

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Owen--Gay Farm
other names/site number CK-204 (Main House); BB-362 (Log Building, aka: Glocca Morra School)

2. Location

street & number Gay Road not for publication NA
city or town Winchester vicinity X
state Kentucky code KY county Clark & Bourbon code 049 & 017 zip code 40391

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: private public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property building(s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u> buildings	<u>1</u> sites
<u>1</u> sites	<u>9</u> structures
<u>9</u> structures	<u>0</u> objects
<u>12</u> Total	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: processing, storage, agricultural field, animal facility
DOMESTIC single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: storage, agricultural field, animal facility
VACANT/NOT IN USE

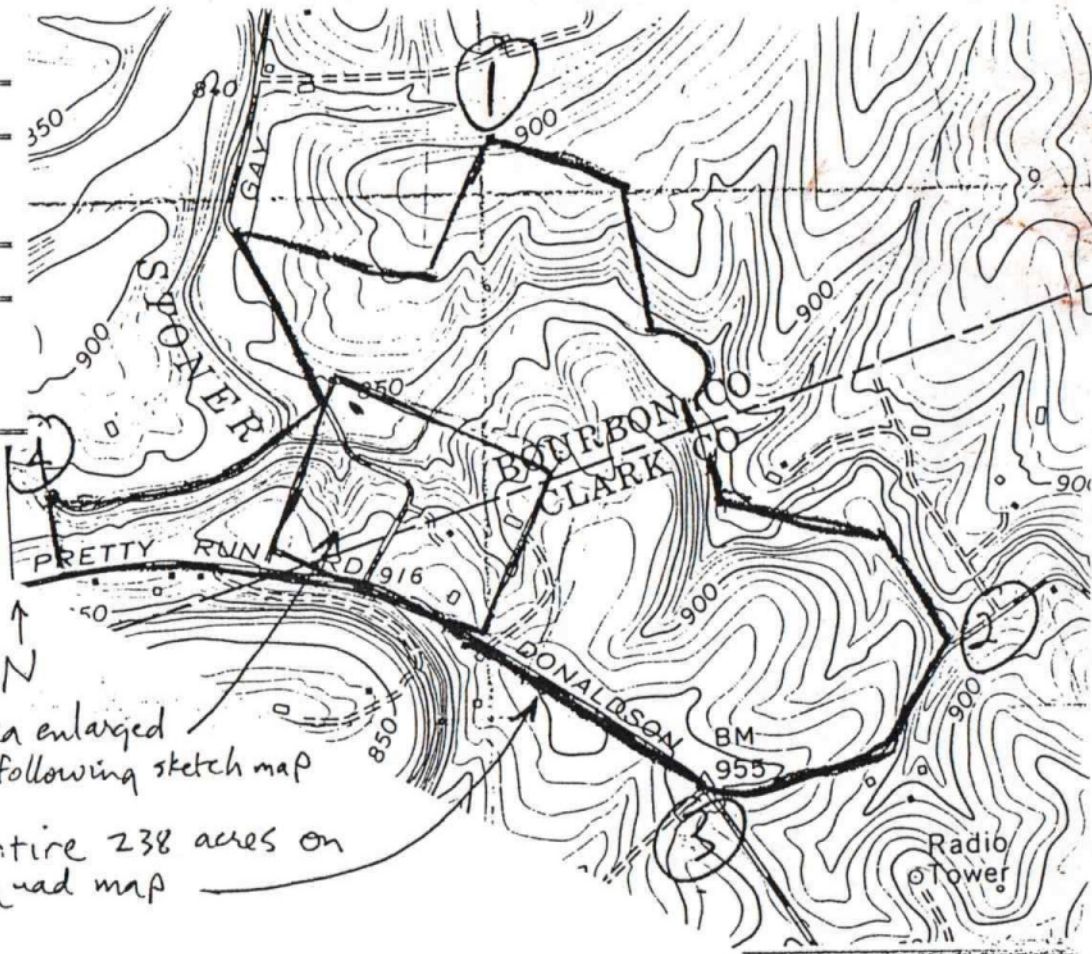
7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Cut stone roof: Metal walls: Brick
other:



Verbal Boundary Description

The property proposed for listing includes 238 acres. This consists of 119 acres in Clark County, designated as Parcel 7 on Clark County Property Valuation Assessor Map 72, and an adjoining unnumbered parcel on map 85. The remaining 119 acres are designated as Parcel 31 on Bourbon County Property Valuation Assessor Map 40. Note: At the time of this nomination Bourbon County PVA Office was switching maps. After 1997 the Bourbon County portion of listed area will have a new designation by that PVA Office. The PVA will retain the old maps to allow users to find properties identified by the old number system.

Boundary Justification

The area proposed for listing in the National Register corresponds with the historical acreage of the farm since its ownership by the Gay family beginning in 1897. This area is within the larger area owned and farmed by the earlier owners, the Owen family, during most of the nineteenth century. The acreage includes historic homes, farm buildings, and acreage which together form a significant historic resources depicting many important aspects of local agriculture. See the Statement of Significance for a discussion of that significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Martin Perry/National Register Coordinator
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city or town Frankfort state KY zip code 40601

8. Statement of Significance

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave. N/A
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions): AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance 1825-1945

