

BARNS OF EBEBY'S LANDING NATIONAL HISTORICAL RESERVE
Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
Ebey's Landing
Coupeville vicinity
Island County
Washington

HABS WA-268
WA-268

HABS
WA-268

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HABS

“A Barn Survey: Understanding the Farm Complexes on the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve” a terminal project by Anne E. Kidd in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Science degree in Historic Preservation at the University of Oregon. WA-268

Farm Complexes included in the survey:

Arnold Farm:	HABS No. WA-244
Boyer Farm:	HABS No. WA-245
Walter Crockett, Jr. Farm:	HABS No. WA-246
Engle Farm:	HABS No. WA-247
Jenne Farm:	HABS No. WA-250
Kineth Farm:	HABS No. WA-248
Le Sourd Farm:	HABS No. WA-252
Reuble Farm:	HABS No. WA-251
Sherman Farm:	HABS No. WA-253
Smith Farm:	HABS No. WA-249
Terry Farm:	HABS No. WA-254

Settlement History

When Europeans first arrived, four groups of Salish Indians – the Skagit, Snohomish, Kikialos, and Clallam – shared Whidbey and Camano Islands.¹ These groups are classified as saltwater or canoe Indians, and they built three permanent villages along Penn Cove on Whidbey Island. Their lifestyle and settlement patterns relied heavily on salmon, although they also hunted and gathered berries and roots. Before white explorers reached the area, the Salish did not cultivate the prairies of Central Whidbey Island, but rather manipulated them to fit their needs. They repeatedly burned the prairie lands and into the surrounding woods. This encouraged the growth of bracken and camas in the prairie, and renewed undergrowth in the woods that became habitat for game animals.² The Salish Indians also used the forest wood to build their canoes and villages.³

Captain George Vancouver carried out the first effective European exploration of Central Whidbey Island, claiming it for the British Empire on June 4, 1792.⁴ In 1833 the Hudson Bay Company explored Whidbey Island in search of game to trap and hunt, and in 1839 the first missionaries reached Whidbey Island.⁵ The white explorers and settlers brought potatoes to the area and by 1830 the British at Fort Nisqually recognized potatoes as a staple in the economy and diet of the Salish villages.⁶ The potatoes' easy growing cycle and high production brought the Salish Indians to first cultivate the prairies of Central Whidbey.⁷ This cultivation was documented and continued by the first American settlers to the area.

In 1850 the United States Congress passed the Donation Land Claim (DLC) Act which accelerated settlement of Central Whidbey Island, Washington. Settlers who were compliant with age, sex, nationality, and race standards, and who agreed to cultivate the land for four years were granted 320 acres if single or 640 acres if married. Colonel Isaac Neff Ebey was the first to stake a DLC in Central Whidbey Island. On October 15, 1850, Ebey claimed "640 acres on the rich black loam of the prairie that now bears his name."⁸

Settlement continued rapidly in the following years. Settlers came across the plains over wagon trails, across the Isthmus of Panama, and around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. When the donation system expired in December of 1855, 985 claims had been taken in the Washington Territory, covering 290, 215 acres. Twenty-nine DLC were taken in Central Whidbey Island, primarily centered in three prairies: Ebey's, Crockett's, and Smith's, and around Penn Cove to the north.

¹ Richard White, Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 14.

² Land Use, 20-21.

³ Ibid., 16. "In each village a single row of three to five large cedar houses, together with smaller buildings, faced the water with the forest looming at their backs. Often from 100 to 200 feet long, these buildings normally housed several families who partitioned the interiors into separate living quarters."

