

HERSHBERGER FARM

.4 mile east of Business Route 220,  
.35 mile southeast of Cessna  
Cessna Vicinity  
Bedford County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5392

HABS  
PA  
S-CESS.V  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HERSHBERGER FARM

HABS No. PA-5392

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Location: .4 mile east of Business Route 220, .35 mile southeast of Cessna, Cessna vicinity, Bedford County, Pennsylvania

USGS Bedford, Pennsylvania Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
17.4440500.711570

Present Owner: Bedford County Air Industrial Park Authority  
203 South Juliana Street  
Bedford, Pennsylvania 15222

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: Based on documentary and architectural data, it is likely that the Hershberger Farm is one of the earliest surviving farm complexes in Bedford Township, which itself was one of the first parts of Bedford County to be settled. Constructed in the first quarter of the 19th century by one of the German farmers who settled this region, the brick-nogged frame house reflects the Germanic heritage of the original owner and offers potentially unique opportunities to document methods of construction and finishing details of a traditional house of this time and place.

An adjacent 1½-story brick-nogged frame outbuilding and large frame bank barn also are representative of early 19th century construction techniques. Several minor outbuildings--a wagon shed/corn crib, a privy, and a small frame shed--are 20th century additions, but contribute to the integrity of the complex as a whole.

#### NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPLEX

The Hershberger Farm is located in rural Bedford Township, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, approximately 4.5 miles north of the borough of Bedford and .35 miles southeast of the village of Cessna. It lies .45 miles east of Business Route 220 and .5 miles east of the recently-completed U.S. Route 220, a four-lane limited-access highway that serves as one of the region's principal north-south arteries.

The Hershberger Farm is situated on the north slope of a low ridge overlooking Dunning Creek, one of the larger streams in central Bedford County. The central portion of the farmstead consists of a 2½-story frame house, a 1½-story frame outbuilding (formerly used as a dwelling), a small frame shed, and a privy. A large frame bank barn and a small frame wagon shed/corn crib are located about 300 feet upslope from the house, near the crest of the ridge. The farmhouse and the 1½-story frame outbuilding both appear to date to the first quarter of the 19th century, and the barn may be contemporary or somewhat later. The minor outbuildings all are 20th century additions to the complex.

Although Bedford County was not formed until 1771, scattered settlement began much earlier, and the area played a prominent role in the events of the French and Indian War. Several sources claim that the first settlement may have been in Bedford Township about 1710, but this has never been confirmed. A few settlers from Maryland, Virginia, and eastern Pennsylvania established widely scattered outposts in central Bedford County in the 1730s. The first settler of record in the immediate vicinity of Bedford was an Indian trader named Ray, who built three cabins on the present town site in 1750.

Although most of the area's settlers were killed or driven off by hostile Indians during the early years of the French and Indian War, the war actually promoted settlement because of the military roads and forts that were built during the conflict. Fort Raystown was built at the site of Ray's trading post in 1755, and was strengthened and renamed Fort Bedford by General Forbes in 1758. It was one of the few forts on the Pennsylvania frontier that was regularly garrisoned by British troops.

The presence of the fort undoubtedly encouraged local settlement, and the town of Bedford was laid out in 1766. Bedford Township was formed as a division of Cumberland County in 1768, and already contained many residents; Germans from eastern Pennsylvania had settled the Cessna area as early as 1730. By 1771 there was sufficient population for Bedford County (which then included much of central and western Pennsylvania) to be detached from Cumberland County.

Most of the earliest settlers were Scotch-Irish from Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania, but Germans began to arrive in large numbers in the early 1780s after the Indian threat had ended. Most of the new arrivals were from York, Lancaster, Franklin, and Cumberland Counties, and they managed to acquire much of the prime agricultural land in Bedford County.

Many roads were built throughout the county in the 1770s and 1780s, facilitating the movement of goods and settlers. Farms had been established in all parts of the county by 1800, particularly on the fertile floodplains and terraces of Dunning Creek and the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River.

To a large degree, the early 19th century development of Bedford County was linked to turnpikes, particularly the Forbes Road (present U.S. Route 30), which crossed the county from east to west. Most towns and villages grew up along the turnpikes and other main roads, often at crossroads. These crossroads villages functioned as minor urban centers for the area's dispersed rural population. Cessna had its origin as a road stop on the Hollidaysburg and Bedford Turnpike.

