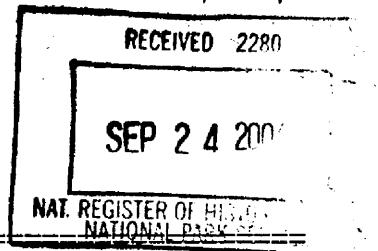
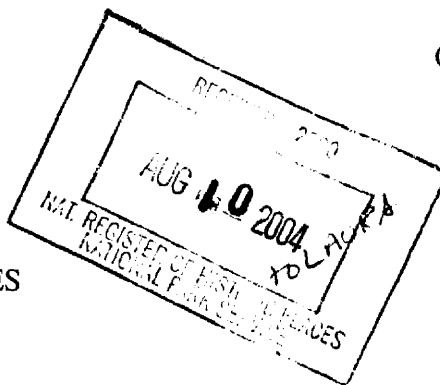


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: **Albert Cofta Farmstead**

other name/site number: **HS-519 (house), HS-520 (well), HS-521 (granary), HS-522 (milk house), HS-523 (barn), HS-524 (garage), HS-525 (hog house), HS-526 (corn crib), Tract # 108-21, Ohio Historic Inventory # SUM 202503**

2. Location

street & number: **2966 Brush Road**

not for publication: **N/A**

city/town: **Richfield Township**

vicinity: **X**

state: **OH** county: **Summit**

code: **153**

zip code: **44286**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara Power

Dept. Head
Inventory & Registration

June 21, 2004

Signature of certifying official Date

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

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.)

Paul Andrew Matthews 9/23/2004
 Signature of commenting or other official Date

National Park Service
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register *Edson A. Beall* 11/4/04
 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): _____

Joe _____
 Signature of Keeper Date
 of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: **Public-Federal**

Category of Property: **Building(s)**

Number of Resources within Property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>		buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>		sites
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>		structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		objects
<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: **Agricultural Resources of the Cuyahoga Valley MPD.**

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: **Domestic**
Agriculture/Subsistence

Sub: **Single Dwelling**
Processing

Current : **Vacant (not in use)**

Sub: _____

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification: **Other: gabled-ell**

Other Description:

Materials: foundation: **Sandstone, concrete block** roof: **Asphalt Shingle**
Walls: **Wood** other: _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: _____.

Applicable National Register Criteria: **A**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : **N/A**

Areas of Significance:

Agriculture

Period(s) of Significance: **1908-1947**

Significant Dates: **Historic, 1908, 1910, 1947**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Page 1

Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Description:

The Cofta Farm is located approximately four miles west of the town of Boston, Ohio, within Cuyahoga Valley National Park. It is situated along the south side of Brush Road and is accessible by a short grassy and gravel drive that is lined with large pine trees. This twenty-three acre property is comprised of a farm house, well, granary, barn, milk house, corn crib, hog house, garage, and overgrown agricultural field. The farm house, constructed around 1910, sits approximately fifty feet from the road and is partially hidden by a line of trees and a large rhododendron bush. The location, setting, and feeling of the property have gone through little alteration since the construction of the farm house. Several of the original outbuildings are present and are currently in good condition. The Cofta Farm maintains a high degree of historic integrity of design (as a farmstead), setting, feeling, location, and materials.

There are 12 resources within the Cofta Farmstead nomination's boundaries that are considered contributing. Contributing buildings consist of the house, barn, and garage. Contributing structures consist of the corn crib, well cap, sandstone walkway, milk house, granary, and hog house. Contributing sites are the two concrete foundations and the field.

Built circa 1910, the Cofta House is a wooden-framed, two-story, Gabled Ell, Folk Victorian farm house (Photos 1-12). The building has an intersecting gabled roof with asphalt roll roofing and an interior brick chimney. All sides are covered with wooden drop lap siding. The northeast corner of the façade includes a shed-roofed porch with delicate turned porch supports and a concrete floor (Photos 1-2). A door adorns the north-facing façade. A large rhododendron bush partially hides the three one-over-one windows on the façade; all have double-hung sashes (Photos 1-2). The west elevation includes five, one-over-one double-hung windows, three on the first floor and two on the second (Photos 3-6). The east side features a bulkhead entrance to the full basement (Photo 14). The house has a cut sandstone foundation.

Two sections were later added to the south elevation of the main house (Photos 7-10). The first one-story addition has a gabled roof with asphalt roll roofing (Photo 15). There is an interior chimney along the east slope of the roof. The walls are covered with wooden drop lap siding. The west side includes a fixed, nine-light window, and the east side has a one-over-one, double-hung window. The south elevation has a small, fixed window within the gable end. This addition has a poured concrete foundation.

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Section number 7

Page 2

Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Description (continued):

A second one-story addition was constructed shortly after 1910. It was built onto the south side of the previous addition, and has a hipped roof with asphalt roll roofing. This second addition has a poured concrete foundation. The walls are covered with wooden drop lap siding. A small porch is on the addition's west side; poured concrete steps are situated along the west side of the porch (Photos 3-4). The west elevation also includes a door, a fixed, octagon-shaped window, and one one-over-one, double-hung window.

The east elevation also has a small porch and a door (Photos 11-16). A concrete block step is positioned along the east side of the porch (Photos 11-12). This step drops to a sandstone walkway (Photo 12) that leads to a well covered with a 4 x 6-foot stone slab cap (Photo 13). The sandstone walkway is considered as a contributing resource within the nomination. A 20 x 30-foot poured concrete slab covers the well opening. The well site is also considered a contributing resource of the Cofta Farmstead.

The interior of the house has been modified over time; however, the house's massing is historically consistent with its original construction. The partial basement, under the core section of the house, is finished with poured concrete floor and wall construction is a mix of sandstone block, concrete block, and poured concrete. The ceiling is unfinished and consists of open wood joists. The bulkhead walkout door is located along the east wall of the basement. The basement also has a small fruit cellar.

The first floor rooms contain wall-to-wall carpeting over the original wood floors, wood paneled walls, and Celotex on the ceilings. The second floor bedrooms have a similar treatment as the first floor rooms. The kitchen has been "updated" with vinyl flooring, wood paneled wainscoting, and a Youngstown Kitchen sink and cupboards.

Despite the presence of two additions, several window alterations and the need for structural stabilization, the farm house continues to be a contributing resource. The house communicates the history and the daily operation of the farmstead through its spatial relationship to the road and the other outbuildings.

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Section number 7

Page 3

Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Description (continued):

The granary (built circa 1908) is located approximately 100 feet southwest of the farm house (Photos 22-24). This rectangular, framed structure has a front gabled roof with sheet metal roofing. The walls are covered with wooden board and batten siding. The north side includes a vertical wood door and a mesh-covered three-light window in the gable end. The granary's wood sill rests on concrete block corner piers. The structure has a wood floor. The granary is in good condition.

Directly west of the granary is a 10 x 10-foot concrete block foundation of a former building. The historic function of the former outbuilding is not known at this time. However, the foundation is counted as a contributing resource for its association with the spatial organization of the farmstead.

The barn (built circa 1908, 1947 addition) is located approximately thirty feet west of the granary (Photos 17-21). The core section of the barn is a front-gabled, two-story, wood-framed building that was constructed into the bank that slopes on the south side. The barn's front-gabled roof is covered with sheet metal roofing material and has boxed rafter tails. The vertical board walls are covered with patterned asphalt roll siding (Insulbrick™), which is undoubtedly over fifty years old (Photo 20). The north side includes a pedestrian door, a hay loft door, and a small fixed window. The east side has three windows on the first level covered with meshed wire and a service door on the second level. A partial concrete-block basement wall is visible along the south side. It has a six-over-six window with a double-hung sash and a double-sliding vertical board door. The barn has a cut sandstone foundation. A short wall constructed of sandstone begins at the southeast corner of the barn and continues roughly five feet down the slope (Photo 18-19).

A concrete block addition was built onto the west side of the barn in circa 1947.¹ The one-story addition has a side-gabled (eave oriented) roof with corrugated metal roofing and exposed rafter tails (Photo 17). The north side includes a double-sliding vertical board door and a two-light

¹ Wesley Baker and Associates, Appraisal of the Cofta Property, Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio, Tract 108-21, (Chagrin Falls, OH: Wesley Baker and Associates, 1989), 13. (Report found in Tract File 108-21).

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Section number 7

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Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Description (continued):

window with a hopper sash (Photo 17). The west side includes metal windows and wooden board and batten siding in the gable end. The addition has a concrete foundation.

