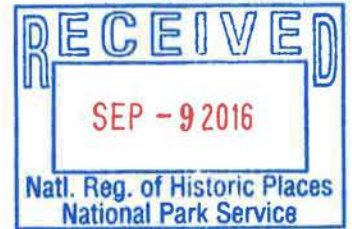


7410

**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 Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number	1901 West Pioneer Road	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Mequon	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	089
code	WI	county	Ozaukee
code		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  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_ nationally \_ statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David J. Tenbrunsel  
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/1/2016  
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer – Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

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

*Edson H. Beall*

*10-24-16*

*[Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	0 buildings
0	0 sites
0	1 structures
0	0 objects
1	1 total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)  
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)  
OTHER: Centric Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)  
Foundation Limestone  
Walls Wood  
Roof Asphalt  
Other n/a

Narrative Description

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

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1888

### Significant Dates

1888

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Clausing, Ernst

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Name of Property

Ozaukee  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Wisconsin Historical Society, Milwaukee Area Research Center, Ozaukee County Historical Society

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

1 16N 424194.7 4792213.2  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Rowan Davidson, Associate AIA & Jennifer Lehrke, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB	date	July 18, 2014
organization	Legacy Architecture, Inc.	telephone	(920) 783-6303
street & number	605 Erie Avenue	zip code	53081
city or town	Sheboygan	state	WI

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**Narrative Description**

This largely intact octagonal barn was built in 1888 by Ernst Clausing for Frank Vocke for use on his family's dairy farm. The two-floor, octagon barn measures sixty-four feet in diameter and is an excellent example of an octagonal barn in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. The barn sits on a fieldstone foundation with a large timber frame structure above. The lower feeding floor has twelve windows and four doors and holds a number of stables; the upper hay mow floor has a large barn door, an elevated Dutch door, and a granary. There is no integrated silo or columns within the hay mow. The exterior walls are of vertical board and batten siding. The walls are capped with a large wood framed pitch roof supported by rings of large timber members; the roof is clad in asphalt shingles. While fairly typical of Ozaukee County octagonal barns, the Frank Vocke Barn possess a high degree of integrity, is in excellent condition, and was likely the first of its type constructed by the builder Ernst Clausing who worked on as many as a dozen such barns in the region.

The Vocke family was acquaintances and neighbors of the Clausing family, and this connection was likely the reason for the choice of the octagonal barn design. The farm was originally owned by William Vocke and the property was inherited by Frank Vocke in the late-nineteenth century. The barn was built on Frank's property in 1888, and he continued to operate the dairy farm into the 1930s. By the late 1940s, his son, H.J. Vocke, operated the farm. By the 1960s the land had been sold and subdivided with owners Hildegard Scheuber and Beth Lloyd, respectively, owning the property and using it as a dairy farm and horse farm. The present owners, who have made significant repairs to the barn, purchased the current nearly nine acre property in 2013. The barn has been maintained since its construction, is largely uncompromised and is one of the region's most distinguished buildings.

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is located in the suburban, or exurban, city of Mequon, sixteen miles north of Milwaukee; however, it was at one time a region densely populated with successful dairy farms dotting the flat terrain on the edge of Lake Michigan. The barn fits in a narrative that considers this geographical context. Other buildings on the property include a recently constructed house and an extant silo. Other farm buildings including a machine shed, garage, stone smokehouse, Queen Anne style farmhouse, and likely other farm buildings, have been demolished. The extant resources are of more recent construction. Due to the extensive demolition of related farm buildings, the property has lost historic integrity as a farmstead and is therefore not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic farmstead. The parcel is bounded by Pioneer Road to the north and neighboring small parcels at a distance on all other sides. The barn and other buildings are presently obscured from the road by a dense ring of woods on all sides of the rectangular property.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**Building Description**

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is a free standing centric barn set back from the road on an eight and a half acre property surrounded by woods. The barn is currently surrounded by a mown lawn, a series of fenced in areas, and a few other buildings. Beyond the property is a mixture of farmland and small residential properties. The octagonal plan of the barn is sixty-four feet at its largest diameter, large for an octagonal barn in general, but average in size for those constructed in Ozaukee County. Likewise, the barn is approximately forty-six feet in height and contains two levels. Each of the eight sides is close to twenty-six feet in length on the exterior with a two feet thick fieldstone wall at the base. The lower level serves as stalls and pens for livestock and measures only eight feet clear in height. Above is the hay mow level that makes up the majority of the volume of the barn. There are no obstructions such as a silo or columns in the hay mow, which extends up to the underside of the large, self-supporting, hipped roof structure.

The barn sits on a fieldstone foundation and is built into a slope gently rising to the west. This configuration, often referred to as a “bank barn”, is a common feature of livestock barns; it is designed to permit direct access to both floors from the exterior. The fieldstone is clearly visible as it rises up approximately eight feet to form the exterior wall of the lower level. Along the sides of the barn where the grade level is higher, less of the fieldstone wall is visible. The fieldstone wall is incredibly thick and is as much as two feet deep in locations around the barn. These massive walls were necessary to support the heavy timber frame, but also served an environmental purpose, keeping the livestock inside warm in winter and cool in the summer. The fieldstone was gathered on the farm during construction and is stacked in a non-uniform pattern and mortared with concrete. In certain locations, especially along the southern façade, the wall has been removed and patched and replaced with a mixture of concrete in some locations and a concrete block wall in others. These changes were likely subsequent to the original construction of the barn, but are quite old and date from the 1920s or 1930s. The floor of the lower level is also constructed with fieldstone and is integral to the foundation. In certain locations the floor has subsequently been covered with a skim coat of concrete, especially along the center north-south pass through.

