

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

FEB 02 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Reiser-Zoller Farm

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number GA 119, four miles north of Springfield N/A not for publication

city, town Springfield vicinity

state Georgia code GA county Effingham code GA103 zip code 31329

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Elizabeth A. Lyon, Deputy SHPO Date 1/26/89 Historic Preservation Office, Georgia Department of Natural Resources State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Entered in the National Register Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 3/2/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
 AGRICULTURE/agriculture outbuilding
 COMMERCE/specialty store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
 AGRICULTURE/agriculture outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood

walls wood

roof wood/sheet metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Reiser-Zoller Farm consists of a farmstead on a 100-acre tract of relatively flat farmland and woodlands in rural Effingham County. A wooded avenue of trees leads from the Springfield Road (GA 119) to the main farm complex. The main house consists of two connected historic farm houses. The 1900 farmhouse is a two-story, plantation-plain style building with a two-story front porch. It is built in front of, and connected to, the one-story, original 1875 farmhouse/cottage. There are approximately two dozen outbuildings including three barns and various utilitarian buildings and structures. Within the barn area is the "horse lot" which is formed by a circle of fences and outbuildings. The grounds of the farm complex are covered with a variety of shade trees and shrubs.

The farmhouses and all the outbuildings of the complex are wood-framed and covered with unpainted pine siding. The clapboards on the older buildings are ten inches in width and hand-finished. On the post-1900 buildings, the clapboards are approximately eight inches in width and machine sawn. The foundations of all the buildings on the complex consist of large pine posts. The chimneys on the farmhouse are constructed with soft, locally produced bricks. The original buildings of the complex were covered with wooden shingles, many of which remain under the standing seam metal roofs. The buildings built after 1900 are covered with standing seam metal roofs. Cut nails were used in construction of both the 1875 and 1900 houses.

Both the 1875 and 1900 portions of the farmhouse have gabled roofs and six over six double hung sash windows. Both have exterior end chimneys laid in stretcher bond with the upper portions roughly half the width of the main part of the stack. The 1900 portion has a number of classical features such as: simple boxed cornice and return, symmetrical placing of porch posts, and side lights and transoms around the front entrance. Porch posts, balusters, railings and lintels are all unadorned. The front porch on both floors has sheet metal awnings. There are original wooden shutters on the 1875 portion.

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The original Reiser farmhouse began as an 1875 one-story cottage with two equally sized rooms. During construction the builder altered the rear slope of the roof by raising it to allow the construction of two small storage rooms on the rear of the house. Originally, it also had a detached kitchen. With the construction of the larger portion in 1900, the builder converted the original 1875 farmhouse to the rear portion. The bedroom became a kitchen and the parlor a dining room. The builder enclosed a large part of the front porch of the original house to create a connector to the new house. In this connector, the builder created a bedroom and a part of the new house's central hallway. Later a part of the bedroom was enclosed to install a bathroom and closet area. The 1900 portion of the farmhouse has a standard plantation-plain floor plan, one room deep, two rooms on the first floor, two rooms on the second floor, with a central hallway.

The interior floors, walls, and ceilings of both the 1875 and 1900 portions were covered with unpainted pine siding. Boards in the 1875 portion are hand-planed and nailed into place with cut nails. Boards in the 1900 portion are tongue-and-groove machine-cut boards. In the 1970s, the interior walls were covered with drywall for the filming of a movie. The original pine is intact under this drywall.

Throughout both the 1875 and 1900 portions there are plain fireplace mantels, door moldings, and window moldings. Doors in the 1875 portion are board and batten construction, while those in the 1900 house are of paneled construction. The 1900 house has an unusually straight and narrow staircase.

The 1875 portion is built on a heavy timber post-and-beam structural system. The 9" by 9" inch sills show evidence of broad axe marks and are joined together by wooden pegs. The 1900 portion has a balloon frame structural system built with sawn lumber. Both portions are supported by round, 12" diameter, pine posts.

The original heating system in both portions was by wooden fireplaces. After the 1900 changes, a pump and sink were added on the porch of the original 1875 farmhouse and a wood cook stove was installed in the newly converted kitchen.