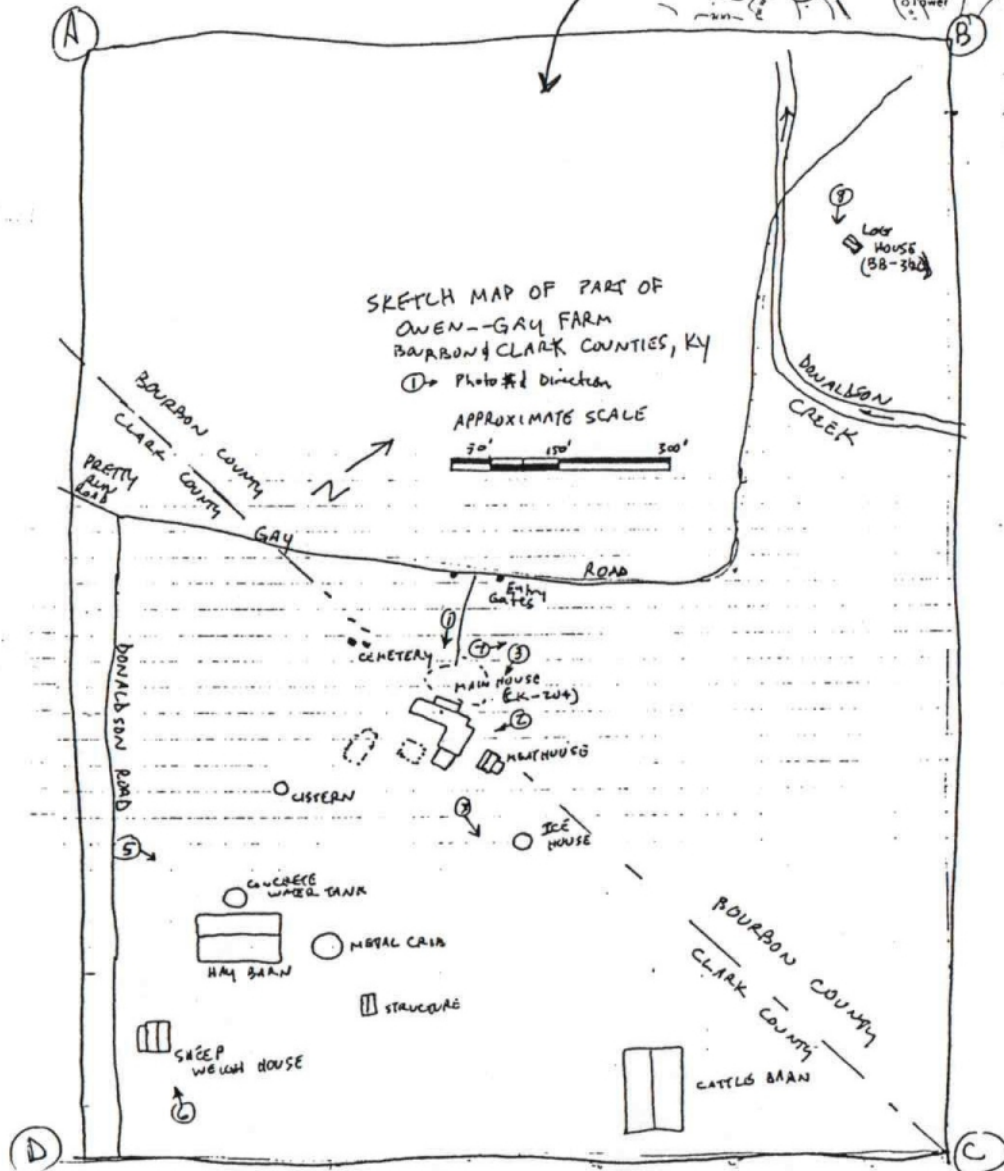
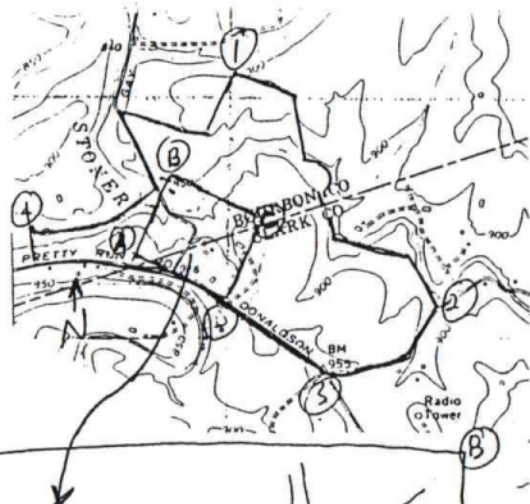
Significant Dates 1825, 1839, 1897

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): NA

Cultural Affiliation NA

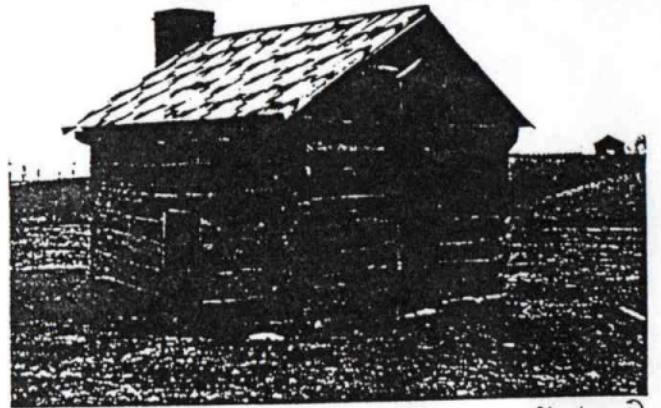
Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets.



Main House (CK-20A)

Photo 1



Log House (BB-382)

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Section 8 Page 1

Name of Property: Owen--Gay Farm
Ky Historic Inventory Number : CK-204
Location: Clark & Bourbon Counties. KY

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Owen--Gay Farm (CK-204) meets National Register Criterion A and is significant within the historic context "Bourbon and Clark County Agriculture, 1800-1945." This historic context refines views forwarded by the Bluegrass Cultural Landscape Study, an element of the State Plan that discusses historic resources within Kentucky's central region. The Owen--Gay Farm straddles Clark and Bourbon, two key Bluegrass counties rich in agricultural history. Through much of the nineteenth century, the Owen--Gay Farm falls within the orbit of Paris, seat of Bourbon County, as do many of the farms in northern Clark County. The siting of the farm along an important Bourbon County drainage, Stoner Creek, and the construction of the house in 1825, with an expansion in 1840, are the most significant resources that illustrate the antebellum identity of the Owen--Gay Farm. When the Gay Family become owners in the later nineteenth century, their role in cattle marketing from the County seat, Winchester, shifts the farm's identity more to Clark County. Today the property's many agricultural out buildings allow the Owen--Gay Farm to be seen as a prosperous late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century operation.