With eight clearly distinct façades, the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn can still be described sufficiently through addressing sides according to the cardinal directions. The south façade of the barn, facing what remains of a fenced-in yard, features a large entry at the lower level. The lower level wall on the central façade, facing due south, has a large sliding wood door hung from above. The door is constructed of vertical dimensional lumber and is approximately eight feet wide by eight feet high. It slides to the east, revealing an opening to the lower level of roughly the same dimensions and covers a series of small windows inserted directly below the header of the opening which also functions as the sill for the large timber frame above. The three fixed windows are arranged in a band, each one

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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measuring roughly two feet in height and two feet in width, with four panes each. The wall supporting the windows is constructed of concrete block resting on the existing fieldstone wall, which has been cut away in a series of steps and patched with concrete. This alteration appears to have been done to the entirety of the lower wall on this south-facing façade. Above the lower level, the structural system of the barn switches from stone masonry to a heavy wood frame. This wood frame, supporting the roof above, is clad in board-and-batten vertical wood siding. Each piece of dimensional lumber extends the entire twenty feet of the wall uninterrupted, and is presently painted red, with the exception of window and corner trim, which is painted white. There is one window on this face, located near the interior granary about five feet from the base of the wood frame and three feet from western corner of the south facing façade. The fixed window is approximately three feet in width and two feet high with six equal panes, three over three, and large trim.

The southwestern façade of the barn is notable for the steep slope of the grade rising to the west on the exterior of the building. The lower fieldstone wall along this façade does not have any noticeable alterations. A small seven-foot door is located a few feet from the eastern corner and appears to be unused. A fixed window, roughly two feet in height and three feet in width with six equal panes, is located at the top of the fieldstone wall, just below the transition to the wood frame above. This window is placed approximately six feet from the western corner of the façade. The western corner of the southwestern façade marks the location where grade has risen up to obscure the fieldstone wall altogether. Above the fieldstone wall is a continuation of the tall board-and-batten vertical siding on a timber frame. A window is placed near the center of the façade, about five feet above the transition point. This fixed window, three feet wide and two feet tall, matches the window previously mentioned on the south façade and looks out from the interior granary within the hay mow space. The timber frame wall and vertical board-and-batten siding terminates with a timber plate for the attachment of the roof above, with radiating rafters that extend to an open eave and narrow fascia.

Two large sliding barn doors dominate the western façade of the Vocke Barn. The grade comes right up the underside of the upper level wood frame and the fieldstone wall below is almost completely covered and functions as a foundation retaining wall at this location. The large doors, each approximately eight feet wide and sixteen feet high and constructed out of vertical pine boards, are relatively new additions, replacing and matching the original barn doors. The doors run on a long track, the width of the façade, from above. The board-and-batten siding on the western side of the barn has also been replaced with new pine siding to match, fastened directly to the existing timber frame. A fixed window on the southern side of the doors is placed about five feet from grade and three feet from the corner. The window's six panes and dimensions match those on the south and southwestern façades and looks out from the interior granary. Above the barn doors is a pair of clerestory windows arranged in a band and centered on the façade. Each fixed window is approximately three feet in width and a foot in height with three panes each. These windows are situated only a few feet under the

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 4

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

---

narrow eaves of the roof.

A large concrete silo, likely from the mid-twentieth century, sits only a few feet off the northwestern wall of the Vocke Barn. While the silo is clearly an important part of the Vocke farm's history, it is separate from the octagonal barn and is non-contributing due to its more recent date of construction. Grade along the northwestern façade slopes steeply down to the east and exposes the fieldstone wall. There are no windows or openings in this section of the fieldstone wall, nor are there any in the existing board-and-batten wood frame wall above.

The north façade closely resembles its symmetrical counterpart on the south side of the barn. At the point of the corner trim on the western edge of the north face of the barn, the grade is returned to the same level as on the south side of the barn. There is an opening cut into the fieldstone wall near this corner for a louvered fan opening. This opening, set below the sill plate of the wood frame above, appears to have been added after the barn's construction. A sliding door, approximately eight feet wide and eight feet high and hung on an overhead track, slides from an opening on the western side of the façade. This opening aligns along an axis through the barn with the opening already mentioned on the south façade. Unlike on the south façade, there are no added windows and no adjustments or repairs to the fieldstone wall on the north side of the building. There is only one existing fixed window, obscured by the wood door when open, on this side of the barn. It is approximately three feet in width and two feet in height with six equal panes and sits a foot below the top of the fieldstone wall, cut directly into it with no obvious header or sill. The board-and-batten siding appears to have undergone some repairs on the north side, but has not been completely replaced. The timber structural posts on this side have been jacked up and repaired recently.

The pattern of the Vocke Octagonal Barn continues on the northeastern façade with the lower fieldstone wall largely intact. A fixed window with six glass panes, about three feet in width and two feet in height and similar to the one on the north façade, sits approximately one foot below the transition to the timber frame structure and wood siding above. The window is also about five feet in from the northern corner of the barn. A solid wood door sits near the other end of the twenty-six foot fieldstone wall. The door is about seven feet high and two and a half feet in width. The board-and-batten vertical wood siding above has been repaired, replaced in-kind where the original material was beyond repair, though the original structure frame is extant. There was once a 'Dutch' door in this wall, but it has been removed along with the replacement pine siding, though the timber frame on the interior clearly shows that such an opening was originally located there. A set of matching clerestory windows, similar to the one found on the western façade of the barn, sits symmetrically a few feet under the eaves of the northeastern façade. These narrow, horizontal, fixed windows are about a foot high and four feet wide each and are located a few feet from the corner trim on each end of the wall. It appears from historic photographs that these windows have been recently added, along with the new



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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siding, as the barn originally only had one clerestory window on this face, located directly above the original location of the “Dutch” door.