Except for mills, tanneries, and other agriculture-related industries, there was virtually no industrial development in central Bedford County during this period. Iron manufacture was the only heavy industry, and the mining of iron ore was important in many areas. By 1850 nearly half the county's arable land had been cleared for agriculture and dairying. Agricultural produce was sent by turnpike to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and smaller markets. Mid-19th century maps of Bedford Township show numerous sawmills, tanneries, grist mills, and many rather extensive farms. Both Cessna and nearby Belden contained a tannery.

Bedford County's iron and lumber industries declined and finally disappeared in the late 19th century. As the older industries declined, new ones began to develop. Local wool production doubled between 1860 and 1900, with a resulting increase in the number and size of local woolen mills. Railroads reduced delivery time to market for agricultural produce and opened new markets, contributing to significant growth in the dairy industry. The population of Bedford County increased by almost 50 percent between 1870 and 1900; Bedford Township's population peaked in 1880 and began a long decline from which it would not recover fully until 1950.

The county's dairy industry expanded dramatically after 1920, partly because of an improved road system and partly because local farmers were being squeezed by large-scale midwestern grain producers. Most farmers turned exclusively to dairying, producing crops of hay and corn for cattle feed. Bedford Township remained rural and agricultural during this period. Its population has grown steadily since 1920, but the prevailing settlement pattern of earlier periods continued well into the mid-20th century.

As was the case in the early 19th century, most new development in central Bedford County since 1940 has been linked to the growth of the road system. In particular, the completion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in 1940 had a major positive economic impact on the county, and the trucking industry had become Bedford County's largest employer by 1955. Most of the county remains rural and agricultural, but new residential and commercial development on the outskirts of Bedford Borough and adjacent to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and new U.S. Route 220 threatens to disrupt settlement and subsistence patterns that have remained essentially intact for nearly 200 years.

Based on documentary and architectural evidence, it is likely that the Hershberger Farm is one of the earliest surviving farm complexes in Bedford Township, which itself was one of the first parts of the county to be settled. The farm originally was part of a much larger parcel of land surveyed in 1763 in connection with a warrant issued to Daniel Clark. It does not appear that Clark ever occupied the tract, and it was conveyed to John Hershberger by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in a September 1821 patent. Hershberger probably built the present farmhouse and adjacent 1½-story frame outbuilding soon afterward. Architectural and archaeological evidence both support an 1820s date for these structures, and the barn also may date to about the same period, although a precise date for the barn is not possible.

At John Hershberger's death, the 284-acre farm passed to his son, Dewalt Hershberger, in 1853. According to the 1850 census, Dewalt Hershberger was a 35-year old farmer with \$4500 in real estate and \$1000 in personal property, with a household that included his wife, five sons, and one female servant. The federal agricultural census schedules for the 1850-1870 period indicate that Hershberger ranked slightly above average in the value of his farm relative to other Bedford Township farmers. The census notes that the farm generally supported 4-8 horses, 4-7 milk cows, 6-12 other cattle, 12-25 sheep, 8-14 swine, and 40 poultry during this period, and the major crops were wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, hay, and potatoes, with smaller quantities of buckwheat, hops, and hemp. It appears to have been a fairly typical self-supporting family farm of the period, with a wide variety of livestock and produce raised both for its own consumption and for sale.

When Dewalt Hershberger died, the property was partitioned and divided among his heirs. In 1884 one parcel of 106 acres and 140 perches with "mansion and buildings", worth \$4809, was conveyed to Samuel B. Hershberger, while an adjacent vacant tract of 85 acres and 124 perches was conveyed to his brother Henry. The 1880, 1900, and 1910 census schedules indicate that Samuel Hershberger headed a household that included his wife, four sons, and two daughters; his mother is listed in the 1900 census as having her own house, suggesting that she may have been occupying the adjacent 1½-story outbuilding. It may have been Samuel Hershberger who added the present kitchen wing to the rear of the farmhouse.

After the death of Samuel Hershberger and his wife Laura, the farm passed to Carl R. and Bessie H. Pencil in 1944, to Moray C. and Clara M. Cain in 1946, and to Fred E. and Connie R. Claycomb in 1979, before being acquired by the present owner in 1989. Many of the physical alterations to the house date to the late 1940s and 1950s. A former frame smokehouse adjacent to the 1½-story outbuilding was removed at this time, and a cistern was added near the farmhouse. The property was owner-occupied until 1979, when Claycomb acquired it and rented the house to tenants while farming the fields and using the barn himself.

