

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm
other names/site number Amish Acres

2. Location

street & number 1600 W. Market Street N/A not for publication
city, town Nappanee N/A vicinity
state IN code IN county Elkhart code 039 zip code 46550

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: residences
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing,
storage, animal facility, horticultural
facility, agricultural outbuilding
RELIGION

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Bank Barn

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls WOOD: weatherboard
WOOD
roof STONE: slate
other METAL: tin
WOOD: shingle

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1874-1939

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Stahly, Moses; Nissley, Noah;
Kuhns, Manassas

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 2.1, more or less

UTM References

A

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5	8	2	1	0	0
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4	5	8	8	3	3	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant
 organization N/A date March 22, 1989
 street & number 3905 N. 500 West Road telephone 812/372-6806
 city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

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Photographs

Page 1

Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm

The information listed below is the same for all photographs:

2. Nappanee, Indiana
3. Laura Thayer
4. December 1988
5. Laura Thayer
3905 N. 500 West Road
Columbus, Indiana 47201

Other information for individual photographs is as follows:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Photo 1 | 1. House and Grossdaadi Haus
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing northeast |
| | 7. 1 of 12 |
| Photo 2 | 1. House, Grossdaadi Haus, Windmill
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing southwest |
| | 7. 2 of 12 |
| Photo 3 | 1. House
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing southwest |
| | 7. 3 of 12 |
| Photo 4 | 1. Barn
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing northeast |
| | 7. 4 of 12 |
| Photo 5 | 1. Hog House
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing northwest |
| | 7. 5 of 12 |
| Photo 6 | 1. Outhouse (far left), Food Drying House, Bake
Oven, Smoke House
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing northwest |
| | 7. 6 of 12 |
| Photo 7 | 1. Rear section of house
Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm |
| | 6. camera facing east |
| | 7. 7 of 12 |

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Photographs

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm

- Photo 8 1. House
 Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm
 6. camera facing northeast
 7. 8 of 12
- Photo 9 1. Living Room/Meeting Room of House
 Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm
 6. camera facing northwest
 7. 9 of 12
- Photo 10 1. Rear Room of House
 Stahly-Nissley-Kuhn Farm
 6. camera facing north
 7. 10 of 12
- Photo 11 1. Amish Acres
 6. camera facing north
 7. 11 of 12
- Photo 12 1. Kuhn Cider and Grist Mill
 6. camera facing north
 7. 12 of 12

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm is located on the outskirts of the town of Nappanee in Locke Township in southwestern Elkhart County, Indiana. Nappanee, established in 1874, is a community of about 4,700 people, and is surrounded by farmland.

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm is part of a property developed for tourism, known as Amish Acres. Amish Acres consists of two areas: the old farmstead, the subject of this nomination, which is essentially unaltered from its historic appearance (photo nos. 1 and 2) and a new area, comprised of old barns and houses which were moved onto the property (photo no. 11).

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns farm is comprised of a farmhouse, a large bank barn, a windmill, a "grossdaadi haus," (grandfather house), an outhouse, a food drying house, a bake oven, a smokehouse, a root cellar, a hoghouse, and a garden plot. All the structures are in good condition and are virtually unaltered.

For the purpose of this application, the farmhouse, bank barn, grossdaadi haus, outhouse, hoghouse, bake oven, smokehouse, and food drying house are buildings, constructed for purposes of human activity or shelter. The garden plot is a site. The windmill and root cellar are structures which were supportive of human activities. The windmill was used to generate power; the root cellar was related to food storage.

Closely associated with the farmstead is a cider mill (photo no. 12) which was operated by the Kuhns family. The mill building was moved onto the property by the family around the turn of the century. It has remained in the same location and has a high degree of integrity. It has not, however, been included in this nomination. The mill's physical relationship with the rest of the farmstead is diminished because of the buildings which have been moved onto the property.

The house (map no. 1; photo nos. 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8) was built in several stages. The main section (southernmost section), constructed in 1893, is a two story wood frame structure with a four bay facade and a side gable roof. The roof covered with diamond shaped slates. There are two chimneys on this section of the house, both interior chimneys, one located at the west end and one in the center. The house has a field stone foundation and clapboard siding. There is a one story shed roof porch, with turned wooden porch posts, on the front

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

of the house. Windows are double hung, with six lights in each sash. Second story windows on the facade are regularly spaced. Openings on the first story are not, and therefore do not line up with second story openings. The front door is the second opening from the west. The house has plain corner boards and fascias.