The lower level fieldstone wall along the eastern façade of the Vocke Barn shows signs of alteration. The eight-foot fieldstone wall along this side contains two symmetrical windows, each approximately three feet wide and two feet high and located about a foot below the transition to the timber frame above. These fixed windows match those found on other sides of the building and flank a central opening on the east façade. The central opening consists of three, double-hung windows in a band; each one about three feet square with four panes each. Below them is a panel of vertical wood siding on the south side of the opening and a concrete in-fill patch under the remaining two windows on the north side of the building. The band of windows is about a foot below the transition to the wood frame and siding above. Given the different style of window opening and the obvious change in material below, it is likely that this configuration was once a barn door to the lower-level feeding area. This change was likely made during the barn’s historic period. Considering that this side of the barn faced the majority of the historic farm yard and house, the presence of a large door at this location would not be surprising. The board-and-batten vertical pine siding above has been recently replaced, just like on the northeast façade. Also, a “Dutch” door rests on the southern side of the façade. A “Dutch” door in this context is a door for baling hale from above. Like a window, it usually is significantly above the level of grade or of the floor, and is operable. In a barn such as the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn, it was likely used along with a rope and pulley to raise bales up high from the farmyard directly into the back of the hay loft. This raised opening, approximately eight feet wide and ten feet high, is located about four feet above the lower fieldstone wall and five feet from the trim on the southern corner. The opening is usually covered by a sliding door, also constructed in board and battens pine and hung on a runner from above. When the door is open it appears symmetrical on the façade. Like on the northeast façade, this “Dutch” door has two narrow clerestory windows above it, neither of which are original, though they do match a single clerestory window that existed in a similar location according to historic photographs.

The southeastern façade of the Vocke Barn is similar to the others in that the lower fieldstone wall has been largely unchanged. Two windows, one on the western side and one centrally in the wall, match others along the lower level of the barn. Each is a fixed window with six panes located about a foot below the wood frame above in an unfussy punched opening in the deep wall. On the eastern edge of the wall, about a foot away from the corner is a wood door. The solid vertical wood door is about seven feet high and two and one-half feet in width and has a transom light about with three panes of glass all the way up to the bottom of the board-and-batten siding. The pine siding on this façade is original and extends, uninterrupted, all the way to the underside of the roof eaves.

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is capped with a large pitched roof with eight equal faces. The roof

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 6

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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sits on a timber plate supported on the large timber corners of the wall frame below. This plate extends around the entire circumference of the octagonal barn. Eight large timber beams extend up from the corners at an angle and rise about twenty feet to meet at a central point, at which they are braced together. About two-thirds of the way up there is a ring, similar to the large octagonal plate at the base, attaching each rafter beam. This ring and the one at the base distributes the load of the roof to the corners, which act as columns below. The result is a long spanning, self-supporting roof with no interior columns. Secondary members rest on the high plate of the walls and span parallel to each other. Wide boards are laid perpendicular on top of these rafters to function as the roof's decking. Recently, an additional layer of plywood was nailed to this board layer, and a new roof with asphalt shingles has been installed. The roof is capped with an octagonal cupola about four feet in height, the materials of which match the rest of the barn's wood siding and roof. The cupola lacks windows or louvers and originally had a horse weathervane, since removed. Eaves, troughs and downspouts have been added to a narrow fascia board on shallow extended eaves.

The lower level of the Vocke Barn was used as a feeding area for cows and horses and is presently used for storage. The floor was originally fieldstone to match the lower exterior walls and has been covered with a layer of concrete in some locations. Presently, the lower level is largely taken up with wood board stables and stalls with wire mesh. A central clear passageway, connecting the doors at the north and south ends of the barn, is the defining feature of the lower level plan. While many centric barns arranged animals in the lower level in concentric rings, the octagonal models, especially of earlier dates such as Vocke Barn, often had rows and pens in a similar arrangement to rectilinear barns. Given that the barn has subsequently been used to house horses, the current arrangement of stalls and stables is potentially similar to its historic use. A series of white-washed timber columns and beams form the structure of the lower level and support the hay loft floor above. The columns are spaced equally roughly twelve feet on center with some variation. The beams lower the head room to seven feet, with additional timber joists running perpendicular at a foot on center. The depth of the exterior stone wall is evident where sections of it have been carved out for additional windows and fan openings. A set of steep wood stairs lead up the granary space in the hay loft and a series of chutes, attached to bins above, also link the two levels.

The hay mow second level is a large open space intended to hold and store hay and feed. The walls are the exposed back face of the structural timber frame sheathed in the board-and-batten pine siding seen on the exterior. A few of the timber corner posts along the northern side of the barn have recently been jacked-up and replaced to preserve the structural integrity of the barn. Each of the eight walls consists of two shared corner posts and a central post on the wall with bracing at each end. The corner posts are unique with a five-sided sectional profile rather than the four-sided timber frame found in other barns, even those octagonal barns constructed by Ernst Clausing in Ozaukee County. Two sides of the post are flush with exterior siding and trim, two sides align perpendicularly with the timber beams

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 7

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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leading to the next set of posts, and the last side faces into the hay mow floor. Two major openings, the large barn door facing west and the large 'Dutch' door facing east, give the large open space an east-west axis of entry. Additional clerestory windows, all of them new, provide additional natural light. The floor is constructed out of dimensional wood lumber set on the timber joist below. In the southwest corner of the hay mow is a series of wood frame structures, open in some places and closed in others, that served as the granary for the animal barn. Within these wood frame cubes and lean-to structures are an additional set of windows and a set of stairs leading down to the lower floor below.

**Integrity**

There have been very few significant changes to the Vocke Octagonal Barn. Those changes that have affected the exterior and interior of the barn have been done with the maintenance of the barn in mind and are in keeping with the building's historic design; work was completed using appropriate matching materials. The historic form of the octagonal barn, its location, and building materials are still clearly in evidence. The barn demonstrates the structural qualities and agricultural uses of the octagonal barn in Wisconsin in a largely intact form. For these reasons, the barn has excellent integrity. The Vocke Octagonal Barn has been fortunate in consistently receiving maintenance and care from its owners who have taken pride in their property. In addition, the city of Mequon listed the octagonal barn as a Historic Landmark in 1983. In listing this resource, the current owners hope to obtain tax credits and/or other incentives to maintain and restore their property.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture as an example of a unique Wisconsin agricultural building, the centric barn. This barn was designed by Ernst Clausing, a well-known carpenter with a specialization in designing and constructing centric barns. The barn has excellent integrity, retaining its distinctive form, structural composition and construction, and materials. Centric barns are becoming rarer and are significant to the history of agricultural architecture in Wisconsin, especially in the context of vernacular round barn building traditions. The period of significance is limited to the year of construction in 1888.