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The eastern third and the western half of the 100-acre tract are heavily wooded with oak and pine. The land to the northwest and south of the complex is open fields. An avenue of trees leads through the wooded area between GA 119 and the farm complex. The yard around the complex is filled with a variety of shade trees. The house area is marked off by an historic picket fence and encloses various shrubs. A rail fence connects most of the outbuildings in the complex to create a "horse lot." This was originally used to contain horses and livestock. A grove of pecan trees and bamboo was planted west of the farmhouse in the 1920s. There is a muscadine arbor west of the farmhouses.

The outbuildings on the complex date from three periods. The first surviving outbuildings were constructed between 1875 and 1879 under Virgil Reiser's ownership. They were of post-and-beam construction and include the surviving buggy house and original barn. The original detached kitchen, also built during this period, was moved in 1900 to become a barn, and it also survives. With the construction of the new farmhouse in 1900, more outbuildings were built. Those built between 1900 and 1910 which still survive include: a cattle barn, a building for boiling syrup, a smokehouse, and a woodshed. About 1910, Virgil Reiser built the local branch of the Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union, a cooperative store, to the southwest of the main farmhouse and it also survives. Adjacent to the store is a small sugar cane mill. In the 1920s, a blacksmith shop and a tobacco barn were built to the southeast of the farmhouse. More recently, two non-historic outbuildings were built: a pump house within the horse lot and an open shed to the southeast of the farmhouse. There is a well just east of the 1875 house.

There are no known archaeological sites on the farmstead. The farm is located in an isolated, rural area of Effingham County, near Ebenezer Creek. It is surrounded by flat, sandy ridges traversed by creeks and swampy bottom lands. Surrounding properties are farms and forests.

There have been few changes to the farm complex. The most notable would be the recent addition of drywall over the original wooden interior paneling and the construction of three non-historic outbuildings.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

agriculture
architecture
landscape architecture

Period of Significance

1875-1938

Significant Dates

1875, 1900
1875, 1900
1900

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Edwards, Pierce (c. 1900)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Reiser-Zoller Farm is significant in the areas of architecture, agriculture, and landscape architecture.

In architecture, the main house on the property is significant because it is a good example of the use of the plantation-plain style. This style, which reached its peak in the mid-1840s, was continued in many rural areas long after the Civil War. The main features include the one-room deep, central hall plan, the shed porch, and the simplistic detailing on the interior. The house, both its 1900 and 1875 units, retains its original wood floors, mantels, shutters, and walls. The house is also significant for representing two distinct methods of construction. The early house has a heavy timber frame, characteristic of earlier 19th century construction and the later house is on a balloon frame, characteristic of later 19th century construction. The house also contains two distinct types of craftsmanship, hand-hewn work in the earlier house and machine produced-work in the later one. All of these features are characteristic of 19th century rural residential architecture in Georgia. One significant, but unusual feature are the timber foundation posts, indigenous to the coastal plain region.

The farm is significant in agriculture because of the large number of surviving outbuildings and for the surviving "farm plan". These buildings and structures represent Effingham County agricultural practices from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries. Most of these outbuildings were built from 1875 to the 1920s either to house farming activities and equipment, or for storage. They reflect the myriad activities of a small, family-owned, diversified working farm from the syrup house, cattle

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barn, well, tobacco barn, to the very rare Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union Store. Such farms stand in sharp contrast to the better-known plantations which grew cotton as a sole cash crop. The fencing that created the "farm plan" includes the "horse lot," a very unusual feature on a Georgia farm.

The Reiser-Zoller farmstead is significant in landscape architecture for the row of trees that connects the main house and lot to the highway, Georgia 119. This feature, reminiscent of early plantation days, is rarely found intact today. Other important landscape features include the intact picket fence which surrounds the main house complex and sets it apart from the horse lot.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA:

These areas of significance support the property's eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

Under Criterion A, "broad patterns of history", this property is eligible for the National Register because it represents an intact, family-owned rural farmstead with its numerous surviving outbuildings, original fencing, and landscaping, virtually as it was laid out in 1875, with some more recent additions. While many rural farms remain in Georgia, this one exemplifies features of the 19th and early 20th century farming era not found on other farms, primarily the Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union Store, the horse lot or corral area, and just about every outbuilding that ever existed. The remaining entrance row of trees is also a significant feature as part of the property's agricultural and landscape history. The row of trees acts an entrance to the farm, setting the property off as a small farm, and reflecting more of a bygone era than those farms which faced major roads or railroads, without any distinct "entrance," or approach.

