

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 12510 North Wauwatosa Road N/A not for publication

city or town Mequon N/A Vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Ozaukee code 089 zip code 53097

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Alicia J. Corley
Signature of certifying official/Title

Sept. 12, 2000
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

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 of Federal agency and bureau

O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Name of Property

Ozaukee County, Wisconsin
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

for
Edson H. Beall

10/24/00

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

wood

roof asphalt

other concrete

Narrative Description

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

O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Name of Property

Ozaukee County, Wisconsin
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 the
National Register listing.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)
Architecture

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.

Period of Significance

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.

c. 1850-1910 (1)

Significant Dates

N/A

D Property has yielded, or is likely to
yield, information important in
prehistory or history.

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

N/A

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

A owned by a religious institution or
used for religious purposes.

Cultural Affiliation

B removed from its original location.

N/A

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.

Architect/Builder

Unknown

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

(1) The period of significance begins with the construction of the first contributing building and extends to the date of construction of the last contributing resource.

O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead Ozaukee County, Wisconsin
Name of Property County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name Robert Williams

street & number 12510 N. Wauwatosa Rd. telephone (414) 242-0071
city or town Mequon state WI zip code 53097

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.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1 O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

DESCRIPTION

The O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead is made up of an historic farmhouse, two historic barns, several historic period outbuildings and a silo, and two modern outbuildings. No longer used for agricultural purposes, the farmstead today consists of the farmhouse and barns and outbuildings that are used primarily for storage. Once part of a large farm in the rural Town of Mequon, the O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead now sits on a three-plus acre lot in the City of Mequon, a rural-suburban community just north of the City of Milwaukee in southeastern Wisconsin. Until about 20 years ago, this area of Mequon was still largely rural, but during the past two decades, and especially during the last decade, the intensive suburban development that has almost completely encompassed the eastern half of the city has begun to move into this area, and modern residential subdivisions have been built near this property.

The northwest quarter of the farmstead is heavily wooded, and many large trees surround the farmstead. Toward the back of the property, the land is partially wooded, with many mature trees and shrubs. Some lawn spaces are maintained around the farmhouse, but much of the rest of the landscaping is largely overgrown, especially around the old agricultural buildings that have been unused for many years. The topography of the site is relatively flat, but rises slightly toward the northern end of the property. The area along the south elevation of the hay barn is artificially banked, creating a ramp for access into this building.

North Wauwatosa Road is a two-lane highway that is a heavily traveled thoroughfare through the city. The farmhouse sits about 95 feet from the road and is partially shielded by the large trees along the front of the property. The barns and outbuildings are behind the farmhouse, well set back from the road. An asphalt-paved driveway leads from the road along the south side of the house towards the garage. The driveway continues behind the farmhouse, providing access to the barns. This area of the driveway is not paved.

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Section 7 Page 2 O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

Farmhouse

Greek Revival, c. 1850; addition, 1870, contributing¹

The farmhouse is constructed with fieldstone walls and consists of two sections, a one and one-half story main block and a one-story rear ell. The fieldstone walls of both the main block and of the ell are joined at the corners with quoins of quarried limestone blocks. The main block, built around 1850, features Greek Revival details such as a symmetrical form and massing, regular fenestration, a narrow wooden frieze and returned eaves. The main block also has a low-pitched gable roof. Projecting from the east side of the roof is a long, narrow, shed-roofed dormer. It is covered with clapboards and features modern narrow sliding windows.

The historic openings in the main block consist of medium-sized, single-light, double-hung sashes decorated with simple wood lintels and sills. The main entrance is in the west elevation and consists of a simple wood paneled door decorated with a transom and narrow sidelights. Another entrance on the east elevation consists of a period wood and glass door covered with a wooden storm door. This entrance is undecorated and may be an early twentieth century addition.

The rear ell projects from the east elevation of the main block. Built in 1870, its fieldstone walls are similar to those of the main block, but it is largely undecorated. Its openings are also single-light, double-hung sashes with wood lintels. One of the openings is decorated with a segmental limestone arch. At the southeast intersection of the main block and the ell, there is a small porch that sits over the rear entrance to the main block and a side entrance into the ell. This porch has a fieldstone foundation, wood deck, and modern turned posts.