The milk house, built circa 1930, is located along the north side of a dry creek bed, approximately forty feet southeast from the barn (Photos 25-26). This small, concrete block building has a flat roof with corrugated metal roofing and eaves. Meshed wire covers the service door, which is on the north-facing façade. A stone ledge runs along the south interior wall that served as a wash basin. The milk house also contains a large water tank underneath the main floor that is constructed of poured concrete. The tank served as a holding tank to cool recently drawn milk. The south wall of the milk house contains a spigot to drain the tank. Originally this structure had a pyramidal roof; it was replaced in 1997 with the flat roof as an interim stabilization measure. The pyramidal roof will be replaced-in-kind when the outbuildings are rehabilitated.

The corn crib, built circa 1908, (Photos 27-28) is located to the south of the dry creek bed, approximately seventy feet southeast of the milk house shed. This narrow, rectangular-shaped, wooden framed building has a front gabled roof with metal sheet roofing and overhanging eaves. The north wall is covered with vertical board siding. The south, west, and east walls are constructed of a wooden frame covered with metal screening. A vertical board service door is on the north side. The corn crib has a concrete block foundation.

The hog house, built circa 1930, is located along the south side of the dry creek bed, about twenty feet north of the corn crib. It is a low, rectangular-shaped, concrete block building with a flat roof. Originally, this building had a gable roof; it was replaced in 1997 with the flat roof as an interim stabilization measure. The gable roof will be replaced-in-kind when the outbuildings are rehabilitated. The south side includes a meshed-wire window, and the east elevation has a small service door.

Directly south of the hog house is a partial concrete block foundation. The historic function of the former outbuilding is not known at this time. However, the foundation is counted as a contributing resource for its association with the spatial organization of the farmstead.

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Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Description (continued):

The garage is positioned along the west side of the property's entrance drive, approximately thirty feet south of Brush Road (Photo 16). It is a wooden-framed structure with a shed roof and asphalt shingle roofing. There is a shed hood on the east side. An overhanging eave with exposed rafters is visible on the west side. The walls are covered with wooden drop lap siding. The north side includes one, two-over-two window with a double-hung sash. Two vertical board double-sliding doors are on the east elevation. The structure has a poured concrete foundation.

An agricultural field historically associated with the operation of the Cofta farm lies directly west of the garage and northwest of the barn. The field, now a fallow meadow, is clearly defined by a tree line on the west and south sides. The historic demarcation of the farmstead's curtilage, the area near the house, barn and outbuildings, is still intact.

Although there have been alterations to the Cofta farm house and surrounding outbuildings throughout the years, the changes have been minimal. Maintenance projects have been performed periodically by Cuyahoga Valley National Park in an attempt to preserve and maintain the outbuildings. This property has maintained its historic sense of location, setting, association, and feeling. The Cofta farmstead has retained a high degree of integrity.

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Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Photographs:

All of the following information is the same for all photographs.

Name of property: Albert Cofta Farmstead
County and state: Summit County, Ohio
Name of photographer: Sarah Scherbel*, Sam Tamburro
Date of photograph: August 2000*, March 2001²
Location of negatives: Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Photo #	Resource	Description
1.	House	Façade (north) elevation, facing south*
2.	House	Façade (north) elevation, facing south*
3.	House	West elevation, facing east
4.	House	West elevation, facing east
5.	House	West and south elevations, facing northeast
6.	House	West elevation, facing east
7.	House	Southwest corner, facing north
8.	House	South elevation, facing north
9.	House	Southeast elevation, facing west
10.	House	Southeast elevation, facing west*
11.	House	East elevation, facing west
12.	House	East elevation, facing west
13.	House Well	East side of the house, facing west
14.	House Bulkhead	East side of the house, facing south
15.	House Chimney	East side of the house, facing west
16.	Garage	East and South elevations, facing northwest

² Although the photographs are over two years old, they still accurately convey the current appearance of the property.

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Page 7

Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Photographs (continued):

All of the following information is the same for all photographs.

Name of property: Albert Cofta Farmstead
County and state: Summit County, Ohio
Name of photographer: Sarah Scherbel*, Sam Tamburro
Date of photograph: August 2000*, March 2001³
Location of negatives: Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Photo #	Resource	Description
17.	Barn	Façade elevation, facing south
18.	Barn	South elevation, facing north*
19.	Barn	South elevation, facing north*
20.	Barn	East elevation, facing west*
21.	Barn	North elevation, facing south
22.	Granary	North elevation, facing south
23.	Granary	North elevation, facing south*
24.	Granary	South elevation, facing north*
25.	Milk house	North elevation, facing south
26.	Milk house	South elevation, facing north
27.	Corncrib	West elevation, facing east
28.	Corncrib	North and west elevations, facing east*

³ Although the photographs are over two years old, they still accurately convey the current appearance of the property.

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Section number 8

Page 8

Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

Statement of Significance:

The Cofta Farm meets the registration requirements for farmsteads eligible under Criteria A specified in the *Agricultural Resources of Cuyahoga Valley Multiple Property Documentation Form (Agricultural MPD)*.

The property is being nominated under Criterion A: (Agriculture) for its agricultural significance and its association with the agricultural practices of the Cuyahoga Valley. The Cofta Farm is a significant example of a farmstead that developed in the Cuyahoga River Valley in the early twentieth century. The "Agricultural Decline and Economic Diversification: 1913-1930" section of the *Agricultural MPD* notes the importance of diversification and specialization of Valley farms during this period and the Cofta Farm's production during the first half of the twentieth century reflects these historic trends. The Cofta Family diversified their farm into a dairy operation to meet the growing demand from the nearby urban markets of Akron and Cleveland.

The spatial relationship of the farmhouse to the outbuildings provides further understanding of how the farm functioned. The clustering of the barn and outbuildings near the farmhouse is indicative of the lifeways of the Coftas. The farmstead has a barn, granary, milk house, corn crib, and hog house all situated near the farm house and all of the buildings are oriented toward Brush Road, indicating the circulation pattern of the farm.

Historical Development:

In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville ceded a majority of land north of the Ohio River to the United States and opened it to white settlement. The State of Connecticut retained ownership of the Western Reserve of the Ohio Territory, and on 3 August 1795, the state sold the entire tract to the Connecticut Land Company (CLC) for \$1,200,000.

Richfield Township, originally designated as Town 4, Range 12, was allotted by the CLC to a syndicate consisting of Benjamin Tallmadge, John Smith, Edwards & Green, Uriel Holmes, and

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Historical Development (continued):

J. Wilcox.⁴ Herman Oviatt of Hudson, Ohio was also a land speculator in Richfield Township. As the township developed, two business centers emerged, East Center and West Center. Both settlements had their own stores, churches, taverns, post offices, and small manufacturing operations. A number of sawmills developed along Furnace Run and by the 1850 US Census' *Products of Industry* survey there were three sawmills operating in Richfield Township. Like other townships in the Cuyahoga Valley, Richfield had a thriving agricultural community producing staple Valley crops such as wheat, corn, and oats.⁵ As a testament to their agricultural position in Summit County, Richfield Township was chosen to host the annual meeting of the Union Agricultural and Mechanics Art Society in 1858.

In 1850, the subject property (Richfield Township Tract 5, Lot 7) was owned by John C. Sanborn, a local farmer. The 1850 US Census *Productions of Agriculture* lists John C. Sanborn as owning a 100-acre farm with a value of \$1,700. Sanborn's farm production was typical of Cuyahoga Valley farms with a strong focus on Indian corn (200 bushels) and oats (300 bushels), as well as wheat (75 bushels) and Irish potatoes (15 bushels).⁶ Sanborn's livestock consisted of three "milch" cows, five swine, and 25 sheep. According to the 1856 Summit County Property Atlas, Sanborn's property contained a building, most likely a house, located on the corner of Black Road and Brush Road (see Figure 5). The section of the property tract where the Cofta House is located (Tract 5, Lot 7) appears to be agriculture fields without any structures in 1856.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the property remained in agriculture production. In the 1870s Clarence L. and Levi R. Newell owned the property (see Figure 6). Unfortunately, the 1870 US Census' *Productions of Agriculture* does not list the Newells farming operation in its statistics. The Newells owned the property into the 1890s, when several transactions occurred on the ownership of the property.

According to the Summit County Tax Auditor's *Duplicates*, in 1894, Clarence and Levi Newell's farm transferred to Executors Eliza, J.J. Stanley, and Chas. J Seabrook (see Figure 7).

⁴ Karl H. Grismer, Akron and Summit County, (Akron, Ohio: Summit County Historical Society, 1952), 573.

⁵ *An Outline History of Richfield Township*, (Richfield, OH: Richfield Historical Society, 1959), 21.

⁶ 1850 US Census' Productions of Agriculture (Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio).

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Historical Development (continued):

The farm, a total of 57 acres, consisted of the following lots in Richfield Township: Tract 5, Lot 7 (22 acres); Tract 5, Lot 6 (4.25 acres); Tract 6, Lot 2 (1.95 acres); Tract 6, Lot 3 (27.47 acres); Tract 5, Lot 8 (1.25 acres).⁷ The value of Tract 5, Lot 7, the parcel where the subject structures are located, was \$760 and the real estate tax was \$11.78. The value and tax of the parcel suggest that some type of building existed on the site. In the subsequent years, the farm experienced several different owners.