This property meets Criterion C because it exemplifies the post-bellum use of a predominantly antebellum style of architecture, that of the plantation-plain. This simplistic style was used on many Georgia farms before the war, and was continued after the war when farmers were able to rebuild what they had lost. Thus it served as a transitional link in an area where so much was in turmoil after the War. The house reflects simplistic detailing in its use of unadorned wood, the original mantels,

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shutters, underpinnings, as well as the original sheet metal roofs, and original room arrangement. It also represents construction techniques and craftsmanship characteristic of rural Georgia farmhouses of the 19th century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE/CONTEXT STATEMENT

The part of Georgia where the Reiser-Zoller Farm is located was part of the original colony of Georgia. The first white settlement in the area came in 1734 when protestant Salzburger from Catholic Austria arrived and settled first at Ebenezer near the Savannah River. Later, in 1777, the area including the future Reiser-Zoller farmland was included within Effingham County, one of Georgia's eight original counties. The nominated property came into the hands of the Reiser family when David Reiser, a descendant of a Salzburger family who had arrived in 1736, received a land grant in 1802 from the State of Georgia for 450 acres of land. Part of this grant is the nominated property.

David Reiser (1765-1836) willed this 450-acre tract to his son, Christopher F. Reiser (1813-1884). Christopher added 150 acres in 1837 and established a plantation in the center of the tract, just south of the Reiser-Zoller Farm location. Christopher and his wife had fifteen children, two sons and thirteen daughters.

Virgil Herbert Reiser (1852-1918), one of these sons, purchased 100 acres of his father's tract in 1874. After purchasing this tract, he continued to live nearby with his parents from 1875 to 1879 while he built and developed his own farm, now known as the Reiser-Zoller Farm. He cleared acreage for cultivation and built the original 1875 house with its detached kitchen, a buggy house, and a barn. After his 1879 marriage to Ella Gnann, they began living on this property.

Between 1880 and 1897, Virgil and Ella had five children, one son and four daughters, all of whom were born in the 1875 farmhouse. On the farm he raised corn as the primary crop. The corn was used to feed the draft animals, and the hogs. He also raised cattle and hogs, which were allowed to roam freely in the woods of the farm. To market his livestock, he took wagonloads of beef and pork to Savannah, just south along the Savannah River. He and other farmers constructed timber rafts on the river and floated these to Savannah to market them.

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When first purchased, the 100-acre tract was entirely woodland. It was cleared by hand, a slow process, so that by 1925, about half of it was cleared and the other half (50 acres) remained woodland. Some of these pine trees were cut and used for lumber while others were "boxed" for turpentine production. Some crops or products were grown primarily for family use, such as sugar cane and sweet potatoes.

From 1900 to 1910, Virgil Reiser expanded the facilities on his farm. He hired a relative, Pierce Edwards, to build a larger farmhouse. He also built new outbuildings, most of which survive today. The building boom on this farm appears consistent with those in other parts of the county. While it is not known for certain what caused it, the advent of the railroad in the eastern part of the county is a probable cause. Another possible cause is just the need to keep up with his contemporaries.

Cooperation was a key word among the farmers of Effingham County. They often had to rely on each other for manpower, sometimes taking turns slaughtering beef and distributing it equally among members of a "beef club". About 1910, the local farms formalized their arrangement by establishing local 113 of the Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union, a national organization. In 1912, Virgil H. Reiser built the union a small store, which still survives, on the Reiser-Zoller Farm. It was "manned" by Virgil Reiser's four daughters until the 1920s. In 1924, the store's activities were moved to the county seat.

