

WILLIAM HOELSCHER FARMSTEAD  
08529 State Route 219  
New Knoxville  
Auglaize County  
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2343

HABS  
OHIO  
6-NEWKX,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
WILLIAM HOELSCHER FARMSTEAD

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6-NEWKX,  
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Location: The former William Hoelscher farmstead is located 08529 State Route 219, approximately 1.5 miles east of New Knoxville, Auglaize County, Ohio.

USGS New Knoxville and Moulton Quadrangles  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:

A: 16.729840.4486800  
B: 16.729840.4486280  
C: 16.730620.4486280  
D: 16.730620.4486540  
E: 16.730220.4486540

Present  
Owner: County of Auglaize

Present  
Occupant: Unoccupied and scheduled for demolition

Significance: The William Hoelscher farm is historically and architecturally significant because it represents the predominant pattern of settlement in this area as well as traditional architectural forms. Established in 1870, the farm remained in the Hoelscher family for 120 years. The Hoelscher farm is typical, in size, production and ownership, of the traditional family farm in the heavily agricultural state of Ohio. The initial structures--house, summer kitchen, barn, smokehouse, corncrib and hog barn--were built during the years 1870-1872. Built with heavy timber framing, these structures exemplify vernacular construction techniques employed by settlers of German descent, in an area that was almost exclusively German.

## PART I - HISTORICAL INFORMATION

William Hoelscher (1841-1928) was 29 when he acquired 105 acres from his father, H. Henry Hoelscher, in 1870. Henry, or Heinrich (1812-1895), had immigrated from Ladbergen, Germany with his wife, Elizabeth, in 1839. Once in this country, they travelled down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, and from there, up the Miami-Erie Canal to New Bremen, the northern terminus of the canal at that time. Henry worked on the canal until its completion in 1845, earning enough money to buy his first small tract of land east of New Knoxville, in Washington Township. In 1856, he purchased 50 acres and in 1866, another 55 acres, all in the southeast quarter of Section 21 on the north side of the present Route 219.

New Knoxville was first settled by Shadrack Montgomery, who moved there from Pennsylvania in 1830. The first subdivision of 102 lots was made in 1836 by James K. Lytle, the owner of a steam sawmill in the village. The Hoelscher land was originally part of a 160-acre government grant to Nehemiah York in 1835. Henry Hoelscher may have chosen a site near New Knoxville because of his affiliation with the German Evangelical Church there, while nearby New Bremen was predominantly German Catholic.

Henry Hoelscher was one of many Germans who fled poor economic conditions in their homeland and immigrated to America during the mid-nineteenth century. This part of the state was settled mostly by immigrants from the northwestern part of Germany, who ventured north via the canal in search of fertile farm land. In 1880, the inhabitants of the nearby village of New Knoxville were entirely of German descent, and this is still largely true today.

Henry's house (no longer extant) was located south of Route 219 on land that passed to William's younger brother Ernst. During the years 1870 to 1872, William built a new house on his property north of the road, as well as other farm buildings, including a barn, bake oven, summer kitchen and smokehouse. These structures were built of hand-hewn timbers (taken from woods on the property) and of circular-sawn lumber.

The Hoelscher farm is located in an area that is primarily agricultural. At 105 acres, the Hoelscher farm, is the typical size for the State of Ohio. It has been operated as a general farm, producing the leading crops of the area--corn, hay, wheat and oats, as well as chickens, hogs and dairy cows. In the late 1940s, the Hoelscher farm became a Grade-A dairy farm. The farm has been under the continuous ownership of the Hoelscher family for 120 years, passed on from father to son for five generations. In 1924, it was conveyed to Benjamin Hoelscher (1881-1971), and in 1956 to Casper Hoelscher (1921- ), and his wife Rachel. In 1985, Casper and Rachel transferred the house to their son Ted, but retained title to the land.

## PART 2 - DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Hoelscher farmstead consists of a group of buildings clustered on an L-shaped plot near the road. This cluster is surrounded by cultivated fields on a 105-acre parcel. The buildings include the house, barn, smokehouse, and corn crib/storage building--all built during the period 1870-72--a circa 1910 hog barn, a 1926 garage, 1939 corncrib, a 1946 silo, a 1951 hen house converted into a garage/workshop, and a 1964 silo. In addition the remains of a bake oven are located on the north side of the house.

A dirt driveway winds from Route 219 through the farm buildings to the north edge of the property, where a new farmstead has been established, including a house and barn. The landscape is relatively flat and open, as the area is predominantly agricultural. The surroundings are characterized by farms of similar size, age and appearance.