In 1897, David Nesbit purchased the 57-acre farm from the Seabrooks and Nesbit continued to own the farm until 1901 when Byron B. Bauer purchased the property. Three years later, John G. Spears acquired the farm from Bauer. In that same year, Spears sold the property to Albert and Keida Cofta (see Figure 8).⁸ From this point, the property would remain in the Cofta Family until the National Park Service purchased it in 1989.

The Summit County Tax Auditor's *Duplicates* reveal that many of the farmstead's buildings were added shortly after the Coftas purchased the property. In 1911, the value of Tract 5, Lot 7 (includes house, barn, and outbuildings) increased from \$910 to \$1,910.⁹ With an increase of \$1,000 it is reasonable to conclude that the barn, granary, and corn crib were added by 1910. The spatial organization of the buildings suggests that they were all constructed around the same time.

It is clear from the value and tax amount of the parcel prior to 1910 that some type of building, possible a dwelling, existed on the site. However, tax record research from the 1850s to 1910 does not cite the addition of a house or barn to the property. According to the Richfield Historical Society, the current Cofta House reputedly was built on the foundation of a previous house that was destroyed by fire around 1910. No additional information has been located to corroborate the fire. The materials and design of the house indicate the house's construction date in the early twentieth century. For the purposes of this National Register nomination, the Cofta House, Barn, and out buildings are considered built circa 1910, but the construction dates may be earlier.

⁷ 1894 Summit County Tax Auditor's Duplicates.

⁸ 1904 Summit County Tax Auditor's Duplicates.

⁹ 1910 Summit County Tax Auditor's Duplicates.

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Section number 8

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Historical Development (continued):

US Census information on the Coftas indicates that they were farmers. The *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population* notes that Albert, age 59, was the head of household and owned the property free-and-clear of a mortgage. His family consisted of his wife Kate¹⁰ (age 49), daughter Matilda (age 21), and sons Benjamin (age 26), Frank (age 19), and John (age 15). Both Albert and Kate immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1880 and were naturalized as citizens in 1888.¹¹ Both were Polish in ethnicity. In the early twentieth century, numerous Polish immigrants emigrated to the Cuyahoga Valley to work for the Cleveland-Akron Bag Company, the Jaite Paper Bag Company in Boston, and to farm.¹² Whether any of the Coftas worked in the paper mills is not known. All the Cofta children were born in Ohio. Neither Albert or Kate could read or write English, however, both could speak English. Albert's occupation is listed as a farmer. Matilda is the only child to have an occupation listed—she was a house keeper.

It appears the Coftas operated a family farm well into the twentieth century with subsequent family members maintaining the business. Unfortunately, not much is known about the Cofta's agricultural production. The *1919 Richfield Township Phone Book* listing for the Cofta's provides insight into their domestic situation. The entry states, "Cofta, Albert w [with] Katie ch. [children] Frank, John, Tillie, farmer 68 ac [acres] 4 hor [horses] 8 chic [chickens]."¹³

By the 1930s the Cofta's farming operation had changed, becoming more specialized. The *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930—Population*, lists both Albert and Benjamin, Albert and Kate's son, as the "head" of the household.¹⁴ However, Albert's occupation is listed as "none," leading one to believe that he had "retired" from farming. It is likely that Benjamin took over the day-to-day operation of the farm with Albert and Kate living their remaining days with

¹⁰ Kate's given name has multiple spellings including Katie and Keida.

¹¹ Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio.

¹² Debra Gelbert, *Historic Landscape Analysis and Design Recommendations for Boston, Ohio*, (Brecksville, Ohio: Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 1993), 5.

¹³ *1919 Richfield Township Phone Book*, (n.p., 1919), 21. Copy located at the Richfield Historical Society.

¹⁴ Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930—Population*, Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio.

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Section number 8

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Historical Development (continued):

Benjamin's family. Other members of Benjamin's family included his wife Theresa (age 33), daughter Lillian (age 7), and son Raymond V. (age 6). Benjamin's brother Frank (age 30) was also counted as part of the family and his occupation was listed as "farm laborer." According to the records, the family did not have a radio and Ben was a veteran of World War I.

The 1930 Census also includes an important distinction about the Cofta's farming operation; it is listed as a "Dairy Farm." In Richfield Township, the census enumerator made the distinction between "general" farms and "dairy" farms, which provides a historical context to the specialized nature of the Cofta's farm. Like many farms in the uplands of Richfield Township, the Cofta's focused their farming operation on dairying, clearing land for pasturing cows.¹⁵ The Cofta Farmstead's built environment reflects these changes in the operation. In 1947, the barn's concrete block, west addition was constructed.¹⁶ The concrete block milk house and hog house were also added to the farm in 1947.

On 4 November 1930, Kate Cofta died and was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio.¹⁷ Nine years later, Albert Cofta died,¹⁸ leaving the farm to his son Benjamin. Albert was also buried in Calvary Cemetery. Benjamin continued to farm until his death in 1950.¹⁹

In 1957, Raymond and Cecilia Cofta built a small ranch (2892 Brush Road) house directly east of the farmstead and expanded the farming operation (see Figures 9-10). This building is still extant and is the residence of Raymond V. Cofta Jr, Raymond's son. In 1989, the National Park Service purchased the Cofta Farm (Tract 108-21) from Paul L. Cofta, which included approximately 23 acres. NPS also purchased adjacent land (21 acres) to the east (Tract 108-22) from Raymond V. Cofta. In March 1997, NPS conducted interim stabilization on the house, barn, and outbuildings.²⁰

¹⁵ Agricultural MPD, 5,30.

¹⁶ Wesley Baker and Associates, Appraisal of the Cofta Property, Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio, Tract 108-21, (Chagrin Falls, OH: Wesley Baker and Associates, 1989),13. (Report found in Tract File 108-21).

¹⁷ Cofta, Catherine, Id# 0057860, Nov. 4, 1930, Cleveland Necrology File, Reel #015.

¹⁸ Cofta, Albert, Id# 0057858, Jul. 9, 1939, Cleveland Necrology File, Reel #015.

¹⁹ Cofta, Ben B., Id# 0057859, Sep. 19, 1950, Cleveland Necrology File, Reel #015

²⁰ For a full description of the interim stabilization efforts conducted on the Cofta Farm buildings in 1997, please see Section 106 XXX form CUVA-97-012.

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Criterion A: Agriculture:

The Cofta Farm is a significant example of a farmstead that developed in the Cuyahoga River Valley during the historic period defined in "Railroads, Industrialization, and Scientific Farming: 1851 to 1913" section of the *Agriculture MPD*.²¹

The exact agricultural production of the nominated Cofta Farm is not known at this time. The US Census' *Productions of Agriculture* does not exist for Summit County for 1920 or 1930, the major period of the Coftas farming operation. However, the agricultural production of the farm for the nineteenth century is documented and provides insight into the productivity of the farm.

The 1850 US Census' *Productions of Agriculture* indicate the Cofta Farm (then known as the Sanborn Farm) was an average size farm in Richfield Township.²² With regard to agriculture production of typical crops, the Cofta Farm exceeded all Richfield Township averages in 1850. The township average bushels of wheat was 62, average bushels of Indian corn 98, and average bushels of oats 88. By comparison, the Sanborns produced 75 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of Indian corn, and 300 bushels of oats.²³

Although US Census' *Productions of Agriculture* statistics from 1870 for the Cofta Farm (then owned by Clarence L. and Levi R. Newell) are not available, the statistics for Richfield Township display interesting trends that could be extrapolated to the Cofta Farm. In that year, the average size farm in Richfield Township was 117 acres, well above the other townships in Summit County. In the Cuyahoga Valley during this period there was a shift in farming from traditional methods to "scientific farming," that depended on a principled understanding of crop rotation, weather patterns, improved animal husbandry, and mechanization. With the increase in cultivated land came an increase in crop production, with crop types remaining consistent throughout the nineteenth century. Richfield, like the other townships in Summit, remained focused on grain production, specifically wheat, corn, and oats. The well drained uplands, where the Cofta Farm is located, were the most extensively farmed areas in the valley.

²¹ Jeffrey Winstel, Paulette Cossel, and Melinda Campbell, *Agricultural Resources of the Cuyahoga Valley Multiple Property Documentation Form*, National Register of Historic Places. Brecksville, OH: National Park Service, March, 1993. Cited hereafter as *Agricultural MPD*.

²² Kurt Mulhauser and Jeff Winstel, *NPS Special History Study: U.S. Census Productions of Agriculture Records, 1850, 1870, and 1880*, (Brecksville, Ohio: Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, n.d.).

