WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

www.washtenaw.org/preservation

MEETING AGENDA

DATE:	**Thursday, Sept. 07, 2023**
TIME:	**5:30 pm – 7:00pm**
PLACE:	**Eastern County Government Center** **Office of Community & Economic Development – 2nd Floor** **415 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI**

Call to Order– Chair
Roll Call – Secretary
Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting – Chair
Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting 07/06/2023– Chair
Application Reviews

- **4151 Thornoaks**

Business and Reports

- **Staff Report**
  - Items for Consideration by Commission
    - National Register Nomination for Groves Farm
  - Local Historic Districts
    - Wild-Frey Farm: Board of Commissioners update
    - Thornoaks
  - Northfield Township MPDF CLG Grant
  - Washtenaw County Updates
    - Staff change
- **Treasurer Report**

Items for Discussion

- Commissioner Updates

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Thursday, Oct 06, 2023 - Washtenaw County Eastern County Government Center

Attachments:

Minutes of the July 06, 2023 Meeting
Staff Report
COA application 4151 Thornoaks
Groves Farm National Register Nomination

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes

DATE:	**July 6, 2023**
TIME:	5:30 pm-7:00pm
PLACE	Gordon Hall 8347 Island Lake Rd, Dexter, MI

Call to Order

- Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:30 PM
- Secretary Clarke conducted roll call:
  Commissioners present: Kim Clarke, Alice Ralph, Anne Stevenson, Angela Oehrli, Alec Jerome, Peter Kelley
  Commissioners absent: James Mann, Katie Remensnyder
  Staff present: Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting: Chair Ralph moved to approve the agenda for the July 6, 2023 Historic District Commission meeting. Commissioner Oehrli seconded the motion, and with no further discussion, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: May 4, 2023: Chair Ralph moved to approve the May 4, 2023 minutes. Commissioner Jerome seconded the motion. With no discussion, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Citizen Participation: Chair Ralph thanked Dexter Area Historical Society for hosting the HDC at Gordon Hall. Gordon Hall is one of the Washtenaw County Local Historic Districts. DAHS members introduced themselves to the Commission and reviewed the rehabilitation and improvements they have made to Gordon Hall over the past few years.

Business and Staff Reports:

Wild-Frey Farm: Staff updated the HDC on the Wild-Frey Farm Study Committee process. The next step is a resolution from the HDC recommending a designation status. Staff gave a brief presentation on the history of the Wild-Frey Farm and the Study Committee Report findings. The Study Committee Report recommends designation of the Wild-Frey Farm as a local historic district under Criteria A and C. After the presentation, staff provided a draft resolution for HDC consideration. Chair Ralph opened discussion on the Resolution by reading the draft out loud for the commission. Commissioner Stevenson suggested several friendly amendments to the text. Commissioner Jerome suggested the resolution spell out the National Park Service Criteria A and C under which the property should be listed. After some discussion, commissioners agreed with that idea. Therefore, Commissioner Jerome moved to approve the Resolution to Recommend Approval of the Wild-Frey Farm Local Historic District Ordinance as presented with an additional statement explaining the NPS Criteria A and C. The Resolution was passed unanimously. It is included at the end of these minutes.

Certified Local Government Program: SHPO and Washtenaw County are working on draft grant agreements regarding the potential Northfield Township National Register grant project.

Washtenaw County Updates: The County is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) Director position and the Historic Preservation Specialist position. Let staff know if you have any questions.

Adjournment: Since there was no further discussion, Chair Ralph adjourned the meeting at 6:03. After the meeting, Dexter Area Historical Society gave a tour of Gordon Hall for the commission.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 3, 2023- Washtenaw County Eastern Government Center, 415 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti MI 48198

DRAFT

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Staff Report
Sept. 7, 2023

Items for Consideration by Commission

- Groves Farm National Register Nomination: Groves Farm, located in Northfield Township, has been nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The farmstead consists of a farmhouse west of Sutton Road and a group of farm outbuildings and structures east of the road. The farm has been nominated under Criteria A: Agriculture, as an example of local nineteenth and early twentieth century agricultural practice in Washtenaw County; and Criteria C. Staff will give a brief presentation on the nomination and provide SHPO with any feedback from the commission. The nomination is attached to this report for review. Please take a look and come to the meeting with any questions or comments for SHPO.

Local Historic Districts

- **Wild-Frey Farm:**
  - The Board of Commissioners will consider the Wild-Frey Farm Local Historic District Ordinance at two consecutive meetings in September. The first reading will be on September 6th, and second reading will be September 20th. Staff will attend the readings. The BOC will make a designation decision at the September 20th meeting.
- **Thornoaks:**
  - Siding has been installed at 4071 Thornoaks Drive. The siding is not in compliance with the COA issued in February 2022. The appeal of the decision is still in circuit court, no hearing date has been set. Staff will discuss next steps with the HDC.

Northfield Township MPDF CLG Grant

- In mid-August, Washtenaw County and SHPO signed the grant agreement to fund the completion of a Multiple Property Documentation Form and select individual nominations for Northfield Township, in partnership with Northfield Township Historical Society (NTHS). Next steps include issuing a Request for Quotes to a shortlist of local consultants to complete the work. The draft RFQ has been reviewed by NTHS and is with SHPO for comment.

Washtenaw County Updates

- Kat Slocum was recently hired as the new Historic Preservation Specialist for the Office of Community and Economic Development. Kat has a master's degree in archaeology from Wayne State University and has completed various archaeology and historic preservation projects throughout the Great Lakes region and Spain. She is also currently serving as an Officer in the U.S. Army Reserves Heritage Protection Task Force.
- The County is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) Director position. Let staff know if you have any questions.
- MHPN has an archive of training and informational presentations from the past few years. If you would like to find a video about a certain topic, reach out to staff. You can find a list of the recordings here: https://www.mhpn.org/workshop-recordings/

Commissioner Project Ideas and Updates:
Please come prepared with any project ideas you would like to share with the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Schmidt, Historic Preservation Specialist
Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development

COA Application Review Packet

Historic District Thornoaks

Name of Owner James Bardwell

Phone Number [redacted]

Email address [redacted]

Address of Property 4151 Thornoaks Dr, Ann Arbor, MI

What are the character defining features? This side-gable ranch has a two-car attached garage on the right side south facing main elevation. The foundation is poured concrete and exterior siding is board and batten. A small patio is located off the front left elevation, accessed by a glass sliding door. There are fixed windows on the front elevation. The asphalt shingled roof has three skylights. There is also a low row of rectangular clerestory windows on the upper right of the roofline. There are two brick chimneys in this residence. There is also a small bump-out with balcony. The rear (north) elevation has fixed plate glass windows and glass sliding doors that provide access to a large wooden deck. There is also a walkout lower level. There are three sets of windows on the west elevation.

What is the current integrity? The house has good integrity.

Summary of proposed work: Tear off existing deck and replace it with a new deck that will bring the structure up to code. The current deck has failed resulting in a comminuted, displaced fracture of calcaneus (heel bone) for the owner and is dangerous. The proposed new deck will be the same footprint as the current deck, except for an 8-foot extension on the east side, which will fuse the existing deck to the two cantilevered sections. The current cantilever sections are not up to code and unsafe. It is not possible to maintain the exact existing footprint without extending the deck surface 8 feet east, as the plumb line drop from the existing deck east edge ends up right in the path to the door of the shed. The proposed material for decking is Dekorators Vault Dusk, selected as a close match in color to the existing aged cedar. Dekorators Vault is a mineral-based composite deck board designed to mimic the look of wood. The deck railing would be Trex Signature Glass Railings, matching a section of the existing upper deck railings. Trex Signature consists of aluminum posts and glass panels. Current railings are a mix of glass and post; and post and rail. Deck access stairs will remain in the same place.

The proposed 8-foot east extension would not be visible from the front facade.

Attachments:

Photos of current deck
Rendering of proposed deck
Proposed materials

Deck before failure

East end of deck showing one cantilevered section

Deck failure that resulted in homeowner injury

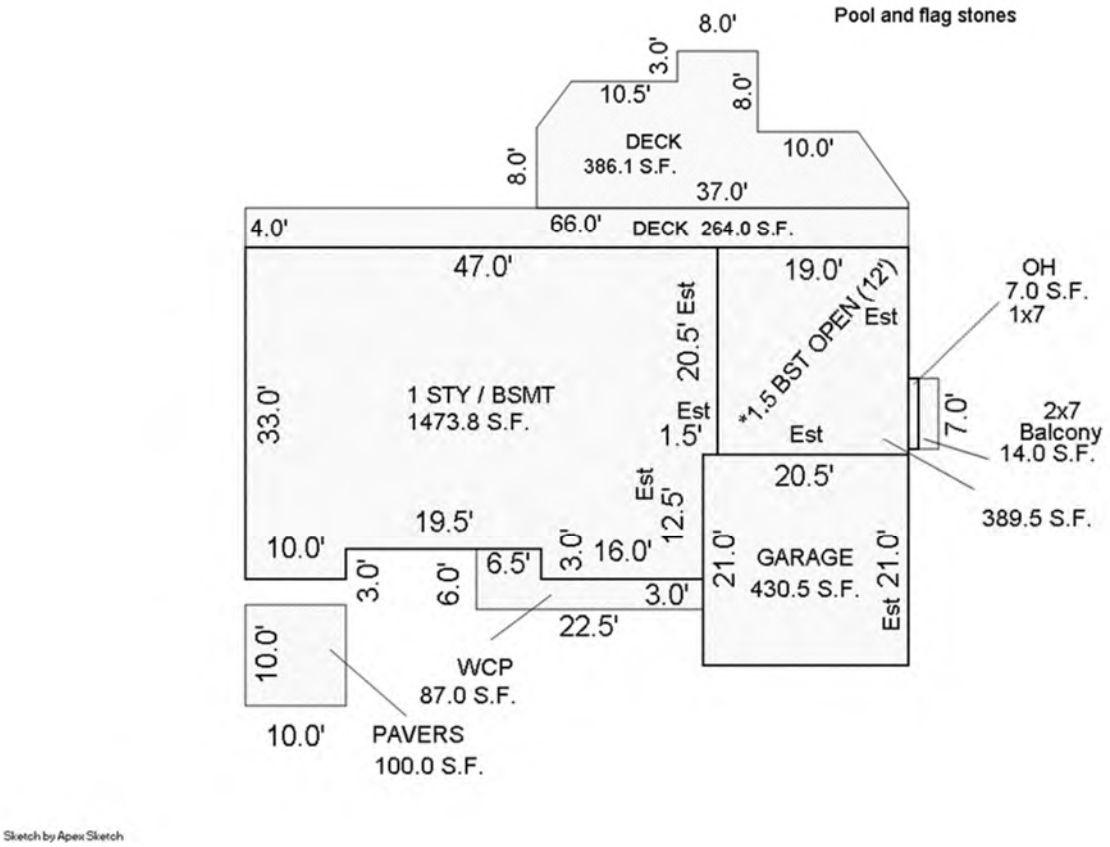
Second section failed and was temporarily patched with plywood
as added aluminum pillars proved inadequate

Current view of deck, showing temporary railing reinforcement

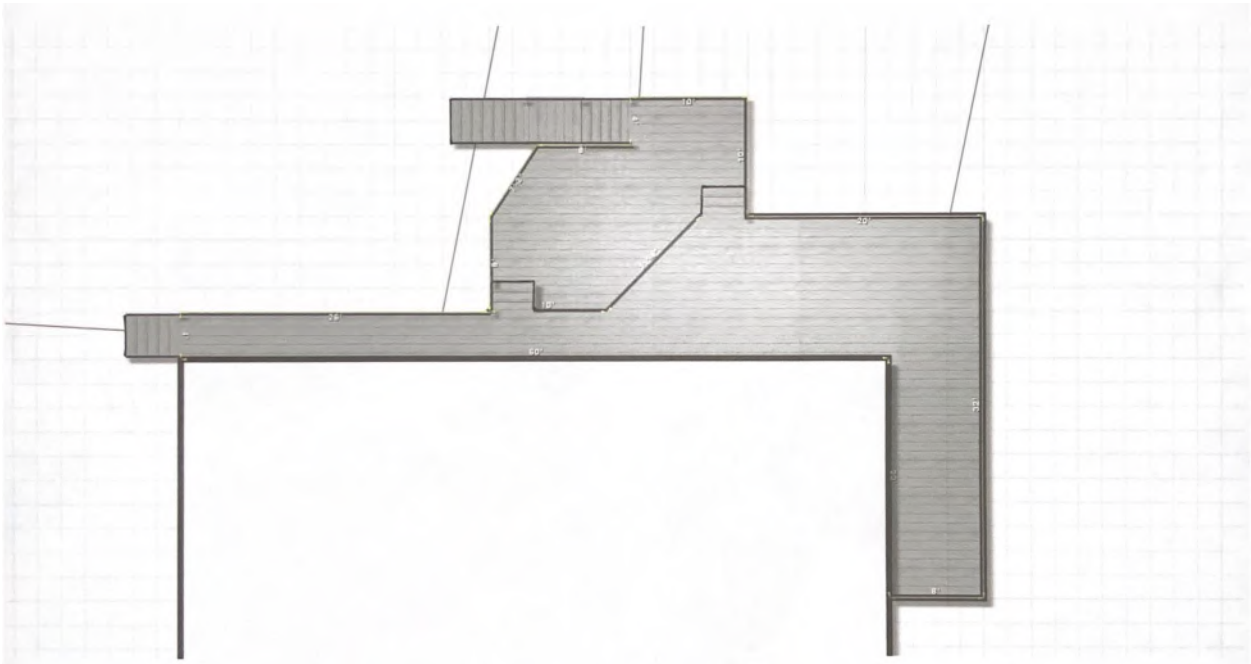
View from east elevation to location of 8-foot extension showing second cantilevered section

View from east end of front facade of east elevation and location of 8-foot extension

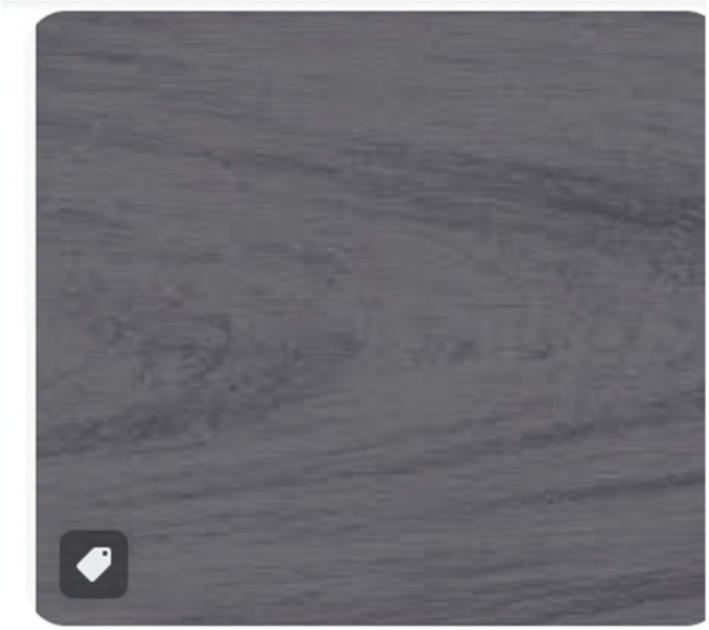
View from east end of front facade of east elevation and location of 8-foot extension



Current footprint, see DECK along rear elevation



Proposed deck footprint, note extension at east side



Dekorators Vault Dusk color

Dekorators deck material

Trex Signature Glass Railings

OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2022

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Groves Farm
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 6015 Sutton Road
City or town: Ann Arbor State: MI County: Washtenaw
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide _X_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A ___B _X_C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title: **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
0	0	sites
3	0	structures
1	0	objects
9	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC – single dwelling
DOMESTIC – secondary structure
AGRICULTURE – storage
AGRICULTURE – animal facility
AGRICULTURE – agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC – single dwelling
DOMESTIC – secondary structure
VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS – Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: wood, stone, asphalt, metal, concrete, brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Groves Farm is located in Washtenaw County in southeastern Michigan. The nomination includes multiple contributing buildings that form a clearly defined complex of mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century domestic and agricultural buildings on both sides of Sutton Road, including the Colonial Revival-style farmhouse, timber frame animal barns, corn crib (granary), milk (pump) house, and garage. Landscape features include a historic wrought iron fence and an heirloom sundial. The farm encompasses approximately five acres located within a rural, agricultural setting. The remaining acreage of the original 160-acre farmstead, including pasture and cultivated fields, has been separated from the nominated property and developed as large single-family lots. The property retains high integrity and the extant buildings and landscape convey its nineteenth and twentieth century agricultural and architectural significance.

Narrative Description

The Groves Farm is located in northern Washtenaw County, in southeastern Michigan. The farm is located about ten miles north of Ann Arbor, the largest city in the county and the county seat, which served as the primary market for farms in the region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The farm setting is typical of the rural Midwest with rolling hills, small streams, wooded areas, and meadows. Washtenaw County has historically been primarily agricultural, and the farm setting retains this agricultural character.