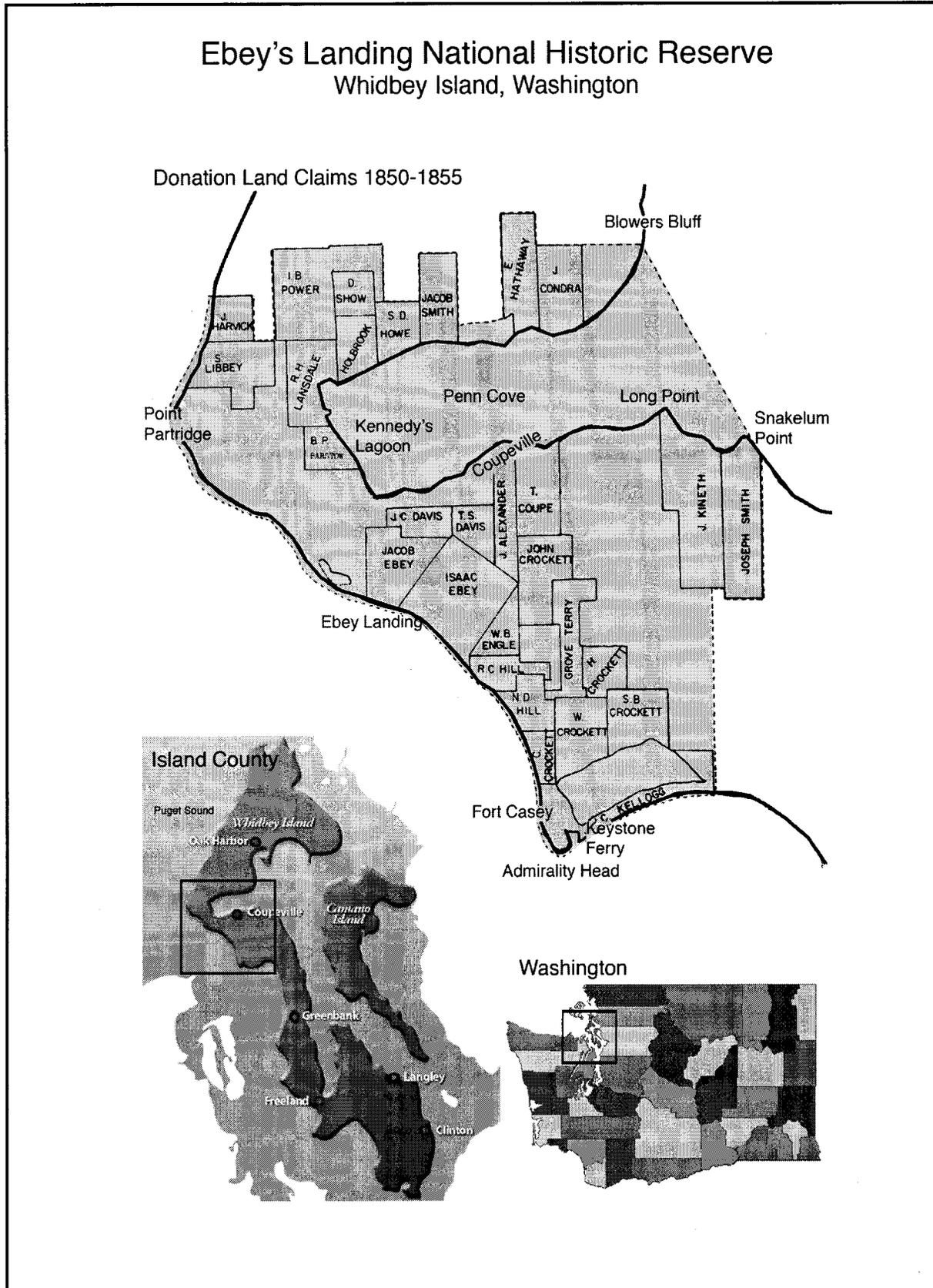
⁴ Jimmie Jean Cook, A Particular Friend, Penn's Cove: A History of the Settlers, Claims and Buildings of Central Whidbey Island (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1973), 11.

⁵ Ibid., 11-13.

⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁷ Ibid., 33.

⁸ Ibid., 19.



Donation Land Claims of Central Whidbey Island and Their location Within Island County and Washington State. (Image created by Summer Minchew, 2008)

Farming Developments

Farming in the area has varied greatly in the 150 years since white settlers came. The first pioneers focused mainly on potatoes, grains, and orchards – farming with work horses and hand tools. As farming technology evolved, threshing machines were brought to the island. Threshing parties became social events with neighboring farmers joining together to harvest. While the women prepared elaborate meals to feed the crews, the men worked in teams in the fields. They collected the crop bundles in horse-drawn wagons and brought them to the stationary threshing machines. This mechanized separation of the grain from the chaff revolutionized the harvesting process on the island.