²³ 1850 US Census' *Productions of Agriculture* (Richfield Township, Summit County, Ohio).

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Criterion A: Agriculture (continued):

According to the 1891 Summit County Atlas, "Richfield Township derived its name from the large quantities of "Oxbalm" or a "rich feed" which abounded and was much relished by grazing stock."²⁴ Hence, the township was good for grazing cattle, with its flat rolling acreage. By the late nineteenth century, Richfield Township was the location of several large dairying operations because of its well-drained uplands. In 1904, the Coftas purchased the farmstead and began their agricultural operation. From all available historical information, the Coftas were dairy farmers supplying products to local markets via the railroad and trucks.

Little is known about the precise crops that the Coftas cultivated, but there are historical trends in the Cuyahoga Valley that shed light on agricultural production in the twentieth century. The Cuyahoga Valley, as well as Ohio, experienced a shift in agricultural production. With the settlement of the Great Plains came the development of large-scale, "bonanza" farms that focused on crop specialization. For example, bonanza farms in Kansas, Minnesota, Illinois, and Nebraska often doubled, or tripled their closest competitors.²⁵ In 1900, Minnesota ranked first in wheat production, producing more than 100 million bushels. In that same year, Ohio ranked third in wheat production (50 million bushels) largely the result of the opening of the "Black Swamp" area in northwest Ohio. Because of the inability to compete with other areas of the state and the country, Cuyahoga Valley farmers shifted their production to fill the needs of the regional market.

With the urban centers of Cleveland and Akron nearby, many of the valley's farmers produced crops for the increasing urban population of the area. The Cofta's focus on dairy/milk production is an example of this trend. The *Agricultural MPD* states that the combined population of Summit and Cuyahoga Counties increased more than 400 percent between 1870 and 1910, rising from 166,684 in 1870 to 745,678 in 1910. Furthermore, with a transportation/commercial network to both cities provided by the O&E Canal and the Valley Railway, farmers in the valley appeared to have adapted their crop production to meet the demand created by the population growth of these nearby cities.

²⁴ Illustrated Summit County, Ohio Representing her Manufacturing Interests, Commercial Houses, Public Institutions, Farms, Homes, and People, (Akron, Ohio: Akron Map & Atlas Company, 1891), 23.

²⁵ Winstel et al, Agricultural MPD, 16.

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Criterion A: Agriculture (continued):

The Cofta Farmstead contains buildings that have significant distinctive characteristics of construction practices associated with the agricultural development in the Cuyahoga Valley as defined in the *Agricultural MPD*.

In the context of the Cuyahoga Valley, a farmstead is defined as a group of buildings that are associated with a historic agricultural function. The spatial relationship between the Cofta Farmhouse, outbuildings, and fields conveys the sense of a functionally related agricultural unit.

Vernacular architecture was also an important cultural expression in the Cuyahoga Valley. As the *Agriculture MPD* notes, vernacular architecture, as opposed to high-style interpretations, was influenced primarily by the building traditions of distinct cultural groups, available materials, and climate.²⁶

The Cofta House evidences features directly associated with vernacular building traditions that are represented in the Cuyahoga Valley and in national trends. According to Stephen C. Gordon's *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*, the gabled ell became a popular house type in Ohio after the Civil War.²⁷ Typically, the gabled ell is wood balloon framing or brick bearing wall construction, one or two stories with an irregular plan, intersecting gable roof, and asymmetrical fenestration pattern. The gabled ell has one half-I house form perpendicular to a wing with gabled ends. The crossed gable roof line is at the same level. The gabled ell was common in rural areas and small towns. Characteristically, the long wing usually faces the road and commonly has a decorative porch flanked by the projecting gabled wing.

The *Agricultural MPD* also identifies the gabled ell as a significant building type associated with the agricultural development of the Cuyahoga Valley. In the Cuyahoga Valley, the farmhouse usually communicated the prosperity of the farm. Commonly, the farmhouse was the closest farm building to the road, which was the case with the Cofta Farm. The house's façade served as the "public image" of the farm.²⁸ The transportation revolution wrought significant changes in

²⁶ Winstel et al, *Agricultural MPD*, 27.

²⁷ Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*, (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Historical Society, 1992), 136.

²⁸ Winstel et al, *Agricultural MPD*, Section F, page 7.

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Criterion A: Agriculture (continued):

Cuyahoga Valley farming practices and eventually the built environment of the farm. After the Civil War a nationally integrated railroad system aided the development of common architectural styles throughout the United States. Building styles and types became nationally distributed by means of pattern books, plan, and trade journals. Moreover, mass production of machine-milled architectural details created a common chord within architecture. This trend is well represented in the Cuyahoga Valley and the Cofta Farmhouse is indicative of the movement. The development of railroads in Northeast Ohio, including the Valley Railway, influenced the area's architecture. Gabled ell farmhouses, like Cofta, are reflections of this movement in the valley.

The Cofta farmhouse is best described as vernacular in style. Typical of earlier building types in the Cuyahoga Valley, the Cofta Farmhouse has a low-pitched gable roof, similar to other building types that were built in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. There are also subtle influences of Queen Anne elements on the Cofta Farmhouse. The house also has machine-milled porch posts.

The Cofta Barn, situated on the south side of Brush Road, is a Raised Bank Barn, a dominant barn style in the Cuyahoga Valley after the opening of the Ohio & Erie Canal, and one which continued to be built well into the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. The barn is a rectangular, gable-roofed structure "banked" into a hillside. The elevation change from the north to the south elevation of the barn is approximately ten feet. The western addition appears to have been added in 1947 to accommodate additional livestock (cows).

The foundation of the barn is cut sandstone block, and a large sliding-track door to the barn's basement is located on the north side. The second floor (threshing floor) held hay and livestock feed and the basement housed equipment and livestock, especially "milch" cows.

Dairy production represented a significant aspect of the Cuyahoga Valley, which is reflected in the barn's architecture. County fairs and agricultural associations educated area farmers to new and improved methods of farming. Area farmers chose improved breeds of cattle, fed them with specialized grains, and kept them inside barns during winter, which all increased milk yields per cow. The Cofta Barn's design is representative of these agricultural improvements that attempted to make farming more efficient. By 1930, the Cofta's farming operation was characterized as a "Dairy Farm" by the census enumerator indicating the specialization of their business.

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Criterion A: Agriculture (continued):

Other out buildings extant on the property add to the historic integrity of the site as a farmstead and evoke the rural, agricultural nature of the property.

The design and location of the Cofta's milk house is critical to understanding how the dairy operation functioned. In the Cuyahoga Valley, milk houses, like Coftas, are usually located as close as possible to the barn. In the early twentieth century, both commercial standards and new governmental regulations required improvements in milk cooling procedures. The following standard instructions were directed toward farmers regarding milk processing:

Milk as drawn from the cow has a temperature of approximately ninety degrees Fahrenheit and becomes damaged after a few hours, if not properly cooled, because of bacterial action. Since bacteria require a temperature of fifty-five degrees or warmer to grow rapidly, milk and cream should be held at fifty degrees or lower ... The sooner milk is cooled after having been drawn from the cow, the longer it will keep, consequently quick and adequate cooling is always essential.²⁹

The Coftas milk house's building materials are also indicative of its function. Typical milk houses were generally small with enough room to provide a cooling container, washing facilities, and storage space for the milk cans. Because of the use of water in the cooling process and the constant moisture, clay tile block or concrete block were often chosen as a building material. Built of concrete block, the Cofta milk house is characteristic of historic trends in agriculture buildings.

The Cofta Farm's granary also contributes to the historic integrity of the farmstead. Like most granaries, the Cofta's granary is rectangular, with few windows or other openings and utilizes vertical board-and-batten construction to keep the structure as animal-proof as possible. The granary is also elevated on concrete piers to keep rodents out and eliminate moisture.³⁰

²⁹ Allen G. Noble, Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape, Volume 2: Barns and Farm Structures, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts, 1986), 116.

³⁰ Noble, Wood, Brick, and Stone, 104.

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Criterion A: Agriculture (continued):

The location of the hog house in relationship to the farm house also provides important cues about everyday life on the farm. Hog houses, like the Coftas, were usually located as far away from the farm house as possible because of the flies and odors associated with the pig pen.³¹

The site of the corn crib near the hog house is also expressive of the operation of the farm and raising hogs. Corn cribs were utilized to slowly dry newly harvested corn and reduce loss from mold and mildew. Hence, the design of the structure required walls with a high proportion of open area, commonly attained by the use of widely spaced narrow slats, similar to the Cofta's corn crib. Raising livestock, like hogs, required large amounts of corn feed. It is likely that the Cofta's corn crib was located in proximity to the hog house for ease of access to feed.

Viewed collectively, the Cofta outbuildings' designs and locations are important landscape features that further the understanding of the functioning of the farm.