The significance of the Hershberger Farm is best considered within the context of the Bedford County Historic Sites Survey, conducted by the Bedford County Planning Commission between 1978 and 1983. The survey attempted to

investigate all pre-1901 structures in the county. Of the 179 structures and complexes examined in Bedford Township, two dated to the 1776-1800 period, one to 1801-1825, and 19 to 1826-1850; three were of stone construction, 11 were log, 17 were brick, and 133 were frame. Most major architectural styles were represented in the township, but 88% of the total were vernacular folk types. The survey results indicate that pre-1825 structures are very rare in Bedford Township.

Both the Hershberger Farmhouse (HABS No. PA-5392-A) and the adjacent 1½-story frame outbuilding (HABS No. PA-5392-C) are early 19th century structures that embody vernacular rural construction techniques characteristic of the German settlers who first came to the Cessna area. The barn (HABS No. PA-5392-B) displays an unusual framing system that provides additional insights into local construction techniques. Together the structures contain architectural information which might not survive elsewhere in the region. Although the minor outbuildings, including the wagon shed/corn crib (HABS No. PA-5392-D), are 20th century additions, their presence contributes to the integrity of the farmstead as a whole.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### A. Architectural drawings:

None are known to exist.

##### B. Historic Views:

Historic views of the farm are discussed in connection with the individual component structures.

##### C. Interviews:

1. Ms. Dolores Cain: interview at the site, October 1989. Ms. Cain's husband, Charles L. Cain, grew up on the Hershberger Farm in the late 1940s and 1950s. She and her daughter, Ms. Jeane Kenney (also interviewed), were frequent visitors to the farm.
2. Mr. Fred E. Claycomb: interview at the site, July 1989. Mr. Claycomb owned the property between 1979 and 1989, and made several structural alterations.

##### D. Bibliography:

###### 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Bedford County Land Records, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Bedford, Pennsylvania. Deed Book A-5, page 432; Deed Book O-3, page 419; Deed Book 175, page 428; Deed Book 175, page 430; Deed Book 234, page 335; Deed Book 234, page 336; Deed Book 238, page 181; Record Book 37, page 133.

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Biro Tech, Inc. "Bedford County, Pennsylvania Airport Site Selection and Master Plan Study Update". Report prepared for the Bedford County Air Industrial Park Authority, 1987.

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2. Secondary and Published Sources:

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Koontz, William H., ed. History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906.

Nelson, Lee H. "Nail Chronology as an Aid to Dating Old Buildings", American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet #48, History News 24(1).

Rupp, I. Daniel. History and Topography of Dauphin, Cumberland, Franklin, Bedford, Adams and Perry Counties. Lancaster: Gilbert Hills, 1846.

Walker, E.L. Map of Bedford County, Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh: E.L. Walker, 1861.

Waterman, Watkins and Co. History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties, Pennsylvania. Chicago: Waterman, Watkins and Co., 1884.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated:

None known.

F. Supplemental material:

None.

