

**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 Apfel, George, Round Barn

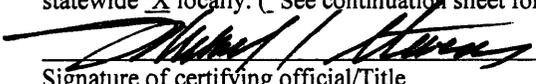
other names/site number Dell Round Barn

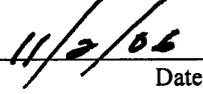
2. Location

street & number	11314 County Highway P	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Town of Clinton	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Vernon	code 123
			zip code 54639

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.)


Signature of certifying official/Title
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI


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

Apfel, George, Round Barn

County Vernon

Wisconsin

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

12.20.06

Jan

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
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)

<input type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
1	0 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 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
is 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)

Agriculture/Subsistence/Animal Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Centric Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Tin

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Apfel, George, Round Barn
Name of Property

County Vernon
County and State

Wisconsin

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

1914

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Apfel, George

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Apfel, George, Round Barn

County Vernon

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

Name/title	Kenton Evenstad	date	2/3/06
organization		telephone	608 221-2385
street&number	306 Woody Lane	zip code	53716
city or town	Monona	state	WI

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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Apfel, George, Round Barn
Town of Clinton, Vernon County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

Nestled among the rolling hills of Vernon County, in Clinton Township, is the George Apfel Round Barn. This barn is an excellent example of a unique dairy barn form known as a centric barn. This barn is representative of a period of agricultural growth and experimentation in Wisconsin.

George Apfel, along with the help from neighbors Charles Bennett, Bennett Dolan and Joe Hough, built the barn in 1914. George had purchased the farm from Marion Aloway in 1903. George's son Stanley Apfel (1899-1976) bought the farm in 1956. Stanley sold the farm in 1977 to Kent Evenstad who is the current owner.

Exterior

The barn is built upon a slope, allowing for direct access to the upper level through a pair of wood doors. The lower level is exposed at the back, with multiple doors and windows providing access, light and ventilation. The foundation of both the barn and the interior silo are of poured concrete, which is visible at the lower level. The upper portion of the barn has a wooden frame and is sheathed with the original tin siding that is stamped to resemble regular masonry blocks. The barn has a circumference of 165 feet and a diameter of 52 feet. The original wood shingle roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles. The barn retains its double pitched roof and the crowning ventilating cupola. The walls of the cupola are faced with wood shingles; it is capped by a simple wood cornice. Four evenly spaced, slatted vents provide air circulation.

The upper floor of the barn has few openings. To either side of the paired doors is a small, elongated, four over four light, double hung window. A third window of these dimensions is found on the wall opposite the doors. The lower level has multiple openings. A new door is located just below the slope on each side. In addition, regularly spaced four over four double hung windows and single doors provide access to the interior.

Interior

Running through the center of the barn is the internal silo. It has a diameter of 12 feet and a height of about 40 feet. The beams of the frame hay loft floor are supported by and radiate from the center silo. The feeding floor extends out from the silo and radiates almost half way around the barn.

The barn was originally used for a dairy operation on the lower level and hay and water storage on the upper level. It is now used for horses and hay storage.

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Apfel, George, Round Barn
Town of Clinton, Vernon County, Wisconsin

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Integrity

The George Apfel Round Barn is 90 year old, but is still in excellent condition. It has retained its historic integrity through the years with preservation in the minds of the owners for future generations to enjoy. In 1994, a new foundation was poured at the front of the barn and in 1999 a new asphalt shingle roof was put on.

Despite minor changes, both the interior and exterior of the barn are still in excellent, highly original condition. These changes do not affect either the overall integrity or significance of this barn.

End of Description of Physical Appearance

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Section 8 Page 1

Apfel, George, Round Barn
Town of Clinton, Vernon County, Wisconsin

Significance

The George Apfel Round Barn is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level. The period of significance is 1914, the date of construction of the barn. The barn is nominated under criterion C for architecture because it is an excellent and intact example of a rare barn form known as a centric barn. The State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resources Management Plan has identified the centric and octagon barn as both a survey and registration priority. The barn's significance is further enhanced by its high degree of integrity and its continued use for its original agricultural purpose. Most round barns in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest were built between the years of 1898-1920 with few being built past 1920. The George Apfel Round Barn was built towards the end of the centric barn building period and takes advantage of the 30 previous years of centric barn building experience.