In 1918, Virgil Reiser died and his son, Herbert (1880-1970), inherited the farm. Herbert, who was unmarried, and Ellis, an unmarried sister, ran the farm together. He undertook several innovations which included the introduction of pecans in the 1920s as well as a grape arbor, both of which survive on the property. He began to cultivate tobacco and built the still-surviving tobacco barn to store the product, which became a cash crop for the farm. A variety of animals, including cattle, goats, chickens, turkeys, and sometimes sheep lived on the farm.

In 1928, at age 10, Walter Zoller, the current owner, came to live on the farm with his uncle and aunt because his mother had died. After Herbert Reiser died in 1970, Zoller became the fifth generation to own this property and the third generation to own and operate the Reiser-Zoller farm. In recent years, with the decline of farm prices, only six acres of tobacco are planted and the cattle graze on another twelve acres, leaving the rest unworked or woodland.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Potterfield, Ty, and Walter M. Zoller. "Reiser-Zoller Farm." Historic Property Information Form, February 25, 1985 with additional materials supplied by Zoller, July 2, 1985. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

N/A See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 100 acres

UTM References

A

1	7	4	7	3	0	5	0	3	5	8	6	3	8	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

C

1	7	4	7	3	8	3	0	3	5	8	5	9	6	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B

1	7	4	7	3	4	0	0	3	5	8	6	5	5	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

D

1	7	4	7	3	7	0	0	3	5	8	5	6	5	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a 100 acre tract that is marked as Parcel 32 on Effingham County Tax Map Number 74.

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is a 100 acre tract that is the historic core of a tract purchased in 1874 by Virgil H. Reiser on which to build his farmstead. It has remained, intact, as the core of this family farm.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section date January 20, 1989

street & number Georgia Department of Natural Resources telephone 404/656-2840

city or town 205 Butler Street, SE Suite 1462 state Georgia zip code 30334
Atlanta,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number _____ PHOTOGRAPHS Page 1

Reiser-Zoller Farm
Springfield vicinity, Effingham County, Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative: Filed at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date: December, 1987
Description:

1 of 18: Front view of the 1900 house with fenced yard; photographer facing northwest.

2 of 18: West side of house, both 1900 and 1875 wings, grape arbor in foreground; photographer facing northeast.

3 of 18: Rear of house, with 1875 wing to foreground; photographer facing east.

4 of 18: Porch of 1875 wing showing connection of two wings; photographer facing southwest.

5 of 18: Front porch of 1900 wing, front entrance; photographer facing northwest.

6 of 18: 1900 wing, first floor parlor; photographer facing northwest.

7 of 18: 1900 wing, first floor, bedroom to right of front door; photographer facing north.

8 of 18: 1900 wing; first floor, stairway at front entrance; photographer facing northeast.

9 of 18: 1900 wing, second floor, bedroom on northeast side; photographer facing northeast.

10 of 18: 1900 wing, second floor, bedroom on northwest side; photographer facing west.

11 of 18: 1900 wing, second floor, second story of porch; photographer facing west.

12 of 18: 1875 wing, living room; photographer facing west.

13 of 18: 1875 wing, kitchen; photographer facing northeast.