The original interior first floor plan has been somewhat modified, but probably consisted of four rooms, two on each side of a central hallway and staircase. To the right of the main hall and stairs is a large living room that was originally a kitchen and parlor. This room features plastered walls and exposed wood beams on the ceiling. The windows have deep sills,

¹ The original construction date for the house is based on an evaluation of deeds by local historian Donald Silldorff and an analysis of the building type of method of construction. The construction date for the rear wing is based on a datestone located in this wing.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

reflecting the stone wall construction of the house, and are trimmed with modern moldings. The floors are covered with narrow oak boards over the original wide board pine planks. To the left of the central hall and stairs is a bedroom and bathroom.

The interior of the rear ell contains the kitchen and a laundry room. The kitchen has plastered walls and exposed beams on the ceiling and plain modern moldings around doors and windows. Interior rooms are covered with simple wood paneled doors and period hardware. The central staircase consists of wood risers and a walnut balustrade of plain posts and a banister with a carved newel post decorating the bottom.

The original second floor consisted of three bedrooms off a central hallway. The bedroom at the northeast corner has been converted into a bathroom. The large north bedroom has been converted into a studio. All of the rooms of the second story have plastered walls, wide board pine floors, and modern moldings around doors and windows.

Animal Barn
1874, contributing2

The animal barn is constructed in a similar manner as the farmhouse. It has fieldstone walls joined at the corners with limestone quoins. The barn is topped with a moderately-pitched gable roof and the gable peaks are covered with vertical board siding. The openings are generally small and irregular.

Doors on both the east and west elevations are covered with simple, wooden, Dutch-style doors made of vertical wood boards. These doors are accented with segmental limestone arches. Other openings are simple rectangles that are covered with vertical boards or filled with modern glazing. The interior of the barn is currently used for storage and still has its original structural features intact, including rafters constructed of native tamarack logs. The barn is in fair condition.

2 Datestone. The term animal barn is taken from Barbara Wyatt, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Architecture:5-2.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

Silo

c.1910, contributing³

At the northwest corner of the barn there is a round, poured concrete silo. It is capped with its original domed concrete roof and has its original concrete loading chute on the east side. It is in good condition.

Hay Barn and Corn Crib

c. 1850 and c. 1900, contributing⁴

The hay barn is a large, one and one-half story building with a steeply-pitched gable roof and walls covered with vertical board siding. The barn sits on a low fieldstone foundation. There are few openings in the barn; the main opening is in the south elevation. It is a large opening covered by large sliding doors constructed of vertical boards. The interior of the barn is used for storage and consists of a large open space. The hay barn is in fair condition.

Attached to the west elevation of the barn is a small corn crib, a one-story rectangular building with a gable roof covered with wood shingles. The walls of the crib are constructed with rows of horizontal wooden boards with openings for ventilation. The corn crib is in fair condition.

Granary

c.1850, contributing⁵

The granary is a medium-sized, one-story building on a low fieldstone foundation. It has a steeply-pitched gable roof and walls covered with vertical board siding. Small window openings punctuate the end walls and both the east and west walls of the building have openings covered with wooden doors.

³ Field observation and information from owner.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

Well House

c.1900, contributing⁶

The well house is a small building that contributes to the farmstead. The well house is a square building with a hip roof and walls covered with shiplap siding. A small window opening punctuates the west elevation and the doors to the building are built of vertical boards. The well house covers a 90-foot well and pump.

Outhouse

c. 1900, contributing

The outhouse is a small narrow building that has a gable roof, clapboard covered walls, and a door made of vertical boards. A small opening with shutters is near the roof of the west elevation.

Shed

c.1860, non-contributing⁷

The shed is a crudely constructed outbuilding with a steeply-pitched gable roof and walls covered with vertical boards. A small, shed-roofed structure is attached to the west elevation. Because the building has a low level of integrity, it is a non-contributing feature of the farmstead.

