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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the 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 Griffin, Cornish, Round Barn

other names/site number Keeler Barn

2. Location

street & number 2015 S.W. Fox Lake Road  N/A  not for publication

city or town Pleasant Lake  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Steuben code 151 zip code 46703

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.)

*Patrick R. Roberts*

2/3/93

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*Patrick Andrews*

4/2/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: storage, animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHERS: true-circular barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CERAMIC TILE

CONCRETE

roof WOOD: shingle

other

Narrative Description

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

Griffin Round Barn  
Name of Property

Steuben Co., IN  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c.1915-1936

**Significant Dates**

c.1915

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Griffin, Cornish

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

Griffin Round Barn  
Name of Property

Steuben Co., IN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6
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6	3	5	0	0
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4	6	0	8	2	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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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 Jerry McMahan

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of IN date November 11, 1991

street & number 340 W. Michigan St. telephone (317) 639-4534

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

**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 Cary Keeler

street & number 2015 S.W. Fox Lake Rd. telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Angola state IN zip code 46703

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN

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The Cornish Griffin Round Barn, constructed sometime between 1910 and 1920, is the only round barn in Indiana that is constructed of hollow glazed tile. Built by Cornish Griffin, this sixty foot diameter round barn is located in rural Steuben County just southwest of Angola, Indiana. The site is rather picturesque with a frame farmhouse on the east with a shed behind, all of which are separated from the round barn by a north-south gravel drive. The barn and house are surrounded by mature trees and there are pastures to the west and north and a large lawn and garden to the south between the barn and the road. The Cornish Griffin Barn retains its integrity in regard to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, meeting all of the requirements set forth in the registration requirements for multiple property nominations.

The unique barn is topped by a two pitch gambrel roof that is crowned by a glazed tile silo that penetrates the roof to form a cupola. The silo/cupola is sheltered by a two-pitch gambrel and there is a small dormer with a four light window on the east side of the silo/cupola's roof (Photo 1). The silo/cupola is constructed of glazed tile in a dark golden brown color and it contains four rectangular openings, one at each of the compass points. These openings are accentuated by tan glazed tiles that form a diamond pattern around the window outline. The glazed tile walls rest firmly on the poured concrete foundation.

The roof surfaces are covered in wood shingles, a treatment original to the barn. There is a slight overhang to the eaves which reveals the exposed rafters in the soffit region. The wall surfaces are comprised of hollow glazed tile with concrete lintels over the door and window openings.

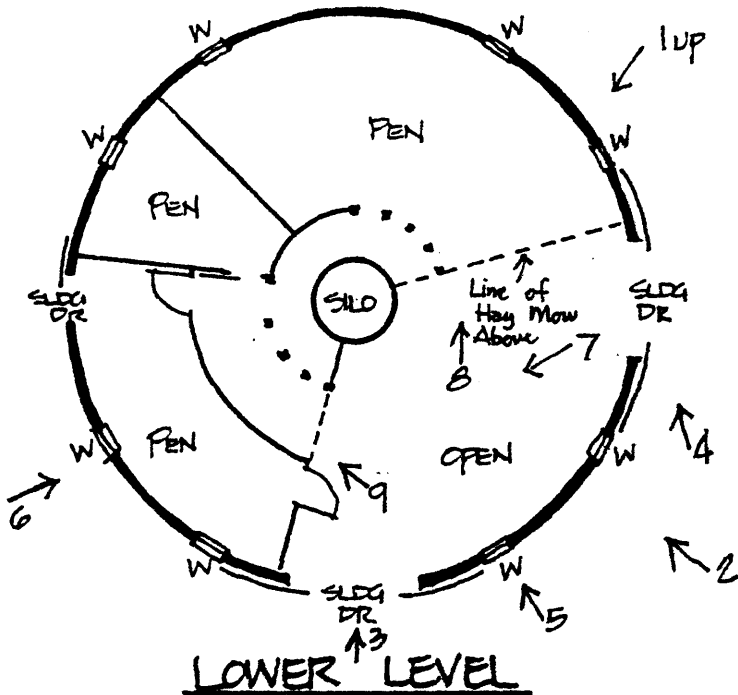
The main or south facade (Photo 2) is characterized by large one and one-half story doors made of vertical wood planks that slide on overhead tracks. There is a large concrete lintel over the doors on which the name GRIFFIN is inscribed in the surface (Photo 3). There is another large doorway on the east that is identical except for the inscription in the concrete lintel (Photo 4). Finally, a smaller human-sized doorway completes the lower level entrances, this one located on the west and composed of wood planks similar to its larger neighbors. Between the south and