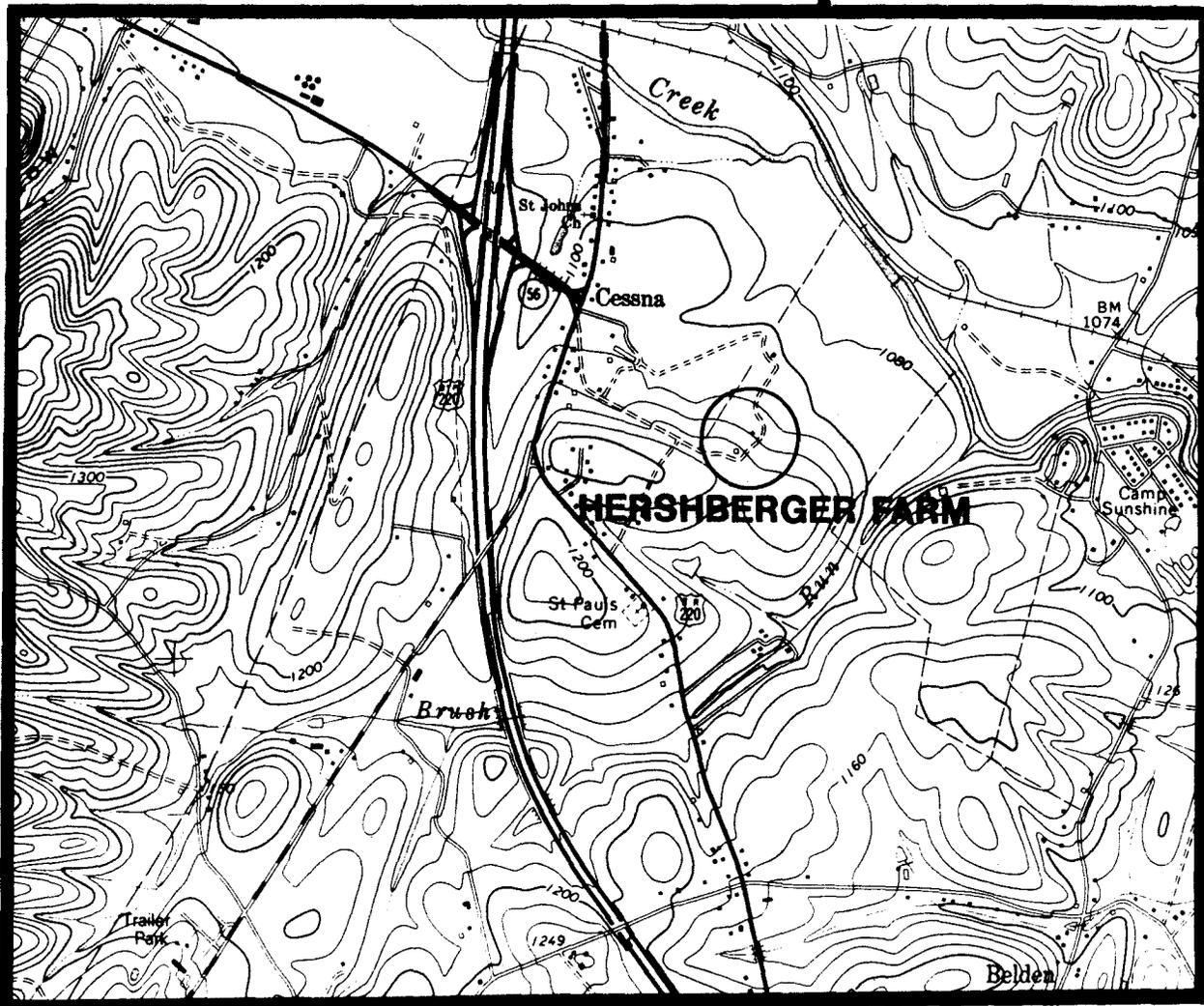
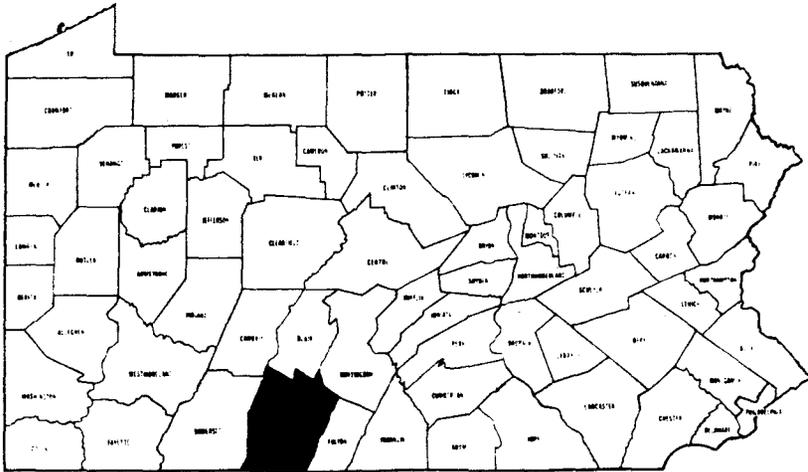
#### PROJECT INFORMATION