The condition of the farm is generally good, except for the house, which is in poor condition because of lack of maintenance. The house has not been painted in many years, and the metal roof has been ripped loose from the west side by the wind. All trees and most shrubs have been removed from around the house in preparation for demolition.

The farmstead evolved over time as the type and scope of farming changed and as each succeeding generation of Hoelschers took over. Individual buildings were altered, added and demolished. The barn, which originally stabled horses at the north end, was modified in 1940s when workhorses were replaced by tractors. In the late 1940s, the barn was altered at the south end where a concrete block milkhouse was inserted to meet upgraded health regulations. The addition of a corncrib in 1939 implies the expansion of corn production. By 1930, a gable-roofed workshop/woodshed had been built just east of the kitchen wing, a square, low, flat-roofed brooder house had been added in the center, and a second hog barn had been added northeast of the barn. These three structures were taken down in the 1980s. The original outhouse was demolished by 1950. In 1951 a new concrete-block hen house was built, which was converted into a garage/workshop in the early 1980s.

## PART III - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: none
- B. Early Views: There are a number of views in the personal collection of the Hoelscher family, which are provided with accompanying photographs.
- C. Interviews: Casper and Rachel Hoelscher, June 3, 1991.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Brown, Mary Ann Olding. Marion Mosaic: Faith Farms and Fatback: A Study of Marion Township in Mercer County, Ohio. April 1984.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. National Register Bulletin: Surveying and Evaluating Vernacular Architecture (Draft). Prepared by the Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee, April 1987.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Arthur, Eric and Dudley Witney. The Barn: A Vanishing Landmark in North America. New York: Arrowood Press, 1972.

Atlas and History of Auglaize County. Piqua, Ohio: Magee Bros., 1917.

Frary, I. T. Early Homes of Ohio. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970, rpt. 1936.

Howland, H. G. Atlas of Auglaize County, Ohio. Phila.: Sutton, 1880.

Jordan, Philip D. Ohio Comes of Age: 1873-1900. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society, 1943.

Kauffman, Henry J. The American Farmhouse. New York: Bonanza Books, 1975.

McMurray, William J. History of Auglaize County, Vol. 2. Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Co., 1923.

New Bremen Sesquicentennial Reflections. New Bremen, Ohio: Sesquicentennial Committee of New Bremen, 1983.

Noble, Allen G. Wood Brick and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape. Vol. 2. Amherst, Mass.: Univ. of Mass., 1984.

Walsh, John B. Atlas of Auglaize County. Wapakoneta, Ohio: Atlas Publishing Co., 1898.

Writers Program of the Works Progress Administration in the State of Ohio. The Ohio Guide. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1940.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Additional information may be found in secondary sources on traditional American and German material culture.