There is a shed roof, one story section (see photo no. 3) on the north side of the two story section. It appears to have been constructed at the same time as the two story section. Part of this extension is enclosed on each end. The central section is open. This open section, or porch, has doors leading into the kitchen, cellar, master bedroom, and west addition (described below). There is a pump for drawing water from a well located under the porch.

Extending from the west end of this one story section is a long, one story shed roof addition with a concrete foundation (photo no. 7), which was constructed in the 1920s. This west rear addition also adjoins an earlier, east rear section, which has a gable roof and consists of three rooms (right side of photo no. 2). The two southernmost rooms comprise the original house, built by Moses Stahly in 1874. The third room was added later. The south room of the original house was converted to a milk house at some point.

This entire rear portion is covered with a standing seam metal roof, has clapboard siding, double hung, multi-light windows, and original wood doors.

The historic appearance of the interior of the main house has been maintained. The first level of the two story section has an small entry way. Straight ahead is an enclosed stair. The kitchen is on the west side of the stair; the living room is on the east. A medicine cabinet is located in the living room (see photo no. 9). This was a typical feature of an Amish house. There are hooks on a board several feet from the floor all around the living room. These were for the use of Amish neighbors who gathered here on Sunday when it was the family's turn to host services. A grille in the ceiling sends heat to the room above.

Off the north end of the kitchen in the rear, one story part, is a pantry. Off the north end of the living room is the master bedroom (visible in photo no. 9). This tiny bedroom has a east window with a view of the barn. On the west wall of the room is a door which exits onto the rear porch.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

The stairway goes straight up, with no turns or landings. There is another stair directly above this one which leads to the attic. On the second floor, there is a narrow hall on the west side of the stairs. On the west side of the hall, on the south side of the house, there is a guest room. This, the house's largest bedroom, has bracketed shelves, intended for the display of objects. It is the only room in the house with this feature. North of the guest room, on the west side of the hall is a walk-in closet, the only closet in the house. On the east side of the hall are two other bedrooms, the south bedroom being slightly larger than the north bedroom.

There are wood floors and plaster ceilings and walls throughout the house. Most window glass is original.

As previously stated, the southernmost room of the gable roof rear section of the house is a milk house, which is accessed through the door shown on the right side of photo no. 3. Inside this room, on the south wall, is a stone trough. The floor is dirt.

The two rooms to the north, which are very plain, are similar in appearance. The northernmost room, shown in photo no. 10, has a small sleeping loft. The floors in these two rooms are wood. The walls are composed of horizontal or vertical boards.

The room to the west of this section was used for laundry, dyeing, and other domestic activities. The south and east walls of this room, originally exterior walls have clapboard siding. There is no ceiling; rafters and roof sheathing can be seen overhead. The floor is wood.

To the south of the main house is the grossdaadi haus (map no. 4; photo nos. 1 and 2) which is a one and a half story frame structure. The house has a gable roof with wood shingles. There is one brick chimney on the top of the gable, just north of center. There is a shed roof front porch with turned porch posts. Windows are double hung with four lights in each sash. This house has small additions on the west side and on the rear. The house has clapboard siding. The exact date of construction for this house is not known; however, since it was moved from Nappanee, it was most likely built between 1874, when Nappanee was founded, and the 1910s, when Nissley and his wife moved into it.

Northeast of the main house is a large bank barn (map no. 2;

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

photo no. 4), which was built in 1876. The barn is 40 feet wide and 80 feet long. It has a gable roof with wood shingles. Siding is vertical wood siding. The foundation is field stone. The barn is constructed of massive hand hewn beams, cut from trees on the farm, joined by mortise and tenon. A threshing floor is on the upper level. On the lower level are stables and milking stalls. On the west end of the barn, there is a shed roof addition which contains a corn crib and wagon shed.

There is a windmill (map no. 3; photo no. 2) constructed in the 1920s, south of the barn.

To the west of the house are three small outbuildings which are similar in appearance. These buildings (shown in photo no. 6) are the food drying house (map no. 6), the bake oven (map no. 7), and the smoke house (map no. 8). Each is a frame structure with a front gable roof and wood shingles. The food drying house has beveled horizontal siding. There are shallow drawers for the food to be dried. The smokehouse and bake oven have vertical wood siding. The exact date of construction of these three buildings is not known. They appear to date from about 1900.