Northfield Township developed in the early and mid-1800s with newcomers purchasing large tracts of land, usually 80 or 160 acres, and developing compact complexes of domestic and agricultural outbuildings around a modest farmhouse.[1] As Ann Arbor has grown throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the surrounding rural areas have also been heavily developed, especially those east and south of the city. Northfield Township, north of Ann Arbor, on the other hand, remains remarkably rural. Development in this part of the county has been limited to the subdivision of former farm fields into large single-family residential lots. As a result, this area, including Sutton Road, retains much of its nineteenth-century rural character.

The Groves Farm originally included two adjacent eighty-acre parcels: the west half of the southwest quarter of section 26 and the east half of the southeast quarter of section 27 in Township One South in Range Six East.[2] Approximately five acres, at the northwest corner of Sutton and Northfield Church Roads, was separated from the west half of the farm around 1870 for the construction of St. John's Lutheran Church, rectory, and cemetery In the late twentieth century, much of the acreage was sold for single-family residential development.[3] Therefore, the nominated property includes the current tax parcel of about five acres, which includes the extant historic buildings and land historically associated with the house and outbuildings, providing an appropriate setting for the historic buildings.

The nomination includes multiple contributing buildings that form a clearly defined complex of mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century domestic and agricultural buildings on both the east and west sides of Sutton Road. As the farm products and domestic technologies changed throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, agricultural and domestic outbuildings were constructed, altered, or removed. Contributing buildings include the 1922 Groves Farmhouse, 1846 threshing (dairy) barn, c.1850 sheep barn, 1864 corn crib (granary), 1872 horse barn, 1846 and c.1945 well and pump house, and c.1950 garage. Contributing landscape features include a wrought-iron fence and an heirloom New England sundial. All resources were constructed within the period of significance, 1846 to 1961, and the nominated property contains no noncontributing resources.

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[1] "Map of Washtenaw County, Michigan," (Philadelphia, PA: Bechler, Wenig & Co., 1856), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clark1ic/x-002745875/39015091184773_02, UM Clark Library Maps Collection, Stephen S. Clark Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (hereafter Clark Library); "Map of the Counties of Washtenaw and Lenawee, Michigan," (Philadelphia, PA: Bechler, Wenig & Co., 1864), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clark1ic/x-002745877/39015091197502, Clark Library; "M.M. Dickson & Co.'s township and sectional pocket map of Washtenaw County, Michigan," (Ann Arbor, MI: M.M. Dickson & Co., 1896), https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clark1ic/x-004978843/39015091184815, Clark Library; "Chadwick's 1911 map and directory of Washtenaw County, Michigan," (Ann Arbor, MI: C.W. Chadwick, 1911), https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clark1ic/x-000074544/39015095414580_0001, Clark Library.

[2] United States to Nicholas Groves, Certificate No. 5938, April 4, 1833, Personal Collection of Ann Groves [hereafter referred to as Groves Collection]; United States to Nicholas Groves, Certificate No. 5939, April 4, 1833, Groves Collection. Family records indicate the family arrived in 1831, though the land acquisition was recorded in 1833.

[3] Personal Interview with Ann Groves (descendant) by Cheri Szcodronski, March 21, 2023, at Firefly offices, Chelsea, Michigan; "M.M. Dickson & Co.'s township and sectional pocket map of Washtenaw County, Michigan," 1896; Washtenaw County, Historic Aerial Images, *MapWashtenaw*, https://gisappsecure.ewashtenaw.org/mapwashtenaw/.

In general, domestic buildings and outbuildings were historically located on the west side of Sutton Road with the agricultural complex located on the east side. Accordingly, the Groves Farmhouse is located on the west side of Sutton Road and accessed by a short gravel drive that leads to the garage. The landscape of the domestic complex features grassy lawns, tended flower gardens, and mature trees. The agricultural complex is located directly across the road from the farmhouse. The threshing (dairy) barn is located in the center of the complex, with the remaining outbuildings forming a U-shape around, and in close proximity to, this barn. Grassy lawn also surrounds the agricultural complex, concealing historic patterns of farm paths and barnyards. Mature trees extend along the property line, providing a buffer between the Groves Farm and surrounding residential development.

The following inventory includes all resources located within the nominated property boundary. The Groves Farmhouse, garage, wrought-iron fence, and New England sundial are located on the west side of Sutton Road; all other resources, comprising the agricultural complex, are located on the east side of Sutton Road. Construction dates and historical information were obtained from the memoirs of William T. Groves, *The Old Farm: The Story of Its Past*, held in the personal collections of his descendants. Additional information was provided by a 1924 map of the farm created by William T. Groves, also held in the personal collections of his descendants. Each resource is given a letter designation that corresponds to the site map.

A. Groves Farmhouse – 1922, 1941, 2007, 2009 1 Contributing Building

The Groves farmhouse is a two-and-one-half-story, side-gable house built in 1922 to replace an earlier house that was destroyed by fire. William Nimke, a local carpenter, served as the contractor for the construction. The house was constructed as a vernacular building with a partial-width front porch, a small center gable, and no ornamentation; it was updated in 1941 with the removal of the porch and gable and the addition of Colonial Revival-style detailing. The house retains weatherboard siding with plain cornerboards, wide rakeboards in the gables, wood beltcourses and skirtboards, an interior brick chimney, and a parged stone foundation. A cornerstone on the southeast corner is inscribed “1831, Groves, 1922.” A one-story, L-shaped addition was constructed on the rear of the house in 2007, and is scaled and set back to be minimally visible from Sutton Road.

Exterior

The east (front) elevation of the three-bay, double-pile house is symmetrical with a centered entrance accessed by a three-step, concrete stoop and containing a replacement door with the original eight-light-over-one-panel wood storm door. The entrance has four-light-over-one-panel wood sidelights and is set in a Classical surround with pilasters supporting an entablature, all added in 1941. This elevation retains its original fenestration with eight-over-eight wood windows at the first story, and the one-over-one wood windows at the second story, replaced in 2009 and 2011 to match the original windows. Sliding two-light wood windows are located at the basement level.

The north elevation also retains the original fenestration with two eight-over-eight wood replacement windows at the first story, two slightly smaller one-over-one wood replacement windows at the second story, and a one-over-one wood attic window in the gable. This elevation also retains wood fire escapes extending down from the second-story windows.

A flat-roof porch constructed in 1941 extends from the south elevation. The porch is supported by square wood columns on a parged stone foundation that matches the house. It is enclosed with wood-framed screens, and wood-framed screen doors on the east and west ends of the porch are accessed by three concrete steps each. There is a matchstick balustrade encircling a second-floor balcony accessed by a fifteen-light door set slightly off center. The first-story window and door openings between the porch and the kitchen were inverted in 2009 to improve interior circulation.

The west elevation of the main block is partially obscured by the 2007 addition. The first story retains an original window centered on the elevation and containing a replacement six-over-six wood window. A box bay window with a shed roof and an eight-over-eight wood window was added to the north end of this elevation during the kitchen renovation in 2009. The second story retains an original window opening at the north end, and a second, centered window opening has been added, likely during the 1941 renovations. Both second-story openings contain replacement one-over-one wood windows.

A modest, one-story, cross-gable addition was constructed on the west (rear) elevation in 2007. A side-gabled wing at the rear (west) is attached by a gabled hyphen that extends from the northwest corner of the house, forming an L-shape. The addition is slightly offset to the north of the main block, minimizing its visibility from Sutton Road. The hyphen contains an eight-over-eight aluminum-clad wood window on the north elevation and fifteen-light French doors flanked by fifteen-light sidelights on the south elevation, the latter accessed by three concrete steps.

The addition contains two six-over-six aluminum-clad wood windows on the east and north elevations, which also has a rectangular vent in the gable. The west elevation contains a nine-light-over-two-panel door sheltered by a narrow flat roof supported by wood brackets and leading to a small wood stoop and staircase and a six-over-six aluminum-clad wood window. A gabled bay projects slightly from this elevation and contains two six-over-six aluminum-clad wood windows and a circular window in the gable. An interior gas fireplace vents between the windows of this bay. The south elevation features a box bay window with a shed roof and paired six-over-six aluminum-clad wood windows, with a rectangular vent in the gable. The addition and hyphen have skylights, and cornerboards, skirtboards, and rakeboards mimic the detailing of the main block.

Interior

The interior of the house is oriented with public spaces toward the front of the house and private family spaces arranged toward the rear and second floor areas. The main block of the house retains the original 1922 floor plan, with the exception of the removal of a wall in the entry hall

and the addition of bathrooms. The interior retains original historic finishes including wood floors and baseboards, wood door and window surrounds, and plaster walls and ceilings.

On the first floor, the living room extends the full depth of the north side of the house, while the dining room and kitchen comprise the south side. The main entrance on the east elevation originally led to a center hall with the stairs at the west (rear) and rooms on either side, but the north wall of the hall was removed in 1941 to open directly to the living room. At the same time, a wide arched opening was added on the south wall of the hall to provide access to the dining room. Crown molding was added to the first-floor rooms around 1975. A window with a bench seat, originally positioned between built-in bookshelves on the west wall of the living room, was removed in 2007 to install a doorway providing access to the hyphen and addition. The kitchen is located in the southwest corner of the first floor, and modern fixtures and cabinetry were installed in 2009, as well as a box bay window. A heavy swinging door between the dining room and kitchen was also removed at that time to improve interior circulation. A bathroom was added west of (behind) the staircase in 1941, when the house was fitted with indoor plumbing, and now features modern fixtures and finishes.

The second floor of the house is accessed by a central staircase, which has two steps leading west to a small landing, then turns ninety degrees to the south. The stairs are carpeted and retain the original balustrades and newel posts at the top and bottom. Turned wood balustrades are located at the first- and second-floor landings.

The second floor features a central hallway running north-south, off of which are four bedrooms and a bathroom. The hallway is carpeted, though the bedrooms retain the original wood flooring. These bedrooms also retain the original two-panel wood doors, wood baseboards, and wood window surrounds. A bathroom was added to the west side of this floor in 1941, and later remodeled with modern fixtures and finishes. Crown molding was added to all four bedrooms c.1975, as well as a wooden chair rail in the southwest bedroom and wainscot in the bathroom. The second-floor hallway also provides access to the balcony above the porch on the south elevation.

A narrow, wood staircase at the north end of the second-floor hallway leads to the third-floor attic, which was finished as a playroom around 1975. The room retains the original wide wood flooring. Ceiling panels and partition walls and constructed of wood framing and particleboard were added, reserving space in the eaves for storage and to house heating and cooling systems. A skylight was also added to the west roof at that time.

The original house also has a full basement accessed by a staircase on the south side of the house between the dining room and kitchen. About half of the basement was finished c.1970 with a poured concrete floor, dropped ceiling, and vertical wood sheathing and batten doors from a demolished barn on the property. The original fieldstone foundation remains visible on the unfinished side.

The interior of the 2007 addition contains the primary bedroom, bathroom, dressing room, and laundry room. The hyphen has a tile floor and wood window and door surrounds similar to those

in the original house. Salvaged pocket doors lead from the hyphen to the primary bedroom, which is carpeted and features drywall walls, a vaulted drywall ceiling, and wood crown molding, baseboards, and window and door surrounds. The bay windows are fitted with bench seats. A doorway on the north end of the room leads to a bathroom with modern fixtures and finishes, a dressing room, and a laundry room, which may also be accessed by a rear entrance.

B. Threshing/Dairy Barn – 1846, 1916, 1940 1 Contributing Building

Known by the Groves family as the "big barn," the threshing/dairy barn is located on the east side of Sutton Road at the center of the agricultural complex. This building is a three-bay threshing barn type (also known as an English Barn, New England Barn, or Yankee Barn), representative of the Groves' French heritage and Massachusetts roots. The barn features a side-gabled roof and three interior bays housing a granary, animal stalls, and central threshing floor. It is of hand-hewn timber construction with mortise and tenon joints, and the roof is constructed of rough sawn boards on dressed timber rafters covered with metal. The barn retains vertical board cladding, a field stone foundation (except where concrete block repairs have been made), and batten sliding doors. The south end of the barn housed livestock and therefore contains four-light and six-light wood windows with pointed surrounds. The north end of the barn served as the granary and is accessed by an original batten door with strap hinges inscribed "1846." The barn is accessed on the west elevation by an earthen ramp supported by field stones. The west elevation is accessed at grade and the lower level retains wood milking stanchions.

This was the first frame barn constructed at the farm. A ramp originally led from an east entrance. The ramp was removed in the 1890s though the original door opening remains visible. In 1916, the barn was clad in new wood siding, the roof was rebuilt, and a hay fork was installed to move hay from ground level into the hay loft. A sheep shed was attached to the north elevation; it was used as a tool shed after the sheep were moved to a new barn in 1916. The sheep/tool shed was demolished in the mid-1900s. Cows were originally housed in a nearby barn to the northeast (no longer extant), but they were moved to this barn along with the milking stanchions when the basement was dug in 1940. The windows were likely also added at that time.[4]

C. East/Sheep Barn – c.1850, 1916 1 Contributing Building

Known by the Groves family as the "east barn," this barn was moved to the Groves Farm from Welch's Corners,[5] about four miles to the west, in 1855. It is a gambrel-roof building with vertical board siding, sliding batten doors on the east and west elevations, four-light wood windows with pointed wood surrounds, and a metal roof. The barn is of hand-hewn timber construction with a dirt floor and field stone foundation. The roof was constructed in 1916 of

[4] William T. Groves, "The Old Farm," 37, Groves Collection.

[5] The intersection of present-day North Territorial and Whitmore Lake Roads was known as Welch's Corners. This crossroads community was on the primary roads west from Detroit (North Territorial Road) and north from Ann Arbor (Whitmore Lake Road), and therefore boasted a tavern and hotel popular with nineteenth-century travelers.

sawn boards and is covered with metal. The barn has two floors with the second floor supported by dressed timbers.

This barn was originally built as a three-bay threshing barn with a hay mow on the north end, a center livestock drive area, and stables for horses and calves on the south end. Interior walls have been removed, though some of the timber framing remains in place. The current gambrel roof was built in 1916 by Jay Pray and Lewis Weisemeyer, and the sheep were moved from the sheep shed attached to the threshing/dairy barn at that time.[6]

D. Corn Crib/Granary – 1864 1 Contributing Structure

A corn crib/granary was built in 1864 to supplement the granary in the threshing/dairy barn and accommodate increasing grain production on the farm. It was built by a Mr. Johnson, presumably a local carpenter.[7] It is a narrow, slightly tapered, gabled building set on brick piers. It is of hand-hewn timber construction with mortise and tenon joints. The roof is constructed of rough sawn boards on hand-hewn rafters and covered with metal. The west end was used as a corn crib, and features wide, vertical slats and a batten door on the west elevation. The east end was used as a granary and is clad in vertical board siding with a batten door and eight-light wood window on the south elevation. The granary was later converted for use as a small animal house for chickens and later rabbits.[8]

E. Horse Barn – 1872, 1931 1 Contributing Building

A horse barn was constructed on the south end of the agricultural complex in 1872 by local builder Thomas Taylor. It is a front-gable building with vertical board siding, sliding batten doors, and boarded windows in pointed arch wood surrounds. The decorative brackets under the eaves are original, "the style of the time" according to William T. Groves. The barn retains the dirt floor and field stone foundation, and is of hand-hewn timber construction with mortise and tenon joints. The barn has two floors with the second floor supported by dressed timbers. An original cupola and running horse weathervane were removed when the current roof was built in 1931, and a shed-roof bay on the east elevation was removed sometime after 1903. A feed box originally extended along the south wall of the barn and horses were fed oats or corn on one end and ground feed on the other end.[9]

F. Wrought-Iron Fence – c.1895, c.1920 1 Contributing Structure

A section of wrought-iron fence extends along the west side of Sutton Road on either side of the driveway. This fence was moved to the Groves Farm from a house on Liberty Street in Ann Arbor prior to 1922, as it appears in photos of the current house shortly after its construction that

[6] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37.
[7] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38; William T. Groves, untitled manuscript, "Outline of Farm Buildings," Groves Collection.
[8] Personal Interview with Sally Louis (current owner) by Cheri Szcodronski, April 10, 2021, at Groves Farm, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
[9] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.

year. Large decorative gates originally extended across the driveway, however they have been removed.[10]

G. Milk/Pump House & Well – 1846, 1917, 1922, 1941 1 Contributing Structure

A pump house is located between the threshing/dairy barn and horse barn. It is a small, gabled building with wood siding, a concrete foundation, a batten door, a six-light wood window, and a metal roof. This building was built in 1917 as the milk house and moved to this location from the west side of the threshing/dairy barn in 1941. A concrete water trough remains extant on the west elevation.