Garage

modern, non-contributing

The garage is a one-story building on a concrete foundation. Its walls are covered with board and batten siding and much of the west elevation is used for the large garage door.

Tractor Shed

Modern, non-contributing

The tractor shed was built with old wooden poles and old vertical boards and without a formal foundation. The south elevation is open, providing a large entrance for machinery. The shed is in poor condition.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

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The O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C. The farmhouse and the animal barn are fine examples of local fieldstone construction. The farmhouse also features details from the Greek Revival style of architecture and it is one of the finest and best preserved examples of mid-nineteenth century house construction in the city of Mequon. The other contributing agricultural buildings and structures also contribute to the architectural significance of the property because they are good examples of their type.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Land in southern Wisconsin was opened up for formal settlement shortly after the Blackhawk War of 1832, when white militias defeated the last resistance effort of Native Americans to signing over their land rights. White settlement began in Mequon in 1835 when the federal government allowed the sale of some of the land in southern Wisconsin, including the area in Mequon east of Range Line Road. Land west of Range Line Road was officially sold in 1839, but some of this land was settled as early as 1836 by "squatters" who did not hold official title until the sale in 1839.⁸

Like most of southern Wisconsin, the first settlers in Mequon were Yankees who came to the area to exploit the water power of the Milwaukee River and its tributaries and to farm the fertile soil of the town. Moving settlers through the area was the old Indian Trail which ran north to Green Bay. This old trail ran north from Milwaukee along the Milwaukee River to Saukville, then traveled along the western shore of Lake Michigan to Manitowoc, before moving inland again to Fort Howard at Green Bay. In 1835, the federal government surveyed the trail for use as a military road between Fort Dearborn in Chicago and Fort Howard. The military road followed the trail between Milwaukee and Saukville, but north to Green Bay, the road ran through Sheboygan Falls and Manitowoc Rapids before returning to the old trail to Green Bay. The military importance of this road ceased when the government abandoned the forts at Chicago and Green Bay, but the road became an important transportation route for early settlement in eastern Wisconsin and in Mequon.⁹

⁸ Don Silldorff, "Mequon's Early One Room Schools," April 1996, unpublished manuscript on file in the Planning Department, City of Mequon, Mequon City Hall, Mequon, Wisconsin, p. 2; Carol Lohry Cartwright, Donald Silldorff, and Sharon C. Robinson, *City of Mequon Intensive Survey Report*, Mequon: City of Mequon, 1990, p. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

During the early 1840s, some of the most intensive settlement occurred in Mequon. Joining the Yankee families were many groups of German immigrants and a number of Irish immigrants, as well. The German immigrants, though, made the most significant architectural and cultural contribution to Mequon. The first Germans in Mequon were William Opitz, his father and mother, and his sister and brother-in-law who immigrated in 1839. About a half dozen families from Saxony, led by Andreas Geidel, also came in 1839, creating the Altenburg Settlement along what is now Wauwatosa Road. A larger German immigrant group that came in 1839 became one of the most significant German groups in Mequon. This group consisted of about 40 families from Pomerania who settled in western Mequon and established a community known as "Freystatt" (Freistadt). Known as "Old Lutherans," these Germans left Germany rather than join the state church. By 1850, many more German families settled in Mequon, filling in all the available land of the town.¹⁰

In the center of the old town of Mequon, a village grew up during the 1840s. Named Thiensville for John Thien, who built the first grist mill, the community grew into a thriving village during the nineteenth century. Freistadt was another village that grew up in Mequon during the nineteenth century. Although much smaller than Thiensville, Freistadt was located in the heart of the German immigrant community and by 1880, it had two churches, a general store, a post office, two shops, and about 24 houses. Other concentrations of houses appeared at the crossroads of the town's major arteries, but none developed into villages like Freistadt or Thiensville.¹¹

The old town of Mequon was originally a part of the large Old Washington County, established in 1836. Officially the Town of Mequon was established in 1846, and in 1853, Washington County was split into two counties and Mequon became a town in the new Ozaukee County. For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mequon was a rural town surrounding the village of Thiensville. Many of the town's farms were large, and some families held several hundred acres of land at a time. The rural character of the town can be seen in its population during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1850, Mequon's population was 2,100 and it would stay between 2,500 and 3,000 through the Great Depression of the 1930s.¹²

During the early twentieth century, the beginnings of Mequon's suburbanization could be seen along the major arteries of the town. During the 1910s and

¹⁰ Silldorff, p. 3.

