Rural Historic Structural Survey
of
Custer Township
Will County, Illinois





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July 2012

for
Will County Land Use Department
and
Will County Historic Preservation Commission

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

At the request of the Will County Land Use Department, acting as liaison for the Will County Historic Preservation Commission, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) has prepared this summary report of the intensive survey of existing farmsteads in Custer Township in Will County, Illinois. For Custer Township, the work was performed in two phases. In the initial phase, the field survey was performed in June 2010 and included approximately twenty-five square miles with 73 farmsteads and related sites containing approximately 426 individual structures. A subsequent phase began in September 2011, leading to preparation of this summary report and final documentation of the survey.

Custer Township does not contain any existing landmarks. Of the 73 farmsteads identified in the current survey, five farmstead sites and two bridges have the potential to be considered for Will County Historic Landmark designation or listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In some cases, the eligibility of the site would be enhanced if certain historic features were restored or non-historic cladding materials such as vinyl siding were removed. Other sites have either been designated Contributing, which means in the context of this report that they retain their overall character as historically agricultural sites but lack individual distinction; or Non-contributing, which indicates that the site lacks sufficient integrity to present the theme of agricultural history in the survey region.

The Custer Township intensive survey was performed to update the previous survey of the township performed in 1988. Because of the rapid pace of contemporary development in Will County in the 1990s, the Will County Historic Preservation Commission recognized the need to reassess the agricultural heritage of the region. WJE has previously completed thirteen intensive survey projects in sixteen of the County's twenty-four townships covering Wheatland–Plainfield–Lockport, Du Page, Homer, New Lenox, Green Garden, Manhattan, Frankfort, Joliet–Troy, Channahon, Wilmington, Jackson, Reed, and Florence Townships. Concurrently with this report on Custer Township, a survey and report for Wesley Township was prepared. Copies of the previous survey reports were provided to public libraries and respective governing agencies in the area. Cumulatively, the surveys have documented more than 6,500 structures on more than 1,450 sites over approximately 610 square miles of Will County. Performing a separate survey for each township has allowed more detailed information to be collected, such as individual photographs of each historic structure, an assessment of current conditions, and preparation of annotated aerial photo-plans. With the permission of property owners, the survey work was performed with close-up access to the buildings, which allowed for close range photography and a reliable identification of building materials. The survey data was compiled and analyzed using database software and geographic information system (GIS) software.

In this report, Chapter 1 contains a description of the project methodology. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the historical and architectural context, within which the surveyed farmsteads were established, grew, were reconfigured, and in some cases were abandoned. Chapter 2 covers the historical context of Will County agriculture, as well as the historical development of Custer Township. Chapter 3 discusses the architectural context of the rural survey area. Chapter 4 summarizes the survey results and includes a discussion of the National Register and Will County criteria for designation of historical and architectural significance. Also in Chapter 4 are several tabulations of the survey results and an overview of a select number of historically and/or architecturally significant farmsteads. A bibliography of research sources follows the text. Appendices include historic and contemporary plat maps for Custer Township, and maps developed for this report to present the results of the survey and research.

Federal Assistance Acknowledgement

The activity, which is the subject of the Will County Rural Historic Structural Survey, has been financed in part with federal funds from the Department of the Interior, administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior nor the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior nor the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background

At the request of the Will County Land Use Department, acting as liaison for the Will County Historic Preservation Commission, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) has prepared this summary report of the intensive survey of farmsteads in Florence Township in Will County, Illinois. A previous survey of farmsteads in Will County was performed in 1988. Beginning in 1999, WJE has prepared intensive surveys of individual townships in Will County. Previous townships surveyed included Plainfield, Wheatland, and Lockport (completed November 2000), Du Page (November 2001), Homer (November 2002), New Lenox (August 2003), Green Garden (July 2004), Manhattan (September 2006), Frankfort (December 2007), Joliet and Troy (April 2009), Channahon (April 2009), Wilmington (December 2009), Jackson (December 2009), Reed (January 2011), and Florence (August 2011). Concurrently with this report on Custer Township, a survey and report for Wesley Township was prepared.

The objectives of the study are to provide comprehensive information on all historic rural structures located in the area; to assess the eligibility of rural districts or individual buildings for designation as local landmarks or nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; to inventory the existing structures in the area for future study; to provide background on significant architectural styles and rural structure types common to the area; and to provide background history of the development of the area. The present study has been developed to meet the requirements and standards of the Certified Local Government program.

Survey Methodology

Survey Team

The survey team from WJE consisted of Kenneth Itle, Michael Ford, Gregory Dowell, and Deborah Slaton. Mr. Itle served as Project Manager and developed the summary report and performed some field survey work. Mr. Ford and Mr. Dowell performed field survey work. Ms. Slaton was the reviewer of the summary report.

Background Research

Initial work on the rural survey began in June 2010, including research, field survey, and map preparation. Background research was performed at the State of Illinois Library in Springfield, the University of Illinois Libraries, and the Joliet Public Library. In addition, extensive historic research materials compiled for previous Will County rural survey reports were available.

Field Survey

A project initiation meeting was held to discuss the project approach and scope. The previous 1988 survey and historic aerial photography of the township dating to 1939 was reviewed to identify historic and existing farmstead sites. Intensive field survey work was performed in June 2010. The survey team first approached the primary residence on the site to request permission of the homeowner/tenant to conduct the survey on the farmstead site. At sites where no one was home, or where owner permission was not provided, the site was surveyed from the public right-of-way. Typically each structure on the site was photographed individually using a digital camera. A sketch plan of the farmstead was prepared. Written notes for each building included a listing of exterior materials, overall condition, and estimated decade of construction based on structural type and style. Any history information provided by the owner, such as dates of construction or names of original owners, was also noted.

Database and Base Map Preparation

Mapping for the survey was prepared using ArcGIS.[1] Baseline mapping showing railways, streams, township boundaries, etc., as well as 2005 aerial photography of the survey area, was downloaded from the Illinois Natural Resources Geospatial Data Clearinghouse internet site.[2] Additional baseline data showing roads and municipal boundaries was provided by the Will County Land Use Department. Updated 2008 aerial photography was also provided by the Will County Land Use Department for reference during the project. Individual points were added to the baseline map at the location of each farmstead site surveyed. Each point represents a particular record in the Microsoft Access database. The database contains all field survey information; historical information specific to each property, such as names of previous owners based on historic atlases and plat maps; and the assessment of historic significance. On the database forms, the "notes" field typically contains other miscellaneous observations of the project team from the field work. Occasionally, this field contains verbal information from the resident or another source; these are so noted.

Prior to inserting the digital photographs into the database, the photograph files were converted from color .jpg files to reduced-size black-and-white .bmp files. The Microsoft Access database was used to generate the property lists included in this summary report, as well as the individual survey forms. The ArcGIS software was used to generate the maps of the survey area included in the appendix.

Presentations

A presentation of the survey results was made to the Will County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on April 4, 2012. This final summary report incorporated comments provided by the HPC members and Will County staff on a draft of the report.

Report and Submittals

The project continued in September 2011 with the preparation of this summary report and completion of research and mapping. The summary report was prepared using Microsoft Word. Will County was provided with the following final materials under separate cover: printed copies of the final summary report; printed copies of the individual property survey forms; digital photographs as original color .jpg files; ArcGIS mapping files; Microsoft Access database file; survey sheets as a PDF file; and report text as Microsoft Word file and a PDF file.

Survey Gaps and Future Research

The present study is not meant to be a definitive review of the history of each property surveyed; rather, based on historic research and field survey, the relative significance of each property has been assessed. In the future, as new development or renovation work may affect particular properties, the history and significance of the particular property should be researched in detail, using the present survey as a starting point.

A detailed survey of the village of Custer Park was beyond the scope of this rural historic structures survey. The village contains numerous historic houses. Existing documentation of these structures is limited to photography taken as part of the 1988 survey.

The present study focused on architectural features of the survey region. Other studies could be undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the survey region; to identify and assess cultural landscape features such as fence rows, hedges, and earthworks; to study historic transportation

[1] ArcGIS is one brand of GIS software. GIS stands for geographic information system, a computerized methodology for organizing data geographically.

[2] <www.isgs.uiuc.edu/nsdihome/>

infrastructure and routes in detail; or to study particular architectural themes, such as limestone masonry construction, in greater detail.

The present study also is focused on built structures of the historic period. Throughout Will County are important archaeological sites. Pending further study, some of these sites may be determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D for archeology.

A number of historic farmsteads in Custer Township were located in what is now the Kankakee River State Park. At some sites within the park, archaeological evidence of former farm buildings may remain. An archeological survey, using historic maps and the 1939 aerial photography to locate potential sites of interested, may be appropriate to document these sites.

View of the Kankakee River from the former Wabash Railroad bridge at Custer Park. The Kankakee River forms the boundary of the township, with Wesley Township on the left (north) and Custer Township on the right (south)in this view.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT HISTORY OF THE RURAL SURVEY AREA

Geologic and Topographic Background to the Illinois Region

As with most of Illinois, the survey area was profoundly altered by glaciation. Over approximately one million years during the Pleistocene era, the northern hemisphere was alternately covered by, and free of, large ice sheets that were hundreds to a few thousand feet thick. Pleistocene glaciers and the waters melting from them changed the landscapes they covered. The ice scraped and smeared the landforms it overrode, leveling and filling many of the minor valleys and even some of the larger ones. Moving ice carried colossal amounts of rock and earth, for much of what the glaciers wore off the ground was kneaded into the moving ice and carried along, often for hundreds of miles.

A significant feature left by the advance and retreat of glaciers in the northeast corner of the state are glacial moraines—low mounds several miles long left by the furthest advance of glaciers in the Wisconsinan period. The last ice sheets in this area began to retreat approximately 13,500 years ago. The retreating and melting glaciers continued to impact the area for a few more thousand years, as the outflow deposited sand and gravel. However, Custer Township lies southwest of the Valparaiso Morainic System in the valley of the former glacial Lake Wauponsee. Lake Wauponsee was impounded by glacial moraines to the south but drained through a narrow gap in the moraines near the present-day city of Kankakee. The resulting Kankakee Torrent formed the Kankakee River valley and deposited sand, gravel, boulders, and rubble along the valley as well as exposing outcroppings of bedrock.[3] As a result of this glaciation, the soils in Custer Township tend to be sandy. The western part of the township is dominated by Watseka loamy fine sand and Granby fine sandy loam on 0 to 2 percent slopes. Neither of these soil types is considered prime farmland. In the eastern part of the township as well as portions of sections 26W and 35W, Gilford fine sandy loam on 0 to 2 percent slopes is common. This soil type is considered prime farmland if well drained. The prime farmland is often bisected by ridges of Oakville fine sand, which is not considered prime farmland.[4]

Custer Township lies within the watershed of the Kankakee River. The Kankakee River arises near South Bend, Indiana, and flows 130 miles southwest to Aroma Park, Illinois. The river then turns abruptly northwest, ultimately reaching the Illinois River. The Kankakee River basin includes 3,125 square miles in Indiana and 2,155 square miles in Illinois, encompassing most of Iroquois and Kankakee Counties as well as the southern half of Will County. Its largest tributary, the Iroquois River, joins the Kankakee at Aroma Park in Kankakee County. The Kankakee River lies almost entirely on bedrock, with a major bedrock outcropping creating a sharp fall at Momence, Illinois.

Custer Township is composed of that portion of congressional township 32 north, ranges 9 and 10 east of the third principal meridian, that lie south and west of the Kankakee River and east of Essex Road.[5] Because Custer Township is about equally divided between portions of two 36-square-mile congressional townships, several sections numbers are repeated within this township. Throughout this report, descriptions such as “Section 36W” will be used to designate Section 36 of congressional township 32 north, range 9 east, i.e., the western half of Custer Township, while descriptions such as “Section 36E”

[3] *Kankakee River Basin Study: A Comprehensive Plan for Water Resource Development* (Springfield: Illinois Bureau of Water Resources, 1967), 2–8.
[4] *Soil Survey of Will County, Illinois* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, 2004).
[5] The western 18 sections of congressional township 32 north range 9 east comprise Reed Township. The portions of both congressional townships that are north of the Kankakee River comprise Wesley Township.

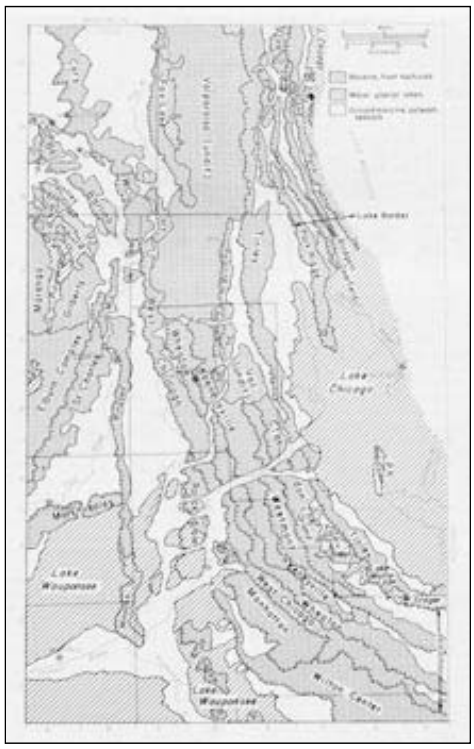
will be used to designate Section 36 of congressional township 32 north, range 10 east, i.e., the eastern half of Custer Township.

The northern boundary of Custer Township is the Kankakee River, and ultimately the entire township drains to that river. In addition to unnamed minor swales that drain to the river, two named streams are located in Custer Township. Horse Creek flows from south to north through sections 36W, 25W, and 24W before entering the Kankakee River at the southeast corner of section 13W. Horse Creek arises from several small streamlets ten to fifteen miles south in Kankakee County, which combine in Section 13 of Essex Township in Kankakee County, three miles south of the county line. The eastern part of Custer Township is drained by a smaller creek, Terry Creek, which flows from southeast to northwest through Sections 33E, 29E, and 20E. Terry Creek arises in Salina Township, Kankakee County, just south of the county line.

Early settlers quickly realized that the sandy soils of Custer Township were generally not suited to grain crops; rather, grazing on the poor soils would be more productive. A few areas of better soil were contained between the sandy ridges close to the Kankakee River.[6]

First Nations in the Illinois Region

Human habitation of the North American continent from the Paleo-Indian culture has been dated to the end of the last glacial advance (about 15,000 to 12,000 years ago). Increasing warmth toward the close of the Pleistocene Era caused the melting and disappearance of the ice sheet in approximately 9000 B.C. The arrival of the First Nations, or Native Americans, in the region between the middle Mississippi Valley and Lake Michigan appears to date from the earliest period following the retreat of the polar ice sheet. This time is known as the Paleo-Indian Period, when peoples in the region briefly occupied campsites while subsisting on deer, small mammals, nuts, and wild vegetables and other plants.



[6] Woodruff (1878), 607.

Illustrated above are the moraine systems in northeastern Illinois. Custer Township lies southwest of the Valparaiso Morainic System in the Lake Wauponsee outwash area. (H.B. Willman, Summary of the Geology of the Chicago Area, *Illinois State Geological Survey Circular 460 (Urbana, Illinois, 1971), 43.)*

The first signs of specific colonization date from the Archaic Period, prior to 1000 B.C., when deer hunting and wild plant gathering supported a dispersed population. As climatic conditions changed over the next several thousand years, populations tended to concentrate near river floodplains and adjacent areas. In the Woodland Period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000), crude grit-tempered pottery appeared in northeastern Illinois. The end of this period saw the advent of large fortified towns with platform mounds, such as the community at Cahokia located east of St. Louis. Further north, villages in the upper Illinois River Valley lacked large platform mounds.[7] It was also a period of a widespread trading network known to modern anthropology as the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. The villages of this period were typically located on valley bottom lands, close to river transportation. Agricultural development included cultivation of floodplain lands; by A.D. 650 maize was being grown in the Illinois River Valley.[8]

The time span between A.D. 1000 and the coming of European explorers and settlers is known as the Mississippian Period. Northeast Illinois was at the fringe of the larger Middle Mississippi culture present in central and southern Illinois. At the beginning of this period, the communities of large fortified towns and ceremonial platform mounds reached their zenith. Custer Township contains several known pre-European-settlement archeological sites. Six specific sites have been identified in sections 13 and 15, consisting of prehistoric habitation sites of up to 12 acres. Additionally, two small prehistoric camp sites have been identified, one in section 27E and one in section 33E.[9]

The Arrival of European Settlers

French Explorers and Settlers in the Illinois Territory

By the time of the French explorations of the seventeenth century, the native inhabitants of Illinois as a group belonged to the Algonquian linguistic family, closely related to the Chippewa. The specific tribes in the northeast Illinois region included the Miami (located on sites near the Calumet River, the juncture of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers, and the Fox River) and the Illinois (present throughout the rest of modern-day Illinois). "Illinois" was a native word signifying "men" or "people."[10] By the early to mid-1700s, the Potawatomi moved into the area from the region of Michigan and northern Wisconsin.

In 1673, the expedition of Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet traveled primarily along the Mississippi River and up the Illinois River to the region of Cook and Will Counties.[11] This expedition

[7] The similar Plenemuk Mound is located along the Kankakee River in Wilmington Township, Will County. See John Doershuk, *Plenemuk Mound and the Archaeology of Will County,* Illinois Cultural Resource Study No. 3 (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1988), 11–14.

[8] James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), 25. "The Late Woodland is a period of increasing dependence on corn agriculture, although northeastern Illinois groups appear less corn-dependent than do central and lower Illinois River valley peoples." (Doershuk, *Plenemuk Mound and the Archaeology of Will County*, 13–14.)

[9] Doershuk, 76–87, citing Thomas Holien, Andrew L. Christenson, and William Weedman, "Archaeological Survey at Kankakee River Facilities of Braidwood Nuclear Station, Will County Illinois," (Chicago: submitted by the Illinois State Museum Society to Commonwealth Edison, 1977).

[10] John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (1952, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin Number 145; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969), 241.

[11] Louis Jolliet was born at Beauport, near Québec, in September 1645. He began to study at the Jesuit College of Québec in 1655 and in 1662 he received minor religious orders from Bishop Laval. After leaving the seminary and becoming a fur trader, he gained proficiency in surveying and mapmaking. Jolliet was chosen by the government of France to be a member of a delegation meeting with the chieftains of the Indian tribes assembled at Sault Sainte Marie in 1671. Beginning the next year, Jolliet led an expedition down the Mississippi, during which he traveled up

claimed the region for France. In 1678, an expedition led by Robert de La Salle with Henry Tonti and Father Hennepin explored the region along the Mississippi River and adjacent territory on behalf of France. A Jesuit mission was established at Chicago in 1696 by Father Pierre Pinet, but it failed to last more than a year. As time progressed the French centered their principal activities in the middle Mississippi valley, focusing on Fort de Chartres near Kaskaskia and its connections with Québec via the Ohio, Maumee, and Wabash Rivers and the Great Lakes, well to the south and east of the upper Illinois Valley.

During this period, the Native Americans were undergoing migrations, often leading to conflict among the various tribes. The Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, and Potawatomi displaced the Miami and Illinois in the Chicago region. The Potawatomi, followed by the Sauk and the Fox, were the predominant peoples in the northeastern Illinois by the later 1700s. Also present in the region were the Winnebago and the Shawnee.[12]

French colonial settlers in the southern and central portions of Illinois brought with them traditional agricultural practices from northern France, including open-field plowlands divided into longlots, and communal pasturing areas.[13] However, unlike labor practices in France, colonial settlers utilized African slaves. By the middle of the eighteenth century, black slaves comprised one-third of the region's population.

Early settlements founded as missions and fur trading posts, such as Cahokia and Kaskaskia, developed into the core of agricultural communities.[14] French colonial farms produced wheat for human consumption and maize as feed for hogs. A staple of the settlers' diet was wheat bread. Livestock for use as dairy production, meat consumption, and draft animals were also present on the region's farms. The open field agriculture system continued in use beyond the era of French domination, and ended only with the influx of settlers from the east coast after 1800.[15]

Illinois in the English Colonial Period and Revolutionary War

Land ownership was not an original right when the Virginia Company settled Jamestown in 1607. The company owned the land and paid its employees for their labor in food and supplies out of a common storehouse, limiting their motivation to farm. After a period of starvation that nearly wiped out the settlement, the company gave each employee an incentive of a three-acre garden, which led to regular land distribution consisting of a 50 acre "headright."[16]

French influence in the Illinois territory began to wane by the mid-1700s. Québec on the St. Lawrence River fell to the British in September 1759 during the French and Indian War, opening a route through the Great Lakes to the middle part of the continent. In 1763, the French ceded land east of the Mississippi to

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the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers. During this expedition he surmised that digging a canal to connect the waterways in this region would allow transportation from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. The Illinois and Michigan Canal constructed in the 1830s and 1840s was the realization of this route.

[12] Jean L. Herath, *Indians and Pioneers: A Prelude to Plainfield, Illinois* (Hinckley, Illinois: The Hinckley Review, 1975), 20–21.

[13] Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 2–3. "Longlots" are, as the name implies, long narrow plots of cultivated land that developed because of the difficulty for plowing teams to turn around. Forms of longlots date back to ancient Mesopotamia; French colonial forms developed from Medieval European models. The longlots in Illinois typically had length to width ratios of 10 to 1.

[14] Ibid., 33.

[15] Ibid., 173–251.

[16] John Opie, *The Law of the Land: Two Hundred Years of Farm Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 19.

the British. In October 1765, the British took possession of Fort Chartres (and briefly renamed it Fort Cavendish), extending British authority across the continent east of the Mississippi River. Unchallenged British control of the Illinois region lasted until the Revolutionary War. In 1778, at the direction of the Governor of Virginia, George Rogers Clark led an expedition against the British and captured their posts in the frontier northwest. Clark marched across southern Illinois, and by July 1778 had disarmed the British-held frontier forts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, claiming the region for the newly independent American colonies.

Land Division and Distribution in the New Nation

When land claims of several of the newly independent states overlapped, the United States Congress, under the Articles of Confederation, struggled to maintain control over the territory extending to the Mississippi River. After making all land west of the Pennsylvania Line to the Mississippi River common national property, a system of land division was developed based on meridians and base lines, which were subdivided further into a series of rectangular grids. In the "Rectangular System," distances and bearing were measured from two sets of lines that are at right angles to each other: the Principal Meridians, which run north and south, and the Base Lines, which run east and west. Subdividing lines called Range Lines are spaced at six mile intervals between the meridians and base lines. Range Lines defined territories known as townships.[17]

On May 20, 1785, Congress adopted this system as the Land Survey Ordinance of 1785. (Eventually, frontier settlers west of Pennsylvania and north of Texas could walk up to a plat map on the wall of a regional land office and select a one quarter Section property for farming, which was thought to be sufficient to sustain individual farmers.[18]) In 1787, after about twenty months of surveying work, the first national public land sales occurred, consisting of 72,934 acres with $117,108.22 in revenue.[19] Also in that year, the Ordinance of 1787 organized the Northwest Territory, including what would become Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

After the ratification of the new United State Constitution, land legislation was not addressed for several years. Meanwhile, settlement continued on the portions already surveyed and sold by the government, and extended into unsurveyed land with settlement by squatters (many of whom were later evicted by federal troops). Additional federal land sales took place in 1796, and in 1800 the government opened land offices in Cincinnati, Chillicothe, Marietta, and Steubenville, all in Ohio.

Development of the Northwest Territory

In 1801, Illinois, then part of the Northwest Territory, became part of the Indiana Territory. Eight years later the Illinois Territory was formed, including the region of Wisconsin. By 1800, fewer than 5,000 settlers lived in the territorial region, with most located in the southern portion of what became Illinois

[17] Townships were the largest subdivision of land platted by the United States. After the township corners were located, the section and quarter section corners were established. Each township was six miles square and contained 23,040 acres, or 36 square miles, as nearly as possible to fit specific geographic conditions such as lakes and rivers, political boundaries such as state boundaries, as well as survey errors. Each township, unless irregular in shape due to the factors cited above, was divided into 36 squares called sections. These sections were intended to be one mile, or 320 rods, square and contain 640 acres of land. Sections were numbered consecutively from 1 to 36, utilizing the same criss-cross numbering pattern on each section regardless of national location or actual township configuration. Sections were subdivided into various smaller parcels for individual farms. A half section contains 320 acres; a quarter section contains 160 acres; half of a quarter contains 80 acres, and quarter of a quarter contains 40 acres, and so on. Today, legal descriptions of real estate continue to describe parcels according to the portion of the section within which they are located.

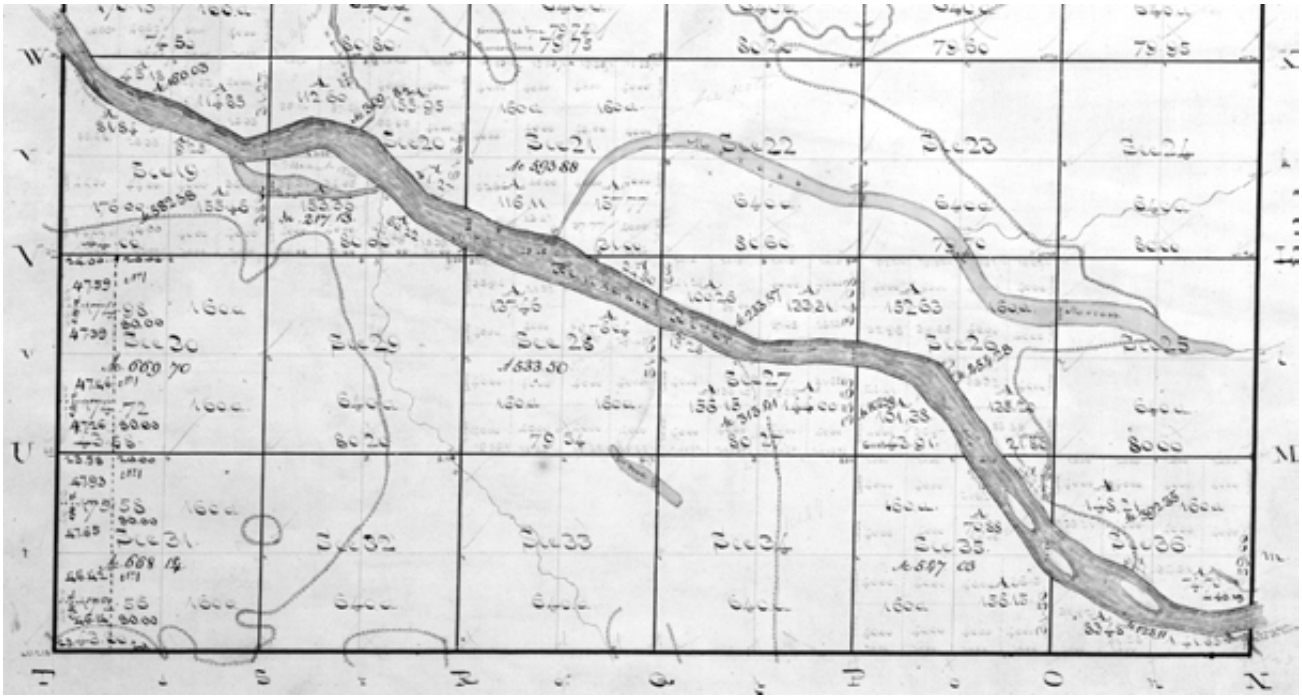
[18] Opie, *The Law of the Land*, 10.

[19] Ibid., 15.

along the Mississippi, Ohio, and Wabash Rivers. The northern portion of the state was more sparsely populated, as European settlers did not begin to enter this area until the early years of the 1800s.

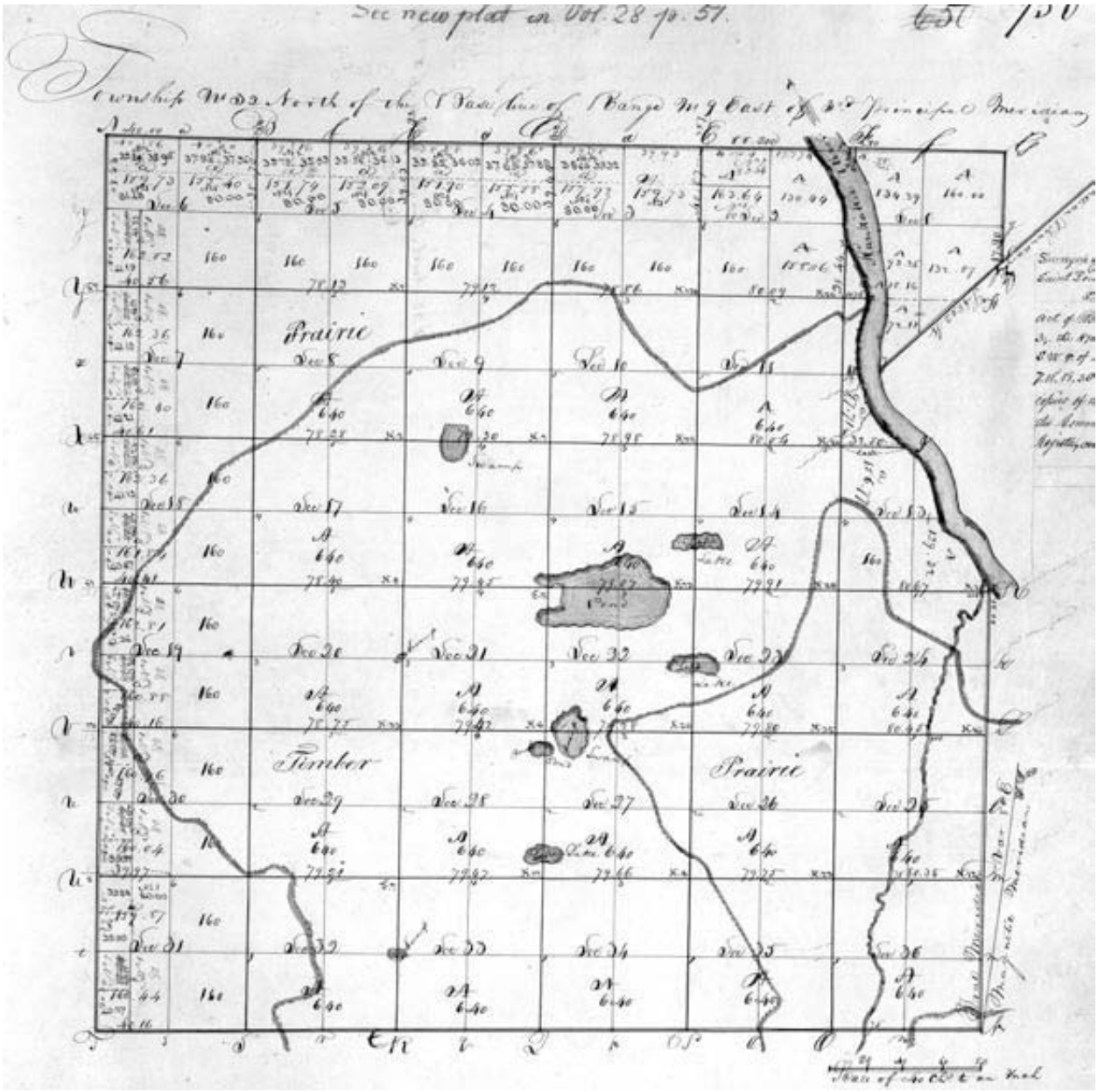
At this time, the Native American tribe leader Tecumseh organized the tribes of the Northwest Territory against European settlers. Although defeated in the Battle of Tippecanoe of 1811, Tecumseh remained active throughout the War of 1812 and aided British forces in capturing many European-settled areas. These reverted to American control at the end of the war. A series of treaties with Native American populations influenced the future of northeast Illinois. In 1795, a peace treaty with Native Americans included the ceding of "one piece of land, six miles square, at the mouth of the Chicago River, emptying into the southwest end of Lake Michigan, where a fort formerly stood."[20] It was on this land that Fort Dearborn was established in 1803, where a settlement of French traders and their Native American wives developed. The site grew initially from the fur trade, and despite the Fort Dearborn Massacre of 1812, more settlers came to the area.

Cutting across the western half of the region later known as Will County was a land corridor ceded by the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa in a treaty signed in St. Louis on August 24, 1816. The corridor, defined by the cartographic features now known as the Indian Boundary Lines (and still present on many maps of the area), was meant to allow European settlers access to Lake Michigan for the construction of a waterway (later developed as the Illinois and Michigan Canal). The corridor was physically surveyed by James M. Duncan and T.C. Sullivan in 1819; its southern boundary was defined by a line drawn from a point on the shore of Lake Michigan ten miles south of the Chicago River, to a point on the Kankakee River ten miles north of its mouth.[21] Since Custer Township lies entirely south of the Kankakee River, it is outside this canal corridor.



Excerpt of the map of the 1834 survey of Township 32 North, Range 10 East. Extensive tree cover is indicated in portions of the congressional township south of the Kankakee River. Terry Creek is shown in Sections 33, 29, and 20. U.S. Surveyor General's Records for Illinois, "Federal Township Plats," Record Series 953.012, Illinois State Archives.

[20] As quoted by A.T. Andreas in his *History of Chicago, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1884), 79.
[21] *Will County Property Owners, 1842* (Joliet, Illinois: Will County Historical Society, 1973), 1.



Map of the 1821survey of Township 32 North, Range 9 East. Tree cover is indicated across the middle part of the congressional township. Open prairie existed along Horse Creek in sections 25 and 36. The southern boundary of the 1816 treaty canal corridor is indicated north of the Kankakee River at upper right. U.S. Surveyor General's Records for Illinois, "Federal Township Plats," Record Series 953.012, Illinois State Archives.

Illinois Statehood

The United States Congress passed an enabling act on April 18, 1818, admitting Illinois as the twenty-first state as of December 3, 1818. A bill had passed Congress in early 1818 moving the northern boundary northward to include the mouth of the Chicago River within the Illinois Territory.[22] The statehood act was approved despite the fact that the population of the state was only 40,258 persons, less than the 60,000 persons required by the Ordinance of 1787. The state capital was established first at Kaskaskia and moved to Vandalia two years later. Much of the land in the state was the property of the United States government. Early sales offices were located at Kaskaskia, Shawneetown, and Vincennes. Until the financial panic of 1819, there was an initial rush of sales and settlement at the southern end of the state where navigable streams and the only road system were located.[23]

The Native Americans who occupied the area were divided into powerful tribes who at times fought the European settlers to hold their hunting grounds. Chief among these tribes was the Kickapoo, who were among the first to engage in war with European settlers and the last to enter into treaties with the United States government. On July 30, 1819, by the Treaty at Edwardsville, the Kickapoo ceded their land to United States and began to retreat to Osage County. By 1822, only 400 Kickapoo were left in the state. The 1832 Peace Treaty of Tippecanoe was negotiated with the Potawatomi tribe, resulting in the ceding of the land now occupied by Chicago and Joliet to the federal government.

The early 1830s saw the greatest land boom to that date in American history. Land sales gradually came under the control of the General Land Office as the survey moved westward. In 1834 and 1835 alone, twenty-eight million acres were shifted from closed to open land for purchase. Two years later the Van Buren administration placed an enormous 56,686,000 acres on the market. These lands were located in some of the most fertile farming regions of the nation: Illinois, Iowa, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Missouri.[24] The building of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in the later 1830s and 1840s led to a land boom in Chicago, which had been platted in 1830 and incorporated in 1833.[25] The rate of growth in northern Illinois soon matched and then surpassed that in the southern portion of the state.