The milk/pump house shelters a stone-lined well dug near the southwest corner of the threshing/dairy barn when it was built in 1846. Initially the well was only twelve feet deep, but in 1922 it no longer provided adequate water for the farm, so Albert Groves hired Edwin Thompson of Ann Arbor to deepen the well to over ninety feet. The water was first pulled up by hand, then by a pump, and then by a wooden windmill. Steel fans were added to the windmill around 1903. The windmill was likely demolished in 1941 when the milk house was moved to this location.[11]

H. New England Sundial – c.1940 1 Contributing Object

A sundial constructed of stones from sites in New England that were significant to the Groves family is located west of the house. According to William T. Groves, stones were obtained from the following sites:[12]

Beverly Cove	Beverly, Massachusetts
Bald Hill	Beverly, Massachusetts
Groves Hollow	Beverly, Massachusetts
Groves Farm	Brimfield, Massachusetts
Groves Farm	Monson, Massachusetts
Groves Warm	Whitingham, Vermont
Site of Old Meeting House	Whitingham, Vermont
Stone Wall of Cemetery	East Charlemont, Massachusetts
Old Stone Wall of Groves Farm	East Charlemont, Massachusetts
Levi Stearns Farm	East Charlemont, Massachusetts
Fish Creek Crossing	Victory Mills, New York
Taconic Trail	Massachusetts – New York
Summit	Mount Washington, New Hampshire
Dixville Notch	Mount Washington, New Hampshire
Stone Wall Cooledge Cemetery	Plymouth, Vermont
Groves Farm	Northfield [Ann Arbor], Michigan

[10] Personal Interview with Sally Louis (current owner) by Cheri Szcodronski, April 15, 2023, at Groves Farm, Ann Arbor, Michigan; William T. Groves, "The Groves Farm: 1831-1931," Photo Album, Groves Collection.
[11] Groves, "The Old Farm," 20; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 5, Groves Collection.
[12] Groves, untitled manuscript, "New England Sundial."

North Rye Beach	New Hampshire
General Lincoln's Entrenchment	Saratoga, New York
Captain Beers Grave	Northfield, Massachusetts
Hale Homestead	Beverly, Massachusetts
Landing Place First Men	Cape Connecticut
Old Bricks, Groves House	Northfield [Ann Arbor], Michigan
Sundial, Site of First Church	Salem, Massachusetts

I. Garage – c.1950 **1 Contributing Building**

A garage with a wide, ten-light rolling door, two-over-two horizontal-pane windows, German weatherboard cladding, and an asphalt roof is located immediately south of the house.

Integrity Statement

The Groves Farm retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The farmhouse retains most of the form, massing, plan, materials, and fenestration present at its construction in 1922, as well as exterior Colonial Revival detailing and interior improvements, such as indoor plumbing, added in 1941. The interior also retains the original staircase; wood floors, doors, and baseboards; and 1941 floor plan. The 2007 west addition is modest, set back from the historic building, and compatibly detailed but clearly defined as an addition; therefore, the addition does not adversely affect the overall integrity of the property.

The agricultural outbuilding complex is a remarkably intact and well-maintained example of an early-to-mid-nineteenth century farmstead. The barns retain original timber framing, mortise and tenon joints, vertical cladding, and fieldstone foundations, and their uses reflect common agricultural practices over time. The threshing barns also reflect the movement of construction methods and agricultural practices from New England to the Midwest in the nineteenth century.

The farmhouse and outbuildings remain in their original location on Sutton Road and in their original configuration. They are immediately surrounded by grassy lawns and mature trees, and the broader landscape remains rural farmland, similar to the nineteenth-century setting.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

The Groves Farm is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. The property originally was a working farm with a full complement of domestic and agricultural outbuildings, some of which were lost in the twentieth century. No archaeological assessment has been conducted at the property, however, the documentary record indicates the following resources were once present on this property and likely have left archaeological deposits: 1832 log cabin, 1832 stone-lined well, 1832 log barn, c.1850 sheep shed/tool shed, 1859 cow shed, 1865 hog house, c.1865 chicken house, c.1868 brick-lined well, 1894 smokehouse, 1917 silo, 1925

chicken house, a carriage shed, two cisterns, three outhouses, and numerous fence lines. Additional archival research or archaeological investigation may reveal additional resources.

Archaeological deposits from remnant landscape features such as paths and fence lines; infrastructural remains such as filled-in privies, wells, or middens; and structural remains of buildings can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the property. Information concerning the spatial organization of buildings and infrastructure in relationship to natural and cultural elements of the landscape can be obtained from the investigation of these features.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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 grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Agriculture
Settlement/Exploration
Architecture

Period of Significance
1846-1961

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
William Nimke – carpenter (house)
Thomas Taylor – carpenter (horse barn)
Mr. Johnson - carpenter (corn crib/granary)
Jay Pray & Lewis Weisemeyer – carpenters (east/sheep barn)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Groves Farm is significant at the local level under Criterion A for Agriculture. The farm is representative of nineteenth and early twentieth century agricultural practices in Washtenaw County. Operating as a subsistence farm during the settlement period, the farm expanded to include the cultivation of grains, apples, and other cash crops, which were taken to Ann Arbor and other local markets. In the early twentieth century, milk also became an important source of income for the farm. Extant agricultural outbuildings reflect these trends. The farm also demonstrates changes in the agricultural practices of southwest Michigan with the construction of new agricultural outbuildings and the repurposing of existing outbuildings, including the construction of a basement in the threshing/dairy barn to house dairy cows and milking equipment in 1940.

The Groves Farm is significant at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture and Settlement/Exploration as an example of an intact settlement-era farmstead in rural Northfield Township, established during Michigan's transition from territory to statehood. The farm retains agricultural outbuildings common to early nineteenth century subsistence farms, that demonstrate early-to-mid-nineteenth-century vernacular construction methods and the influence of New England architecture on barn construction in the region. The 1846 threshing/dairy barn, c.1850 sheep barn, 1864 corn crib/granary, and 1872 horse barn are of hand-hewn timber construction with mortise and tenon joints. Both the threshing/dairy barn and the sheep barn are examples of the three-bay New England barn type. In addition, the buildings are arranged in a clearly defined complex and though the 1846 farmhouse was destroyed by fire, the 1922 vernacular farmhouse that replaced it illustrates changing architectural preferences with the application of Colonial Revival detailing to the house in 1941.

The period of significance begins in 1846 with the construction of the earliest extant buildings, the threshing/dairy barn and milk house/pump house. It extends to 1961 when the Groves family permanently moved away from the farm.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Background and Agriculture Context

Indigenous Peoples of Washtenaw County[13] - through 1840

[13] William Taylor Groves wrote his reminiscences in a book he titled, "The Old Farm: The Story of Its History," which remains in the possession of his descendants and was made available to the author. Material quoted from this source is transcribed exactly as written by Groves, including spelling or punctuation errors, terminology no longer in common use (such as "Indians"), and discriminatory language or descriptions of Indigenous peoples. Groves prepared what appears to be several draft versions of this history, and these unpublished manuscripts were also utilized in the preparation of this nomination.

The Groves Farm is located in southeastern Michigan in Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, just north of Ann Arbor. The earliest known inhabitants of this area were the Potawatomi peoples who lived along the waterways. They hunted caribou, moose, elk, deer, muskrat, and other game; fished the rivers; grew corn, pumpkins, squash, and beans; and gathered wild rice, nuts, berries, and other edible plants. Maple trees are so abundant that the late winter practice of making maple syrup traces back to Indigenous people in the region and continues throughout the county to this day.[14]

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and White settlers appears to have been relatively cordial while the fur trade was strong. However, as fur-bearing animals became overhunted and European settlers sought more land for agriculture, Indigenous peoples were increasingly displaced from their ancestral lands.[15] It is believed that by the turn of the nineteenth century, many Potawatomi people, already feeling the pressure of European settlement, had abandoned their permanent settlements in what would become Washtenaw County in favor of seasonal migrations, arriving in spring to take advantage of the hunting, fishing, and growing season.[16] Ottawa and Ojibwe peoples also passed through what would become Washtenaw County, though in fewer numbers.[17] In 1807, the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe nations signed a treaty with Territorial Governor William Hull, known as the Treaty of Detroit, ceding their lands in southeastern Michigan to the federal government.[18] The General Land Office survey of the Michigan Territory began in 1815, and a land office was opened in Detroit in 1818 to begin the sale of land in the Michigan Territory. Purchases initially had to be for a minimum of 160 acres at $2.00 per acre, which limited potential settlers to those who could afford such a large tract.[19]

Washtenaw County was designated in 1822 and Territorial Governor Lewis Cass chose the name Washtenaw. The name originates from the Ojibwe word "Washtenong," and myths and legends about the meaning of the word are plentiful. However, the most likely meaning comes from experts at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, who suggest the name is derived from the Algonquin language, spoken by the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi nations, and means "far country."[20]

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[14] Ruth Bordin, *Washtenaw County: An Illustrated History* (Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), 13; Wystan Stevens, ed. *Northfield Harvest: A Pictorial History of Northfield Township and the Whitmore Lake Area* (Whitmore Lake, MI: Northfield Township Historical Society, 1999), 40-41; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 98-99, 123, 134-135.

[15] R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis; Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 215-217.

[16] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 13-16; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 43-44.

[17] Willis F. Dunbar and George S. May, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State*, Third Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 146.

[18] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 13-16; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 46; Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 219-220; Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, 138; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 147, 150.

[19] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 45-47; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 93, 154-155.

[20] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 18, 21-22; Virgil J. Vogel, *Indian Names in Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1986), 6-11, 124-125.

As large numbers of European settlers arrived in Michigan, animals were hunted and displaced from the tribes' hunting grounds, European medicines were needed to combat European diseases in Indigenous populations, and Indigenous peoples increasingly required European goods for their daily lives. As their self-sufficiency decreased, Indigenous peoples began to rely on annuities offered by the federal government in exchange for their ancestral land, while at the same time, the federal government began to force their removal from the region in a concerted effort to claim land for crop cultivation.[21] Therefore, in the late 1830s, most of the remaining Potawatomi people in Michigan, including those in Washtenaw County, were taken west of the Mississippi River by force.[22] William T. Groves noted in his reminiscences, "How long the Indians [sic] remained in this neighborhood I do not know. Perhaps as late as 1840. Where they went I do not know… Nothing remains to-day in this vicinity to remind us of those early residents."[23]

Prior to their removal west, Indigenous peoples coexisted with the Groves family. William T. Groves recalled his grandfather, William P. Groves telling him about "Chief Toge's Indians" and that they were "of a friendly disposition."[24] But Groves also perceived that "while the Indians never bothered the incoming settlers, still the white men were always on the alert."[25] He describes increased tension during the Black Hawk War in 1832, petty thefts at his family farm by the Indigenous people, and the necessity of "tact" in their relationships. Reflecting common prejudices of the time, and likely those expressed by his grandfather, he describes them as "a dirty lot and somewhat shiftless."[26]

In spite of their differences, the Groves family appears to have maintained relatively good relations with their Indigenous neighbors and they appear to have generally helped one another. William T. Groves describes his father and grandfather trading tobacco, molasses, or sugar, or loaning guns in exchange for fresh venison, and he also notes that the family sometimes gave their old clothing to the Indigenous people.[27] Groves recalls a family story in his journal: "it so happened one day when grandfather was suffering from a severe tooth ache that an Indian came by. He cast a glance [at] grandfather and offered him a chew of his tobacco indicating that it would cure pain. 'Uh, white man feel better.' And so he did feel better."[28] Similarly, Groves describes offering the use of their grindstone: "The Indians soon discovered our folks had a

[21] Edmunds, *The Potawatomis,* 215-217; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 146.

[22] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 13-16; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 46; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest,* 219-220; Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History,* 138; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 147, 150.

[23] Groves, "The Old Farm," 9.

[24] William Taylor Groves wrote his reminiscences in a book he titled, "The Old Farm: The Story of Its History," as well as a number of other untitled journals, photo albums, and other documents. These materials remain in the possession of his descendants and were made available to the author. William T. Groves was the fourth generation of the family to live at the Groves Farm, and his journals record his own experiences, as well as his recollections of stories told to him by his father, Albert Damon Groves, and grandfather, William Parley Groves. Groves, "The Old Farm," 5.

[25] Groves, "The Old Farm," 6.

[26] Groves, "The Old Farm," 5.

[27] Groves, "The Old Farm," 7-9; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Indians," 5.

[28] Groves, "The Old Farm," 7, 9.

grindstone and that it would sharpen tools. Soon they started to bring their tommahawks [sic] and knives."[29] He also notes that "many a Indian drank from [the well]."[30]

European Settlement of Washtenaw County – 1820 to 1830

European pioneers began to arrive in the area in the mid-1820s and were typically New Englanders seeking larger land tracts and more fertile soils than could be obtained in the New England states. The first to arrive in present-day Washtenaw County were John Allen, Elisha Walker Rumsey, and Benjamin Sutton, who traveled west from Detroit on the Sauk Trail in 1824. Upon reaching present-day Plymouth, Allen and Rumsey turned south and later founded the city of Ann Arbor, while Sutton turned north into what would become Washtenaw County's Northfield Township.[31] The Groves Farm is located on Sutton Road, named for Benjamin Sutton.

Travel to Michigan in the early nineteenth century was expensive and difficult, though was greatly improved following the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes with a waterway across New York state. This route was much faster and less expensive than overland travel, and it was the first water route to the Great Lakes that did not require portage. The same year, Congress provided funds to improve the road from Detroit to Fort Dearborn, known then as the Sauk Trail and today part of US Highway 12.[32] Groves' great-grandson, William T. Groves, noted in his reminiscences, "after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 many farmers sold their farms in Massachusetts and went west where land was cheaper and easier to farm. There seemed to be more of a future."[33] By the 1830s most settlers to Washtenaw County traveled by boat through the Erie Canal to Buffalo, where they could board a sailing ship or steamship across the Great Lakes to Detroit, then travel by wagon to their final destinations. As a result, most settlers during these early years were from New England or western New York.[34]

Nicholas Groves (1788-1866) was among those who left New England seeking better fortunes in Michigan in the 1830s. Groves was born in 1788 in Whitingham, Vermont, to Jesse and Martha Parley Groves, and in 1796, the family moved to East Charlemont, Massachusetts. Nicholas Groves helped his father manage his farm, and after his father's death in 1819 and his stepmother's death in 1828, he decided to travel the newly opened Erie Canal to Michigan. Following the advice of a neighbor who had previously moved west, Groves traveled to Michigan in 1831 and purchased two adjacent eighty-acre tracts of land in Northfield Township.[35]

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[29] Groves, "The Old Farm, 8."

[30] Groves, "The Old Farm," 19.

[31] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 51-53, 69-70; Thomas P. Hennings, *Looking Back: The History of Northfield Township and the Whitmore Lake Area* (Whitmore Lake, MI: Northfield Township Historical Society, 1985), 24-26.

[32] Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 93, 155, 158-161, 164.

[33] Groves, "The Old Farm," 52.

[34] Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 165, 170, Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 52, 55, 91.

[35] Groves, "The Old Farm," 52-53; United States to Nicholas Groves, Certificate No. 5938, April 4, 1833, Personal Collection of Ann Groves [hereafter referred to as Groves Collection]; United States to Nicholas Groves, Certificate No. 5939, April 4, 1833, Groves Collection. Family records indicate the family arrived in 1831, though the land acquisition was recorded in 1833.

Groves returned to Massachusetts and prepared for the move, packing up the family's personal items and selling the livestock. He traveled with his second wife, Clarinda Holbrook Groves; their daughter Harriet; and three of his children from his first marriage, Lois Ann, William Parley, and Roxa. A fourth child from his first marriage, Martha, remained in Massachusetts with her Stearns grandparents.[36] William Taylor Groves noted in his journal that his father, William Parley Groves, "was one of the most enthused members of the family and nothing would keep him in Charlemont. The thrill of going to a wild country appealed to him."[37] Though transportation had improved by that time, it was still a long and challenging journey. They traveled overland from Charlemont, Massachusetts, to Albany, New York, where they boarded a canal boat traveling via the Erie Canal to Buffalo, New York. They then boarded another boat to cross the Great Lakes. Upon arrival in Detroit, Groves likely purchased food, clothing, and other supplies, as well as oxen and a wagon, before setting out for Northfield Township, a two-day journey.[38]

Nicholas Groves and the Establishment of the Groves Farm – 1831 to 1846

Upon arriving in Northfield Township with his family in December of 1831, Groves established a small farmstead that remains an extant reminder of Euro-American settlement in rural Washtenaw County. During the settlement era, Washtenaw County, and much of southeastern Michigan, was primarily made up of dispersed farmsteads, typically including a farmhouse, one or more livestock barns, and several smaller domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Farmsteads were usually on 80- or 160-acre parcels and connected by rudimentary dirt or plank roads. Early Washtenaw County had few urban areas and travel by wagon was difficult and time-consuming over early roads. As a result, crossroads communities formed throughout rural regions, usually at the intersection of primary roadways and often including a variety of public services, such as a general store, post office, inn, restaurant, school, or church.