Period of Significance Justification:

The Cofta Farmstead's era of significance could be placed within the period of "Agricultural Decline and Economic Diversification: 1913-1930," as defined in the *Agricultural MPD*, but it extends to 1947 when the barn addition, milk house, and hog house were added to the property. All of the 1947 additions to the farm are over fifty years old and contribute to the historic integrity of the farmstead as a functioning farm. Therefore, the period of significance for the Cofta Farmstead is best defined as the period between 1904 to 1947. During those forty-three years, the property was farmed solely by the Cofta Family. The Cofta Farm's built environment suggests that the property experienced the diversification of operations that was typical of Cuyahoga Valley farms in the twentieth century.

Historic Integrity:

The nominated farm maintains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and materials. The basic features of the contributing buildings and structures are intact, enabling the resources to communicate their historic functions. The *Agricultural MPD* defines a farmstead as a group of agricultural buildings that functioned as a related unit.

³¹ Amos Long, Jr., *The Pennsylvania German Family Farm*, (Breiningsville, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1972), 393.

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Historic Integrity (continued):

The buildings, structures, and sites are in their original locations, and the spatial relationship between the contributing resources is not impacted by new construction. The small field to the west of the house adds to the integrity of the agricultural setting.

The house type and the barn type collectively communicate a farmstead that is characteristic of a Cuyahoga Valley farm and reflects the changing agricultural technologies and an increasingly urban farm produce market.

The alterations to the house and the barn have not changed the original profiles of the buildings. Both buildings are integral parts of the farmstead and cumulatively express integrity of feeling.

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Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
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Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

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Albert Cofta Farm
Richfield Township
Summit County, Ohio

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
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6)	17	448373	4566875

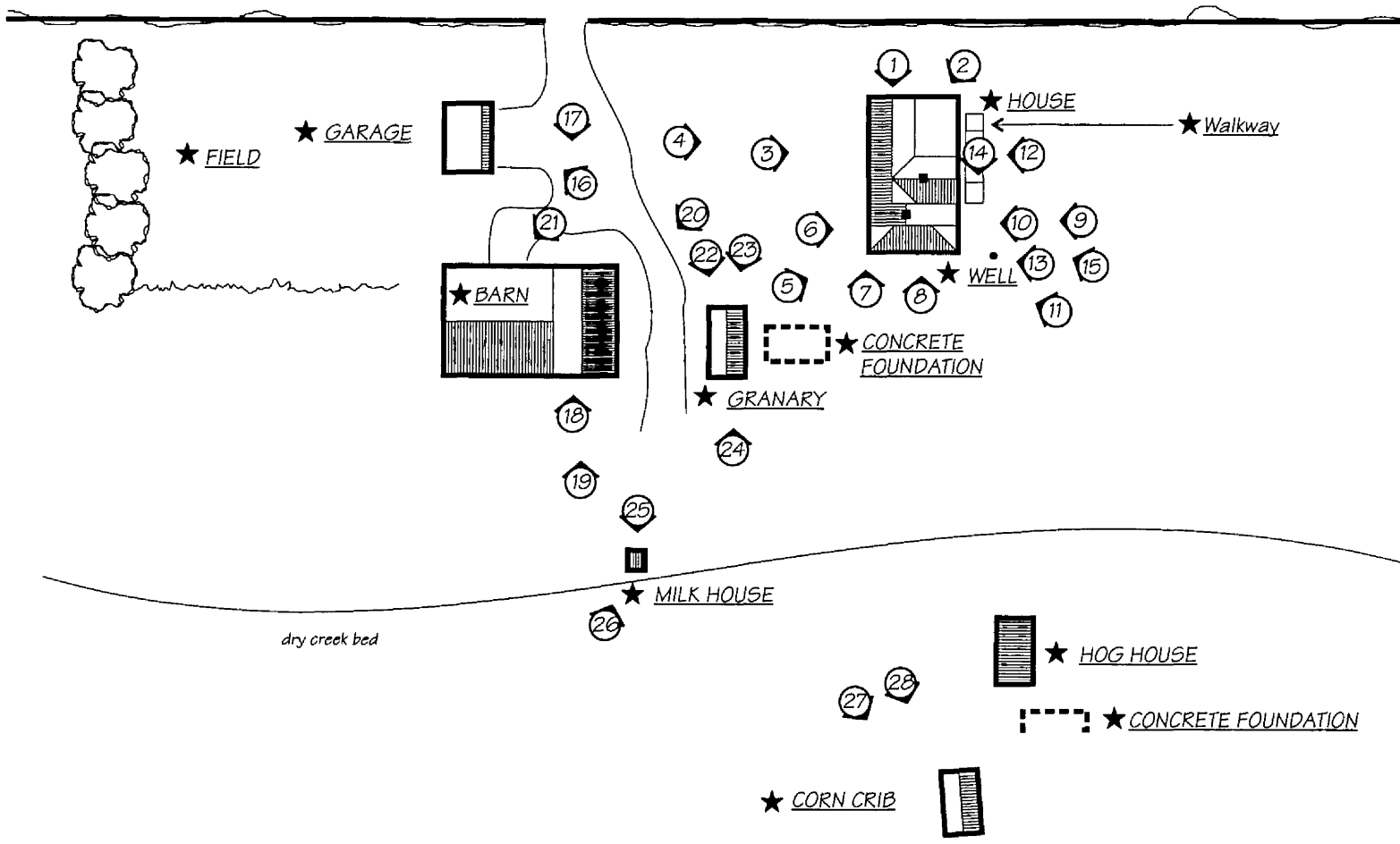
Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at Point 1 on the sketch map, proceed east a distance of 340 feet past the north elevations of the garage and house along the alignment of Brush Road to Point 2; thence proceed southwest a distance of 310 feet through a scrub brush area past the east elevation of the corn crib to Point 3; thence proceed northwest a distance of 140 feet past the milk house to Point 4; thence proceed in a northwest a distance of 94 feet to Point 5 (northwest corner of the barn); thence proceed west a distance of 120 feet to Point 6; thence proceed north along the treeline a distance of 90 feet back to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property contains the buildings and acreage that are historically associated with the agricultural practices of the Cofta Farm and continue to retain historic integrity. The agriculture field listed in the nomination as a contributing resource is within the historic boundary of the Cofta Farm. Other fields and pasture lands historically associated with the Cofta Farm have gone into succession and have lost historic integrity (see Figures 9-11). The two-acre farmstead boundary represents the adjacent property that still retains historic integrity as an agricultural farm.

brush road



- ★ CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
- PHOTOVIEW



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE ONE
SKETCH MAP
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