Historic Context: Bourbon and Clark County Agriculture, 1800-1945

Research Design

Several sources were consulted to learn what is known about Bourbon and Clark Counties' nineteenth and early twentieth century agricultural history, the historical context in which to evaluate the agricultural significance of the Owen--Gay Farm. Initial sources consulted included the Kentucky Heritage Council's Inventory of Historic Sites and theme files, Amos' Bluegrass Cultural Landscape study, files in the Kentucky Historical Society, and published histories of the county. As is the case throughout many of the Commonwealth's counties, agriculture as a theme or pattern of activity has been overshadowed by other more urban historic themes.

Useful works include Thomas D. Clark's *Clark County, Kentucky, A History* (1996) and Clotfelter's Master's Thesis on Bourbon County's agricultural history (1953). County tax rolls provided important comparative data for Bourbon County farmers from 1820-1840. U.S. Census reports from 1850-1880 provide an important overview of Bourbon and Clark County's agrarian character in the late nineteenth century. Finally, statistics compiled by the State's Department of Agriculture beginning in 1909 also provide quick uniform data, county by county, for the early twentieth century.

The research program sought to identify typical patterns of farming in both counties during the years when the Owen--Gay Farm's buildings were constructed, i.e., beginning in 1825 and continuing through the first half of the twentieth century. Building construction is taken as a useful indicator of that farm's activity patterns, because such construction requires a commitment of highly valued resources, particularly money and space. By looking at the subject farm's evolution, as depicted by its buildings and production records, and comparing that farm's activity with farming patterns in the county overall, more valid interpretation of the subject farm is possible.

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Thus, the research for this nomination sought to gauge the ability of the Owen--Gay farm to illustrate relevant periods of Bourbon and Clark County's agricultural history.

Bourbon County Agriculture: 1825-1850.

This period was selected to encompass the two major building campaigns of the Owen family's primary residence. The Owens upgraded their living situation in 1825, from a primitive log house to a frame dwelling on high ground overlooking Donaldson Creek, and again in 1840, when they added the impressive brick dwelling in the Greek Revival style in front of the frame structure. It is worth considering that these events represent high water marks for not just the Owen family, but a general prosperity for county farmers. During these years, Bourbon County, along with Fayette County (county seat: Lexington), emerged as the leading agricultural counties in the inner Bluegrass, which itself emerged as the primary farming region of Kentucky in the years leading up to the Civil War.

County tax records for the period 1825-1850 allow a comparison between the Owen farm and other farms in Bourbon County. This source provides perhaps the best insight into the character of farms before 1850, when the U.S. Census for Agriculture began publishing statistics by county. These records enable us to recognize the Owen Farm among Bourbon County's more productive and successful farms

A sampling approach was used to gain a view of Bourbon County's agricultural status during the important early years of the Owen Farm. County tax data from 1827 and 1836, for all farms, were tabulated in an effort to establish a context within which to judge the Owen Farm's representativeness. The first year, 1827 was selected because the Owen farm reached 500 acres, where it remained for several years. The second year, 1836, was an important year for the Owens, when their farm's assessed value almost doubled, and continued at those high levels for the next four years.

County tax records contained approximately 2184 entries in 1827 (78 pages, an average of 28 entries per page) and 2025 entries in 1836 (75 pages; 27 entries/page). Of course, not each entry represents a farm, but all farms in the county appear among the entries. Factors such as large acreage, large numbers of slaves and animals, and high assessed values, together signify a farm in the records. While the precise number of farms in Bourbon County during these years was not found, the number probably approached 1000 farms. Conclusions are based on the following data:

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	Number of farms according to acreage per farm		Number of farms according to assessed value of cattle per farm				
	500-1000	>1000	\$60-99	\$100-499	\$500-999	\$1000-1999	>\$2000
1827	29	7					
1836	36	9	33	86	38	22	18

	Number of farms according to # of slaves per farm			Number of farms of a given assessed value			
	13-19	20-39	>40	\$10,000-19,999	\$20,000-29,999	\$30,000-39,999	>\$40,000
1827	66	22	3	65	10	4	3
1836	49	16	2	Not calculated	33	17	14

Note: values above which have been bolded represent the range in which the Owen Farm is found. A table appears below with detailed information on the Owen Farm derived from tax records for nearly all years, 1825-1850.

These statistics point to an extremely healthy farm economy in Bourbon County during 1825-1850. The number of larger farms increased during the short, nine-year, sample period, from 36 in 1827 to 45 in 1836. Assessed values inflated tremendously during that time; some of that undoubtedly reflects an actual increase in farm production. It seems astounding that in 1827 only 17 farms had an assessed value of \$20,000 or more, and that by 1836 county officials valued at least 64 farms that highly. Curiously, the numbers of slaves goes down during this period, suggesting the possibility that the increased productivity on these farms which led to their higher assessments, may have been accomplished with labor-saving devices more so than through a heightened dependence upon human labor.

While we cannot observe a change in cattle production during the nine-year sample period, it is clear that Bourbon stood as one of the state's early leaders in cattle production (Clotfelter: xxx). At least 78 farms were assessed in 1836 with at least \$500 worth of cattle. Three farmers had assessed values of over \$3000 for their cattle. Of those, Henry Towles owned the county's second most highly assessed farm, at \$72,170, whose 1626 acres held cattle assessed at \$4100.

Translating these assessed values to number of cattle is difficult. The value assessed upon a single farm's cattle varied from farm to farm. The 1837 assessment for the Owen farm averaged \$20/head, while on the same tax page other farms were assessed for as little as \$10/head. This variation in value on cattle may indicate a system of classifying cattle into different grades and higher assessments for better grades. The tax office had already established a three-tiered assessment for land (first rate, second rate, and third rate) from the earliest days of the nineteenth century, and perhaps followed suit with assessments for cattle. Using the higher value, \$20/head, we see a significant number of county farmers (78) with herds of 25-200 head. During good years, the Owen family ran 50-65 cattle on their 500 acres. Undoubtedly, a good portion of their acreage would have been devoted to growing corn and hay, to feed these animals. The household also would have consumed corn, having ground it at one of the numerous mills nearby on Stoner Creek.