Nicholas Groves' acreage was wooded with oak, elm, ash, hickory, and walnut trees, so Groves and his son, William Parley, began clearing the land and constructing a home. While this work took place, the family stayed with their neighbors to the north, the John Renwick family.[39] William T. Groves, notes in his journal that, at the time of their settlement, "no lumber yards and very few saw mills had been set up. What few they were, were far away."[40] Within a few weeks, they had completed a log cabin (no longer extant) northeast of the present house and extending into present-day Sutton Road, constructed of the ax-hewn logs from the cleared land with bark-covered split slabs laid for the roof and a rough, oak plank floor. The cabin was about twenty feet by about twelve feet, with a log chimney at the east end. The door was in the south elevation, and the house had several windows. A loft served as the family sleeping area, accessed by a ladder

[36] William T. Groves, "The Old Farm: The Story of Its Past," 4, Groves Collection; William T. Groves, *A History & Genealogy of the Groves Family in America* (Ann Arbor, MI: self-published, 1915), 23-27.
[37] Groves, "The Old Farm," 64.
[38] Groves, "The Old Farm," 39, 53-54, 63-64; Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 165.
[39] Groves, "The Old Farm," 1-4, 54-55, 65.
[40] Groves, "The Old Farm," 3, 32.

that could be drawn up overnight for safety.[41] Groves also dug a well (no longer extant), which was lined with stone and located near the cabin.[42]

At the time the log cabin was constructed on the Groves Farm in 1831 there was no road leading to it, but by the 1840s, a corduroy road, which became present-day Sutton Road, extended from the Renwick farm north of the Groves Farm to Sutton's Corners at the intersection of Pontiac Trail, a little less than a mile and a half south of the Groves Farm. Local governments did not yet, at that time, maintain many public roads in the township. Therefore the Groves family served as the "pathmaster" for Sutton Road, assuming responsibility for its maintenance, which meant keeping brush and weeds cut away in the summer months and the snow cleared away in the winter months.[43]

While relatively flat, Northfield Township has a high water table, resulting in abundant swamps and marshes, and many settlement-era landowners constructed canals or enlarged natural streams to drain swampland and gain more acreage for agriculture. These early drainage efforts were initially the concern of each individual landowner, but in 1851, the county began assuming ownership and responsibility for the drains. By the 1880s about forty miles of drainage system had been built throughout Northfield Township, with two drains that passed through the Groves Farm.[44] The McCarthy Drain cut across the northwest corner of the original farm and the Groves & Horseshoe Lake Drain cut through the southern end of the farm. Both remain extant, though neither are located within the current acreage.

The earliest farmers in Northfield Township were subsistence farmers concerned primarily with self-sufficiency, rather than profitability, and therefore farms were small-scale, generalized operations. Most farmers grew corn, wheat, oats, barley, hay, and potatoes, and in the fall they grew strawberries, squash, and pumpkins. Farmers worked together in the fall to cut and shuck grain, pitch hay, and gather vegetables. Crabapple and plum trees were native, but settlers brought pear, apple, and peach trees from the Northeast to the region as well.[45] They also raised sheep, hogs, and cattle, and kept dogs to protect their livestock from predators and crops from deer and other native grazers. Sheep-shearing took place each spring, while sheep, hogs, and sometimes cattle were slaughtered in the fall.

According to family maps and journals, the Groves Farm was representative of early farmsteads in Northfield Township. Livestock were especially difficult for pioneers to transport, therefore Benjamin Sutton, who lived just south of the Groves Farm, seized the opportunity by selling

[41] Groves, "The Old Farm," 1-4, 54-55, 65.

[42] Groves, "The Old Farm," 19.

[43] Groves, "The Old Farm," 25-26, 87-88.

[44] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 27, 93, 107-108; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 641; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 12; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 50-51.

[45] [George Sutton], "Northfield Township," *History of Washtenaw County, Michigan; Together with Sketches of Its Cities, Villages and Townships […]* (1881; repr., Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Mt. Vernon, IN: Windmill Productions, Inc., 1990), 641; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 40, 97, 99-100; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan: An Historic Context for the Theme of Agriculture* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, Michigan State University, 2004), 11.

livestock to newcomers.[46] The Groves family purchased milk cows and beef cattle from Sutton,[47] housing the livestock in a log barn (no longer extant) completed in early 1832. The log barn and adjacent pastures, enclosed with split rail fences, were located near the cabin on the west side of present-day Sutton Road.[48] The first land cleared and cultivated with subsistence crops, oats, and corn was immediately north of the log cabin, now north of the extant barns. The northeast corner of the original farm, east of the current property and known as the East Field, was a grassy meadow when the Groves family arrived. The grasses were cut for hay and this field too was planted with subsistence crops.[49]

The Groves family participated in local politics, as most men of means did during the settlement era. Benjamin Sutton hosted a community meeting at his home in 1832, during which residents of the area prepared a petition to the state legislature for the separation from Ann Arbor Township and the formation of a new township. The petition was approved that December, and the new township was named Northfield. The name "Northfield" may refer to the township's location in northern Washtenaw County, but more likely it is a reference to the settlers' New England roots, as Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire all have towns that bear the same name. The election of township officers took place at Sutton's home the following spring, during which Nicholas Groves was elected Overseer of the Poor.[50]

In 1839, the Lucerne Post Office was established at the farm of John Renwick, the Groves' neighbor to the north. When Renwick was elected to the state legislature in 1849, he resigned his position as postmaster. William P. Groves was appointed in his place and the post office was moved into the recently constructed frame farmhouse at the Groves Farm.[51] William T. Groves shared this recollection: "Mail was carried on horseback from Ann Arbor to Pontiac via South Lyon. The carrier used to stop here for his dinner. [He] would eat it before the fire-place and [kept] his mail sack beside him. Grandfather [William P. Groves] had his post office box desk. Very few letters bore a stamp. The letter postage was 5¢ and was marked by hand 'paid 5¢.'"[52] He also noted that "all the neighborhood received their mail here [at the Groves Farmhouse]."[53] Groves remained the postmaster until the Lucerne Post Office was discontinued in July 1853.[54]

William Parley Groves and the Growth of the Groves Farm – 1846 to 1907

[46] [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 636, 639; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 53-55, 70-71; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 27, 29.

[47] Groves, "The Old Farm," 40.

[48] William T. Groves, untitled manuscript, "Chronology," Groves Collection; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Outline of Farm Buildings"; Groves, "The Old Farm," 36-37.

[49] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 41, 55, 75.

[50] Groves, "The Old Farm," 56; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 54-55, 69, 71, 91; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 640-641, 644; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 29-30, 76.

[51] Groves, "The Old Farm," 26-28, 68; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 134; Walter Romig, *Michigan Place Names* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 336.

[52] Groves, "The Old Farm," 27.

[53] Groves, "The Old Farm," 68.

[54] Groves, "The Old Farm," 26-28, 68-69; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 134; Romig, *Michigan Place Names*, 336.

In 1846, the family hired Hascal Laraway and Philander Murray, carpenters from Salem Township, just east of Northfield Township, to build a larger frame house southwest of the log cabin. Lumber was brought in from Flint, about seventy miles north of the farm, presumably by wagon as the railroad had not yet been extended into Northfield Township. The tripartite house was comprised of a one-and-one-half-story center block with a central entrance, flanked by one-story wings with exterior end chimneys at the north and south ends.[55] The c.1831 log cabin was razed when the new house was completed, though family history suggests that one of the hearth stones from the log cabin was used as the steppingstone for the corn crib/granary (D), possibly the stone that remains in place today.[56]

Later that year, the barnyard was moved to the east side of Sutton Road and a threshing/dairy barn (B) was constructed. The south end of the barn housed livestock, the north end of the barn served as the granary, with the central bay used as a threshing floor.[57] A stone-lined well was dug adjacent to the barn (G), which also remains extant. The water was first pulled up by hand, then by a pump, and then by a wooden windmill (no longer extant).[58]

The following year, 1847, Nicholas Groves transferred the property to his son, William P. Groves, though he continued to live at the farm. The property at that time encompassed two hundred acres, including a forty-acre farm property on Pontiac Trail, just south of the original 160 acres on Sutton Road.[59] In 1851, William married Harriet Fitzsimmons, whose family had come to Michigan from New York in the 1840s, and the couple had six children: Roxa, Albert Damon (1853-1924), Elizabeth, Harriet, Edwin William, and Fanny May.[60] The Groves family enlarged the house as their family grew. A west wing was added onto the back of the house in 1856 by local carpenters Eugene Savage and Thomas Bisbee and was used as a dining room in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[61] In 1864, a south wing was added to the house and used as a living area for Nicholas Groves until his death in 1866.[62]

The arrival of the railroad in southern Michigan in the 1840s opened new markets for Northfield Township farmers who were able to transport their products to Ann Arbor for distribution. As a result, subsistence crops began to find markets as cash crops. In addition to wheat, which had been the primary cash crop, the popularity of potatoes and apples as cash crops increased. The demand for wool and dairy products grew and, as the numbers of livestock increased, hay and corn became increasingly important cash crops.[63] The Groves Farm demonstrates these trends, increasing both livestock herds and cash crop production. In the 1850 federal agriculture

[55] Groves, "The Old Farm," 14, 37.
[56] Groves, untitled manuscript, "Chronology"; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Light and Heat," 7.
[57] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37.
[58] Groves, "The Old Farm," 20; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 5.
[59] Nicholas Groves to William P. Groves, June 8, 1847, Groves Collection; John Renwick to Nicholas Groves, Deed Book H, Pages 129-130, Washtenaw County Register of Deeds, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
[60] Groves, *A History and Genealogy of the Groves Family in America*, 33-35.
[61] Groves, "The Old Farm," 14, 37.
[62] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37, 57.
[63] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 97; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 12-13; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 53.

census, Nicholas Groves reported 2 horses, 3 milk cows, 8 other cattle, 60 sheep, and 3 hogs, and the farm produced 300 bushels of wheat, 10 bushels of corn, 15 bushels of buckwheat, 8 tons of hay, 75 pounds of wool, and 100 pounds of butter. In 1860, William P. Groves reported generally the same products, but in much larger quantities: 3 horses, 6 milk cows, 10 other cattle, 4 working oxen, 140 sheep, and 7 hogs, and producing 600 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of oats, 100 bushels of Irish potatoes, 75 tons of hay, 40 bushels of clover seed, 500 pounds of wool, 200 pounds of butter, 60 pounds of cheese, and orchard products.[64] The 1850 federal agriculture census recorded 162 farms in Northfield Township. A comparison of improved land, meaning land used in cultivation, pasture, orchards, gardens, fallow, or occupied by buildings, shows that over half of these farms were fewer than fifty acres and only about five percent were greater than 150 acres, putting the Groves family in the township's top echelon.[65]

Additional barns were added to the farm in the 1850s. A shed (no longer extant) was constructed on the north side of the threshing/dairy barn (B) sometime between 1846 and 1855 and housed sheep and lambs. It is not clear where William P. Groves acquired his first flock of sheep, but William T. Groves observed, "It was fortunate, for grandfather. As wool went up and sheep were scarce and he rented out sheep all over the country and from this derived a good income." Around the time of the Civil War, wool prices peaked at about one dollar per pound but dropped by the 1880s. Groves recalled they had always had two flocks of sheep producing fine Merino wools, and he noted "shearing sheep was a big event," originally done by hand and later using machine clippers.[66]

In 1855 a large animal barn was moved to the Groves Farm, relocated from near the intersection of Whitmore Lake and North Territorial Roads, an area known as Welch's Corners, about three miles to the west of the farm. This crossroads was also known as Multop's (or Multhaup's) Corners and the barn may have come from the Multop family farm, though its exact origins are not clear. Known by the Groves family as the East Barn (C), it remains extant east of the threshing/dairy barn (B) and was also a New England threshing barn type. William T. Groves described the barn with "a center drive, a mow to the north, a calve stable and horse barn on the south," though it is now a single open space.[67] The following year, the 1832 log barn on the west side of Sutton Road was demolished.[68]

In 1859 a cow shed (no longer extant) was constructed by Eugene Savage onto the east side of the threshing/dairy barn (B). Groves noted that the barns were "all hooked together in a New England fashion. The years 1846, 1855, and 1859 there must have been that 'Massachusetts influence.' The idea was, of course, the protection of the Stock from the cold winds of the North

[64] 1850 Agriculture Census; US Census Bureau, "Schedule 4 - Productions of Agriculture in Northfield [Township] in the County of Washtenaw," 1860, BHL.

[65] US Census Bureau, "Schedule 4 – Productions of Agriculture in Northfield Township in the County of Washtenaw," 1850, BHL [hereafter 1850 Agriculture Census]; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 110.

[66] Groves, "The Old Farm," 40-41, 72.

[67] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37.

[68] Groves, untitled manuscript, "Chronology"; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Outline of Farm Buildings"; Groves, "The Old Farm," 37.

and West. Our old custom was a straw stack in the center. The warm sun coming from the south in the winter months meant much."[69]

The north and northeast fields had been in cultivation since 1832, and by the 1850s, the remainder of the farm had been cleared with the exception of about twelve acres in the southeast corner, known by the family as the Twelve Acres. Farming had become more profitable, facilitating increased production of cash crops such as apples.[70] In the 1840s vegetable gardens for the family's use were moved from the North Field to a garden adjacent to and just north of the farmhouse, and the North Field was instead planted with apple trees.[71] William P. Groves was a member of the pomological society and considered a local expert on apple cultivation.[72] An important settlement-era crop, apple seeds and seedlings had been brought to Northfield Township by Moses Allen, who had come to Michigan from New York in 1825. Allen had relocated to Plymouth, Michigan, in 1830, and Benjamin Sutton had taken over his apple orchards. William P. Groves likely obtained apple seeds and/or seedlings from Sutton to start his own extensive orchards.[73] William T. Groves noted in his journal that "apple buyers used to come around to buy… [William P. Groves] made more on his apples than on all the rest of the farm."[74] Barrels were brought from Ann Arbor by wagon, filled with apples, and returned to town for sale.[75] An additional 210 apple trees were planted on the farm in 1862.[76]

While none of the members of the Graves family saw military service during the Civil War, the family found other ways to support the war effort. William P. Groves had aged out of the draft at forty-five years old, but he still attempted to enlist and was rejected. William T. Groves noted that, "Grandfather's [William P. Groves] sympathies were with the abolitionists."[77] The family increased grain production to help provide provisions for Union soldiers campaigning in the South and purchased government bonds to help raise funds for the war effort. The Groves family also helped neighboring farmers who were drafted to hire substitutes so their farms could remain in operation during the war years.[78]

Agricultural advancements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries impacted Northfield Township farms. Steam-powered tractors, riding plows, spring tooth harrows, seed drills, row crop cultivators, forage mowers, twine binders, threshers, and large grain combines all increased efficiency and crop yields while decreasing labor needs. In the early twentieth century, gas-powered tractors and trucks replaced animals and steam, furthering a shift to larger agricultural operations with whom smaller farms struggled to compete.[79] These advancements

[69] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37-38.
[70] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34.
[71] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34-35; "Map of the Groves Farm," 1924, Ann Groves Collection.
[72] Groves, "The Old Farm," 41.
[73] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 53-55, 70-71; [Sutton], "Northfield Township," 639; Hennings, *Looking Back*, 29.
[74] Groves, "The Old Farm," 41.
[75] "Map of the Groves Farm," 1924; Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 41, 73.
[76] Timeline, Groves Collection.
[77] Groves, "The Old Farm," 70.
[78] Groves, "The Old Farm," 70-72.
[79] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 100-101, 105; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 14-15

also resulted in an increasing focus on cash crops, which in turn began a shift toward distinct geographic preferences for specific crops throughout the state. However, the central region of the lower peninsula, including Northfield Township, continued the generalized farming predominant since settlement. Farmers in this region continued to grow a variety of cash crops like corn, wheat, and hay; fruits and vegetables like apples and potatoes; and kept livestock like dairy cows and sheep.[80]

The 1870 federal agriculture census shows Northfield Township farmers continued to produce wheat, corn, oats, hay, Irish potatoes, apples, and sometimes barley, as well as raising milk cows, sheep, and hogs.[81] William P. Groves reported 10 horses, 8 milk cows, 3 other cattle, 93 sheep, and 6 hogs in the 1870 federal agriculture census, and his farm produced 250 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of corn, 400 bushels of barley, 40 bushels of buckwheat, 200 bushels of Irish potatoes, 70 tons of hay, 370 pounds of wool, 1,200 pounds of butter, and orchard products – roughly comparable to the 1860 census.[82] Northfield Township farmers took vegetables, fruit, and wool by wagon to Ann Arbor markets, where produce could be shipped to Toledo, Detroit, or other nearby cities by train, sold in local markets, or bartered in town for other goods. Wool was taken to carding mills in Ann Arbor or Delhi Mills, just northwest of Ann Arbor, and a wool factory was located at Foster's Station, on the Huron River northwest of Ann Arbor. All three were served by the Michigan Central Railroad, which shipped processed wool to larger eastern textile operations. Cattle from several farms were often gathered into larger herds and driven to Detroit or other railroad depots for shipping to larger markets.[83]

The 1880 federal agriculture census shows that nearly every farm in Northfield township grew corn, wheat, hay, and potatoes. Over eighty percent of farms had apple orchards and about five percent had peach orchards at that time. There was also diversity among the livestock, with over ninety-three percent of farms with dairy cows, nearly ninety-two percent of farms with chickens, over eighty-one percent of farms with hogs, and over sixty-eight percent of farms with sheep.[84] The 1894 state agriculture census showed similar generalization, with nearly all farms reporting corn, wheat, hay, and potatoes, nearly two-thirds reporting apple orchards, peach orchards, pear orchards, and vineyards. Livestock showed similar patterns as well, with over ninety-six percent of farms with dairy cows, ninety-eight percent with chickens, over eighty-one percent with hogs, and sixty-two percent with sheep.[85] The Groves Farm continued to be a representative and successful example of Washtenaw County farms during this time. In this census, William P. Groves reported 4 milk cows, 10 other cattle, 115 sheep, 9 hogs, and 30 chickens, and the farm produced 550 bushels of wheat, 450 bushels of corn, 480 bushels of barley, 40 bushels of Irish

[80] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 16; Michigan State University, "Agricultural Regions in Michigan," geo.msu.edu/extra/geogmich/ag_regions.html.