F. Supplemental Material

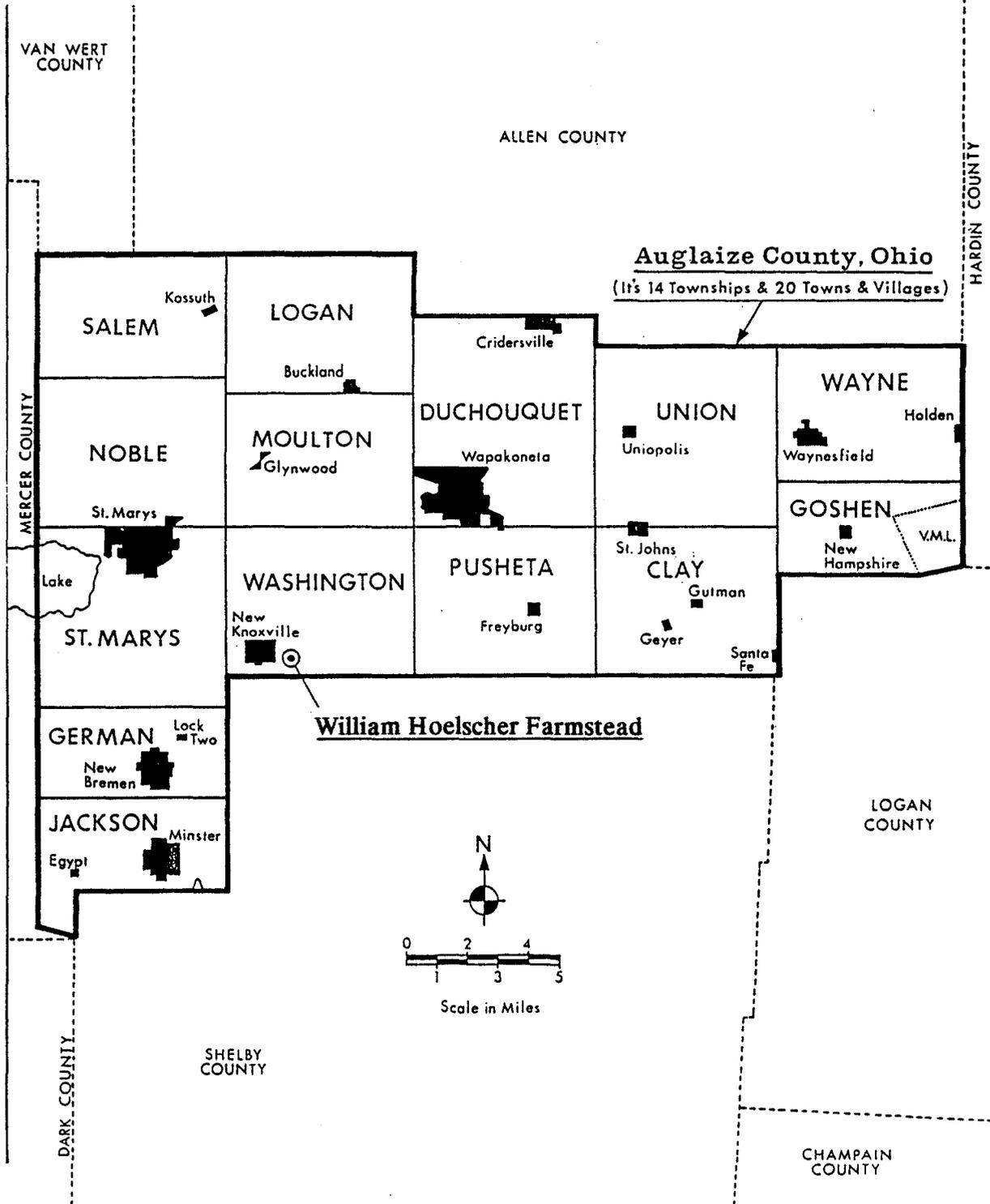
1. Location maps

2. Site plans: circa 1875, circa 1930, 1946, 1976, 1990

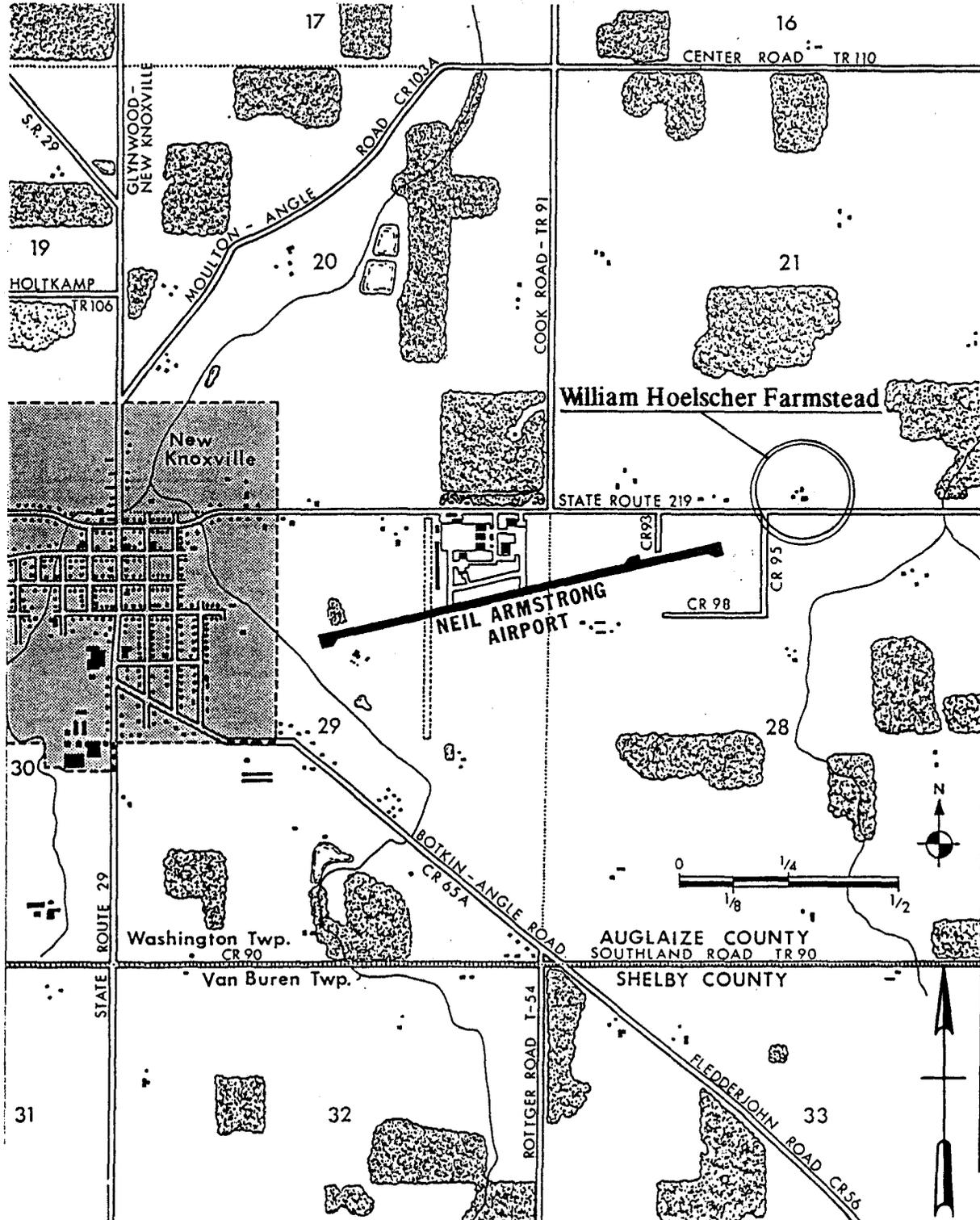
PART IV - PROJECT INFORMATION

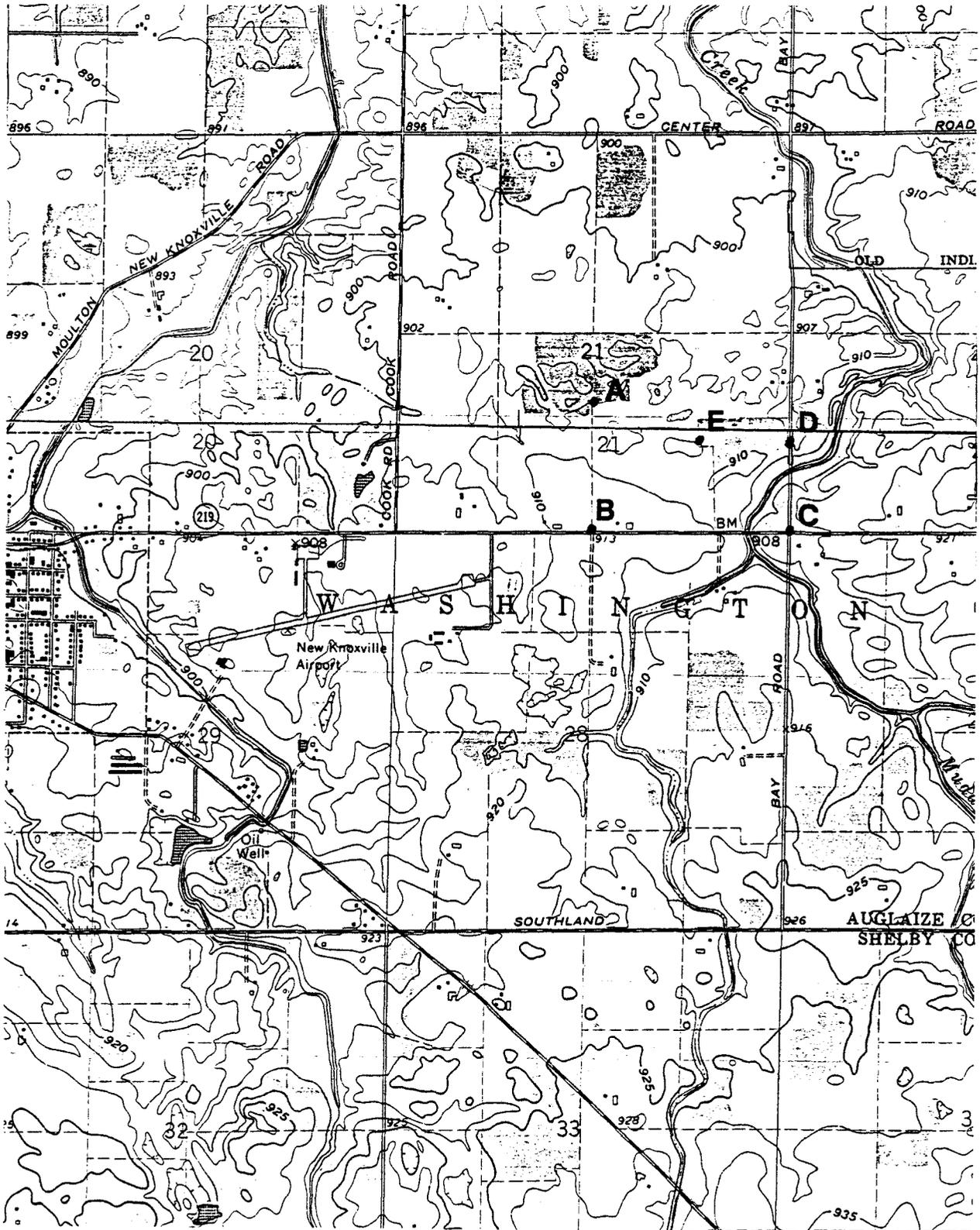
The farm buildings, acquired through eminent domain by Auglaize County, are required to be removed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) because they obstruct the approach to the Neil Armstrong Airport in Wapakoneta, Ohio. In accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement dated December 27, 1990 and signed by the FAA, the Ohio State Historic Preservation Officer and the Commissioners of Auglaize County, the house and farm buildings are being recorded and offered for sale for relocation prior to demolition.