The 1850 federal census confirms what the county tax records suggest, that Bourbon

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County land appreciated in value as much as any in the Commonwealth. Its farms had the second highest total value for any county in the state and third in the number of improved acres:

Kentucky Counties with Highest Farm Values and Greatest Amount of Improved Acreage, from 1850 Census

County	Value of All Farms	County	Acres Improved	Acres
<u>unimproved</u>				
Jefferson	\$17,253,897	Madison	224,377	61,232
Bourbon	15,945,373	Shelby	164,879	61,359
Fayette	15,234,119	Bourbon	155,304	37,549
Shelby	10,023,460	Jefferson	152,494	52,128
Madison	8,981,032	Christian	140,349	155,250

The tax tables reveal that same increase in value for the Owen Farm over time. Those statistics allow us to infer with reasonable certainty a number of other things about the farm. From their earliest days, the family enjoyed increased prosperity. The way that the Owens made use of their resources reflects trends in the Bluegrass overall. The family acquired more resources (land, slaves, animals) as needed, carefully putting newly-acquired resources to work to generate greater profits. Their careful farm management was rewarded in increased value for their land. It held a value of about \$15 per acre though the 1820s, and increased to double that by the late 1830s.

Year	Name	Acreage	# Mire males	# Blacks >16	Total # Blacks	Total value	# Horses	Total value	# Cattle	Total value	Value/acre	Value of Land	Total Value
1814	Owen, Thomas	340	1	2	3	9		\$ 9					\$ 4,430
1817	Owen, Thomas	340	1	2	6	9		15					7,650
1818	Owen, Thomas	440	1	4	7	8		15					10,050
1819	Owings, Robert	520*	1	6	8	10		15					11,750
1821	Owen, Robert	---	1	5	8	14		15					---
1822	Owen, Robert	520	1	6	10	13		16					12,060
1823	Owen, Robert	340	1	6	11	10		11					12,550
1824	Owen, Robert	528	1	6	11	12		15					12,750
1825	Owen, Robert	449	1	7	15	15		27					23,103
1826	Owen, Robert	450	1	6	12	16		15					10,150
1827	Owen, Robert	500	1	5	15	18		15					10,700
1828	Owen, Robert	500	2	5	15	24		15					11,740
1829	Owen, Robert	500	1	4	14	20		15					11,100
1830	Owen, Robert	500	2	4	13	25		16					12,200
1832	Owen, Robert	500	1	4	13	25		18					13,000
1835	Owen, Robert	500	1	5	12	23	65	18					13,775
1836	Owen, Robert	500	1	4	12	20	-- (1690)	25					19,340
1837	Owen, Robt & Son	500	2	4	12 (3700)	14 (700)	60 (1200)	30	15,000				22,000
1838	Owen, Robt & Son	500	2	4	12 (5800)	16 (960)	60 (850)	30					22,210
1839	Owen, Robt & Son	500	2	5	11 (5050)	12 (480)	30 (382)	40	20,000				25,912
1840	Owen, Robt & Son	450	2	4	10 (5000)	12 (480)	65 (1325)		18,000				24,805

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1842	Owen, Robt & Son	450	2	4	10 (3550)	10 (300)	40 (360)	13,500	17,710
1843	Owen, George Wash.	450	1	5	10 (2500)	10 (200)	40 (269)	8,000	11,069
1844	Owen, G.W.	564	1	5	12 (3400)	20 (400)	63 (450)	14,100	18,850
1848	Owen, G.W.	670	1	8	12 (5200)	10 (330)	58 (736)	24,000	30,341

*Even with the inconsistent spelling of the last name, this surely is the same person whose entries appear in subsequent years as "Robert Owen." Of the 520 acres indicated here, 150 acres are listed as being in Clark County, identifying it further with the nominated property.

Concerning the house, these data reinforce the dates of construction. Oral tradition has held two key dates of construction for the home, 1825 for the frame portion and 1840 for the much larger brick Greek Revival addition. The tax assessments show two substantial increases in the property's value, in 1825 and in 1839. Because the jump in 1825 is so large, it seems reasonable that additional extant features, such as the meathouse and icehouse, could have been built at that time to serve the new residential site. Further features which are not evident above ground today, such as slave houses, enclosures and barns for animals, and other work buildings, all may have been added to support the farm, as well.

The family's landholdings fluctuated some in the early 1820s, stabilizing at about 450-500 acres after 1824 for two decades. The Owens made land acquisition an early priority, because with the fertile Bluegrass land the envy of all farmers, pressures upon land were felt as early as the 1820s in the Bluegrass. By that time, nearly all prime land had been claimed, surveyed, and purchased. The Owens amassed sufficient acreage by 1824 to undertake a substantial operation.

Slaves, horses, and oxen performed much of the hard labor on the farm. The Owens owned a considerable number of slaves. After 1818 the family retained at least 4 adult slaves to assist with farming and domestic needs. By 1822 the Owens owned no fewer than 10 slaves, reaching a peak of 15 in 1825, the year the house was constructed. While a few farmers owned more than 50 slaves (55 by William Alexander in 1827), the Owens held a relatively high number among all Bourbon County farms.

Following the rise in the number of slaves in the middle 1820s, the Owens began to increase the number of horses on their farm in the later 1820s. Together, slave and horse cultivated and harvested crops. After 1828, the number of slaves on the farm declined somewhat, even though the number of horses continued to rise until it leveled in the mid-1830s. Perhaps the family shifted to a type of farming or to farming methods which required less human labor, or through the use of labor-saving implements such as better metal plows.

On whatever category Bourbon County farms are classified, many farms exceeded the Owen farm. However, it stood among the top 10% of farms in nearly all categories in one of the Commonwealth's richest agricultural counties.