Historical Background on Centric Barns:

Wisconsin was once primarily a wheat farming state. By 1860, several bumper crops of this wheat monoculture lead to diseases such as smut and rust, and to other problems such as the cinch bug. By 1879 wheat production in Wisconsin was essentially dead.¹ Wisconsin became important in growing tobacco, sorghum, hops, and potatoes among other crops, but dairying eventually became a very large industry. Dairying became the dominant agricultural pursuit in Wisconsin in the 20th century.

As the economic benefits from dairy farming became apparent, more attention was paid to the breeding of cows. This led to more concern over shelter and feed. By 1890 dairying was one of the leading industries in the state and, by 1915, Wisconsin was the leading dairying state in the nation and was known as "America's Dairyland" throughout the world.²

For existing barns, the transition to this new dairy industry was accommodated by revising wheat and threshing barns to barns on raised foundations to produce the typical dairy barn of Wisconsin. The raising of barns allowed for cows and livestock in the new basement and hay storage in the above loft.

¹ Jerry Apps and Allen Strang, Barns of Wisconsin, Madison: Tamarack Press, 1977, p. 35.

² Wyatt, Barbara, Ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of WI, June 1986. Volume II. P. 8-4.

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Apfel, George, Round Barn
Town of Clinton, Vernon County, Wisconsin

While some existing barns were being adapted, new ones were also being built to make way for dairy farming. For those who built new, centric barns had advantages.

In the United States, many credit the Quakers with the original idea of centric or octagon barns. Other precedents include the round Shaker barn at Hancock, Massachusetts of 1826, which was published in farm journals by the 1880's. Orson Fowler, a famous New York phrenologist, popularized octagonal structures in the east and in the Midwest in the 1850s. Several octagonal houses are directly attributed to him. He toured Wisconsin in 1850, promoting octagonal houses which he claimed to have invented.³ However it is known that the Dutch octagonal churches existed along the Hudson River Valley since 1680 and these octagonal churches quite probably inspired Fowler, who was from New York. Fowler's influence on round barn building in Wisconsin is not certain but in the mid-1870's octagonal barns attracted their first widespread, effective advocates among farm improvement proponents, progressive farmers, stock breeders, and agricultural editors.⁴

Centric barns, though eccentric in the history of American barn building, were promoted in agricultural literature around the turn of the century and were built in some number, from Vermont to California. The Wisconsin dairy industry grew rapidly in the late 19th century. The industry was abetted by the encouragement of improved herds of dairy cattle by Hoard's Dairyman, published in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, by research by the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Stations, and by development at the University of Wisconsin in 1890 of the Babcock test to determine the amount of butterfat in milk. Other periodicals included the American Agriculturalist, the Country Gentlemen, and the Breeders Gazette.

As dairy herds increased an efficient and inexpensive barn construction was sought to house the cattle herds, as well as the draft horses used on the farms. Centric barns were espoused for their advantages of "convenience, strength and cheapness."⁵ Professor F.H. King (1848-1911) of the University of Wisconsin, who was nationally known for his work on soils and his system of barn ventilation and who wrote in several farm journals, in 1889 designed a round barn near Whitewater, "not for novelty but for advantage," which was nationally published.

As a result of the promotion by farming periodicals and by the University, round barns were being built in Wisconsin towards the end of the nineteenth century. Round barns were deemed to be more wind resistant, but more importantly, they afforded more ease in feeding the cattle as all heads faced

³ Rose Larry Jost, "The Round and 5-or-more Equal Sided Barns of Wisconsin," Franklin, WI: privately printed, 1980, p. 1.

⁴ Jerry Apps and Allen Strang, Barns of Wisconsin, (Madison: Tamarack Press, 1977), p. 6.

⁵ W.J. Fraser, Economy of the Round Dairy Barn, U. of Illinois. Ag. Exper.Station, Bulletin No. 143, Urbana, 1910, p. 44.

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Apfel, George, Round Barn
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the inner silo hay chute. Almost all centric barns in Wisconsin were built for use as dairy barns. Round barns were built to utilize dairy barn space more efficiently. The round barn also allowed for new farming technologies including the silo. In centric barns the silo was usually located in the center with cow stanchions and other equipment radiating from it.

For convenience, all the centric barns tended to include all functions possible within one roof: mow, stable, milking stanchions, silo and granary. They incorporated the latest developments, often a round silo in the center, some kind of ventilating system, including louvers or a cupola and conveniences such as a hay track with pulley in the mow and a manure track below. The centric plan had rows of cows facing the center with a circular aisle for convenience in doing chores. For strength the barns seemed superior. The continuous plate of a round barn converted the "lateral thrusts of the roof into vertical loads upon the outside bearing walls."