**Methodology**

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

**Historic Context**

Within the context of the 112 extant centric barns identified in Wisconsin, the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is an excellent example of the type and illustrates the importance of such barns in the late-nineteenth century. The Frank Vocke barn sits a short distance from a major east-west road in the City of Mequon in Ozaukee County. This region, successful and densely populated on the shore of Lake Michigan, is largely flat with a number of tributary rivers, numerous small cities, and good cropland. Populated in the mid-nineteenth century, Ozaukee County was already developed by the time the Vocke Octagonal Barn was constructed. A large influx of German immigrants at mid-century and close proximity to the major metropolitan center of Milwaukee spurred much of the growth. At the turn of the century as many as a dozen octagonal barns had been constructed in Ozaukee County; however, by the second half of the twentieth century only eight remained. Currently, there are three extant octagonal barns in the county.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that Ozaukee County, along with Vernon County, are among those counties with the greatest concentrations of this building type in the state.

The origins of the octagonal barn form in Wisconsin are not entirely clear, though some clear influences can be identified. Orson Squire Fowler, a follower of renowned phrenologist F.J. Gall, spent much of the 1850s travelling around the country, including Wisconsin, in support of his popular book *A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building*. In a search for rational and perfect forms, Fowler described construction methods, space planning, house design, and the ideal

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<sup>1</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study." Ozaukee County Historical Society website. <[www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/ochs/Archives/ClausingOctagonBarnsOzaukeeCountyInDepth](http://www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/ochs/Archives/ClausingOctagonBarnsOzaukeeCountyInDepth)> Accessed June 12, 2014.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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octagonal barn with a ramp leading to a second floor.<sup>2</sup> His goal was the efficiency and improvement of an ideal human existence in all things, including barn design. His octagonal barns would have two floors, similar to a bank barn, equipped with ventilation and natural light. The second floor supplied with grain and the lower floor with livestock facing the center.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that Fowler's book inspired the construction of octagonal barns in Wisconsin, but their relationship to such designs is unclear. Octagonal agricultural forms began to appear in greater numbers in the 1870s, and by the 1880s centric barns were constructed across Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup>

The 1870s saw a decline in Wisconsin wheat production, which was slowly replaced with dairy farming. In response, barns needed to be of a larger size and shape to house animals and store their feed in close proximity. Octagonal barns, and other centric shapes, became more popular. In 1874, Elliot W. Stewart, a successful farmer and lecturer in agricultural sciences at Cornell University, constructed a large octagonal barn on his property in Erie County, New York. The following year he published his views and plans on the design of the octagon barn and its advantages. His views were favorably received, especially in application to the increasingly lucrative dairy farm model across the northern states of the United States.<sup>5</sup> Stewart saw the octagon form as superior and practical approach because it was potentially cheaper to build and contained more storage for its size. In a number of published works, he argued that while a truly round barn would be best, it was an impractical approach as it was too expensive and difficult to construct; octagons would be satisfactory. These 'round shapes' would not be as affected by wind loads and had more efficient line of travel and work. In a pre-industrialized era of agriculture, efficiency of movement on the part of farmers and other workers was important to save time and physical effort. The octagon also offered, partly due to its size and height, enough room to combine many functions of the farm, especially a dairy farm, under one roof.<sup>6</sup> By the mid-1880s, about forty octagon barns, most of the designs based on Elliot Stewart's published model, had been constructed around the country. Almost a dozen similar octagon barns were constructed in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin in the 1880s and 1890s by builder and designer, Ernst Clausing, and his brother, Theodore.<sup>7</sup>

The Vocke Barn is significant as an excellent example of a centric barn, specifically an octagonal barn, in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, built by the Clausings.

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<sup>2</sup> Perrin, Richard W.E. "Circle and Polygon in Wisconsin Architecture: Early Structures of Unconventional Design." *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 47. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> Apps, Jerry. *Barns of Wisconsin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1995, Page 51.

<sup>4</sup> Soike, Lowell J. *Without Right Angles: The Round Barns of Iowa*. Iowa City, IA: Penfield Press, 1990, Page 6.

<sup>5</sup> Triumpho, Richard. *Round Barns of New York*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004, Page 28.

<sup>6</sup> Soike, Lowell J. *Without Right Angles: The Round Barns of Iowa*, Page 12.

<sup>7</sup> Soike, Lowell J. *Without Right Angles: The Round Barns of Iowa*, Page 10.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**The Vocke Octagonal Barn**

The Vocke Barn was constructed in 1888, the first of many octagonal dairy and horse barns constructed by Ernst Clausing and his brother in Ozaukee County. The Vocke family, who were friends and neighbors of the Clausings, built the barn on their existing eighty-acre dairy farm in the current city of Mequon.<sup>8</sup> Frank Vocke, the head of the farm, lived close to his brother Edward Vocke, and Ernst Clausing's brother, Richard Clausing, along what is now Pioneer Road. Ernst Clausing built a number of octagonal barns in the area, almost always for members of the family, relations or friendly neighbors, who were usually of German ancestry. The barn was owned and operated as a dairy farm by the Vocke family through the 1950s.

The shape of the octagonal barn, and any other centric barn, is considered to be more resilient to strong winds and lateral loads, which made it a more popular choice in windy regions. Ozaukee County, facing Lake Michigan, often experiences strong winds, and it has been suggested that the centric design is partly in response to this fact. Multiple-sided buildings can also be found on the northern German coast facing the North Sea and in other parts of the United States where German immigrants settled in large numbers such as Michigan, Minnesota, the Dakotas, and, Wisconsin.<sup>9</sup>

The octagonal Clausing barns follow a typical pattern of design and construction and closely resemble one another. A fieldstone foundation was most often used with rough cut limestone, and extending up as the thick wall of the lower floor, obscured by the embankment leading to the upper level hay mow barn door. The floor was constructed with a variety of materials such as fieldstone, concrete, or wood, and the barns were always sided with vertical lumber. The most characteristic feature of the barns was their roof design. Roof beams were joined near the high center point by an additional octagonal timber ring, and the low plates on which the large beams rested were joined to make a continuous ring at that location as well. This converted the lateral thrusts of the roof into vertical loads on the outside wall, making the roof self-supporting and eliminating columns. This simple design put a great deal of stress on the bulking corners, but did avoid an arched roof or difficult trusses and left more storage room in the middle of the hay mow floor, which was supported by a number of columns below. The pitched roof was always capped with a cupola for light and ventilation at the top. None of the Clausing barns, typical of the octagon shape, had integral silos when they were constructed. The Clausing octagonal barns all measured close to sixty feet diameter with some variation.<sup>10</sup>

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is a fine and unique example of the octagon barn type and maintains a high level of integrity. In addition, it has additional architectural interest for its association with a

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<sup>8</sup> Ozaukee County plat maps and atlases, & Ozaukee County directories.