[22] The northern boundary of the Illinois Territory was on an east-west line from the southern line of Lake Michigan. In order to give the future state a portage on Lake Michigan, the boundary line was moved ten miles north of the initial boundary. The Congressional legislation was amended before passage, moving the future state's northern boundary a total of fifty-one miles north. This gave the region more potential economic security as well as less potential for the area to align politically with the slave states of the South.

[23] Olin Dee Morrison, *Prairie State, A History: Social, Political, Economical* (Athens, Ohio: E. M. Morrison, 1960), 24–25.

[24] Ibid., 51.

[25] Between 1840 and 1860 the population of Chicago increased from 4,470 to nearly 100,000, growth tied to the economic boom resulting from the opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. By 1890, Chicago's population was more than 1,000,000 persons (Harry Hansen, ed., *Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1974), 176–83).

Settlement and Development of Northeast Illinois

By 1826, more European settlers began to move to the northeast Illinois region, so that by 1831 a few hamlets were present between LaSalle and Chicago. Also present in the region was a tribe of nearly 1,000 Potawatomi in the area along the Du Page River south of what would become Plainfield.[26] At the beginning of the Black Hawk War in 1832 the largest settlement north of the Illinois River (except for Chicago) was on Bureau Creek, where there were about thirty families. A few other settlers had located along the river at Peru and LaSalle, and at Ottawa. At Walker's Grove or Plainfield, there were twelve or fifteen families.[27] Along the Du Page River, partially located in the region that would become Will County in 1836, there were about twenty families. In Yankee settlements, which embraced part of the towns of Homer, Lockport and New Lenox, there were twenty or twenty-five families. Along the Hickory in the town of New Lenox there were approximately twenty more families, and at the Reed's and Jackson Grove there were six or eight more.[28]

In 1832, a band of Sauk Indians led by Black Sparrow Hawk resisted their deportation by European settlers from their ancestral lands. Although most of the fighting occurred in the Rock River area in Northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin, an Indian panic swept through Will County settlements. The settlers in Walker's Grove together with about twenty-five fugitives from the Fox River area hurriedly constructed a stockade from the logs of Stephen Begg's pigpen, outbuildings, and fences ("Fort Beggs"). The prospect of engaging Indians in pitched battle from the confines of "Fort Beggs" prompted the settlers to leave the makeshift stockade in favor of Fort Dearborn in Chicago. Meanwhile homesteaders in the eastern Will County area gathered at the Gougar homestead and decided to flee to Indiana.[29]

Also in 1832, northwest Will County was the scene of an epidemic of smallpox among the Potawatomi, inflicting a mortality rate at least twice that of European settlers. Approximately one-third of the Native American population in the region died during the epidemic.[30]

The end of the Black Hawk War brought about the expulsion of the Sauk and Fox from lands east of the Mississippi River. Also in 1832, the Winnebago ceded their lands in Wisconsin south and east of the Wisconsin River and east of the Fox River to Green Bay. The Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa tribes still held title to land in northern Illinois outside of the Indian Boundary lines. In September 1833, a gathering of Native American chiefs and leaders was held in Chicago to "negotiate a treaty whereby the lands might be peaceably ceded, and the Indians removed therefrom, to make way for the tide of white emigration which had begun to set irresistibly and with ever increasing volume to the coveted region."[31] A Chicago historian, A.T. Andreas, writing in the 1880s, emphasized the disadvantaged position of the Native Americans, who had seen the effects of war on other Native Americans and experienced the ravages of epidemic on their own peoples:

> Black Hawk's ill-starred campaign, followed by the subsequent treaty made by his tribe, showed them the inevitable result [that] must follow resistance. They knew quite well that they had no alternative. They must sell their lands for such a sum and on such terms as the Government agents might deem it politic or just or generous to grant. The result of the treaty was what might have been expected. The Indians gave up their lands and agreed for certain considerations, the most of

[26] Herath, 21.
[27] A Potawatomi village was located to the south of Walker's Grove. (Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), Map 26, 140.)
[28] Ibid.
[29] Robert E. Sterling, *A Pictorial History of Will County*, Volume 1 (Joliet: Will County Historical Publications, 1975).
[30] Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History,* 173.
[31] Andreas, *History of Chicago,* 123.

> which did not redound to their profit, to cede all their lands to the Government, and to leave forever their homes and the graves of their fathers for a land far toward the setting sun, which they had never seen and of which they knew nothing.[32]

In the resulting treaty, the three tribes ceded land "along the western shore of Lake Michigan, and between this lake and the land ceded to the United States by the Winnebago nation at the treaty of Fort Armstrong. . . ."[33] As compensation, the tribes received land on the east bank of the Missouri River and a series of monetary payments.[34]

Immigration into Will County after the Black Hawk War increased so markedly that settlers began agitating for separation from Cook County. Residents of these settlements, then part of Cook County, demanded a more convenient place to record their land purchases and to pay their taxes. Accordingly, Dr. A. W. Bowen of Juliet and James Walker of Plainfield went to the state capital of Vandalia and successfully lobbied a detachment petition through the General Assembly. On 12 January 1836, an act was passed creating Will County from portions of Cook, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties. Will County also included at that time the northern part of what would later become Kankakee County. (In 1845, the boundaries of Will County were changed to their present configuration.) The county was named in honor of Dr. Conrad Will, a member of the state legislature who lived in the southern part of Illinois.[35]

On March 7, 1836, an election was held to select Will County's first public officials. They in turn set the price of tavern licenses and created a book for recording the ear markings of livestock. Since swine, sheep, cows, and other livestock freely roamed the city streets and open fields, settlers devised special ear markings consisting of slits, crops, and holes to identify their animals. These "brands" were recorded with pen and ink drawings in the county clerk's office.[36]

The primary concern of pioneer farmers was providing food for their families and livestock. Most farmers homesteaded around wooded land to provide building materials and fuel. On cultivated land, settlers would need to grub out tree stumps before breaking the prairie sod with a walking plow. This latter activity was often difficult, since the soil tended to ball up on the plow. In 1833, John Lane of Lockport invented the breaking plow, which eliminated this problem. Lane's innovation developed from an improvised steel plow attached to the plow molding board. It successfully cut the prairie sod so that the soil could be turned over.[37]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] As quoted in Andreas, *History of Chicago,* 124.

[34] It has been reported that Native Americans returned to Will County as late as 1900 on pilgrimages (Herath, 21):

> Though officially ousted, the Indians, being great travelers, made pilgrimages back to the land of their childhood for many years. Small ragtag bands of women and children were seen as late as the 1870s along the Du Page, wending their way north in the spring and south in the fall. In 1900 an old Indian man, a small boy and a horse pulling a travois were seen along the Kankakee River.

[35] Born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 3, 1779, Conrad Will migrated westward after studying medicine. He was instrumental in the formation of Jackson County from the lower half of Randolph County and part of present day Perry County. Will served first in the Illinois state Senate and later the state House of Representatives, until his death on June 11, 1835. On the following January 12, the state legislature passed an act sectioning the southern portion of Cook County in northern Illinois, naming it after Conrad Will. (Alice C. Storm, *Doctor Conrad Will* (Joliet, Illinois: Louis Joliet Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1917), 1–5.)

[36] Address of George H. Woodruff, *Sixth Annual Reunion of the Will County Pioneer Association* (Joliet: The Press Company, 1886), 5–6.

[37] Fayette Baldwin Shaw, *Will County Agriculture* (Will County Historical Society, 1980), 1. The site of Lane's farmstead at the northeast corner of 163rd Street and Gougar Road in Homer Township was marked with a historical marker commemorating his importance due to the invention of this plow. The marker was removed for its protection

The boom in agricultural production that coincided with the opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 was soon followed by the introduction of railroad service in the following decade. Plank roads were also a significant mode of transportation in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the late 1840s, the United States still owned 14,060,308 acres of land in Illinois. Between 1848 and 1857, much of this land passed into private hands. In addition to land that could be purchased from the government, alternate five mile Sections each side of the route planned for the Illinois and Michigan Canal in western Will County were offered for sale by the canal authority. Later, alternate six mile Sections on each side of the route granted to the Illinois Central Railroad (which passed through eastern Will County) were available for purchase from the railroad.[38]

In 1848, Illinois adopted township government as the basic level of local government, although in most locations functioning governments were not set up until 1850. By law, three services were to be provided by the townships: general assistance to the needy, property assessment for tax purposes, and maintenance of township roads and bridges. A unique feature of township government was the annual town meeting, held each April in all townships. This system continues to the present day.[39] Until the twentieth century, almost all public infrastructure (such as roads) was thus maintained by each township with local tax revenue.

Agricultural Development

By the 1850s, Illinois was a major agricultural state. Its corn production was 57.65 million bushels, which increased to 115.2 million in 1860, making it the leading corn producer in the nation.[40] Wheat was also a major crop—the state was fifth in wheat production in 1850 and first in 1860. Acreage in improved farmland increased two and one half times in the decade. Other principal farm crops were oats, rye, and barley. The average price for corn and wheat was $1.25 per bushel. In the early- to mid-1800s, agricultural implements were primitive and included reapers, iron plowshares, and hay tenders. The first McCormick reaper in the County appeared in Wheatland Township in 1846. Some local inventions that could be attached to modify the McCormick included gearing produced by W. Holmes of Hickory Creek in Will County, produced at Adams' Foundry, followed by a turf and stubble plow.[41]

The major crops in Will County historically have been corn and wheat, although wheat production declined in the later 1800s after infestations of the chinch bug and the army worm. (Wheat farming revived during World War I due to incentives from the U.S. government.) As early as 1850, corn was the

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during construction of the Interstate 355 tollway extension and associated overpasses. The marker was re-erected in July 2011 about 150 feet north of its original location.

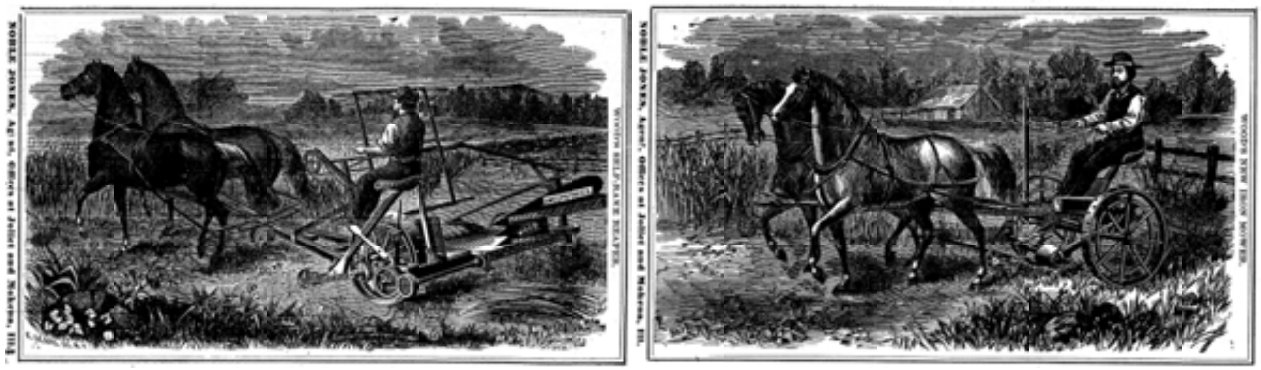
[38] The lands were sold to settlers and speculators. It is estimated that six million acres passed into the hands of speculators between 1849 and 1856. There were several types of speculators. Small farmers bought the land for pasturage, timber, or simply as an investment. Small businessmen also bought land as an investment, and in this group was included practically every prominent politician in Illinois except Abraham Lincoln. Professional speculators operated on a large scale, with corporations or individuals owning land in many states. Finally, East Coast capitalists invested in western lands—Samuel Allerton, a wealthy resident of New York, owned 2,000 acres in Frankfort, New Lenox, and Homer Townships in Will County and an additional 400 acres in Cook County. In time, settlers purchased the land from speculators. The Chicago Land Office was the last one opened and the last one closed, except for Springfield which took over all the unfinished work of all offices and remained open until 1877. (Shaw, *Will County Agriculture*, 1–2.)

[39] Bryan Smith, "Township Government in Illinois: A Rich History, A Vibrant Future." <http://www.comptrollerconnect.ioc.state.il.us>

[40] "Corn" was the medieval term used in England for the grain known later as wheat. Settlers given "Indian corn" (maize) by the Native Americans began to sow it themselves, and corn (maize) became one of the leading grain crops in the United States by the 1800s. (United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of Agriculture* (1936), 496.)

[41] Shaw, *Will County Agriculture*, 13.

leading crop in the survey area, since it could be fed to livestock as well as processed into other products.[42] Other grain crops included oats, barley (used in beer production), and rye. Potatoes were also grown in the region through the late 1800s, but several seasons of wet summers led to rotting crops, followed in subsequent years by potato bugs. Strawberries and grapes were grown in limited areas by the 1870s.[43]



Two of the variety of mechanical farm implements that were available to Will County farmers after the Civil War. Above left: A self-raking reaper. Above right: A mower. Both of these were advertised by Noble Jones, a farm implement dealer with offices in Joliet and Mokena, in the 1872 Will County directory.

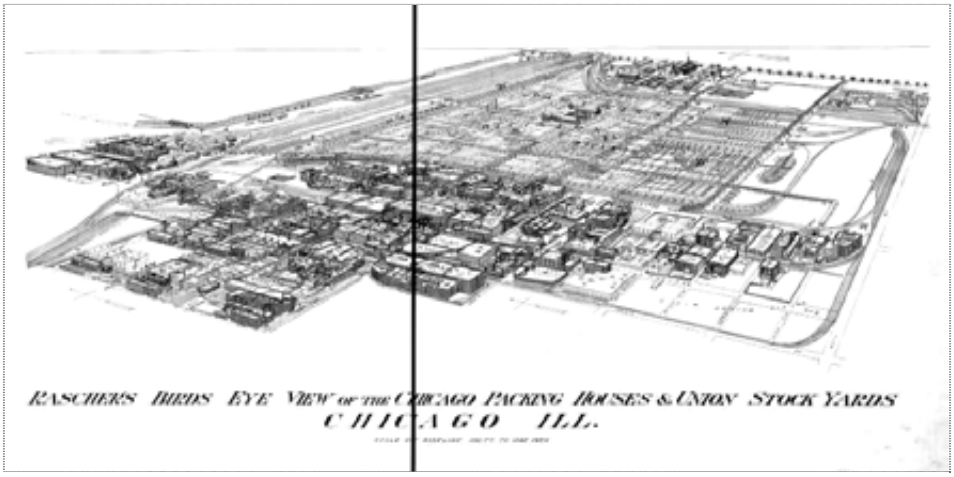
The change from self-sufficient farming to cash crop farming occurred during the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to that time, a farmstead typically had less than ten acres. Most farms were 80 acres in size by the end of the century, sometimes with additional parcels of 40 and 80 acres.[44] However, a few individuals in Will County owned larger parcels of land. In order to divide their parcels of land and enclosure pasturage, farmers used split-rail fencing and vegetation such as osage hedges. Other means included wire fencing, available after 1860, and barbed wire, introduced in the 1880s.[45]

Cattle, hogs, and sheep were also a significant part of northeastern Illinois agriculture. The Chicago Union Stock Yards, incorporated by act of the Illinois State Legislature in 1865, was a ready market. Horses were also bred, as they were an indispensable for the operation of farm machinery; oxen were also used into the 1870s. The dairy industry also was initially a significant part of the region's agriculture.[46]

The average value of a southern Illinois farm in 1910 was $15,000; in the northern part of the state it was $20,700. The annual value of farm products measured in dollars rose from $186 million in 1896 to $277 million in 1912; this was accompanied by an increase in production of field crops by 70 percent and 76 percent respectively for those years. During this time, wheat, rye, and oat production was on the decline. Livestock production remained fairly constant in overall value but sales of animals decreased by 50

[42] *Souvenir of Settlement and Progress of Will County Illinois* (Chicago: Historical Directory Publishing Co., 1884), 244.
[43] Shaw, *Will County Agriculture*, 8.
[44] It should be noted that plat maps from the period reflect land ownership, not tilled land or the extent (through land leasing or barter) of a farmstead.
[45] Ibid., 5.
[46] The dairy industry in the Midwest was centered on Elgin, Illinois, and the western counties around Chicago until the beginning of World War I, after which Wisconsin came to be known as "America's Dairyland." (Daniel Ralston Block, "The Development of Regional Institutions of Agriculture: The Chicago Milk Marketing Order" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1997), 49–52).

percent during this period. Vegetable production was led by root crops like potatoes, turnips, and carrots. Of orchard fruits, apples had the greatest production.[47]



Rascher's Birds Eye View of the Chicago Packing Houses & Union Stock Yards (Charles Rascher, 1890; Library of Congress collection).

With the development of the gasoline engine and adaptation to the tractor, working conditions on the farm improved considerably. Water could be pumped using gasoline engines instead of depending on the wind to run windmills. Engines also provided power to operate milking machines, grind feed, and run various kinds of machinery. The coming of the gas powered automobile and truck led to demands for better roads in Illinois. At the 1913 meeting of the Illinois Farmers' Institute, Illinois State Highway Engineer A.N. Johnson recognized these needs:

> In particular, there is a vast field for the development of motor truck traffic, which it has not been necessary heretofore to consider in plans for road improvement. It is believed that in many Sections of the State the opportunity is big for the development of this class of traffic, and provision should be made in the future for road building on a majority of the main roads for the eight and ten ton motor truck. Already truck farmers in the vicinity of Chicago have clubbed together in the purchase of a motor truck by which a 24-hour trip has been reduced to 8 hours, while the delivery of milk from the farm to the city by motor truck is already an economic proposition.
>
> It is believed therefore that the construction to be undertaken on our main roads should be a character that can withstand the heavy motor traffic, heavy horse drawn traffic, as well as the lighter forms of traffic, and that a serious mistake will be made to put down any other than rigid, durable forms of pavement. In Illinois this reduces the choice of the road surface to brick and concrete.[48]

With the implementation of the Civil Administrative Code in 1917, which formed the departmental structure within the executive branch, the Illinois Department of Agriculture was formed as a regulatory and promotional agency.[49]

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[47] Morrison, *Prairie State, A History,* 98.

[48] A.N. Johnson, "Cost of a System of Durable Roads for Illinois," in *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Illinois Farmers' Institute,* edited by H.A. McKeene (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Journal Company, 1913), 149.

[49] Information from the website of the Illinois Department of Agriculture <www.agr.state.il.us/aghistory.html>. The department actually dated back to 1819, when the Illinois Agricultural Association was formed. Although little is known of the activities of this early group other than a collection of letters by its founders, it established an

Farm machinery changed drastically in the early twentieth century with the introduction of internal combustion engines. At left, a tractor advertisement from Ruge & Wilke in Beecher, Illinois, illustrates the types of tractors available in the 1910s as well as listing the tremendous variety of other implements that were available. From the Prairie Farmer's Reliable Directory of Farmers and Breeders, Will and Southern Cook Counties, Illinois *(Chicago: Prairie Farmer Publishing Company, 1918), 349.*

Twentieth Century Developments

Land area of farms in the Chicago area declined from 88.7 percent of total area in 1900 to 84.9 percent in 1920 and to 80 percent in 1925. In the century between 1830 and 1925, the number of farms had peaked in 1900. By 1925, the total number of farms was 5,000 less than in 1880.[50] During that same period livestock production (including swine) peaked in 1900. For the counties within fifty miles of Chicago, the average number of dairy cows per square mile of farmland declined from 46.1 in 1900 to 42.8 in 1925. Acreage in cereal production showed a gradual increase after 1925. Sheep and wool production peaked in 1880 and horses and mules in 1920, declining as a direct result of the introduction of the tractor and motor truck. Dairy production in the Chicago region peaked in 1900 and declined markedly in the following two decades.[51]

Although the Great Depression of the 1930s had a dramatic impact on all Americans, for American farmers the economic decline began a decade earlier. Numerous factors led to the decline of the farm economy in the post-World War I era. To meet the needs of the wartime economy that was feeding American and European populations, American farmers increased production by cultivating lands that formerly were kept fallow. Following the war, farmers continued this trend, overproducing despite reductions in demand. As commodity prices fell, so did the standard of living of many farmers since prices in the rest of the economy were increasing. Farmers went into debt, mortgaged their property, and in many cases lost their farms to creditors.

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organization that became the Illinois State Agricultural Agency in 1853. This semi-public organization continued to function until replaced in 1871 by the Department of Agriculture under the supervision of the State Board of Agriculture.

[50] Edward A. Duddy, *Agriculture in the Chicago Region* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1929), 3.

[51] Ibid., 4.

The coming of the Great Depression deepened the crisis further. Agricultural production in Illinois collapsed from almost $6.25 billion in 1929 to $2.5 billion in 1933. As unemployment in industrial centers soared, some people fled to rural communities, putting additional pressure on rural areas as most did not have access to welfare relief.[52] Within days of the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt, legislation was formulated that Congress would later pass as the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The numerous adjustment programs initiated under the New Deal led to limitations in agricultural production in order to raise crop prices to acceptable levels. These included twenty percent of the land or 1,218,062 acres used in corn production being retired; over 1,000,000 acres of land in wheat production were also retired.[53] In 1934, 15,734,600 acres of land were in production, for a total crop value of $218,569,000 nationally; this grew to 17,692,100 acres and a crop value of $273,931,000 the following year.[54]

Soybeans were first planted in the late 1930s as a forage crop mainly to be fed to dairy cows and cattle. Although some soybeans were processed through a threshing machine and sold on the market it was not a popular grain product. Ten or fifteen years later, however, soybeans became a valuable food and commercial product as new uses were developed with the assistance of state and federal agricultural programs.

During World War II, farmers were encouraged by the federal government to increase their production by the use of power machinery and the latest scientific processes. When a decline in demand arose, the farmer was forced to continue his heavy production rate. Cash crop income in 1950 was $2.038 billion nationally. Of this livestock and livestock products accounted for $1.26 billion; crops, $763 million; and government pay for adaptation of production program, with $10.6 million paid to the farmers in Illinois. Principal crops were corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, hay, fruit, and greenhouse products. The average value of a farm in Illinois in 1950 was $28,400.[55] The farm population in Illinois declined from 1,341,104 in 1900 to 772,521 in 1950.[56]

The abandoning of farms and the consolidation of small farms into large ones resulted in many buildings being razed or abandoned. Moreover, changes in farming meant that many old farm buildings were too small, or unsuitable for other reasons, and were replaced by larger, more suitable and flexible structures. By the twentieth century many barns were constructed by professional builders following plans influenced by farm journals and using mass-produced lumber from a nearby yard or sawmill. In 1987, there were 1,239 farms in Will County covering 328,729 acres. Ten years later, the continued decline in agricultural production in northeastern Illinois was apparent, as farmland was lost to suburban development. By 1997, there were only 910 farms in Will County, and though the average farm was larger, the total acreage devoted to agriculture had declined by more than 10 percent to 293,526 acres. After dipping to only 830 farms in the county in 2002, the number of farms in the county increased slightly by 2007 to 877. The total acreage in the county continued to decline steadily, however, and by 2007 only 220,851 acres remained in agricultural use, representing less than half the total area of the county and a loss of more than 100,000 acres in the twenty years since 1987. In recent years almost half the farm acreage in the county remained planted in corn, with soybeans covering another quarter of the acreage. Raising beef cattle, dairy, and hogs also remained significant cash products in the county. The average farm sold crops worth more than $145,000 in 2007. Between 2002 and 2007, the value of products sold directly to individual consumers by Will County farms more than doubled to $1.3 million, reflecting the increasing popularity of farmer's markets and vegetable crops in the county.[57]

[52] Morrison, *Prairie State, A History,* 108.
[53] United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of Agriculture* (1936), 1155–1156.
[54] Ibid., 1146.
[55] Morrison, *Prairie State, A History*, 116.
[56] Salamon, 35.
[57] Ibid.; Census of Agriculture.

The continuing importance of Will County's agriculture is recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which considers nearly 75 percent of the county, or more than 400,000 acres, to be prime farmland:

> Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. It is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent. In the last two decades, a trend in land use in some parts of [Will County] has been the loss of some prime farmland to industrial and urban uses. The loss of prime farmland to other uses puts pressure on marginal lands, which generally are more erodible, droughty, and less productive and cannot be easily cultivated.[58]

By 1997, there were 79,000 Illinois farms utilizing 28 million acres and about 80 percent of the total land area in the state. Illinois was the leading state in agricultural-related industries such as soybean processing, meat packing, dairy manufacturing, feed milling, vegetable processing, machinery manufacturing, foreign exports, and service industries.[59]

Recent decades have seen tremendous suburban growth in formerly rural areas near Chicago, particularly in the northern portions of Will County. Along with this suburban development has come conflict between the "new" settlers and established farmers:

> A while back, farmer Ray Dettmering was arrested for plowing his fields late at night in Matteson, Illinois, a rural community 30 miles southwest of Chicago. The 28-year-old farmer told police officers that he needed to prepare his fields for spring planting after days of rain had put him behind schedule. The real problem? A few years earlier, subdivisions had been built near Dettmering's corn and soy bean fields. The new residents claimed they couldn't hear their TVs above the tractor noise. Others were having trouble sleeping. Two neighbors complained to the police, and Dettmering was booked and fingerprinted. "What were these people thinking when they moved to the country?" he asked. "It's not like these farms snuck up on them."[60]

Perhaps in response to incidents such as this, the Illinois Farm Bureau issued a booklet in 1999 titled *The Code of County Living*, targeted at former city dwellers and suburbanites who have moved to rural areas on the metropolitan fringe. The booklet discusses the comparative limitations of rural living compared to more established suburban areas.

> In rural Illinois, you'll find working farms. You'll also find a level of infrastructure and services generally below that provided through the collective wealth of an urban community. Many other factors, too, make the country living experience very different from what may be found in the city.[61]

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[58] *Soil Survey of Will County, Illinois* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, 2004), 187.
[59] Census of Agriculture.
[60] Charles Lockwood, "Sprawl," *Hemispheres*, United Airlines magazine (September 1999), 82–84.
[61] *The Code of Country Living* (Bloomington, Illinois: Illinois Farm Bureau, 1999), 3.

Custer Township Developmental History

The natural topography of Custer Township included level prairie with some areas of forest. Native Americans had sometimes encamped near the Kankakee River; one native mound near present-day Custer Park was identified and excavated as early as 1878, and specimens of native pottery were found.[62]

The first European-American settlers of present-day Custer Township arrived between 1836 and 1840. Andrew Yeates and Thomas Hatton were the first permanent settlers. Yeates, a native of Ireland, was a relatively prosperous immigrant who established a farm in Section 34E, site 624 in the present survey. Thomas Hatton was a brother-in-law of Andrew Yeates. Yeates and Hatton acquired some of the first privately owned land in the township at the public land sale in November 1838.[63] Jedediah Smith had established a farm in the northeast quarter of Section 3W by 1842.[64]

James Hines came to the township in 1846. Other early settlers included John S. Hoyte, Joseph Wood, Jeremiah Gray, Elias Winchell, Patrick Judge, and R. S. Noble. Henry Hudson, a native of Ohio, also arrived in the township in 1846. Stephen F. Hanford, a native of Ohio, arrived in 1848, and acquired more than 1,000 acres of land. Other settlement by 1846 included G. H. Blanchard, John Wing, Orlin Miller, and Abram and John Wurts.[65]

In 1850, Reed Township was first organized. The township included all of present-day Reed and Custer Townships, with virtually all of the settlers residing in what is now the Custer Township portion. The name of Clinton Township was suggested by the County Commissioners, but at the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the township, it was decided to name it Reid Township, in honor of John Reid, a pioneer settler and early postmaster. [66] (By the 1860s, the name was commonly written Reed Township.) The 1850 census indicates that the population of the township was 183 persons among 33 families.

Richard Warner, a native of Ohio, came to present-day Custer Township in 1853. Warner had been a member of the State Senate of Ohio. He served as township supervisor for several years. John Kahler, a native of Pennsylvania, was another early settler.[67] In 1854 the Chicago & Alton Railroad was extended through the township, with a small station built in section 8 of present-day Reed Township.[68]

By 1860, most areas had been settled and initial farmsteads developed, and the population of Reed (with Custer) Township had increased to 785 in at least 150 households. However, as late as 1865, the vast majority of the inhabitants of the original Reed Township resided in what is now Custer Township.

The earliest settlement in the township occurred near the Kankakee River, which provided an important means of transportation in the nineteenth century. Farm products were shipped by river barge down the Kankakee River and up the Des Plaines River toward Chicago.[69] Steamboats landed in Custer Township at a river pier in Section 36E known as "Warner's Landing," which was considered the farthest point upriver on the Kankakee that was navigable during the dry season. In the 1870s, Warner's Landing included a store and blacksmith shop. A smaller river pier was located near the mouth of Horse Creek,

[62] *Wilmington Advocate*, August 30, 1878.
[63] Woodruff (1878), 608; Illinois Public Domain Land Tract Sales Database.
[64] *Will County Property Owners, 1842* (Will County Historical Society, July 1973, republished 1992).
[65] Woodruff (1878), 609.
[66] Woodruff et al., 464.
[67] Woodruff (1878), 609.
[68] Note that the name "Chicago and Alton Railroad" was not adopted until an 1862 reorganization of the company. It was later known simply as the Alton Railroad. The Alton Railroad was purchased by the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad in 1947. After a 1972 merger, the line became part of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad.
[69] Woodruff (1878), 607.

known as Horse Creek Landing. This pier also was used to ship grain to market.[70] Stone was quarried near Warner's Landing on the Smith Estate in Section 26 near the river, as shown on historic atlas maps.

Around 1870, a new railroad was proposed to cross through the southeastern corner of Custer Township, with Warner's Landing the likely site of a proposed depot. In 1871, construction began on the new bridge needed to carry this railroad, the "Decatur & State Line Railroad," across the Kankakee River, and five stone piers were completed. However, no superstructure was ever completed. The Great Chicago Fire of October 8–10, 1871, and the Great Boston Fire of November 9, 1872, disrupted funding for the planned railroad and the line was never built.[71]

In the years immediately after the end of the Civil War, coal mining emerged as a major industry in Reed Township. (Refer to the summary report for Reed Township, completed in January 2011, for a discussion of the history of coal mining in the area.[72]) As mining companies built facilities in the western part of the township and the newly established City of Braidwood grew rapidly to house miners and their families, the farmers residing in the eastern two-thirds of the township felt that their interests were neglected. Starting in spring 1875, the citizens of eastern Reed Township began to organize for the division of the township.[73] The following petition was presented to the Will County board in June 1875:

> To the Honorable, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Will, State of Illinois, severally and specially:
>
> At the next session of Our Honorable Board, there will be presented for your cordial consideration a petition from residents of the town of Reed, Will County, said State, for the division of said town, making two townships of one. In order that your Honorable Board may be truthfully advised in the premises, and that you may each of you be prepared to vote understandingly upon the petition presented, it has been thought advisable to present in brief some of the many claims in behalf of a division as so petitioned for: the requisite number of square miles as required by the statute is given in each subdivision of the town; the requisite number of voters also join in the petition; the requisite notice has been given, and in fact all the needful requirements of the law in such cases made and provided have been complied with, so that there is no legal obstacle to the action of the Board in carrying out the prayer of the petition and in subdividing the town as requested.
>
> We therefore beg that your Honorable Body will consider the following as among a large number of solid reasons why the town should be divided:
>
> FIRST – Under the existing organization the town has lost its equalization. The city of Braidwood absorbs the majority of the town offices, and it being located at the outer verge or north western limit of the town renders the southern portion of the town inaccessible to the town offices and officers, except by burdensome travel; and the probability is that as Braidwood commands the largest vote there will be no change in this regard, and that while the southern portion of the town is allowed to vote it will be impossible for that portion of the town to be represented by the choice of town officers, the greater vote absorbing the loss, and the result being that while the city of Braidwood has more than its full quota of town officers the southern half of the town – and that represented by your petitioners – is left virtually without local representatives. The effect being virtually taxation without representation.
>
> SECOND – The city of Braidwood is a mining city. The majority of its citizens are engaged in mining interests or thoroughly identified with them, and are only transiently interested in the welfare of the town. Taxation falls lightly upon the majority of the residents of that city, as they only take up residence there until they can do better elsewhere, and for this reason can have no permanent interest in the town,

[70] Woodruff (1878), 608, 610.
[71] Ibid., 608.
[72] *Rural Historic Structural Survey of Reed Township, Will County, Illinois* (Prepared for Will County Land Use Department and Will County Historic Preservation Commission by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., January 2011).
[73] *Wilmington Advocate*, May 21, 1875.

> excepting so far as it effects their temporary comfort. Under the existing condition of things, then, as it would naturally be supposed, the city of Braidwood and its immediate vicinity absorbs all or nearly all the appropriations for improvements raised by the town, and it becomes almost impossible for the southern end of the town to have needed repairs and improvements cared or provided for.
>
> THIRD – The portion of the town represented by petitioners is an agricultural district, and must necessarily have wants which are distinct from a mining district, and it is in accordance with the policy and framework of American government that dissimilar interests should not come in conflict, but that each should be self-preserved and each should be self -represented; that the miner should have his separate wants supplied from his separate territory and its immediate resources, and the name of the agricultural and farming interests, and thus avoid an "irrepressible conflict."[74]

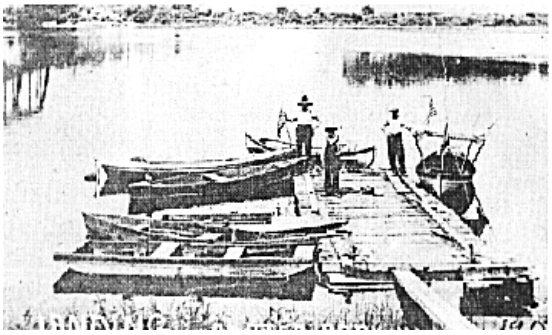
In 1876 the Will County Board of Supervisors approved the division of the township. The western portion of the township retained the original name, Reed Township, while the geographically larger but more sparsely populated eastern portion became Custer Township, in honor of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, who had been killed at the Battle of Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876. The first township officials included George W. Petro, Supervisor; M. L. Russell, Clerk; I. T. Palmer, Assessor; and John Evans, Collector. John Meadern and Lewis Monteith were Justices of the Peace, James Bradford was Constable, and Henry Miller, A. G. Taylor, and Ira Smith were Commissioners of Highways.[75] A new post office was established at Horse Creek Landing in the township, named Custer after the township.[76] The settlement at Horse Creek continued to develop, and a new iron bridge in two spans was built across the creek near the Kankakee River in 1878 by the King Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio. At about this time, a creamery was also built in the vicinity of Horse Creek Landing.[77]

In 1880, the Wabash Railroad opened a new route across Will County, crossing the Kankakee River and extending diagonally through sections 19, 24, 25, 36W, and 35W of Custer Township. The railroad bridge crossing the Kankakee River was built in 1879 and included stone piers and abutments and an iron superstructure.[78] A depot was built on the J. J. Palmer and T. J. Hymes farms in Section 19, where the rail line crossed the historic road parallel to the Kankakee River (present-day Illinois Highway 113) and near the site of Horse Creek Landing. The railroad reinforced the development of this site as a town, with a new depot erected circa 1883. Once a rail depot was established at the town, the use of the river for shipment of farm products quickly came to an end. In the early 1880s, the town was called Custer, after the township. In 1885, the post office was renamed Custer Park. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Custer Park had a post office, store, and grain elevator. The population of the township peaked in 1900 at 610 persons, an increase from 545 persons in 1890.[79] There were no organized church congregations in Custer Township; even in the nineteenth century, residents attended services in Braidwood or Wilmington.[80] Custer Park never grew into a larger settlement and it remains an unincorporated hamlet.

