

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hill, William, Polygonal Barn

other names/site number Hill-Mershon Barn

2. Location

street & number School Street N/A not for publication

city or town Bloomington N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Parke code 121 zip code 47832

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth R. Roberts
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/3/93
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ 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): _____

Hill Polygonal Barn
Name of Property

Park County, IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: eight-sided barn

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT
other METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Hill Polygonal Barn
Name of Property

Park Co., IN
County and State

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c.1905 - 1936

Significant Dates

c.1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Hill, William

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Historic Landmarks Foundation
of Indiana

Hill Polygonal Barn
Name of Property

Parke Co., IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 478480 4408690
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jerry McMahan
organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date November 11, 1991
street & number 340 West Michigan St. telephone 317/639-4534
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Sue Mershon
street & number P.O. Box 66 telephone
city or town Bloomington state IN zip code 47832

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN

Located in the rural community of Bloomingdale in Parke County, Indiana, is the William Hill Polygonal Barn. Reached by a short drive off of School Street, the Hill Polygonal Barn is tucked into the rear of the lot atop a rise, behind a frame house and surrounded by mature trees, a vegetable garden and fields to the north. This simple eight-sided structure retains its integrity in regard to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, meeting all of the standards set forth in the registration requirements for multiple property nominations.

The octagonal two-storied barn, just under 30 feet in width, is capped by a sectional cone roof that is in turn crested by an octagonal cupola with a sectional cone roof. Each face of the cupola is filled by louvered vents that adds ventilation to the upper reaches of the structure. The balloon frame wall and roof construction are anchored by a poured concrete foundation and the lower level's flooring is composed of concrete. Even though the construction technique differs from the Octagonal Era barns (which used post and beam construction), this True-Circular Era barn is representative of the school of thought that prevailed at the time.

The roof surfaces are now covered in asphalt replacement shingles, an alteration that minimally alters the historic significance of the barn. There is a shallow overhang to the eaves and the rafters and roof decking are exposed on the underneath side of the soffit. The wall surfaces are covered in the original horizontal clapboards with cornerboards at the intersection of each of the wall sections.

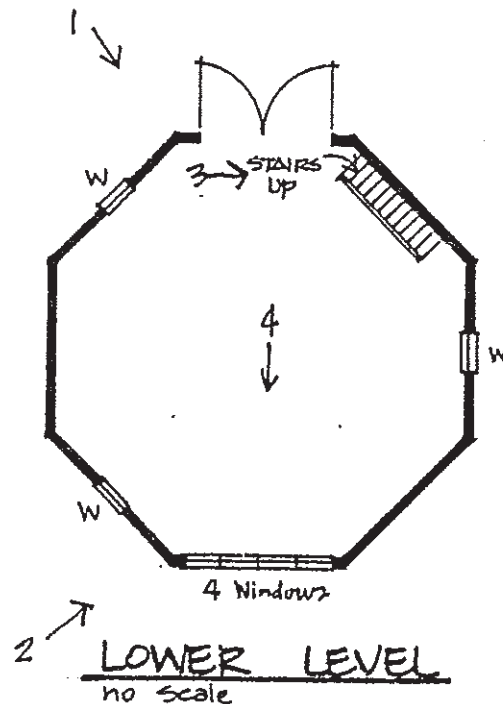
The main or north facade (Photo 1) is composed principally of a large set of outswinging, extra height doors that are made up of vertical boards. Continuing around the barn in a clockwise manner, the next wall is without openings, the third section on the east contains a central four light window and the next side is without openings. The fifth or south side contains a set of four, four light windows with an awning of standing seam metal for shade and protection (Photo 2). The next wall has a central four light window as does the eighth wall section but the one in between, wall section seven, is without windows. There are no upper level windows or openings, except for the louvered vents in the cupola.

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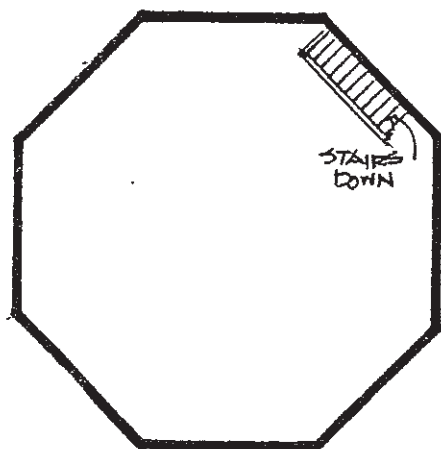
Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN



Note: W = Window

HILL (MERSHON)
BARN

UPPER LEVEL
no scale



C. 1905 OCTAGON
PARKE COUNTY, INDIANA
PENN TOWNSHIP

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Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN

The interior of the barn is likewise simple yet functional. Upon entrance through the north doors, there is a staircase to the east or left that ascends to the upper level (Photo 3). This staircase is very narrow yet serves its purpose. The remainder of the interior is left open and unobstructed and is fairly light-filled due to the number of windows present, especially those on the south (Photo 4).