[81] US Census Bureau, "Schedule 3 – Productions of Agriculture in Northfield Township in the County of Washtenaw," 1870, BHL [hereafter 1870 Agriculture Census].

[82] 1870 Agriculture Census.

[83] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 99, 109.

[84] US Census Bureau, *1880 U.S. Federal Census – Agriculture Schedule*, Microfilm, BHL [hereafter 1880 Agriculture Census].

[85] Washtenaw County, *Washtenaw County Census, Schedule III: Productions of Agriculture, 1894*, BHL.

potatoes, 690 pounds of wool, 400 pounds of butter, 120 bushels of apples, and 350 dozen eggs.[86]

The agricultural complex on the east side of Sutton Road continued to grow. Since the Groves family had increased grain production to help feed the Union Army, a corn crib/granary (D) was built in 1864. It was built by a Mr. Johnson and remains extant northwest of the threshing/dairy barn (B). The following year, a hog house (no longer extant) was constructed near the corn crib/granary by a Mr. Osborn. A concrete floor was poured in the hog house in 1900 and the building was clad in wood siding.[87] A horse barn (E) was built by local builder Thomas Taylor in 1872 and remains extant at the south end of the barnyard. The horse barn features a decorative cornice and originally had a cupola and running horse weathervane, though these were removed when the roof was replaced in 1931.[88] A smokehouse (no longer extant) was built adjacent to the house in 1894, and William T. Groves recalled, "smoking our meat here with hickory bark and corn cobs in the early spring."[89] Around 1900, a chicken house (no longer extant) was built at the south end of the barnyard by Jack Hamlin.[90]

Fences were built to delineate pastures and contain livestock. In 1870s and 1880s, sawn wood became more readily available, therefore board fences began to replace the older split rail fences. Slat fences, which were made up of narrow vertical boards connected by wire, were a versatile fence used on the farm in the nineteenth century; they were flexible and movable, and therefore could be rolled up and moved around the farm as needed. Around the turn of the twentieth century, wire fences began to replace the rail, board, and slat fences.[91] Because of these changes in technology, none of the historic fencing remains extant, though archaeological evidence may exist. However, at the Groves Farm, the wood was repurposed in other buildings around the farm, including the 1865 hog house and the c.1900 chicken house.[92]

Field patterns also shifted as crop yields increased or new crops were tested and abandoned. The Twelve Acres in the southeast corner of the farm was cleared in the 1860s and planted with corn.[93] In the early 1880s the Groves family leased the East Field to Mr. Baumgartner who planted onions, which grew well, but were not profitable. South of the East Field was a cow pasture, which was fenced to prevent the cows from collapsing the sides of the Groves & Horseshoe Lake Drain, which transected the southern half of the farm.[94] On the west side of Sutton Road, Albert D. Groves, son of William P. Groves, planted a second apple orchard north of the farmhouse around 1880. Apples remained an important crop until the orchard was destroyed by cankerworms in the late 1890s.[95] For a short time in the 1870s, the Groves family grew hops – a particularly labor-intensive crop – in a field west of the house and south of the

[86] 1880 Agriculture Census.
[87] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.
[88] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.
[89] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.
[90] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.
[91] Groves, "The Old Farm," 36.
[92] Groves, "The Old Farm," 38.
[93] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 41 75.
[94] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 41 75.
[95] "Map of the Groves Farm," 1924; Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 41, 73-74.

orchard, hiring laborers to harvest the crop. Bushels of hops were taken to the horse barn at the Frasier Farm (formerly owned by the Renwicks) to be dried prior to sale. From the late 1890s until about 1904, the Groves family maintained about eighteen honeybee swarms in two rows of beehives near the house. They collected honey from the upper sections of the hives, storing it in the corn crib/granary (D), and left the rest for the bees use during the winter.[96]

Ann Arbor remained the primary market for the farm's products through the late nineteenth century. William T. Groves recalled that his father, Albert D. Groves, took grain by truck to the mills and markets in the Ann Arbor area. Barley was taken to Ypsilanti, east of Ann Arbor, for sale to the brewery there. Wheat was taken to the mill at Geddesburg, a small settlement on the Huron River east of Ann Arbor; Delhi mills, a village northwest of Ann Arbor and also on the Huron River; and later to the flour mill at the settlement of Lower Town, on the Huron River southeast of Delhi. Grains were also taken to the three grist mills in Ann Arbor.[97]

Starting in at least the 1860s, the Groves family worked their 200-acre farm with the assistance of farm laborers, tenant farmers, and domestic servants. William T. Groves notes in his journal the names he could recall of men and women who worked at the farm, and census records show that these laborers boarded with the family, came from neighboring farms, or occupied a log tenant house (no longer extant), which was located south of the farmhouse on the east side of Sutton Road. Though the federal census did not record property ownership status until 1900, census records do show that over twenty percent of Northfield Township farming households boarded at least one farm laborer, about ten percent boarded at least one domestic servant, and about five percent boarded both.[98] The Groves Farm demonstrates this trend. In addition, the presence of the log tenant house reveals that tenant farming took place in this area during that time, though the details of this complex system are unclear.[99] Groves recorded the names of several laborers in the 1860s, including Henry Keadle, a laborer who enlisted in the Union Army in 1862 at the farm; Jake Bender and his wife who were tenant farmers and lived in the tenant house; George and Ezra Brokaw who were farm laborers boarding in the Groves farmhouse; Bridget McLaughlin, who appears to have been a teenaged neighbor; and Fred Kapp and George Maulbetch, who lived on farms near the Groves farm.[100] In the 1870s, Jacob Kapp (from Northfield Township) and William Dcorr (from Canada) were boarding with the Groves family and working as farm laborers.[101] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several young women boarded with the Groves family and worked as domestic servants, and a number of young men worked as farm laborers.[102]

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[96] Groves, "The Old Farm," 42, 74.

[97] Groves, "The Old Farm," 24, 39, 41; Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley, *Historic Ann Arbor: An Architectural Guide* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Historical Foundation, 2014), 22-23.

[98] US Census Bureau, *1860 United States Federal Census*, www.ancestry.com; US Census Bureau, *1880 United States Federal Census*, www.ancestry.com.

[99] "Map of the Groves Farm," 1924.

[100] Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 6; Groves, "The Old Farm," 43; *1860 United States Federal Census*.

[101] *1870 United States Federal Census*.

[102] Groves, "The Old Farm," 43; US Census Bureau, *1900 United States Federal Census*, www.ancestry.com.

Like the agricultural outbuildings, the farmhouse was also improved in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The family relied on candles they made themselves for light in the house and barns until 1869 when they got their first kerosene lamps. William T. Groves recalls a family story that "children were not allowed to use them at first. There was the danger of explosion. Later on… that danger had passed. Kerosene oil was bought in 5 gal. cans with the groceries."[103] In 1877 the house was renovated to two full stories.[104] Around 1903 the family installed a gasoline ceiling lamp made by the Superior Lamp Company of Ann Arbor. Groves remembered, "we liked it but father was always afraid of it and I don't believe he ever felt confident of it… gasoline never did replace the kerosene lamps."[105] A new well was dug in the late 1860s near the southeast corner of the house, about forty feet deep and lined with brick. William T. Groves notes that the "water was icy cold and the old tin cup was there to quench ones thirst."[106] Food was cooked on a wood cooking stove installed in 1868.[107] There were also two cisterns providing water for the house. One was filled in 1922 and the other fell out of use by the 1940s when indoor plumbing was installed. Three outhouses were located on the farm, but also fell out of use by the 1940s.[108] A telephone line was extended from the rectory at St. Patrick's Catholic Church east to the Groves Farm in 1905, and though "it was not entirely strange to us since it was in use earlier in Ann Arbor," William T. Groves recalled "it was a thrill to us all to have connection with the outside."[109]

In 1886, Albert D. Groves married Emma Taylor at St. Andrews Church in Ann Arbor. They lived for a short time at the Groves' Pontiac Trail farm property, known as the Forty-Acre Farm. Groves moved back to the family farm on Sutton Road in 1887 and continued to farm both the homestead and the Forty-Acre Farm until the latter was sold in 1899.[110] In 1888 an addition was constructed on the north side of the house by carpenter Lewis Sutton. This wing was used by William P. Groves after Albert D. Groves took over full-time management of the farm.[111] Upon his death in 1899, William P. Groves bequeathed the farm to his son, Albert, and his brother, Edwin W. Groves, who co-managed the farm until Edwin Groves' death in 1915.[112]

The Tenant Era – 1907 to 1940

Tenant farming is a complex system with different types of cash-rental and crop-lien payment arrangements, varying levels of tenant autonomy in managing farm operations, and a range of power dynamics from relatively equal partnerships to deep exploitation of tenants. From the mid-nineteenth century through early twentieth century, hired laborers and tenant farmers at the Groves Farm had worked alongside the family, but in 1907, the Groves family moved to Ann

[103] Groves, "The Old Farm," 17; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Farm Lighting," 3.
[104] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37.
[105] Groves, untitled manuscript, "Farm Lighting," 4-5; Groves, "The Old Farm," 17.
[106] Groves, "The Old Farm," 19; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 1-2.
[107] Groves, "The Old Farm," 16; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Light & Heat," 7-8.
[108] Groves, "The Old Farm," 21.
[109] Groves, "The Old Farm," 29-30; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Communications," 13.
[110] Groves, "The Old Farm," 88.
[111] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37, 80, 89.
[112] Estate of William P. Groves, Last Will and Testament, August 13, 1904, Groves Collection.

Arbor and tenants moved into the farmhouse, taking over full-time operation of the farm.[113] Martin Wurster, a German immigrant who had previously been a hired laborer on the Stafford family's farm in nearby Superior Township, moved into the farmhouse with his family and began farming the Groves' land.[114]

A 1915 farm lease between Albert and Edwin Groves and Martin Wurster reveals the tenant-landowner relationship delegated much of the day-to-day operation of the farm to the Wursters while the Groves family retained rights to access the property and control operations. The Wursters were responsible for providing labor, tools, and machinery; maintaining the buildings and fences; daily husbandry of the livestock; and planting, harvesting, and taking crops to market. The Groves family controlled the overall operation of the farm, including specifications in the lease that no more than twenty acres could be planted with wheat; crops must be rotated with wheat, corn, oats, and hay or clover; and all straw, hay, and oats must be used on the farm rather than sold. Additionally, the Groves family determined when to take crops to market and specified that products must be sold in Ann Arbor. They reserved the north wing of the farmhouse, the one-acre field north of the house, and space to house a horse and buggy in the barn, leasing the remainder of the farmhouse, the fields already in cultivation, and the barns to the Wursters. The Groves family also paid for major expenses at the farm, such as construction of new fences or improvements to buildings, typically hiring local contractors to complete the work. Other aspects of the operations were shared equally, including the provision of seeds, ownership of the livestock, and responsibility for threshing bills and road taxes. At the conclusion of the lease, the Wursters were to "surrender and yield up the said premises together with the buildings, fixtures, fences, walls, ditches, and drains in as good order and repair as they now are… and will also give up and return to the said parties of the first part their just and full share of all stock, grain, bay and other farm products belonging to them under the terms of this lease."[115]

A number of improvements took place at the farm during the Wursters' tenancy, from 1907-1938, overseen and funded by the Groves family. In 1916 the threshing/dairy barn (B) was updated with new siding, a new roof, a concrete floor, and the installation of a hay fork to move hay from ground level into the hay loft.[116] The east/sheep barn (C) was updated with the current gambrel roof in 1916, built by Jay Pray and Lewis Weisemeyer. Jay Pray was a lumber dealer and contractor who lived in Northfield Township, and Freda Jedele, a relative of Carrie Jedele Wurster, was a live-in maid in the Pray household. Lewis Weisemeyer was a carpenter, also from Northfield Township, though his relationship to Pray and the Groves family is unclear.[117] After work on the east/sheep barn was completed, the sheep were moved there from the sheep shed attached to the threshing/dairy barn, the east field was shifted from crops to sheep pasture, and

[113] Groves, "The Old Farm," 23.

[114] Groves, "The Old Farm," 43; *1900 United States Federal Census*; US Census Bureau, *1910 United States Federal Census,* www.ancestry.com; US Census Bureau, *1920 United States Federal Census,* www.ancestry.com; US Census Bureau, *1930 United States Federal Census,* www.ancestry.com; "Martin Wurster and Carrie E. Jedele," Michigan, US, Marriage Records, 1867-1952, www.ancestry.com.

[115] William Taylor Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), 1831-1924, "1915," Groves Collection.

[116] Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1916."

[117] *1910 United States Federal Census; 1920 United States Federal Census*.

the old sheep shed was converted to a tool shed and later demolished.[118] The farm increased milk production and sale in 1917 and to support this expanded venture, the Groves family built a milk house (G) on the north side of the threshing/dairy barn. They also hired Perkins and Fahrner to relocate a silo (no longer extant) from Saginaw to the farm that year, though the origins of the silo are not known.[119] The following year, the tenant house south of the farmhouse was relocated away from the Groves Farm, though where it was moved to is not clear. In 1922 a new floor was laid in the horse barn (E) and the Groves family hired Edwin Thompson of Ann Arbor to deepen the barn well (G) to over ninety feet.[120] The c.1900 chicken house was demolished and in 1925 a new chicken house (no longer extant) was built further back from Sutton Road.[121]

The farm was representative of Michigan and Washtenaw County farms during this time. Corn, wheat, oats, and barley were the top grains produced in the state; sheep and chickens were the most common livestock; the average farm size was about 100 acres, and about sixteen percent of farms in Michigan were operated by tenants.[122] Washtenaw County farms followed statewide trends in crops and livestock, were an average size of 115 acres, and about 20 percent were operated by tenants.[123] William T. Groves kept farm records recording taxes assessed, crop yields, building construction, and other important activities on the farm. These records show that in 1918, the farm produced 50 bushels of wheat, 731 bushels of oats, and 202 bushels of barley, and there were ten cattle, seven milk cows, 95 sheep, 150 chickens, and hogs.[124] In 1923, the farm produced 144 bushels of wheat, 67 bushels of barley, 574 bushels of oats, and 1,100 bushels of corn.[125]

One of the most dramatic events at the Groves Farm took place in 1922 when the fireplace in the south parlor was the source of a devastating house fire. Martin Wurster saw the fire from the threshing/dairy barn (B) and attempted to douse the flames, but the wind caused the fire to spread. In spite of neighbors' efforts to save the house – efforts that drained the well – the house was completely destroyed. Only some furniture and clothing could be saved and the well never refilled, requiring the family to obtain water for the house from the barn well (G).[126] A new house was built immediately, completed in March of 1922 in the same location as the 1846 house, with William Nimke serving as the contractor.[127]

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[118] Groves, "The Old Farm," 34, 37, 41, 75.

[119] Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 2; Groves, "The Old Farm," 16, 38; Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1917."

[120] Groves, "The Old Farm," 20; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 5; Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1923"; Timeline, Groves Collection.

[121] William T. Groves, "The Old Farm," 37, Groves Collection.

[122] US Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Agriculture, Volume II, Part 1 – The Northern States,* "Agriculture – Michigan," 658-659, 660, 665, https://agcensus.library.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/03337983v2p1ch07.pdf.

[123] *1900 United States Federal Census; 1920 United States Federal Census;* US Census Bureau, *1940 United States Federal Census*, www.ancestry.com; *Fifteenth Census,* "Agriculture – Michigan," 658-659, 660, 665.

[124] Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1918."

[125] Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1923."

[126] Groves, "The Old Farm," 15, 19; Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1922."

[127] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37; Groves, untitled manuscript (annual farm reports), "1922."