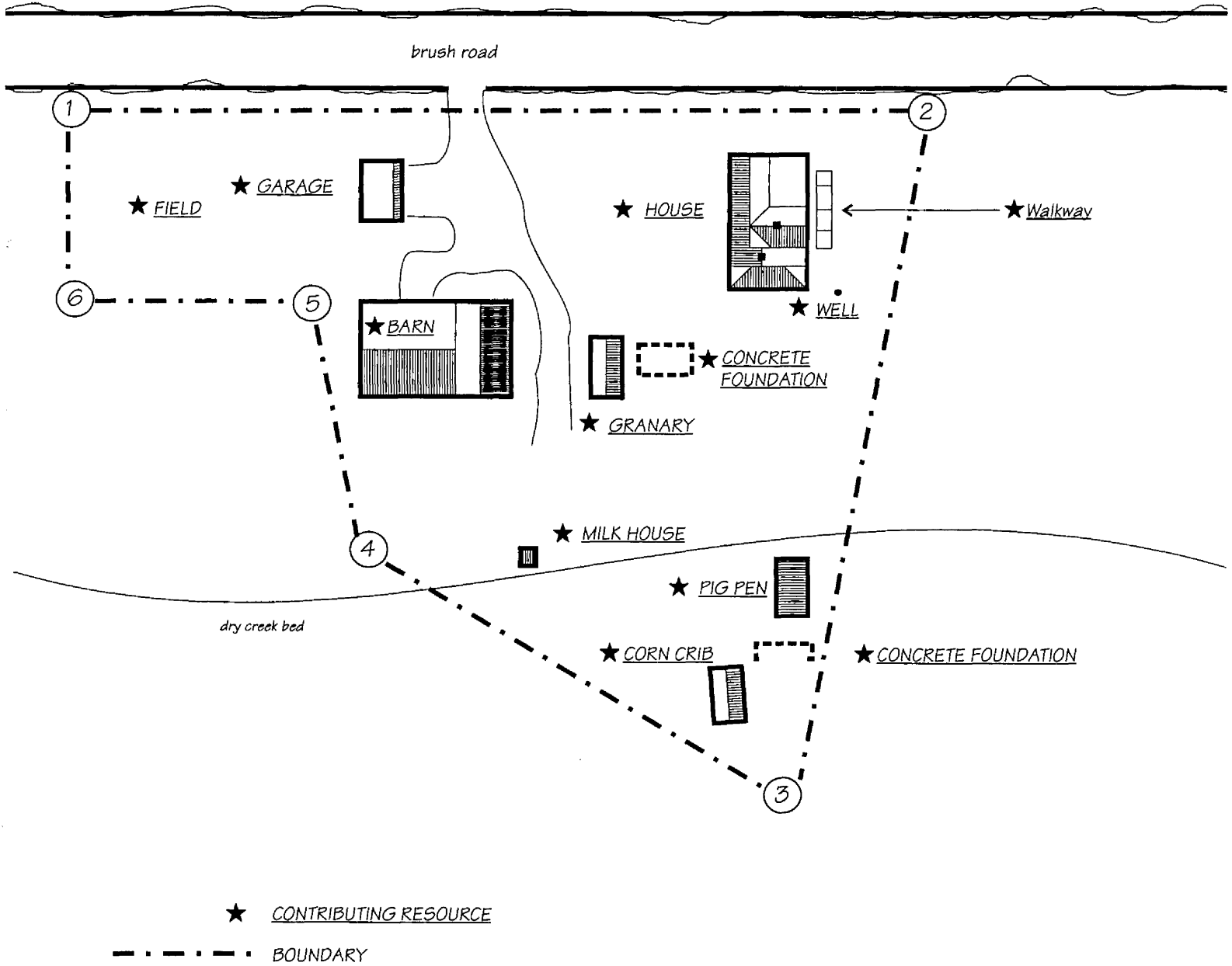
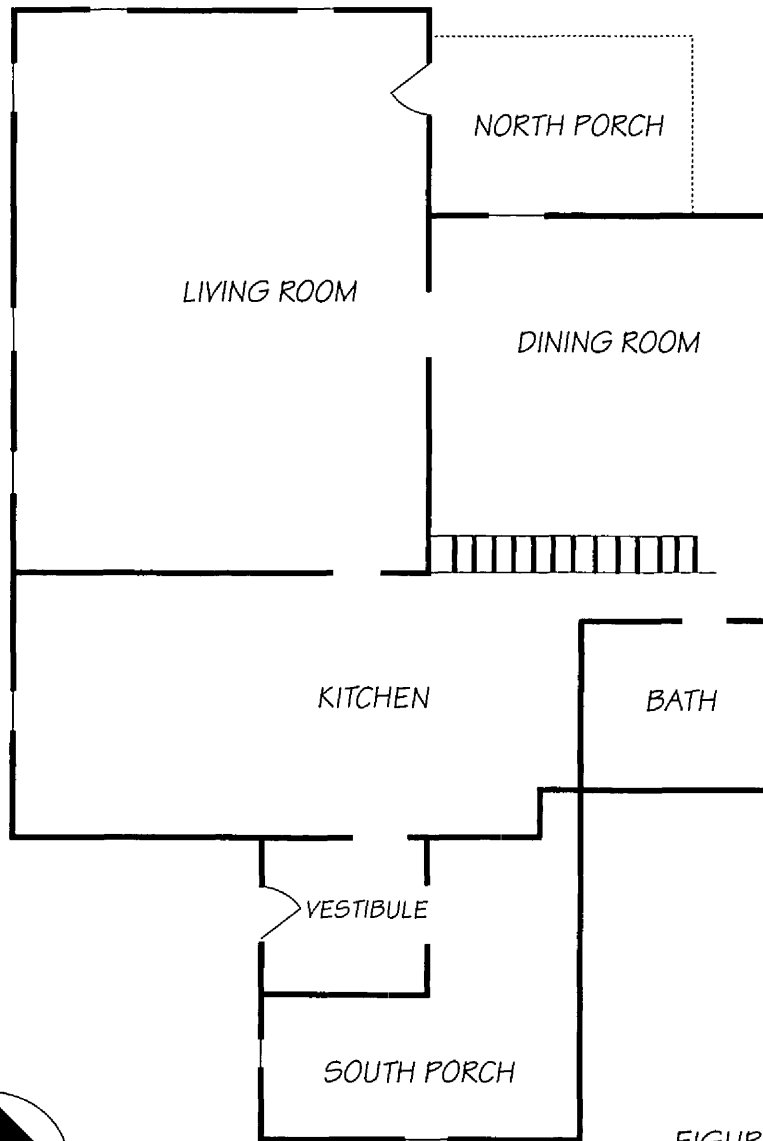


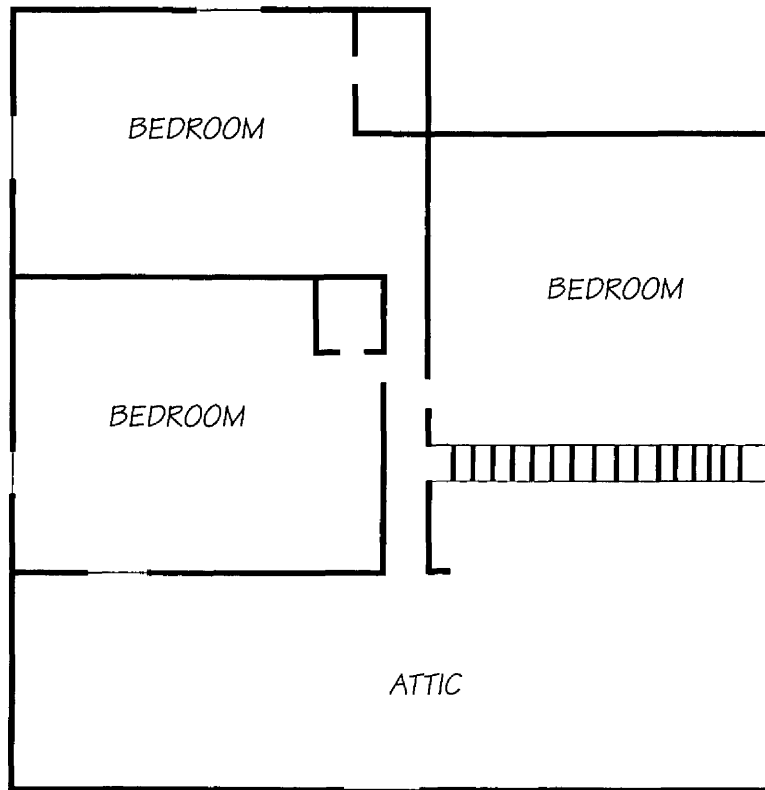
FIGURE TWO
 BOUNDARY MAP
 COFTA FARMSTEAD
 SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
 RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
 JUNE 2003
 CUYAHOGA VALLEY
 NATIONAL PARK





NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE THREE
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE FOUR
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