Prepared by: Beth Sullebarger  
Title: Principal  
Affiliation: Sullebarger Associates  
Date: June 28, 1991

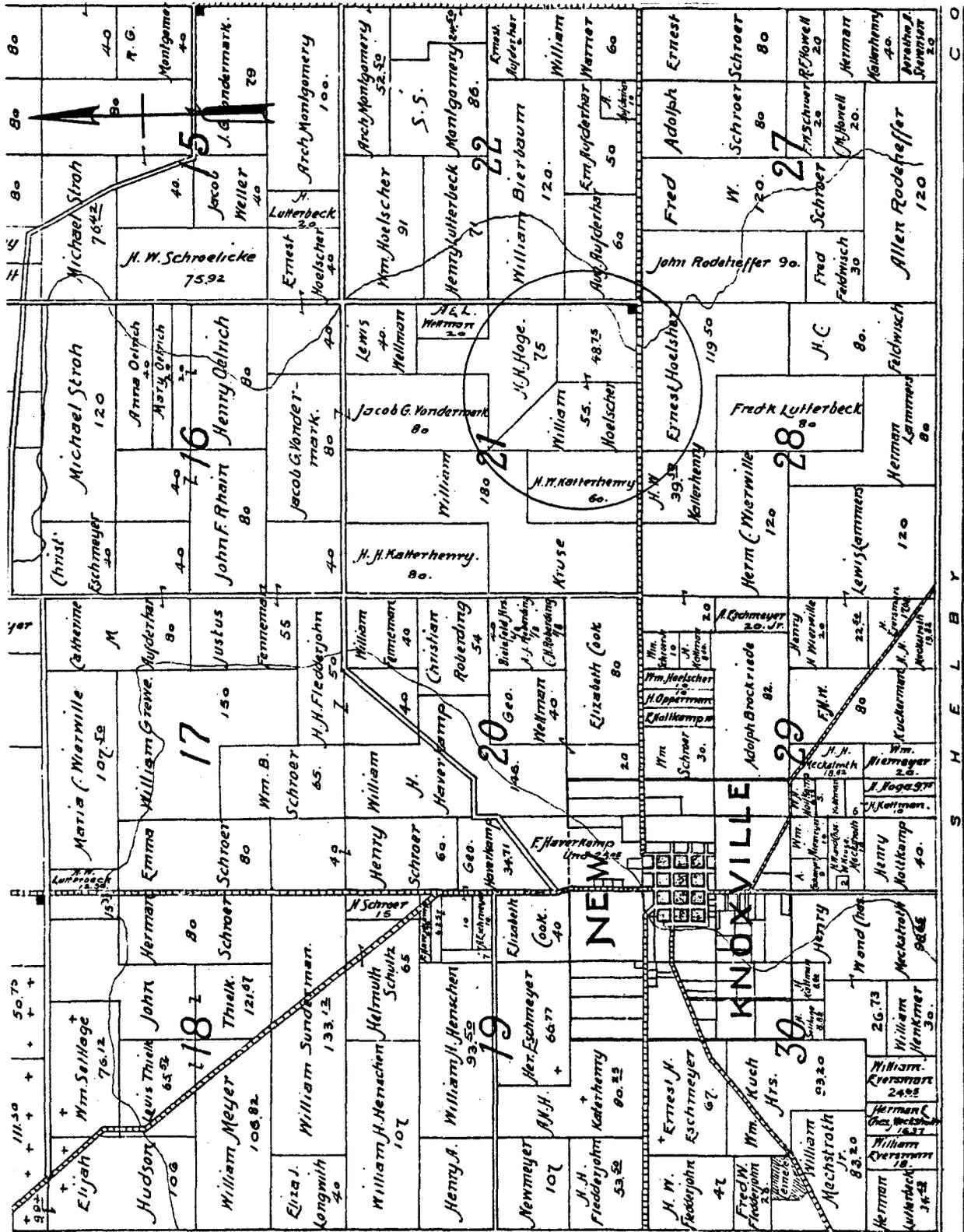


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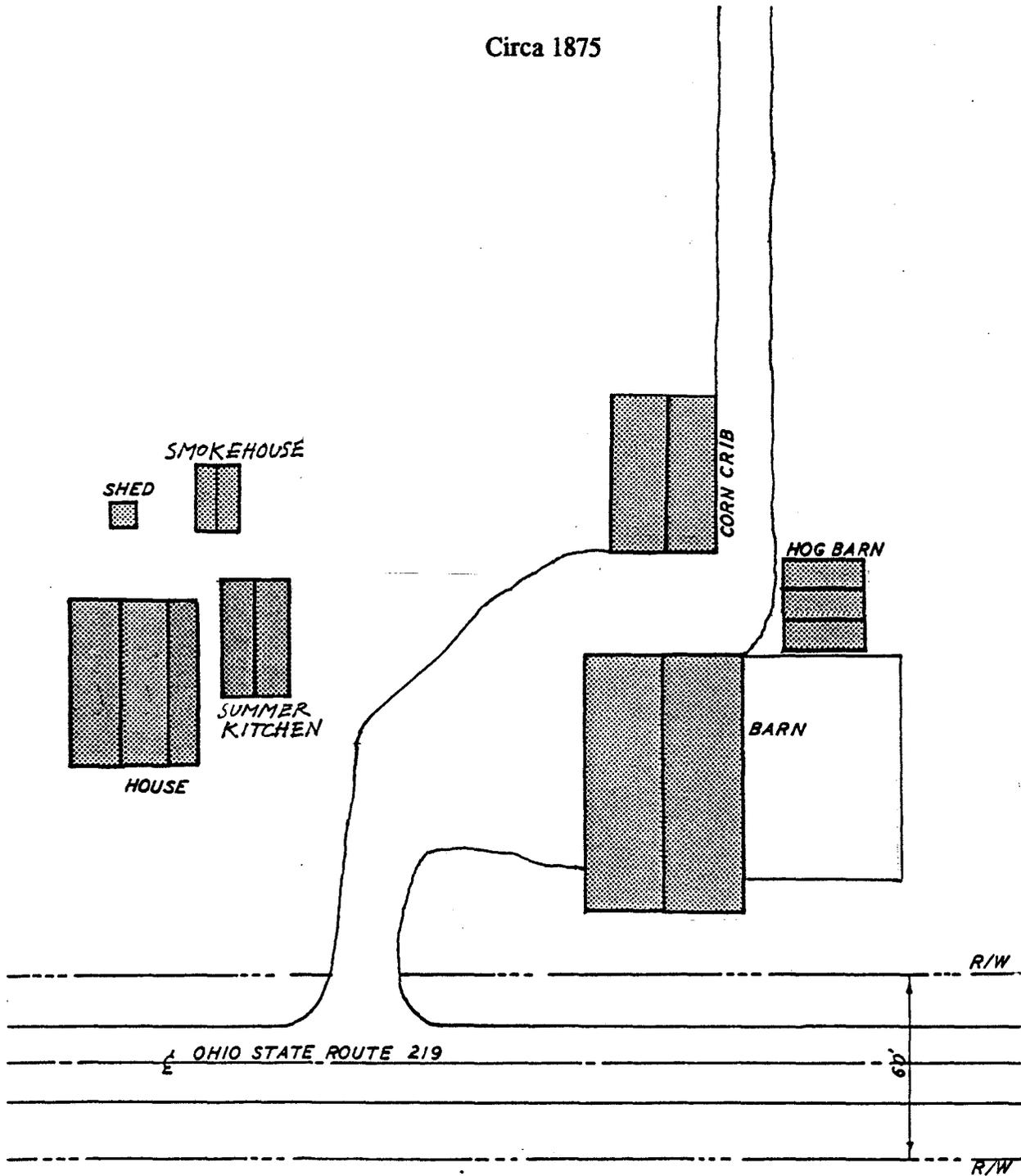