The riverfront area around Custer Park and Horse Creek became a major summertime vacation destination in the 1880s and 1890s. Wealthy fisherman would visit the area and camp near the mouth of Horse Creek.[81] A major business was the Custer Bowery Amusement Park, which drew summer vacationers from Chicago and offered boat rides on the Kankakee River, among other activities. The park

[74] Quoted in *Wilmington Advocate*, June 4, 1875.
[75] Woodruff (1878), 610.
[76] *Wilmington Advocate*, October 19, 1877.
[77] *Wilmington Advocate*, December 21, 1877, January 25, 1878, and March 22, 1878.
[78] *Wilmington Advocate*, August 29, 1879.
[79] Stevens (1907), 74.
[80] Woodruff (1878), 609.
[81] *Wilmington Advocate*, October 20, 1882, reporting on the visit of the Cincinnati Star Fishing Club.

was gone by the 1920s, and the main park site is now the playground of the Custer Park school.[82] A hotel business in Custer Park grew out of the activities of Kankakee & Western Ice Company, which began operation in Custer Park in the 1880s. The hotel was constructed in 1883.[83] This hotel was later purchased by A. Shinaberger and for many years was known as Shinaberger's Hotel.[84] Ardie B. Shinaberger was a native of Porter County, Indiana, who had trained as an electrical engineer. After fifteen years working for various telegraph and electric power companies around the Midwest, he moved to Custer Park in 1904 and opened a general mercantile store.[85] Custer Park also featured a dance hall built by the Wabash Railroad.[86]



Above, left: The Kankakee River landing at Custer Park in 1904. Above, right: View north from the Custer Park depot of the riverfront and Shinaberger's Hotel in Custer Park. Below, left: View of Main Street (present-day Illinois Route 113) in Custer Park, looking southeast, early twentieth century. Below, right: This apartment building at 35246–35252 Grant Avenue in Custer Park may also be a former resort lodging building.

In about 1902–1903, the Wabash Railroad raised its grade and built a new bridge over the Kankakee River; newspaper reports throughout the 1880s and 1890s make mention of repeated flooding of the line in this vicinity. The steel bridge supported on limestone piers still exists as a prominent local structure (refer to Bridges, below). Telephone service came to Custer Township in 1905, when thirty residences

[82] Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Kankakee River State Park (http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R2/kankakee.htm); "A Touch of History," Reed Custer School District (http://www.rc255.will.k12.il.us/cpes/Homepage/past.html).
[83] "The summer resort at Custer," *Wilmington Advocate*, March 9, 1883; April 13, 1883; grand opening reported, June 22, 1883.
[84] David A. Belden, *Will County: Postcard History Series* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 113. Belden gives the name as "Art Shinaberger" and states that Shinaberger purchased the hotel in 1885, but the information in Stevens (writing in 1907) is likely more accurate. The hotel building still existed as late as the 1990s, but was demolished circa 2000.
[85] Stevens (1907), 841.
[86] *Wilmington Advocate*, July 9, 1886.

gained service.[87] In the first decades of the twentieth century, the township lost population, dropping to 533 persons in 1910 and as low as 442 persons in 1930.

Around 1928, a concrete road was built on the south side of the Kankakee River from Wilmington to Kankakee (present-day Illinois Highway 113). The development of this road greatly improved access to Custer Township and encouraged the further development of private camps and summer cottages along the river.[88] The population of the township began to rebound in the 1930s with this new development, and the 1940 census showed 548 persons residing in the township.

Postcard with scenes from the early twentieth century Polish Roman Catholic Union Camp Gierye in Custer Park.

With the end of traditional underground shaft mining in 1928, strip mining began in the area. The Northern Illinois Coal Corporation purchased the last mine shaft in 1928 and commenced strip mining on the property, in section 4 of Reed Township adjacent to Custer Township. In the strip mining operation, the topsoil and overlying rock were removed to the depth of the coal seam, which lay between thirty and fifty feet below the surface. The machinery moved forward 300 feet per day, taking off the soil in a thirty foot wide strip. The coal seam itself was only about three feet thick, but each day's soil removal exposed 3,000 tons of coal. Once the coal was exposed, electric shovels were used to scoop the coal into railroad cars. In contrast to the old shaft mines, which required 500 miners to produce 200,000 tons of coal per year at the mines' peak, the strip mining operation could produce 30,000 tons per month with only 135 men in the entire company, using only one electric shovel.[89] In the 1930s and 1940s, strip mining was in progress in Sections 3 and 10 of Custer Township and adjacent portions of Reed Township. Strip mining in Will County ended by 1974.[90] Portions of Sections 3 and 10 in Custer Township were left unsuitable for agriculture or other development. The piled up earth at the strip mined areas became overgrown with shrubs and trees, while the low-lying areas became ponds and wetlands. In recent decades, the strip mined areas have been reused as privately owned recreational areas, such as the Braidwood Recreation Club (established in 1951 and including large portions of section 10) and the Crow's Nest Club in section 3.

Starting in the 1930s, much of the land fronting the Kankakee River in sections 27, 28, 35, and 36 of the township was acquired by the Illinois Light and Power Co. (predecessor to today's Commonwealth Edison), perhaps with the intention of building a power plant in the area. This development never occurred, and the power company turned over 1,715 acres to the state in 1956, which became Kankakee

[87] *Wilmington Advocate*, March 10, 1905.
[88] Maue (1928), 188. The road on the north side of the river, present-day Illinois Highway 102 in Wesley Township, was built at the same time.
[89] Ibid., 350–351.
[90] *Directory of Coal Mines in Illinois: Will County* (Champaign: Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability, Illinois State Geological Survey, July 2009).

River State Park. The park extends approximately seven miles on both sides of the river from Custer Township into Kankakee County.[91]

Strip mine near Braidwood, January 30, 1939. Source: photo album in the collection of the Wilmington Public Library, donated by Charles I. Raworth.

Removing top soil for strip mining of coal, 1940s. Source: photo album in the collection of the Wilmington Public Library, donated by Charles I. Raworth.

[91] Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Kankakee River State Park (http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R2/kankakee.htm).

Debris piles of soil following coal mining, 1940s. Source: photo album in the collection of the Wilmington Public Library, donated by Charles I. Raworth. The numerous parallel ridges that resulted from strip mining are a distinctive landscape feature in Reed Township today.

In recent decades, although Custer Township has not experienced the explosive growth seen in other areas of Will County, the population has steadily increased, peaking in 2000 when 1,463 persons lived in the township; however, the population declined slightly to 1,430 persons by the 2010 census. This represented relatively steady growth since 1990, when 1,110 persons lived in the township. Recent residential development has been concentrated in new subdivisions close to the Kankakee River, while the portions of the township inland from the river have remained open agricultural land.

Aerial view of Custer Park, 1955. The Wabash Railroad bridge and depot and Shinaberger's Hotel are visible.

Above, left: Custer Township Hall, 35332 Grant Avenue in Custer Park. Above, right: View northwest along Illinois Route 113, the former "Main Street" of Custer Park. Below: The Custer Park War Memorial, located on Grant Avenue opposite the township hall.

Schools

The first school was established in 1846.[92] As shown on historic maps, by 1862 present-day Custer Township contained six one-room schoolhouses. The 1909 atlas map shows a seventh schoolhouse in Section 35E. By 1920, there were six school districts and six schools in Custer Township.[93]

One-room Schoolhouse circa 1920	Location	Status
Tilden Lawn School	Section 30E, SW 1/4	Moved to Custer Park, 1922. Demolished, 1928.
Yeates School	Section 34E, SW 1/4	Closed, 1940s. Demolished.
Frazier School	Probably Section 35E, SE 1/4	Closed prior to 1920s? Demolished.
Washington School	Probably Section 3W, SW 1/4	Closed, 1940s. Demolished.
Evans School	Original building, Section 29E, NW 1/4, perhaps known as "Gray School." New building by 1909 in Section 30, NE 1/4	Closed, 1940s. Demolished.
Robinson School	Section 25W, SW 1/4	Closed, 1948. Demolished.
Johnson [Robertson] School	Section 11W, SE 1/4	Closed, 1948. Converted to residence; site 512 in the present survey.

In 1922, the former Tilden Lawn School building was moved two miles north into Custer Park to serve as the village school. By 1928 the building had outlived its usefulness, and it was demolished and replaced with a new building.[94] The new school building in Custer Park was photographed in 1955, and apparently consisted of several classrooms in a wood-framed one-story structure.

In the early 1940s, the Washington, Evans, and Yeates Schools were consolidated with the village school. The last two rural one-room schoolhouses in the township, Robinson School and Johnson School, closed in 1948.[95] The rural one-room schoolhouses of Reed Township were closed in the late 1950s, and the Reed Township and Custer Township schools were consolidated into the new Custer Park Community Consolidated District 44C. This school district built a new building in 1959 in Custer Park, replacing the small 1928 schoolhouse. The new 1959 building included six classrooms. In 1965, an expansion containing six additional classrooms was completed.[96]

Left: The circa 1928 Tilden Lawn School in Custer Park in 1955. Right: The Reed Custer Township High School in Braidwood in 1955.

[92] Woodruff (1878), 609.
[93] Farrington, 172.
[94] Maue (1928), 189.
[95] Farrington, 297.
[96] Ibid., 298.

Custer Township never had its own high school. Rather, students wishing to continue their education beyond eighth grade attended the high school in Braidwood. Reed Custer Township High School was organized in Braidwood in 1915, at first using space in the East School in Braidwood. By 1928 it had four teachers and forty-seven students.[97] Following a referendum, a new high school was constructed on the site of the former Grove School, on South School Street. The building was opened by September 1929.[98]

The Custer Park and Braidwood school districts ultimately merged to form Reed Custer Community Unit School District 255, covering all of both townships. Since 2003, the 1959 school building in Custer Park has been operated as the Reed Custer Primary School for kindergarten and first grade; the Reed Custer Intermediate School for grades two through five occupies a 1953 elementary school building in Braidwood, much expanded by additions and incorporating the formerly separate 1929 high school building on the same site; the Reed Custer Middle School for grades six through eight; and the Reed Custer High School. The middle school and high school share a new campus on Comet Drive at the southeastern edge of the city.

The Reed Custer Primary School in Custer Park, originally built in 1959 and expanded in 1965.

[97] Maue, 352.
[98] Farrington, 293.

Cemeteries

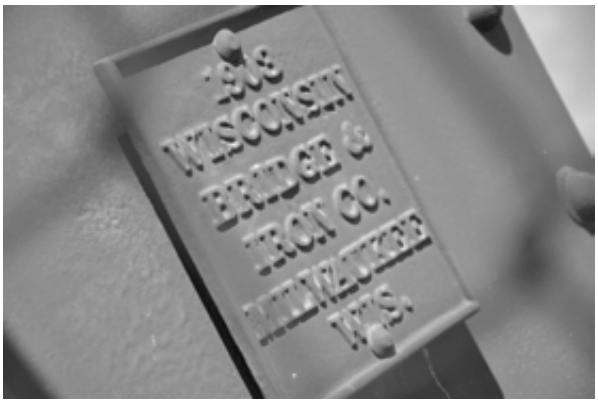
There are no historic church buildings in Custer Township. There are three historic public cemeteries.

Custer Park Cemetery is located in Section 24 just east of Horse Creek. It has existed since at least the 1870s as the public cemetery for the township, and thus pre-dates the construction of the Wabash Railroad and the establishment of Custer Park nearby.

Oakwood Cemetery is located in Section 15 and dates to 1872. It is also maintained by the township as a public cemetery. The nearby Brown Cemetery is a small family cemetery that was designated a Will County landmark in 2009. It is also owned by Custer Township.

Bridges

When the Wabash Railroad raised its grade circa 1902–1903, the project included a new bridge over the Kankakee River. The bridge crosses the Kankakee River between Wesley and Custer townships in Section 19. This bridge is supported on limestone piers (three of which are in the middle of the river) and includes three identical steel Pratt truss spans. This bridge is now part of the Wauponsee Glacial Trail. As a local example of a steel Pratt truss type bridge, this structure is judged to be eligible for listing as a Will County landmark and in the National Register.



The former Wabash Railroad bridge over the Kankakee River in Section 19. This bridge has a plaque dated 1903 reading "Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Co. Milwaukee Wis." but the year 1902 is marked on the superstructure of the bridge at the south end.

Upstream of the Wabash Railroad bridge are five limestone piers that were constructed in 1871 to support a bridge over the Kankakee River for the proposed "Decatur & State Line Railroad." As noted above, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and Great Boston Fire of 1872 disrupted funding for the railroad, and the bridge piers were the only portion ever built. As locally prominent, 140-year-old structures, the bridge piers are judged to be Will County landmark-eligible.

The Decatur & State Line Railroad bridge piers in the Kankakee River in Section 36.

CHAPTER 3

AMERICAN RURAL ARCHITECTURE

Farmstead Planning

The relationship of the farmhouse to the barn and other farm buildings was generally determined by five factors: topography, weather conditions, convenience and labor efficiency, land survey organization, and, most importantly for some settlers, ethnic or regional tradition. A south facing orientation secured maximum light; an orientation toward the east allowed a barn to place its back against west prevailing winds. Local snow accumulation also influenced barn locations. In much of the Midwest, the geometric grid of roads and survey lines was basically aligned with compass directions, and farmers often lined up their barns and farm buildings in conformity. Where the terrain was more rugged, farmers followed the contours of the land in laying out buildings. In terms of labor efficiency, the barn did not need to be near the house except in areas where winters were cold and harsh. It was desirable to locate the barn closer to the field and other outbuildings than to the house.

Development of Balloon Framing

The initial settlement of Will County coincided with one of the most revolutionary developments in American building construction: the introduction of the balloon frame. Referred to as "that most democratic of building technologies,"[99] the balloon frame allowed the construction of a house with a minimum of labor and a moderate amount of carpentry skills. The key to the success of the balloon frame was the proper construction and erection sequence of its components. Prior to the development of the balloon frame, builders using timber for the construction of houses and other structures used structural systems such as the box frame or braced frame. It utilized heavy timbers to form posts, girts, girders, braces, and rafters, all fastened together with traditional carpentry joining such as mortise and tenons, splices, dovetails, and others. This type of structural system required builders to have a crew of five or six men to raise and set the heavy timbers.[100] The materials used in the construction of a balloon frame structure consisted of milled lumber that was much lighter in weight than heavy timbers.[101]

Credit for the development of the balloon frame is usually given to George Washington Snow of Chicago,[102] although others give note that the originator of the system was a carpenter, Augustine Taylor, who with Snow built the first structure using balloon frame construction, St. Mary's Church, in 1833.[103] At that time Chicago lacked a sawmill to produce the cut lumber, but mills were present in Indiana and in

[99] Michael P. Conzen, "The Birth of Modern Chicago," in *1848: Turning Point for Chicago, Turning Point for the Region* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1998), 22.

[100] For a thorough discussion of the early architectural history of Illinois, see Thomas Edward O'Donnell, "An Outline of the History of Architecture in Illinois," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Springfield, Illinois, 1931); and Thomas Edward O'Donnell, "Recording the Early Architecture of Illinois in the Historic American Buildings Survey," *Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions for the Year 1934* (Springfield, Illinois, 1934).

[101] Advances in milling techniques in the early 1800s and the invention and development of machinery to produce nails from iron in the late 1700s and early 1800s preceded the development of the balloon frame.

[102] Paul E. Sprague, "Chicago Balloon Frame: The Evolution During the 19th Century of George W. Snow's System for Erecting Light Frame Buildings from Dimension Lumber and Machine-made Nails," in *The Technology of Historic American Buildings*, H. Ward Jandl, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Foundation for Preservation Technology for the Association for Preservation Technology, 1983), 36.

[103] Fred W. Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850–1920* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 14.


Traditional heavy timber braced framing is used at the historic bank barn on the Gooding–Issert Farmstead, site 725 in Section 6 of Wesley Township.

Plainfield in northwestern Will County.[104] However, these mills were relatively far away, and transportation of milled heavy timbers difficult and expensive. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a more economical construction system.

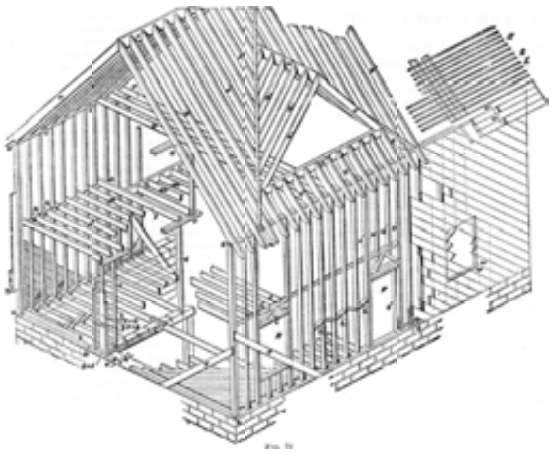
The classic balloon frame consists of the following elements:[105]

- A sill, made from a large section of milled lumber (e.g., 4x8) or two or more smaller pieces (two 2x8s), set on a masonry or concrete foundation,
- Floor joists (2x10, 2x12, etc.), typically at 16 inches on center,[106] reinforced by diagonal bridging, nailed to the sill and nailed to:
- Studs (2x4 or 2x6), also set at 16 inches on center, running the full height of the building wall, to which is nailed:
- Ledgers to support the second floor joints,
- Exterior wall sheathing, consisting of wood boards (1x8), often set at a diagonal to create a structural diaphragm,
- A top plate on the stud wall, on which are set:
- Roof rafters (2x10, 2x12, etc.) set at 16 to 24 inches on center, to which roof sheathing consisting of wood boards are nailed, followed by wood roofing shingles,
- Exterior wall siding,
- Flooring nailed to the wood joists, consisting of two layers of wood boards (a rough board subfloor followed by a finished wood strip surface),
- Interior wall finish, consisting of wood lath nailed to the wood studs, covered by two to three layers of plaster.

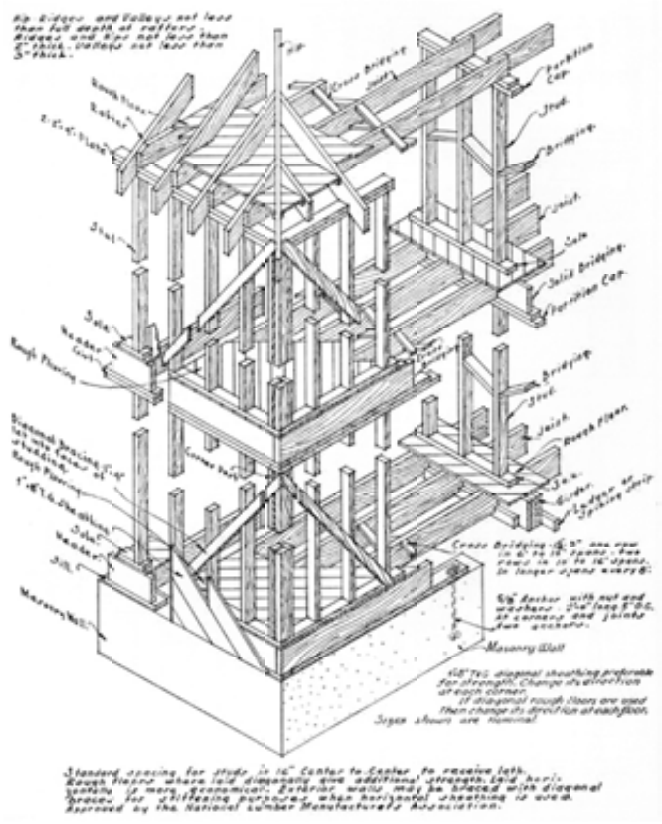
Since a carpenter with one or two helpers could frame and sheath a small one story house in one week, the balloon allowed a settler to have a dwelling on their land in a short amount of time. In addition, there was a 40 percent savings in the amount of material to enclose the same volume as compared to the braced frame.[107] Additions were as easy to construct as the original house, and easier to frame into than if braced framing was used. Another benefit of the balloon frame's light weight was that it allowed a structure to be

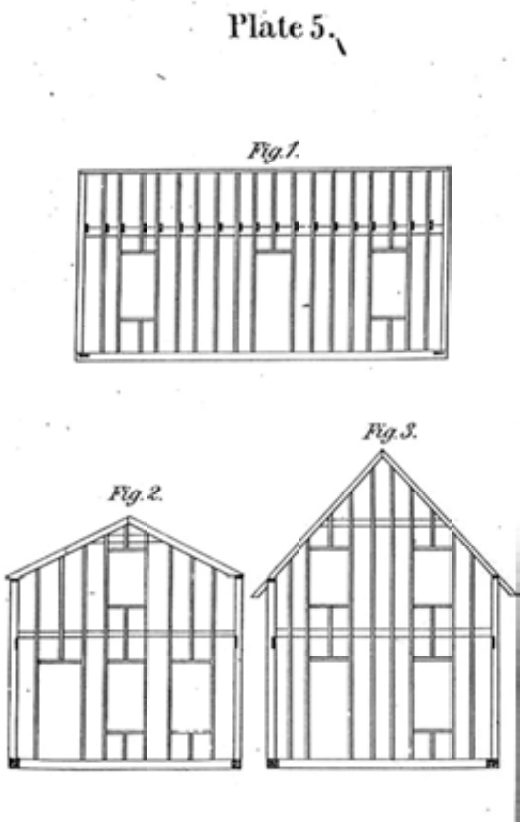
[104] Sprague, "Chicago Balloon Frame," 37.
[105] As with any new system or technique, there was a period of transition in which older framing methods were used alongside balloon framing. This is discussed in Sprague, "Chicago Balloon Frame."
[106] Platform framing, also called Western framing, developed from balloon framing, allowing floor joists to be spaced up to 24 inches on center. Platform framing involved setting each floor level as a platform on the stud walls, allowing the use of shorter stud walls.
[107] Peterson, 9 and 11.

moved more easily to a new site, if more room was needed on a property for other buildings or if additional land was obtained.



*The balloon frame derived its name from the lightweight framing that allowed a large volume of space to be enclosed economically. The drawing shown above is from was published nearly sixty years after the system was developed [*Masonry, Carpentry, Joinery*, International Library of Technology Volume 30 (1889; reprint Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1980), Carpentry section, drawing between pages 101 and 102]. Above right: Twentieth century plank frame barns, like this barn at the Curl Farmstead (now the John Wesley Preserve owned by the Will County Forest Preserve District, site 775 in Section 12 of Wesley Township) use balloon framing techniques. Below right is a drawing of balloon framing from 1894 [William E. Bell,* Carpentry Made Easy, or the Science and Art of Framing *(Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1894), plate 5]. Below left is a drawing of platform or Western framing construction, a development from balloon framing, published in the 1930s [Charles George Ramsey and Harold Reeve Sleeper,* Architectural Graphic Standards*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1941)]*.





Farming trade publications touted the benefits of the balloon frame.[108] Its inherent advantages led American farmers to adopt the balloon frame as the standard structural framing system for houses by the end of the century. Although many ethnic groups brought their own techniques of constructing farmhouses and farm buildings with them to the United States, they often adopted balloon framing techniques in whole or in part and adapted it to their traditions.[109]

As different architectural styles were introduced, the balloon frame was easily modified to create the forms and spaces required. Albert Britt of Illinois, in his book *An America That Was,* describes his family's new farmhouse that "cost nearly a thousand dollars":[110]

> Farmhouses were built without benefit of architect or reference to a particular style or period. Such plans as existed were principally in the head of the local carpenter who bossed the job. Ours was named Perkins and he came from Alexis, all of six miles away . . . A model of our house could have been made easily with a set of child's building blocks, but it was roomy and comfortable without dormers, turrets, or scrollsaw ornamentation, which were unpleasantly common on dwellings of that time. Prime consideration was enough interior space to suit a family's needs, and if the house was leakproof through rain and snow and windproof for anything short of a cyclone, all hands were satisfied. Houses were painted white, window blinds green. Barns were always painted red and as the color weathered some of the barns were beautiful. If a barn was in sight from the road it usually had the year of construction painted on it in large white numerals.[111]

With the completion of the new farmhouse, Britt goes on to describe how the older farm structures were adapted for new functions: "with the building of a new home the little old one became a stable for horses, and the lean-to kitchen the family smokehouse."[112] This shows the flexibility that the framing system allowed, since these new functions required new or larger openings, relocating the structure, or construction of additions.

[108] Peterson, 15–24.
[109] One example was German-Russian farmers from Eastern Europe: "German-Russians eventually combined *Batsa* brick with balloon-frame construction, placing clay brick in walls between the studs to stabilize and insulate the dwelling." (Michael Koop, "German-Russians," in *America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups that Built America,* Dell Upton, ed. (New York: Preservation Press, John Wiley & Sons, 1986), 131.)
[110] Albert Britt, *An America That Was* (Barre, Massachusetts: Barre Publishers, 1964), 33.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

Masonry Construction

Brick

Historically, brick masonry construction is relatively uncommon in the rural areas of Will County. Custer Township lacks examples of nineteenth century brick masonry construction. The survey area does contain a number of historic early twentieth century brick masonry bungalow type houses. More commonly, the locally abundant limestone was used for masonry foundations throughout the township.

There are a couple early twentieth century brick masonry bungalow-style houses in Custer Township. Left: The Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510 in Section 11. Right: The Taylor Farmstead, site 529 in Section 13.

Joliet Limestone

One building material dating from the earliest period of European settlement in Will County was limestone quarried from the Des Plaines, Du Page, and Kankakee River Valleys. These same regions later provided gravel for use in concrete construction in Will County and the Chicago area. The limestone material quarried in the Des Plaines River Valley is referred to as Joliet Limestone. These quarries were utilized first for limestone for masonry construction but are primarily used today as sources of gravel.

The area surrounding Joliet contains abundant supplies of limestone, derived predominantly from the Niagaran strata. Owing to oxidation of ferrous minerals contained in the stone, the color of the stone ranges from buff near the surface to gray tones at deeper levels. Its surface is a hard, compact and slightly porous, brittle dolomite. The stone has thin seams of greenish clay (chert) running through the whole mass, which upon long exposure in alternately wet and dry conditions causes the solid calcium carbonate layers to delaminate.[113]

A prosperous period for quarrying stone in the Joliet area began during the 1830s and lasted until nearly the end of the century. Martin H. Demmond was the first to quarry stone in the Joliet district, most likely on the bluffs west of the Des Plaines River overlooking the fledgling Joliet settlement. Commercial quarrying activities began about a decade later, when William Davidson and his brother opened the first of their quarries in 1845, one mile south of Joliet at a point where the canal turns west-southwest with the curve of the river.[114]

[113] Linda Ponte, "The Celebrated Joliet Marble Field," in *An Historical Geography of the Lower Des Plaines Valley Limestone Industry, Time and Place in Joliet*, Michael Conzen, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1988), 15.
[114] Robert E. Sterling, *Joliet: Transportation and Industry: A Pictorial History* (St. Louis, Missouri: G. Bradley Publishing, Inc., 1997), 116.

The opening of the I & M Canal in 1848 provided an easy means to transport stone quarried in western Will County. Also, by the mid-1850s tracks for the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad had been laid between the river and canal, affording quarries access to more transportation facilities. The limestone industry grew steadily, both in number and acreage size of firms.

The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 provided enormous stimulation to the stone quarrying industry. Not only was stone needed at once to replace destroyed buildings, especially in the city center, but new building ordinances created a "fire" zone in which wood construction was (in theory) prohibited. Many new quarries were started to cater to the increased demand. For example, the Joliet Stone Company incorporated in 1872.[115] A least one quarry was in operation in Custer Township in the 1870s, on the Smith Estate in Section 25, as shown on historic atlas maps. As the quarry industry peaked in the 1880s, many smaller businesses were bought out by much larger operations or forced by competition to abandon their sites. The consolidation of established quarries changed the methods of the business. Tools to crush, cut, rub, and saw stone became more advanced and raised production, while some of the old established quarries saw themselves eclipsed by newer and larger enterprises.

However, the development of smoother business links with customers in metropolitan areas could not offset competition from alternative sources with superior building stone, especially limestone quarried near Bedford, Indiana. The availability of the more durable Indiana limestone and the discovery of the lack of long-term durability of the Joliet stone, in addition to the introduction of other building materials such as concrete, led to the gradual decline of the Joliet area stone industry. Some quarries survived by shifting production to crushed stone to use as aggregate for concrete or road and railroad construction.

Local limestone was frequently used for foundation construction in Custer Township. Above: The stone foundation of the Upright and Wing type house at the Quiring Farmstead, site 568 in Section 35W.

In addition to locally quarried limestone, rounded fieldstone was also occasionally used for foundations in Custer Township, for example, at the Plese Farmstead in Section 2.

[115] Ibid.


Examples of fieldstone of construction survive at the Plese Farmstead, site 500 in Section 2. Left: The bank barn foundation is fieldstone. Right: Several small outbuildings also have fieldstone walls.

Concrete

Although concrete was used by the Romans in antiquity, its use in recent times dates from the mid-nineteenth century. In 1860, S. T. Fowler patented a type of reinforced concrete wall construction, but it was not until the 1870s and 1880s that examples had actually been constructed. By 1900 numerous systems of reinforced concrete construction had been patented.[116]

Concrete was seen as a material with great potential for use on the farm. Farmers were given guidance in using concrete on the farm, recommending its use in a variety of structures:

> Concrete can be used on the farm for residences, barns, poultry houses, garages, piggeries, stalls and mangers, milk houses, machine sheds, ice houses, silos, all kinds of tanks and troughs, vats and wallows, manure pits, septic tanks, piers and foundations, sidewalls, steps, driveways, hen nests, pump pits, fence posts, etc. . . .
>
> Of all the buildings on the farm, which should be built of concrete, probably none is more important than the silo. Here is a structure in which it is essential to keep the silage fresh in order that the stock may be keep thrifty and growing all winter. The silo prevents a waste of corn stalks, which contain about one-third of the food value of the entire crop, and it enables a large number of animals to be maintained on a given number of acres. The concrete silo is ratproof, windproof, fireproof and will withstand cyclones. It will not dry out in the hot summer months, keeps the silage in perfect condition and can be constructed at a moderate first cost. There are four types of silos: Monolithic, cement block, stave and cement plaster construction.
>
> . . . Concrete buildings contain no crevices in which to harbor vermin, and this freedom from lice makes it possible for the birds to retain more flesh at the end of the setting period and therefore more strength. Poultry can withstand dry cold when housed, but cannot endure dampness or drafts from below, and a concrete floor will also keep out rats. Instances are known where concrete is used successfully for nests, dropping platforms and roosts, thus greatly simplifying the problem of cleaning. The first requirement of a milk house is that it is scrupulously clean, and the construction should be such as to eliminate breeding places for germs and cracks or crevices for dirt to collect, making cleaning difficult or impossible. A milk house properly constructed of concrete fulfills these requirements, and concrete floors are recommended for sanitary reasons, with proper

[116] William B. Coney, "Preservation of Historic Concrete: Problems and General Approaches," National Park Service Preservation Brief 15, 2.

> provisions for draining. The milk house should be located with reference to other buildings, such as stables and manure pits.[117]

The survey area contains relatively few examples of cast-in-place concrete structures, which were generally observed only for building foundations.

Cast in place concrete used for foundations is somewhat less common in Custer Township. Left: This remnant foundation is at Harrison–Hertz–Fitzpatrick Farmstead, site 543 in Section 24. Right: This grain bin has a cast-in-place concrete foundation, at the Edward Yeates Farmstead, site 623 in Section 33.

Concrete Block

Beginning in the early 1900s, mass production of concrete block units succeeded after several earlier developments failed to lead to widespread production.[118] Harmon S. Palmer patented a cast iron machine with a removable core and adjustable sides in 1900, allowing companies and cottage industries to spring up across the country. Palmer founded the Hollow Building Block Company in 1902, selling $200 block machines. Other manufacturers who flooded the market with similar machines (without directly infringing on Palmer's patent) led to increased use of concrete block in building construction.

The blocks were produced by mixing Portland cement, water, sand, and gravel aggregate; placing the mixture in the machine and tamping it down to eliminate voids; and pulling a lever to release the block from the machine. Newly made blocks were stacked until the concrete cured, typically for one month. Blocks were made with a variety of face textures and even color, with "rockface" block being one of the most popular styles.[119]

[117] "The Use of Concrete Work on the Farm," *Building Age* (February 1917), 102–103.
[118] Pamela H. Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870–1930* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 11.
[119] Ibid., 24.


Concrete block is relatively common in Custer Township, used for foundations in early twentieth century structures. Left: The dairy barn at the Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510 in Section 11, has a concrete block ground floor. Right: The feeder barn at the Weikum–Zelenka Farmstead, site 537 in Section 22, is entirely built of concrete block.

Although early block machines and block manufacturers produced units relatively larger than contemporary units, by the mid-1920s standards were introduced by concrete products organizations that included fabrication of units 8 by 8 by 16 inches in size. Other standards, produced by the National Association of Cement Users, the Concrete Producers Association, and the Concrete Block Manufacturers Association, promoted testing to improve quality.[120] However, concrete block began to fall out of favor as a building facing material during this same period. During the 1930s, smooth-faced block began to dominate the industry as architectural styles changed. Also by the later 1930s, mass production of block units began to supplant the use of earlier concrete block machines.

Just as with concrete, farmers were encouraged to use concrete block for their structures. At the annual meeting of the Illinois Farmers' Institute in 1913, one lecturer discussed concrete block for silos:

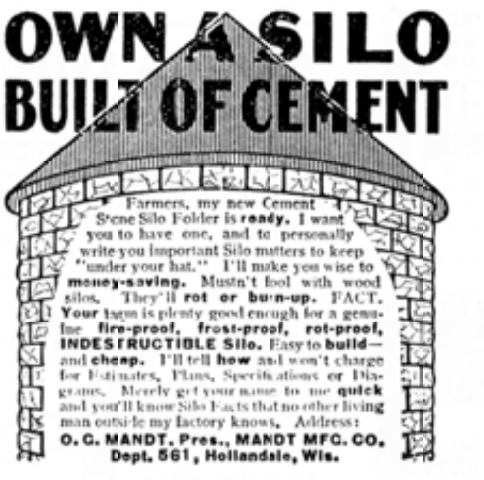
> It is clear that the cash outlay for material becomes of the first importance and cost of labor becomes second. To illustrate, a man in such circumstances might have gravel on his farm. Also, he might have lumber, which he could use temporarily for the scaffold. The cost of cement block molds is slight, and if this man were somewhat of a mechanic, he would find it advantageous to secure a mold or molds and make his own cement blocks at odd times. In this way a cement block silo could be built with less cash outlay than any other form of silo.[121]

Building trade journals also promoted the use of concrete block on the farm:

> If one may judge from the demand and the variety of uses to which it is put, the concrete block is the most important of all cement products. When properly made it has not failed to give satisfaction as a building material and much of its popularity has resulted from the pleasing architectural effects that have been brought about. Hollow blocks represent a considerable saving in cost, without reducing the strength so as to impair the safety of the building. The use of facings to bring about pleasing exterior treatments has its advantages while the interior air chambers allow them to conduct heat or cold but slowly. This fact makes buildings of this material warm in winter.