<sup>9</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study."

<sup>10</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study."

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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significant builder of centric barns in the state.

**Ernst Clausing**

Ernst Clausing consciously followed the expert work published, partly by Elliot Stewart, on the construction and use of octagonal barns. Frederick Clausing, the father of Ernst and Theodore, came to America with his family from Saxony in 1846 and settled in Ozaukee County; Ernst was born in 1859 and died in 1941. Ernst Clausing was a carpenter and got the initial idea for building a centric barn from agricultural magazines in 1885. The Clausings constructed their first centric barn (non-extant), a round one, in 1888. It is possible that the images and designs he saw could have originated with the work of Orson Squire Fowler or Elliot Stewart. While it is unclear exactly where the inspiration for these octagonal barns came from, they do address the prevalence of horse and dairy farms in Ozaukee County and proximity to Lake Michigan with occasional high winds, for which the circular plan was well-suited.<sup>11</sup> Similar to other centric barns, Clausing's octagonal barns were arranged with cattle stables below and a hay mow and storage above on a second level. They were typically constructed with a fieldstone foundation, poured concrete flooring, and board siding. The Clausing octagon barns are notable for the utilization of a cupola for light and air and a timber ring near the top of the roof that joined converging rafters and helped make a self-supporting roof free of columns and other obstructions.<sup>12</sup> Such a roof structure can be seen in the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn. A number of the Clausing barns were built for the family's relations. One of these barns was built for his cousin, William Clausing, in Mequon in 1897. This barn was removed from its original site in 1978, and is now located in Old World Wisconsin in Waukesha County.<sup>13</sup> Besides the Vocke barn, the following octagonal barns are attributed to Ernst Clausing in Ozaukee County: the William Clausing Barn, the John Clausing Barn, the Julius Clausing Barn, the Edward Clausing Barn, the Theodore Clausing (Tetzlaff) Barn, the Henry Clausing Barn, the Richard Clausing Barn, the Leonard Maul Barn, the Henry Kiekhaefer Barn, and the Frederick Timpel Barn. All of them were constructed between 1888 and 1898.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, almost all of these have been demolished.

**Conclusion**

The Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn is nominated at the local level of significance under National Register Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a fine example of the octagonal barn type. The barn gains additional distinction from its association with local builder Ernst Clausing. The barn retains its unique structural design, original plan, and original construction materials. It serves as a

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<sup>11</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study."

<sup>12</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study."

<sup>13</sup> Perrin, Richard W.E. "Circle and Polygon in Wisconsin Architecture: Early Structures of Unconventional Design."

<sup>14</sup> "The Clausing Octagon Barns of Ozaukee County: An In-Depth Study."

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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physical manifestation of an agricultural trend, and maintains its historic integrity in the preservation of its site, context, high level of craft, original materials and form, and high quality design.

**Acknowledgements**

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



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**Major Bibliographical References**

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property that is the subject of this nomination consists of 1 contributing resource (barn) and 1 non-contributing resource (silo) sited on parcel 15-006-02-003 located in Section 6, Town 9 North, Range 22 East, in the City of Mequon in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. The specific boundary of the nominated property is defined by a boundary line beginning 50 feet west of the western edge and 70 feet north of the northern edge of the octagonal barn. From this point the boundary follows a path that travels 200 feet to the east, then 200 feet to the south, then 200 feet to the west, from this point the boundary line returns to the original location northwest of the octagonal barn.

The boundary of the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn as described above is clearly delineated on the accompanying sketch map. This boundary enclosed an area of approximately 0.50 acres.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encloses approximately 0.50 acres that immediately surrounds the nominated resource and was drawn to exclude other buildings on the property. The boundary sits within an 8.5 acre parcel that was part of a dairy and horse farm since the construction of the nominated resource; however, the other resources on the property are considered extraneous for the purpose of this nomination.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI

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Name of Property: Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn  
City or Vicinity: City of Mequon  
County: Ozaukee County  
State: Wisconsin  
Name of Photographer: Rowan Davidson, Legacy Architecture, Inc.  
Date of Photographs: May 22, 2014  
Location of Original Digital Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division  
816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

Photo #1 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0001)  
Exterior, Dutch door, southeast façade

Photo #2 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0002)  
Exterior, southwest façade

Photo #3 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0003)  
Exterior, barn hay mow door, west façade

Photo #4 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0004)  
Exterior, lower level livestock door, north façade

Photo #5 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0005)  
Exterior, fenestration and Dutch door, east façade

Photo #6 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0006)  
Exterior, window detail, east façade

Photo #7 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0007)  
Exterior, board and batten siding detail, southeast façade

Photo #8 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0008)  
Interior, lower level stables, facing north

Photo #9 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_0009)  
Interior, hay mow walls, facing northeast

Photo #10 (WI\_OzaukeeCounty\_FrankVockeOctagonalBarn\_00010)  
Interior, hay mow roof, facing southeast