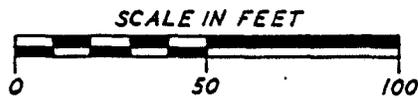
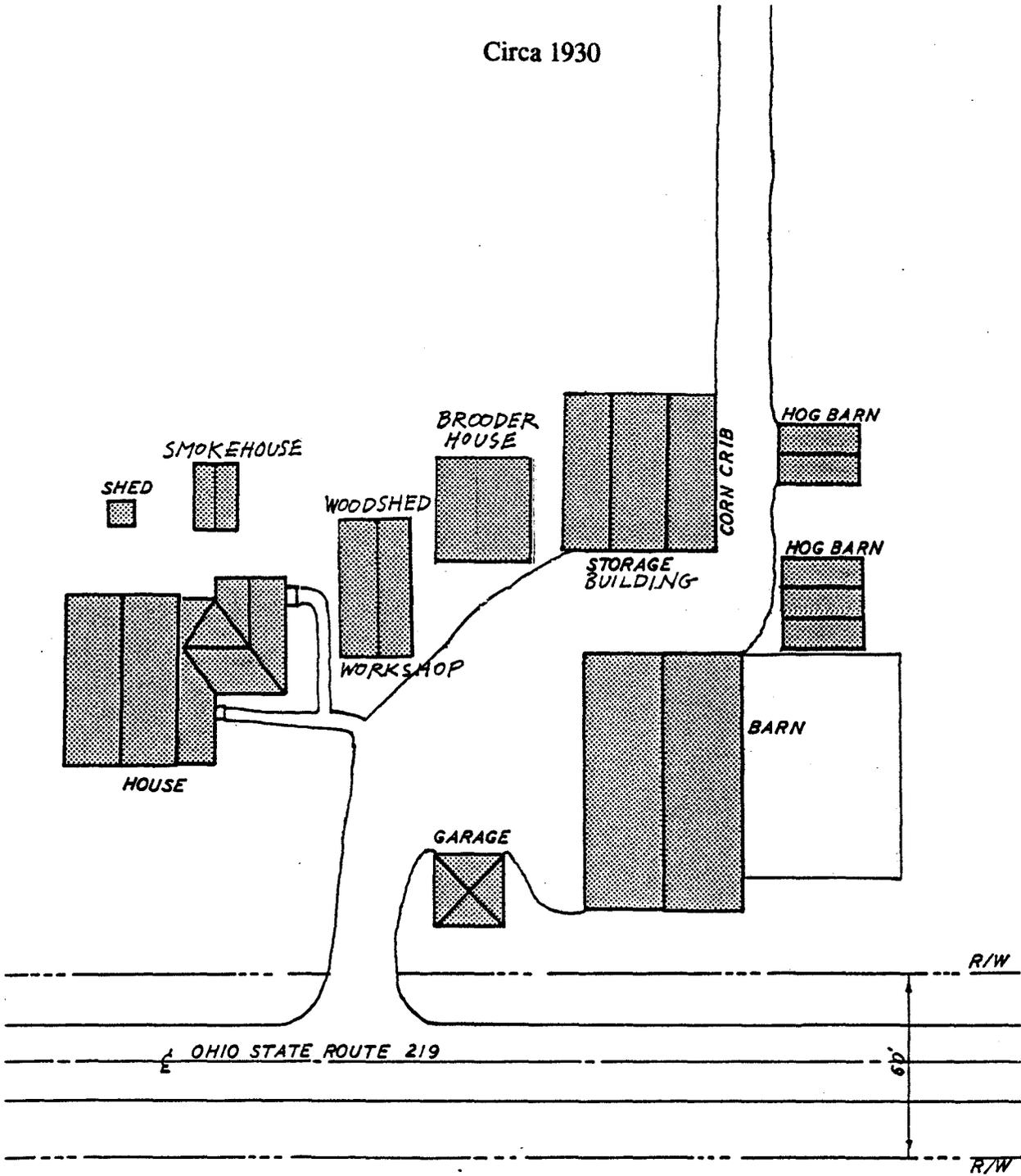
Atlas of Auglaize County, 1898, p. 163.