The survey area has a few historic structures built of concrete blocks, including outbuildings as well as garages. Concrete block is also widely used for building foundations in the survey area.

[120] Ibid., 21–22.
[121] M.L. King, "Planning the Silo," in *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Illinois Farmers' Institute,* H.A. McKeene, ed. (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Journal Company, 1914), 64.



By the 1910s, farmers had several choices of silos using concrete block. Both advertisements are from the farm journal Hoard's Dairyman, *1909.*

Classification of Farmhouses

Most built structures can be grouped into one of three categories of stylistic classification: "high style," where the building clearly relates to a defined architectural style in form and detail; vernacular or "folk architecture," where builders or owners without formal architectural training construct buildings based on regional or cultural customs, and where stylistic elements derived from style books are applied or mixed within the same structure; and utilitarian, where style is entirely secondary and efficient use of materials is the primary factor in the design. Most buildings fall into the categories of vernacular and utilitarian. Farmhouses were usually built by a builder or carpenter, and reflect general types of houses popular at the time. A discussion of the utilitarian types of farm buildings is covered later in this chapter. The discussion below first describes the architectural *styles* found to some degree in the survey area. This is followed by an outline of the *types* of farmhouses, since most of these structures are better categorized by this means, with only the applied ornament being classified by style. Some houses in the survey area have undergone extensive renovations, making identification of a style or type difficult. In these situations, an assessment has been made as to possible original style or type with notes made in the comment portion of each survey form giving additional information on additions or alterations.

Architectural Style

In the second half of the nineteenth century, architectural styles were disseminated through style books promoting not only aesthetic features of houses but also the orderly qualities for a proper domestic environment.[122] Another source of building ideas was agricultural journals. Although carpenters and builders rarely followed such books and journals exactly, these publications did influence the types of houses being constructed (as discussed in the next section) as well as the stylistic elements applied to those houses. Although it is unlikely that many of the buildings in the survey area were built using designs or supervision of academically trained architects, many of the farmhouses were built by carpenters and builders competent at applying fashionable architectural styles in their work.

Greek Revival

The Greek Revival style was popular in the United States beginning in the 1820s and continued in some regions until the 1870s. Inspired by archaeological excavations and measured drawings of ancient Greek temples, the style was developed by America's first trained architects and spread by pattern books that influenced carpenters and builders across the relatively young United States. Greek Revival buildings have simple rectilinear forms, prominent classical ornament, molded cornices and window lintels, and other ornamental motifs inspired by Classical architecture. The style's simple massing and details went along with the sometimes limited materials and resources of rural areas. Only one house with Greek Revival detailing was documented in the township.

[122] Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland*, 68.

The house at the Baird Farmstead, site 632 in Section 19, has Greek Revival detailing, including the strong cornice and front entrance surround.

Gothic Revival

Gothic Revival was roughly contemporary with Greek Revival, although with very different inspiration. It utilized late Medieval Gothic forms that have vertically oriented massing with steeply sloped roofs, and detail features such as pointed arches, narrow lancet windows, decorative bargeboards and finials, battlemented parapets, and clusters of chimney stacks. Like Greek Revival, pattern books guided architects and builders. Andrew Jackson Downing's *The Architecture of Country Houses* helped popularize this style. Gothic Revival architecture was not observed in the survey area.

Second Empire

The Second Empire style took its name from the public buildings with mansard roofs built under French emperor Napoleon III. (The first empire was the reign of his uncle, Napoleon). The style was transformed and applied in the United States to domestic as well as institutional buildings. In addition to the mansard roof and architectural features often present on Italianate buildings, Second Empire buildings often feature rich classical or baroque detailing and dormer windows with moldings or hoods. No examples of Second Empire are extant in the survey area.

Italianate

Italianate, or Italianate Victorian, was one of the most popular and fashionable building styles in the mid-1800s, popular from about 1850 to 1880. Inspired by Italian Renaissance architecture, Italianate style houses feature rectilinear massing, low pitched roofs, overhanging eaves with bracketed cornice, and tall rectangular windows. Other features often present are moldings or hoods around window lintels (which

are sometimes arched) and polygonal or rectangular bays or towers. No Italianate style houses were identified within the survey area.

Queen Anne

Popular in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, this building style in its purest form utilized irregular, asymmetrical massing and floor plans, several types of building materials, and extensive ornament to create an eclectic architectural tapestry that was often picturesque and entertaining. None of the farmhouses in the survey region reflect all of the primary elements of Queen Anne, although the massing and details of some of them show Queen Anne influence, likely due to the influence of the style on builders and carpenters. The name "Queen Anne" for this style of design was popularized by nineteenth century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw, although the architectural precedents from the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714) have little connection to this heavily ornamented style. No historic Queen Anne style detailing was observed on houses in the survey area.

Colonial and Georgian Revival

After the comparative excesses of the Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne styles, the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles are more restrained and utilize stricter use of ornament and proportion. Introduced on the east coast at the end of the nineteenth century, the Colonial Revival style spread to the Midwest over the next decade and became an influential style for larger homes and public buildings into the 1930s. The rectilinear forms of Colonial Revival structures are often symmetrical and have gabled roofs with dormers, classical columns and ornament, and ornamental window shutters. Georgian Revival buildings differ in that they adhere more closely to symmetrical floor plans, have strong cornice lines, Flemish bond brick coursing, watertables, and other elements of traditional Colonial period architecture. Colonial Revival architecture was not documented in the survey.

Craftsman or Arts and Crafts Style

The Arts and Crafts movement originated in England in the mid-nineteenth century, although it did not become fashionable in the United States until the first two decades of the twentieth century. The style favored simple designs with natural materials, low-pitched roofs, battered wall treatments, exposed rafters, and casement and double hung windows. A number of the bungalow-type houses in the survey include Craftsman or Arts and Crafts style features.

Left: The bungalow at the Taylor Farmstead, site 529 in Section 13, has Craftsman style detailing, including the wood brackets at the overhanging eaves and masonry ornament. Right: The bungalow at the Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510 in Section 11, also has limited Craftsman style detailing, such as the overhanging eaves, door dormer trim, and divided-light window sash.

Prairie Style

The Prairie Style was developed by several architects in the Midwest but originated chiefly from the Chicago area, where Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin, Marion Mahony Griffin, William Purcell, and George Elmslie (among others) formulated a set of principles uniquely suited to and inspired by the American suburban and rural landscape. In many ways this style developed from the Arts and

Crafts movement, although it was a distinct style with its own characteristics. Prairie Style structures are characterized by broad, horizontal massing, hipped and gabled roofs with deep overhangs, asymmetrical floor plans, and geometric detailing based on nature motifs. Natural and earth-toned materials such as wood, stucco, and brick predominate, and windows often have leaded glass windows that repeat and develop nature motifs. The style was fashionable from around 1895 to 1920. The survey area does not have any "high style" Prairie Style houses.

Tudor Revival

From about 1910 to 1940, Tudor Revival was one of several fashionable revival styles in practice. Based on English late medieval architecture, the style was adapted to unique American building forms created by the balloon frame. Although Tudor Revival buildings were also built in stone, the use of wood and stucco to imitate a half-timbered appearance was a predominant feature. Often times only the ground or first floor was clad with stone while the upper story was clad with wood and stucco "half-timbering." The style also utilized asymmetrical floor plans and massing, narrow multi-paned windows, prominent masonry chimneys, and steeply sloped roofs. No Tudor Revival style houses were observed during the field survey.

House Types

Vernacular residential dwellings are not always suited to classification by architectural style because style is not the primary organizing principle in their design. Most vernacular houses relate to a *type* that describes or classifies their massing and floor plan. This section discusses the different types of housing found specifically in the survey area. Additional types and subtypes do exist but have been excluded because they are not pertinent to the discussion of Custer Township.

During the survey, very few structures could be readily identified that date from the earliest period of settlement (approximately the 1840s and 1850s). House types dating from the earliest settlement may have used configurations known as single pen or double pen, which basically are one or two room houses respectively. A double pen dogtrot consists of two rooms with the space in between covered by the roof. A saddlebag house is similar to the double pen except for the inclusion of a central chimney between the two rooms.

The house types classified below are those that are typically found in the survey area. As with any classification system, alternate systems could be utilized. Most of the definitions provided below were derived from *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory* by Stephen C. Gordon.[123] Building forms followed the movement of settlers from New England westward through the Ohio Valley to Illinois.[124] However, a significant number of the settlers in the survey area were new immigrants to the United States. Their influence on the region's buildings is visible in some of the extant house types, but more readily visible in the barns and other farm structures.

I House

The name "I House" was first recognized in 1930 as a housing type in Indiana that had originated in the Middle Atlantic states. The form was later identified in the other Midwestern "I" states of Illinois and Iowa.[125] The form consists of a two story, one room deep plan that is at least two rooms wide. Chimneys were often placed at each end of the floor plan. A few examples of the I House type were identified in Custer Township during the survey.

Left: The house at the Johnson–Shenk Farmstead, site 509 in Section 11, is a local example of the I House type. Right: The house at the Russell–Lake–Prince Farmstead, site 613 in Section 31, is an unusual example of the type with a hipped gable roof.

[123] Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Historic Preservation Office, 1992).

[124] For overviews of patterns of ethnic migration and diffusion, see Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture,* Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986); and John A. Jakle, Robert W. Bastian, and Douglas K. Meyer, *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

[125] Kniffen, 7–8.

Hall and Parlor

The Hall and Parlor house is a simple rectangular plan dwelling one to one-and-a-half stories in height, with a side oriented gable roof. In plan, these types of houses have one larger room for the kitchen and daily living and a side room used as a more formal parlor or a bedroom. There is often an addition at the rear of the house extending from the parlor side. Chimneys are often placed at each end of the house. The type was used less often after the late 1800s.[126] No Hall and Parlor houses were identified in the survey area.

New England One and a Half

This house type is a rectangular plan dwelling, one to one-and-a-half stories in height and at least two bays wide. Flanking a central entrance hall and stairs are two large rooms with two or more smaller rooms across the rear of the house. Some houses of this type are not symmetrical across the front, depending upon the interior layout. New England One and a Half houses were popular from the earliest days of settlement in Will County in the 1830s up to the Civil War. They often include Greek Revival ornament, such as pilasters, architraves, cornice returns, and entablature panels. Farming settlers emigrating from New England, where this house type originated, brought this house type with them to the Midwest. One example of the New England One and a Half type was identified in the survey area.

The house at the William Young Farmstead, site 549 in section 25, is a local example of the New England One and a Half type.

Side Hallway

Side Hallway houses are typically simple rectilinear volumes, two stories in height, and often with gable roofs oriented to the front or the side. In plan the entry is at the end bay of the front elevation, opening into the main stair hall. Adjacent to the hall is the main parlor with additional rooms at the rear of the house. The form was popular until the 1880s.[127] Few examples of Side Hallway type houses were identified in the survey area. Some houses may have been originally constructed as Side Hallway types but have evolved to other types through subsequent additions.

[126] Gordon, 125. Since the form can be confused with later cottage types of houses, one feature that can date it properly is the height to width ratios of the window openings: tall window openings usually date a house to the 1800s.

[127] Ibid., 126.


Left: The house at the Homer Eells Farmstead, site 634 in Section 19, is a typical late example of the Side Hallway type. Right: The house at the Hudson–Haas–Shenk Farmstead, site 511 in Section 11, may have originated as a Side Hallway type, before the addition of the low wing at left. This house is now considered an Upright and Wing type (see below).

Upright and Wing

The Upright and Wing was popular in the mid to late 1800s.[128] The type consists of an upright portion with a gable end, usually one-and-a-half to two stories, and a one to one-and-a-half story wing. The gable end of the wing is usually at or below the eave of the upright. Upright and Wing type houses have T- or L-shaped floor plans. Inside, the wing contains a kitchen and one or two bedrooms and the upright a parlor and additional bedrooms.[129] The Upright and Wing type is common throughout Will County but occurs less frequently in Custer Township.


Upright and wing type houses are not uncommon in Custer Township. Left: The house at the Archibald Trainer Farmstead, site 520 in Section 14. This house is unusual in that it includes gabled dormers within the low one-story wing portion. Right: The house at the Quiring Farmstead, site 568 in Section 35W.

[128] Peterson groups the Upright and Wing with the Gabled Ell type (both being forms of L- or T-plan houses), making it "the most numerous and familiar farmhouse type in the Upper Midwest…" (Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland*, 96.) Peterson also notes that many L- and T-plan houses are the result of additions being constructed to existing rectangular house forms (Ibid., 99).

[129] Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*, 132.

Gabled Ell

The Gabled Ell house type usually dates from the two decades after the Civil War.[130] It has an L-shaped plan, sometimes with additions to form a T-shaped plan, and usually is two stories in height with a gabled roof. Within the main "L" there is often a porch. In most arrangements, the gable end of the shorter of the two wings faces the street or main approach with the broad side of the other wing at the side. The Gabled Ell type is common in Custer Township.

Gabled Ell type houses are common in Custer Township. Examples include the house at the Andrew Yeates Farmstead, site 624, left; and the Tierney–Geelan Farmstead, site 626, right; both are located in Section 34E.

Four-over-Four

The Four-over-Four basically consists of a central hallway flanked by two rooms on each side in a house two to two-and-a-half stories in height. This house type usually has a gable roof, with the ridge line running parallel to the front face. Exploiting balloon frame construction, the form was popular in the middle 1800s, although it returned during the vogue of the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles. A few Four-over-Four type farmhouses were identified in Custer Township.

One example of the Four-over-Four house type in Custer Township is the house at the Baird Farmstead, site 632 in Section 19.

[130] Ibid., 136.

Gable Front

The Gable Front house describes a variety of house types dating from the mid-1800s through the 1920s. It is similar to the Four-over-Four, except that the main entrance at the gable end facing the street or main approach. It is also similar to the Side Hallway type, and usually has a rectangular floor plan. A number of Gable Front type houses were identified in Custer Township. Most local examples are one-and-a-half stories in height.

Two examples of the Gable Front type in Custer Township: at left, the Munch Farmstead, site 513 in Section 11; at right, the Herbert–Hoffman Farmstead, site 604 in Section 28E.

American Foursquare

The American Foursquare[131] was introduced around 1900 and continued to be popular until the 1920s. It consists of a two to two-and-a-half story block with a roughly square floor plan with four rooms on each floor. Roofs are hipped or pyramidal, with dormer windows (hipped and gable) on at least the front elevation and sometimes the side and rear elevations. Foursquares usually have front porches but may also have bay windows (some extending both stories) and one story rear additions. Many Foursquares were built from plans developed by local lumber companies or mail order sources that advertised in farm journals; others were purchased whole and delivered as pre-cut, ready-to-assemble houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company or home manufacturers. Although American Foursquare type farmhouses are common in Will County, no examples were identified in Custer Township.

Bungalow

The term bungalow derives from the word *bangla,* an Indian word adopted by the British in the nineteenth century for a one story house with porches. The American house form descended from the Craftsman movement, using natural materials and simple forms to create an informal domestic environment. Popular from approximately 1905 to 1935, there are two basic types of bungalows (and numerous subtypes), each deriving its name from the dominant roof forms. The Dormer Front Bungalow (also called the Shed Roof Bungalow) has a gable or shed roof turned parallel to the front elevation and a single large dormer. The Gable Front has a front facing gable, with the ridge of the roof running perpendicular to the main elevation. The relatively few examples of the Bungalow type in the survey area are somewhat simpler than those found in city and suburban neighborhoods and lack stylistic features such as exposed roof beams, ornamental wall trim, or shingle siding. Bungalow type houses are common in the survey area.

[131] The term "American Foursquare" was coined by Clem Labine, former editor of the *Old-House Journal.* (Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*, 137.)


The bungalow type house is common in Custer Township. Left: the Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510 in Section 11. Right: the George Baird House, site 601 in Section 19.

Cape Cod

The Cape Cod was a popular house type from the 1920s to the early 1950s. The type was inspired by eighteenth century cottages in Massachusetts and Virginia.[132] The Cape Cod has a simple rectangular plan, one story in height with dormers and a gable roof. Only one example of a Cape Cod type house was documented in Custer Township during the survey.

Ranch

Because the ranch type is a relatively recent domestic architecture development (it generally dates from the post-World War II era), ranch style houses were generally not recorded in the rural survey. The presence of a ranch style house was noted on the site plan of surveyed farmsteads to indicate that these houses likely replaced the original house on the site or provided an additional dwelling on the property. Ranch style houses are usually one or at most two stories and have rambling floor plans and relatively low-pitched hipped or gabled roofs. Although much of the newer housing in recently developed areas has features and elements reminiscent of older architectural styles (Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, or even Queen Anne), its true architectural lineage traces back to the ranch houses of the 1950s and 1960s.


Two examples of the mid-twentieth century Ranch type in Custer Township: at left, the Roe–Tammen Farmstead, site 563 in Section 34W; at right, the Blogg–Dummer Farmstead, site 620 in Section 32.

[132] Ibid., 140.

Development of the Barn

The barns of the Midwest have several typical functions: animal shelter, crop storage, crop processing, equipment storage, and machinery repair. However, barns also have specialized functions designated by adjectives such as "sheep" barn or "dairy" barn. In some instances a substitute term was used such as hog house or implement shed, especially if a larger multipurpose "barn" is also on the farm. Nonetheless, these structures shared some similar forms and structural systems.[133]

Pioneer settlers, faced with clearing virgin forest or breaking sod, usually had little time to do more than erect a roughhouse and perhaps a crude animal shelter in the first years of settlement. Not until after some ten years on a homestead, or perhaps not even until the second generation, did the pioneer have the means to construct a large barn.[134]

The need for large barns necessitated the development of structural systems to enclose large volumes of space. As the frontier of settlement passed into the Midwest, many early barns were constructed of logs by settlers who either possessed log-building skills or gained these techniques by association with other ethnic or cultural groups. Although the eastern Midwest was well forested, providing sufficient log materials, the prairies of the central Midwest (including Illinois) had less forested land to supply log construction. Therefore, other solutions were required.[135]

The skeletal framework of barns consists typically of sill timbers resting directly on the foundation (usually stone, although concrete was introduced in the early 1900s). The sills also form the substructure for the floor joists and wall framing. The barn's joists sometimes remained round, except for the top side, which was flattened to accommodate floorboards. Most early barns had a gable roof composed of rafters, rough sawn boards, and wooden shingles. Vertically attached boards, some as large as fourteen inches wide, ran from the sill to the top plate of the wall for siding on timber frame barns.[136]

As discussed earlier in this chapter, light framing techniques and advanced wood milling machines influenced the development of Midwestern farmhouses. However, barns continued to be built with heavy timber. As these large framing members became scarce and expensive in the early twentieth century, new innovations were sought, such as plank framing that featured the substitution of plank lumber for heavy long, square timbers.[137]

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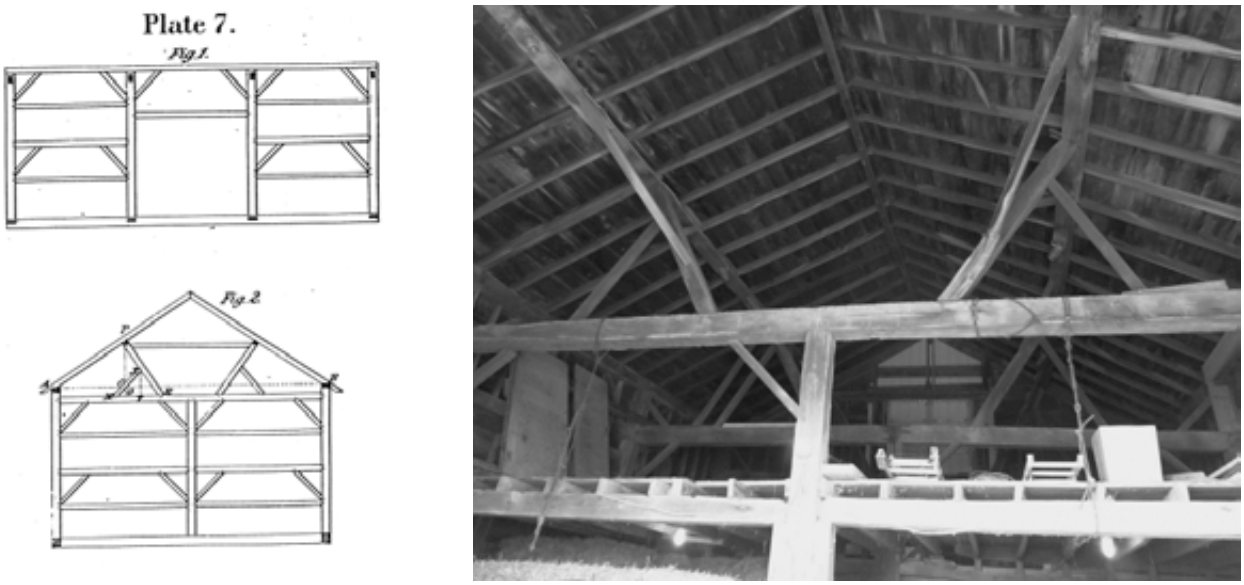
[133] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G. H. Wilhelm, "The Farm Barns of the American Midwest," in *Barns of the Midwest*, Allen G. Noble and Hubert G. H. Wilhelm, ed. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995), 9.
[134] Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, "Midwestern Barns and Their Germanic Connections," in *Barns of the Midwest*, 65.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., 48–50.
[137] Lowell J. Soike, "Within the Reach of All: Midwest Barns Perfected," in *Barns of the Midwest*, Allen G. Noble and Hubert G. H. Wilhelm, ed. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995), 147. Two major forms of plank framing developed. The first took dimension plank lumber and imitated heavy timber framing, carrying the loads through posts and beams. The second type opened up the center of the barn by using a truss for the framing bents. This was followed by an adaptation of the balloon framing for barn construction. Stud walls replaced posts and girts for handling loads; roof loads were carried by trusses made from lighter weight lumber (Ibid., 155–156).



Left: A drawing of heavy timber barn framing from 1894 [William E. Bell, Carpentry Made Easy, or the Science and Art of Framing *(Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1894), plate 7]. Right: This type of braced framing is evident at the historic barn on the William Goodwin Farmstead, site 763 in Section 9 of Wesley Township.*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, new barn building ideas emerged from a growing field of experts: agricultural engineers, experiment station researchers, and commercial farm planning services. The American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) soon contained a committee on farm structures after its formation. The result of these efforts widened the variety of barn building plans available to farmers and encouraged improved building standards.[138] At about this time, manufacturers and marketers of pre-cut, ready-to-assemble houses (such as the American Foursquare house type discussed above) entered the market for barn construction. Two major Iowa firms, the Louden Machinery Company of Fairfield and the Gordon-Van Tine Company of Davenport, advertised plans for their pre-cut barns along with their pre-cut homes.

Engineering research led to the development of framing for gambrel roofs, culminating in the Clyde or Iowa truss. (The shape of the gambrel roof allowed a larger loft space to store hay than the gable roof allowed.) The first step in this development was the work of John Shawver of Ohio, who developed a gambrel truss form using sawn lumber. The Iowa truss was developed by A.W. Clyde, an engineer with the Iowa State College farm extension service, around 1920. It allowed construction of a stiff frame at far lower cost than the Shawver truss, which required expensive extra-length material.[139]

[138] Ibid., 158.

[139] Ibid. The open loft, free from interior braces like those used in the Shawver and Iowa trusses, was finally achieved with the laminated gothic arch roof. The gothic roof was developed over a two decade period, with an early system using sawn boards 12 inches wide, 1 inch thick, and 3 to 4 feet long from which the outside edge was shaved to the needed curvature. Three or four plies were laminated together with nails, with splices staggered along the curve. These rafters were placed 2 feet on center. However, due to the material wasted in shaving the lumber and the labor consumed in sawing and nailing, farmers and builders were slow to adopt this system. Bent or sprung arches were the second major type of curved rafter construction, first used in an experiment in Davis, California, in 1916. The perceived savings in material and labor required to produce the same contour by bending instead of sawing, made this system more popular. Bent-rafter gothic arch construction, although more economical in labor and material, proved less rigid that the more expensive sawed type. For this reason, many farmers adopted a combination of the two, with the sawed rafters spaced every 8 to 12 feet and the bent rafters spaced between, twenty-four inches on center (Ibid., 161–2).

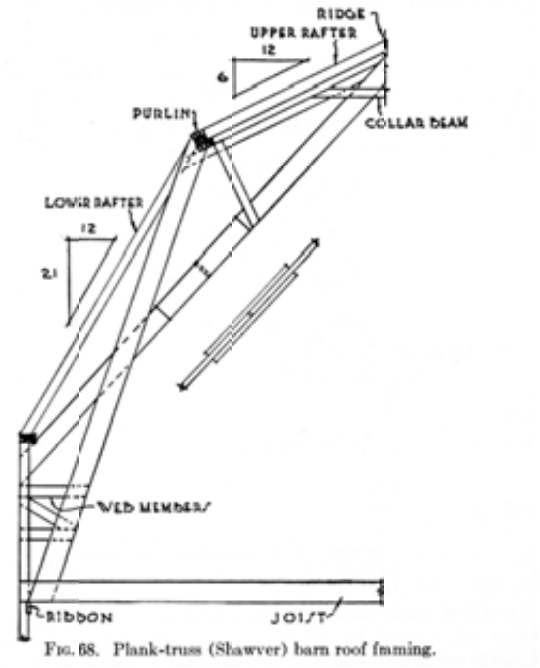


FIG. 68. Plank-truss (Shawver) barn roof framing.

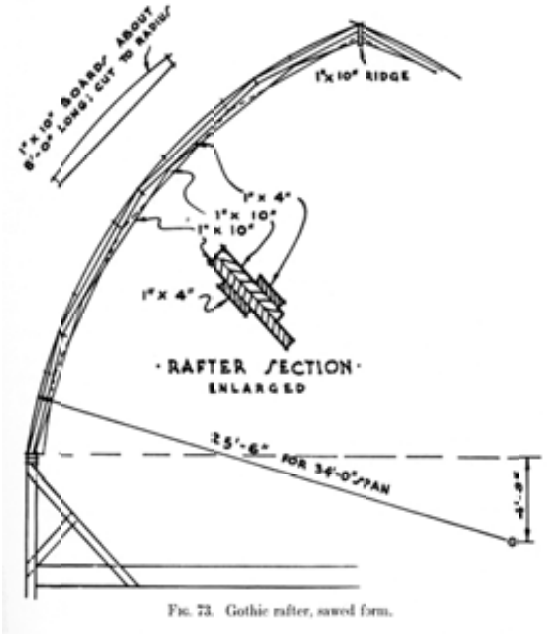


FIG. 73. Gothic rafter, sawed form.

The Shawver and sawn gothic arch barn roof rafters. [Deane G. Carter and W.A. Foster, Farm Buildings*, Third Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1941), 136, 141.]*

During the 1930s, the Gothic roof entered the last phase of its evolution. At Iowa State Agricultural College, Henry Giese tested existing types of laminated bent rafters in an attempt to solve their shortcomings. Working in collaboration with Rock Island Lumber Company, distributor of Weyerhauser Forest Products, he explored the potential of modern glues to yield a stronger bent rafter. Using Douglas fir, clear of knots and defects, glue-laminated under approximately 100 pounds per square inch of pressure and shaped to an arch form, the rafter was stronger than those laminated conventionally with nails and bolts (either the shaved- or bent-lumber techniques). Rafter performance was also improved with the use of hinge connections at the supports. Weyerhauser was marketing these factory-built rafters under the trademark of Rilco by 1938.[140] The United States Forest Products Laboratory also performed tests on glued laminated construction. Their laboratory tests showed that laminated rafters were two to four times stronger than ordinary bent and sawed rafters laminated with nails.[141]

The two-story loft barn ceased to be built shortly after World War II.[142] In the first half of the twentieth century the dependence on draft animals waned and mechanical power in the form of tractors increased, and farmers no longer needed loft space.[143] Farmers began to build fewer custom wood frame structures, which were susceptible to fires, as manufactured buildings using steel became available. Early metal-barn types, such as Quonsets, developed initially in the 1930s and gained a notable measure of popularity among some Midwestern farmers immediately after World War II. One of the leading manufacturers of Quonset barns and sheds was the Great Lakes Steel Corporation of Detroit, whose structures were purported to be fireproof, rat-proof, and sag-proof. Corrugated metal was also a suggested covering for

[140] Ibid., 162–163.
[141] Ibid., 164.
[142] Ibid., 165.
[143] In 1930, 61,000 combines were counted by the U.S. Census; in 1953, 918,000. One in six farmers already owned a tractor by 1932. In 1944, 14 percent of the nation's hay was harvested with windrow balers; by 1948, the figure was 46 percent. See Glenn A. Harper and Steve Gordon, "The Modern Midwestern Barn, 1900–Present," in *Barns of the Midwest*, Noble and Wilhelm, ed., 225.

wooden barn siding, and organizations as the Asbestos Farm Service Bureau promoted the use of asbestos-based cement boards for re-siding old barns.[144]

Because lofts were no longer needed, one-story barn construction became more standard in the postwar years. The shift from loose to baled or chopped hay reduced the need for haymows as many farmers adopted the "loose-housing" or "loafing" system for housing cattle. University of Wisconsin agricultural scientists argued that cows would be more content and give more milk if they were allowed to roam in and out of the barn at will. The loose-housing system resulted in the construction of one-story galvanized all-steel barns.[145] The pole barn was a simple method for constructing the necessary enclosure for farm implements and the limited amount of hay still required on the farm. Pole barns use round poles set into small, individual foundations, to which engineered roof trusses and wall girts and siding are attached. The structural concept for the modern pole barn was developed by H. Howard Doane of St. Louis in the early 1930s. He and George Perkins, his farm manager, used creosoted wood poles (which were commonly used for telephone poles) for the vertical structural members.[146] Pole barns and manufactured buildings are common throughout the survey area, and remain the standard means of construction for contemporary farm buildings.

Left: An advertisement for a metal covered machine shed similar in form to a Quonset shed, from the Peoria publication The Illinois Farmers Guide, *August 1939. Right: An advertising postcard for a Morton Building, manufactured by Interlocking Fence Company of Morton, Illinois.*

[144] Ibid., 226.
[145] Ibid., 225.
[146] Ibid.

Barn Types

As with house types, several systems have been used to classify barns, either by function; shape and structural system; ethnic traditions and their influence; or regional characteristics and commonalties.[147] The classification types developed below are based on Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek's *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns & Other Farm Structures* and Allen G. Noble's *Wood, Brick & Stone.* Classification is generally made by the shape and function of the barn.

Three-bay Threshing Barn

The three-bay threshing barn (also called the English barn) was introduced into North America through English colonial settlement in southern New England.[148] The English and continental European immigrants of the early 1800s introduced this barn type to the Midwest. It was originally designed as a single function barn to store or process grain and was most suitable for small-scale, subsistence farms. It is a single level, rectangular structure divided into three parts or sections, each termed a bay.

Unlike other areas in Will County, Three-bay Threshing barns are uncommon in Custer Township. Only one example was identified, this barn at the Tilden–Baker–Love Farmstead, site 553 in Section 25.

Large double doors are centered on both long sides of the structure. Hand threshing with a grain flail was done in the central bay, sometimes called the threshing bay. Following threshing, the large doors were opened to create a draft, which, during winnowing, would separate the chaff from the heavier grain, and carry it away. Flanking the central bay were the other two bays of generally equal dimensions. One was used during the fall or winter to store sheaves of harvested grain, awaiting threshing. The other bay was used for storing the threshed grain, commonly in bins, and straw, which was used as feed and bedding for

[147] Often there are more conflicts than agreements between different classification systems. The types defined herein seem to best describe the structures actually present and the social and ethnic origins of their builders.

[148] Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk-Housing: Key to Diffusion," in *Common Places, Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, ed. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 11.

horses and cattle.[149] Early examples had steeply pitched (over 45 degrees) gable roofs and low stone foundations. They were sided in vertical boards with small ventilation openings high on the gable ends. Windows are largely absent, although later versions included them at animal stall locations. Gable-end sheds were a common addition.[150]

Eventually, as dairying replaced wheat production in the agricultural economy, the threshing/storage function of this barn type became less important. At first animals were not housed in the structure, although interior remodeling was often made to introduce animal stalls in one of the two side bays. This effectively reduced the grain storage and processing function and only offered shelter for a modest number of animals.[151] In some cases this barn type was lifted up and placed onto a raised basement, which then could house the animals, especially dairy cows.[152]

Raised, Bank, and Basement Barns

The raised or bank barn originated in central New York as a shelter for dairy cattle. It was the first multi-purpose barn to gain widespread popularity. These barns are usually larger than three-bay threshing barns and have a ground floor level for cattle and dairy cows with an upper level for hay and feed storage. This upper level is reached by an earthen ramp, bridge, or the natural slope of an embankment. Basement barns are similar to raised barns, in that the foundation walls extend up to the bottom of the second floor. However, basement barns do not have ramps nor are they sited to utilize the natural topography to access the second floor. The somewhat hilly topography near the Kankakee River in Custer Township provides locations for a few examples of bank barns.

Many bank barns in Custer Township overlook the valleys formed by the Kankakee River or Forked Creek. left: the bank barn at the Plese Farmstead, site 500 in Section 2. Right: the bank barn at the Herbert–Hoffman Farmstead, site 604 in Section 28.

German Barn

German barns, also called German/Swiss barns or Pennsylvania barns, include a group of barns introduced into the Delaware valley by German-speaking settlers. It was one of the first American barn types to combine crop storage and animal shelter. It became a structure synonymous with Pennsylvania Dutch culture and its mixed grain-livestock agriculture. These barns had a lower story partially cut into the natural slope of the land and an upper level that was accessed from a slope or ramp. A forebay is

[149] Charles Calkins and Martin Perkins, "The Three-bay Threshing Barn," in *Barns of the Midwest,* Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995), 40–41.
[150] Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns and Other Farm Structures* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 77.
[151] Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone,* The North American Settlement Landscape, Volume 2: Barns and Farm Structures (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 56–58.
[152] Calkins and Perkins, "The Three-bay Threshing Barn," *Barns of the Midwest,* 59.

formed by recessing the ground floor wall and enclosing it at each end with the masonry gable end walls. Another distinctive feature is the use of a combination of stone masonry and wood framed and sheathed walls: stone was typically reserved for gable end walls and/or north facing walls. This barn type was not observed in the survey area.

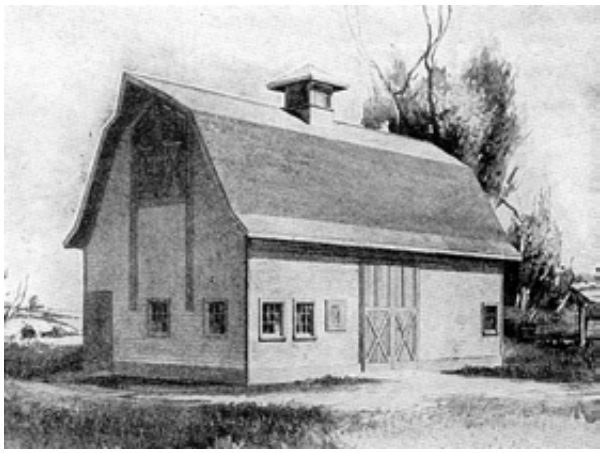
Plank Frame Barn

This relatively small barn type originated in the eastern Midwest around 1875.[153] Plank frame barns can have gable or gambrel roofs and are typically one story in height plus a large hay loft. They are multi-purpose, with small ground floor windows for animal stalls and a large sliding door for equipment. Their floor plans are usually small, approximately 30 by 40 feet. Plank frame barns use small dimension milled lumber rather than the heavy timber framing of earlier barn types. The plank frame barn type is very common in Custer Township, representing about half of the historic barns surveyed.