¹¹ Cartwright, et. al., pp. 9-10.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

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1920s, bungalows were built on large suburban-style lots that were divided off of farm land along Cedarburg, Green Bay, Freistadt, Wauwatosa, and Port Washington Roads. Also during this time, especially along the Milwaukee River and the Lake Michigan shoreline, some wealthy families built suburban estates featuring fine period revival style homes.¹³

Despite these developments, the rural character of the town so prevailed that the citizens did not even build a formal town hall during most of its history; rather, town officials conducted meetings in private homes. But, by the late 1930s, the necessity for a modern government building was met with the construction of the Mequon Town Hall in 1939. The new town hall housed offices and the fire department. A swimming pool and bathhouse were also erected next the town hall building.¹⁴

After World War II, modern subdivisions began to appear in Mequon, which was just a short automobile trip from Milwaukee. During the 1950s and 1960s, Mequon began losing its rural identity in favor of one as a Milwaukee suburb. In fact, between 1940 and 1960, the population of the town more than doubled to 8,543 residents, and most of the growth was due to the new subdivisions and modern houses being built in the town. But even with this growth, the town of Mequon still largely resembled a rural community.¹⁵

During the 1950s, Mequon's residents became concerned about town property being annexed to either Thiensville in the town itself, or to cities to the north and south of the town. The town citizens' solution was to incorporate, which was completed on May 24, 1957, making Mequon an official city. In 1970, the now city of Mequon's population had grown to over 12,000 residents, and fueled by continued suburban development, the population in Mequon in 1980 was slightly over 16,000.¹⁶

During the 1980s and 1990s, favorable economic conditions resulted in skyrocketing suburban development in the city of Mequon, and today almost the entire eastern half of the once-rural town of Mequon is filled with suburban residential development. The city is now considered a suburb of Milwaukee, not a farm community, although many areas in the western half of the city are still filled with fields and farmsteads. But, most of the farmsteads are occupied by non-farmers and it may be only a matter of time before the

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

remaining fields are filled with houses as suburban development moves west. Because of this type of suburban pressure, it has been, and continues to be, a challenge to maintain the historic rural features of the city's history.

Resource specific history

This farmstead was the long-time farm of German immigrant John G. Peuschel, his son, and his grandson. The Peuschel family owned this farmstead between 1855 and 1964. The farmstead is a good example of a farmstead expanded and developed by Germans in a community where German heritage was an important component of its history. In fact, by the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, Germans were the largest foreign-born group in Ozaukee County, and counting the American-born descendants of German-born immigrants, Germans were, by far, the largest ethnic group in nineteenth and early twentieth century Ozaukee County. John G. Peuschel, the second owner of the farmstead, and his family, were part of the wide variety of Germans who contributed to the important German ethnic heritage of Mequon.

Germans were the largest non-English-speaking immigrant group that came to America from Western Europe. Over five million Germans came to the U. S. Between 1820 and 1910. Three waves of Germans flooded to America: from 1845-1855, they came mostly from southwestern German states; and from 1880-1893, they came mostly from northeastern Germany. In Wisconsin, Germans came in significant numbers during the 1840s, 1850s, and the 1880s. German-born population in the state peaked in 1900, but subsequent generations of ethnic Germans continued the German influence in the state as they retained their culture and traditions well into the twentieth century.¹⁷

Germans came for economic reasons, for religious reasons, and for political reasons. Since German settlers tended to live within German communities in similar economic, political, or religious groups, many close-knit communities of Germans developed, sometimes within larger German settlement areas. Germans established their own fraternal organizations, their own churches, their own clubs and entertainment groups, and their own press. They even tended to support the same political ideas among themselves, being strong supporters of the Democratic party in the nineteenth century, and in Milwaukee, establishing a strong socialist movement in the twentieth

¹⁷ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol. I, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. Settlement, pp. 2-1--2-10.