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Bourbon and Clark County Agriculture, 1860-1899

U.S. Agricultural Census records after 1850 become increasingly detailed over time, yielding a clear view of Bourbon and Clark County's agriculture. These two, along with seven other Bluegrass counties, shared a number of characteristics which made them a remarkably distinct agricultural region in Kentucky. This group, comprised of Fayette and surrounding counties of Bourbon, Clark, Jessamine, Madison, Scott, and Woodford, along with outlying counties Harrison and Shelby, led the state in numerous categories of agricultural output and property value during this time. Thomas Clark cites the decade ending at 1860 as the golden age of Clark County farming (Clark: 115), which could be said about most of these Bluegrass counties. A number of important data from the 1860 national census help define this area and illustrate the great dominance of the Bluegrass region's farming on the eve of the Civil War.

1860 U.S. CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, SELECTED DATA FOR BLUEGRASS FARMS

County	Farm Size (in acres)		Unimproved Acreage in Co.	Cash Value of All County Farms	LIVESTOCK		
	500-1000	>1000			Horses	Mules	Cattle
Bourbon	79 (1)	11 (3)	---	\$13,036,389 (2)	7397 (5)	8984 (1)	17875 (2)
Clark	52 (5)	9 (4)	---	6,589,038 (9)	6910 (6)	4333 (3)	16125 (4)
Fayette	63 (3)	12 (2)	1,693 (3)	13,431,717 (1)	8155 (2)	4289 (4)	16768 (3)
Harrison	25	3	39,681	5,632,940	7925 (4)	2627	11465
Jessamine	14	1	38,499	5,297,860	4865	1434	7896
Madison	60 (4)	15 (1)	95,211	7,346,990 (6)	9454 (1)	5496 (2)	17946 (1)
Scott	44 (6)	6	3,039 (4)	6,793,203 (7)	6170	3441	11733
Shelby	66 (2)	9 (4)	29,074 (8)	9,831,836 (4)	8103 (3)	2085	15906
Woodford	22	6	7,895 (5)	6,642,240 (8)	5415	2043	8910
KY MEAN	9.8	1.5	105,679	2,674,284	3263	1079	7670

(Number in Parenthesis indicates rank among all Kentucky Counties)

1860 U.S. CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, SELECTED DATA FOR BLUEGRASS FARMS

County	Sheep	LIVESTOCK Total Value	PRODUCE			
			Rye (Bushels)	Corn (Bushels)	Oats (Bushels)	Wool (Pounds)
Bourbon	16,639 (6)	\$2,390,873 (1)	20,234	1,364,285 (3)	183,129 (3)	78,986 (1)
Clark	14,084 (16)	1,692,938 (4)	32,548 (6)	1,056,206 (15)	136,610 (8)	53,246 (7)
Fayette	15,180	1,819,237 (3)	25,125	1,544,920 (2)	208,060 (1)	75,551 (2)
Harrison	15,506	1,207,032 (7)	13,561	1,181,368 (5)	137,151 (6)	50,228
Jessamine	7,---8	156,519	1,524	228,714	18,364	9,303
Madison	14,886	1,938,858 (2)	63,445 (2)	1,354,705 (4)	156,545 (4)	54,225 (6)
Scott	12,529	1,339,454 (6)	12,992	1,106,195 (12)	191,821 (2)	55,701 (4)
Shelby	21,262 (2)	1,465,012 (5)	82,999 (1)	1,622,710 (1)	145,785 (5)	69,008 (3)
Woodford	11,815	1,058,522	15,441	758,065	114,970	48,014
KY MEAN	8,614	\$ 567,599	9,681	587,556	42,358	21,368

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These figures reinforce the image of Bourbon County farms conveyed by county tax records prior to 1850, and adds new information about the kinds of activity on those prolific farms. Farms in both Bourbon and Clark Counties, as well as in the seven other Bluegrass Counties identified here, shared similar characteristics. These counties contained farms that were more valuable than others in the state, had a greater numbers of, and more valuable livestock, and received impressive yields of grain, particularly rye, corn, and oats. These similarities indicate not only the rich agricultural possibility of this fertile region, but an equally strong communication network among the area's farmers.

The Owen--Gay Farm fits much of the Bluegrass farm profile derived from these measures. It was a farm of between 500-1000 acres, had significant numbers of horses and cattle when compared with other Bourbon County farms, was a valuable farm in a county and in a region full of valuable farms. The 1860 census introduces sheep as an important livestock type in both Clark and Bourbon Counties. Sheep became an important part of the Owen--Gay farm, and that presence is signaled by the sheep scale house constructed around the turn of the twentieth century.

Only in tobacco did the Bluegrass region *fail* to dominate the state in an important farming category as late as 1880. Bourbon and Clark Counties devoted only 19 and 38 acres respectively to tobacco cultivation in 1879 (p. 6, "Tobacco Production in the United States," 1880 U.S. Census). Western Kentucky counties such as Graves, Christian, Logan, Todd, and Trigg, and Ohio River Counties such as McCracken, Daviess, and Henderson, produced a dark tobacco crop that enabled Kentucky to rise as a *national* leader in dark tobacco production beginning with the 1870 census, after having trailed only Virginia in production among states during the 1850 and 1860 censuses (1900 Census: Acreage, Production, Value of Tobacco).

Many important events occurred between 1860 and 1880 that allowed counties throughout the Commonwealth to rival the Bluegrass' dominance of the state's agriculture by more than just tobacco. No event could have had as much impact as did the farmers' loss of free labor with the end of slavery. Coupled with that, the Bluegrass counties had improved their acreage early, while other counties had vast acres of untapped land to put into production during the 1860s and 1870s, when many of those counties also began to receive railroad service. In 1880, the nine Bluegrass counties still led in many of the categories that they dominated in 1860, but counties elsewhere in the state had made great progress in developing their agricultural potential.

While the Bluegrass counties still led in many livestock categories, they began to de-emphasize others. For instance, Bourbon and Clark County reduced the overall numbers of horses and mules between 1860-1880, with Clark County falling from 6th to 37th place in number of horses and from 3rd to 42nd in number of mules. During much of the 1870s the Owen Farm had only two mules and fewer than 10 horses. County farmers may simply have shifted attention from types of farming which demanded horse labor, e.g., row crops, to concentrate on raising beef cattle, in which Clark led all counties, and was followed by Madison and Bourbon Counties.