Left: Barn at the William Trainer Farmstead, site 519 in Section 14. Right: Barn at the Archibald Trainer Farmstead, site 520, also in Section 14.

Left: Barn at the Quiring Farmstead, site 568 in Section 35W. Right: One of two barns at the Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead, site 607 in Section 29.

[153] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book,* [117]



Left: Barn at the Smith–Bauer Farmstead, site 629 in Section 35E. Right: An example of the plank frame barn type illustrated in Smith & Betts Farm and Building Book *(Chicago: The Radford Architectural Company, 1915).*

Three-ended Barn

This barn type is a modification to the three-bay threshing barn, adding a hay barn addition perpendicular to an existing barn. This addition, sometimes called a straw shed, could have less height than the main portion of the barn or be taller than the main barn. The additions could also have an open bay at ground level into which a cart could drive to unload hay into the loft space. No three-ended barns were identified in the survey area.

Round Barn

Non-orthogonal barns (round or polygonal in plan) were popular in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In Illinois, agriculture professor Wilber J. Fraser of the University of Illinois promoted the use of round barns. No existing round barns were documented in the survey area.

Round Roof Barn

Round roof barns came into existence with structural advances in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Although called round, roof shapes for this type are often gothic arch in form. The name describes the roof shape, although the configuration of their floor plans were usually based on more typical barn types such as plank frame, dairy, or raised barns. No round roof barns were identified in Custer Township.

Wisconsin Dairy Barn

A barn associated with dairying is the Wisconsin dairy barn, which originated at the Wisconsin's Agricultural Experiment Station at Madison around 1915. It was specially designed to provide a structure for efficient dairy farming. This large barn was typically 36 by 100 feet or larger. It had a gambrel roof or occasionally a round roof, although early versions were often gable-roofed with horizontal boarding. Rows of small windows and gable-end doors were typical. There was usually a large gable-end loft opening and a triangular hay hood. Frequently there are roof ventilators.[154] Two dairy barns were identified in the survey area, both in Section 11.

[154] Noble and Cleek, 77.


Left: Dairy barn at the Johnson–Shenk Farmstead, site 509 in Section 11. Right: Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510 in Section 11.

Feeder Barn

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Illinois and Iowa developed into the regional center for beef production. Farmers with rougher land, more suited to cattle than crops, raised their cattle from birth to finished beef. They fattened their stock on surplus corn, alfalfa, and feed supplements, and sold them to the rail-connected beef-processing industry in Chicago. The industry was also aided by the introduction of the refrigerated box car. In order to build a barn to hold cattle and hay, the feeder barn (sometimes called the hay barn) was developed. Cattle are housed and fed on the ground floor with a loft above to hold hay. The feeder barn type is common in Custer Township.


Left: One of two barns at the Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead, site 607 in Section 29. Right: Large feeder barn at the Sleight–Roe–O'Brien Farmstead, site 533 in Section 22.

Pole Barn

The latest major barn type, called the pole barn, evolved in the eastern Midwest. The walls of the building are hung on poles that are driven into individual footings buried in the ground below the frost line. The floor is typically concrete slab or dirt. There is no loft. Later versions usually have metal siding, especially those erected after World War II.[155] The pole barn is an example of economical construction techniques applied to modern agriculture.

[155] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book,* 120.

Example of a pole barn from the Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead, site 618 in Section 32.

Quonset Shed

Sometime referred to as Quonset "huts," this metal building type is named for the U.S. Naval Air Station at Quonset Point in Davisville, Rhode Island, where sheds of this type were built in 1942, although wood-framed examples were already common in the 1930s. Its universal use in the military during World War II made Quonset sheds seem to be an ideal economical building type in the postwar years, finding use as storage facilities, offices, homes, and commercial ventures such as movie theaters. Military Quonsets often had steel framing members to support the corrugated galvanized metal sheathing, but civilian examples used wood framing as well. Several examples were identified in Custer Township.

Typical pole barns in Custer Township. Left: Quonset shed at the Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead, site 607 in Section 29. Right: Quonset shed at the Herbert–Hoffman Farmstead, site 604 in Section 28.

Manufactured Building

While pole barn structures use manufactured materials assembled by a local builder or the farmer himself, manufactured buildings originated in the early decades of the twentieth century but were offered as a complete system from the 1940s. Companies including Butler, Bryant, and Morton have produced manufactured buildings that are present in Will County. Such buildings offer quick construction time and potentially lower cost because of the use of standardized components. The buildings also allow for large floor areas, giving farmers flexibility of usage. This building type remains ubiquitous in Will County for newly constructed agricultural buildings.

Examples of manufactured buildings in Custer Township. Top left: This style of manufactured building, exemplified by this structure at the Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead, site 618 in Section 32, is ubiquitous in Will County. Top right: A similar building at Sleight–Roe–O'Brien Farmstead, site 533 in Section 22. Bottom: Unusual wall and roof profiles are also present on manufactured buildings in the survey area. These buildings are at Smiley–Stauffenberg Farmstead, site 521 in Section 14, and Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead, site 607 in Section 29.

Grain Elevators

Grain elevators began to be constructed alongside developing rail systems during the second half of the nineteenth century. Early elevators were often associated with the flour mills they served. They were usually timber-framed structures, as were the mills themselves.[156] Concrete grain elevators and silos, usually constructed in banks of two to ten or more, were constructed in the early decades of the twentieth century.

[156] Keith E. Roe, *Corncribs in History, Folklife, and Architecture* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 176.

Corncribs

Pioneer farmers frequently built log corncribs during their two centuries of migration into and settlement of the Midwest. Most crude frontier log cribs were little more than bins, loosely constructed of saplings or split rails and laid up with saddle notching to hold them together.[157] Sometimes the logs were skinned to lessen the danger of infestation by worms and insect. The bin-like cribs were typically covered with thatch or cornstalks to help shed the rain; a board and shingle roof took more effort, required nails, and therefore was more expensive. Unfortunately, thatch roof corncribs were more readily infested by rodents. Log construction of corncribs remained popular through the 1800s in areas where timber resources proved readily accessible.

The invention of the circular saw in 1860 and its growing adaptation to steam power by mid-century made lumber cheap enough for general use on outbuildings such as corncribs, enabling later versions to be built of narrow lumber slats.[158] The corncrib usually rested on log or stone piers.[159] In constructing a frame corncrib, two methods of attaching the slat siding or cribbing were used. The slats were attached either horizontally or vertically; cribbing attached diagonally for extra strength seems to have come into practice about 1900.[160]

The size of the corncribs remained small, even as corn production rose during much of the nineteenth century, in part due to the practice of corn shocking. Corn could be gradually "shucked out" as needed and hauled to the crib or barn for milling and feeding to livestock. Large corncribs were unnecessary since farmers could leave much of their corn in the field until spring.[161] Crib width was influenced by the climate of a region; drier conditions allowed for wider cribs with no increased loss of corn due to mold. As corn production outgrew the single crib in the developing Corn Belt, double cribs were formed by extending the roof over a pair of cribs to form a gable roof. If the gap between the cribs was then lofted over, extra space was gained beneath the roof for overflow storage of ear corn. Spreading the cribs apart not only increased the loft space but created a storage area below for wagons, tools, and implements. These structures, called crib barns, became common in the Midwest by 1900.[162] The creation of larger corncribs and their overhead grain bins depended upon the invention of new methods to raise the grain and ear corn higher than a farmer could scoop it. High cribs were made possible by the commercial adaptation of continuous belt and cup elevators from grain mills and by the portable grain elevator grain.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, both concrete and steel were promoted as alternative construction materials for corncribs and grain elevators. The use of hollow clay tiles was also encouraged in those parts of the Midwest where they were manufactured, notably in Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana.[163] The most common variety of concrete corncrib was made of interlocking stave blocks, which had been cast with ventilating slots. In some cases, steel wires or rods were incorporated in the vents to keep out rodents. The blocks were laid up in the form of a circular bin. These were encircled with steel rods, enabling the structure to withstand lateral pressures from the corn heaped within. Single and double bin corncribs of this type were most common, although four-bin corncribs were not unusual. Between 1900 and 1940, concrete was promoted as a do-it-yourself material, poured into rented forms, for building corncribs.[164] Wood-framed corn cribs are not common in the survey area. Crib barns, silos, and metal grain bins are much more common.

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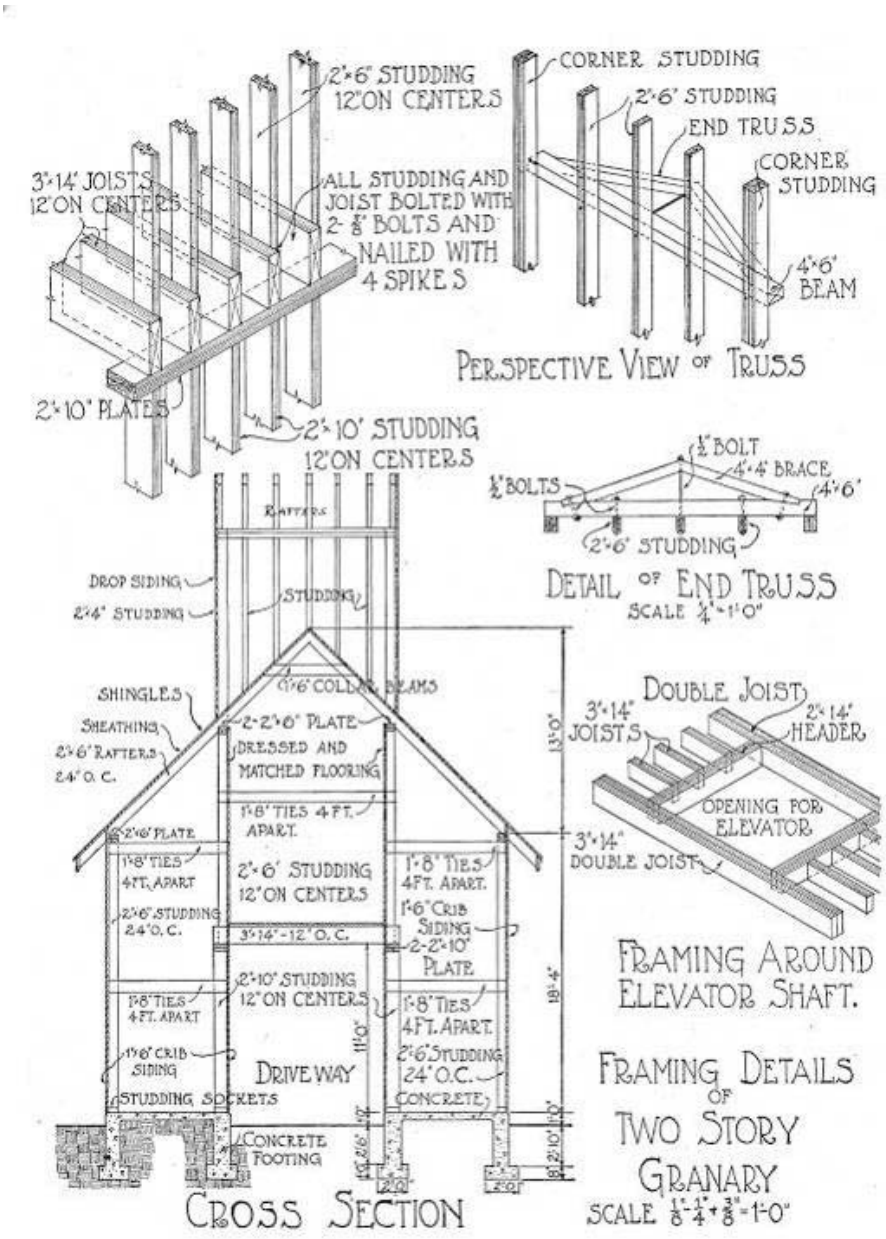
[157] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*, 170–171.
[158] Roe, *Corncribs in History, Folklife, and Architecture*, 26.
[159] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*, 155.
[160] Roe, *Corncribs in History, Folklife, and Architecture*, 27.
[161] Keith E. Roe, "Corncribs to Grain Elevators: Extensions of the Barn, " in *Barns of the Midwest*, 170.
[162] Roe, *Corncribs in History, Folklife, and Architecture*, 60.
[163] Ibid., 177.
[164] Ibid., 176.

Crib Barns

Crib barns are simple structures formed of pens or cribs that have a space between the cribs for implement storage. There are two basics types: crib barns with the gable or roofline parallel to the cribs, and transverse crib barns with the roofline perpendicular to the pens. The configuration of crib barns developed from practical limitations and needs, such as the height to which a scoopful of corn could be pitched from a wagon (which dictated the bin height) and the size of farm equipment (which dictated the spacing between bins). Later crib barns, including many examples in the survey area, have mechanical elevators housed in a small projecting cupola at the ridge of the crib barn roof. Crib barns are present on approximately one-quarter of the farmstead sites surveyed.

From left: Top: Crib barns at the Johnson–Shenk Farmstead, site 509, and Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, site 510, both in Section 11. Middle: Crib barns at the Plese Farmstead, site 500 and the Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead, site 607. Bottom: Round roof crib barns at the Mueller–Cooper Farmstead, site 535 in Section 22 and the Andrew Yeates Farmstead, site 624 in Section 34E.



Crib barns, usually with two bins, abound in the survey area. Illustrated above are framing details of a crib barn from Smith & Betts Farm and Building Book *(Chicago: The Radford Architectural Company, 1915).*

Metal Bins

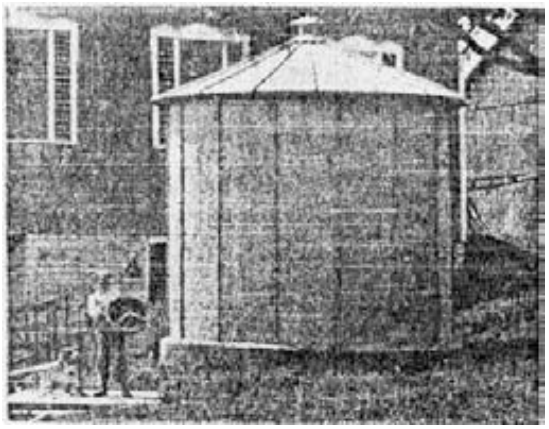
Metal construction for corn storage came into use early in the twentieth century and was promoted by the steel industry during World War I as a crop saver for the patriotic farmer. Rectangular or hexagonal corncribs were constructed from flat, galvanized-steel sheet metal with ventilating perforations. Corrugated, curved sheets created the more common cylindrical bin type, which was usually topped with a conical roof. The steel corncrib had wall ventilation slits and, most times, a roof ventilator at its peak.[165]

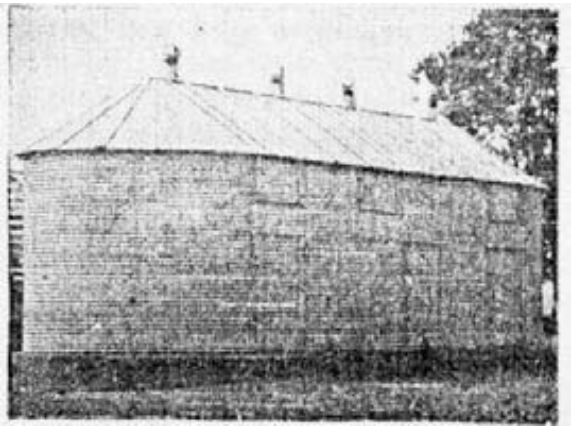
Steel was ideal for fabricating standard parts, as well as being vermin-proof. Proper design of metal bins included such factors as ventilation, consideration of structural loads from the feed to be contained, and

[165] Ibid.

use of a concrete or heavy timber foundation with the exterior walls anchored to the foundation. Roofs usually consisted of overlapping sheets to form a conical form.[166]

Corn bins made of steel rods or heavy wire mesh also became available in the 1930s. The wire mesh type was particularly popular after World War II because of its low cost, ease of filling, and low maintenance. Wire mesh-type bins have fallen out of favor since the 1980s, but the solid metal bins are still commonly used today. Grain bins are less common in Custer Township than other areas of Will County.





Above: Illustrations of two types of metal corn bins from The Illinois Farmer's Guide, *August 1939. Below, circa 1930s grain bin at the Smith–Bauer Farmstead, site 629 in Section 35E, left; newer style grain bin at Reed–Seigert–Kopriva Farmstead, site 616 in Section 31, right.*

Silos

Silos are structures used for preserving green fodder crops, principally field corn, in a succulent condition. Silos are a recent phenomenon, employed only after 1875 and not truly established until shortly before the turn of the twentieth century. The stored green fodder material is termed ensilage, which is shortened to silage. The acceptance of silos was gradual, but this type of structure eventually came to be enthusiastically embraced by farmers because it offered certain advantages. First, larger numbers of cattle could be kept on the farm because the food value of corn is greater than that of a combination of hay and grain. Second, less water was needed for stock in the winter, lessening labor requirements as frequent ice breaking and thawing was no longer required. Finally, because succulent green fodder could be fed

[166] R.E. Martin, "Steel Bin Design for Farm Storage of Grain," *Agricultural Engineering* (April 1940): 144 and 146.

throughout the year, cows produced milk during the entire winter season, increasing the income of the farm.[167]

The first silos were pits excavated inside the barn. The earliest upright or tower silos date from the late 1880s and were rectangular or square in form and constructed with the same materials and techniques as those used in the barn itself, with framed lumber walls.[168] Many were constructed within the barn building.[169] Later examples of this silo type had rounded corners on the inside formed by a vertical tongue-in-groove lining. The rectangular silo appeared in some areas as late as 1910. The octagonal silo type that followed attempted to achieve the advantages of a circular silo while keeping the ease of angular construction. In the 1890s circular forms began to be seen. A shift from the rectangular to the circular stems from the efficiency of the circular form in storing corn ensilage by eliminating air space and thereby reducing spoilage.

The wooden-hoop silo was formed with wood, soaked and shaped into gigantic circular hoop forms and then fastened together horizontally in the tower shape. This style did not become popular because the hoops tended to spring apart. A more common type of wood silo was the panel or Minneapolis silo, also known by several other names. It was advertised in numerous farm journals in the early twentieth century. It consisted of ribs set about 20 inches to 24 inches apart and horizontal matched boards (known as staves) set in grooves in the ribs. Steel hoops were placed around silo to lock the boards in place. This type of silo was made with either single or double wall construction and was polygonal in plan.

Masonry silos, constructed of hollow clay tile, brick, or concrete block, appeared in the first decades of the twentieth century. In comparison with the other two types of silos, brick silos were more difficult to construct because of the time required to erect the relatively small masonry units. There were many patents on concrete blocks for silo purposes, with some blocks curved and other finished with rock-faced building blocks. Some patented blocks had reinforcing sold with the blocks or integral with the block units.[170] Concrete block silos were finished on the interior with a layer of cement mortar to seal joints that might otherwise leak air or water.

The hollow clay tile silo, generally known as the "Iowa Silo," was developed by the Experiment Station of the Iowa State College and erected during the summer of 1908 on the college farm.[171] Brick and tile companies manufactured curved blocks for silos, advertising them in farm journals. The main complaint regarding the hollow block silo was that the masonry units were porous and leaked water. The mortar joints on both inside and outside of wall needed to be properly pointed as a precaution against leakage. Some silo builders washed the interior of the wall with cement mortar as a further precaution. Steel reinforcing consisted of heavy wire embedded in the mortar joints.

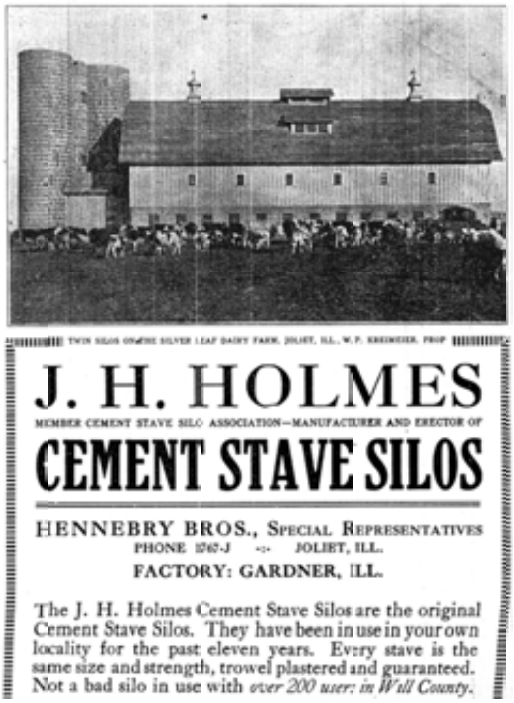
Concrete stave silos were constructed as early as 1904 in Cassopolis, Missouri, which used book-shaped staves.[172] Several patents existed for cement stave silos, including that of the Mason & Lawrence of Elgin, Illinois, dating from 1914.[173] Farmers also could make their own concrete staves or blocks to construct a silo or other farm structure. Concrete staves could vary in size, but were often approximately 30 inches

[167] Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone*, 71–72.
[168] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*, 158.
[169] Ingolf Vogeler, "Dairying and Dairy Barns in the Northern Midwest," *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 108.
[170] W.A. Foster, "Silo Types and Essentials," *Hoard's Dairyman* (21 February 1919) 201, 216, 217, and 232.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Foster, "Silo Types and Essentials." Patents were granted on this type of stave silo in 1908, and the type was known commercially as the Playford patent cement stave silo.
[173] "How to Make and Sell Concrete Silo Staves," *Concrete* (October 1927): 32–35.

long, 10 inches wide, and 2-1/2 inches thick. One end of the block was concave and the other convex to allow fitting the blocks in the assembled structure.[174]

This excerpt from *Concrete* magazine from 1927 outlines the erection procedure for a concrete stave silo:

> Concrete stave silos are quickly and easily erected. Three men can easily erect two average sized silos each week and some crews can do better than that, especially when the proper equipment is at hand. . . . Concrete staves are generally set up dry, no mortar being used in the joints. In some types a grove is molded entirely around the edge of the stave. . . . The hoops or steel rods, placed to reinforce the silo, are set as the erection of the wall progressed. Hoops are usually composed of two or three sections, depending upon the diameter of the silo. The sections are joined by means of special lugs. After the hoops are placed in position they are drawn tight enough to hold them in position. . . . After the entire silo walls are completed, the hoops are drawn tight, care being exercised to draw them all to the same tension. . . . After the walls are erected and the hoops tightened, the interior walls are ready for a wash that seals the joints and produces a smooth, impervious surface. A cement wash, made of a mixture of cement and water and of the consistency of thick paint, is often used.[175]



Above: A detail view of the steel hoops and turnbuckles on a concrete stave silo. Right: An advertisement for concrete stave silos from the Prairie Farmer's Reliable Directory *(1918), 359.*

Silos constructed with monolithic concrete walls also appeared in the early decades of the twentieth century. Concrete silos were built using "slip-forms," with the forms usually about two feet high and lifted once the level below had cured sufficiently, leaving horizontal cold joints between each level.[176] Such silos could be expensive to construct since labor was required to prepare the concrete and lift the forms. However, forms could be rented from contractors or cement manufacturers. Farmers who chose to

[174] David Mocine, "Keep Workmen Busy the Year Round," *Concrete Products* (January 1948): 161.
[175] "How to Make and Sell Concrete Silo Staves," *Concrete* (October 1927) 32–35.
[176] The presence of cold joints had the potential to allow air to enter the silo. Therefore, it was important to coat the silo interior with a layer of cement mortar. As with other silo types, this mortar layer needed to be renewed periodically.

build a concrete silo could obtain guidance from farm and building trade journals. Qualities of the reinforcing steel and type, concrete components and mixing, formwork, and concrete placement were outlined, as stated in this excerpt from *Hoard's Dairyman* from 1919:

> When used, the cement should be in perfect condition and contain no lumps, which cannot readily be pulverized between the fingers. Sand and gravel or broken stone should conform to the requirements of proper grading and cleanliness. . . . Water must be clean, free from oil, alkali, silt, loam, and clay in suspension. Steel used in reinforcement should be secured from one of the manufacturers specializing in steel for use in concrete construction. . . . Wire mesh fabrics may be used instead of steel bars but if used should contain an amount of metal equal in cross-section area to the rods for which substituted.[177]

In 1913, farmers were lectured at the annual gathering of the Illinois Farmers' Institute not only about the utility of the silo but also other issues to consider:

> The question of general arrangement of the farm buildings is too often neglected. This should be of second consideration, as there is beauty in utility. Often the upper portion of a well-built silo showing above the sloping roof of some of the other buildings adds very materially to the general appearance of the group of buildings. Also the side near the top often affords the best place for the farm name.[178]

Farm journals gave their readers information for constructing a silo with the "essential features . . . necessary to secure good, sweet silage," focusing primarily on the silo walls.[179] Wall strength, smoothness of interior wall surfaces, and air and water tightness were considered essential features. The foundation for the silo typically consisted of a wall ten inches minimum in width extending below the frost line and six to eight inches above grade. Conical roof shapes were common on some early silos, but gambrel and, later, domical roofs became more prevalent.[180] An essential feature of any roof was a snug fit to prevent birds from entering the silo.

After 1949, a new type of silo appeared: the blue Harvestore silos. Constructed of fiberglass bonded to sheets of metal, they were first introduced in Wisconsin. The glass-coated interior surface prevented silage from freezing and rust from forming. Because the container was airtight, the silage would not spoil. Augers, derived from coal-mining equipment, were used to bore the silage out at the bottom of the silo, a great change from the earlier top-unloaded silos. A large plastic bag at the top of the structure allowed changes in gas pressure to be equalized, and took up the space vacated by removal of silage.[181] In 1974 the company launched another line of products for the containment of manure called Slurrystore. By 1999, over 70,000 of Harvestore structures of various sizes (tall or short, narrow or stout) had been built.[182]

Silos are not particularly common in Custer Township. The observed examples typically use concrete stave or Harvestore construction.

[177] H. Colin Campbell, "Concrete Silo Construction," *Hoard's Dairyman* (21 February 1919): 200.
[178] King, "Planning the Silo," in *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Illinois Farmers' Institute,* 64.
[179] W.A. Foster, "Silo Types and Essentials," *Hoard's Dairyman* (21 February 1919): 201.
[180] Gambrel and domical roofs allowed for filling the silo to the top of the outer wall, maximizing the storage capacity.
[181] Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*, 108–9.
[182] Harvestore Systems, DeKalb, Illinois, www.harvestore.com



Silos. From left, examples at the Sleight–Roe–O'Brien Farmstead, site 533, the Plese Farmstead, site 500, and the Kilpatrick–Ptacek Farmstead, site 551.

Other Farm Structures

> We did much of our own carpentering as a matter of course. The farmer who couldn't build his own henhouse or woodshed wasn't much of a farmer.[183]

Farmhouses, barns, corn cribs, and silos make up approximately half of the buildings surveyed as part of this study. The remaining outbuildings include many of the building types illustrated below. They include chicken houses, hog houses, milk houses, smokehouses, water tanks and windmills. As implied by the above quote, many of these outbuildings likely were built by the farmers themselves.


Historic farmsteads generally include a variety of small, special purpose outbuildings. Left: Small animal barn at the Smillie–Underwood Farmstead, site 516 in Section 13. Right: Chicken coop at the Weikum–Zelenka Farmstead, site 537 in Section 22.

[183] Britt, *An America That Was*, 127.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Period of Significance: 1835 to 1970

The first settlement by settlers of European origin occurred in Will County in the 1830s. Settlers first came to Custer Township in the late 1830s, although large portions of the township were sold to private owners only in the late 1840s. An approximate starting date of 1835 is used for the period of significance.

Custer Township began its development as a farming community, with the nearby city of Wilmington serving as the primary market and commercial town for the residents of the township. The Kankakee River formed an important artery for travel in the nineteenth century, with several river landings in the township that served as early commercial centers. With the rapid development of coal mining in the area after the Civil War, the City of Braidwood was established and the original Reed Township was divided, leading to the creation of present-day Custer Township in 1876.

Following construction of the Wabash Railroad in 1880, the earlier settlement at Horse Creek Landing developed into the small hamlet of Custer Park, but this new village never developed into a major commercial center, and the nearby cities of Braidwood and Wilmington remained the social and economic focus for Custer Township residents. Custer Township remained an predominantly rural community well into the twentieth century.

Starting in the 1930s, residential development along the Kankakee River resulted in the establishment of new subdivisions in the riverfront portion of Custer Township. The riverfront portions of the eastern half of the township were incorporated into Kankakee River State Park in 1956. When school consolidation occurred in the 1950s, the historic connections that had always made Custer Township socially and economically joined to the City of Braidwood were reinforced.

Unlike other areas of the county that have seen significant commercial, industrial, and residential development since 1990, Custer Township has been little affected by new construction. A closing date of 1970 is used for the period of significance, for consistency with other portions of Will County.

The use of the closing date of 1970, however, does not mean that all elements constructed prior to that time were surveyed. Only a select number constructed between 1950 and 1970 have been included. Agricultural support structures such as manufactured buildings or grain bins that may post-date 1970 were included in the documentation of historic farmsteads.

Significance

National Register and Local Landmark Criteria

A selected number of properties within the rural survey area are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation, as cited below, provide standards that significant historic properties are required to meet in order to be listed in the National Register:

> The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:
> A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
> B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
> C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
> D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information in prehistory or history.[184]

The three criteria that are most applicable to the rural survey area are A, B, and C. Under Criterion A, the survey region has significance as a historic agricultural region with over 100 years of historical significance. The survey region has less significance under Criterion B, except on a local level as discussed below. Under Criteria A and C, the survey region contains architecturally significant structures that represent the diverse range of agricultural practices that occurred during the period of significance.

In addition to eligibility for national listing, properties within the survey region are also eligible for local Will County listing, either individually as landmarks or as a group as a preservation district. The following are the criteria for Will County landmark listing as stated in the Will County Preservation Ordinance:

> Criteria for Consideration of Nomination. The Commission may recommend to the County Board the designation of landmarks and preservation districts, where not more than fifty percent (50%) of the property owners whose property is located within the boundaries of the proposed district object to designation, when after a thorough investigation results in a determination that a property, structure or improvement, or area so recommended meets one (1) or more of the following criteria:
> a) It has character, interest, or value which is part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of a local community, the County of Will, State of Illinois or the Nation;
> b) Its location is a site of a significant local, County, State, or National event;
> c) It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the local community County or Will, State of Illinois, or the Nation;
> d) It embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;
> e) It is identified with the work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the local area, County of Will, State of Illinois, or the Nation;
> f) It embodies elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant;
> g) It embodies design elements that make it structurally or architecturally innovative;

[184] Quoted from National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources Division, 1997), 2; originally published in *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60*.

h) It has a unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
i) It has character which is a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure with a high level of integrity or architectural significance;
j) It is suitable for preservation or restoration;
k) It is included in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Illinois Register of Historic Places.
l) It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to pre-history, history or other areas of archaeological significance.

In the event a property, structure, or an area is found to be of such significant character and quality where it is determined that its designation as a landmark or preservation district is in the overall best interest of the general welfare, any person may nominate and the Commission may recommend to the County Board such appropriate designation.

One of the differences between national and local listing is that local significance may be easier to justify than national significance. Properties that are eligible and listed as local landmarks, but may be more difficult to nominate for the National Register, receive important recognition and thereby afforded a certain measure of protection. Eventually, these properties could be listed as National Register properties if the case for their nomination improves. Additionally, local landmark designation often gives protections that National Register listing does not. The suggested properties have been researched sufficiently in performing this survey to merit consideration as Will County Landmarks.[185] It should be noted that some of the properties with local landmark potential could be determined, after performing additional research, to have sufficient significance for National Register designation.

Another measure of recognition is the listing of farmsteads that have been "owned by a straight or collateral line of descendants of the original owner for at least 100 years."[186] Since 1972, the Illinois Department of Agriculture has administered the Illinois Centennial Farms Program. Illinois has been settled by farmers since the early 1800s, meaning that some farms have been in the same family for more than 100 years. To recognize the achievement of 150 years of ownership, the Illinois Sesquicentennial Farms Program was established in 2000. Application for either program requires a written legal description and the familial line of farmer owners.

[185] It is useful at this point to provide general readers of this report with information on the issues surrounding the designation of a property as a Landmark as embodied in the Will County Preservation Ordinance. (The issues discussed herein are current as of the date of this report.) Landmarks may be properties (including districts), structures, or natural features. Any individual or group may propose a property for designation to the Historic Preservation Commission. Although the property owner does *not* need to be the party proposing designation, and the property owner does *not* need to grant consent in event of approval by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Will County Board, the property owner is notified in accordance with legal requirements of public hearings (adjacent property owners are notified as well).
The Will County Preservation Ordinance protects historic sites designated as Landmarks from alteration and demolition. (The ordinance also has a clause that provides for the review of demolition permits on buildings and structures 30 years and older.) All work on the Landmark (with the exception of normal maintenance) must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission prior to beginning work, although work limited by economic hardship or in response to emergency situations is allowable with proper documentation. Demolition of a Landmark is permitted only after review of the demolition application by the Historic Preservation Commission, who may require written, graphic, and/or photographic documentation of the Landmark prior to demolition. Owners of Will County Landmarks are not obligated to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore their properties; however, owners may be eligible for low-interest loans, tax credits, or grants to assist with such actions. (Source: "Will County Landmark Nomination Questions," n.d.)

[186] Introduction to the Illinois Centennial Farms Program application form, Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Integrity

One important issue in the consideration of significance of a property or site is its historical and architectural integrity. This can be defined as the degree that a structure or group of structures retains its original configuration and materials, and that these materials are in good enough condition that measures can be taken to extend their service life. Replacement of selected elements, such as rotted wood members, may be necessary, but total replacement is not necessary. The issue applies primarily to the exterior of the structure, although in some cases the integrity of the interior may be a factor as well.

In the areas of Will County included in this and past intensive surveys, individual buildings on farmsteads may be in poor condition or significantly altered. In these instances, determination of significance can only be made on the historical importance of the original owner or builder. Some farmstead sites have an eroded integrity because of the loss of one or more significant structures, making it difficult to recognize the agricultural connections of the site. Determination of integrity has to be made on a case by case basis. In many instances, the presence of a former farmhouse or barn alone communicates agricultural origin of the site.

Another issue that defines the integrity of a structure is the presence of historically appropriate materials. Since a 150-year-old farmhouse is unlikely to have all of its original wood siding in place, an appropriate replacement would be wood siding material of similar dimension to the original. The presence of artificial or synthetic siding material, such as metal, aluminum, or vinyl siding, seriously detracts from the integrity of the building or element. It should be noted that this applies not only to farmhouses but barns and other agricultural support buildings. To address the addition of contemporary finish materials to historic buildings while still identifying structures of historic interest, this survey report uses the terminology "potentially" significant. This terminology is used to describe structures for which the overall form and architectural character remains intact, but for which contemporary finish materials have been added to the building exterior. The removal of these finish materials and the repair of the original wood siding (which typically is left in place in such installations) is a straightforward activity that, if implemented, would restore the integrity of these historic structures. Although the presence of contemporary finish materials generally disqualifies a structure from individual listing as a historic landmark in some registries, this survey report is intended to serve as a planning tool, and the identification of sites with a potential to be listed as historic landmarks increases the usefulness of this tool.