The upper level is one clear space that is broken only by the stairwell on the northeast wall and the small open area to the lower level just inside of the north doors. This open area allows greater access to the upper level through the main doors. The roof structure, totally self-supported by small laminated beams between the roof sections, is broken only at the apex to allow the ventilation and muted light of the cupola's vents to filter in.

This barn, although small in stature at less than thirty feet in width, is an important part of the development of the multi-sided barn movement in Indiana. Still in excellent condition and fairly well-maintained, the Hill Polygonal Barn should be useful for many more years.

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Section number 8 Page 4 Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN

The Hill Polygonal Barn, c.1905, is significant for its association with the development of round and polygonal barns in Indiana (see historic context, "Round and Polygonal Barns of Indiana.") The owner and builder of the barn, William Hill, helped to spread the round barn idea to Indiana. The barn is an important and direct link to the agricultural development that occurred in the state from 1850 to 1936 (and beyond) and has changed little since its dedication in the early twentieth century. The period of greatest significance of the barn was from c.1905 to the mid 1930s when round and polygonal barns lost their popularity. By 1936, round and polygonal barns were considered obsolete and the last round structure was built in the state to replace a 1915 round barn that had burned (Grant County, Richland Township, extant).

The original owner of the property was Mr. William Hill, builder of the first circular barn in the Carthage, Indiana, area. Hill was a University of Chicago professor who introduced the concept of circular barns to Isaac and Emery McNamee in 1900, with the McNamee's eventually becoming at least partially responsible for the proliferation of round and polygonal barns in the state. Hill became the director of the Bloomingdale Academy in 1905 and probably then had the structure built on the property.¹ A small barn that is today used as a garage, the first level was probably intended for the storage of mostly small animals such as chickens or hogs and the upper level was used for storage, possibly of both straw, hay, grain and other miscellaneous items. Finally, interesting details on the barn such as the window unit on the south side composed of four, four light windows complete with a canopy and the clapboard siding help the barn to blend into its small town setting.

The ownership of the property has stayed in the Hill family with it eventually passing to Mr. Hill's brother, with the brother eventually deeding ownership to his own daughter and her husband, Mr. & Mrs. Clayton Mershon. In the early 1980s, the Mershons passed the property to their daughter Sue. Ms. Mershon, the great niece of Mr. Hill, owns and maintains the barn, using it today as a storage shed and garage.²

Indiana saw the construction of 33 octagonal barns with thirteen remaining today. Of the 33 octagonal barns, 14 were built in the earlier Octagonal Era of 1850 to 1900 and 19 were

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Section number 8 Page 5 Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN

built in the later True Circular Era of 1889 to 1936. Of the 19 octagonals that were constructed in the True Circular Era (of which this is one), only seven survive today. These barns are located in Kosciusko County (Franklin Township, 1900), Owen County (Harrison Township, 1912), the Hill Polygonal Barn, Pike County (Lockhart Township, 1914), Rush County (Posey Township, 1916), St. Joseph County (Harris Township, 1900), and Tippecanoe County (Fairfield Township, c.1910).

The Hill Polygonal Barn is an unusual and interesting example of a polygonal barn, being one of the thirteen surviving octagonal structures of the 33 that were built in the state. Although octagonal barns were the second most prominent style of the 219 round and polygonal barns built in Indiana, their numbers are dwindling every year. Furthermore, this barn has all of the physical properties that it possessed at the time of its period of significance from c.1905 to the mid 1930s and it is representative of the octagonal style of construction. The Hill Polygonal Barn has aged over time but retains good integrity.

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Parke Co., IN

ENDNOTES

1. John Hanou, research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from 1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46220.
2. Sue Mershon, owner of the Hill (Mershon) barn, Bloomingdale, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 25 October 1991.