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 1

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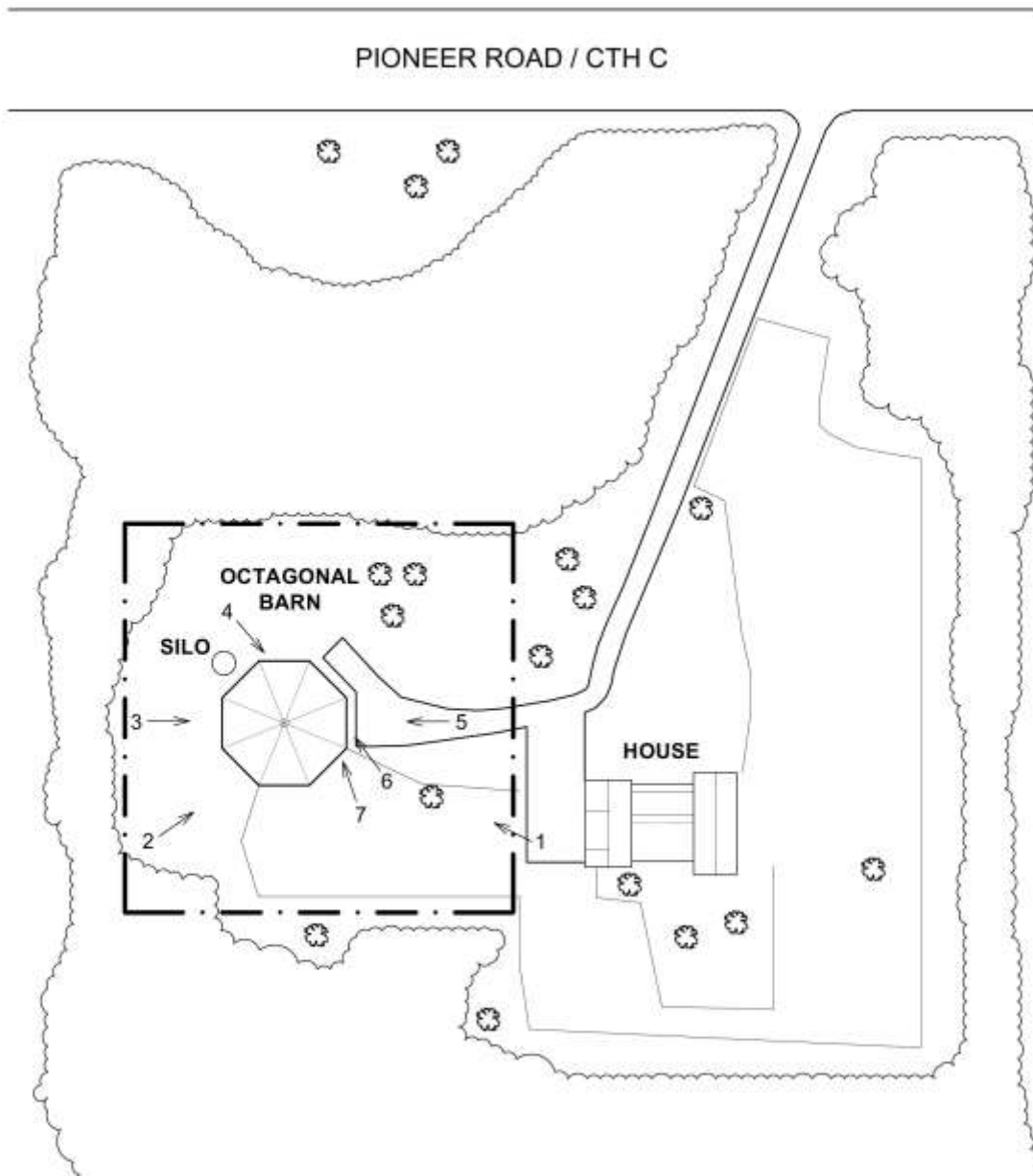
Photograph of the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn and site from the north circa 1975.  
Image courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section Sketch map & photokey Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
City of Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI



**LEGEND**

- BOUNDARY LINE
- 1 → PHOTO NUMBER & VANTAGE POINT

Octagonal barn: contributing  
Silo: non-contributing

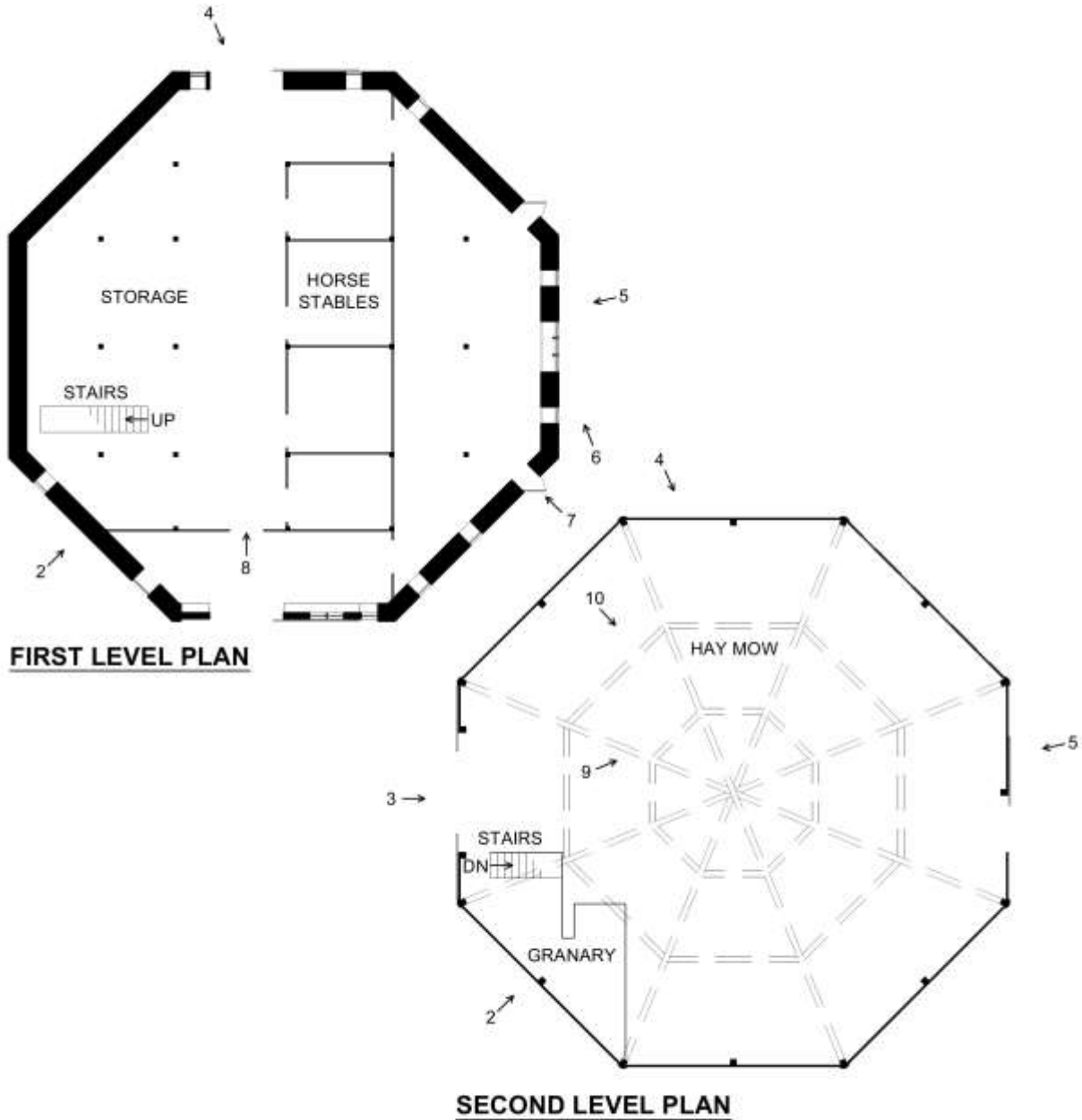


**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

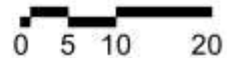
Section Sketch plan & photokey Page 1

Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
City of Mequon, Ozaukee County, WI