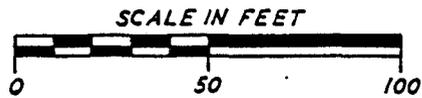
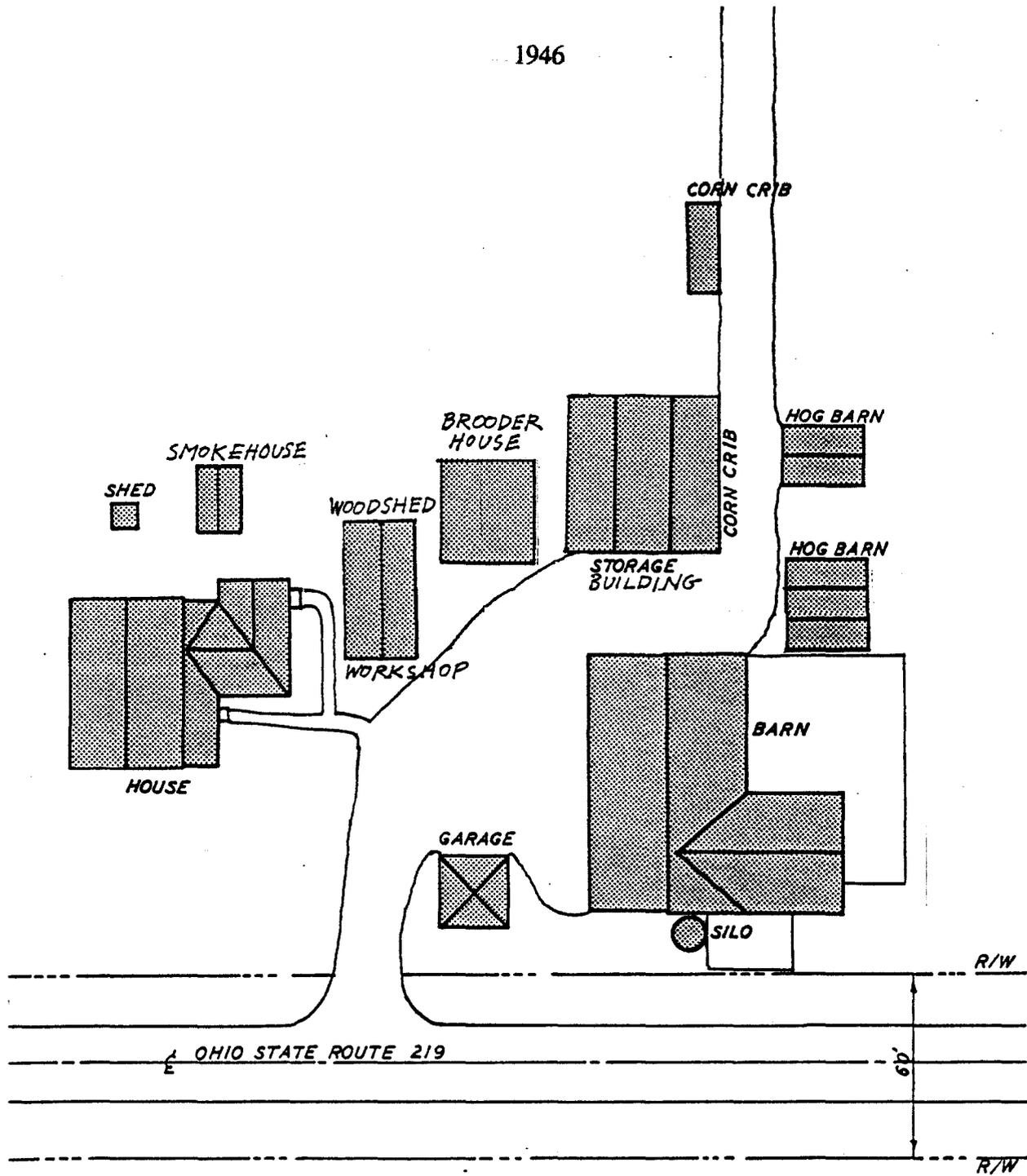
Circa 1875



Circa 1930



1946



1976