To the west of the food drying house is a wood frame outhouse with a front gable roof, wood shingles on the roof and horizontal wood siding. (map no. 5; far left of photo no. 6.) The exact date of construction of the outhouse is not known. It appears to date from about 1900.

The original garden plot (map no. 11) is located south of the food drying house and the outhouse. The garden is planted with herbs, and rows of vegetables alternating with rows of flowers.

North of the smoke house is a root cellar (map no. 9; visible in photo no. 5, behind the hog house). The root cellar is built into the ground and has field stone walls and an earthen roof.

The hoghouse (map no. 10; photo no. 5), directly north of the main house, has a concrete foundation, a standing seam metal, gable roof, and vertical board siding. It was constructed in the early part of the century.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm is a significant representation, under criteria A and C, of the lifestyle of the Nappanee-area Amish during the late 19th and early 20th century. The property, which includes two houses, a barn, a hog house, and several other structures, portrays the agricultural life practiced by the families who lived there. The structures themselves are illustrative of the simple architecture favored by the Amish.

The Amish are a religious group. They have also been identified as a distinct social group because of their resistance to the mainstream American way of life. They are characterized by their simple lifestyle, by their rejection of unnecessary material goods, and by the lack of technology in their daily lives. They have traditionally been farmers.

The Amish, who first came to the United States shortly after 1700, are of Swiss-German origin. There are 50 to 100 Amish settlements in the United States today. (Estimates vary.) In Indiana, there are between 8 and 12 settlements, the five major ones being a settlement in Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, a settlement around Nappanee (Elkhart County), and settlements in Daviess, Adams, and Allen Counties. The Nappanee settlement (which spills over into Marshall and Kosciusko Counties) is Indiana's second largest, with about 2,000 members. The Amish first came to Indiana in 1839, when the Elkhart-Lagrange settlement was established.

The Nappanee settlement is also an early Indiana Amish settlement. The Amish were among the first Europeans to arrive in the area which would later be known as Nappanee. (The village of Nappanee was founded in 1874.) Christian Stahly has been identified by one historian as the first Amish settler in the area. He came to the United States with his mother and brothers from the Palatinate of Germany in 1835, and settled in Union township, Elkhart County, in 1842.

Christian's son, Moses, was born in 1849 in Union township. He married Mary Nissley in 1872 and settled on a farm (the subject of this nomination) in Locke township in 1874. The first house consisted of two small rooms, which are now part of the large house. The barn was built in 1876.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

In 1890, a controversy regarding the use of windmills, manure spreaders, and hay loaders began among the Nappanee area Amish. The most conservative families left the area, unable to sanction use of the modern devices. The family of Moses Stahly were among those who left for western states. Stahly sold the farm to Noah Nissley, his father-in-law, whose Ohio farm house had recently burned. Nissley built the two story section of the large house shortly after moving to the farm, in the early 1890s.

Mannasses Kuhns married Nissley's daughter, Eliza, around the turn of the century. They moved into the large house during the teens, after the small house, known as the "grossdaadi haus" (grandfather house) was moved onto the property from the town of Nappanee. This was in conformance with the Amish tradition which calls for retired parents to move into a small house on property and pass the main farm house, as well as the responsibility for operation of the farm, to a son or son-in-law.

The farm was in use by the family until the 1970s, when it was purchased for its present use.

The old Amish way of life, which has changed significantly over the past 30 years or so, is illustrated in the Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm. The grossdaadi house, for example, represents the close family relationships among the Amish, and the transfer of farms from one generation to the next. The windmill, constructed some 30 years after the controversy of 1890, symbolizes the reluctance to accept change. The presence of outbuildings such as the outhouse and the bakeoven attest to the resistance to modern conveniences.

The interior of the house also reflects the Amish way of life. Except for the living room (photo number 9), which was designed to accommodate Sunday services held in turn at members' farms, the rooms are small. The possessions of the Amish were few and modest and there was no reason for large spaces. In addition to being small, rooms are unembellished, and there are no signs of technological advancements such as electricity or telephones.