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Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN



LOWER LEVEL

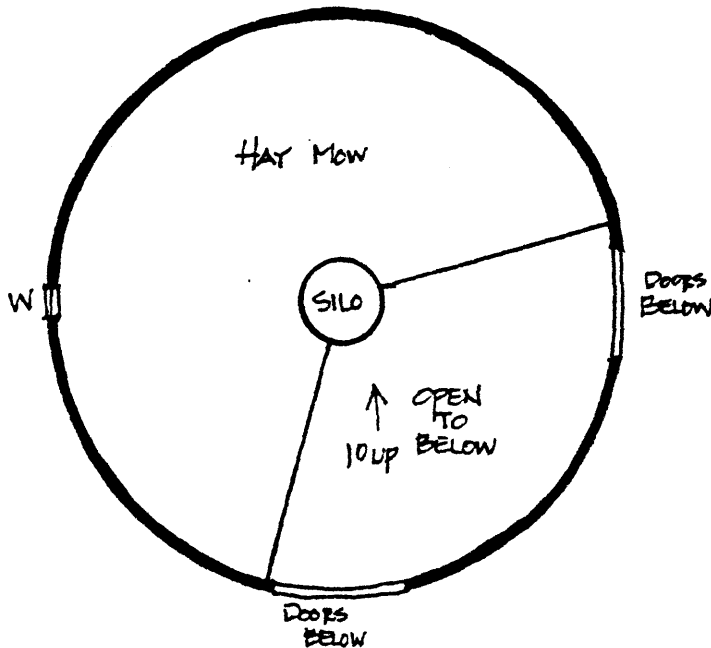
Note: W = Window

UPPER LEVEL

GRIFFIN (KEELER)  
BARN

c. 1920 TRUE CIRCLE  
STEBEN COUNTY, INDIANA  
STEBEN TOWNSHIP

↑ = Photographic Key



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Steuben Co., IN

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east doors are two, evenly spaced four light windows with concrete lintels. The lintels are stamped with a circular medallion that contains a maple leaf and is typical of all of the window openings (Photo 5). Between the east and west doors are four evenly spaced four light windows and finally, between the west and south doors are three more evenly spaced four light units (Photo 6). There is one upper level opening, a window opening without sash facing the west.

The interior of the structure is also very interesting with the glazed tile walls extending up one and one-half stories and the centralized silo standing as a great support for the roof above. The lower level is divided into several pen areas to facilitate the storage and handling of animals. Inside the south doors the area on the southeast, from the west edge of the south doors to the north edge of the east doors, is open to the upper level, emphasizing the grandeur of the space (Photo 7). Around to the north, underneath the internally radiating floor joists of the upper level, is a large open area that is broken only by the line of four columns that support a laminated beam above (Photo 8). These columns, placed about six feet from the silo's walls, support the laminated beam that offers intermediate bracing of the large floor joists. Along the same column line, a section of wall runs from roughly the north to the west complimented by wall sections that return to the exterior walls to form a pen in the northwest quadrant of the barn. This is followed by fencing sections that create another pen between the northwest and the south doors. Finally, there are gates on the west side, lining up with the west door and immediately inside of the south doors (Photo 9). The overall effect is an efficiently arranged central feeding alley with pen space around the perimeter that is well lit by the numerous window and door openings.

The upper level, found in the area from the north edge of the east doors around to the west edge of the south doors and comprising approximately two-thirds of the circle, is an open area for the storage of hay and straw. The central silo aids in supporting the large roof structure (Photo 10) with the inwardly radiating roof trusses braced at the center by a laminated beam that is tied to the silo. Unlike some other examples and because of the silo's support, there is no laminated beam at the juncture

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Section number 7 Page 4 Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN

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of the two roof pitches. The intermediate support network is comprised of a series of 2" x 10" pieces that extend from the lower portion of the upper pitch to about midway on the lower roof section. The lower section then transfers the load to the extremely durable and strong exterior walls. Finally, there is a series of ladder rungs attached to the silo's face on the east side that facilitates access to the upper reaches of the barn.

The Cornish Griffin Round Barn of Steuben County, Indiana, is one of a kind in the state. It has been extremely well-preserved and closely resembles what life on the farm was like at the turn of the century.