Farming in Central Whidbey reached its stride during the decades between 1900 and 1930. The tractor was introduced as early as the 1910s, along with the first combine coming to the island in 1937. At this time farming was also influenced by the military that had come to the area. Fort Casey, located south of Coupeville, elevated the economy by increasing the demand for goods, and by bringing additional supplies to the island. Farmers purchased lumber, slate, and in some instances, entire buildings from the fort. Primary industries of this time included raising turkeys, hogs, and sheep, along with dairying and growing squash. The mild climate and fertile soil of the prairies made an ideal location for growing vegetables, not just for their fruit, but also to harvest seeds.

Farming in the area has always been about diversity: changing crops to suit the market, rotating crops to replenish the land, and adapting techniques to follow new farming innovations. Following World War II, all farming practices were implemented with machines. Ebey's Prairie thrived as a center for crop production. Crockett's Prairie was primarily used for dairying and sheep grazing. And Smith's Prairie, with the least fertile land, adapted away from farming. Its land became a test-landing site for the military, and was also divided into smaller residential lots.

In the late 1970s farming changed in Central Whidbey. Congress established the Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve in 1978 with the intent of preserving and protecting the continuous historical record as seen in the cultural landscape of Central Whidbey Island. It was the first such reserve to be included in the National Park System. Its' goal is "to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time."⁹ The reserve encompasses 17,400 acres of coast, woodlands, uplands, and prairies, including Penn Cove, Coupeville, and surrounding land of Central Whidbey Island; 5,500 acres are agricultural. With most of the land remaining in private ownership, the National Historic Reserve preserves the rural countryside as a dynamic landscape, reflecting the past while serving the present.¹⁰

⁹ Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve website (<http://www.nps.gov/archive/ebla/lpp/lpp1.htm>), accessed April 2007.

¹⁰ Fred Walters, *Historic Structures Report: Gus Reuble Barn* (Coupeville, WA: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve), 1.

Creating the Project

In the summer of 2005, after my first year in the Historic Preservation Master of Science Program at the University of Oregon, I was hired as an Architect Intern by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), a branch of the National Park Service. I was to spend my summer hand-measuring and creating AutoCAD drawings of two historic barns at Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland.

HABS was created as a New Deal Era program designed to, “employ 1,000 out-of-work architects and draftsmen for ten weeks to document ‘America’s antique buildings’ systematically before they vanished.”¹¹ With a cooperative agreement between the Library of Congress, the American Institute of Architects, and the National Park Service, the project was expanded into an on-going program, with the Library of Congress providing an archive (available to the public without copyright restrictions) of the photographs, histories, and drawings created by HABS. In 1969, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) was created as a companion program to HABS; and in 2000 the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) was created.