When Albert D. Groves passed away in 1924, his son, William T. Groves assumed ownership of the farm. He and his wife, Eleanor Harrington Groves, oversaw additional improvements while living in Ann Arbor, and continued to lease the farm to the Wursters.[128] Electric lights were installed in the fall of 1928 when the Detroit Edison Company (now DTE Energy) extended its line to the Groves Farm. All the buildings, the barn well (G), and the windmill were wired by local contractor Roy Rice.[129] An electric furnace was also installed. The Wursters moved out in 1938, and Eleanor Harrington's brother, Irwin Harrington, and his family moved in, bringing with them an electric stove, refrigerator, and radio.[130] In 1939, the farm began utilizing electric fences for all livestock except the sheep, with the first electric fence installed running south from the horse barn (E).[131] The Harringtons remained on the farm until 1940.[132]

William Taylor Groves and William Albert Groves – 1940 to 1961

In the early 1940s, William T. and Eleanor Groves began making plans to return to the farm from Ann Arbor. Eleanor's mother, Mary Harrington, lived with her daughter and son-in-law in Ann Arbor and intended to move to the farm with them. She kept a journal in which she describes their preparations. The Groves family visited the farm every few days, often meeting contractors who were building the new porch, painting the walls, sanding the floors, installing carpet, or repairing appliances. They also did much themselves to prepare, including washing walls, waxing floors, installing shelf paper, and putting away dishes.[133]

A new well was dug for the house in 1941 by Mr. Gott of Whitmore Lake and his assistant "Red." It was dug near the first well, which was then filled in. This well was connected to the newly installed water system by Robert Steward, with Hugo Schneider doing most of the plumbing. It included a toilet and lavatory sink on each floor, a kitchen sink, and a sink in the basement. Bill King dug the drains and the dry well for the septic system.[134]

The agricultural complex was also improved in anticipation of the family returning to the farm. In 1940, a basement was dug in the threshing/dairy barn (B) and the cows were moved there from a cow shed (no longer extant), along with the milking stanchions. In 1941, the milk house was moved on top of the well by the threshing/dairy barn, just outside the south door into the basement, to serve as a pump house (G). The old cow shed remained in use for feeding calves.[135]

Mary Harrington notes in her journal on May 21, 1941, "Moved to the farm to-day," and the following day describes a "weinie roast" picnic with friends and neighbors. Over the following months she describes her grandson William A. Groves cutting hay and picking up hogs with

[128] Probate for Albert D. Groves, December 26, 1924, Groves Collection.
[129] Groves, "The Old Farm," 18, 20; Groves, untitled manuscript, "Farm Lighting," 5.
[130] Groves, "The Old Farm," 16, 18.
[131] Groves, "The Old Farm," 36.
[132] Groves, "The Old Farm," 43.
[133] Journal of Mary Anderson Harrington, 1942-1943, Groves Collection.
[134] Groves, "The Old Farm", 37; Groves, untitled manuscript, "The Water Supply," 2.
[135] Groves, "The Old Farm," 37-38, 40.

Archie Fraser, the neighbor north of the Groves Farm; picking string beans, radishes, peas, onions, and carrots from their vegetable garden; and planting flower gardens with her daughter Eleanor Groves.

They also continued to visit Ann Arbor often and retained their home on Morton Avenue.[136] When William T. Groves died unexpectedly in 1943, Eleanor Groves and Mary Harrington appear to have returned to Ann Arbor. Though the farmhouse was vacant for the next decade, they likely continued to make frequent visits to the farm while Archie Fraser likely continued utilizing the land. Meanwhile, their son William A. Groves enlisted in World War II, then attended the University of Michigan, graduating in 1950. In 1952, he married Elizabeth Swift and they relocated from Ann Arbor to the Groves Farm.[137]

The agricultural advancements that began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued into the mid-twentieth century. Throughout most of the state, further improvements in farming methods, transportation, and marketing allowed farms to specialize in products best suited to the local geography, climate, and soils, in turn furthering in the development of distinct regional patterns of agriculture in Michigan. However, Northfield Township continued to practice diverse, general farming into the mid-twentieth century. Farms in this region were ideally placed to easily access not only the major urban markets within the state, but also transportation networks to large markets and processing facilities in other states. As a result, Northfield Township farms continued to practice generalized farming, growing a variety of cash crops while also raising livestock, much as they had done since the settlement period in the early nineteenth century.[138]

Although farms remained generalized, there were changes in the popularity of some types of crops and livestock during the mid-twentieth century. Corn, wheat, and hay remained the most common cash crops, while the 137 fruit orchards reported in the 1894 state agriculture census had dropped to just fifteen by the 1950s. While nearly every farm in the township raised dairy cows and chickens at the turn of the twentieth century, by the 1950s only about half of Northfield Township farms still kept dairy herds. About two-thirds continued to house chickens by 1954, however chickens were not recorded at all in the 1959 state agriculture census. Hogs and sheep were also common livestock in the 1894 state agriculture census, but hogs were no longer recorded on the state agriculture censuses of the 1950s, and only six farms recorded sheep herds by 1950, with sheep not included at all in subsequent census data.[139] The Groves Farm reflects these shifts among generalized farms in Northfield Township. In the 1950s, they had just 2-3 cows, kept a large vegetable garden, and grew alfalfa, corn, wheat, and soybeans with the help of

[136] Journal of Mary Anderson Harrington, 1942-1943, Groves Collection.

[137] Personal Interview with Ann Groves (descendant) by Cheri Szcodronski, June 25-26, 2023, via email.

[138] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 20, 28

[139] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 110; 1880 Agriculture Census; US Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1950*, "Michigan by Counties," Microfilm, BHL; US Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1954*, Microfilm, BHL [hereafter 1954 Agriculture Census]; US Census Bureau, *United States Census of Agriculture, 1959*, Microfilm, BHL [hereafter 1959 Agriculture Census].

the Maulbetsch family, who also owned a farm nearby, and the hog barn was demolished in the 1960s or 1970s.[140]

The Groves Farm Since 1961

In 1961, William and Elizabeth, with their two daughters, Ann and Carol, moved away from the farm and returned to Ann Arbor. The Groves family leased acreage to the Maulbetsch family and visited the farm often, but they left the farm in favor of the city's accredited school system and because small-scale farming had ceased being profitable. Ann Groves recalls that her father, William A. Groves, "was really tied to the farm, and he would have continued to farm if he could have made a living."[141] Although family farms remained common through the 1960s, most farms in Northfield Township today are leased to larger companies. Farm machinery continued to evolve through the latter decades of the twentieth century and equipment continued to become larger and more expensive. As a result, purchasing and maintaining such equipment became unaffordable and impractical for small farmers. Commercial seed and fertilizer resulted in larger crops that produced greater yield, but this too added to the expense of farming. As a result, more land was needed to grow enough crops in order to remain profitable; therefore, the size of farms began to increase, the number of farmers began to decrease, and leasing farmland became common.[142]

The technology and machinery improvements of the early twentieth century continued to widen the production gap between small family farms and larger agribusiness operations in the mid-twentieth century. Although these improvements resulted in greater production on fewer acres and faster cultivation and processing with less manual labor, the expense of purchasing and maintaining the machinery necessary to remain competitive was too great for many smaller farms.[143] As a result, the number of farming operations in the township, and more broadly throughout the county and much of the state, began to drop dramatically. In 1935, there were approximately 3,500 farms operating throughout the county, but that number fell to just 1,400 farms by 1985. In Northfield Township, two hundred farms had been recorded in the 1894 state agriculture census, but that number dropped to 145 farms by the 1954 state agriculture census and only 109 farms by the 1959 state agriculture census.[144] By 1969, farmers made up less than one percent of the employed people in the county, and that number was cut nearly in half again by 1985.[145]

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[140] Personal Interviews with Ann Groves (descendant) by Cheri Szcodronski, March 31, 2023, and June 25-26, 2023, via email.

[141] Personal Interviews with Ann Groves (descendant) by Cheri Szcodronski, March 21, 2023, and June 30, 2023, at Firefly offices, Chelsea, Michigan.

[142] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 97, 105.

[143] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 86; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 111; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 15-16.

[144] 1880 Agriculture Census; 1954 Agriculture Census; 1959 Agriculture Census.

[145] Bordin, *Washtenaw County,* 86; Stevens, *Northfield Harvest,* 111; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan,* 15-16.

Farm products changed in the late twentieth century as government programs aimed to address flooded markets and decreasing farmland acreage. Although large dairy barns are common on the Northfield Township landscape, few, if any, dairy cows are present today. In the 1980s, dairy farming was effectively ended in Northfield Township when most dairy farmers participated in a federal herd buyout program intended to prevent overproduction.[146] Horses have replaced dairy herds on the farm landscape today. Corn, hay, wheat, and soybeans remain the top cash crops, though farmers no longer rely on the railroads to get their farm products to market, instead transporting goods by truck to Toledo or other nearby cities.[147] By the late twentieth century, pick-your-own farm products, truck farming, and farming-related businesses like meat packing, milling, fertilizer and feed retail, and even veterinary services, offered new opportunities for former farmers.[148] In addition, as the twentieth century came to a close, many farmers found it was more profitable to "grow houses" than crops, and therefore sold their farm fields for housing developments.

In 1968, William A. and Elizabeth Groves sold the house and 2.3 acres on the west side of Sutton Road to Karen Caskey, who immediately sold it to Nancy and Fred LaPointe.[149] Soon after, they purchased the barns and an additional 2.6 acres on the west side of Sutton Road from the Groves, who had been using the barns to store automobiles and antique farm equipment. The LaPointes and their three children raised pigs in the hog barn (no longer extant); ducks and chickens in the granary side (east end) of the corn crib/granary (D); rabbits in a wing on the west side of the horse barn (E) that is no longer extant; and horses, ponies, and a goat in the east/sheep barn (C). They also maintained a vegetable garden just northwest of the house and tended apple, pear, and cherry trees near the farmhouse that had been planted by the Groves.[150]

In 1972, the LaPointes sold both parcels to Sally and Dean Louis. The remainder of the acreage was subdivided and sold in the 1980s and 1990s. Sally Louis retains ownership of the current 4.9-acre property, including the farmhouse and associated outbuildings on both sides of Sutton Road.[151]

Architecture and Settlement/Exploration Context

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[146] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 86.

[147] Stevens, *Northfield Harvest*, 105, 109.

[148] Bordin, *Washtenaw County*, 86.

[149] "William A. Groves and Elizabeth S. Groves to Karen J. Caskey," July 1, 1968, Deed Book 1250, Page 396, WCRD; "Karen Campbell Caskey to Fred D. LaPointe and Nancy L. LaPointe," July 1, 1968, Deed Book 1250, Page 397, WCRD; "William A. Groves and Elizabeth S. Groves to Fred D. LaPointe and Nancy L. LaPointe," Deed Book 1314, Page 330, January 19, 1970, Washtenaw County Register of Deeds, Ann Arbor, Michigan (hereafter WCRD); "Ann Arbor Federal Savings and Loan Association to Fred D. LaPointe and Nancy L. LaPointe," Deed Book 1404, Page 592, July 24, 1972, WCRD; "William A. Groves and Elizabeth S. Groves to Fred D. LaPointe and Nancy L. LaPointe," Deed Book 1404, Page 595, July 24, 1972, WCRD.

[150] Personal Interview with Christine LaPointe (former resident) by Cheri Szcodronski, July 30, 2023, via telephone.

[151] "Fred D. LaPointe and Nancy L. LaPointe to Sally B. Louis and Dean S. Louis," Deed Book 1404, Page 596, July 24, 1972, WCRD; Washtenaw County, Historic Aerial Images, *MapWashtenaw*, https://gisappsecure.ewashtenaw.org/mapwashtenaw/.

The Groves Farm is an intact settlement-era farmstead in rural Northfield Township, established during Michigan's transition from territory to statehood. The farm retains agricultural outbuildings common to early nineteenth century subsistence farms in this region, which demonstrate early- to mid-nineteenth-century vernacular construction methods and the influence of New England architecture on barn construction in the region during the settlement era. Though Northfield Township is notable for the number of farm complexes that remain extant, few retain the full complement of high integrity, settlement-era outbuildings present at the Groves Farm.

Most Northfield Township farms established in the 1830s initially featured log homes built with timber that was cut as the land was cleared of forest for agriculture. These log homes were later replaced with frame buildings as settlers gained prosperity and sawn lumber was more widely available. Extant Northfield Township farm complexes also often retain outbuildings that date to the construction of the log house, as well as later outbuildings that reflect the continued growth of the farm and evolution of farming techniques. Therefore, extant farm complexes typically have farmhouses dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century with outbuildings that date from the early-nineteenth century through the late twentieth century. The farm landscape typically includes a barnyard, once divided into small holding pens for livestock though often fences have not survived, and the domestic complex with a yard, gardens, and outbuildings immediately adjacent to the farmhouse. Most farms have been subdivided over time with much of the original field acreage sold off, but some retain small fields for cultivated crops, hay meadows, or livestock pasture, typically bounded by wooded areas or divided by tree lines.[152] The Groves Farm reflects this trend, with a log cabin (no longer extant) constructed in 1832, a frame house replacing it in 1846 though later destroyed by fire, and the extant farmhouse completed in 1922 and updated with Colonial Revival detailing in 1941. Extant nineteenth-century outbuildings include the 1846 threshing/dairy barn (B), 1850 east/sheep barn (C), 1864 corn crib/granary (D), and 1872 horse barn (E). The barnyard surrounding the agricultural complex remains, though fences are no longer extant and the former crop fields and pasture have been subdivided and sold.

Farm complexes began to change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the arrival of the railroads and the availability of new markets, as well as the advent of new farming technologies, including commercial fertilizers and new machinery. Most farms in Northfield Township and the surrounding region remained predominantly generalized farms, with a combination of cash crops, subsistence crops, and livestock, but they often increased in size and production. As new machinery allowed greater production with less manual labor, cash crop production increased. Likewise, with the ability to produce more corn and hay, larger herds of livestock could be maintained. Improvements in transportation meant vegetables, fruits, eggs, and dairy products could be stored longer and shipped farther, allowing increases in those farming operations as well. As a result, the farm complex evolved with more storage buildings,

[152] Cheri LaFlamme Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County [Michigan]," 2021, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Lansing, 51.

larger barns, and the construction of silos and chicken houses during this period.[153] In the early twentieth century, dairy production increased at the Groves Farm, resulting in the construction of a milk house (G) in 1917 and the addition of a basement to the threshing/dairy barn (B) to house milk cows and stanchions.

Farmsteads included agricultural outbuildings related to housing, storing, and processing crops or livestock, and domestic outbuildings related to the operation of the household. The topography of Northfield Township is generally flat, allowing a relatively regular placement of outbuildings with respect to the farmhouse. Domestic outbuildings are typically smaller in scale and arranged closer to the farmhouse for ease of use by the farm family, while agricultural outbuildings are usually medium- or large-scale buildings positioned on the periphery of the farm complex to support agricultural operations. Animal barns in particular are placed on the periphery of the farm complex, and outbuildings used in the care of livestock, such as grain silos or corn cribs, are typically in close proximity to animal barns.[154] The Groves Farm is arranged with the domestic complex, including the farmhouse and garage, on the west side of Sutton Road, while the agricultural complex, including the animal barns, corn crib/granary, and milk house are together on the east side of Sutton Road.

The defining feature of Northfield Township farmsteads is the livestock barn, which was used for housing cows, horses, hogs, or sheep. Livestock barns are multi-story buildings usually with a gambrel or, less commonly, gable roof form. Wide doors facilitated moving livestock and equipment and smaller doors provided exterior access to the loft.[155] A comprehensive barn survey has not been completed for either Washtenaw County or the state of Michigan. As a result, it is difficult to identify different types of livestock barns without direct knowledge of their use, to quantify their frequency, or determine how many may remain extant. However, the Groves Farm does retain nineteenth-century livestock barns used to house dairy cows, sheep, and horses.

Wheat and other grains dominated agriculture of the Midwest throughout the nineteenth century, therefore, as farmers relocated from the New England region to the Midwest, many constructed three-bay threshing barns, a form common in eighteenth and early nineteenth century New England. These settlement-era barns are characterized by stone foundations, gabled roofs, timber frame construction, and large central entry doors, with the three interior bays providing dedicated space for livestock, a threshing floor, and a granary. As agriculture in the Midwest shifted from grains to dairy, basements were often dug to accommodate increased dairy herds and associated equipment.[156] The Michigan Barn Preservation Network estimates that approximately one-quarter of barns in Washtenaw County are or were this barn type, though it is difficult to clearly define how common threshing barns were in nineteenth century Northfield Township or how

[153] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 52; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 15-17.

[154] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 52.

[155] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 56; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 52-58.

[156] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1995), 40-59.

many may remain extant. Many gabled barns were altered with the construction of gambrel roofs to better accommodate hay storage, making interior access necessary to identify this barn type. Threshing barns also have many colloquial names – they are known as the English barn, New England barn, Connecticut barn, or Yankee barn, further complicating efforts to quantify their use and survival.[157]

In 1846 a three-bay threshing barn (B) was constructed at the Groves Farm and remains the center of the agricultural complex. The Groves family almost certainly utilized this barn type on their Massachusetts farm, bringing their knowledge of, and preference for, this barn type with them from New England to the Midwest. The barn retains a gable roof, vertical wood siding, large batten doors, a stone foundation, and heavy timber framing with mortise and tenon joints. The south end of the barn housed livestock and therefore contains small wood windows for light and ventilation. The north end of the barn served as the granary and is accessed by an original door with strap hinges inscribed "1846." The barn was originally accessed on the east and west elevations by earthen ramps, leading to a central threshing floor, though the east entrance was removed in the 1890s. In 1940, a basement was dug to accommodate the dairy herd and milking stanchions.