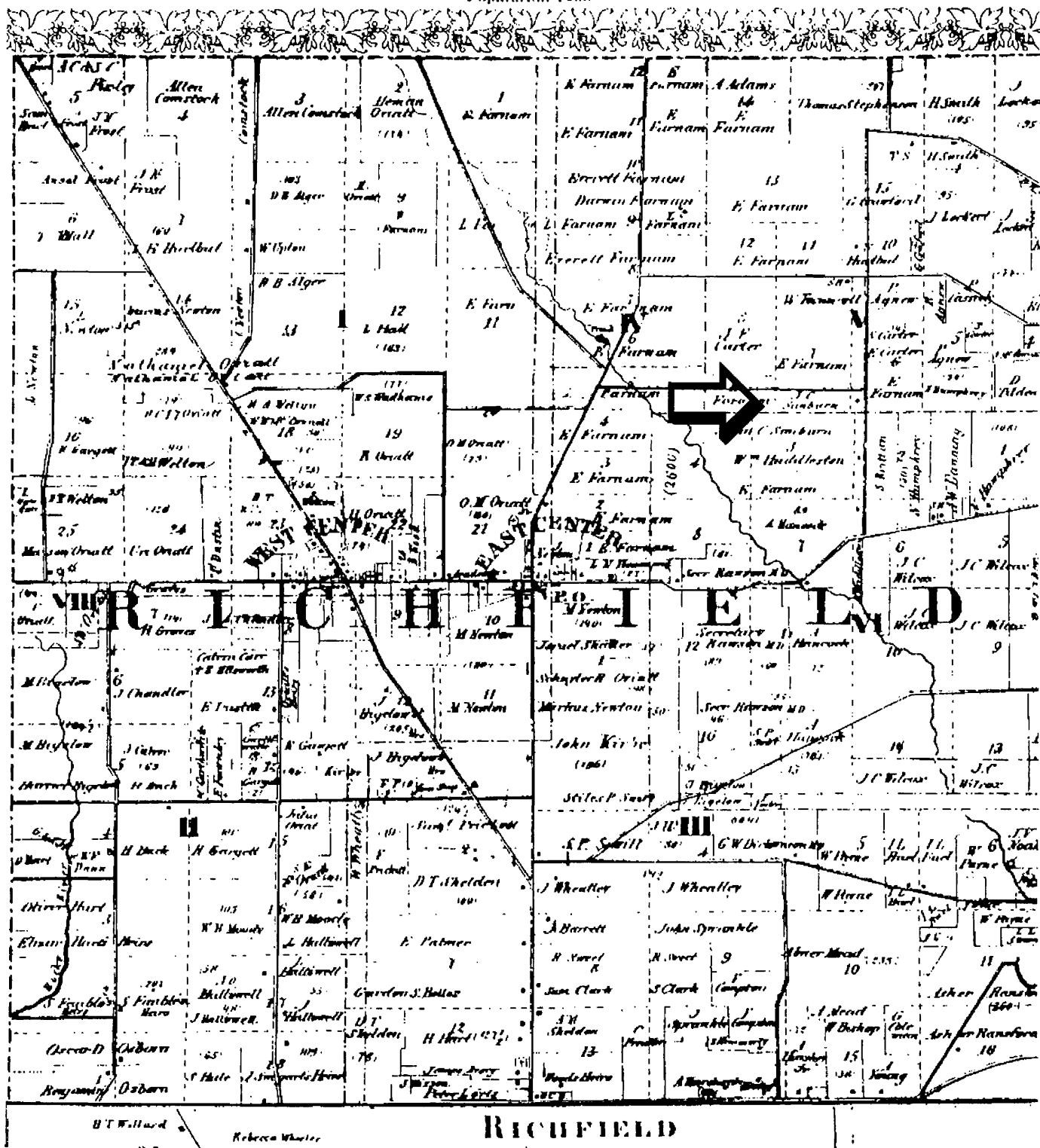


FIGURE FIVE
 1856 SUMMIT COUNTY ATLAS
 COFTA FARMSTEAD
 SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
 RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
 JUNE 2003
 CUYAHOGA VALLEY
 NATIONAL PARK



FIGURE SIX
1874 SUMMIT COUNTY ATLAS
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

MAP OF RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP

TOWN 4, RANGE 12.

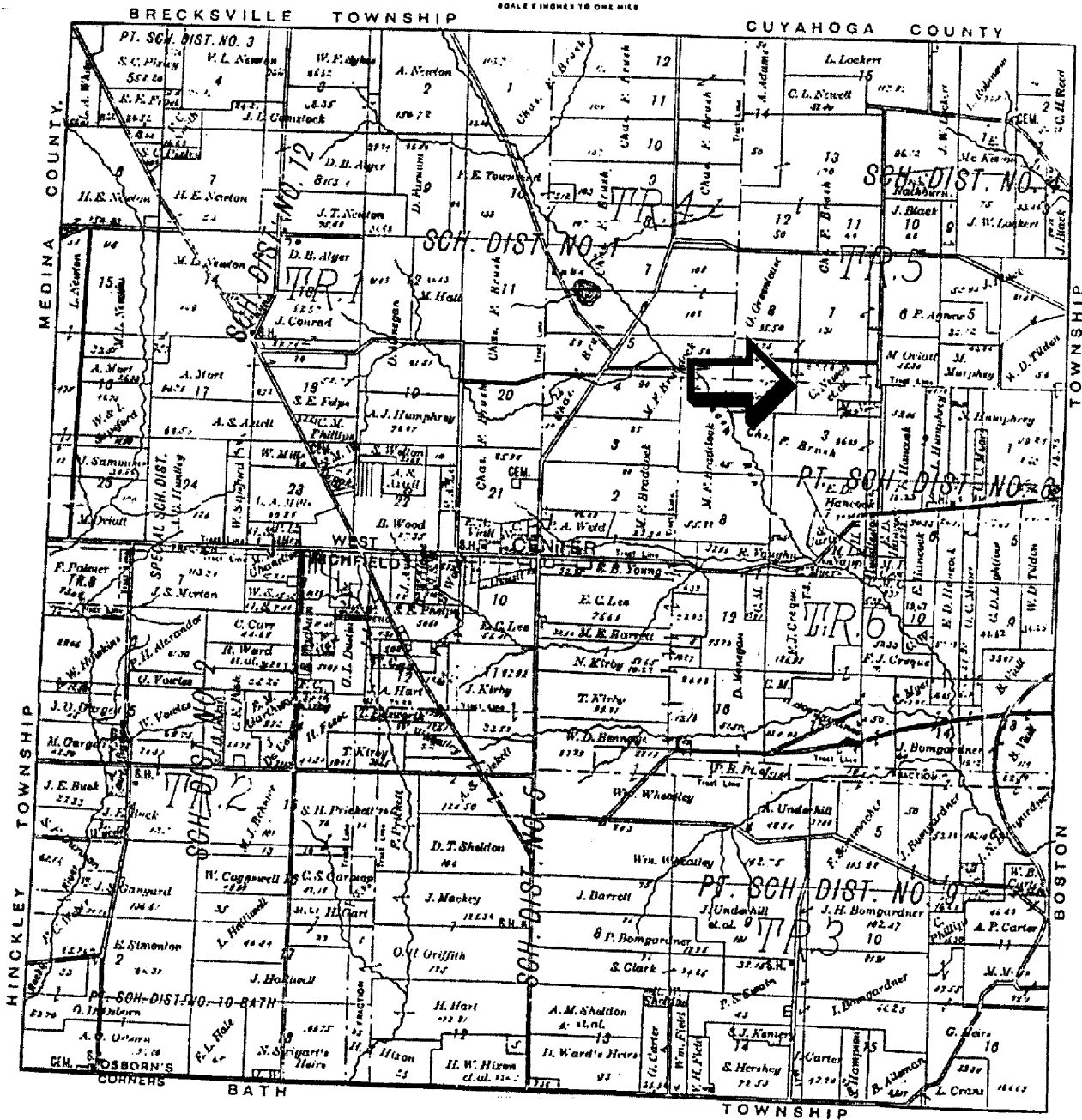


FIGURE SEVEN
 1891 SUMMIT COUNTY ATLAS
 COFTA FARMSTEAD
 SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
 RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
 JUNE 2003
 CUYAHOGA VALLEY
 NATIONAL PARK