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century.¹⁸

As stated in the historical background section, Germans came to Mequon as early as 1839, and the most significant group of German settlers, the Old Lutherans who made up the Freistadt settlement, came between 1839 and 1846. Many other Germans came to Mequon during the nineteenth century, among them, John G. Peuschel, who came in 1855.

Peuschel acquired this farmstead from John O'Brien in 1855. The farmstead was part of the large holdings of early settler James Bonniwell, who acquired it in 1839. Bonniwell sold a portion of his holdings, which included this farmstead, to John O'Brien in 1846 for \$400. In 1855, O'Brien sold his farm to Peuschel for \$3,300, suggesting that substantial improvements had taken place during O'Brien's nine-year tenure.¹⁹

Although John O'Brien began the development of this farm, it was the Peuschel family that made it a success. John and Henriette Peuschel, along with their five children, improved the O'Brien farm significantly during the nineteenth century. In 1860, the 80-acre farm had 45 improved acres and a variety of livestock. He grew five tons of hay that year for his livestock, along with wheat, corn, and oats. By 1880, the farm was 120 acres in size, including 94 improved acres. Peuschel still had a diversified operation, with a variety of livestock, including milk cows, cattle, sheep, and pigs. He also raised chickens, which produced 3,000 dozen eggs in that year. He grew 40 tons of hay, along with wheat, corn, and oats. Like many farmers in Wisconsin at that time, Peuschel had increased his dairy production. He doubled the size of his dairy cow herd to eight cows that produced over three times the amount of butter as in 1860. Not fully committed to dairying, though, Peuschel also produced wool and eggs on his farm, and still grew wheat as a cash crop.²⁰

The family founder, John G. Peuschel, with his wife, Henriette, took a medium-sized farm with only about half of its acreage improved, and built it into a successful operation that supported two additional generations of Peuschels. Of particular interest in the Peuschel farming story is that it is typical of the diversified farming that helped Wisconsin become a leader in agriculture

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Determination of eligibility for the John G. Peuschel Farmstead, on file in the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Also, information from an analysis of deeds for this property by Donald Silldorff, local historian.

²⁰ Determination of eligibility for the John G. Peuschel Farmstead.

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Section 8 Page 6 O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

in the United States.

Early Yankee settlers concentrated on growing wheat on Wisconsin's virgin soil, a practice that quickly depleted the land of its nutrients. German immigrants, who often took over Yankee farms after their owners decided to move on to further virgin territory, introduced diversified farming practices that they were familiar with in Europe. These practices improved the soil and eventually resulted in Wisconsin's successful agricultural economy.

Right from the beginning, it was apparent that Peuschel engaged in a diversified operation. He still grew wheat, but also grew equal amounts of corn and oats, and a large amount of hay. He probably engaged in crop rotation with these plantings, which provided feed for his livestock, which was also a diversified group of animals, including milk cows, other cattle, sheep, and pigs. Later, he added poultry, to produce eggs as a cash crop. By 1880, he added butter production as a cash crop and the early twentieth century silo on the property indicates that his son made a further transition to dairying that was typical of Wisconsin farms during the turn-of-the-twentieth-century era.

In 1882, John Peuschel turned over his farm to his eldest son, Hugo and his wife, Lena. Hugo and Lena, and their five children operated the farm until 1917, when Max Peuschel, one of Hugo's children, became the farm's owner. Max and his family operated the farm until 1964, when the land was subdivided and the farmstead was acquired by Robert and Eileen Williams. The Williams' lived on the farmstead, maintaining its historic quality, for 35 years. Robert Williams remains on the farmstead, although Eileen Williams has recently passed away.²¹