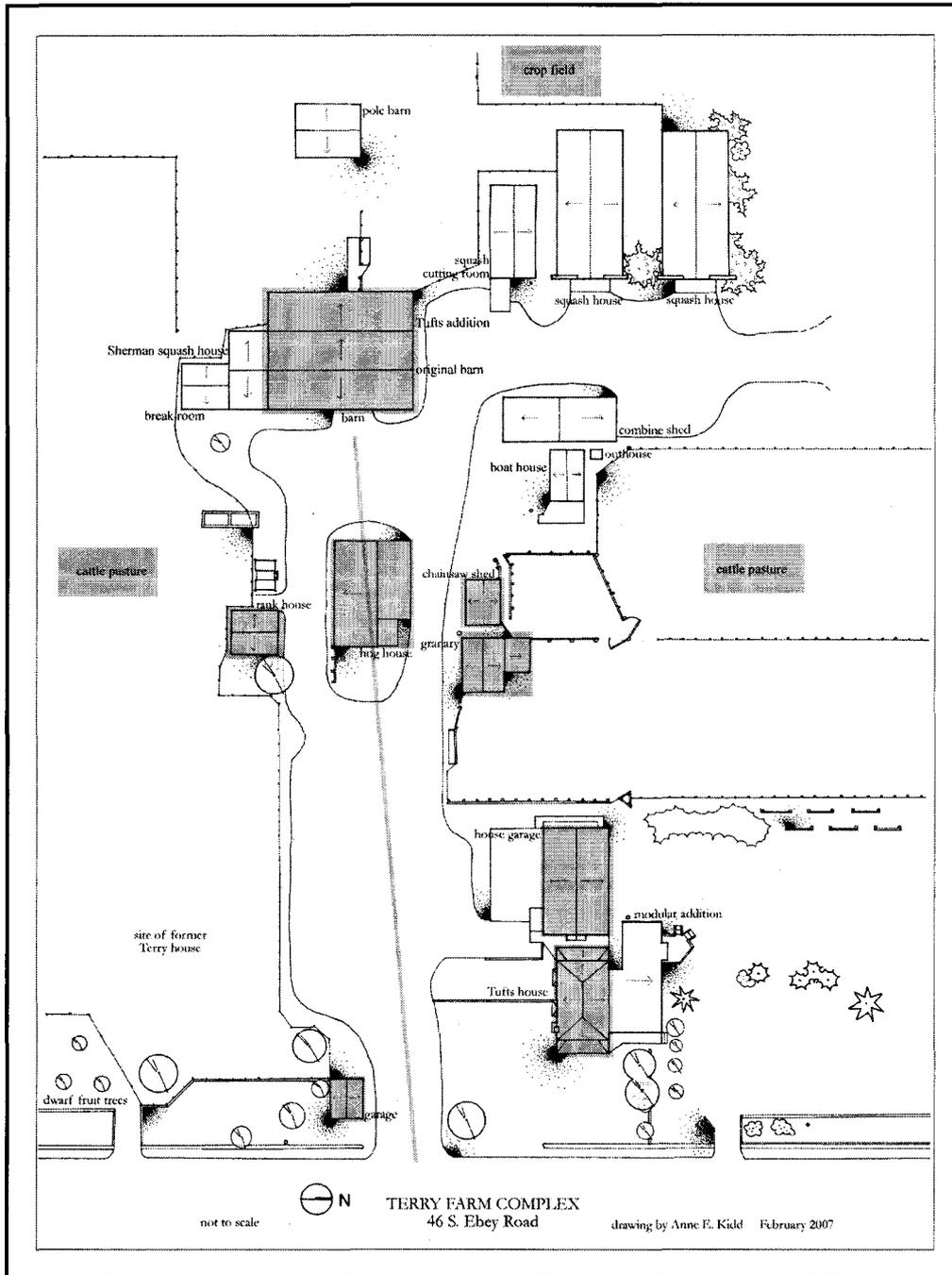
“Today the HABS, HAER, and HALS collections contain records on nearly 40,000 historic sites and structures nationwide, encompassing over 60,000 measured drawings, 250,000 large-format photographs, and untold pages of history. It is one of the most heavily used special collections in the Library of Congress. According to the library, ‘The encyclopedic coverage of American’s built environment, the exceptional clarity of the visual materials, and the general lack of copyright restrictions account for thousands of online catalog searches each month. In more than 35,000 surveys, researchers can discover a comprehensive range of building types, engineering technologies, and landscape features dating from pre-Columbian times to the present day and located throughout the Unites States and its territories.’”¹²

After spending a summer immersed in the HABS documentation standards, I was convinced of its importance to a greater and long-lasting understanding of our designed environment and was determined to put my newly-learned documentation skills to work as a terminal project focus. Through the assistance of Don Peting, Professor Emeritus in Architecture at the University of Oregon, I was connected with the Ebey's Landing Board of Directors. I had a skill; they had a need. A project focusing on barn documentation was the brainchild of Coupeville local, Al Sherman, and former Reserve Manager, Rob Harbour. They insightfully recognized that the preservation effort in the area had yet to focus on the agricultural buildings of Central Whidbey.

The goal of the project was to use photography, drawings, and historical research in an attempt to capture the buildings as they are today, and to explain the history of use that brought them to their current state. The project includes measured floor plan drawings of the barns, hand-sketched site plans, photography, oral interviews with local farmers, and a written history of each property.

