

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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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 any 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 Blankenbecker-Riley Farm

other names/site number BE-396

2. Location

street & number 2788 Hathaway Road not for publication N/A

city or town Union vicinity ✓

state Kentucky code KY county Boone code 015 zip code 41091

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

David L. Morgan
Signature of certifying official/Title David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive Director, KHC
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

10-21-02
Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
✓ entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper
John D. Island

Date of Action

10/3/02

 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
Name of Property

Boone County, KY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
16		buildings
		sites
2		structures
1		objects
19		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstone
walls WOOD/weatherboard; WOOD; CONCRETE
roof ASPHALT; METAL
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Refer to continuation sheets

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 a 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1848-c. 1940

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unidentified

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
Name of Property

Boone County, KY
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 120 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3		
2				4		

N/A 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 David L. Taylor, Principal

organization Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc. date November, 1999

street & number 9 Walnut Street telephone 814-849-4900

city or town Brookville state PA zip code 15825

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. & Mrs. Ben A. Riley

street & number 2788 Hathaway Road telephone _____

city or town Union state KY zip code 41091

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

Section Number 7 Page 1

Description

The Blankenbecker-Riley Farm encompasses a 120-acre area containing 16 buildings, one object, and two structures, among which are a 1913 house and a variety of agricultural dependencies which date from the mid-nineteenth century to c. 1940. The property is located on the north side of Hathaway Road (Kentucky State Route 536), immediately east of its intersection with Big Bone Road (Kentucky State Route 1925), and lies approximately one mile west of the unincorporated village of Union, in southwestern Boone County. Small farms adjoin the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm on the east and west and a new county park abuts the farm on the northwest. The property's nearly level acreage is indicative of the gentle topography of the eastern section of the county. Approached by a farm drive approximately one-quarter mile in length, the house and many of the associated outbuildings are clearly visible from the road. The Blankenbecker-Riley House is a representative example of Property Type I, *domestic architecture*, as defined in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky" and its dependencies, all contributing features within the context of this nomination, are representative subtypes within the context of Property Type II resources, *domestic outbuildings*.

The main house (Photos 1, 2; Resource A on the accompanying location map) was built in 1913 and is the second on the site, having replaced the original log homestead. The house is one-and-one-half stories in height, and is crowned by a moderately-pitched pyramidal roof with lower gables. The facade contains the main doorway, framed by single-light sidelights and a transom sash of clear plate glass. To the left of the entrance, is a large, focal window with rectangular transom sash. On the second story, a gable on the left is balanced by a small, gabled dormer on the right. The dormer is faced with square-butt decorative shingling. Originally covered in wood shingles, the first roof was replaced with standing-seam metal, which, in turn, was replaced by the present asphalt shingling. Fenestration employs flat-topped openings with one-over-one-light sash. The house was originally trimmed with operable exterior shutters which deteriorated and have been removed, although some shutter hardware remains. Extending across the facade is a simple, three-bay open porch of wood borne by Tuscan posts. A one-story hip-roofed ell adjoins the rear; a shed-roofed porch along the east elevation of the ell has been enclosed, but without impact on the overall character of the property.

The seven-room interior of the home includes a foyer which opens into a parlor and a hall that offers access to the dining room and kitchen, at the rear of the house. Doors and windows are enframed by modest, flat trim with modestly-molded entablatures, all retaining their original dark varnish (Photo 3). Original gasoliers, initially fueled by acetylene produced by a gas plant on the farm, have been electrified and remain in place, displaying the copper plating common on northern Kentucky lighting fixtures and hardware of the early twentieth century. Like a number of rural dwellings in the county, the Blankenbecker-Riley house is still heated with coal.