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Location: Clark & Bourbon Counties, KY

County tax records suggest challenges for the Owen family farm in the 1870s which paralleled the struggles among other Clark County farms. George Washington Owen, who took over ownership of the farm from his father, Robert, in 1856, changed the size of the farm, according to assessment records. The farm's acreage fluctuated from a high of 600 acres in 1871 and 1872, to 275 acres in 1878. The number of cattle also declined over time, going from a high 45 head in 1870 to just 10 in 1878. Apparently, the farm underwent some belt-tightening, but other factors within the tax rolls paint a more positive picture.

Those records reveal signs of the farm's health via data not collected earlier, i.e., for crop production and assets. For instance, the farm seems to have increased its production of pigs, reporting 15 in 1878. The farm annually produced between 1000-1500 bushels of corn, several hundred bushels of wheat, and 8,000-16,000 pounds of hay. On a more personal note, the family reported anywhere from \$25-250 of precious metal goods such as gold watches, a piano valued at \$100, and a passenger buggy. The farm must have had many head of sheep, as shown by a grizzly category, Number of Sheep Killed by Dogs, which the Owens reported from 5-15 annually!

Bourbon and Clark County farmers sought ways to retain their leadership status. Thomas Clark identifies two crops, burley tobacco and bluegrass seed, which would become important to Clark County, and to the region, as well, after 1880 (Clark: 111). As early as 1880, seed production had already shown promise as a cash crop, where Clark County produced the state's 2nd largest yield, 8625 bushels, and Bourbon was 7th with 4242 bushels (U.S. Census). Unfortunately, the tax records did not report the value assessed on these crops. Likewise, the production of industrial hemp remained obscure in the tax assessments, though Clark County farmers were reported to be selling \$200,000 of it annually in the 1870s. While no signs of hemp production on the farm were recognized, the possibility of its cultivation is raised by a mention of one member of the Gay family operating a successful hemp and grain warehouse in 1870s Winchester (Beers and Lanagan: 6-10).

Ownership of the farm transferred from the Owens family near the end of the century. On October 16, 1897, William Gay and his wife paid the George W. Owens heirs \$10,654 for a tract of 238 acres straddling Bourbon and Clark Counties (Bourbon County Deedbook 78, p. 314). That is the area proposed for listing by this nomination.

Bourbon and Clark County Agriculture, 1900-1945

Except for the crisis of the Great Depression, farming remained a vital and profitable enterprise in Bourbon and Clark Counties during the first half of the twentieth century. Through the period the number of farms in each county ranged between 1500-1800. Both counties still had a relatively large number of farms greater than 500 acres in size, and the numbers of farms of this size remains high even today. In fact, there has been growth in Bourbon County since the middle 1980s in farms of 1000-2000 acres. The current pressure on farming has resulted in the number of farms in each county to shrink, to around 1000.

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The Owen--Gay farm strongly reflects the ownership of the Gay family today in its retention of the 238 acres, in the many farm outbuildings erected during their tenure, and the absence of late-twentieth century outbuildings to obscure the historic configuration of the farm. The strong bias toward cattle raising, initiated by the Owens, was maintained by the Gay family, and continues by its current owners, the Hodgkins, who are descendants of the Gays.

The farm exhibits patterns which would be found in an in-field survey of historic Clark and Bourbon County farms. The farm raised livestock and grew grains and hay to support those activities. Cattle continued as a staple of the local agricultural economy in both counties. Two large barns were erected late in the 19th century or early in the twentieth century, to serve livestock operations. Their interiors are more open than would be a comparably-sized dairy barn, allowing cattle and sheep to occupy space when needed, but not requiring confinement to stalls or stantions. In each county, cattle populations ranged from a low of 12,000 to more than 20,000, which is similar to numbers in the later-nineteenth century (Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service).

Sheep are a livestock class that remained on the farm at least until the 1950s (Conversation with Hodgkin) and was historically part of the farm and of local agricultural patterns. Probably because sheep no longer constitute an important part of Kentucky's farming activity, that livestock group is not enumerated by the state's Agricultural Statistics Service in their county overviews. Despite this removal from the written record, the sheep weigh house on the Owen--Gay farm is an unusual structure, and remains to instruct about an important part of local farming past.

One aspect of the farm, the *absence* of tobacco-related structures, may help define very local agricultural patterns. While farming in Clark and Bourbon Counties historically paralleled each other in so many ways, and both are near the center of the highly productive Burley tobacco growing area of the state, they curiously depart from each other today in tobacco culture. Bourbon County ranked 2nd in the state in Burley tobacco production in 1994, but Clark ranked only 25th, the most recent statistics available. One way to consider this difference may relate to the historical ownership of the Owen--Gay farm and to its shift in identity as a *Clark County* farm. The Gays, and the Hodgkins after them, were important members of the Clark County livestock exchange in Winchester, and may have seen their primary pursuit as the raising of animals. Their decision *not* to build a tobacco barn was conscious, because so many of their neighbors to the north, in Bourbon County, probably were erecting such structures to house their lucrative harvest. That decision may bespeak a traditionalism, a desire to do what is familiar and what can be done well, which sits at the center of our view of farming and which gives it a rich appeal.

Main House
photo (2)



Ice house ruins with rattle barn in distance (4)



Looking down to Donaldson Creek (7)



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Name of Property: Owen--Gay Farm
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DESCRIPTION

The Owen--Gay Farm (CK-204) lies on either side of the Clark and Bourbon County border in Kentucky's inner bluegrass region, an area of rich agricultural land and tradition. The farm's first owners, the Owens, began during the second decade of the nineteenth century to assemble the acreage which would become their farm. By the 1820s, when they had accumulated 500 acres, the farm had become one of the area's many larger stock farms. The Owens sold the farm to the Gay family in 1897, who purchased 238 acres. The Gays erected structures that supported their early twentieth century livestock venture, thus maintaining the historic use of the farm. The farm house today is being rehabilitated by the owners, descendants of the Gay family, while beef cattle raising operations continue. The area proposed for listing in the National Register includes that 238 acres, which consists in 1 contributing site, 9 contributing structures, and 2 contributing buildings.