ARCHITECTURE

The O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead is architecturally significant at the local level, in part, because the farmhouse is a good example of a Greek Revival style, stone construction residence. The Greek Revival style was the first national style commonly seen in Wisconsin. It was popular between 1830 and 1870 in the state. Greek Revival buildings are formal, orderly, and symmetrical. Although most Greek Revival houses were frame buildings covered with clapboards, in Wisconsin, the style was used to adorn brick, fieldstone, and quarried stone structures. While Wisconsin has a number of high-style Greek Revival buildings, more commonly, the style is seen on vernacular houses

²¹ *Ibid.*

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

in the form of symmetrical massing, regular fenestration, simple cornices and returned eaves, and entrances decorated with a transom and/or sidelights.²²

The farmhouse, built by O'Brien, is typical of how the Greek Revival style was interpreted in Wisconsin. The main block of the house is where the Greek Revival details appear. These details largely consist of a symmetrical form and massing, regular fenestration, simple frieze, and returned eaves. The main entrance, featuring a transom and sidelights, is also typical of the style. The 1990-completed intensive survey of the City of Mequon noted that there were several good examples of the Greek Revival style in the city, and that most were houses of fieldstone construction. The survey identified the O'Brien farmhouse as one of the examples that had good Greek Revival details and a high degree of historic integrity.

The O'Brien farmhouse is even more architecturally significant as a fine example of fieldstone construction. Stone construction is found throughout Wisconsin and the state's stone buildings express popular architectural styles, vernacular forms, and ethnic variations. Fieldstone construction was particularly popular in Wisconsin between 1850 and 1880, but by the twentieth century, this type of stone construction was generally limited to agricultural outbuildings and building foundations. But, during its heyday, fieldstone was used to build houses, barns, silos, churches, and commercial buildings. Early fieldstone construction utilized large boulders, filling in the spaces with smaller stones and liberal amounts of mortar. Later, boulders were split and mortar joints became thinner. Quarried rock or bricks were used to make corner quoins and the trim around doors and windows.²³

Stone was an important building material in Wisconsin because of the natural materials found in the state and because its earliest immigrants were familiar with stone construction either from the eastern United States or Europe. In Wisconsin, fieldstones from pre-historic glacial activity were abundant and easily harvested. Also common in southern Wisconsin were sandstone and limestone deposits that were easily quarried. Many of the Yankee, English, and German settlers in Wisconsin in the mid-nineteenth century were familiar with stone construction, as it had been common in their home areas. The result was many fine examples of this type of construction in the state.²⁴

²² Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol. II, p.2-3.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 4-6.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

According to the 1990-completed intensive survey of the city of Mequon, there is an outstanding collection of fieldstone buildings in the city, including houses, barns, and outbuildings. The fieldstone houses identified in the survey are largely vernacular side and front gable forms with some suggestions of the Greek Revival architectural style. These fieldstone houses are almost all constructed in the same manner, that is, walls of randomly coursed fieldstones with corner quoins of quarried stone or of brick.²⁵

The O'Brien farmhouse is one of the good examples of fieldstone construction mentioned in the 1990 survey report. Its fieldstone walls are well constructed and have a high level of integrity. Of particular note are the interesting corner quoins which have varying sizes and the stone arches of the rear ell. The main block of the house was constructed about 20 years earlier than the rear ell, yet the two sections of the house are almost identical in their construction materials and methods, suggesting a high attention to detail in the building of this addition. Also significant for its stone construction is the animal barn, which features similar stone walls and limestone corner quoins and arches that suggests the same builder as the farmhouse.

There have been some alterations to the farmhouse, but these are largely confined to the interior. The exterior of the house is in very good condition and has a high level of integrity. The interior changes do not overwhelm the original characteristics of the house. The house is a well-preserved and is an important part of the overall farmstead.