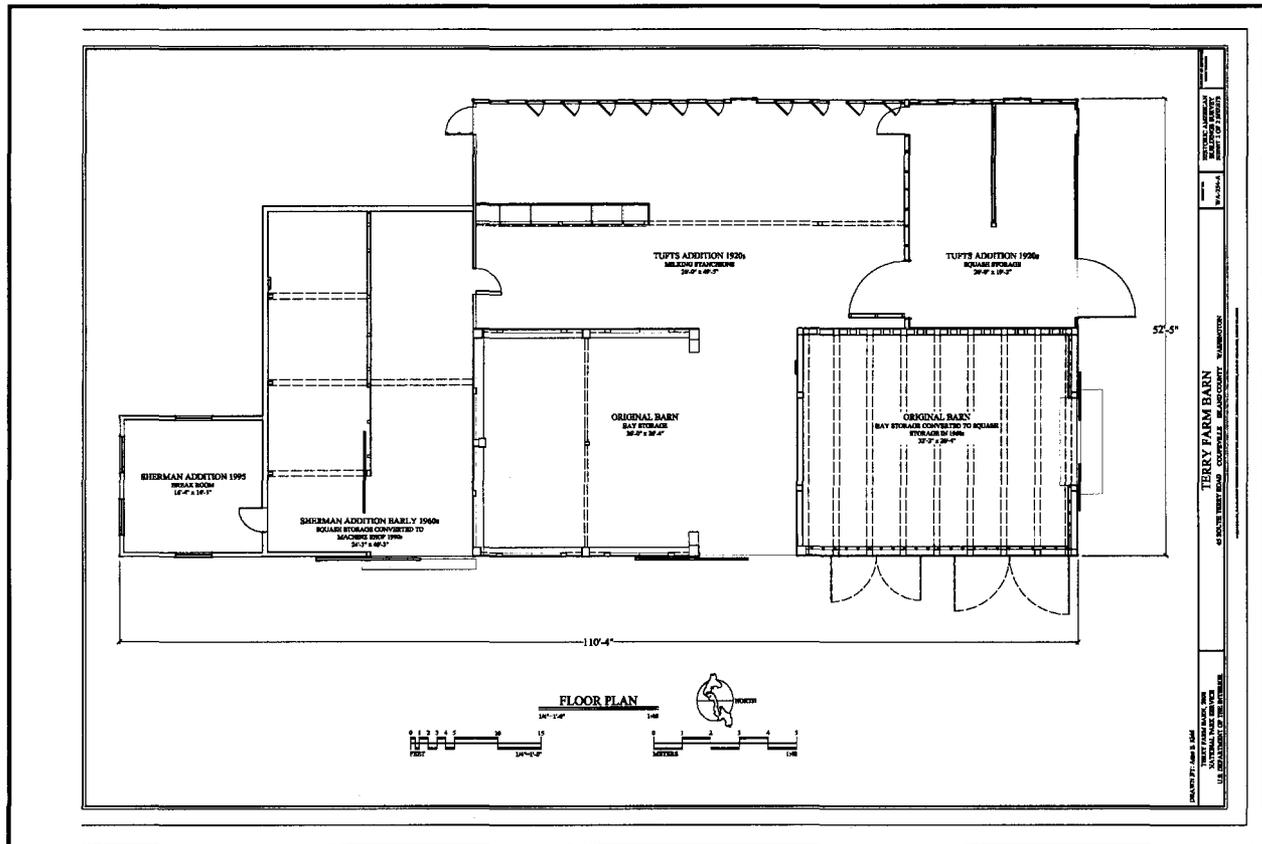
¹¹ Celebrating Research: Rare and Special Collections from the Membership of the Association of Research Libraries website (<http://www.celebratingresearch.org/libraries/loc/buildings.shtml>), accessed December 2008.

¹² Historic American Buildings Survey, *AMERICAN PLACE: The Historic American Buildings Survey at 75 Years* (National Park Service, August 2008), 46.



Project Findings

This project helped to illustrate key patterns of building construction, building arrangement within the farms, building types, farming techniques, and agricultural practices. Farms in Central Whidbey Island have a typical plan consisting of a central drive with farm buildings clustered around it. The Terry farm is an excellent example of this cluster plan. The site is accessed by a central drive that terminates at the barn. Clustered around this drive are the other key elements on the site: the farmhouse with a detached garage, the granary, the pump house, a workshop, and animal sheds with crop fields and pasture land surrounding. This design was intended for easy use of the buildings by both the farmers and their equipment.