The property lies in a remarkably intact rural landscape with historic fencing and plantings, a gravel drive, and a series of dependencies. The house is closely surrounded by a series of domestic outbuildings, including a woodshed (Resource H on the map), another shed (Resource E), and a root cellar (Property Type IIC; Resource F), all of wood frame construction, with gabled metal roofs (Photos 4 and 5). The root cellar and shed appear to date from the late nineteenth century; the construction date of the woodshed, which appears

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***Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)***

Section Number 7 Page 2

Description, continued

to have been built in the early to mid-twentieth century, has not been determined. The below-grade stone cellar is sheltered by an above-ground frame enclosure with a stairway providing access to the cellar below. Behind the main house, detached, stands the ell of the original log dwelling (Photo 5; Resource C), considerably altered and now serving as a studio. North of the house is a stone cistern, likely dating from the nineteenth century (Resource D). Defining the front of the domestic yard area immediately south of the house is a straight run of wrought-iron fencing (Property Type IIIC; Photo 6; Resource B), executed in the spear-and-hairpin pattern and produced by the Stewart Iron Works of nearby Covington, Kentucky, whose distinctive cast name plate is on the gate. The fencing and gates remain intact, the original end posts were replaced by undistinguished modern posts when replacements could no longer be found. The house is surrounded by historic flowering shrubs and rose bushes, some of which appear in family photographs of the late nineteenth century. Also in close proximity to the house are a root cellar and a stone cistern.

About one-half mile north of the main dwelling is the former tenant house (Property Type IIF; Photo 7; Resource M). The historic core of the tenant house is a two-room frame building set on stone piers, built about 1890 for African-American farm tenants. During the early twentieth century, an addition was made to the tenant house. The addition was built perpendicular to the main wing on the lobby saddlebag plan, a common Boone County tenant house form. Unlike the original wing, the enlarged building was rented to white tenants. The interior walls of the newer section are finished with the tongue-and-groove wood siding commonly used in tenant dwellings and farmworker houses in the county. The interior also features woodwork reminiscent of vernacular Federal-era trim along with doors and frame-and-shelf mantelpieces salvaged from the demolished log homestead. The tenant house was last rented in the 1940s and is vacant and rapidly deteriorating.

The Blankenbecker-Riley Farm includes one of Boone County's finest collections of agricultural outbuildings, dating from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. As is typical of large farms, the outbuildings are arranged in several discrete clusters. East of the domestic yard area stands a mid-nineteenth-century timber frame aisled stock barn (Property Type IIG(3); Photo 8; Resource I), constructed of hewn timbers pegged together and numbered. Entry is through the front gable end, which includes an overhanging, gabled hay hood. The main driveway extends from gable to gable and is flanked by stabling areas that housed sheep on one side and horses on the other. The barn retains its original framing and roof boards and most of its original poplar vertical siding, although some siding was replaced with tongue-and-groove pine siding in the twentieth century. A disparity in the proportions of the flanking sheds suggests one or both may have been added after the main unit was built.

Near the stock barn stands a twentieth-century wood frame corn crib, a cistern, and a wood-frame buggy house (shown on the property map as Resources J, L, and K). A lane leads approximately one-half mile north to a second group of buildings: an early twentieth century timber-frame dairy barn (Resource O) with front-gabled roof, enlarged in the mid-twentieth century to house the growing herd (Photo 9); a hog house (Resource P) dating from c.1940; a deteriorated concrete block milk house (Resource S) dating from the 1930s (Photo 10), with a front-facing asphalt-shingle-clad gabled roof; and a second wood-frame corn crib (Resource R).

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Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

Section Number 8 Page 1

Significance

The Blankenbecker-Riley Farm (BE-396) is significant under National Register Criterion C, for architecture, as an locally-significant example domestic and agricultural design from the nineteenth through the early twentieth century. The nominated property is significant within Historic Contexts I, IV, and V, "Settlement, Growth, and Maturity of Boone County, 1789-1950," "Agriculture in Boone County, 1789-1950," and "Domestic Architecture in Boone County, 1789-1950," as set forth in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky." The Period of Significance of the property begins in 1848, when the Blankenbecker family first settled the tract, and ends c. 1940, the date of construction of the most recently-constructed historic buildings within the nominated area. The entire complex retains integrity its components meet the Registration Requirements set forth in Section F of the Boone County MPDF.