**LEGEND**

1 → PHOTO NUMBER & VANTAGE POINT

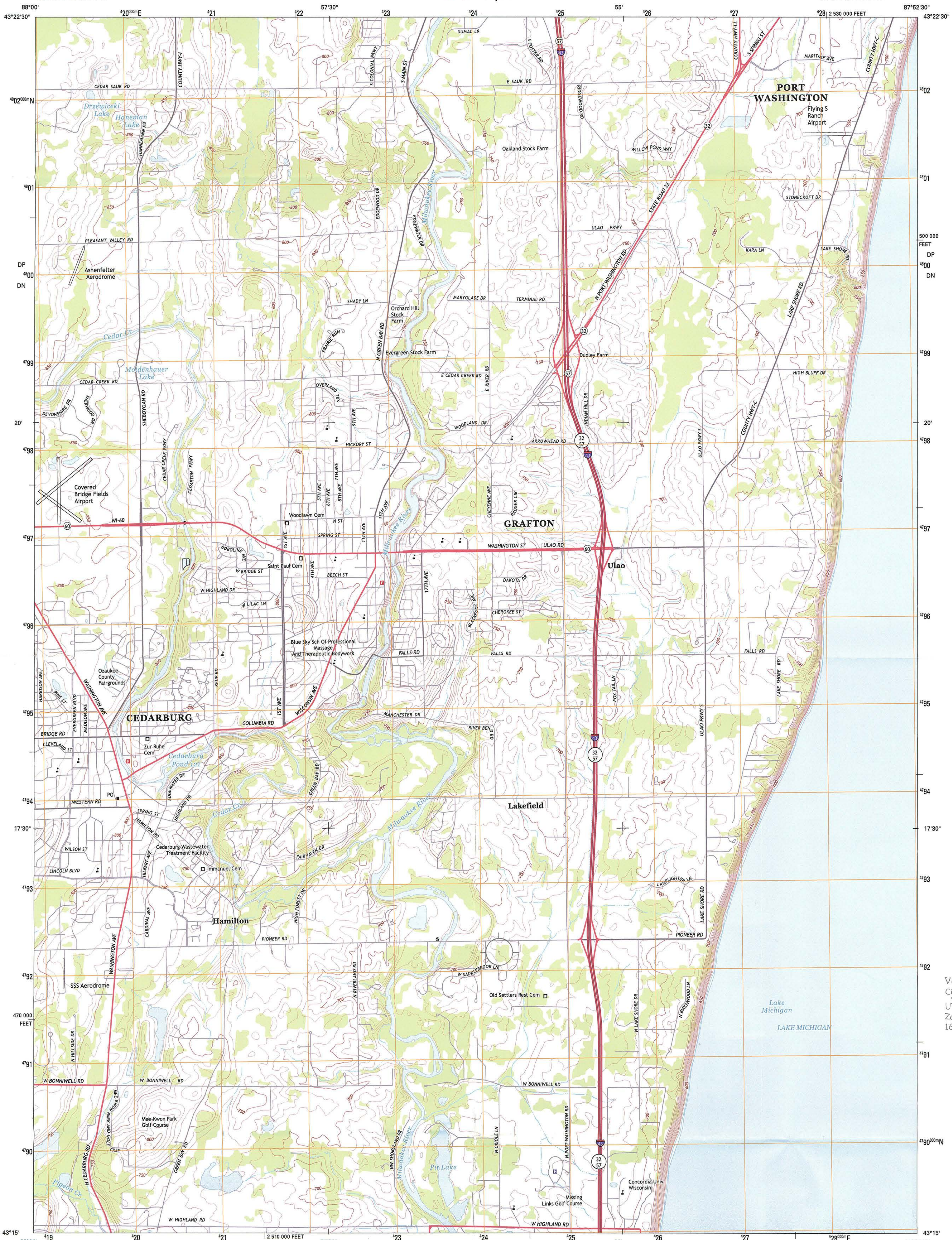




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



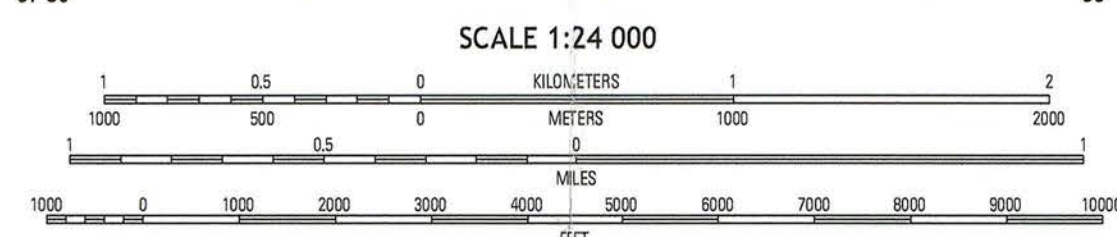
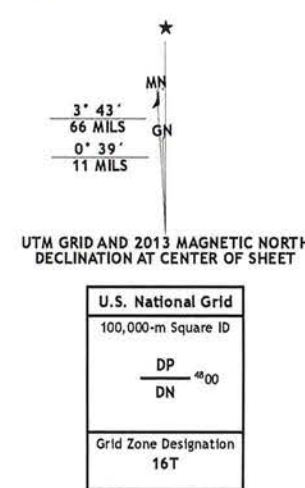
CEDARBURG QUADRANGLE  
WISCONSIN-OZAUKEE CO.  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
City of Mequon,  
Seneca County, IA  
UTM Reference:  
Zone Easting Northing  
16N 424194.7 4792213.2

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and  
1:24,000-scale grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16T  
10 000-foot ticks: Wisconsin Coordinate System of 1983 (south  
zone)

Imagery: NADIP, June 2010  
Roads: 2006-2013, TomTom  
Names: GNS, 2013  
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2010  
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 1999  
Boundaries: Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2012



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988  
This map was produced to conform with the  
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.12



QUADRANGLE LOCATION		
Newburg	Port Washington West	Port Washington East
Five Crosses	Cedarburg	Cedarburg East
Mississippi Falls	Thienville	



CEDARBURG, WI  
2013

ADJOINING 7.5 QUADRANGLES













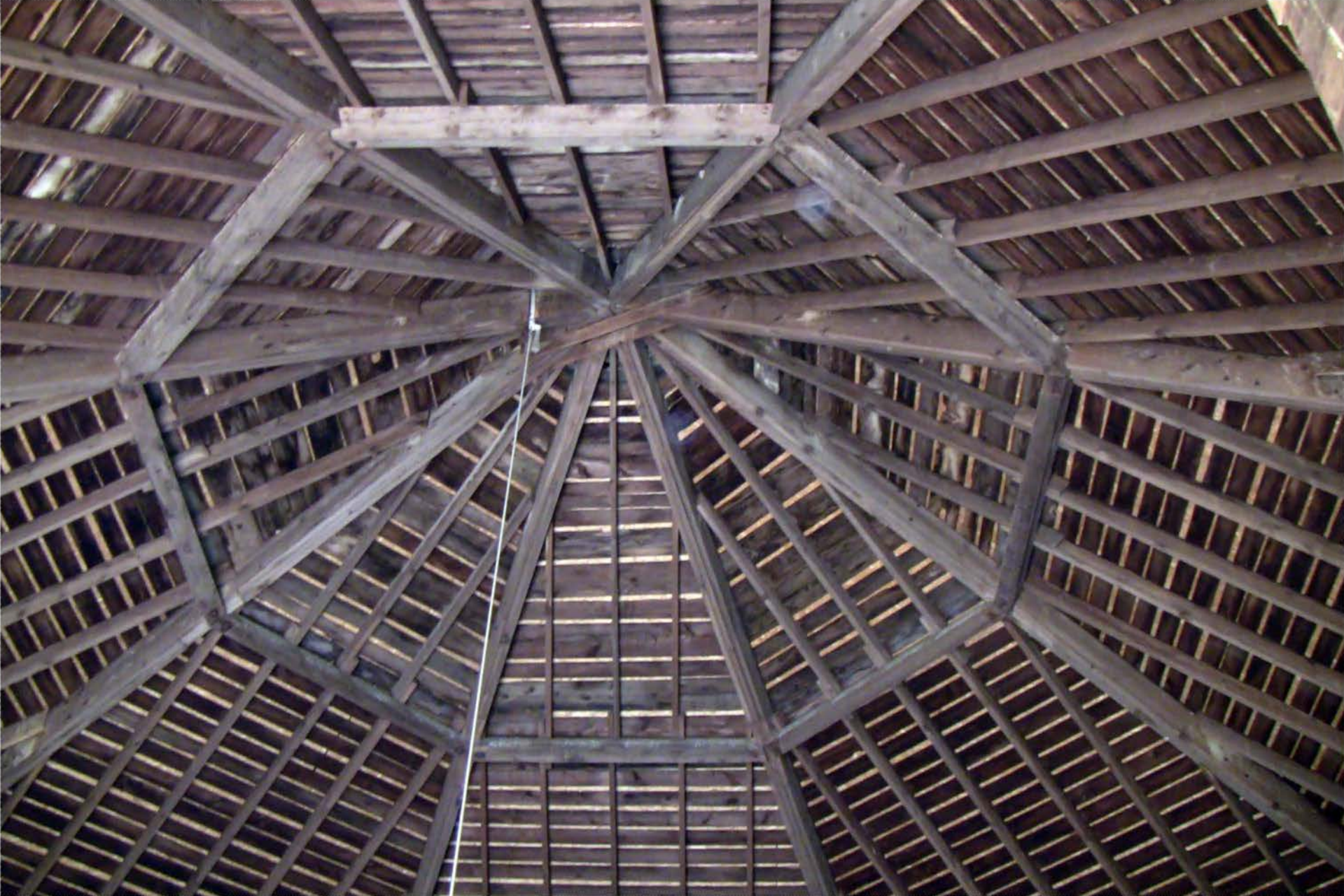












UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Vocke, Frank, Octagonal Barn  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Ozaukee

DATE RECEIVED: 9/09/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/07/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/24/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/25/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000740

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 10.24.16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this First day of September 2016, for the nomination of the Frank Vocke Octagonal Barn to the National Register of Historic Places:

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

COMMENTS:

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