The Terry barn maintains the key spaces typically found in local barns. It was originally constructed with a central aisle flanked on either side by loose hay storage. This space is constructed with 14-16" rough-cut posts and beams with pegged mortise and tenon construction joints.

In the 1920s a large addition was added to the west of the barn to provide milking stanchions, animal pens, and later storage space for squash. An addition to the south was added at this time to store the cleaning mill. This construction consisted of stud walls with tongue and groove cladding. The squash storage required extra insulation. To achieve this, walls were added on the interior, providing a gap for sawdust insulation.

In the 1960s the farm began to focus on Hubbard squash. One of the original hay storage spaces was converted into squash storage, and the cleaning mill addition was removed and replaced by additional squash storage. This alteration and addition followed the same wall construction with sawdust insulation. In 1995 a break room was added to the south end of the barn. It was constructed on a post and pier foundation with sheet rocked stud walls.

With one exception, the Engle barn,¹³ the eleven barns included in the project fall into three categories: rough-cut, sawn, and plank. These categories date the barns according to the building techniques available at the time of their construction, even when the exact construction date is unknown.

The construction date of the Boyer Barn is unknown. But its construction type dates it as one of the oldest in the area. The barn has 10-inch square posts of rough-cut lumber. It is constructed with pegged mortise

¹³ A fire in 1954 destroyed a large three-part barn on the Engle property. The barn that stands today is a 1955 addition that was added to the north end of a pre-existing hog barn.

and tenon joints, typical of heavy timber construction. It was originally used to house loose hay with space for animal pens. It's now used to store bailed hay and equipment. The original section of the Terry barn is also of this early construction period. Its posts and beams, which are 14-16" square, were cut before sawmills came into the area. As discussed, this space was also constructed to store loose hay. It was later converted into storage for squash and bailed hay.

The next category, barns made of sawn boards, illustrates a transitional period. These barns still show signs of heavy timber construction, including mortise and tenon joints with pegs, but their members came from saw mills in the area that existed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The Crockett barn is a unique barn type in the area. Constructed as a Pennsylvania Bank Barn, the Crockett barn is embanked on a hill with both the lower and upper floors accessible at ground level. The lower floor's stone foundation walls kept the space cool and protected from the wind, ideal for animal pens. The upstairs space was used for equipment and hay storage. The Le Sourd barn is unique in that it has a central aisle flanked by overhead haylofts. When the Le Sourd dairy expanded, the barn was converted into a loafing shed, but at the time of its construction at the turn of the century, it served as animal pens and equipment storage. The Smith barn's open central space and large sawn members make it very similar to the Kineth barn in construction. Both barns have a hip-on-gable roof, with a central space designed for loose hay storage, and room for animal pens and equipment storage around the perimeter.

In 1908, with the construction of the Ed Jenne barn, construction methods on the island transitioned into a more modern form, one that required standardized plank boards used as roof trusses. The key benefits of the plank system included the need for less building materials and fewer builders, a shortened construction time, the ease of adding additions to the barn, and an open floor plan in the hayloft. In 1918, when the Arnolds constructed their barn, they used a similar plank construction technique. The Arnold barn is also an excellent example of how additions can easily be added to the structure. The barn's lean-to additions allow storage for equipment and machinery. In the 1930s, Ralph Story and Warren Stockton built barns with identical construction techniques for the Sherman and Reuble families. The Reuble barn was used for dairying, which was a popular industry at the time. Its loft was used to store hay, with openings to the space below to allow easy distribution of hay. The Sherman barn was constructed after a fire in 1935. It was later expanded to the north and south to include milking stalls and animal pens. The open floor plan in the hayloft maximizes the available space.

Additional Building Types

By dissecting the agricultural buildings in the area, not just the barns, but the farm complexes as a whole, this project was able to understand the significance and character that still remains at these sites. Although the barns remain the heart of agricultural practices on Central Whidbey, they are supported by the other outbuildings that make up a cluster plan typical in the area.