This issue is addressed in *Preservation Brief No. 8: Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings*, which states the following:

> Preservation of a building or district and its historic character is based on the assumption that the retention of historic materials and features and their craftsmanship are of primary importance. Therefore, the underlying issue in any discussion of replacement materials is whether or not the integrity of historic materials and craftsmanship has been lost. Structures are historic because the materials and craftsmanship reflected in their construction are tangible and irreplaceable evidence of our cultural heritage. To the degree that substitute materials destroy and/or conceal the historic fabric, they will always subtract from the basic integrity of historically and architecturally significant buildings.[187]

Contributing and Non-contributing Properties

Many of the farmsteads and supporting rural sites in the survey can be considered contributing to a potential rural heritage district or simply retain the character of an agricultural development. In evaluating the sites in this survey, a contributing site is one that retains a *coherent* appearance as a farmstead or

[187] John H. Myers, with revisions by Gary L. Hume, *Preservation Brief No. 8, Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings* (October 1984).

whatever its original function once was. Most of the structures on the property were observed to be in good or fair condition, although a few of the structures might be considered to be in poor condition. Non-contributing sites are listed as such because they lack integrity, such as potentially significant structures that have been significantly altered or were observed to be in poor condition. Abandoned farmsteads are also generally listed as non-contributing.

Will County Land Use Department Planning Documents

In April 2002, Will County adopted a new *Land Resource Management Plan*. The plan addresses the importance of Will County Landmarks and National Register designated properties and sites through preservation planning. The document is also very realistic, recognizing that growth likely will occur and, if not regulated properly, could have a detrimental impact on the character of the County's rural areas. The *Land Resource Management Pla*n focuses primarily on land use and development forms, but advocates that the preservation of rural areas should include the preservation of those elements significant to agricultural production and the agricultural landscape, such as rural structures. Therefore, the *Land Resource Management Plan* supports the goals for the preservation of rural structures.

The new *Land Resource Management Plan* also includes discussion of different forms of development in rural areas, both historically and at present. This includes preserving the character of hamlets and other small rural crossroad settlements. Contemporary development trends include Conservation Design Subdivisions, which rearrange the typical layout of streets and housing lots, setting aside a substantial amount of land as permanent open space. Conventional Suburban Residential subdivisions typically consume the entire development parcel. Historic structures and landscapes are specifically recognized in the *Land Resource Management Plan* as meriting protection when developing a Conservation Design Subdivision.[188]

A detailed review of the new *Land Resource Management Plan,* and its application to the rural survey area, is beyond the scope of this report. However, the information provided in this new document should be considered in the development of protection measures for the rural heritage areas and sites discussed below.

Municipal and County Government Coordination

Most of Custer Township is unincorporated, including the hamlet of Custer Park. A small area in Section 3 of the township is within the corporate limits of the City of Wilmington. No farmstead sites were identified within these limits. Generally, the Will County Historic Preservation Commission does not consider landmark nominations for properties within incorporated municipalities. However, the City of Wilmington does not have a local historic preservation ordinance. Through the passage of a municipal ordinance granting Will County the authority to designate a property, a property nominated within the municipality could proceed through the normal landmark designation review process. If, in the future, the City of Wilmington were to adopt a local historic preservation ordinance, jurisdiction of county landmarks within the municipality would be transferred to local from county jurisdiction. If a municipality without a local historic preservation ordinance were to annex a property that is already designated as a county landmark, the Will County preservation ordinance would continue to govern protection of the property.

[188] To view the *Land Resource Management Plan* in its entirety, please visit http://www.willcountylanduse.com/lrmp/lrmpmain.html, or contact the Will County Land Use Department, Planning Division, at (815) 727-8430.

Potential Historic Districts, Thematic Designations, and Landmarks

Individual Landmarks

Custer Township contains one existing Will County landmark, the small Brown Cemetery located on Illinois Route 113 in the northwest quarter of Section 15.[189] There are no National Register-listed properties in the township. Based on the research performed for this survey, there are five farmstead sites and two bridges with the potential to be nominated as Will County landmarks. Of these sites, the Wabash Railroad bridge is additionally considered to be National Register eligible due to its significance as a local example of a distinctive structural type. This does not mean that other sites are not eligible; merely that further study is required before a determination of eligibility could be made.

The following properties are considered to be eligible for Will County landmark designation:

- Site 510 PIN 24-11-200-006 Quimby–Shenk Farmstead (Page 117)
- Site 549 PIN 24-25-100-001 William Young Farmstead (Page 119)
- Site 613 PIN 25-31-100-002 Russell–Lake–Prince Farmstead (Page 120)
- Site 624 PIN 25-34-300-004 Andrew Yeates Farmstead (Page 120)
- Site 632 PIN 25-19-400-010 Baird Farmstead (Page 121)
- Site 636 N/A Decatur & State Line Railroad bridge piers (Page 32)
- Site 635 N/A Wabash Railroad bridge, National Register eligible (Page 32)

These properties, as well as other farmsteads associated with prominent families in Custer Township, are discussed in detail beginning on page 115.

Custer Park

Consideration was also given to the potential establishment of a historic district encompassing the unincorporated hamlet of Custer Park. Based on the results of the archival research and documentation conducted as part of this project, the hamlet likely lacks sufficient integrity to justify designation as a historic district. None of the buildings visible in historical photographic postcards of Custer Park survive today with integrity. The "Main Street" commercial buildings along present-day Illinois Route 113, the Wabash Railroad depot, Shinaberger's Hotel, and the 1920s schoolhouse in the village have all been demolished. Surviving older buildings, such as Custer Township Hall and the apartment building at 35246–35252 Grant Avenue, lack historic integrity due to later remodeling. Many of the existing houses in Custer Park date to the 1950s and 1960s and are not related to the earlier, historically notable resort activity in the area. However, individual buildings or structures within Custer Park may have sufficient historic integrity for individual listing.

[189] Brown Cemetery was designated a landmark on March 19, 2009. Will County Land Use & Development Committee Resolution 09-51. The cemetery is owned by Custer Township. See also Modesto (M. J.) Donna, *The Braidwood Story* (1957), 277.

Survey Summary

The survey of Custer Township documented approximately 426 structures, including 69 houses and 21 major barns on 73 farmsteads and related sites. Cumulatively since 1999, the Will County Rural Historic Structural Survey has documented more than 6,500 structures on more than 1,450 sites.[190] The tables below provide a breakdown of the survey results for Reed, Custer, Florence, and Wesley Townships.[191]

Farmhouses

House Type	Reed	Custer	Florence	Wesley	Totals
I House	—	2	—	1	33
Hall and Parlor	—	—	—	—	20
New England 1-1/2	—	1	—	1	11
Four over Four	—	1	3	3	91
Side Hallway	—	1	3	3	20
Upright and Wing	3	5	12	14	229
Gabled Ell	—	11	13	13	260
Gable Front	3	11	3	4	90
Foursquare	—	—	8	4	108
Bungalow	3	6	3	7	76
Cape Cod	—	1	3	5	48
Ranch	9	18	9	20	*
Other	—	12	4	8	257
Totals	**18**	**69**	**61**	**83**	**1,243**

* Ranch type houses are grouped with the "Other" category.

Barns

Barn Type	Reed	Custer	Florence	Wesley	Totals
Three-bay Threshing	—	1	4	2	188
Bank	—	2	2	9	36
Raised	—	—	—	—	9
Pennsylvania German	—	—	—	—	9
Three-ended	—	—	—	—	12
Plank frame	3	10	16	17	153
Feeder	—	6	4	4	51
Dairy	1	2	3	3	103
Round roof	—	—	—	1	7
Round	—	—	—	—	2
Other or Unclassified	2	—	1	—	21
Totals	**6**	**21**	**30**	**36**	**591**

[190] It should be noted that the rapid suburbanization of Will County since survey work began in 1999 means that some of these structures have already disappeared. For example, the 1999–2000 survey documented sites in Plainfield and Wheatland Townships. During an updated survey by WJE for the Village of Plainfield of the village's planning area in 2005–2006, it was found that 35 of 112 farmstead sites existing in 1999 had been demolished within the intervening six years.

[191] These townships have been selected since they are geographically close to Custer Township and have been surveyed recently. Note that these tabulations do not include any structures located on the former Joliet Arsenal site in Florence Township. Typically, ruins of buildings, trailer homes, and site features such as swimming pools are excluded from the tabulation, although these structures are photographically documented on the individual site survey forms.

Outbuildings

Building Type	Reed	Custer	Florence	Wesley	Totals
Animal shed or shelter	4	8	18	20	148
Barn (secondary)	—	1	—	—	27
Cellar	1	2	4	—	17
Chicken coop	1	6	7	8	147
Corn crib	—	—	—	1	16
Crib barn	—	16	31	26	495
Foundation	—	9	6	8	103
Garage	13	50	40	67	628
Horse stable	—	5	1	2	24
Hog house	1	—	—	—	16
Implement shed	—	6	3	9	204
Machine shed	9	23	21	33	206
Mesh bin	—	3	2	—	48
Metal bin	18	77	38	50	626
Milk house		2	2	5	99
Pole barn / Manufactured building	14	39	44	55	589
Privy	—	—	1	1	14
Pump house / Well house	3	9	4	6	118
Shed	12	54	34	75	623
Silo	3	6	6	12	287
Smoke house	—	—	1	2	30
Summer kitchen	—	—	1	—	30
Windmill	—	2	4	1	53
Other	6	18	5	20	171
Totals	**85**	**336**	**273**	**401**	**4,719**
Total, including houses and barns	**109**	**426**	**364**	**520**	**6,553**

Comparison to 1988 Survey Results

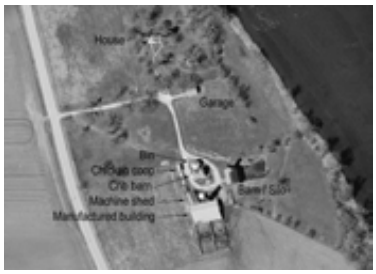
As part of the data compilation, a limited comparison was made between the results of the 1988 reconnaissance survey of Will County and the existing conditions in Custer Township in 2012. The 1988 survey, conducted by Michael A. Lambert in September–October 1988 for the State of Illinois, was a reconnaissance-level survey performed from the public right-of-way. In the 1988 survey of Custer Township, approximately 350 buildings on 77 farmstead sites were documented.[192] Among the farmstead sites documented in 1988, no historic structures survey at 14 sites in Custer Township. Most of these historic farmsteads have been lost due to a decline in the agricultural economy of the area; relatively little new development has occurred in the townships. In addition, at a few sites, major contributing structures such as the original house or barn have been lost since 1988.

The following table lists all farmsteads and sites included in the survey area of Custer Township and each site's potential for landmark designation. The table also includes photographs of the house and barn on each site and other noteworthy information as available. Two other tables list farmhouses with type and major barns with type. The ID numbers listed on the tables correlate to the maps included in Appendix B.

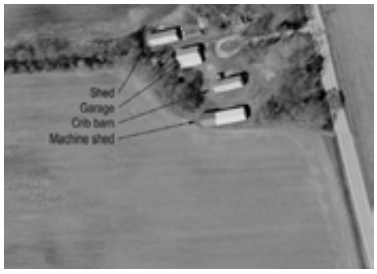
[192] Excluded from this total are 13 farmstead sites in Custer Township that were not documented during the 1988 survey, but which are included in the present survey and therefore obviously existed at that time.

Table 1. Surveyed Farmsteads and Related Sites in Custer Township

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
500	24-02-100-001	West River Road	**Plese Farmstead**	Contributing




501	24-02-300-004	West River Road	**Vesely Farmstead**	Non-contributing



506	24-11-200-002	West River Road	**House 506**	Non-contributing


ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
507	24-11-200-003	West River Road	**House 507**	Non-contributing


508	24-11-200-005	West River Road	**House 508**	Non-contributing




Small house and garage is at 33632 West River Road, PIN 24-11-200-004

510	24-11-200-006	West River Road	**Quimby–Shenk Farmstead**	Local landmark potential



Woodruff (1878), 874–875; Chapman Brothers (1890), 287–288. See also site 509.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
509	24-11-200-007	West River Road	**Johnson–Shenk Farmstead**	Contributing



Woodruff (1878), 874–875; Chapman Brothers (1890), 287–288. See also site 510.

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513 24-11-300-006 Reed Street (Illinois Highway 113) **Munch Farmstead** Contributing

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511 24-11-400-006 West River Road **Hudson–Haas–Shenk Farmstead** Contributing

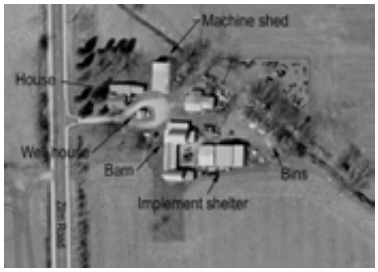

Woodruff (1878), 873–874.
Settled by Henry Hudson in 1846.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
512	24-11-400-018	West River Road	**Johnson [Robertson] School**	Non-contributing

514	24-13-100-020	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Gray–Gebhart Farmstead**	Non-contributing

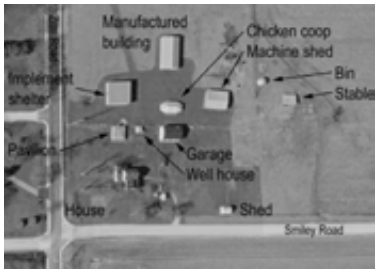
Also 1988 site 13-04

515	24-13-300-001	Zilm Road	**Thomas Trainer Farmstead**	Contributing



Woodruff (1878), 876–877; Stevens (1907), 726–729. See also sites 519 and 520.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
516	24-13-300-006	Zilm Road	**Smillie–Underwood Farmstead**	Contributing



Woodruff (1878), 875.
Settled as part of John J. Smillie estate.

528	24-13-400-008	Smiley Road	**Smillie Farmstead**	Non-contributing

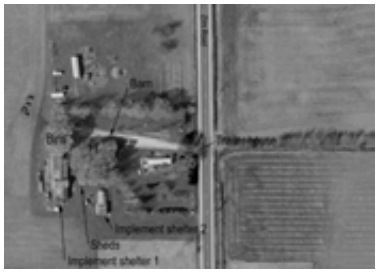
Woodruff (1878), 875.
Likely settled as homestead of John J. Smillie in 1855.
Smiley Road not extended across farm until first decade of 1900s.

529	24-13-401-006	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Taylor Farmstead**	Contributing

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
532	24-13-404-006	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Clubhouse Site 532**	Non-contributing

Non-historic 1960s and later construction.

519	24-14-200-002	Zilm Road	**William Trainer Farmstead**	Contributing



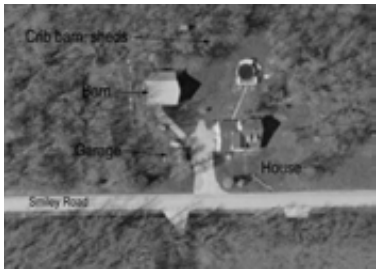
Woodruff (1878), 876–877; Stevens (1907), 726–729. See also sites 515 and 520.

518	24-14-200-012	Zilm Road	**Christ Zilm Farmstead**	Non-contributing

Northermost outbuilding is at PIN 24-14-200-013

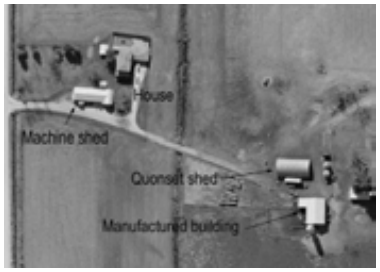
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
521	24-14-300-004	Smiley Road	**Smiley–Stauffenberg Farmstead**	Non-contributing

520	24-14-400-015	Smiley Road	**Archibald Trainer Farmstead**	Contributing



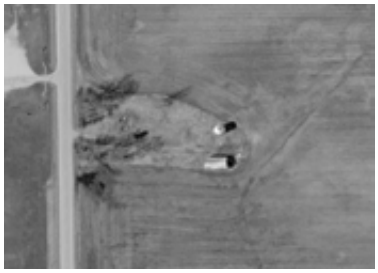
Woodruff (1878), 876–877; Stevens (1907), 726–729. See also sites 515 and 519.

526	24-15-400-004	Smiley Road	**Kolb Farmstead**	Contributing

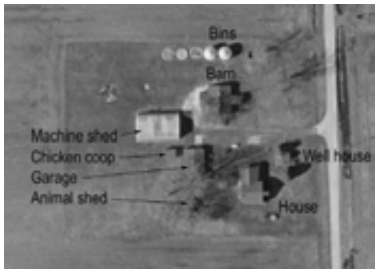


Newly constructed since 1939.

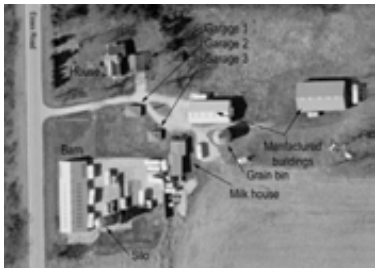
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
536	24-22-100-010	Essex Road	**Troost–Tchon Farmstead**	Non-contributing



537	24-22-200-003	Weikum Road	**Weikum–Zelenka Farmstead**	Contributing

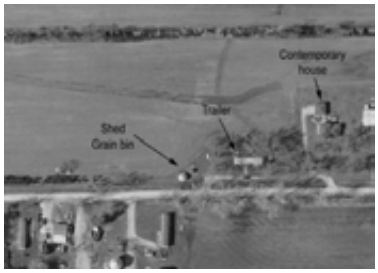


533	24-22-300-001	Essex Road	**Sleight–Roe–O'Brien Farmstead**	Contributing



ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
535	24-22-400-001	McGuire Road	**Mueller–Cooper Farmstead**	Contributing

542	24-23-300-005	McGuire Road	**Butkus Farmstead**	Non-contributing



New since 1939.

House and some outbuildings on PIN 24-23-300-006

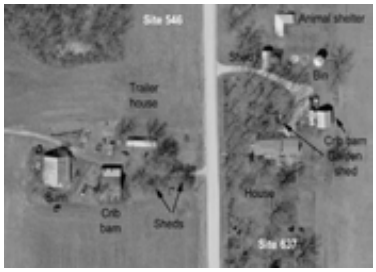
545	24-24-100-006	Smiley Road	**Hind House**	Non-contributing

New since 1939.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
548	24-24-203-015	Grant Avenue	**Crater–Zawrazky House**	Contributing

543	24-24-300-001	Zilm Road	**Harrison–Hertz–Fitzpatrick Farmstead**	Contributing

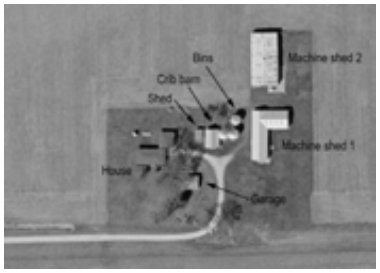
546	24-24-400-002	Ohlhues Road	**Culkin–Ebbert Farmstead**	Contributing



ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
549	24-25-100-001	Zilm Road	**William Young Farmstead**	Local landmark potential

Settled by William Young circa 1850s.
1860 census: William Young, 37, born New Jersey; wife Maria (35), children Flora (14), George (13), John (10), all born in Ohio.

550	24-25-100-003	Weiske Road	**Veigelt Farmstead**	Non-contributing

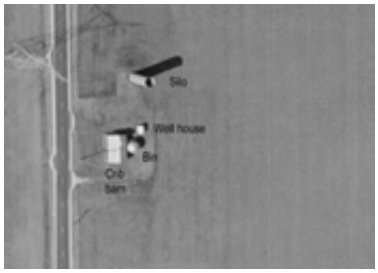


553	24-25-200-004	Ohlhues Road	**Tilden–Baker–Love Farmstead**	Contributing

Settled by Martin and Sarah Tilden in 1849. Inherited by their daughter, Sarah Rose. By 1918, home of James Baker and wife Mabel Rose, daughter of Sarah. Acquired by Love family by 1960s.

(2) other grain bins removed since 2005. Also PIN 25-30-100-005

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
551	24-25-300-002	Zilm Road	**Kilpatrick–Ptacek Farmstead**	Contributing

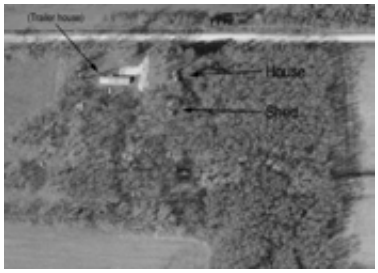


552	24-25-400-003	Ohlhues Road	**Coulter–Catlett–Newbrough Farmstead**	Non-contributing

560	24-26-100-007	McGuire Road	**Reilly–Finger Farmstead**	Non-contributing

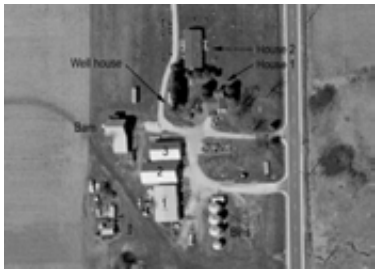
Limited access to survey, owner declined permission.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
556	24-26-100-012	McGuire Road	**Doty–Butkus Farmstead**	Non-contributing



Difficult to photograph due to heavy vegetation and newly excavated pond.

557	24-26-200-001	Zilm Road	**Howatt–Peterson Farmstead**	Contributing

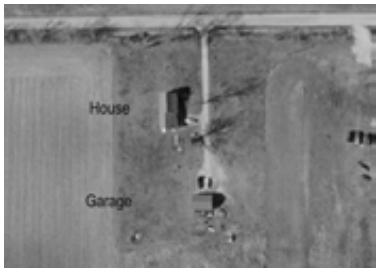


558	24-26-200-004	Zilm Road	**Vorreyer–Christensen Farmstead**	Non-contributing

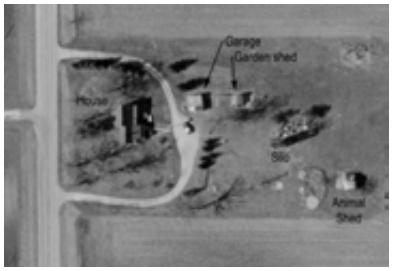
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
559	24-26-400-002	Zilm Road	**French–Myneilic Farmstead**	Non-contributing

562	24-27-100-002	Essex Road	**Thewlis–O'Reilly Farmstead**	Contributing

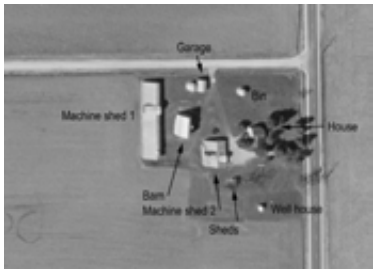
564	24-34-100-003	Cooper Road	**Roe–Walker Farmstead**	Contributing



ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
563	24-34-100-004	Essex Road	**Roe–Tammen Farmstead**	Contributing

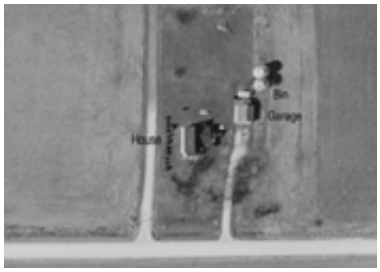


568	24-35-200-001	Cooper Road	**Quiring Farmstead**	Contributing

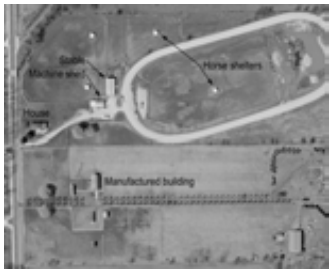


June 22, 1883, Wilmington Advocate: John Quiring, of Custer, died on June 14 [1883] of pneumonia, at the age of 64. He was a resident of Custer for the past 32 years.

571	24-35-400-023	County Line Road	**Swackhammer–Floyd–Checota Farmstead**	Contributing



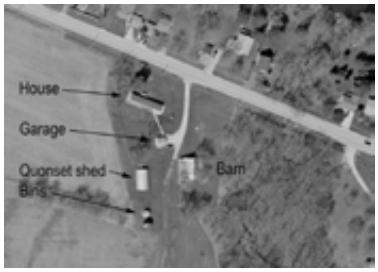
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
572	24-36-100-009	Zilm Road	**Kilpatrick–Eich Farmstead**	Contributing



575	24-36-400-005	Ohlhues Road	**Clark–Tammen Farmstead**	Non-contributing

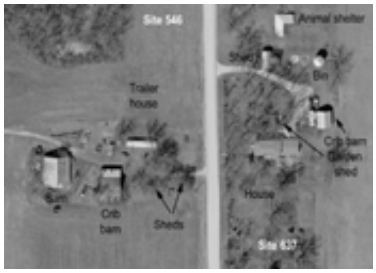
Only grain bins survive.

600	25-19-108-018	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Hynd Farmstead**	Contributing



ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
634	25-19-202-003	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Homer Eells House**	Contributing

637	25-19-300-019	Ohlhues Road	**Tanner–Ohlhues Farmstead**	Contributing



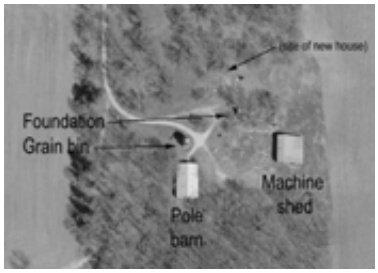
632	25-19-400-010	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Baird Farmstead**	Local landmark potential

1860 census:
Abraham J. Baird (38), wife Lydia (33), son Frank W. (1), born Illinois

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
601	25-19-400-019	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**George Baird House**	Contributing

Survey from public right-of-way only.

603	25-27-400-008	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Adams–Hoffman Farmstead**	Non-contributing



605	25-28-100-007	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Hoffman Farmstead**	Non-contributing

Original house replaced after 1955. Crib barn demolished after 1988.

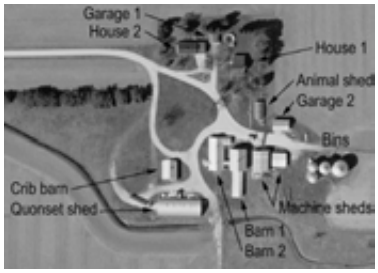
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
604	25-28-400-006	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Herbert–Hoffman Farmstead**	Contributing

Crib barn removed since 2005.

606	25-29-100-003	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	**Russell–Campbell Farmstead**	Non-contributing

No permission from owner; surveyed from public right-of-way only. Other PIN 25-29-100-004, 25-29-100-005

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
607	25-29-300-005	Gray Road	**Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead**	Contributing



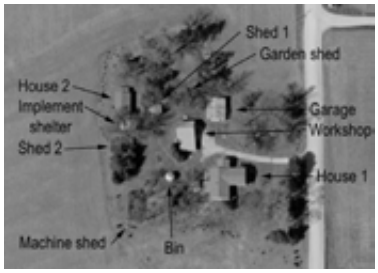
608	25-30-100-004	Ohlhues Road	**Hall Farmstead**	Non-contributing

Historic outbuildings, PIN 25-30-100-006

610	25-30-300-003	Ohlhues Road	**Foster Farmstead**	Non-contributing

Older garage is only historic structure.

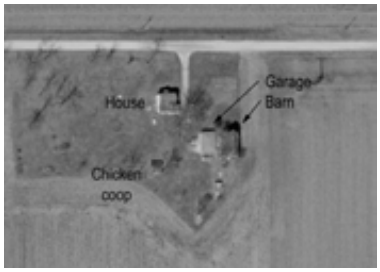
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
612	25-30-400-002	Gray Road	**Klemt Farmstead**	Non-contributing



611	25-30-400-010	Curtis Road	**Reinike-Mason Farmstead**	Non-contributing

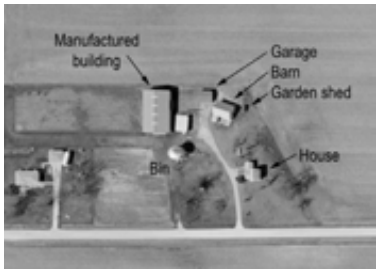
Only historic crib barn survives.

613	25-31-100-002	Curtis Road	**Russell–Lake–Prince Farmstead**	Local landmark potential



Intact grouping of historic buildings, but in somewhat deteriorated condition.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
616	25-31-400-004	County Line Road	**Keay–Seigert–Kopriva Farmstead**	Contributing

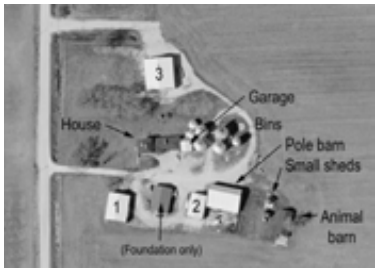



Woodruff (1878), 874.
Settled by James Keay, a native of Scotland, in 1855.

619	25-32-100-005	Bauer Road	**DeLacy–McComb Farmstead**	Contributing

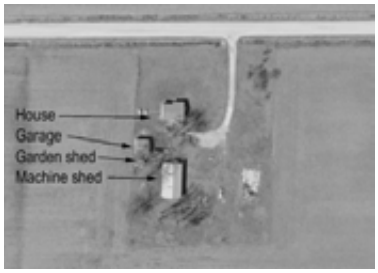
No permission from owner; surveyed from road right-of-way only.

618	25-32-300-021	Gray Road	**Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead**	Non-contributing



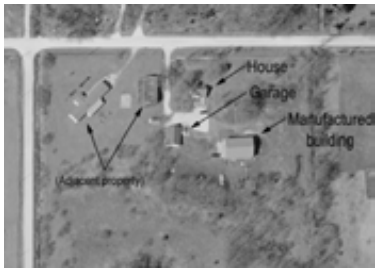
One outbuilding removed since 2005.

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
620	25-32-400-012	Bauer Road	**Blogg–Dummer Farmstead**	Non-contributing



622	25-33-200-016	Bauer Road	**Culkins–Cockle Farmstead**	Contributing

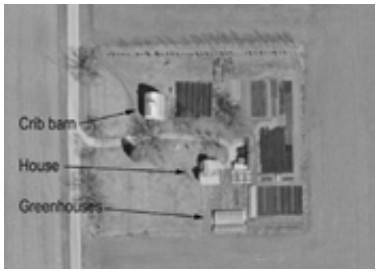
621	25-33-300-020	Bauer Road	**Darby–Russell–Dunn Farmstead**	Contributing



No permission from owner; surveyed from road right-of-way only.

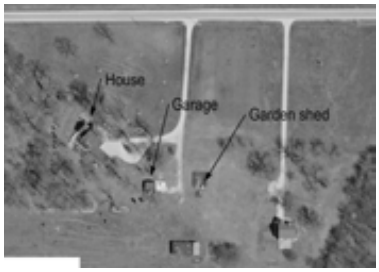
ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
623	25-33-400-013	Bauer Road	**Edward Yeates Farmstead**	Non-contributing

624	25-34-300-004	Yeates Lane	**Andrew Yeates Farmstead**	Local landmark potential



Woodruff (1878), 608.
Settled by pioneer Andrew Yeates in late 1830s.

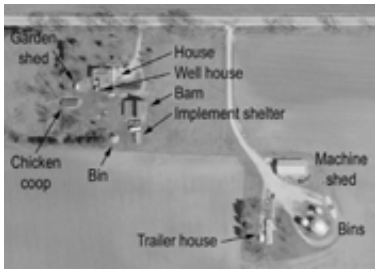
625	25-34-300-011	Bauer Road	**Connor–Yeates–Bauer Farmstead**	Non-contributing



Southernmost outbuilding is at PIN 25-34-300-014

ID	PIN	Street Name	Name	Landmark Potential
626	25-34-400-005	Bauer Road	**Tierney–Geelan Farmstead**	Contributing

629	25-35-400-007	Bauer Road	**Smith–Bauer Farmstead**	Contributing



Two separate clusters of buildings at this farmstead. Southeastern cluster is PIN 25-35-400-006, 18001 Bauer Road.