The animal barn on the O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead has additional interest as a good example of an agricultural building. The hay barn is also a good example of its building type. According to Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan*, the state's barns fall into a number of categories, including animal barns, bank barns, basement barns, hay barns, and dairy barns. Many of these barns share details, such as a tall foundation and large storage area above it. Gable and gambrel roofs are common to all of these barns. Animal barns are generally rectangular buildings with a single story and, sometimes, a loft. The hay barn is a medium-sized barn that features an upper loft and large entrances in the foundation.²⁶

According to the Mequon intensive survey report, Mequon's barns cross over many categories. In particular, bank and basement barns are almost

²⁵ Cartwright, et. al., p. 46.
²⁶ Wyatt, pp. 5-2--5-4.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

indistinguishable from each other, since almost all of Mequon's barns are banked, either by building into a rise, or by the construction of an artificial bank to an upper level entrance. The survey report also indicates that due to the rapid residential development in Mequon at the time (1990), development that continues, barns are threatened resources in the city and an important factor in the preservation of the community's rural heritage.²⁷

The animal barn on the O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead is a good example of this type of agricultural building. Constructed for general purpose animal storage, the barn is a fairly large example of this type of agricultural building and reflects the large number and variety of animals kept on the farm at the time of its construction (1874). In 1880, the agricultural census reported that the current owner, John G. Peuschel, had five horses, eight cows, nine cattle, eight sheep, and six pigs, a large selection of animals that needed the size of this barn to house them. The barn has a storage loft and was later fitted up for dairy farming. All of its historic features are intact, and it provides a good look at a multi-purpose animal barn of the nineteenth century diversified farmer.

The hay barn is a good example of this type of agricultural building in that it features storage space over animal space. It lacks the tall foundation typical of bank or basement barns that were used for animal storage and for produce storage. It is known that John Peuschel produced large amounts of hay, suggesting the need for this outbuilding. The hay barn is in good condition and can provide important information on this type of barn that is not as typical as bank or basement barns in the city.

Although not individually important, the granary, well house, and outhouse add interest to the farmstead because they complete the common types of outbuildings found on historic farmsteads in Wisconsin. Also of interest is the concrete silo, probably added in the 1910s for dairying. This silo is in good condition and has a high level of integrity. The addition of a silo to this farmstead suggests an expansion of dairying on this farmstead during the early twentieth century.

The fact that there are so many different types of outbuildings still extant on this farmstead is one of the reasons it has architectural significance. From the large animal barn and hay barn to the small outhouse, this farmstead represents an almost complete picture of nineteenth and early twentieth century farm life. Since historic farmsteads are a threatened resource in

²⁷ Cartwright, et. al., pp. 50-51.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

Mequon, as it rapidly suburbanizes, the preservation of this farmstead is especially important.

ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead was once part of a large, working farm in an area that was known to have had active Native American settlement. Because the farmstead sits on three-plus acres and includes some relatively undeveloped spaces, there is a possibility that unknown archeological resources, either pre-historic or historic, may exist on the property. An archeological investigation was outside of the scope of this nomination, but if such an investigation was undertaken, it is possible that some pre-historic or historic archeological resources may be uncovered.

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Megun, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The verbal boundary description of this property is as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the south lot line of 12510 N. Wauwatosa Rd. and the right-of-way of North Wauwatosa Road, then north along the right of way for 377 feet to the north lot line of 12510 N. Wauwatosa Rd., then east along this line 360 feet to the east lot line of 12510 N. Wauwatosa Rd., then south 377 feet to the south lot line of 12510 N. Wauwatosa Rd., then west along this line 360 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the historic buildings of the O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead in their traditional setting.

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Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

O'Brien-Peuschel Farmstead
Mequon, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin
Photos by Carol Cartwright, May and June 1999
Negatives on file at the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical
Society of Wisconsin

Views:

- 1 of 9: House, west elevation, from the southwest
- 2 of 9: House, south and east elevation, from the southeast
- 3 of 9: Animal barn, south and west elevations, from the southwest
- 4 of 9: Granary, south and east elevations, from the southeast
- 5 of 9: Hay barn, south and west elevations, from the southwest
- 6 of 9: House, interior, kitchen wing
- 7 of 9: House, interior, front entrance
- 8 of 9: House, second floor bedroom, showing wall thickness
- 9 of 9: House, second floor bedroom, showing closets and shelves