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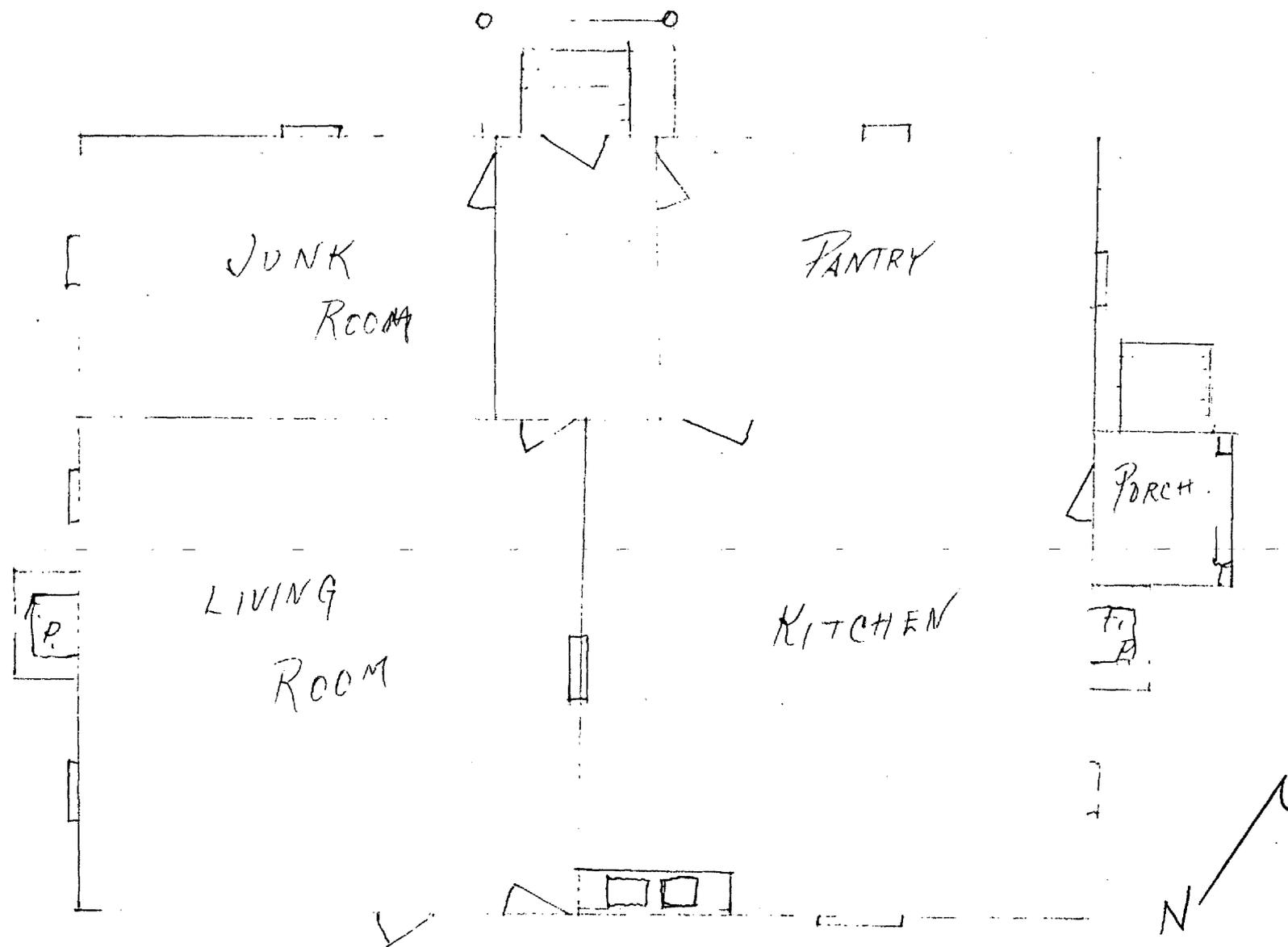
14 of 18: Outbuilding, from left to right: shed, smokehouse, and syrup house; photographer facing north.

15 of 18: Outbuildings, from left to right: smokehouse, syrup house, well, horse lot fencing, and pump house; photographer facing northeast.

16 of 18: Outbuildings, from left to right: buggy house, barn (formerly a kitchen), and fencing; photographer facing northeast.

17 of 18: Outbuildings, from left to right: buggy house, original barn (1875), and cattle barn. Fencing creates the horse lot; photographer facing north.

18 of 18: Outbuilding, the store (Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union Store); photographer facing northwest.