The Owen--Gay Farm lies along Stoner Creek, the principal drainage of the two counties it straddles, a waterway flowing into the Licking River in northern Bourbon County. Through much of the nineteenth century, Licking and Stoner served as transportation corridors for flatboats. One of Stoner's many tributaries, Donaldson Creek, skirts the farm along its eastern border, flowing in a northerly direction into Stoner. The lowest portion of the farm lies along Donaldson, at 830 feet; the farm rises from the creek, westerly and southward, to 955 feet, at an open field marking the property's southern-most point. Three roads converge near the property's northwest corner: Gay, Pretty Run, and Donaldson Roads.

The arrangement of features on the farm is rather loose. There is a domestic complex, which historically was much more compact with a dense arrangement of outbuildings. That compactness is less evident due to the removal of many of those structures, with perhaps as many as 12 having been removed (Conversation with Hodgkin). The scattering of historic farm buildings seems to have survived to a much higher degree than have the domestic ones. It does not appear that the farm's owners placed any structures there after 1945, so the farm retains a great deal of its character from the historic periods.

LIST OF FEATURES

1. Agricultural acreage, fences, cemetery, farm's residential area: contributing site
2. House (1825-1840): contributing building
3. Log house (ca. 1817): contributing building. Designated BB-362 and known as Glocca Morra School in the Kentucky Heritage Council's Historic Sites Inventory
4. Meathouse (ca. 1825): contributing structure
5. Ice House ruins (ca. 1825): contributing structure
6. Cistern (1915-1920): contributing structure
7. Concrete Water tank (ca. 1945): contributing structure
8. Hay Barn (ca. 1900): contributing structure
9. Metal crib (1930-1940): contributing structure
10. Undefined structure (ca. 1900): contributing structure



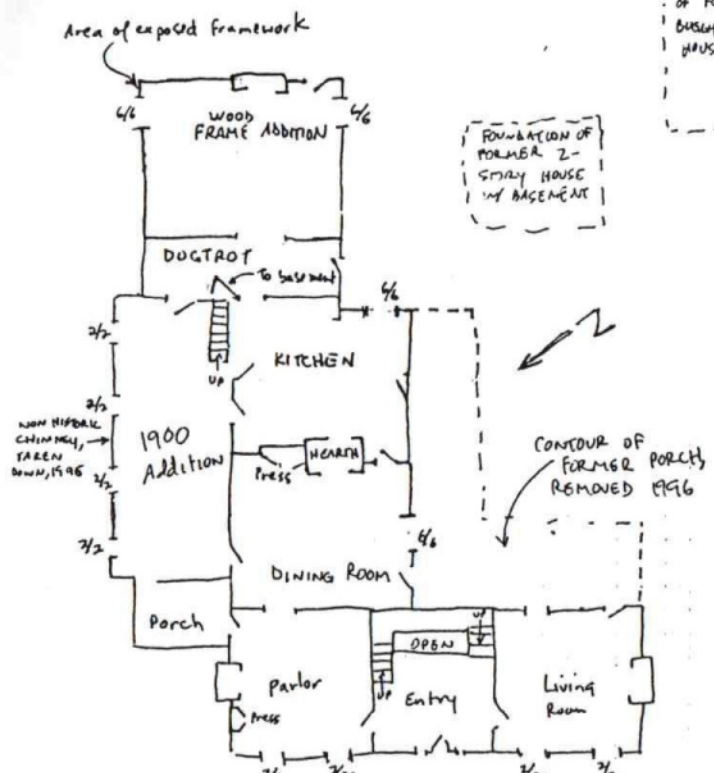
Sheep weigh house & will Hodgkin (b)



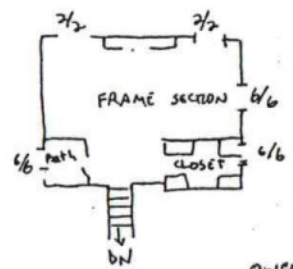
Concrete water tank and hay barn (c)



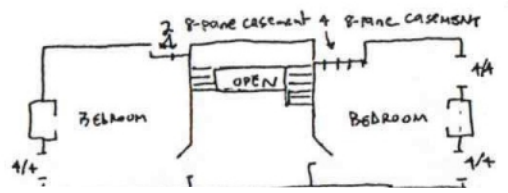
Photo (3)
meathouse at left



SKETCH PLAN OF OWEN-GAY FARM MAIN HOUSE
FIRST FLOOR
CLARK COUNTY, KY NO SCALE



OWEN-GAY FARM
MAIN HOUSE
2ND FLOOR PLANS SKETCH



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Name of Property: Owen--Gay Farm
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11. Cattle Barn (1910-1920): contributing structure
12. Sheep Weigh House (ca. 1910): contributing structure

DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL FEATURES

1. Site: described above and by the attached sketch map. Additional features include a family burial area at the property's northwest corner, in the front yard area.
2. Main Residence: This building was built in three phases, coinciding with important eras of the farm's history. The first phase, 1825, resulted in the construction of the brick central-hall-and-el main house. In probably 1840, a second phase was built, a two-story wooden-frame addition to the rear of the main house. Finally, around 1900, shortly after the Gay family purchased the farm, they built a large room-sized brick addition on the side of the house.

The first phase of the house resulted in an elegantly designed brick residence. The front portion of the residence has a large entry surrounded by a transom and sidelights. The 2/2 window configuration on the front side's windows, and the rounded frames on the sidelights and transom, suggest changes made in the late-nineteenth century to the house. This house, though more architecturally conceived, does not have prominent interior woodwork. The absence of woodwork is noticeable more because the fine mantels have been removed from the fireplaces in each side room for repair. The front rooms of the house are made of a living room, entry, and parlor, with the outside rooms having partially exterior end chimneys. The remaining rooms consist in a dining room and kitchen, both of which share a common chimney. The more historic 6/6 double-hung windows are visible on the dining room's west wall and the part of the kitchen's south wall which is exposed to the outside. A historic porch, though possibly not 1825, is on the east side, set back from the frontal plane of the house behind the end chimney. Upstairs over this portion are sleeping rooms, each with fireplaces, lit by 4/4 double-hung windows in the gable-side walls and small-paned casement windows in the back-side walls.