**O'BRIEN-PEUSCHEL FARMSTEAD
MEQUON, OZAUKEE COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

SITE MAP

Key:

A: Farmhouse
E: Granary
I: Garage

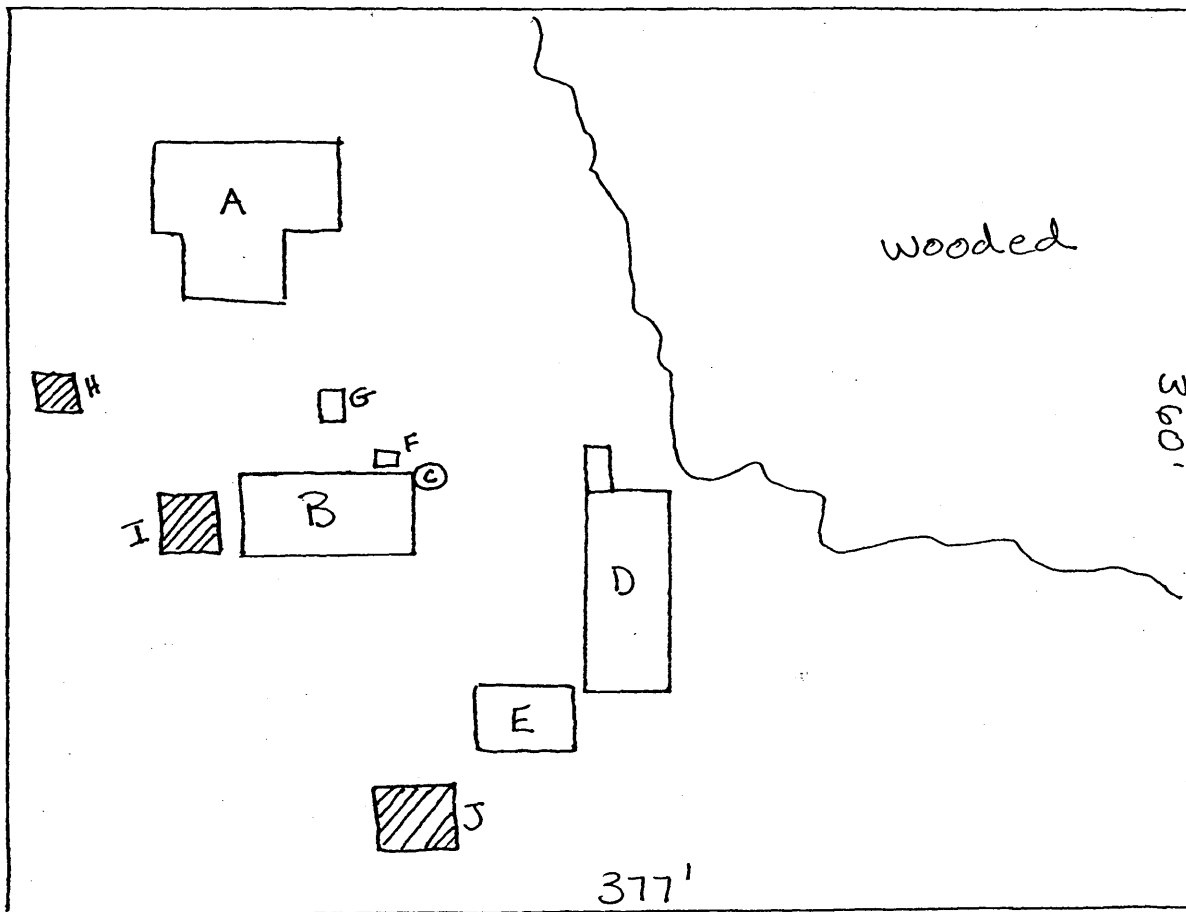
B: Animal Barn
F: Outhouse
J: Tractor Shed

C: Silo
G: Wellhouse

D: Hay Barn and Corn Crib
H: Shed

Not to scale
→
North

N. Wauwatosa Rd.



□ Contributing

▨ Non-contributing