Granaries were originally built to house sacked or bulk grain, and were typically constructed with tongue and groove flooring to prevent grain from slipping through the cracks in the floor. The granary walls were typically constructed of sub-sheathing and a more formal exterior cladding to make the building air tight. As granary buildings became unnecessary with the advancement of agricultural technology, many granaries in Central Whidbey were adapted to serve new functions on the farm. The Smith family converted their granary into a family home. The Le Sourd granary once held squash and now holds straw bales. And the Arnold granary, now used as storage, is also a unique example of building materials with walls of concrete block.

Pump houses were common in the area, but uncommon across the country. They housed large wood water tanks. Pumps in cisterns or wells brought water to an elevated tank that gravity fed to faucets in the farmhouses and agriculture buildings.

As dairying became a popular industry on the island, there grew a need for milk houses. These small buildings housed freshly pumped milk, and often in later years included a mechanized cooling system. The most unique of these milk houses is on the Engle property. This building is one of only two field stone constructions on all eleven of the properties researched.¹⁴ This is both a significant example of milk houses and of construction materials in the area.

Although most local farms raised poultry for the family, in the mid-twentieth century turkey farming became a popular industry in the area. With the turkeys came brooder houses. These buildings, used to house young turkeys, included heating stoves and sun porches. The Shermans maintained the largest turkey farm on the island thus requiring a significant amount of brooder houses, most of which no longer remain. Whereas, the Arnold farm has a small chicken coop that housed chickens for family consumption.

Additional Research Areas

Like any great research topic, this project grew exponentially as it began to delve deeper into the story of farming in the area. Suddenly a project that set out to document architecture began to tell the story of threshing parties, and the first combine on the island, of raising turkeys, sheep, and dairy cows and growing vetch and oats, cabbage seeds, and squash... and to peel back the layers of development in agriculture that shaped these buildings, the land, and the people that lived in Central Whidbey Island.

Particular aspects of the area's history struck my interest, and it was with great self control only that I was able to prevent myself from adding onto my already daunting scope of work. These areas of interest, needing further research, include: telephone service arriving in the area and the documentation of the operator's house at the intersection of North Main and Northwest Coveland Streets in Coupeville, women's role on the farm, an inventory and documentation of H.B. Lovejoy's Queen Anne style houses, an illustrated explanation of the route taken by early settlers from the east coast to Whidbey Island, Aloha Farm, the Engle's bulb-growing industry in the mid-twentieth century, and a history of local mid-wife, Nettie King, and early photographer, Perry Grove.

Understanding the Documentation

The following pages are produced using HABS standards for written histories, photography, and measured drawings. The standards were created to both provide accountability for the documentation (through cited sources, original negatives, and field notes) and standardization in presentation (through the history's outline format, sizes of negatives and prints, and specific borders, paper sizes, and line weights used in the drawings). HABS assigns a state and number combination to each property that is submitted to the collection. For the farm complexes documented in this project, the buildings featured in the measured drawings, written historical and descriptive data, or large format photography were given an additional letter to distinguish them from the group. For example, the Terry farm is HABS No. WA-254, and the Terry barn is WA-254-A. However, because the Terry farm was not photographed with large format photography, no other building on the property was distinguished from the group with an additional letter.

The scope of work for each property was not consistent. The work load was determined based on each barn's perceived significance and the perceived integrity of the complex as a whole. No site plans were drawn for the Boyer and Crockett farms because their complexes were too altered to read as cohesive wholes. The Terry, Le Sourd, Reuble, and Sherman farms were not photographed using the large format camera. This was a product of Alvin Sherman's modesty in regards to the significance of these buildings (the Terry, Le Sourd, and Sherman farms are owned by various branches of the Sherman family), and an understanding that the Reuble farm was extensively documented by the National Park Service just a few years prior to this project. As part of the National Park Service documentation, the barn was measured and drawn by Fred Walters.

¹⁴ The other is the extensive foundation walls of the Walter Crockett barn, at 1056 South Fort Casey Road.

The following properties are arranged chronologically by barn construction date and remain in HABS standard formatting. Because the properties share a common early history, the beginning of all eleven Historical Context Statements is identical.