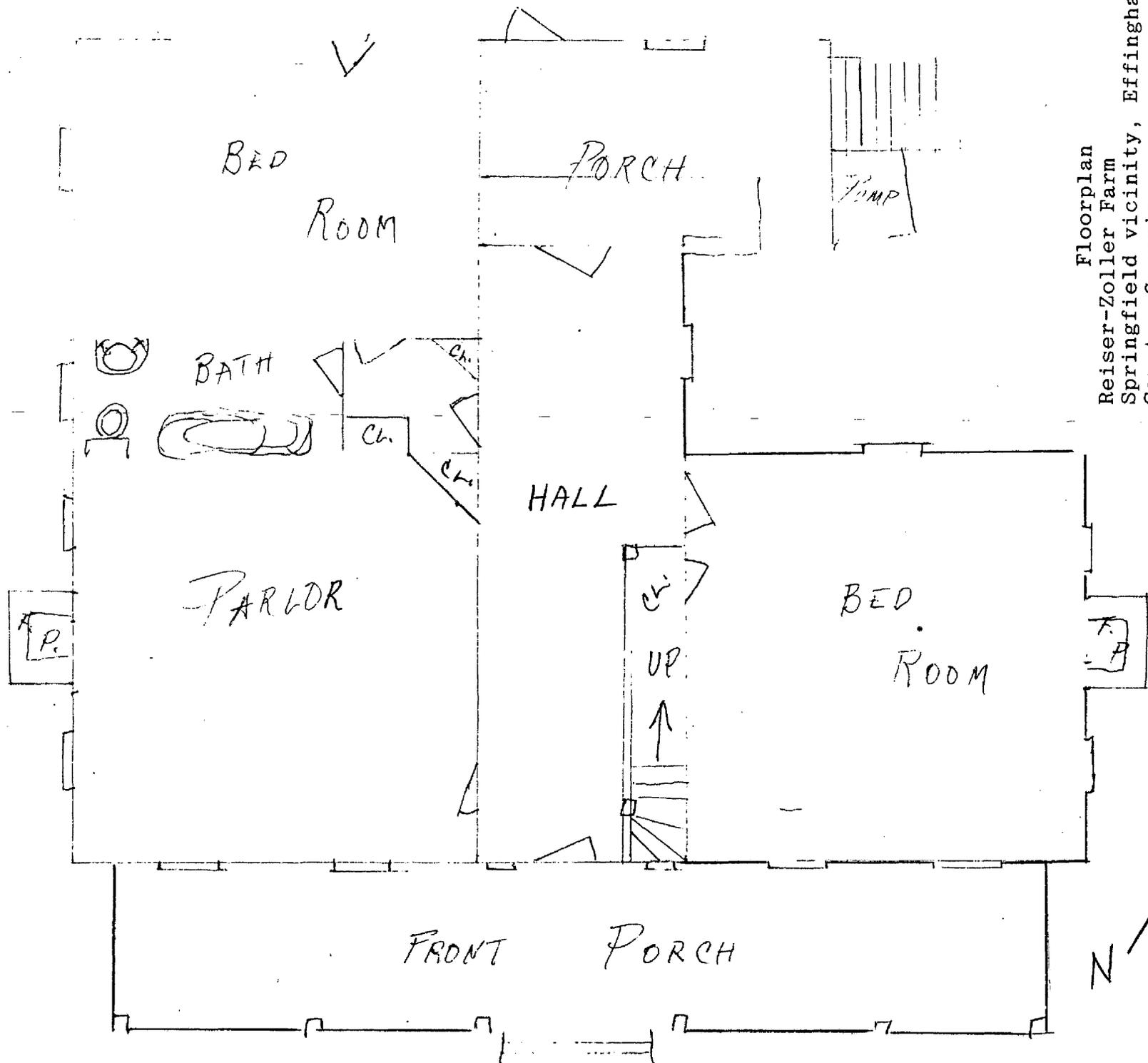
Floorplan
 Reiser-Zoller Farm
 Springfield vicinity, Effingham
 County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale

Source: Drawn by Walter M. Zoller

Date: c. 1985

Key: This is the floorplan for the
 1875 portion.