Table 2. Farmhouses in Custer Township

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
500		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1940s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asbestos Shingles
502		Trailer	—	**Foundation:**	None
	—	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Sheet metal
				Roof:	Sheet metal
503		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1940s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
506		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1930s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding
				Roof:	Asphalt shingle
507		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1930s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
508		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1930s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
508		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete, Concrete Block
	1970s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
509		I-house	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1870s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
510		Bungalow	Craftsman	**Foundation:**	Brick
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick
				Roof:	Cement asbestos shingle
511		Upright and wing	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1860s	*Contibuting*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
512		Schoolhouse	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete, Concrete Block
	1900s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingles
513		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete block, stone
	1900s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
514		Bungalow	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
515		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1880s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl Siding, Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
516		Upright and wing	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
518		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
519		Trailer	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	—	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Sheet metal
520		Upright and wing	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
522		Trailer	—	**Foundation:**	None
	—	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Sheet metal
				Roof:	Sheet metal
526		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Brick
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
528		Split Level	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1980s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding, Brick
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
529		Bungalow	Craftsman	**Foundation:**	Brick
	1920s	*Local landmark potential*		**Walls:**	Brick
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
532		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	2000s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
532		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1960s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding, Brick, Stone
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID	Date	House Type Significance	Style	Materials	
533		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
535		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1940s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding
				Roof:	Sheet Metal
537		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1940s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
542		Split Level	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1970s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick, Board and batten
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
543		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
545		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1950s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
546		Trailer	—	**Foundation:**	None
	—	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Sheet metal
				Roof:	Sheet metal
548		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1900s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Asphalt siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
549		New England One-and-	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1850s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
550		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1960s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
552		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1930s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt
553		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
556		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1880s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt shingle
557		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete block
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
557		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Stone, Concrete Block
	1870s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding, Asphalt siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
558		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1980s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
559		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete, Concrete Block
	20th cent.	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
563		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1940s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
564		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
568		Upright and wing	—	**Foundation:**	Stone, Concrete
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
571		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1900s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
572		Bungalow	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1930s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
574		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	2000s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
600		Trailer	—	**Foundation:**	None
	—	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
601		Bungalow	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete block
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Asphalt siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
604		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1910s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
605		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1960s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
606		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1960s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
606		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1950s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick, stone
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
607		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1900s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingles
607		Bungalow	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
608		Split Level	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
610		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	2000s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
611		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Brick
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
612		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
613		I-house	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt shingle

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
616		Upright and wing	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1870s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
618		Contemporary	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1930s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Siding
620		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1950s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
621		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
622		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
623		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1960s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
624		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1880s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
625		Cape Cod	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1990s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
626		Gabled Ell	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1890s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
629		Ranch	—	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1970s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Wood siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
632		Four-over-four	Greek Revival	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1860s	*Local landmark potential*		**Walls:**	Wood Siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
634		Side Hallway	—	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1920s	*Contributing*		**Walls:**	Aluminum siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID		House Type	Style	Materials	
	Date	*Significance*			
637		Gable Front	—	**Foundation:**	Stone
	1900s	*Non-contributing*		**Walls:**	Vinyl siding
				Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

Table 3. Barns in Custer Township

ID	Barn Type	Materials	
Date	*Significance*		
500	Bank barn	**Foundation:**	Stone
1900s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Corrugated Metal
		Roof:	Corrugated Metal
508	Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete
1970s	*Non-contributing*	**Walls:**	Vertical Wood Siding
		Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
509	Dairy barn	**Foundation:**	Stone
1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood Plank Siding
		Roof:	Asphalt Shingles
510	Dairy barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Vertical Board Siding
		Roof:	Asbestos Shingle
515	Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood siding
		Roof:	Sheet metal
519	Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete block
1910s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood Siding
		Roof:	Corrugated Metal
520	Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
1910s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Sheet metal
		Roof:	Sheet metal
533	Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
1950s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Sheet Metal
		Roof:	Sheet Metal
537	Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
1950s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Concrete Block
		Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
546	Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete
1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood Siding
		Roof:	Sheet Metal
553	Three-bay threshing barn	**Foundation:**	Stone
1870s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Vertical Wood Siding
		Roof:	Sheet Metal
557	Plank frame	**Foundation:**	None
1910s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Board and Batten Siding
		Roof:	Asphalt Shingle

ID		Barn Type	Materials	
	Date	***Significance***		
558		Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1960s	*Non-contributing*	**Walls:**	Vinyl Siding
			Roof:	Corrugated Metal
568		Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Sheet metal
			Roof:	Sheet metal
600		Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1930s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood Siding
			Roof:	Sheet metal
604		Bank barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1930s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Sheet Metal
			Roof:	Asphalt Shingle
607		Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1910s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Sheet Metal
			Roof:	Sheet Metal
607		Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete Block
	1950s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Concrete Block
			Roof:	Sheet Metal
613		Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Unknown
	1920s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood Siding
			Roof:	Asphalt shingle
616		Feeder barn	**Foundation:**	Concrete
	1930s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Concrete Block
			Roof:	Sheet Metal
629		Plank frame	**Foundation:**	Concrete block
	1910s	*Contributing*	**Walls:**	Wood siding
			Roof:	Asphalt shingle

Notable Farmsteads in Custer Township

Tilden–Baker–Love Farmstead ***Site 553 (PIN 24-25-200-004)***

Martin F. Tilden was born in Vermont in 1811. In 1836 Tilden married Sarah A. Kimball, also of Vermont, and they had seven children. They settled on a farm in present-day Custer Township in Section 30 in May 1849. His younger brother Turner Tilden and brother-in-law Jacob J. Palmer settled farmsteads nearby in the same section, sites 608 and 610 in the present survey (neither of these sites retains historic structures). The family at first lived in a log cabin built by Tilden, but the farm was gradually improved and grew to 170 acres, known as the "Evergreen Home." Mrs. Tilden died in September 1884. Only two of Sarah and Martin Tilden's children survived to adulthood, two daughters, Lora (born circa 1839 according to census data), wife of Harper Bovee, a farmer in Wilmington Township; and Mrs. Sarah Rose (born circa 1840 according to census data), who lived on this farmstead with her daughter, Mabel Rose. At various times Martin Tilden served as clerk and trustee of Custer Township as well as school director.[193]

Martin Tilden died in the 1890s. By 1902, the farm is listed on atlases as being owned by his daughter, Sarah Rose. By 1918, this was the home of James H. Baker and his wife Mabel Rose, the granddaughter of Martin Tilden. After several changes of ownership, the farm was acquired by John Love, Jr., by the 1960s. It remains in the Love family today.

The existing buildings on the site primarily date to the twentieth century and are located on the west side of the road in Section 25. The three-bay threshing barn on the east side of the road likely dates to the nineteenth century. The Tilden Lawn school, also located on this farm, was moved to Custer Park to serve as the village school in the early 1920s.

Left: This three-bay threshing barn at the site was likely built for Tilden in the nineteenth century. Right: The house at the site is on the west side of the road and likely dates to the twentieth century.

[193] Woodruff (1878), 876; Chapman Bros. (1890), 571-572.

Trainer Family Farmsteads ***Site 515 (PIN 24-13-300-001)***
Site 519 (PIN 24-14-200-002)
Site 520 (PIN 24-14-400-015)

William Trainer, a native of the Isle of Man, was born in 1798 and immigrated with his wife Margaret, four sons, and one daughter to the United States in 1853. Margaret died of cholera during the crossing of the Atlantic. William Trainer and the children proceeded from New York to Wilmington, Illinois, and finally purchased 120 acres in Section 14 of present-day Custer Township in 1854. William died at the family homestead in 1878.[194] The 1860 census lists William Sr., age 60; William Jr., age 26; James, age 24; Thomas, age 18; and Robert, age 17.

William's son Thomas Trainer was born on the Isle of Man in 1841 and immigrated with the family. He married Elizabeth McDonald of Ireland in 1874, and acquired a farmstead adjacent to his father's in Section 13, site 515 in the present survey. He engaged in breeding of Clydesdale horses, South Down and Cotswold sheep, and Poland, China, and Chester White hogs as well as farming.[195] William's youngest son Robert Trainer was also born on the Isle of Man in 1844 and immigrated with the family.[196] As shown on historic plat maps, adjacent farms in Section 14, sites 519 and 520 in the present survey, were later owned by another son of William Trainer, William, Jr., and one grandson, Archibald Trainer. All of these farmsteads had been sold to other families by the 1980s.

Left: The house at the Thomas Trainer Farmstead, site 515, likely dates to the nineteenth century and was built for Thomas Trainer. Right: Historic buildings at the William Trainer Farmstead, site 519, include this plank frame barn from the early twentieth century. Below: The Archibald Trainer Farmstead, site 520, includes this Upright and Wing house and early twentieth century outbuildings.

[194] Woodruff (1878), 876–877.
[195] Stevens (1907) 726–729.
[196] Woodruff (1878), 876.

Shenk Family Farmsteads ***Site 509 (PIN 24-11-200-007)***
Site 510 (PIN 24-11-200-006)

Michael Shenk was born in Pennsylvania. He married Sarah Ann Carter in 1841, and they had eight children. They came to Illinois in 1858 and settled a farmstead in Section 10 of present-day Custer Township.[197] The 1860 census lists Michael Shenk, aged 43; his wife Sarah, age 36; and their children: John (18), William (16), Jerome (14), Marie (12), Adelia (10), Joseph (8), and Ida (2).

Although the Shenk family homestead in Section 10 no longer exists, adjacent farmsteads in Section 11 are associated with Shenk descendants. Site 509 was acquired by Mrs. Ellen Shenk by 1940 and remained in the Shenk family into the 1970s. Site 510 was acquired by William and Vera Shenk by 1940 and remained in the Shenk family into the 1980s. Site 510, the Quimby–Shenk Farmstead, is considered to be local landmark eligible. The bungalow house, large dairy barn, crib barn, and other outbuildings were likely built after William Shenk acquired the site circa 1930s.

Above: The bungalow type house and dairy barn at the Quimby–Shenk Farmstead.

Hudson–Haas–Shenk Farmstead ***Site 511 (PIN 24-11-400-006)***

Henry Hudson was born in Pennsylvania but grew up in Ohio. In 1846 he came to Wilmington and settled this farmstead. Three of his sons fought in the Civil War.[198] After several changes of ownership, around 1910 this farm was acquired by the Haas family. William Shenk acquired the farm in the 1940s. The existing house at the site was likely built for Henry Hudson circa 1860s.

Left: Although somewhat altered, the basic mid nineteenth century form of the house at the farmstead is still apparent. Right: The 1955 aerial view shows the original configuration of windows in this house.

[197] Woodruff (1878), 874–875; Chapman Brothers (1890), 287–288.
[198] Woodruff (1878), 873–874.

Keay–Seigert–Kopriva Farmstead ***Site 616 (PIN 25-31-400-004)***

James Keay was born in 1812 in Forfarshire, Scotland. In 1855, he immigrated to the United States with his wife and children. He purchased this 120-acre farmstead in 1855.[199] The 1860 census lists James Keay, aged 48; his wife Jane, also 48; and their children William, 16; Mary, 10; and Caroline, 8. The parents and children were all born in Scotland. (James' brother John Keay and his family are also listed in the census.) By 1893, the farm had been acquired by the Seigert family. By 1940, the farm was owned by Frank Kopriva.

Left: The Upright and Wing farmhouse at the site likely dates to the early nineteenth century. Right: The existing feeder barn was likely added after Frank Kopriva acquired the farm.

Smillie Farmsteads ***Site 516 (PIN 24-13-300-006)***
Site 528 (PIN 24-13-400-008)
Site 529 (PIN 24-13-401-006)

John J. Smillie was born in New York in 1828. He came west to Illinois with his parents in 1835, who settled a farm near Joliet. After venturing to California during the 1850 gold rush, Smillie returned to Will County in 1854 and settled on 160 acres in Custer Township, purchased with the gold he had discovered in California. He ultimately acquired 674 acres. In 1855, he married Olive Reed, and they had eleven children.[200] Smillie died after 1909, based on historic plat maps. Three existing farmsteads are located on the large estate owned by Smillie. The Smillie–Underwood Farmstead, site 516, has a nineteenth century house that was likely occupied by a tenant of Smillie. The Smillie Farmstead, site 528, contains a few small historic outbuildings. This was likely the site of Smillie's residence as shown on historic atlas maps. The Taylor Farmstead, site 529, was likely newly developed after the Smillie heirs sold the property.

Left: 1955 aerial view of site 516. Right: A nineteenth century farmhouse survives at this site.

[199] Woodruff (1878), 874.
[200] Ibid., 875.


Left: 1955 aerial view of site 529, showing bungalow-type house and twentieth century outbuildings. Right: The bungalow-type house still exists at the site, but the outbuildings visible in the 1955 view have all been demolished.

William Young Farmstead ***Site 549 (PIN 24-25-100-001)***

As shown on historic plat maps and atlases, from circa 1850s until at least 1909, this farmstead was the home of William Young and his family. As listed in the 1860 census, William Young, aged 37, was born New Jersey. His wife Maria, age 35, and their children Flora, age 14; George, age 13; and John, age 10, were all born in Ohio.

By 1918, the farm was owned by Mrs. Anna Howatt, who resided here with her children Archie, Alex, Elizabeth, Tom, James, Mary, Maggie, and George. The farm was later inherited by her son Tom Howatt. By the 1950s, the farm was owned by the Kupczak family, who still own the farm today.

This farmstead is noteworthy for its New England One-and-a-Half type house, likely built for William Young circa 1850s. As a unique example of this house type in Custer Township, the farmstead is judged to be Will County landmark eligible.


Left: The circa 1850s house at the farmstead. Right: The concrete root cellar on the site is also noteworthy.

Russell–Lake–Prince Farmstead ***Site 613 (PIN 25-31-100-002)***

This farmstead was owned by T. D. Russell, as indicated on the 1893 atlas and 1902 county map. Later, it was acquired by the Lake family. By 1948, it had been acquired by Walter Prince. It remains owned by the Prince family today. Because of the well preserved I-house on the site, it is judged to be local landmark eligible.

The farmstead includes a historic farmhouse as well as a number of abandoned historic outbuildings.

Andrew Yeates Farmstead ***Site 624 (PIN 25-34-300-004)***

Andrew Yeates was a native of Ireland and settled in present-day Custer Township in the late 1830s, one of the first permanent settlers. Unlike many of the pioneers, he came to the township with substantial monetary capital. In his later years, he moved to Kankakee Township, where he died circa 1870s.[201] The 1860 census lists Andrew Yeates, aged 57; his wife Sarah, aged 44; and four of their children all born in Illinois: Burnett (14), Albert (10), Edward (5), and Frederick (2). Historic maps and atlases list Sarah Yeates as the owner of the farmstead through 1902. Her son Frederick and his wife Mary apparently inherited the farm. It remained in the Yeates family into the 1940s, worked by Frederick and Mary's son Earl Yeates, who was born in 1892.[202] Because the farmstead includes a well-preserved Gabled Ell type house as well as a noteworthy round roof crib barn, it is judged to be local landmark eligible.

Left: The Gabled Ell house at the farmstead likely dates to the nineteenth century. Right: The arched roof crib barn likely dates to the twentieth century when the farm was operated by Earl Yeates.

[201] Woodruff (1878), 608.
[202] 1918 directory.

Baird Farmstead ***Site 632 (PIN 25-19-400-010)***

The 1860 census lists Abraham J. Baird, aged 38, a native of New York; his wife Lydia, aged 33, a native of Ohio, and their one-year-old son Frank W., born in Illinois. Later plat maps and atlases identify the owner as John Baird. Baird apparently died in the early 1900s, since Frank W. Baird is listed as the owner on the 1909 atlas. The farm remained in the Baird family into the 1940s. Although the farmstead has been subdivided, the original farmhouse, likely dating to the 1860s, remains intact. As a large and well preserved nineteenth century house, this property is judged to be local landmark eligible.

The well preserved circa 1860s house at the Baird Farmstead.

Aerial view in 1955 of the farmstead; all of the outbuildings were demolished when the farmland was developed as a residential subdivision in the 1970s.

Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead ***Site 618 (PIN 25-32-300-021)***

James Curran was born in Ireland in 1814. After immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1849, he proceeded to Will County, Illinois. In 1852, he settled this farmstead in Section 32E of Custer Township.[203] The 1860 census lists James Curran (age given as 35, likely was actually 45), his wife Ellen "Nellie" age 28, also a native of Ireland, and their children Catherine (9), John (7), Mary (5), Margaret (3), and Francis (1). James' mother Catherine, age 70, is also listed as residing with the family. As stated in Woodruff, the couple ultimately had seven children. As noted on early twentieth century plat maps and in the 1918 directory, the farm was later owned by daughter Catherine and son John.

Plat maps from the 1960s to the 1980s indicate that the Hoekstra family later acquired the farm.

The house (left) and outbuildings (right) that exist on the Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead were likely built in the twentieth century by the Hoekstra family or other owners.

[203] Woodruff (1878), 872–873.

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In 1988, Will County performed a survey of unincorporated rural areas, documenting approximately 4,867 structures dating from before 1945. The documentation, performed by architect Michael A. Lambert, consisted of black and white photographs and a completed information card utilizing a format established by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Recorded information included the approximate age, architectural style, construction materials, noticeable additions or alterations, and overall condition of the structure. For most sites, survey data was gathered from the public right-of-way. In addition to the survey a report was prepared, "Historic Structures of Will County," dated 1991. The report examined the overall rural themes present in the county and identification of noteworthy structures.

In 1999, the Will County Land Use Department, acting as liaison for the Will County Historic Preservation Commission, engaged Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. to perform an intensive survey of Wheatland, Plainfield, and Lockport Townships in northwest Will County, Illinois. In 2001, an intensive survey was performed of Du Page Township in Will County, followed by Homer Township in 2002; New Lenox Township in 2003; Green Garden Township in 2004; Manhattan Township in 2006; Frankfort Township in 2007; Joliet and Troy Townships in 2009; Channahon Township, Jackson Township, and Wilmington Township in 2009; and Reed Township and Florence Township in 2011. The resulting reports from these surveys were used as a basis for developing this report.

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GLOSSARY

abutment. A masonry mass (or the like) which receives the thrust of an arch, vault, or strut.

adaptive reuse. The conversion or functional change of a building from the purpose or use for which it was originally constructed or designed. Such conversions are accomplished with varying degrees of alterations to the building. The more change that is necessary, the less likely that particular new use is appropriate for a historic building.

addition. An extension or increase in floor area, number of stories, or height of a building or structure.

arch. A curved construction which spans an opening; usually consists of wedge-shaped blocks call voussoirs, or a curved or pointed structural member which is supported at the sides or ends. Arches vary in shape from semicircular and semi-elliptical to bluntly or acutely pointed arches.

architectural conservation. The science of preserving architecture and its historic fabric by observing and analyzing the evolution, deterioration, and care of structures; the conducting of investigations to determine the cause, effect, and solution of structural problems; and the directing of remedial interventions focused on maintaining the integrity and quality of historic fabric.

balloon frame. A system of framing a wooden building where all vertical structural elements of the exterior walls and partitions consist of light single studs (usually 2x4, but sometimes larger) which may extend the full height of the frame and are fastened by nails to the studs. Balloon framing differs from a braced frame in that a balloon framed wall acts as a bearing wall and does not rely on posts and beams to support joists.

baluster. One of a number of short vertical members, often circular in section used to support a stair, porch, or balcony handrail or a coping.

balustrade. An entire railing system (as along the edge of a balcony) including a top rail and its balusters, and sometimes a bottom rail.

barrel vault. A masonry vault of plain, semicircular cross section, supported by parallel walls or arcades and adapted to longitudinal areas.

bay. one architectural subdivision of a wall, roof, or structure marked by repetition of similar elements, such as columns or windows.

beam. A horizontal structural member whose prime function is to carry transverse loads, as a joist, girder, rafter, or purlin

brick. A solid or hollow masonry unit of clay or shale, molded into a rectangular shape while plastic, and then burnt in a kiln

column. A slender vertical element carrying compressive loads from other structural elements above.

contributing. A historic property which retains historical integrity and forms a part of a grouping of related properties

corbel. In masonry, a projection or one of a series of projections, each stepped progressively farther forward with height; anchored in a wall, story, column, or chimney; used to support an overhanging member above or, if continuous, to support overhanging courses

cornice. The exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall or at the top of the wall in the case of a parapet, usually consisting of bed molding, soffit, fascia, and crown molding; any molded projection which crowns or finishes the part to which it is affixed; the third or uppermost division of an entablature, resting on the frieze; an ornamental molding, usually of wood or plaster, running round the walls of a room just below the ceiling; a crown molding; the molding forming the top member of a door or window frame

course. a continuous horizontal range of masonry units such as bricks, as in a wall.

dormer. a projecting structure built out from a sloping roof, usually containing a vertical window or louver.

elevation. A drawing showing the vertical elements of a building, either exterior or interior, as a direct projection of the vertical plane; also used for the exterior walls of a building other than the facade (front).

fabric. The structural and material portions that make up the building (frames, walls, floors, roof, etc.).

facade. The exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from the other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

gable. The vertical triangular portion of wall at the end of a building having a double-sloping roof, from the level of the cornice or eaves to the ridge of the roof.

gambrel. A roof which has two pitches on each side.

hip. A roof which has equal pitches on all sides of a building.

integrity. A district, site, building, structure, or object with intact original location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, to an extent that its historic character is discernible.

joist. One of a series of parallel beams of timber, reinforced concrete, or steel used to support floor and ceiling loads, and supported in turn by larger beams, girders, or bearing walls; the widest dimension is vertically oriented.

landmark. A property or district which has been designated by a government entity as possessing historic significance.

lintel. A horizontal structural member (such as a beam) over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above.

mansard. A roof having a double slope on four or more sides of the building, the lower slope being much steeper.

mortar. A mixture of cementitious materials (such as cement and/or lime) with water and a fine aggregate (such as sand); can be troweled in the plastic state; hardens in place. When used in masonry construction, the mixture may contain masonry cement or ordinary hydraulic cement with lime (and often other admixtures) to increase its plasticity and durability.

mortise. A hole, cavity, notch, slot, or recess cut into a timber or piece of other material; usually receives a tenon, but also has other purposes, as to receive a lock.

National Register of Historic Places. The official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and cultures.

National Historic Landmark (NHL). Historic and archeological sites, buildings, and objects possessing exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States. NHLs are buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects are of exceptional national significance in American history and culture.

non-contributing. A property physically located within a historic district or area of study which does not relate to the defined criteria of historic significance for the area.

parapet. A low guarding wall at any point of sudden drop, as at the edge of a terrace, roof, battlement, balcony, etc; in an exterior wall, fire wall, or party wall, the part entirely above the roof.

pointing. In masonry, the final treatment of joints by the troweling of mortar into the joints. The removal of mortar from between the joints of masonry units and the replacing of it with new mortar is properly called "repointing."

pyramidal. A hip roof in which all planes of the roof come together at a single point.

rehabilitation. Returning a property to a state of usefulness through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

restoration. Accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by replacement of missing earlier work.

ridge. The horizontal line at the junction of the upper edges of two sloping roof surfaces.

shed. A roof consisting of a single, sloping plane.

significant. A district, site, building, structure, or object that has integrity and that is associated with historical events or patterns of events; or that are associated with the lives of significant persons; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, period, or method construction, or possess high artistic values.

sill. A horizontal timber, at the bottom of the frame of a wooden structure, which rests on the foundation; the horizontal bottom member of a window or door frame.

spandrel. In a multistory building, a wall panel filling the space between the top of the window in one story and the sill of the window in the story above.

stabilization. Applying measures designed to reestablish a weather-resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present.

stud. An upright post or support, especially one of a series of vertical structural members which act as the supporting elements in a wall or partition.

tenon. The projecting end of a piece of wood, or other material, which is reduced in cross section, so that it may be inserted in a corresponding cavity (mortise) in another piece in order to form a secure joint.

tension. The state or condition of being pulled or stretched.

truss. A structure composed of a combination of members that resist axial loads, usually in some triangular arrangement so as to constitute a rigid framework.

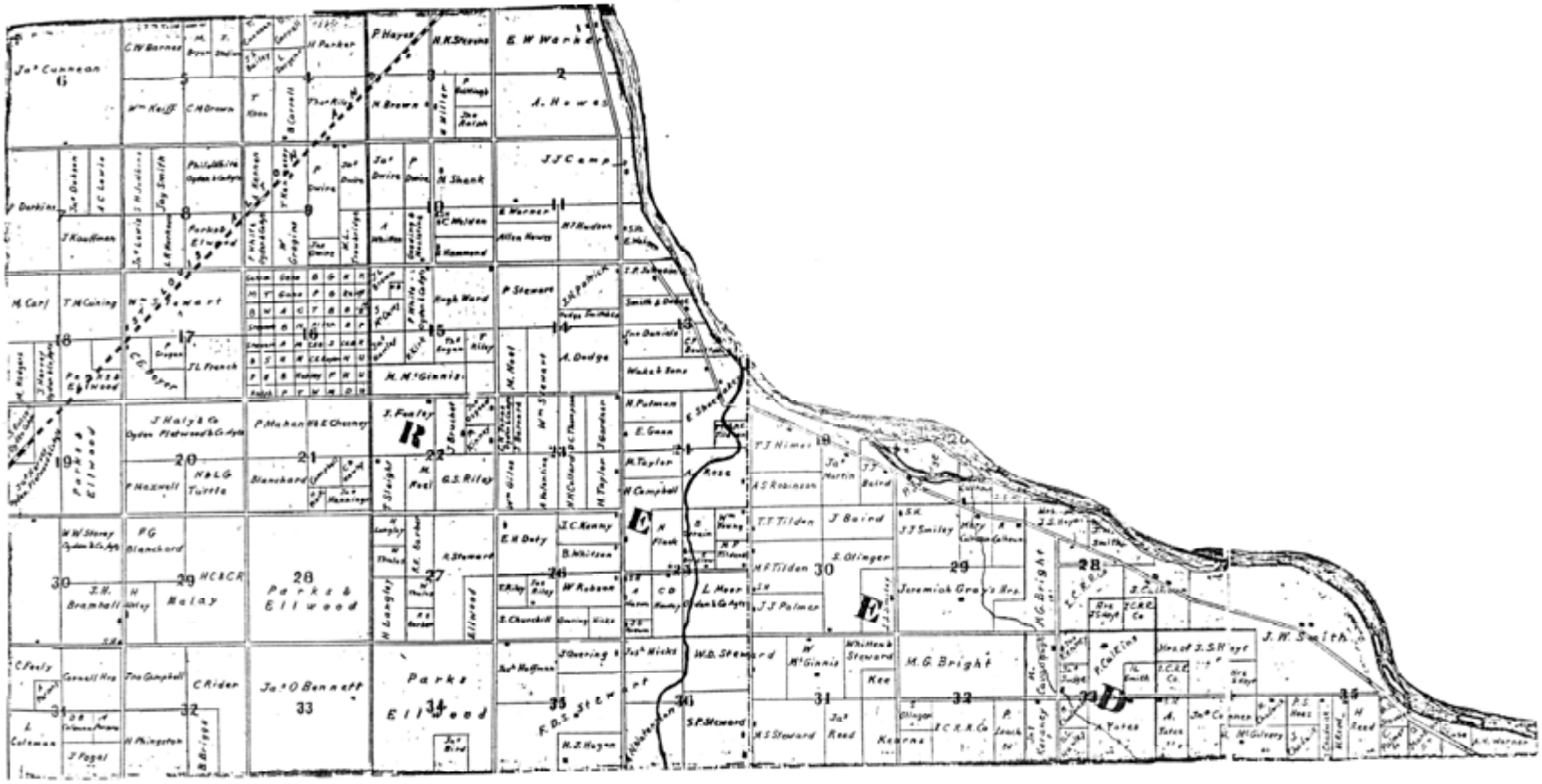
vault. A masonry covering over an area which uses the principle of the arch.

wythe. One thickness of brick or other masonry material in a wall, commonly about 4 inches.

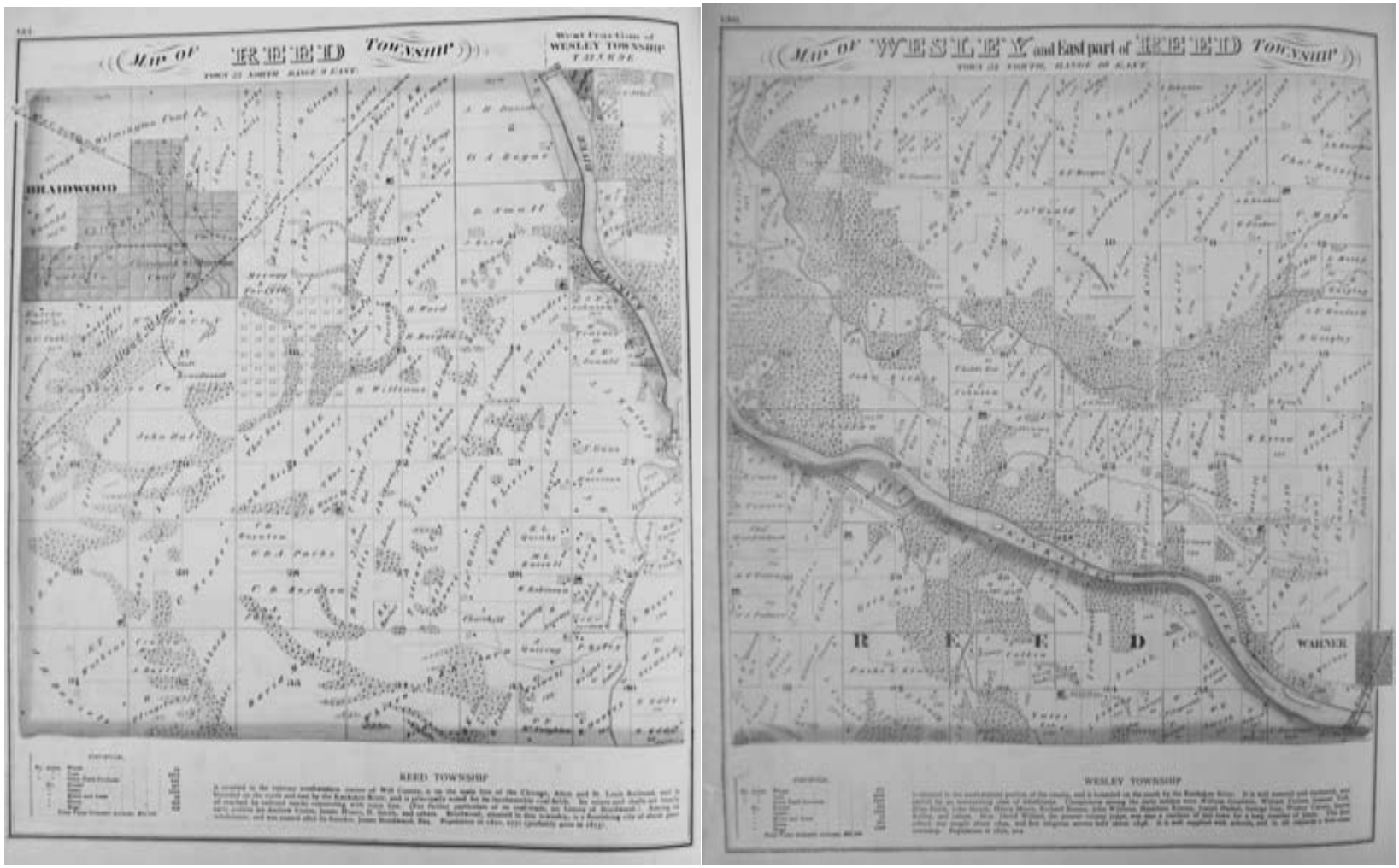
APPENDIX A

HISTORIC PLAT MAPS

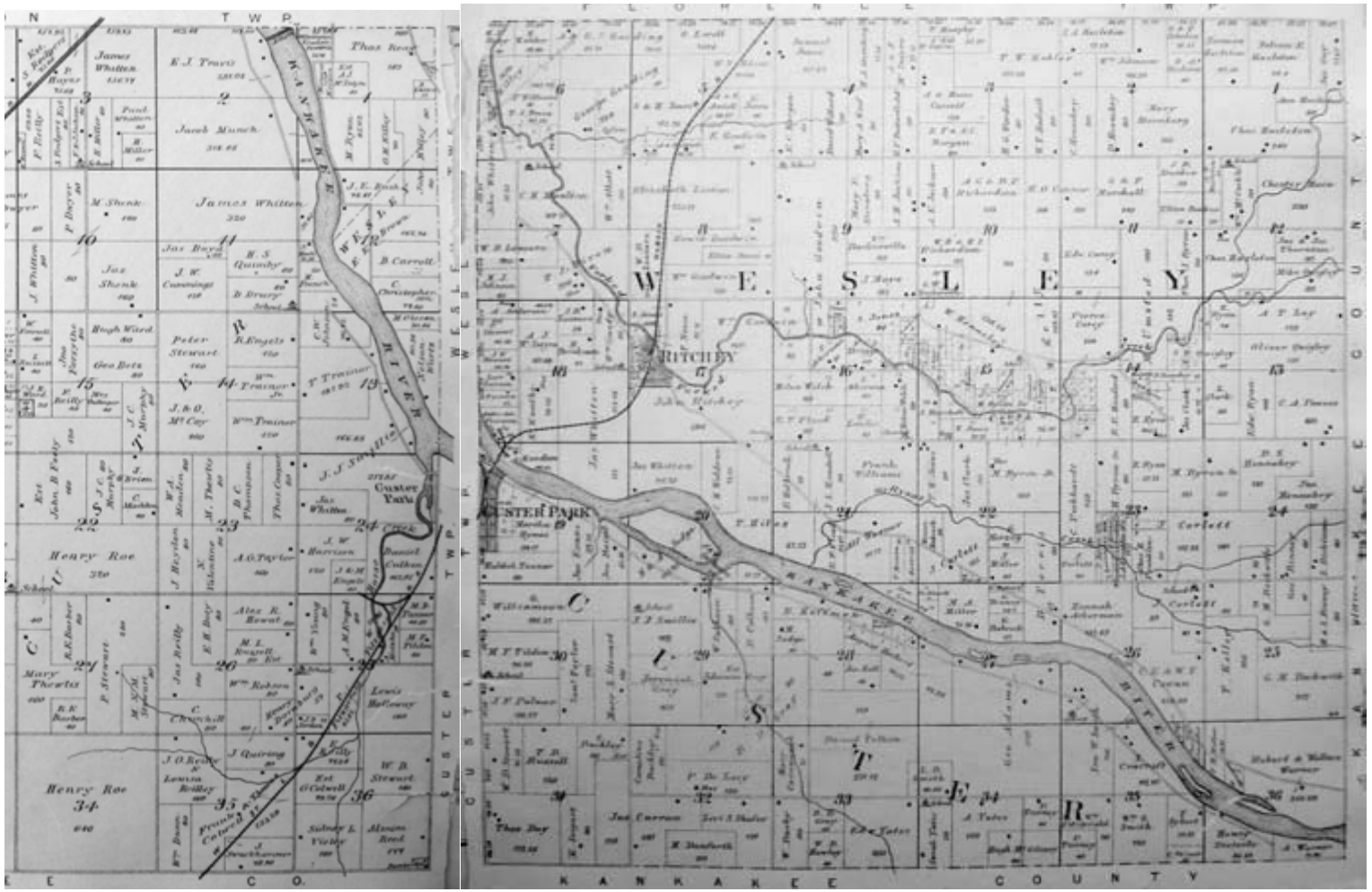
This appendix contains historic farm atlas and plat maps for Custer Township. Refer to Bibliography for map sources. Note that prior to 1876, Custer Township was part of Reed Township.