The second phase structure, of wood frame, is connected to the brick main house by an enclosed dogtrot. The structure is lit by two 6/6 double-hung sash windows, one on the east and one on the west side walls, on each floor. An exterior door on the first floor is in the back (south) side, to the right of the fireplace. The door into the room from the rest of the house is on the north side of that room. Today, the upper level is reached by a stairway from the inside of the house.

An interesting feature of this clapboard-covered addition is its structural system. It is supported with a stud wall system, as revealed by the removal of several siding boards on the east wall near the southeast corner. This uncovering reveals several courses of brick laid at the bottom of the cavity between each wall stud. Also, a corner brace, running diagonally from the corner post downward to the sill is notched into the studs that it crosses. These elements of the support system indicate an early attempt at what would become balloon framing. The bricks and corner bracing may have been attempts to provide structural security for what must have been seen as an extremely light method of supporting the weight of the roof and walls.

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Name of Property: Owen--Gay Farm
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The third phase of construction occurred around 1900 (Conversation with Hodgkin), which coincides with the new ownership of the property by the Gay family. That resulted in a one-story brick addition on the east side of the house which is lit by four 2/2 double-hung windows. At the rear of this addition is a stairway which leads up to the second floor of the frame addition. Near where that stair begins its climb is the door to the former dogtrot. This addition is entered from that dogtrot, from the dining room, or from the east side porch.

Several important changes have been made since 1995, and continue today, to stabilize and protect the residence. The highly deteriorated back side porch, which wrapped onto the crotch of the L was removed. Currently, workers are weatherizing it by installing gutters and readying it for occupancy by sealing the building's openings in preparation for new windows. Much interior work remains for it to be considered habitable by late twentieth century standards.

3. Log Building (BB-362: Glocca Morra School): This is the original Owen family residence at this site. It stands not far from where Donaldson Creek empties into Stoner Creek, thus marking an important landscape feature. It is in remarkable condition for its age and location, surely having survived a number of floods. Informants have not alluded to its use after 1825 in any way other than as a school; almost certainly it would have found welcome use as a slave quarters.

4. Meathouse: This brick structure had deteriorated severely through neglect. Rehabilitation at the site in the last year has given much attention to this structure, through tuckpointing and brick replacement, where necessary. Consequently, its life has been tremendously extended. It has a door in its west side, facing the house. Its bricks are laid in common bond, and star-end tie rods puncture the building east-to-west. Its simple gable roof is covered with corrugated metal, whose ridge runs in an east-west direction. At its rear (east) side is an enclosure, which looks like an elevated garden, but whose use has been forgotten.

5. Ice House ruins: This circular structure lies southeast of the house site, within the domestic complex. Its above ground component is gone. It had outlived its usefulness once refrigerators became available. Always practical, its owners did not let it remain unused during the twentieth century: it served as a trash collection site, much the same way that some Bluegrass farmers will use an extremely deep sinkhole. It contributes to the site by defining what was considered an appropriate location for such a structure. Its relationship to the house, to slave quarters, and to the site in general are all issues which the physical remains help illustrate. These structures were common features of well-to-do farmers, much in the way that root cellars appear on middling farms. It is very uncommon to find an intact historic icehouse anywhere in Kentucky. These features all became obsolete in the last fifty years, so offer an important glimpse to the way in which farming was, and how it has changed.

6. Cistern: This concrete structure was added to the farm not long after the Gays became the owners. It provided water to the family household. Its slightly higher elevation and location southwest of the main house would have allowed it to connect via underground plumbing. It fell into disuse, and so has deteriorated. It, as the ice house, testifies to the importance of water to

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Name of Property: Owen--Gay Farm
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household operations, and offers information about the ways in which successful farmers procured and stored that vital resource for their convenient use.

7. Concrete Water tank: The proximity of this poured concrete structure to the barn indicates its use for animals. It looks very much like the base of a silo whose upper portion might have been wood staves. The owner had no recollection of its use as a silo.

8. Hay Barn: Standing near the Concrete Water Tank is the 7-bent long hay barn. The structure has its larger, wagon-sized door on the gable side, closer to Stoner Road, and a pedestrian-sized door on the opposite side. The building is covered by a newer standing seam metal roof. Inside, the barn is three bays wide, has an assortment of pens and open spaces. The wood support system for the barn rests on large, squarish sandstone blocks; the interstices between those blocks was filled with a concrete material. The walls of the barn are covered with wooden vertical board siding.

9. Metal crib: Standing near the Hay Barn's side with the pedestrian-sized door, this structure sits on a slightly raised circular concrete pad, approximately 14 feet in diameter. Its exterior wall material and structural support are the same: sheet metal with ventilation holes. Its proximity to the Hay Barn suggests that farmers would carry food (corn) from the bin for use in the barn. It has not been in use for several years, apparently, and its truncated conical roof has collapsed.

10. Undefined structure. This structure is about equidistant from the Hay Barn and the Sheep Weighing house. Its former use is unknown to the current owner, who had grown up on this farm. Nevertheless, its continued presence allows for further understanding of its identity and role in farming operations. The structure is a simple post-and-beam wood frame covered by a metal roof. It has no foundation other than the earth. The vertical boards which once covered its walls have fallen, or were taken, away.

11. Cattle Barn: This structure's support system seems lighter, and therefore more recent than that found in the Hay Barn. While in the middle of the Hay Barn are found massive post and beams carrying the mow, the upper level of the Cattle Barn is carried on a light framework of studs, none larger than 4" x 4". The Cattle Barn is covered by a very old and somewhat rusty metal roof. Its interior is more open than the interior of the Hay Barn, allowing animals to be penned but not confined. In the south end is found a chute that terminates in a stantion, for the purpose of working on individual calves.

12. Sheep Weigh House: This structure gives evidence of the farm's use for raising sheep. Its gable roof is covered with standing seam metal, and a small shed-roofed addition is covered with asphalt shingles. The support system is light post and beams, and the building is covered with vertical wood siding. Under the shed roofed addition are a series of chutes leading to a sheep dip.

1.8