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5 Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN

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The Cornish Griffin Round Barn is located in rural Steuben County's Steuben Township, just south of Angola, Indiana. The Griffin Barn is a highly significant structure because of its association with the development of round and polygonal barns in Indiana (see historic context, "Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana.") It is one of very few masonry round barns, and is the only glazed tile example in Indiana. The barn is an important and direct link to the agricultural development that occurred in the state from 1850 to 1936 (and beyond) and has changed little to none since its erection before 1920. The period of greatest significance was from c.1915 to 1936 after which round and polygonal barns lost their popularity. By 1936, round and polygonal barns were considered obsolete and the last round structure was built in the state to replace a 1915 round barn that had burned (Grant County, Richland Township, extant).

The original owner of the barn was Cornish Griffin who also built the magnificent structure. He purchased the hollow glazed clay tile for the walls and silo and mixed the concrete on site that was used for the mortar and for the lintels of the door and window openings. To add further distinction to his unique barn, Griffin inscribed his name in the concrete lintel over the south door and stamped a maple leaf pattern in the center of each window lintel. The lower level of the great structure was laid out in a carefully devised set of pens around the large glazed tile central silo. The upper level was for the storage of hay and straw and the entire area from the west edge of the south door to the north edge of the east door was left open to the upper level, allowing for the free and efficient movement of equipment and access to the hay mow.1

Griffin, who had built an earlier frame house on the property (the house was built in 1903) along with a chicken coop, owned the property for numerous years. After Mr. Griffin's death, the farm passed out of the family to Don Johnson who owned it for a number of years before selling it to the Swinage family. The Swinage family eventually sold it to Nancy Brady and then in 1986 to Cary Keeler, the current owner, Mr. Keeler does an excellent job of maintaining the structure. Although the primary use for the barn today is storage, Mr. Keeler does have horses which are housed in the barn during the colder months of the year. The silo is no

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Steuben Co., IN

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longer used but is in good condition and the upper level still contains hay and straw in addition to other items.<sup>2</sup>

The most dramatic point of significance for the Cornish Griffin Round Barn is the fact that it is the only Indiana example that was constructed of hollow glazed clay tile. Although these tile barns are quite prominent in Iowa, according to Lowell Soike in Without Right Angles, the trend in Indiana was for wood barns. Of the 219 round and polygonal structures in the state, only eight were constructed of materials other than wood. There were three poured concrete barns built; one in Greene County (Jefferson Township, extant), one in LaGrange County (Newbury Township, extant) and one in Sullivan County (Turman Township, razed). There were also three concrete block barns built with only one remaining in Boone County's Center Township. The other two examples, both razed, were located in Greene County (Jefferson Township and Howard County (Harrison Township). Finally, aside from the Cornish Griffin tile barn, the only other material besides wood was the brick barn built in Fountain County's Richland Township, which unfortunately, was torn down in 1989.

In Indiana, 219 round and polygonal barns were constructed between the years of 1850 and 1936 and of these 151 were true circles. Of these 151 examples, only 77 remain and the Cornish Griffin Round Barn is one of them. More importantly though, the Griffin Barn is the only example in the state that was constructed of hollow glazed clay tile and distinguishes itself by its materials and the decorative qualities of the concrete lintels and contracting clay tile window surrounds. The barn has all of the essential physical characteristics that it possessed at the time of its period of significance, c.1915 to the mid 1930s.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Steuben Co., IN

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## ENDNOTES

1. John Hanou, research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from 1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.
2. Cary Keeler, owner of the Griffin (Keeler) barn, Angola, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 27 October 1991.

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Section number 9 Page 8 Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hanou, John. Research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from 1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Intensive architectural survey of Indiana's round and polygonal barns. Conducted June to August 1991, conducted by Jerry McMahan, areawide survey of round and polygonal architectural and historical resources.