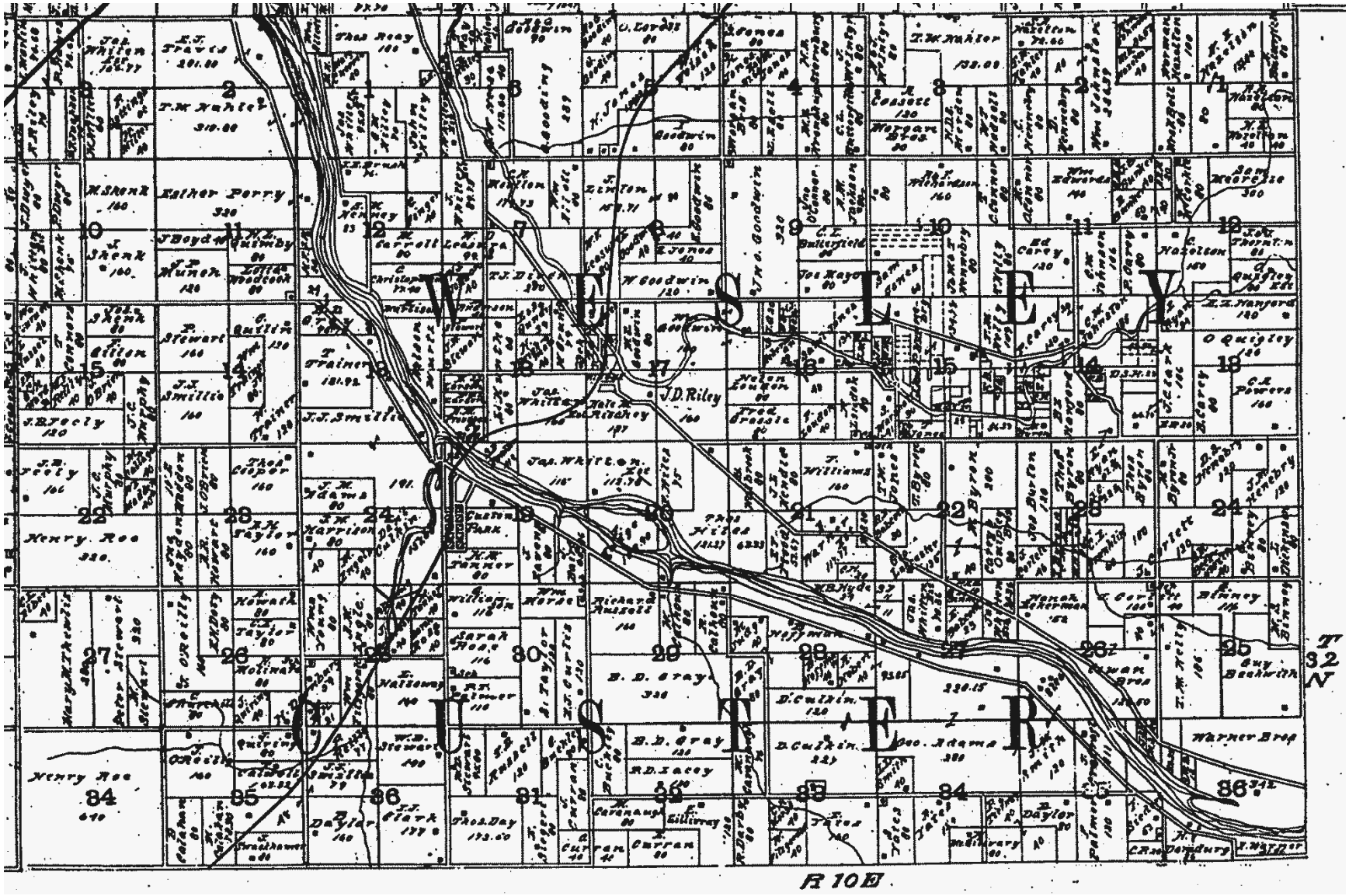
Reed Township 1862



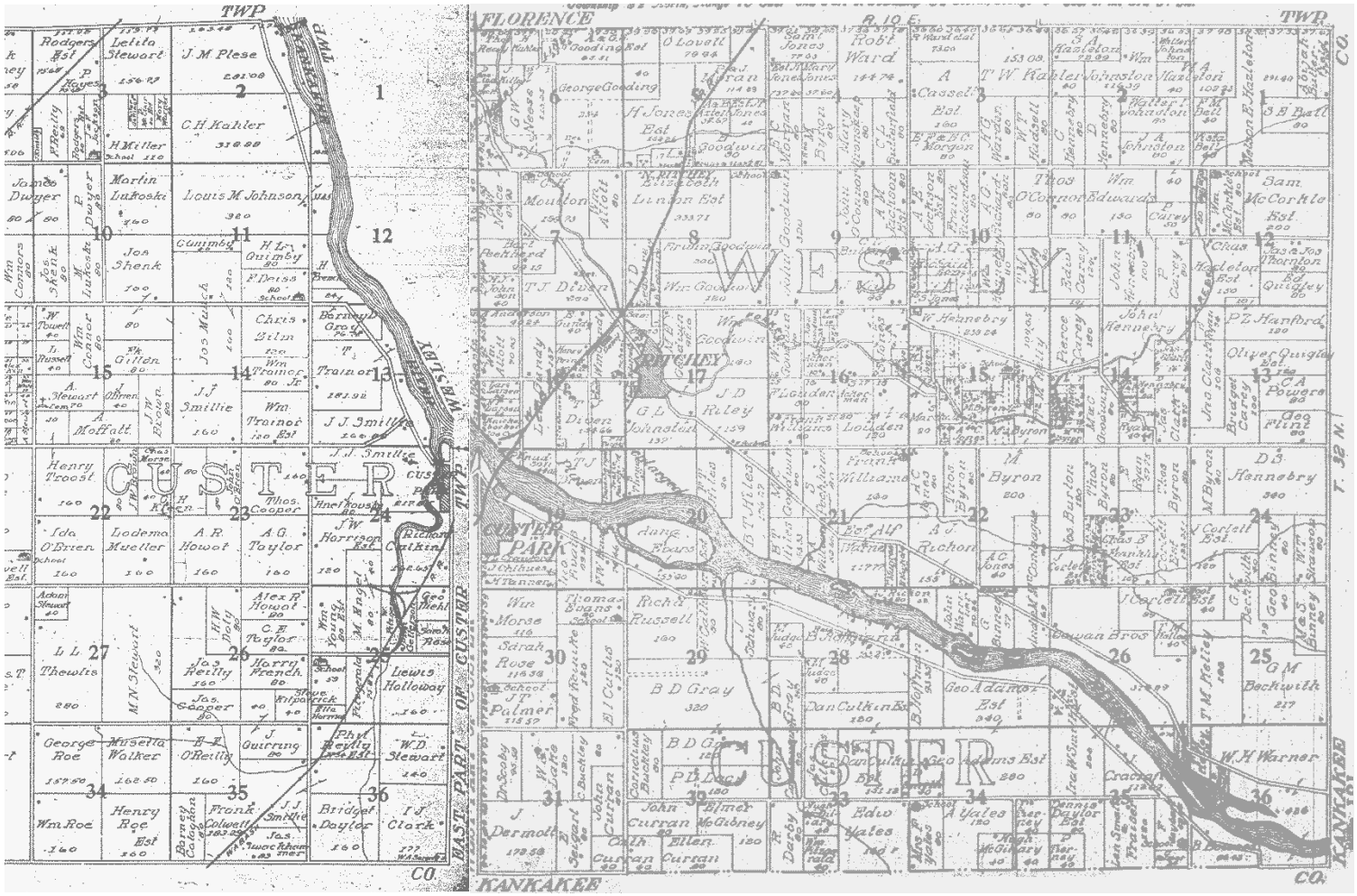
Reed Township 1873



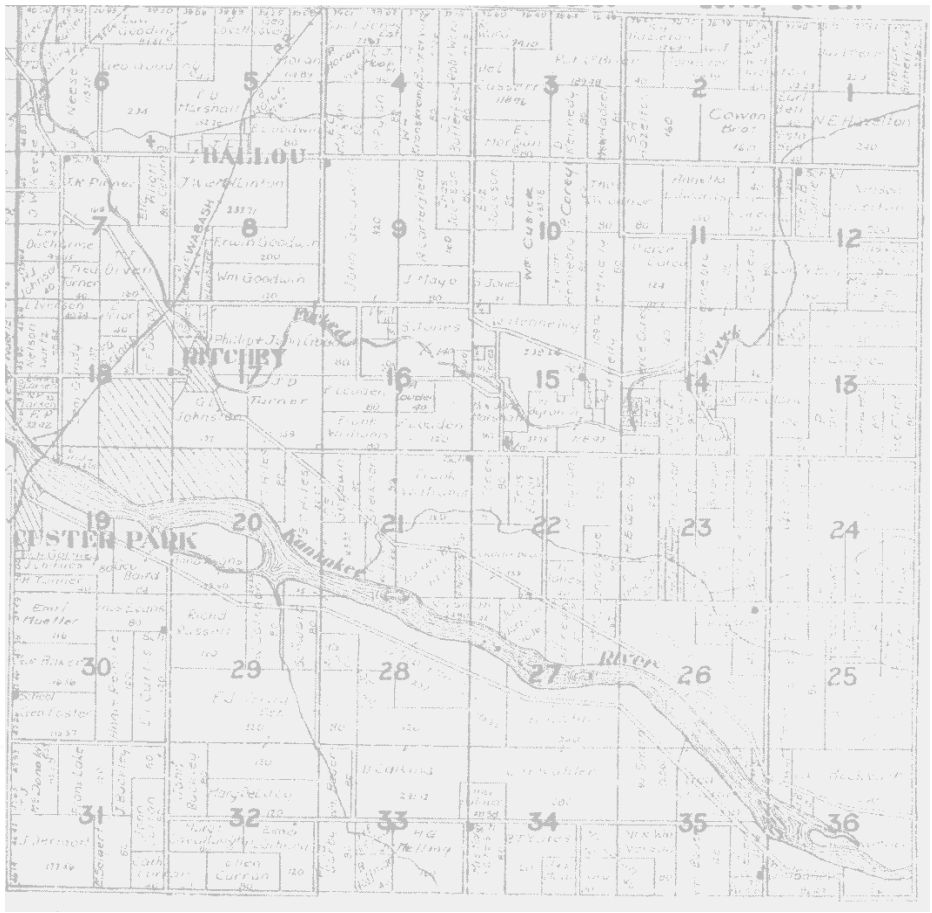
Custer Township 1893



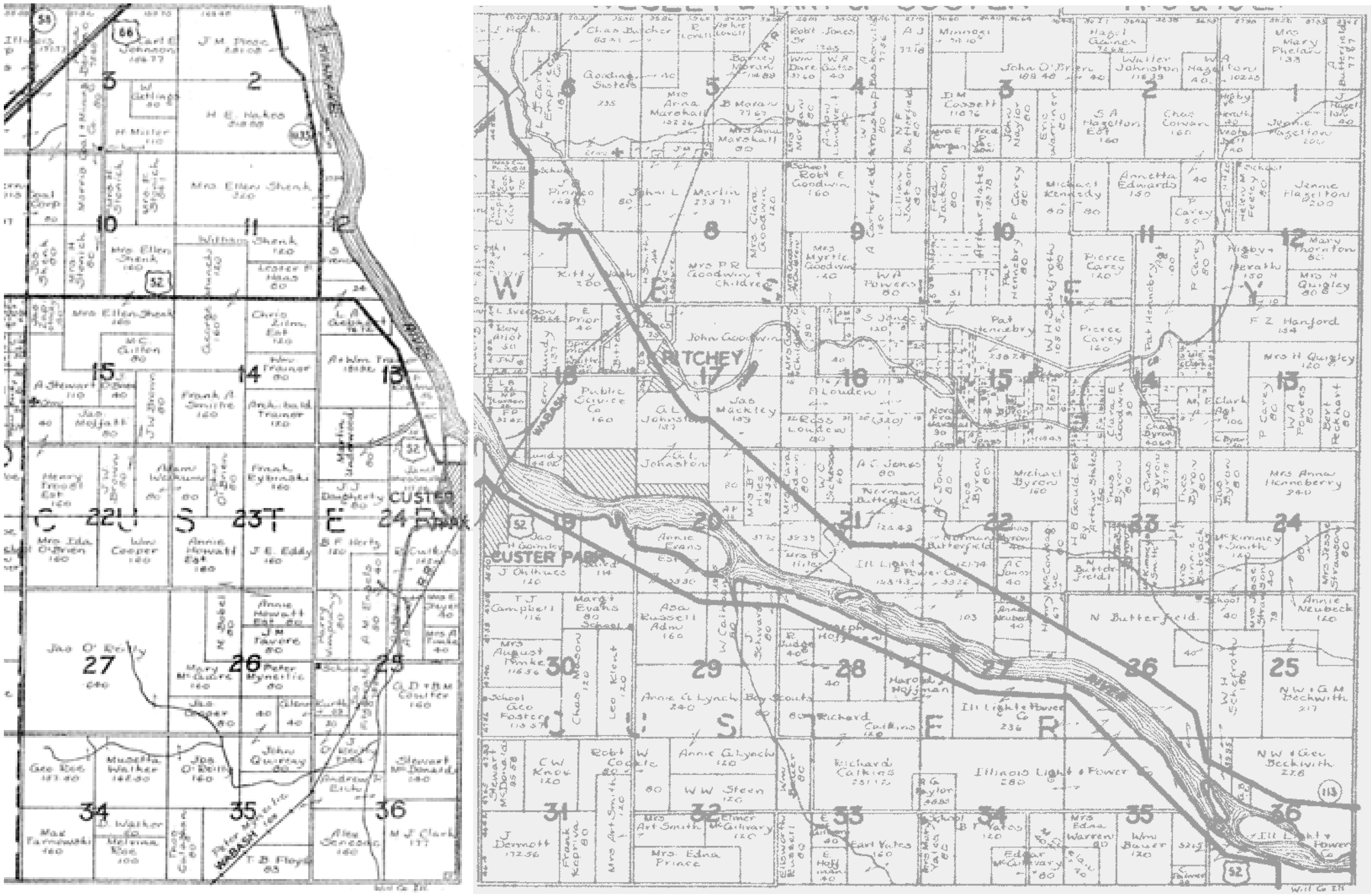
Custer Township 1902



Custer Township 1909



Custer Township 1920s



Custer Township circa 1940

APPENDIX B

SURVEY MAPS

The following maps were generated as part of this study using ArcGIS software. The background baseline mapping data were provided by the Will County Land Use Department. The contemporary aerial photography that forms the background for the maps is dated 2009. The historic aerial photography of Maps 6 and 7 is dated August 3–4, 1939.

This appendix contains:

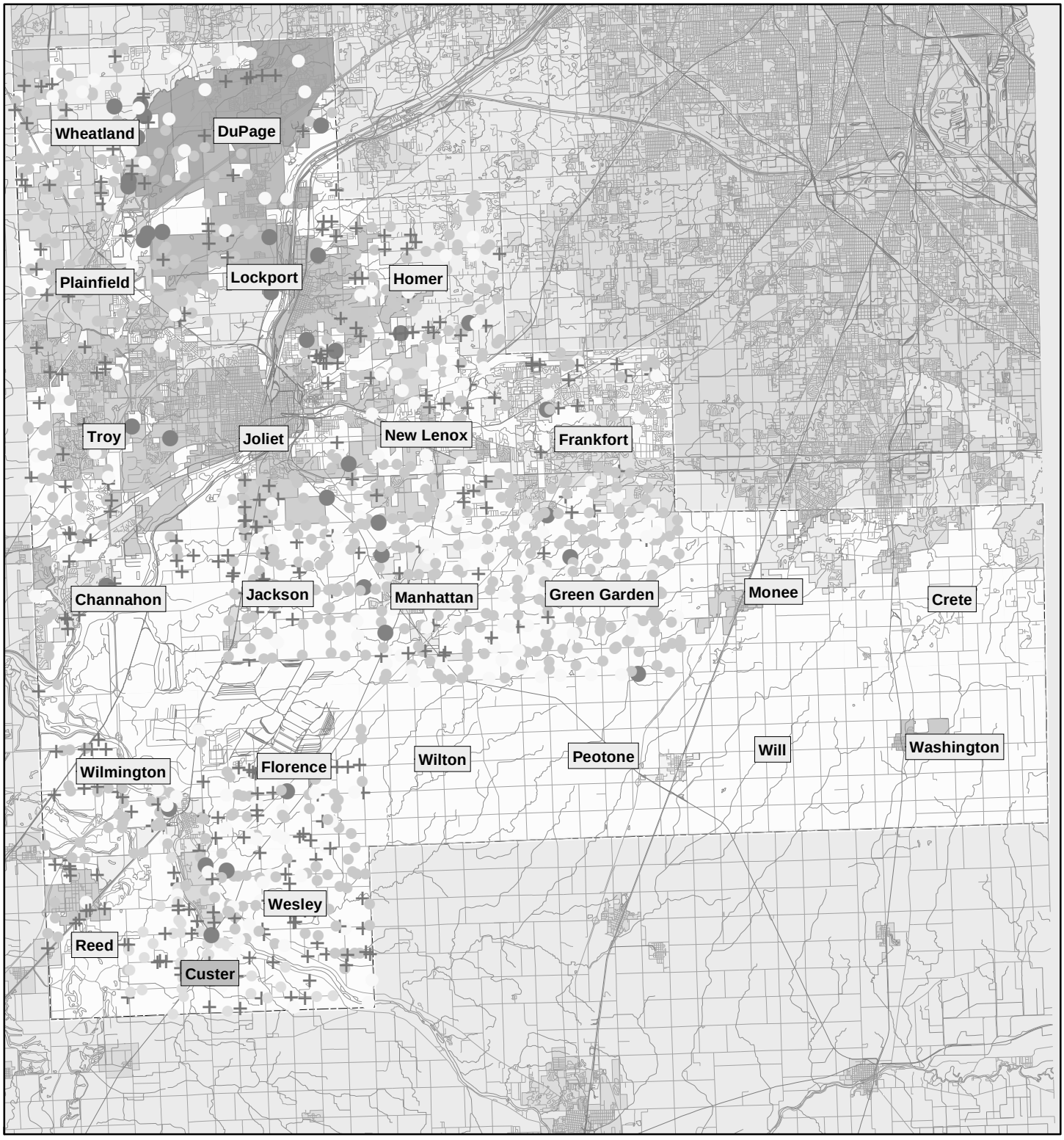
Key to Properties by Map ID Number

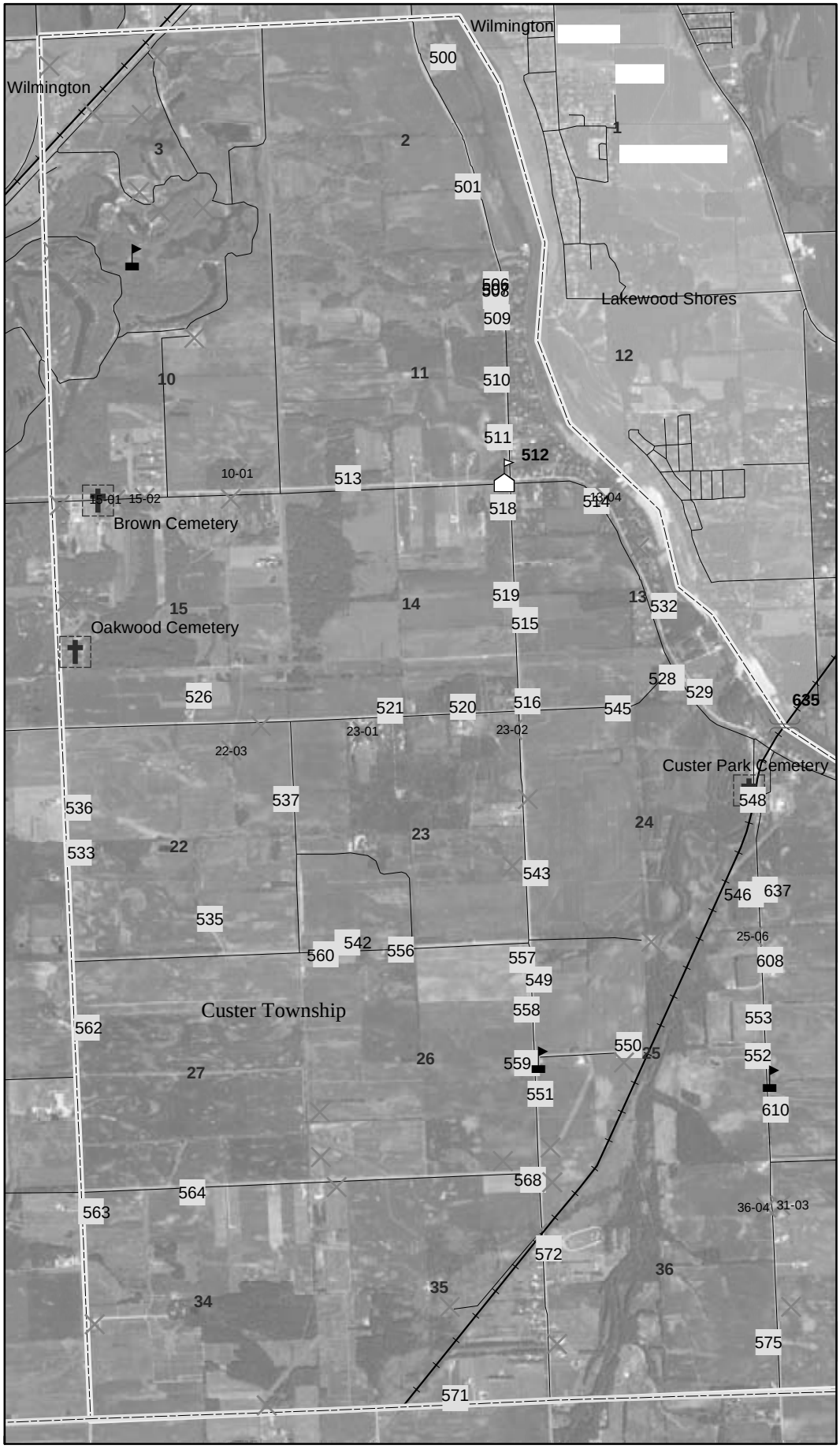
ID	PIN Number	Address	Name	Significance of Site
500	24-02-100-001	32801 West River Road	Plese Farmstead	Contributing
501	24-02-300-004	33250 West River Road	Vesely Farmstead	Non-contributing
506	24-11-200-002	33620 West River Road	House 506	Non-contributing
507	24-11-200-003	33612 West River Road	House 507	Non-contributing
508	24-11-200-005	33640 West River Road	House 508	Non-contributing
509	24-11-200-007	33663 West River Road	Johnson–Shenk Farmstead	Contributing
510	24-11-200-006	33924 West River Road	Quimby–Shenk Farmstead	Local landmark potential
511	24-11-400-006	34120 West River Road	Hudson–Haas–Shenk Farmstead	Contributing
512	24-11-400-018	33924 West River Road	Johnson [Robertson] School	Non-contributing
513	24-11-300-006	22940 Reed Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Munch Farmstead	Contributing
514	24-13-100-020	22161 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Gray–Gebhart Farmstead	Non-contributing
515	24-13-300-001	34753 Zilm Road	Thomas Trainer Farmstead	Contributing
516	24-13-300-006	35033 Zilm Road	Smillie–Underwood Farmstead	Contributing
518	24-14-200-012	34400 Zilm Road	Christ Zilm Farmstead	Non-contributing
519	24-14-200-002	34660 Zilm Road	William Trainer Farmstead	Contributing
520	24-14-400-015	22560 Smiley Road	Archibald Trainer Farmstead	Contributing
521	24-14-300-004	Smiley Road	Smiley–Stauffenberg Farmstead	Non-contributing
526	24-15-400-004	23538 Smiley Road	Kolb Farmstead	Contributing
528	24-13-400-008	21861 Smiley Road	Smillie Farmstead	Non-contributing
529	24-13-401-006	21730 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Taylor Farmstead	Contributing
532	24-13-404-006	21926 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Clubhouse Site 532	Non-contributing
533	24-22-300-001	35515 Essex Road	Sleight–Roe–O'Brien Farmstead	Contributing
535	24-22-400-001	23504 McGuire Road	Mueller–Cooper Farmstead	Contributing
536	24-22-100-010	Essex Road	Troost–Tchon Farmstead	Non-contributing
537	24-22-200-003	35344 Weikum Road	Weikum–Zelenka Farmstead	Contributing
542	24-23-300-005	23125 McGuire Road	Butkus Farmstead	Non-contributing
543	24-24-300-001	35647 Zilm Road	Harrison–Hertz–Fitzpatrick Farmstead	Contributing
545	24-24-100-006	22036 Smiley Road	Hind House	Non-contributing
546	24-24-400-002	35754 Ohlhues Road	Culkin–Ebbert Farmstead	Contributing
548	24-24-203-015	34522 Grant Avenue	Crater–Zawrazky House	Contributing
549	24-25-100-001	36015 Zilm Road	William Young Farmstead	Local landmark potential
550	24-25-100-003	22040 Weiske Road	Veigelt Farmstead	Non-contributing
551	24-25-300-002	Zilm Road	Kilpatrick–Ptacek Farmstead	Contributing
552	24-25-400-003	Ohlhues Road	Coulter–Catlett–Newbrough Farmstead	Non-contributing

ID	PIN Number	Address	Name	Significance of Site
553	24-25-200-004	36160 Ohlhues Road	Tilden–Baker–Love Farmstead	Contributing
556	24-26-100-012	McGuire Road	Doty–Butkus Farmstead	Non-contributing
557	24-26-200-001	35950 Zilm Road	Howatt–Peterson Farmstead	Contributing
558	24-26-200-004	36130 Zilm Road	Vorreyer–Christensen Farmstead	Non-contributing
559	24-26-400-002	36324 Zilm Road	French–Myneilic Farmstead	Non-contributing
560	24-26-100-007	23035 McGuire Road	Reilly–Finger Farmstead	Non-contributing
562	24-27-100-002	Essex Road	Thewlis–O'Reilly Farmstead	Contributing
563	24-34-100-004	Essex Road	Roe–Tammen Farmstead	Contributing
564	24-34-100-003	23615 Cooper Road	Roe–Walker Farmstead	Contributing
568	24-35-200-001	36718 Cooper Road	Quiring Farmstead	Contributing
571	24-35-400-023	22716 County Line Road	Swackhammer–Floyd–Checota Farmstead	Contributing
572	24-36-100-009	36949 Zilm Road	Kilpatrick–Eich Farmstead	Contributing
575	24-36-400-005	Ohlhues Road	Clark–Tammen Farmstead	Non-contributing
600	25-19-108-018	21265 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Hynd Farmstead	Contributing
601	25-19-400-019	21045 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	George Baird House	Contributing
603	25-27-400-008	18665 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Adams–Hoffman Farmstead	Non-contributing
604	25-28-400-006	19435 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Herbert–Hoffman Farmstead	Contributing
605	25-28-100-007	19721 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Hoffman Farmstead	Non-contributing
606	25-29-100-003	20431 River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Russell–Campbell Farmstead	Non-contributing
607	25-29-300-005	36401 Gray Road	Gray–Lynch–Love Farmstead	Contributing
608	25-30-100-004	36029 Ohlhues Road	Hall Farmstead	Non-contributing
610	25-30-300-003	36519 Ohlhues Road	Foster Farmstead	Non-contributing
611	25-30-400-010	21152 Curtis Road	Reinike-Mason Farmstead	Non-contributing
612	25-30-400-002	36430 Gray Road	Klemt Farmstead	Non-contributing
613	25-31-100-002	21251 Curtis Road	Russell–Lake–Prince Farmstead	Local landmark potential
616	25-31-400-004	21110 County Line Road	Keay–Seigert–Kopriva Farmstead	Contributing
618	25-32-300-021	Gray Road	Curran–Hoekstra Farmstead	Non-contributing
619	25-32-100-005	20420 Bauer Road	DeLacy–McComb Farmstead	Contributing
620	25-32-400-012	20107 Bauer Road	Blogg–Dummer Farmstead	Non-contributing
621	25-33-300-020	19921 Bauer Road	Darby–Russell–Dunn Farmstead	Contributing
622	25-33-200-016	19466 Bauer Road	Culkins–Cockle Farmstead	Contributing
623	25-33-400-013	19247 Bauer Road	Edward Yeates Farmstead	Non-contributing
624	25-34-300-004	37405 Yeates Lane	Andrew Yeates Farmstead	Local landmark potential
625	25-34-300-011	18811 Bauer Road	Connor–Yeates–Bauer Farmstead	Non-contributing
626	25-34-400-005	18501 Bauer Road	Tierney–Geelan Farmstead	Contributing

ID	PIN Number		Address	Name	Significance of Site
629	25-35-400-007	17935	Bauer Road	Smith–Bauer Farmstead	Contributing
632	25-19-400-010	20837	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Baird Farmstead	Local landmark potential
634	25-19-202-003	21150	River Street (Illinois Highway 113)	Homer Eells House	Contributing
637	25-19-300-019	35745	Ohlhues Road	Tanner–Ohlhues Farmstead	Contributing

CUSTER TOWNSHIP
Map 1: Will County Key Map





CUSTER TOWNSHIP Map 2: Overview of Survey, West Half

- Demolished site
- Bridge
- Demolished schoolhouse
- Existing schoolhouse
- Historic cemetery
- Existing site

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

N W E S

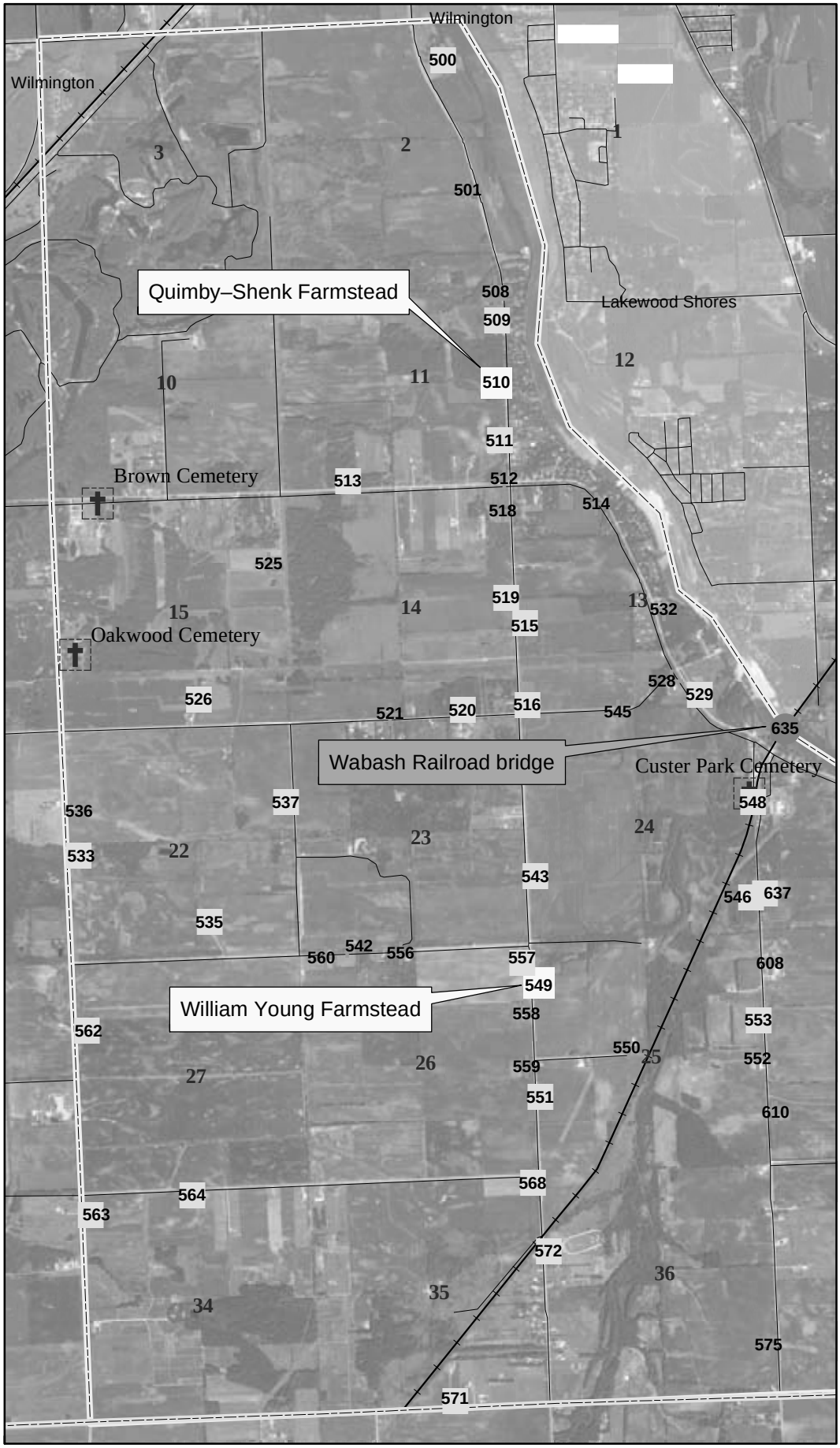
CUSTER TOWNSHIP
Map 3: Overview of Survey, East Half

Bridge
Existing site
Existing schoolhouse
Historic cemetery
Demolished site
Demolished schoolhouse

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

N
W E
S

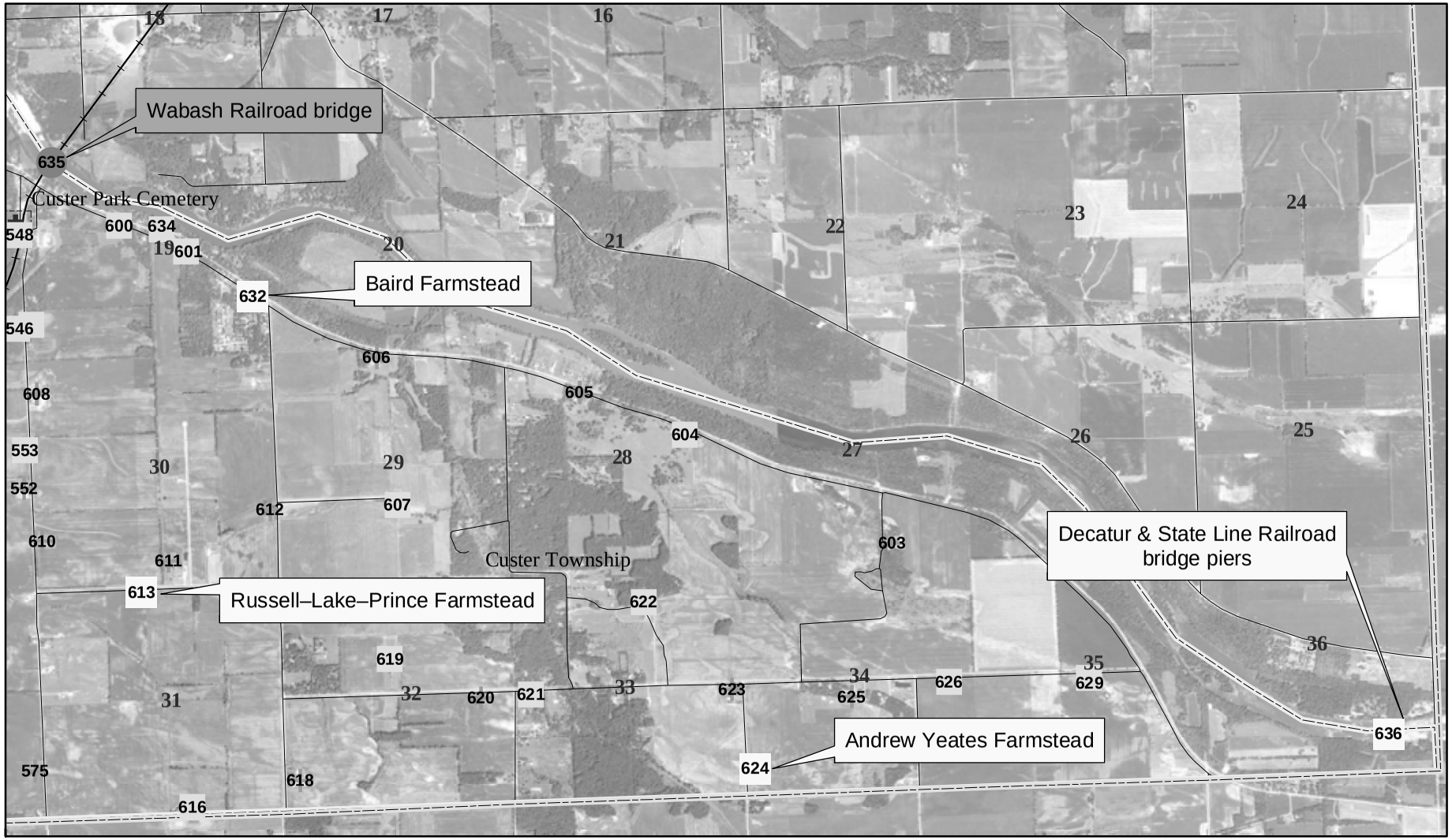
CUSTER TOWNSHIP Map 4: Significance of Sites, West Half



- National Register potential
- Local landmark potential
- Contributing
- Non-contributing
- Cemetery

CUSTER TOWNSHIP
Map 5: Significance of Sites, East Half

National Register potential
Local landmark potential
Contributing
Non-contributing
Cemetery



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

N W E S

CUSTER TOWNSHIP Map 6: 1939 Aerial Photography, West Half

Existing site

Demolished site

Historic cemetery

CUSTER TOWNSHIP
Map 7: 1939 Aerial Photography, East Half

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

N W E S