For cheapness, a round or polygonal barn gave more interior wall space for the amount of exterior wall, thus saving in lumber, using up to ¼ or 1/3 less. It could also utilize a balloon frame rather than heavy timbering. Also, because the silo was generally inside the barn, it was protected and probably needed less maintenance.

Wisconsin leads the country in the number of centric dairy barns. They were common especially in the southwest part of the state. Most influential to the large number of centric dairy barns in Wisconsin was probably the need for new dairy barns across the state at a time when round barns were receiving a maximum of publicity. Farm journals were well read in Wisconsin and farmers tended to be in the forefront of experimental farm improvements. The necessity to switch from wheat farming to a new form of farming, the profitability of dairy farming due to the abundance of creameries and cheese factories, and the effort to implement the findings of experimentation through the Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, all made Wisconsin a premier dairy state. The occurrence of centric barns seems to have little tie with ethnicity. Accounts of the people who built round barns show them to have been creative individuals willing to try something unusual in the interests of improving their farms and livestock.

Historical Background: Vernon County and Apfel Barn

The George Apfel Round Barn gains further significance because of its location in Vernon County. Vernon County has the highest concentration of round barns in the state and the county has one of the most unusual histories in Wisconsin. Vernon County and the Kickapoo Valley was the largest rural African American settlement in Wisconsin in the 19th century. The black settlement was well-

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integrated with their Norwegian, Irish, and Bohemian co-settlers. The African-Americans were among the first to acquire and farm the land, and were well established as white settlers were still coming to the area. The white settlers saw them as capable and equal and relationships were harmonious.⁶ The community grew in the 1870s and 1880s with considerable interracial marriages.

Round barns in Vernon County were made popular by the son of a former slave, Alga Shivers (1889-1978). Shivers' father, Thomas Shivers, settled Cheyenne Valley which is located in Vernon County. Thomas Shivers, a freed black slave from Tennessee, arrived in the Town of Union in 1879 and by the end of the century owned 260 acres of land and had the largest black-owned farm in the state at one time.⁷ He had been one of the few slaves permitted to attend school and was considered to be a man of ideas and innovations among his fellow farmers in Vernon County. He was the first in the area to adopt new methods and techniques in his farm operations and was the first in the area to purchase a tractor. By 1920, he was the first in the area to install a hot and cold water system, as well as an electric light and power system in his home⁸.

Alga Shivers was born April 7, 1889. He was a carpenter and also farmed in Forest Township, Vernon County.⁹ Alga Shivers shared his father's creativity and practicality and along with constructing round barns also experimented with the use of electric power (from several homemade batteries) and developed a water ram powered by these batteries and connected to an air pump to run water to his house. (Interview by Rose Hilbert with Roberta Mecum whose great uncle was Alga Shivers in June 1986.)

Alga Shivers constructed the first round barn building in Vernon County. There were no other professional barn builders in the area, and if needed, they had to be sent for from another county.¹⁰ It is unknown what prompted Alga to start building round barns. However, he is believed to have acquired the knowledge of building round barns when he studied for a time at the George R. Smith Technical College in Sealia, Missouri.

While there is no concrete evidence that Shivers had a role in the design or construction of this particular barn, his influence on the area's barn building is important. Shivers is known to have

⁶ Lon Reuter, "Forest-Union Settlement Study: A Melting Pot", Kickapoo Valley History Project, manuscript, p. 16 citing an interview with Stephen Feirman of the Black Studies Dept., UW-Madison, Nov. 2, 1978.

⁷ Zachery Cooper, Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin, Madison, WI: State Historical Society, 1977), p. 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁹ Obituary for Alga Shivers, Wisconsin State Journal, Wed., Nov. 29, 1978.

¹⁰ Zachery Cooper, Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin, Madison, WI: State Historical Society, 1977, p. 7.

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Apfel, George, Round Barn
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designed and built 15 round barns in Vernon and Monroe counties, giving this area the highest concentration of centric barns in the United States.