The 1993 Boone County historic resource survey identified this complex as

one of the county's finest examples of a large, diversified farm of the early twentieth century (c. 1900-1924). Its layout reflects the typical arrangement of such farmsteads: groups of specialized outbuildings arranged in discrete clusters, and one or more tenant houses at some distance from the main house. The farm retains one of the county's finest collections of farm outbuildings, including hog houses, several chicken coops, a dairy barn, corncribs, cisterns, and a multipurpose stock barn. Built from c. 1840 to 1930, these structures document the evolution of the farm and illustrate the necessity of replacing outbuildings over time.¹

The original 200-acre area of the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm illustrates a sizeable farmstead in a county typified by significantly smaller agricultural holdings. In 1900, when the total number of farms was increasing in the county and average farm size was dropping steadily, the county's average farm was 93.4 acres according to the census of agriculture. This figure was only barely smaller than the state average of 93.7 acres. Only 137 of Boone County's 1,598 farms contained between 175 and 259 acres. By 1910, the county's population had decreased by 2,000 and the number of farms had dropped slightly, to 1,540 with the result that the average farm acreage increased slightly, to 94.6. In 1920, with the county's population on the increase, the total number of farms jumped to 1,831 and average farm size dropped to 82.6 acres: the lowest value recorded by the agricultural census to date. In 1920, only 153 (c. 8%) of the 1,831 farms in the county contained between 175 to 259 acres in 1920. Thus, the nominated property, at 200 acres, was somewhat anomalous within the context of Boone County farming. The nominated acreage, encompassing the house and its associated domestic and agricultural dependencies, is significant as a farmstead which has retained its cohesive collection of historic domestic and agricultural resources. This is particularly significant in Boone County, which is the focus of modern residential and commercial development on a large scale, due to its proximity to Cincinnati and the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport.

Like most farms in Boone County, this property was a diversified operation which incorporated a dairy

¹Warminski, Margo, "Kentucky Historic Resources Survey Form" No. BE-396 [Riley Farm], on file with the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

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Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

Section Number 8 Page 2

Significance, continued

herd, sheep, hogs, and chickens, in addition to corn and tobacco crops. While all of these products played a role in the county's agricultural economy, corn, tobacco and dairy products were of particular importance. The dominance of corn and tobacco among field crops in the vicinity of Union and the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm is attested by the Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory, which reported that the settlement shipped "tobacco, corn and hogs." Census data for Boone County indicate that corn consistently lead cereal crops. The 1900 census reported that out of 23,445 acres devoted to cereals, 17,240 were planted in corn. In 1910, 16,995 acres grew corn, which in turn comprised 547,941 (86.3%) of the 634,497 total bushels of cereals produced in the county.

Like most of Kentucky's Ohio River counties, Boone County has been a major tobacco producer since the mid-nineteenth century. The cornerstone of the county's farm economy, tobacco consistently led the census "special crops" category that also included potatoes, vegetables, cane and syrup. In 1910 tobacco, was by far the most productive special crop; while others in the category ranged from 46 to 995 acres planted, tobacco accounted for 3,304 acres planted and 3,537,996 pounds harvested. In 1920, during the heyday of the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm, tobacco dominated the category of "miscellaneous crops" (the term which by then had replaced the "special crops"), totaling 4,293 acres and 3,737,237 pounds.

Boone County's heritage of dairying is also represented by the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm. During the first three quarters of the twentieth century, a vast network of small Boone County dairy farms produced milk for the Cincinnati and Covington markets. Heavily promoted by the state's Department of Agriculture, dairying became a huge industry in the county after 1900. The former importance of dairying in Boone County is attested by the many surviving dairy barns, silos and milk houses extant throughout the county. In 1880 and 1890, census records indicate that milk cows totaled about one-third of the cattle in the county. In 1900 dairy cows aged 2 and over totaled 4,170 and led the category of neat cattle. By 1910, dairy cows had increased to 4,691 and comprised nearly one-half the county's total of 9,429 head. The 1920 census saw a doubling of the number of dairy cattle to 9,260. In the same decade 2,182,853 gallons of milk were produced, with a value of \$512,293. The Rileys produced ten gallons of milk per day in the 1920s and 1930s. Each day, workers trundled the milk cans in a wicker buggy to the milk house, where they remained cool until the arrival of the milk wagon. Most Boone County dairy barns post-date 1900 and some nineteenth-century barns were adapted to new use as the dairy industry grew. The Blankenbecker-Riley dairy barn, built c. 1900, was expanded in the 1920s to house the growing herd.