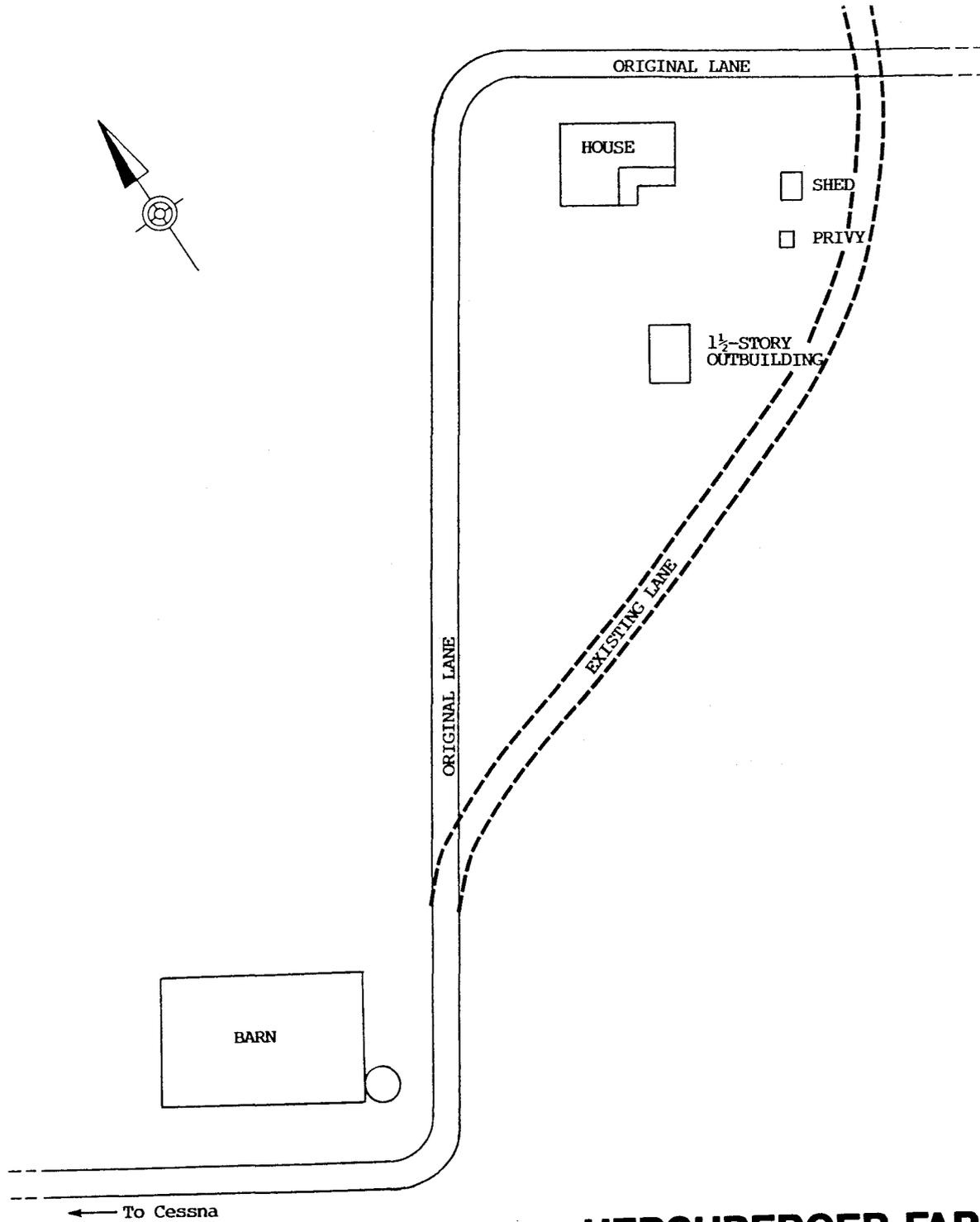
The Bedford County Air Industrial Park Authority, in association with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aviation, is proposing to replace the existing Bedford County airport facility with a new facility to be located near the village of Cessna, Bedford Township. The proposed airport facility will be constructed in two stages, with approximately 150 acres of land required for the first stage components.

The structures of the Hershberger Farm stand in the mandated clear zone at the west end of the proposed first-stage runway, and are to be removed as part of the airport project. A Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration and the Pennsylvania SHPO stipulated that the farm buildings must be recorded to HABS standards before demolition. The present documentation was prepared between April and June 1990.

Prepared by: Scott D. Heberling  
Title: Historian  
Affiliation: Heberling Associates  
Date: May 1, 1990

### LOCATION MAP





□ SHED/  
CORNCRIB

# HERSHBERGER FARM

## SITE PLAN