The c.1850 east/sheep barn (C) at the Groves Farm was also constructed as a three-bay threshing barn. Although early farmers in Northfield Township often kept sheep, it appears few sheep barns have survived. These were typically medium-sized barns with gable- or gambrel-roof forms, usually without an adjacent silo, and they can be difficult to distinguish from other livestock barns without direct knowledge of their use.[158] The east/sheep barn at the Groves Farm was moved to the site from another nearby farm in 1855 and is located at the east end of the agricultural complex. It has vertical board siding, a stone foundation, large batten doors on the east and west elevations, and heavy timber framing with mortise and tenon joints. The interior originally contained a hay mow on the north end, a center livestock drive area, and stables for horses and calves on the south end. Interior walls have been removed, though some of the timber framing remains in place. Originally built with a gabled roof, the current gambrel roof was built in 1916 to create a larger hay loft for the sheep housed in the barn.

Horses were needed on early farms to help pull farm machinery and to transport people and supplies. Sometimes horses were housed in dairy barns, but separate barns were common to larger farmsteads. Like other types of livestock barns, without direct knowledge of building use, horse barns are difficult to identify, but they are typically medium-sized barns located adjacent to dairy or other livestock barns, equipment sheds, or pastures.[159] The Groves Farm retains a large horse barn (E) built in 1872. Located at the south end of the agricultural complex, is a gabled, frame building with a stone foundation, vertical board siding, batten doors, and distinctive wood brackets under the cornice.

[157] Noble and Wilhelm, *Barns of the Midwest*, 40-59; Personal Communication with Stephen Stier (Michigan Barn Preservation Network) by Cheri Szcodronski, February 2023 and June 2023, via email.
[158] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 57-58.
[159] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 57.

Other agricultural outbuildings were related to the processing and storage of crops. As livestock herds grew larger in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, farms needed to store increasing amounts of corn as livestock feed. Corn cribs for storing ear corn became a necessary element of the farm landscape and remain common in Northfield Township. They are usually small, gabled buildings built with a pier foundation and widely spaced slats to maximize air flow in order to dry the corn, prevent molding, and protect the corn from pests. Most are single, slant-sided cribs with tapered walls, although double cribs are not uncommon.[160] Granaries are also common Northfield Township, generally dating to the early twentieth century. Usually used to store corn or wheat still on the stalks, granaries are typically frame gabled buildings elevated on pier foundations.[161] Corn cribs were usually located between the domestic outbuildings and the other agricultural outbuildings, allowing easy access from the fields during the harvest, as well as from the house when corn was needed for grinding into meal.[162] An 1864 corn crib/granary (D) was constructed at the Groves Farm, northwest of the threshing/dairy barn, to accommodate increasing grain production on the farm. It is a narrow, slightly tapered, gabled building set on brick piers and is of hand-hewn timber construction with mortise and tenon joints. The west end was used as a corn crib, and features wide, vertical slats and a batten door on the west elevation. The east end was used as a granary and is clad in vertical board siding with a batten door and eight-light wood window on the south elevation.

Milk houses, small buildings used to cool and store milk, became common in the early twentieth century to comply with expanding safety regulations for sanitation and the temperature regulation of milk. Milk was originally stored in wells, spring houses, or milk rooms inside the dairy barns, however milk could be easily contaminated by barn odors and from contaminants carried into the milk room by walking through the barn. Milk houses became commonplace after 1915 when farm books began regularly advocating separate facilities for storing milk.[163] They are typically constructed of concrete block, which was more sanitary than wood and also aided in keeping milk cool. Some milk houses are connected the livestock barn, though with separate entrances, while others are freestanding buildings located between the barn and the house to allow easy access from each.[164] In 1917 a milk house (G) with a gable roof, batten door, and small window was constructed adjacent to the threshing/dairy barn (B) at the Groves Farm. Though most milk houses in Northfield Township are of concrete block construction, the Groves Farm milk house is frame with a concrete block foundation.

Pump houses, windmills, and water troughs were common to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century landscape, however, improvements in technology in the mid- and late twentieth century have made these structures obsolete and few remain extant in Northfield

[160] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 59-60.

[161] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 59-60; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 66-67.

[162] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 59-60; Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 63-66; Noble and Wilhelm, *Barns of the Midwest*, 170-176.

[163] Michigan Agricultural Heritage Project, *The Agricultural Landscape of Michigan*, 72; Noble and Wilhelm, *Barns of the Midwest*, 109-110.

[164] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 53.

Township.[165] The milk house (G) at the Groves Farm was moved on top of the well, adjacent to the threshing/dairy barn, to serve as a pump house in 1941. A concrete water trough for livestock remains extant adjacent to the milk/pump house.

Domestic outbuildings in Northfield Township are typically small-scale accessory buildings that support the operation of the household and are built within relatively close proximity to the farmhouse. Garages are one of the most common domestic outbuildings in Northfield Township. The earliest garages were constructed in the early twentieth century, their construction increasing in frequency as personal automobiles became more common, and they continued to be built throughout the twentieth century. Garages are usually front- or side-gable buildings located near the house, facing a driveway or road. They are typically of frame construction, and they vary in size from functional one-car garages to larger multi-car garages with storage areas, to combination garages and farm equipment sheds.[166] The c.1950 garage (I) at the Groves Farm is a traditional side-gable form clad with German-profile weatherboard. It features construction methods and architectural details common to the mid-twentieth century, including a poured concrete foundation, a wide ten-light rolling door, and two-over-two horizonal-pane windows.

Collectively, the extant domestic and agricultural outbuildings at the Groves Farm illustrate settlement-era building forms and techniques, including the influence of New England architecture on barn construction and the use of timber framing with mortise and tenon joints. The farm also demonstrates evolving trends in nineteenth and twentieth century farming, as agricultural outbuildings were constructed or converted to accommodate changes in farm production over time.

[165] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 55.
[166] Szcodronski, "Architectural Survey of Northfield Township," 52.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.9 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.365746 Longitude: -83.702662

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary follows the current tax parcel lines to form a rectangle extending east and west of Sutton Road: beginning at the northwest corner of the property at latitude 42.366420, longitude -83.703150, then 470 feet east to latitude 42.366420, longitude -83.701390, then 445 feet south to latitude 42.365200, longitude -83.701390, then west 470 feet to latitude 42.365200, longitude -83.703150, then north 445 feet to the beginning point.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary selected reflects historic and current ownership. Though the Groves family owned a much larger parcel when the house and outbuildings were constructed, most of the acreage has been subsequently sold and no longer retains integrity to the period of significance. The boundary selected represents land historically associated with the house and outbuildings that has retained integrity and provides an appropriate setting for the historic buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cheri Szcodronski, Architectural Historian
organization: Firefly Preservation Consulting
street & number: 58 Fox Hill Court
city or town: Chelsea state: MI zip code: 48118
e-mail: cheri@fireflypreservation.com
telephone: 615-604-5618
date: July 2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Groves Farm
City or Vicinity: Ann Arbor
County: Washtenaw State: MI
Photographer: Cheri Szcodronski
Date Photographed: April 2021 and April 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #0001: Farmhouse (A) Southeast Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021

1 of 28

Photo #0002: Farmhouse (A) East (Front) Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
2 of 28

Photo #0003: Farmhouse (A) North Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
3 of 28

Photo #0004: Farmhouse (A) Southwest Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
4 of 28

Photo #0005: Domestic Complex (A, F, H, I) – West Side of Sutton Road – Facing Northwest
Date Photographed: April 2021
5 of 28

Photo #0006: Garage (I) – southeast elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
6 of 28

Photo #0007: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Living Room – Facing Southwest
Date Photographed: April 2023
7 of 28

Photo #0008: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Living Room & Former Entry Hall – Facing East
Date Photographed: April 2023
8 of 28

Photo #0009: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Dining Room – Facing Northeast
Date Photographed: April 2023
9 of 28

Photo #0010: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Kitchen – Facing Northwest
Date Photographed: April 2023
10 of 28

Photo #0011: Farmhouse (A) Interior – Stairs and Second Floor Landing
Date Photographed: April 2023
11 of 28

Photo #0012: Farmhouse (A) Interior – Second Floor, Hallway – Facing North

Date Photographed: April 2023
12 of 28

Photo #0013: Farmhouse (A) Interior – Second Floor, Southeast Bedroom – Facing Northeast
Date Photographed: April 2023
13 of 28

Photo #0014: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Hyphen – Facing Southwest
Date Photographed: April 2023
14 of 28

Photo #0015: Farmhouse (A) Interior – First Floor, Primary Bedroom – Facing Southwest
Date Photographed: April 2023
15 of 28

Photo #0016: New England Sundial (H)
Date Photographed: April 2023
16 of 28

Photo #0017: Agricultural Complex (B, C, D, E, G) – East side of Sutton Road – Facing Southeast
Date Photographed: April 2021
17 of 28

Photo #0018: Corn Crib/Granary (D) Exterior – Northwest Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
18 of 28

Photo #0019: Corn Crib/Granary (D) Interior – Facing Northeast
Date Photographed: April 2021
19 of 28

Photo #0020: Threshing/Dairy Barn (B) – Southwest Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
20 of 28

Photo #0021: Threshing/Dairy Barn (B) Interior – Facing Southeast
Date Photographed: April 2021
21 of 28

Photo #0022: East/Sheep Barn (C) – Northwest Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
22 of 28

Photo #0023: East/Sheep Barn (C) Interior – Facing Southeast
Date Photographed: April 2021
23 of 28

Photo #0024: Milk/Pump House & Well (G) – Northwest Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
24 of 28

Photo #0025: Horse Barn (E) – Northeast Elevation
Date Photographed: April 2021
25 of 28

Photo #0026: Horse Barn (E) Interior – Facing South
Date Photographed: April 2021
26 of 28

Photo #0027: Groves Farm – Facing North
Date Photographed: July 2023
27 of 28

Photo #0028: Groves Farm – Facing South
Date Photographed: July 2023
28 of 28

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

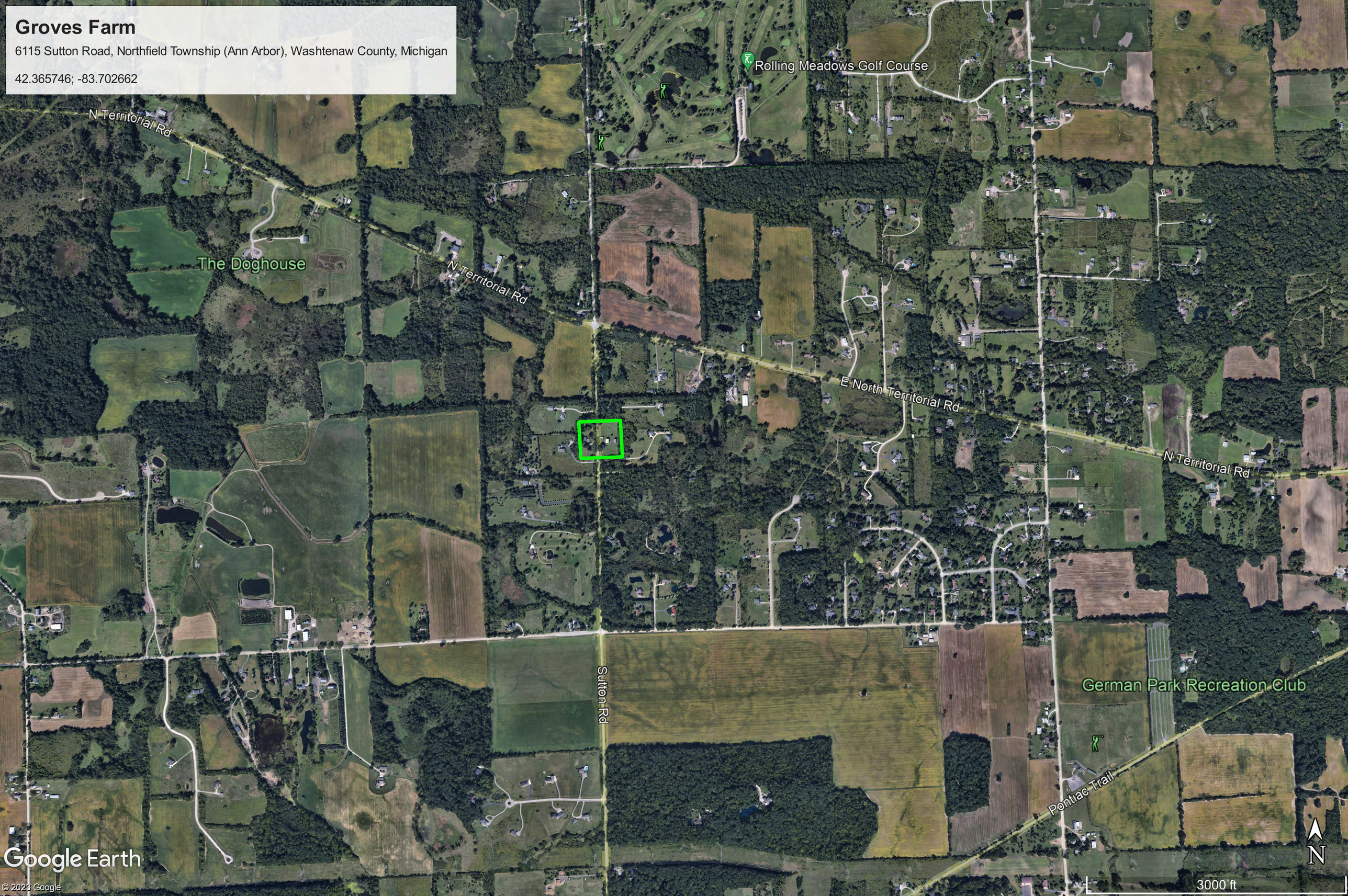
Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Groves Farm

6115 Sutton Road, Northfield Township (Ann Arbor), Washtenaw County, Michigan

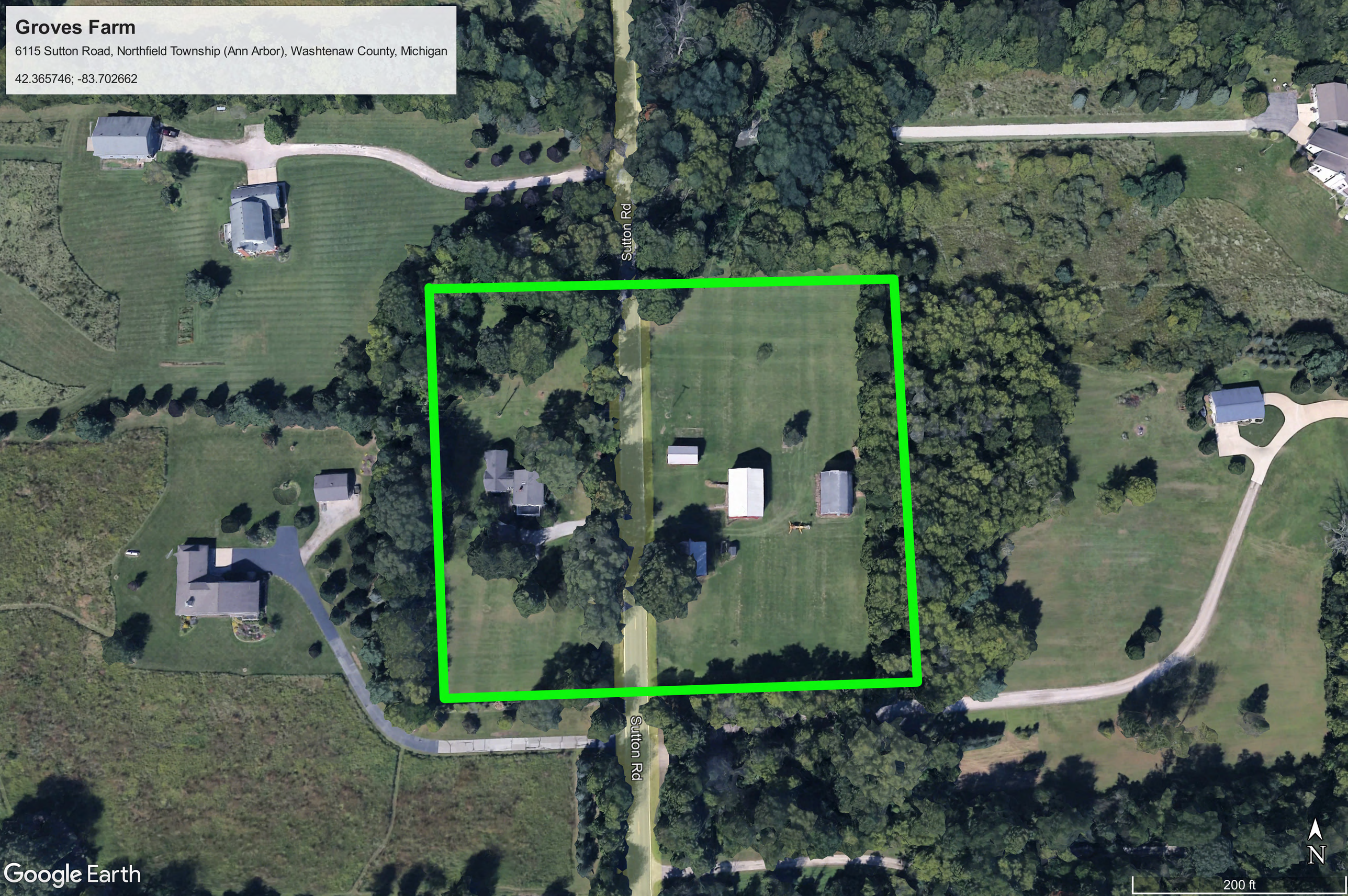
42.365746; -83.702662



Groves Farm

6115 Sutton Road, Northfield Township (Ann Arbor), Washtenaw County, Michigan

42.365746; -83.702662



Groves Farm
National Register Boundary and Site Map

National Register Boundary

Building Footprint

A Building Inventory Letter

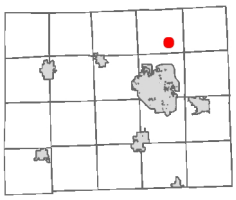
1 Coordinates

Latitude and Longitude Coordinates (WGS84)

1: 42.365746 -83.702662

6015 Sutton Road
Washtenaw County
Michigan

N



0 100.00 200.0 400.0 Feet

1: 2,400

7/9/2023

NOTE: Parcels may not be to scale.