Like most large farms, this operation included tenants. It is not known whether they operated on a cash or share basis, both arrangements being common in Boone County. The 1900 census reported that 20.7% of farms were operated by share tenants, slightly below the statewide total of 25.7%; 14.6% of the farms were operated by part owners (6.2% statewide), and 8.5% by cash tenants (7.2% statewide). As was the case county-wide the tenants were housed in a modest frame edifice in sight of, but some distance from, the main house. The family rented to tenants until the 1940s, when the tenant house ceased to be occupied.

This farm has belonged to the Blankenbecker and Riley families since 1848 and has been continuously passed on from one generation to the next. The Blankenbeckers were among a number of German Lutherans

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Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

Section Number 8 Page 3

Significance, continued

who in the early nineteenth century emigrated into Boone County from Madison and Culpepper Counties in Virginia. Many of the families settled in Hebron and Florence. Successive generations of Blankenbecakers owned the property, including Ephraim, Robert, and Ezra. The Riley family also were major landowners in the Union area; Lake's 1883 **Atlas** indicates that the Riley family owned several farms in the vicinity. The Rileys acquired the property and remained active in its farming until 1983; apart from a rented tobacco field, the farm's acreage is no longer used for agriculture. The lack of active use has placed some outbuildings in danger of loss by neglect. No buildings have been replaced, nor have intrusive new structures been added. Some of the buildings survive in a fragile and deteriorated state, but the farm collectively retains a high degree of integrity. As an ensemble, the Blankenbecker-Riley Farm is a representative of Boone County's agricultural heritage and a valuable living chronicle of Boone County agricultural history.

The Blankenbecker-Riley House is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an outstanding representation of a stylish rural dwelling from the second decade of the twentieth century. The house is set in an exceptionally well-preserved rural landscape that includes the aforementioned dependencies, the ell of the original log homestead, historic plantings and a wrought-iron fence. Viewed in this setting, the importance of the house as the seat of a prosperous turn-of-the-century farm is readily conveyed.

Virtually unaltered, the house retains a high degree of integrity in all aspects. It is an excellent illustration of the sweeping changes in domestic architecture during the early years of the twentieth century, an era when more comfortable and aesthetic domestic architecture began to replace regional vernacular forms, and the picturesque High Victorian style gradually lost favor to simpler, more practical, more symmetrical designs. These dwellings, built in the first two decades of the new century, became symbols of agricultural prosperity much like the I-houses of an earlier era. As a group they are varied in form and plan, including the rectangular and cubical, center-passage or modified side-hall, with roofs may hipped or gabled. They are, however, united by their simple Colonial Revival or Neo-Classical Revival detailing, including porches with Doric or Tuscan columns and spindled balustrades, denticulated friezes, transomed focal windows, and front entries framed by plain glass sidelights. The building clearly reflects these changes in the popularity of domestic design. Each of the various dependencies is a contributing feature within the context of the nomination as a whole.

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Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

Section Number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boone County Public Records, Boone County Court House, Burlington, Kentucky.

Lake, D. J. **Atlas of Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties, Kentucky** (Philadelphia: D. J. Lake & Co., 1883).

Oral interview with owners, 1999, incorporated into text of nomination.

Warminski, Margo. Kentucky Historic Resources Survey Form BE-396 ("Riley Farm"), filed at Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

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Blankenbecker-Riley Farm
(Historic Resources of Boone County, Kentucky)