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Section number 9 Page 7 Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hanou, John. Research compiled on Indiana's round and polygonal barns from 1986 to present. Archived at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 340 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Intensive architectural survey of Indiana's round and polygonal barns. Conducted June to August 1991, conducted by Jerry McMahan, areawide survey of round and polygonal architectural and historical resources.

Mershon, Sue. Owner of the Hill (Mershon) barn, Blcomingdale, Indiana. Interviewed by Jerry McMahan, 25 October 1991.

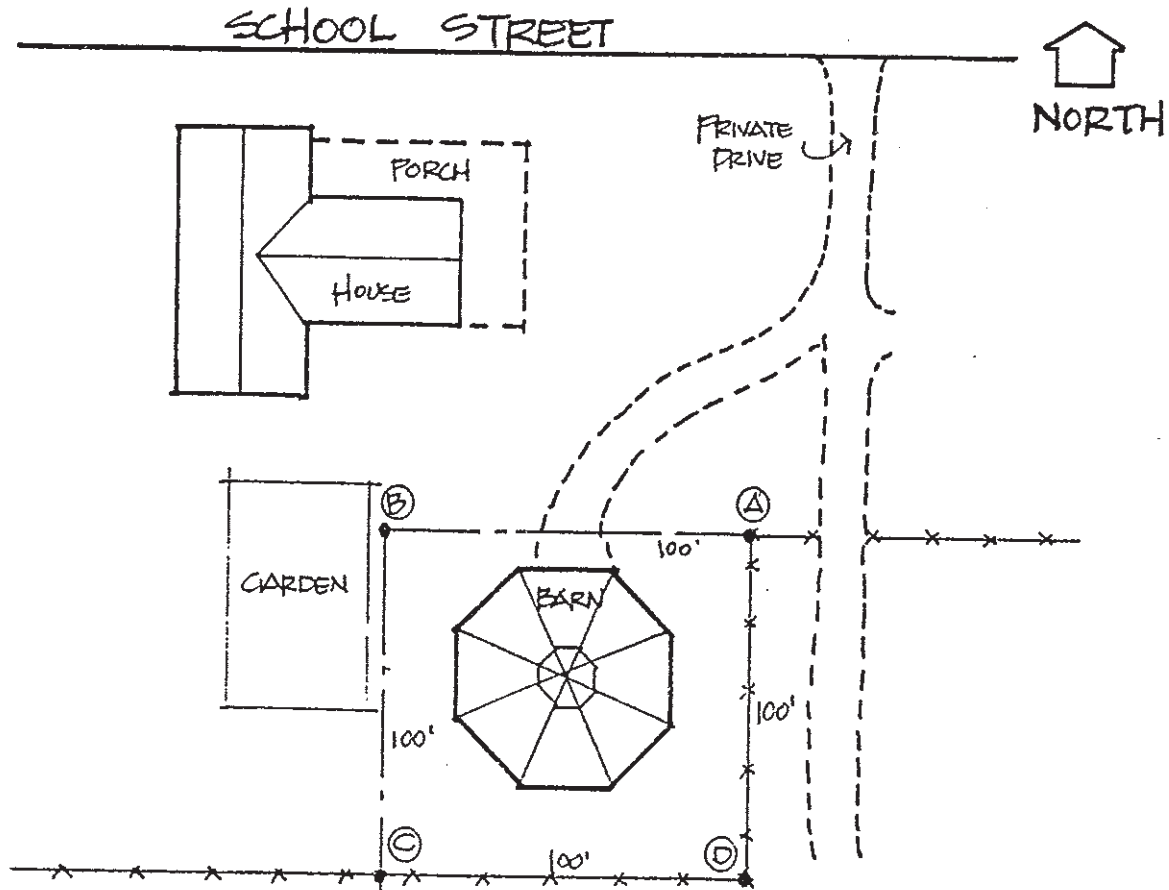
Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles, The Round Barns of Iowa. Des Moines, IA: Iowa State Historical Department, Office of Historic Preservation, 1983.