The information contained in this cadastral map is used to locate, identify and inventory parcels of land in Washtenaw County for appraisal and taxing purposes only and is not to be construed as a "survey description". The information is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.

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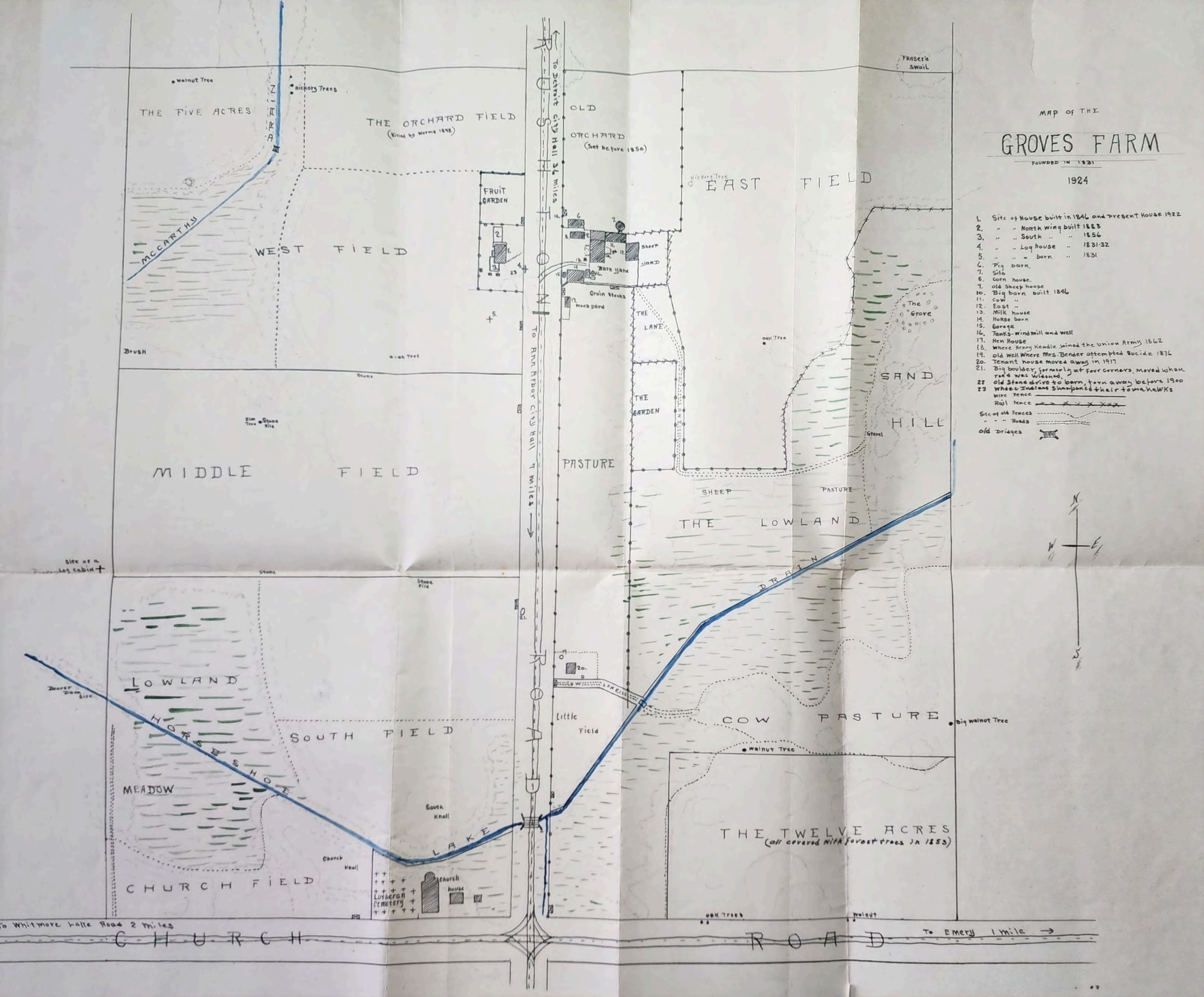
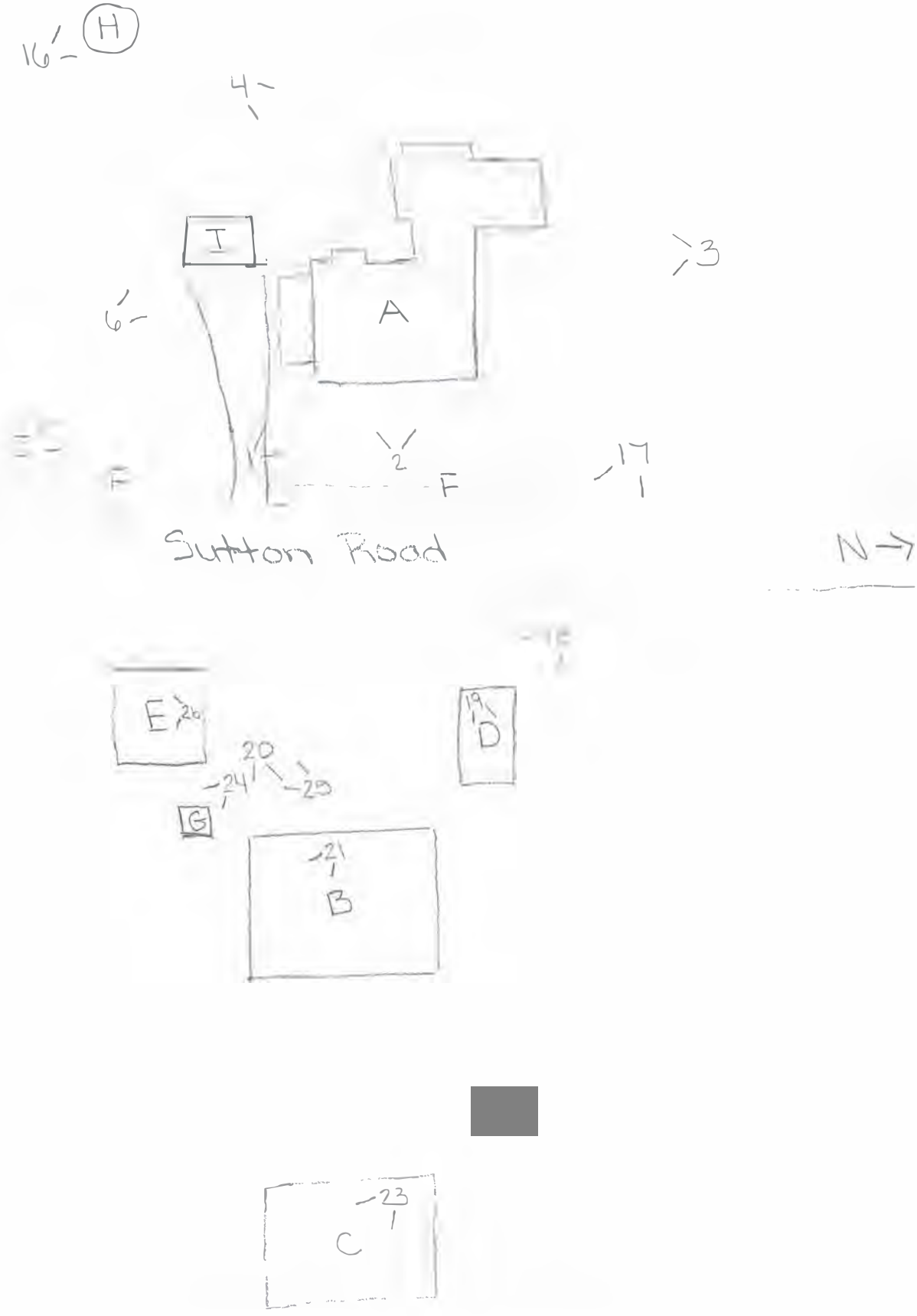
Edits by Cheri Szcodronski, 2023

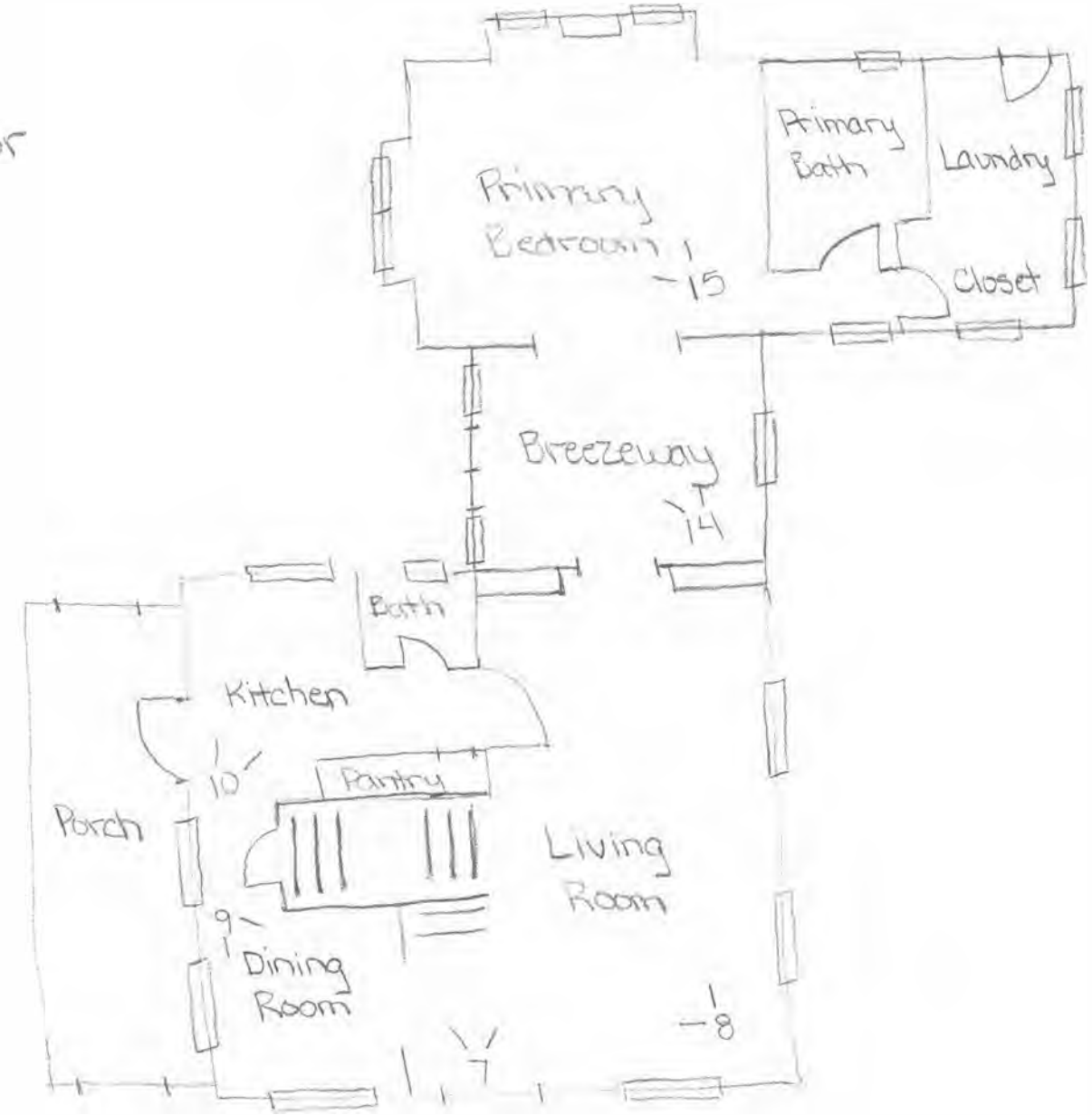
THIS MAP REPRESENTS PARCELS ATTHE TIME OF PRINTING. THE OFFICIAL PARCEL TAX MAPS ARE MAINTAINED SOLELY BY THE WASHTENAW COUNTY EQUALIZATION DEPARTMENT AND CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THAT OFFICE AT 734-222-6662.


MAP OF THE
GROVES FARM
FOUNDED IN 1831
1924
1. Site of House built in 1846 and present House 1922
2. " " North wing built 1883
3. " " South " " 1856
4. " " Log house " 1831-32
5. " " " barn " 1831
6. Pig barn.
7. Silo
8. Corn house.
9. old Sheep house
10. Big barn built 1896
11. Cow "
12. East "
13. Milk house
14. Horse barn
15. Garage
16. Tanks-windmill and well
17. Hen House
18. Where Henry Keadle joined the Union Army 1862
19. old Well Where Mrs. Bender attempted Sucide 1876
20. Tenant house moved away in 1917
21. Big boulder, formerly at four corners, moved when road was widened.
22 old Stone drive to barn, torn away before 1900
23 Where Indians Sharpened their tomahawks
wire fence
Rail fence
Site of old Fences
" " " Roads
old bridges
THE FIVE ACRES
THE ORCHARD FIELD
(Killed by Worms 1898)
OLD ORCHARD
(Set before 1850)
FRUIT GARDEN
WEST FIELD
EAST FIELD
Walnut Tree
Hickory Trees
Hickory Tree
McCARTHY
ARRAIZ
Brush
Oak Tree
Stone
Elm Tree
Stone Pile
MIDDLE FIELD
Site of a Log cabin
Stone Pile
Beaver Dam Site
LOWLAND
HORSESHOE
SOUTH FIELD
MEADOW
South Knoll
Church Knoll
CHURCH FIELD
Lutheran Cemetery
church
house
LAKE
To Detroit City Hall 36 Miles
To Ann Arbor City Hall 7 Miles
ROAD
Sheep Yard
Barn Yard
Grain Stacks
Wood Yard
THE LANE
THE GARDEN
PASTURE
SHEEP
PASTURE
THE LOWLAND
DRAIN
Little Field
LANE
COW PASTURE
Big walnut Tree
Walnut Tree
THE TWELVE ACRES
(all covered with forest trees in 1853)
Oak Trees
Walnut
SAND HILL
The Grove
Gravel
Oak Tree
FRASER'S SWAIL
N
W
E
S
To Whitmore Lake Road 2 Miles
CHURCH ROAD
To Emery 1 Mile

Site



First Floor



N →

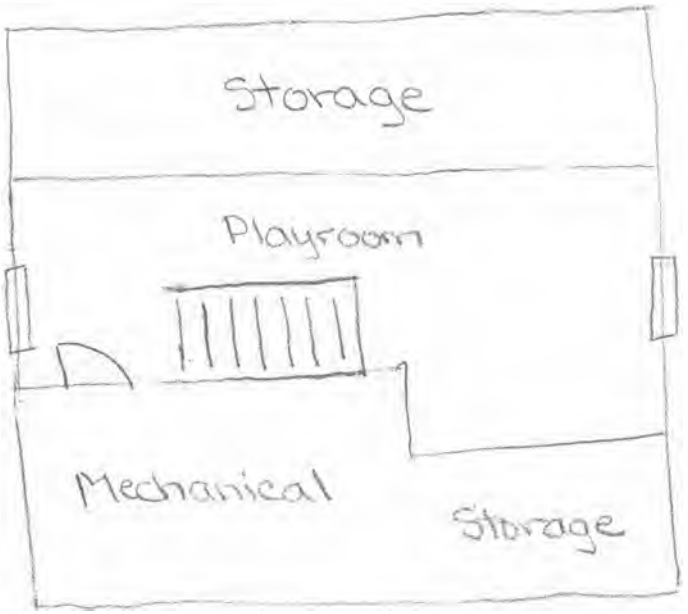
Sutton Road

Second Floor

Sutton Road

N →

Attic



Sutton Road

N→

Mechanical
Multi-
Purpose
Mechanical
Sutton Road

WE WON'T
Fellowes
PART NO. 07310
B