The farm buildings illustrate late 19th and early 20th century agricultural techniques practiced by the Amish.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

In the large bank barn (photo number 4), for example, one bay on the upper level which has built up sides was used for flailing wheat. This feature of the barn illustrates one of the many differences between Amish farms and non-Amish farms. For, by the time the barn was constructed, in 1876, mechanical threshers were quite advanced and had been in use on most Indiana farms for 30 years or more.

The buildings also show the agricultural diversity practiced by Amish farmers, which contributed to their high degree of self-sufficiency. The families who farmed the property grew - in addition to wheat - hay crops, and corn (evidenced by the corn crib at the west end of the bank barn). The bank barn contains stalls for horses (used both for plowing and transportation) and milking cows. There were also hogs, which were housed in the building north of the house. The remnants of a fruit orchard are located just to the west of the group of buildings which comprise the historic property.

Other outbuildings such as the food drying house, smokehouse, and root cellar, illustrate food storage and processing techniques. And the garden plot, an essential component of an Amish farm, is an original landscape features. In it were grown herbs and many varieties of vegetables - the rows of which were alternated with rows of flowers.

The structures on the property reflect simple Amish tastes in architecture. Because of a traditional focus on self-sufficiency, Amish farmers have always been skilled in many areas, including carpentry. The buildings would have been constructed by Stahly, Nissley, and Kuhns, with the help of sons and neighbors. The house, though constructed at a time when irregularity in plan and elaborate wood ornamentation was the style, has a conservative rectilinear plan, and no decorative features which would have required use of any of the new technologies for creating building ornaments. The other farm buildings were constructed similarly, with function and practicality taking precedence over appearance.

In addition to conveying the architectural preferences of the Amish, the out buildings are significant as representations of a type of structure which is rapidly vanishing from the rural landscape. The barn is notable for its large, hand-hewn timbers and mortise and tenon construction. All the structures are significant for their high degree of integrity.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm is perhaps the best representation of an old Amish farm in the Nappanee area Amish settlement. The vast majority of Amish farms in the Nappanee area have been altered to some degree in the name of home improvement. Many have aluminum or some other type of synthetic siding. Some of the farm properties have intrusions in the form of new buildings to house motorized vehicles and modern farm equipment, which are gradually becoming accepted among many Amish groups.

The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for Elkhart County (1976) identified two Amish farms in the Nappanee area (Locke and Union townships). These are the Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm, and the Schmucker Farm, located across the road. The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm was given the highest rating, "outstanding," while the Schmucker Farm received the second highest rating, "notable."

The Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm now operates as a farm museum and is part of a development known as Amish Acres. The present owner is very conscious of the historical value of the property and is committed to continuing its preservation.

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Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns Farm

"Amish-Beachy-Conservative Nappanee Community Directory."
Volume II. Nappanee, Indiana, 1978.

Chapman, Charles C. and Company. History of Elkhart County, Indiana. Chicago: Charles C. Chapman and Company, 1881.

Goshen Daily Democrat. Atlas and Plat Book of Elkhart County, Indiana. Rockford, Illinois: The Thrift Press, 1929.

Higgins, Beldon and Co. An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Elkhart County, Indiana. Chicago: Higgins, Beldon and Co., 1874.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, 1976.

Landing, James E. "The Spatial Development and Organization of an Old Order Amish-Beachy Amish Settlement: Nappanee, Indiana." Ph.D. dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1967.

Ogle, George A. and Company. Plat Book of Elkhart County, Indiana. Chicago: George A. Ogle and Company, 1892.

Ogle, George A. and Company. Standard Atlas of Elkhart County, Indiana. Chicago: George A. Ogle and Company, 1915.

Pletcher, Richard. Amish Acres, Nappanee, Indiana. Interview, 14 December, 1988.

Wenger, John Christian. The Mennonites in Indiana and Michigan. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1961.

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Stahly-Nissley Kuhns Farm

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point approximately 400 feet north and 400 feet west of the southwest corner of the northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 35 North, Range 4 East; thence east approximately 180 feet; thence north approximately 140 feet; thence east approximately 120 feet; thence north approximately 160 feet; thence west approximately 300 feet; thence south approximately 300 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include all structures which contribute to the historic property. The historic property comprises the original farm house and related outbuildings. The Amish Acres development includes a number of other buildings, not related to the historic property. However, there is a large open area between the historic property and the moved buildings. The original relationships between the structures of the historic property remain intact.