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Hill Polygonal Barn
Parke Co., IN



HILL (MERSHON) BARN

SITE PLAN
NO SCALE

C. 1905 OCTAGON
PARKE COUNTY
PENN TOWNSHIP

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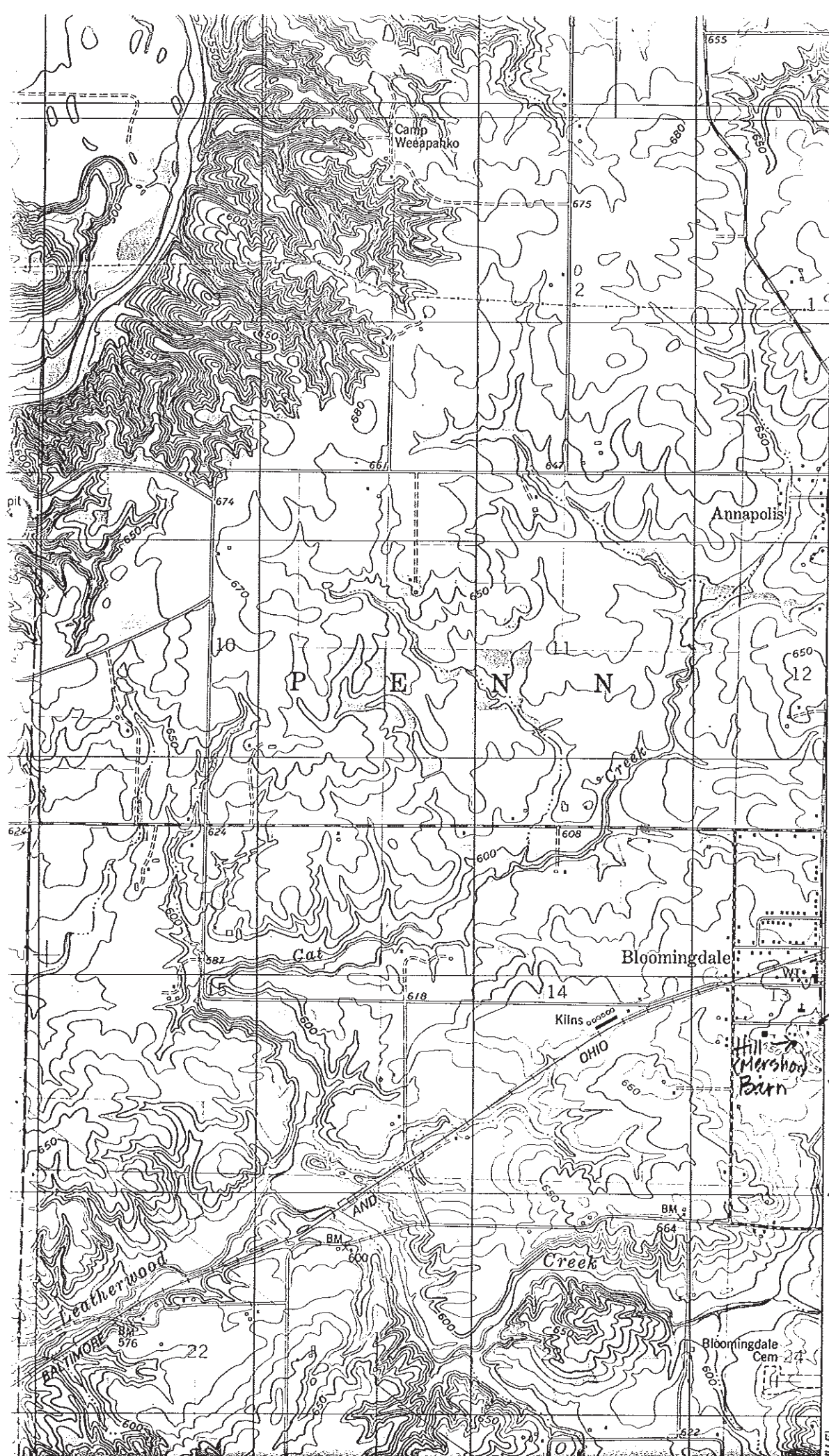
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Parke Co., IN

Verbal Boundary Description

The Hill (Mershon) Barn is located in the NWSW of Section 13, T16N-R8W in Penn Township, Parke County, Indiana. Referring to the site plan, beginning at the fence cornerpost on the east (Point A), proceed west 100 feet to Point B. Then turn 90 degrees south for 100 feet to Point C, thence east along the fence for 100 feet to Point D and finally north 90 degrees for 100 feet to the point of beginning (Point A).

Boundary Justification

The immediate area of the barn is a part of a larger acreage. Some of the acreage has been excluded from the nomination and the above boundary includes the property necessary to demonstrate the historic significance of the Hill (Mershon) barn.



T 17 N
T 16 N

860 000
FEET
"12

"11

"10

50'

School Street

WILLIAM HILL POLYGONAL
BARN
PARKE CO., IN
UTME
"08
16 478480 4408690

WILEY
SW