As far as centric barns are concerned, it is unknown what inspirations he had. It is quite likely he read of round barns and had ample opportunity to see one. Shivers traveled and even attended George R. Smith College in Sedalia, Missouri for two years working as a maintenance man during the school terms. During the summer he built farm buildings in his Kickapoo home area.¹¹

Usually, these round barns were built with the help of a two or three man crew under the supervision of Alga. A year or two before the actual construction would begin, Alga and his crew would cut the needed wood from the farmer's own woodlot. The wood would be left to cure. Then Alga and his crew would begin actual construction of the round barn which took from two to three months.¹² Alga and his crews also built conventional barns, outbuildings, and houses, and kept building such structures long after round barns became outdated in the late 1920s.¹³

It is said that Alga Shivers did not like to leave the Vernon County area because of the racism he encountered outside of the well integrated Coon Valley Region. There were plenty of jobs for him in the area and his work was well respected.

Changes and advancements in the dairy industry contributed to the centric barns' fall from favor. With continued advancements in dairy farming, these round barns became obsolete. Starting in the 1920s, centric barn building declined rapidly. Few centric barns were built after 1930. This decline coincides with a 1920s decline in all barn construction. Also, many of the disadvantages of centric barns became major obstacles with respect to the changes that the industrialization of dairying was having on the old dairying practices, such as the need for larger herds of milk producing cows, and the accompanying necessity to mechanize the barn. For example, new inventions with piping for milking machines and barn cleaners required straight lines. For farmers to stay operative they had to enlarge their herds. Often the new, long, lower pole-barns which now characterize the rural landscape were built, rather than attempting the remodeling of the centric barn. The trend towards separating jobs and machinery on the farm and providing new housing of tools in individual buildings was once again making a comeback. It was no longer advisable to consolidate equipment. A major factor in this trend to disperse and expand to pole-barns was due to the changes in costs and the technology of barn

¹¹ Lon Reuter, "Forest-Union Settlement Study: A Melting Pot," Kickapoo Valley History Project manuscript, p. 30, citing a personal interview with Alga Shivers on Nov. 3, 1978.

¹² "Alga Shivers and his Round Barns", La Farge Epitaph, Nov. 7, 1979.

¹³ Ibid.

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construction and the availability of cheap, efficient, prefabricated, metal outbuildings which could be constructed with little or no professional help. This is a result of farms adapting to the ever more complex changes in the economy and technology.

It is important for the history of Wisconsin, but especially to Vernon County, that the George Apfel Round Barn be preserved. Barns are an essential part of Wisconsin's history and landscape that are slowly disappearing. New, modern barns can be built for less cost than repairing these old barns and, as a result, many round barns are being taken down or are falling down due to neglect. The George Apfel Barn is in very good condition with its historic integrity remaining intact. It is one of the best maintained and least altered in Vernon County.

Out of the 185 known round barns that were built in Wisconsin, fewer than 130 remain with 15 still standing in Vernon County. The George Apfel Round Barn stands as a reminder of Wisconsin's rich agricultural history. Richard Perrin, in Historic Wisconsin Buildings, summed up the importance of round barns when he wrote, ". . . they are pioneer landmarks in every sense of the word."

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Town of Clinton, Vernon County, Wisconsin

Bibliographical References

Books:

Fish, Gail, Wava G. Haney, and June Zalewski. Round Barns of Vernon County, Wisconsin: A Circle Tour. Wisconsin: 1996.

Perrin, Richard. Historic Wisconsin Buildings. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962.

Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles: The Round Barns of Iowa. Des Moines: Penfield Press, 1990.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Volume II, June, 1986.

Newspapers:

Wisconsin State Journal

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Boundary Description:

The boundary of the nominated property is a circle drawn 30 feet from the outer wall of the barn.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary was drawn to exclude other buildings on the property. The other resources are not related to the significance of the round barn.

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Section photos Page 1

Items a-d are the same for photos 1 - 6.

Photo 1

- a) George Apfel Round Barn
- b) Town of Clinton, Vernon County, WI
- c) Kenton Evenstad, Owner; February 2006
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) Exterior, Front Elevation, View looking N
- f) Photo 1 of 6

Photo 2

- e) Exterior, Left-side Elevation, View looking NE
- f) Photo 2 of 6

Photo 3

- e) Exterior, Right-side Elevation, View looking NW
- f) Photo 3 of 6

Photo 4

- e) Exterior, Back Elevation, View looking S
- f) Photo 4 of 6

Photo 5

- e) Interior, View of Silo
- f) Photo 5 of 6

Photo 6

- e) Interior, Basement View
- f) Photo 6 of 6