Floorplan

Reiser-Zoller Farm

Springfield vicinity, Effingham

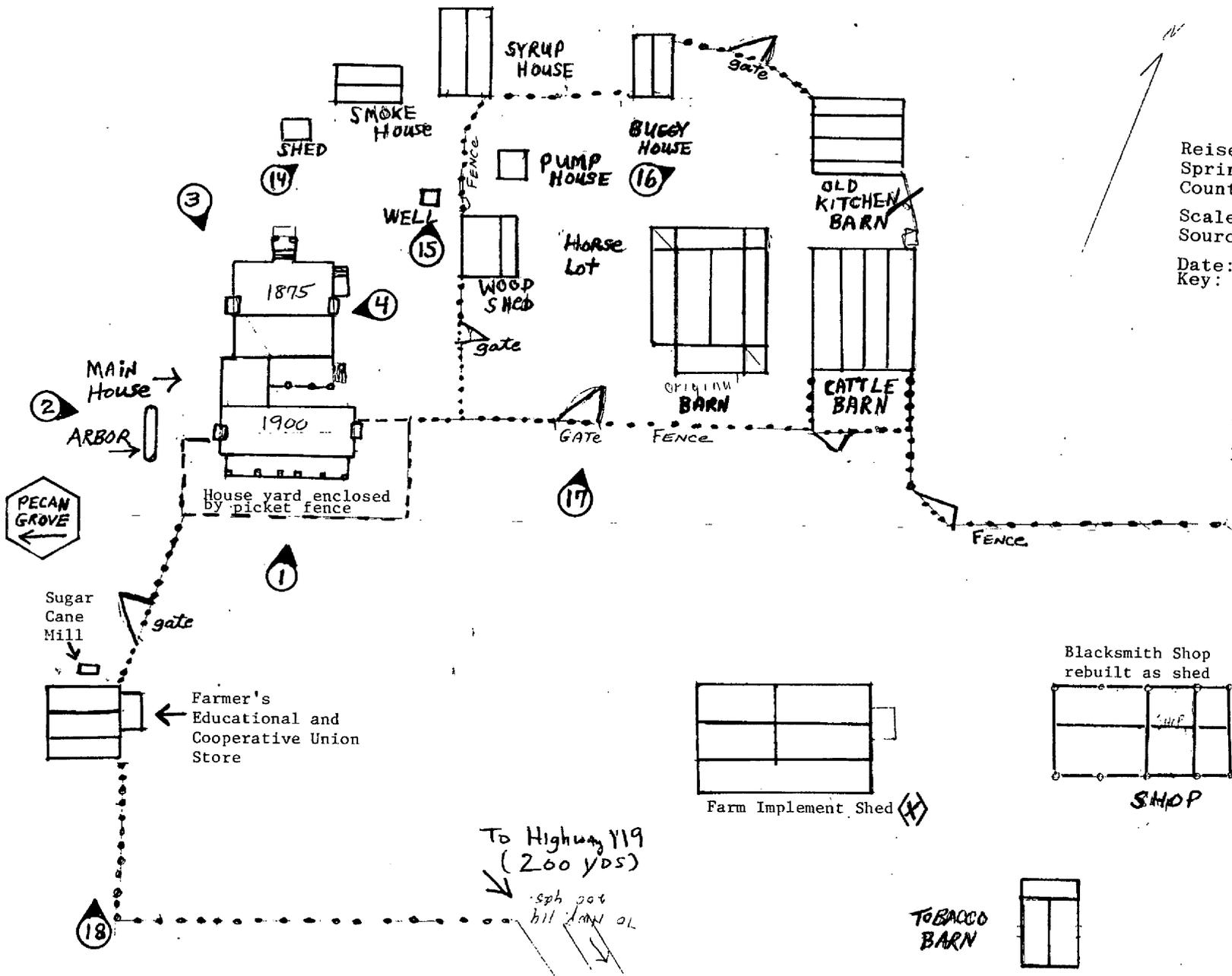
County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale

Source: Drawn by Walter M. Zoller

Date: c. 1985

Key: This is the first floor of
the 1900 portion.



Sketch Map
 Reiser-Zoller Farm
 Springfield vicinity, Effingham
 County, Georgia
 Scale: not to scale
 Source: Base map drawn by Walter
 M. Zoller.
 Date: c. 1985

Key: This is the farm lot, the
 core of the farm. The
 current use of the buildings
 and specific areas and
 landscaping are marked
 directly on the map.

Photographs are marked: ④
 Noncontributing Features: X

Tax Map/Boundary Map
Reiser-Zoller Farm
Springfield vicinity, Effingham County,
Georgia
Scale:  = 660'
Source: Effingham County, Georgia Tax
Map number 74
Date: 1985
Key: The nominated property is that
part of parcel 32 which is marked
by a heavy black line.