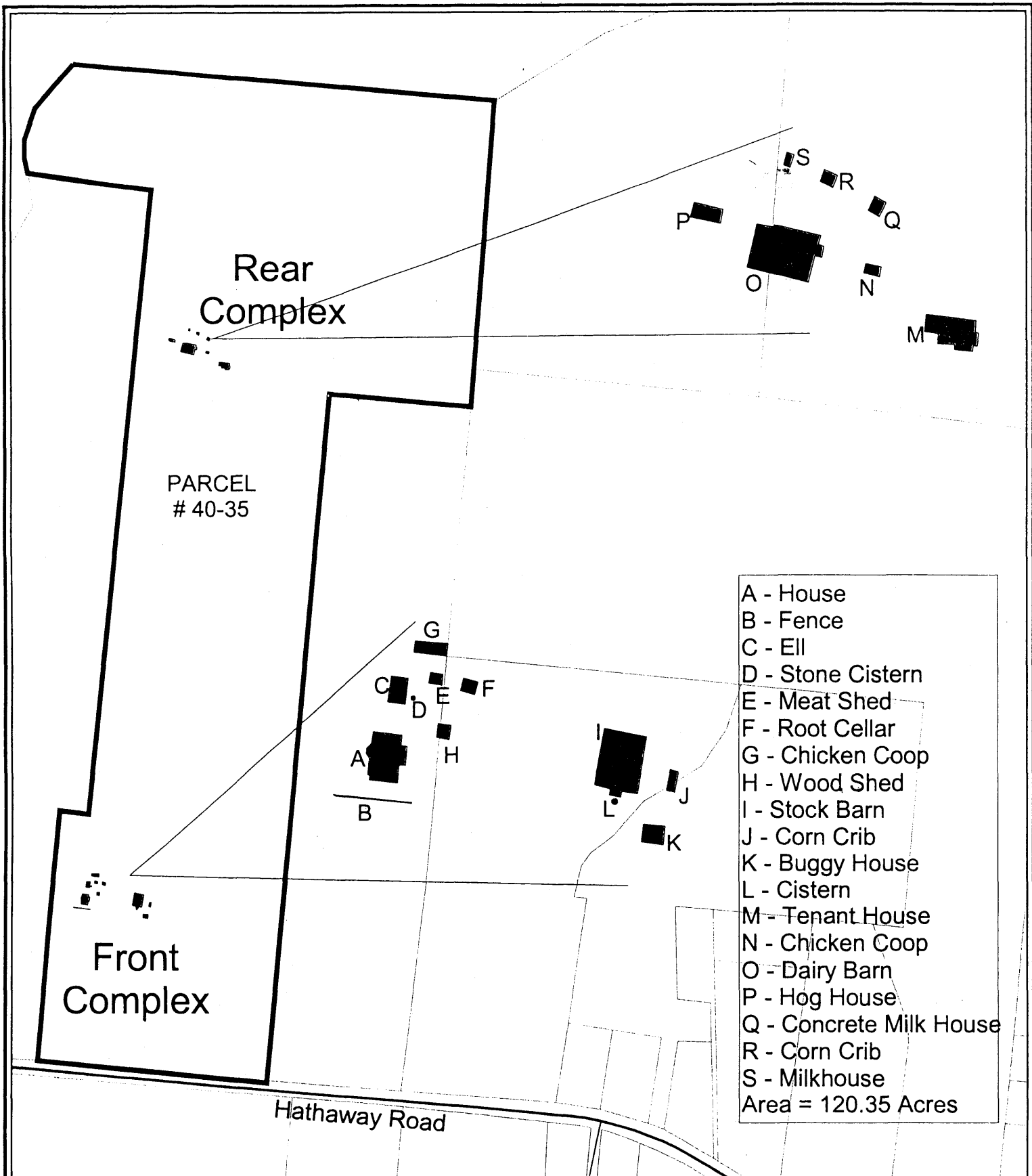
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

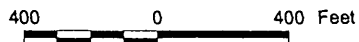
Being a portion of that property described in Boone County, Kentucky Property Tax Parcel Map No. 40-35, more particularly shown on the attached map prepared by the Boone County Planning Commission.

JUSTIFICATION

The significance of this property is vested in its position as an agricultural resource with an associated farmhouse, the dependencies of which are inextricably linked to the property both by use and geographical proximity, and have been part of the holdings for generations.



Historic Resources of Boone County, KY
 Blankenbecker - Riley Farm
 BE - 396



Produced by the
 Boone County Planning Commission
 GIS Services Division
 August 31, 2001