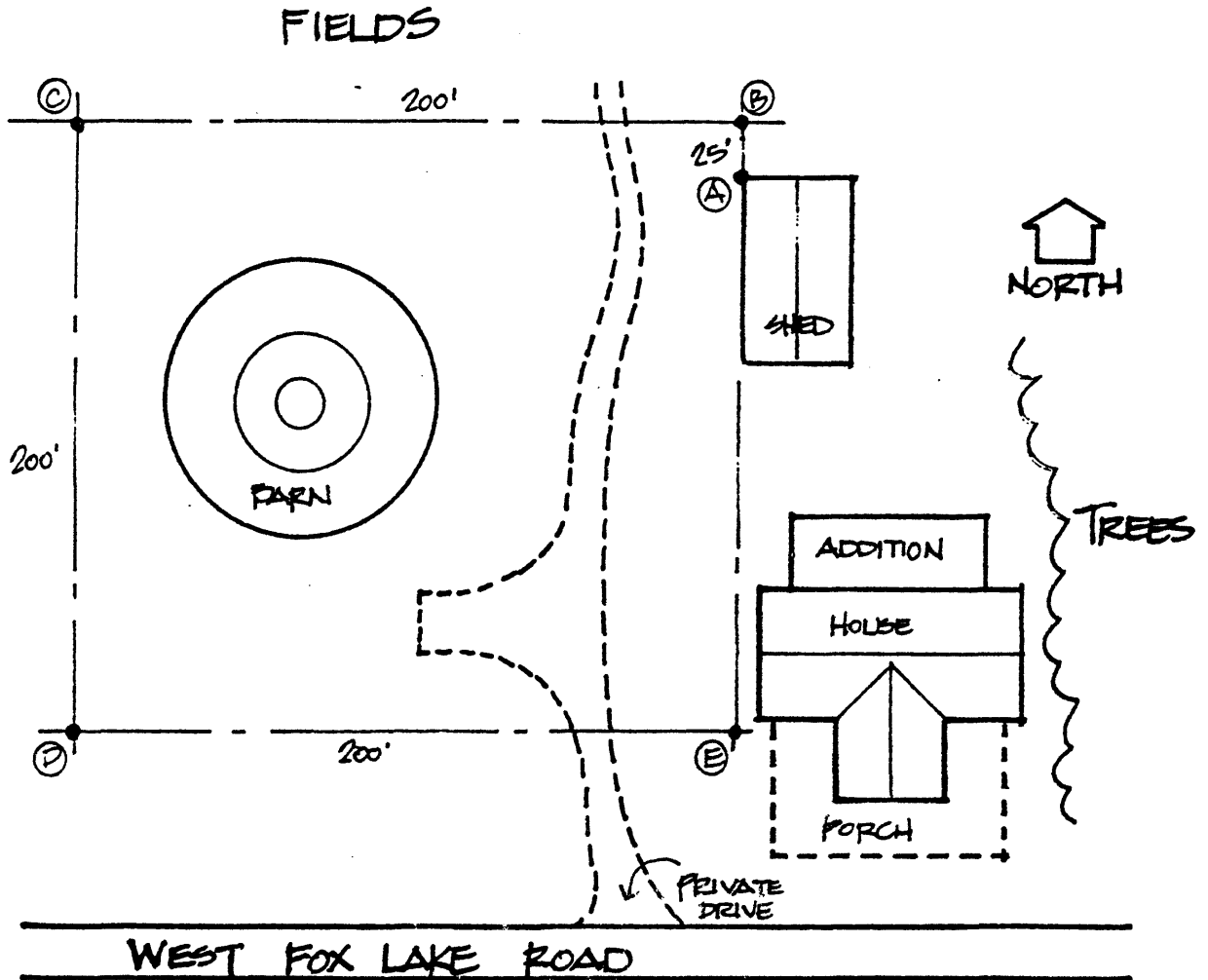
Keeler, Cary. Owner of the Griffin (Keeler) barn, Angola, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 27 October 1991.

Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles, The Round Barns of Iowa. Des Moines, IA: Iowa State Historical Department, Office of Historic Preservation, 1983.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 9



## GRIFFIN (KEELER) BARN

SITE PLAN  
NO SCALE

C. 1920 TRUE CIRCLE  
STEBEN COUNTY, INDIANA  
STEBEN TOWNSHIP

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Section number 10 Page 10 Griffin Round Barn  
Steuben Co., IN

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Griffin Round Barn is located in the NWNE of Section 4, T36N-R13E of Steuben Township, Steuben County, Indiana. Referring to the site plan, beginning at a point one foot west of the northwest corner of the shed (Point A), then proceed north 25 feet to Point B, then proceed west 200 feet to Point C, then proceed south 200 feet to Point D, then proceed west 200 feet to Point E, Point E being in line with points A and B, then proceed north along said line for 175 feet to Point A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes only the nominated resource.

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Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000187

Date Listed: 4/2/93

Cornish Griffin Round Barn      Steuben    IN  
Property Name:                      County:    State:

Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana MPS

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus  
Signature of the Keeper

5/27/93  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Technical oversight was corrected through a phone call to the Indiana SHPO. The verbal boundary description should read "...east 200' to point E" rather than west. The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)