RICHFIELD

TOWN 4, RANGE 12

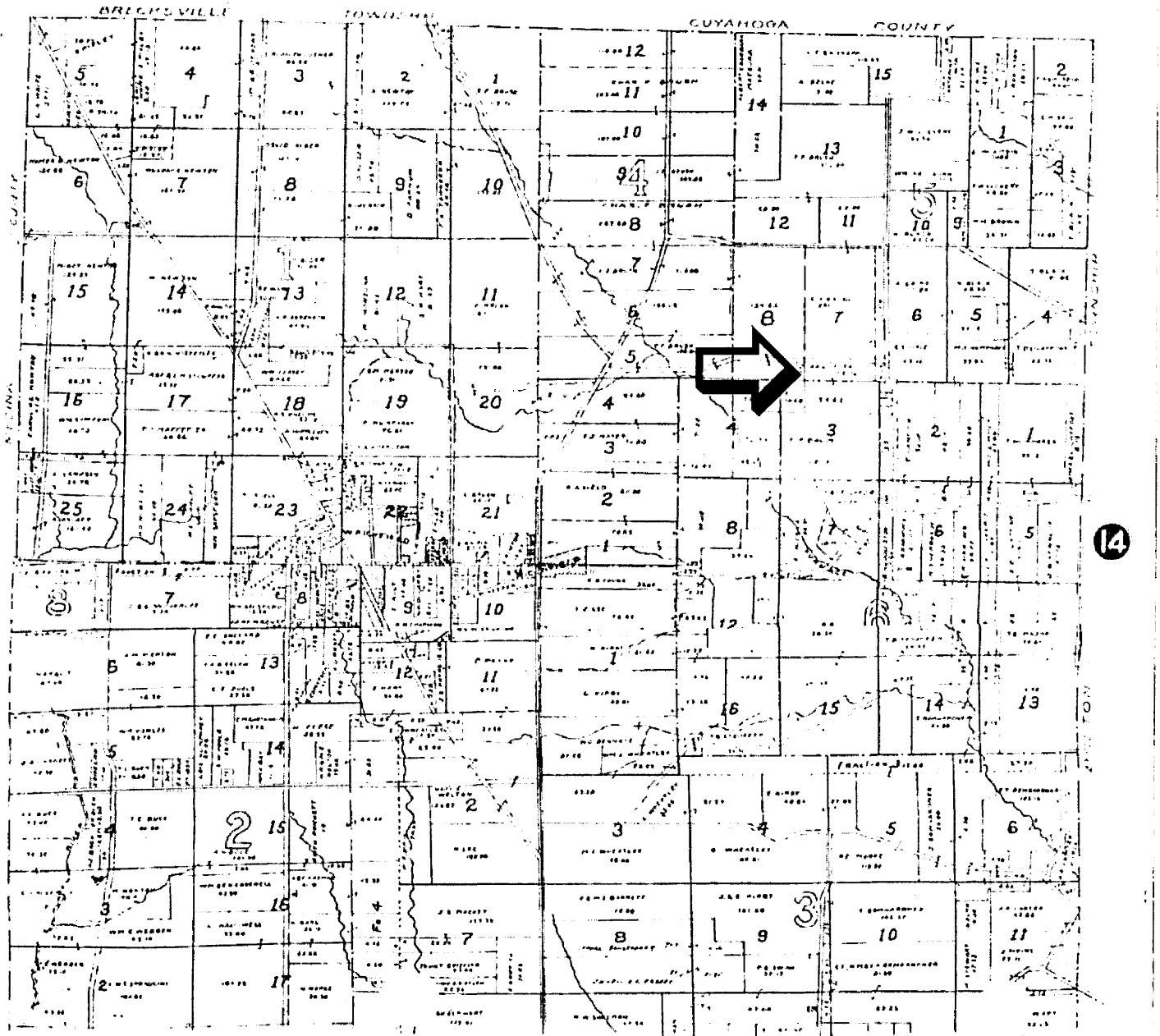


FIGURE EIGHT
1910 SUMMIT COUNTY ATLAS
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

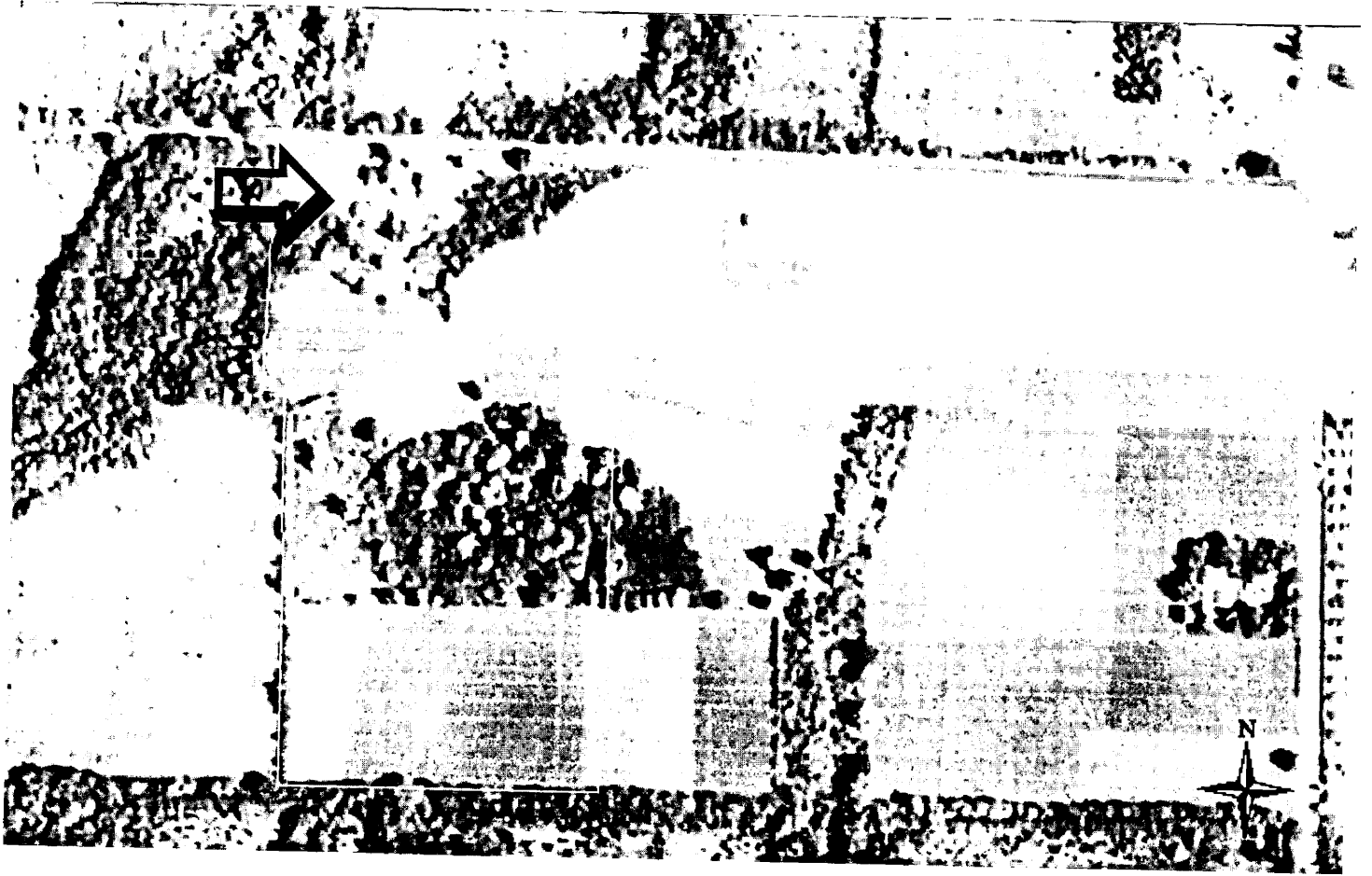


FIGURE NINE
1959 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK



FIGURE TEN
1964 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

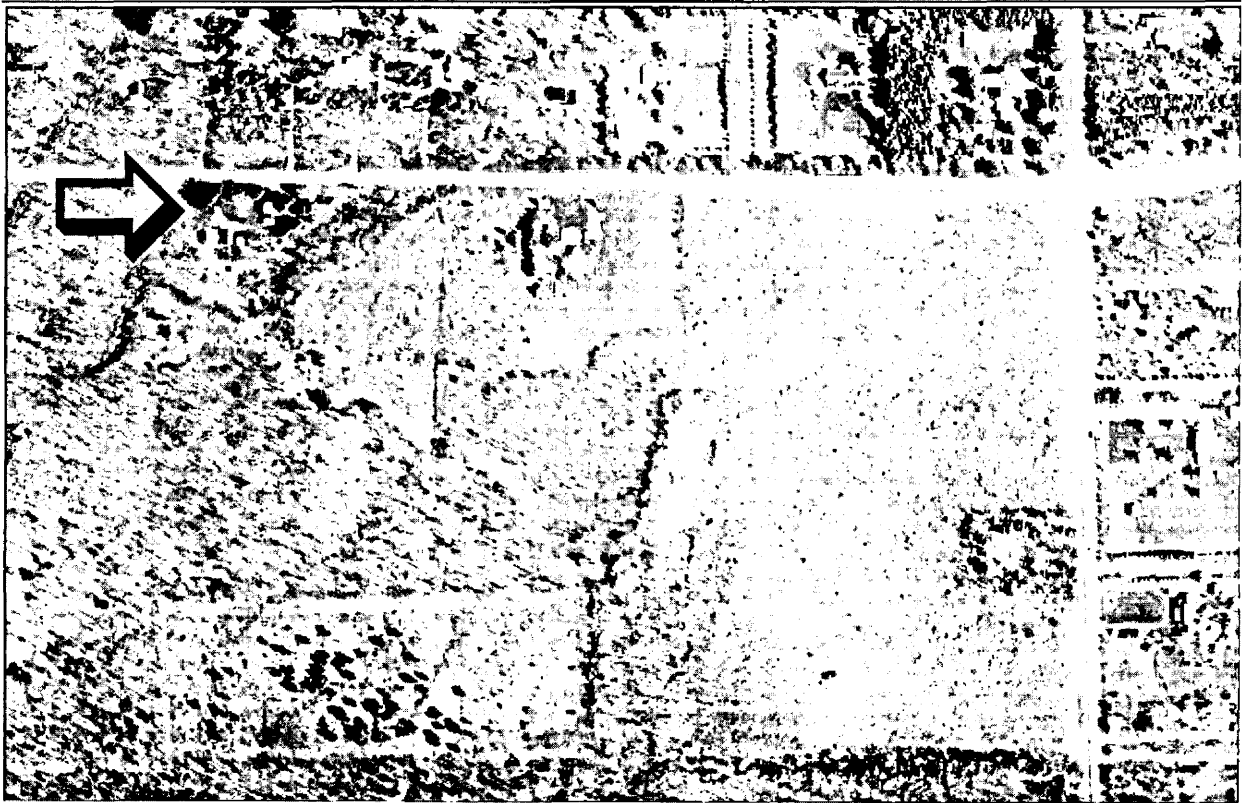


FIGURE ELEVEN
2000 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH
COFTA FARMSTEAD
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO
RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
JUNE 2003
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK