

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 Walnut Grove Farm
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Knox Station Road, 1 mi N. of Knoxville, Illinois not for publication
city, town Knoxville vicinity
state Illinois code IL county Knox code 095 zip code 61448

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>11</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

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] _____ June 26, 89
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

5. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/Secondary structure

Agricultural/Subsistence/Agricultural outbuilding

Agriculture/Animal facility/storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/Secondary structure

Agricultural/Subsistence/Agricultural outbuilding

Agriculture/Animal facility/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/ Second Empire

Other: Bank barn

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood

roof Asphalt

other Metal

Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Walnut Grove farm is situated in Sections 21 & 22 of Knox Township, Knox County, Illinois. The homestead and tenant house are located on the east side of Knox Station road in sec 22. The "newer" farm buildings (which were erected around 1900), and the grain handling facility (which was all built within the last 10 years) are located on the west side of Knox Station road in section 21. The farm gets its name from the two walnut stands, one on each side of the road, at the North edge of each set of buildings. The buildings are situated at the top of a hill which levels off to the north and east with flat, black Prairie soil which recently has been tilled for corn, soybeans, hay & oats. To the west there is a large draw running the length of the farm from south to north (which was the site of a sandstone quarry in the 1800's). Around the hillier terrain on the west side of Knox Station road, there is pasture, a Christmas tree patch, and a few hardwood trees. The large level areas at the tops of the draws are tillable fields for row crop production and occasionally hay. Total acreage being nominated is about 360.

This acreage is part of the original Charles family farm which developed into a cattle empire of nearly 2000 acres by 1887. The combination of prairies and savanna that lured the Charles family to this spot was the sustaining element in the development of cattle farming as a major industry in Knox County. The soils gave ability to grow corn in surplus for export and specialized farming such as cattle feeding. The gently rolling west hills of the Walnut Grove Farm, which yielded wood for fuel and building materials in the 1870's (see map 1), became pasture land and some crop land as needs changed. (The fear of predicted wood shortage had been abated by 1890, but much woodland was consumed by that time). The Court Creek tributaries provided water and sandstone outcroppings. The east black prairie soils traditionally have been farmed for corn since "they broke the prairie" in the 1840's.

Since 1927, changes have occurred in some field sizes and Interstate 74 sliced a five acre plot from the south edge of the farm (that portion is being excluded from nomination). Two smaller cropland fields east of farmstead have been combined since 1927. Water retention basins to contain excess water runoff for soil conservation were added in 1987. The orchard that young George Charles planted was not replanted as age and an ice storm took its toll in the 40's. New grain storage facilities at the edge of the west walnut grove were built respecting the prominence and aesthetic qualities of the trees while fulfilling the functional needs of modern farming; the facility is unobstrusive. Technology has changed, but the overall pattern of spatial organization remains the same. Earlier structures on the west farmstead site were used for grain storage (corn crib and silos). The main change at the Walnut Grove Farm

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is that the corn/cattle balance has shifted more to corn than cattle at this time in its history. Cattle still graze the pastures and woodlots. Corn and hay are still grown to feed the animals. Production of surplus commodities is an activity that was well established by 1859(see map 2.) and still continues today. The changes have not harmed the physical integrity of the farmstead in relation to the period of significance.

The features of the farmscape which remain historically intact since 1927 are the walnut groves, the cluster arrangement of the buildings, the evergreen trees at the property line and apple trees in the farm yard that were planted by George Charles, the "little timber" (which is a restored oak, hickory savanna), the west interior farm road and the accompanying pastures, early quarry site and present farm fields that it services, all fence boundaries (excluding the south which borders I-74), and the general and traditional land use of the cropland. (See map 3)

The Walnut Grove Farm homestead was built on the land that was originally deeded to George A. Charles by the U.S. Government on May 22, 1835. From that time, the Charles family built many structures. Erection dates were seldom accurately documented, but we do know by other historical indications approximate building dates of remaining early structures, circa 1865-1925, built during the Charles' family ownership from 1835-1927. The Walnut Grove Farm farmstead today consists of: 4 barns, a farrowing house, open lounging shed, corn crib and attached covered feeding area, machine shed, 3 metal grain storage bins, grain dryer & elevator leg, 2 houses, 2 garages and a brick water storage facility. (See map 4)

Dates of Construction:

- A. bank barn c. 1865 old photo, local historians, Janis King alterations;
c. 1880 horse stall, c 1940 machinery lean-to contributing
- B. middle barn c. 1916 (date on foundation)
alterations: none
contributing
- C. east barn late 19th century (Ann Swallow, IL SHPO)
alterations: south lean-to c. 1880
north lean-to c. 1890
foundation c. 1940
contributing
- D. lounging shed 1973 (Bob Rader, previous owner)
alterations: none
non-contributing
- E. hog farrowing house c. 1920 (Janis King, current owner)
alterations: none
contributing

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- F. garage c. 1913 (dated floor)
alterations: widened- unknown
non-contributing
- G. cob house, late 19th century (Janis King)
alterations: window boarded-date unknown
contributing
- H. main house c. 1857 (county assessor's office)
alterations: c. 1870 whole house was modernized
c. 1930, 40 tower removed, part of front porch removed
contributing
- I. west hay barn c. 1890 (Gertrude Watkins, former resident & Charles descendant)
alterations: 1936 south lean-tos
contributing
- J. corn crib/feeding area c. 1910 (date on silo)
alterations: 1987 brick silo removed
contributing
- K. modern grain facility 1977-1987 (Janis King)
non-contributing
- L. tenant house 1900 (assessor's office)
alterations: c. 1940 basement & foundation
c. 1950 bathroom
contributing
- M. garage 1900 (assessor's office)
alterations: none
contributing
- N. brick water storage facility, late 19th century (Janis King)
alterations: c. 1950 windmill removed
contributing
- A. Constructed sometime before 1870, the three level "bank" barn has board and batten wooden siding. Built specifically for a cattle feeding operation, the sandstone block foundation was set into the hill, with the lower level openings facing the south. The lower level, supported by stone piers on the south facade, was (and still is) equipped with hay feeders that can be filled from the main level through trap doors. Later, wooden granaries and feeding chutes were added to the main floor to send feed to the bunks below. The lower level has a sandstone floor that

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extended outside of the barn; some sandstone remains in the outer lot as well. The purpose of this stone was to keep the cattle dry in inclement weather and to facilitate cleaning the barns.

The mow is the upper level which is divided into two parts at this time, with an alleyway (for hay wagons) between them. When the barn was first built the mow was divided into three sections with two alleyways. When the entrances were changed, probably during the 1880's to add on the horse stall lean-to, one alleyway was not used as previously. The alleyway was planked over for more mow space- hay storage.

The post and beam construction is fastened by mortise and tenon, featuring hand hewn trunnels at the top and bottom of braces. This is a feature of quality in barns. David Ciolek, Michigan barn builder and expert, has seen over 2000 barns and only two have had the pegs at the top and bottom of the braces. Dimensions of the original portions of the "bank" barn are 48 ft x 96 ft being about 35 ft to the peak of the gambrel roof. The ridgepole roof had corrugated metal roofing on the southside which replaced the wooden shingles around 1948. Three dormers were probably removed around at that time as well. The cupola was removed around 1946. The north side had wooden shingles and the three roof dormers. The gabled dormers have a round-arched two over two windows. During 1988, as phase two of the tax credit application, the cupola was rebuilt using the louvers that were found in the mow, the dormers were built on the south side to match those on the north, the entire roof is now cedar.

The ends of the east and west sides of the barn sport rectangular ventilation louvers. The south side of the barn has six rectangular windows (with 4 window lights each) at the mow level, placed directly above the six winnowing doors that are evenly spaced across the main level. Four windows were added to the barn at the main level sometime around 1900. These have 2 window lights each. The foundation has three rectangular windows- with three lights each- one in each corner of the barn, except the northeast corner. This window was bricked up when the alley and approach were changed in about the 1880's. It has been surmised that the northeast approach was abandoned at that same time when a large lean-to (12 ft x 48 ft) was added as a horse stall to the northeast end of the barn. Another lean-to (26 ft x 48 ft) was added to the northwest side of the barn in the early 40's for machinery storage. This addition blocked the northwest entrance (the door is still present and functional). The additions to the north side made this 2 bay north entrance barn into a barn with an east-west drive through and a perpendicular alleyway. (These adaptations were made to accommodate the changing functions needed for the barn: hay and grain storage, animal feeding. Farming changed about every 30 years, therefore, barns evolved and developed to meet the farmer's needs.

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The present changes are being, or have been made as part of the current plans for the rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards. As part of the National Trust For Historic Preservation's Barn Again! demonstration project, those changes are: repairing windows, returning west louver to original position, removing one "later vintage" window, raising hay lofts in 2/3 of main level, removing lower row of beams & brace pieces to create open interior space, removing one granery and one storage room, widening east doorway and approach, painting siding with original colors: red with white trim, removing red paint from the sandstone foundation, replacing missing sandstone blocks in foundation, replacing one sill, repairing other floor joists and flooring that has rotted, repairing and replacing the roof with cedar 1/2" shakes, restoring and replacing the 3 south dormers and the cupola.

Future plans include: repairing the lightning rod system and repairing the crumbling brick foundation on the horse stall lean-to.

B. The middle barn is about 27 ft x 24 ft and is constructed on a poured concrete foundation. The two-story board and batten wooden siding building was built and dated in 1916 and seems to be a replacement for the smaller barn that is pictured in the 1886 Knox County Pictorial History. This barn has a gambrel roof with corrugated metal roofing. There is a large hay door on the south side at the peak of the roof, and several small doors at the mow level. Hay and straw is stored in the mow for feeding and bedding of the animals below. There are feeding bunks in the four compartments at ground level with doors allowing entrance into each area. This barn is for smaller groups of animals, such as caring for sick animals, monitoring calving, etc.

C. The east barn is a wooden, board and batten building c. 1875. The main barn measures about 30 ft x 75 ft. The foundation consists of large pieces of sandstone as bases for the posts, and some poured concrete, which was added at a later time. The gambrel roof is formed from ridgepole construction and has wooden shingles, which were covered with corrugated metal roofing in 1982. The roof is accented with two dormers on the south side. The dormers have gable roofs, square double sash windows with four window lights. Two large hay doors allowed hay to be brought into the mow with fork and rope from either the east or west. There are two small windows symmetrically placed on either side of the hay doors. At the mow level, there are several windows at the north side which allow baled hay to be brought in with present day elevators. The ground level has windows spaced evenly along the west, south and east sides of the barn. Doors are placed strategically at each corner of the barn and at the center to allow movement of the animals in and out of the four main sections of the barn. One section has dairy stantions which suggests that this building was used

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specifically for a dairy barn at one time. The structure that provides space and strength for the stantions also gives support to the floor of the mow above. The barn is built with the sawn post and beam construction. It has lower bunks and smaller confinement areas which suggest that it was used for sheep and hogs at one time. Attached to the sides of this barn are two lean-tos: one 75 ft x 24 ft, for cattle feeding, one 24 ft x 30 ft, for equipment storage. The south feeding lean-to allows space for hay to be thrown down from the barn's mow to the hay feeders below. The north equipment lean-to has probably been on the barn since 1900, because the vertical boards are one foot wide and have battens similar to those on the original barn. The present condition of the barn is basically sound with a need for repair at the east end, specific windows and doors.

D. The small rectangular lounging shed is open to the south. It has a saltbox roofline. This small pole barn was built in 1973 with vertical wooden siding and corrugated metal roofing. It has been called the "bull barn" by the preceding owners, who raised registered cattle, and built the structure for separate winter protection for their bulls. It is in good condition. This structure was built on the site of an old house, which may have been the original homestead.

E. The hog farrowing building is a 10 ft x 70 ft rectangular building with shed roof with overhanging eaves and open rafters. The roof is sloped to the north with an open southern exposure, as the others, to take advantage of the winter sun. " Slope your barn 'gainst northern blast" reads an old almanac, "and heat of day is made to last"¹ The farrowing house is built on a poured concrete foundation. It has brick interior floors. There are 10 wooden stalls on the south that correspond with the 10 pairs of windows. There is an aisle for tending to the animals along the entire north side of the building; the two doors in the building are at both ends of the alley. The moveable, double sash windows with six lights per sash are not only handsome, but allow for adequate ventilation and admit the sun freely, "essential requisites for a warm, dry, well-ventilated shelter, that will ensure comfort in winter..."² (Even though this shed was built in the 1920's, the same basic principles of considering the environment, the animals and the materials at hand were used when building.) Windows, doors and some stall boards have incurred damage, but the basic structure is sound.

F. The garage is a small, rectangular building. The gable roof has asphalt shingles. There is a single sash window at the peak which has four lights. At this time, the building has two large sliding doors, a poured cement floor and foundation (date in floor concrete is 1913). This building was split and widened; the center section at the peak has been pieced in on the east and west ends. I feel that this building may have been a carriage house that was modernized in 1913 to accommodate vehicles (2 early models). There are two double sash windows, with two lights each, above the

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wooden work bench that lines the south and 1/2 of the east walls. There is a pedestrian door on the southwest corner of the garage. The condition of this building is marginal.

G. The "wood shed" or "cob house" is a 9 ft x 12 ft wooden storage shed adjacent to the house. The gable roof is about 15 ft high at the peak. The shed has a door and one small window for light. It is structurally sound, but in need of paint. Cobs and kindling for starting fires in the furnace and cook stoves were stored here, which is the source of its recent name. c. 1870

H. The residence at Walnut Grove Farm is depicted in the 1886 Knox County history as a large two-story, Second Empire style house. However, according to the Knox County tax assessor's records, an earlier house was built in 1857 on the Charles farmstead. Evidence supporting the existence of an earlier house is an historic photograph dating sometime after the Civil War. It depicts the farm with a much different home in the same location as the present one. Furthermore, The Portrait and Biographical Album of Knox County, Illinois, 1886 described A.P. Charles' residence as "the old Charles homestead which he has beautified with all modern improvements."³ All indications are that the house was completely redesigned sometime during the 1870's.

The farmhouse has a cross-mansard roof with a corner tower and rear one-story extension. The mansard roof is extended by two steep gables on the north and west bays. These gables have decorative moldings at the cornice and narrow strips of wood creating a radiating pattern from the centered window. The decorative bracketed cornice graces the eaves and first story bay window on the south. Paired rectangular windows are a common fenestration for this home which has approximately 40 double-hung, one-over-one windows. On the south facade, there is a two-story bay with four windows on each story. There is a small oval shaped window on the south facade which gives light to the foyer closet. The kitchen addition, which was added in 1870, has a modified hip roof construction. It appears that an old wash house or summer kitchen may have been attached to the house. Interior features include handcarved walnut and cherry woodwork, wall niches on the staircase, built-in interior shutters, built-in sinks with marble tops and original hardware in 4 of 5 bedrooms, walnut pocket doors in the parlor and double swinging doors that fill the arched doorway between the two living rooms. The tower's mansard room was removed in the 1930's. Part of the front wrap around verandah and stairs was also removed during the 30's and 40's, only the section on the west facade remains. Structurally, nothing has been added to the house exterior since 1870.

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Descriptions of the second set of farm buildings, located on the west side of Knox Station Road, includes the hay barn, corn crib and attached feeding area and modern grain handling & storage facilities.

I. The hay barn is a 65 ft x 24 ft pole barn. Circa 1890. There is no foundation around the main barn. Two sliding doors at the north entrance allow hay wagons to enter easily to unload hay on both sides of the interior drive. There are no mows, floors, or other divisions in the main part of the barn. This structure was built simply for hay storage from ground to peak; the poles used were unmilled trees. The siding is vertical tongue and groove. Later, lean-tos were added to house and protect feeding cattle. The hay can be easily thrown to the bunks at the open interior juncture between the barn and the lean-to on the south. The lean-tos, which were added in 1936, are open to the south, measure 24 ft x 65 ft, have some poured concrete foundation and some brick flooring (to facilitate cleaning the barns; to help keep cattle dry.) Fenestration of the north side includes five single sash windows with four lights at the roof line; the east side has three windows at the roof line. The gable roof has corrugated metal roofing at this time and two round, metal ventilators with cow weathervane finials. Circa 1890.

J. The corn crib and attached feeding area is what remains of the early 20th century grain storage & feeding facility. This horizontal wooden slat, rectangular structure stored ear corn until it was ground for cattle, fed whole to hogs or shelled for market. The attached feeding area connected two earlier silos which stored winter silage (fermented hay) for winter feed. This was considered a very modern, convenient way to feed livestock and was the forerunner of today's facilities for cattle feeding. The feeding area most recently was used for hog feeding.

K. The modern grain storage facility on the north side of the corn crib and feeding lean-to is a one-story metal structure with shed roof.

L. The tenant house was built in 1900 (tax records) and is an example of simple, vernacular utilitarian homes. It is approximately 30 ft x 18 ft. The hip roof (15 ft height) has exposed roof rafters, black asphalt shingles and is topped with a simple brick chimney. The narrow wooden horizontal siding, original doors and windows and simple front portico demonstrates that this building is virtually intact. The only structural changes occurred in the 1940's when a basement and foundation were dug for the house. A Purington Block foundation and poured concrete basement were positive sound additions. A bathroom was added in the 1950's. The house currently needs painting, but is structurally sound.

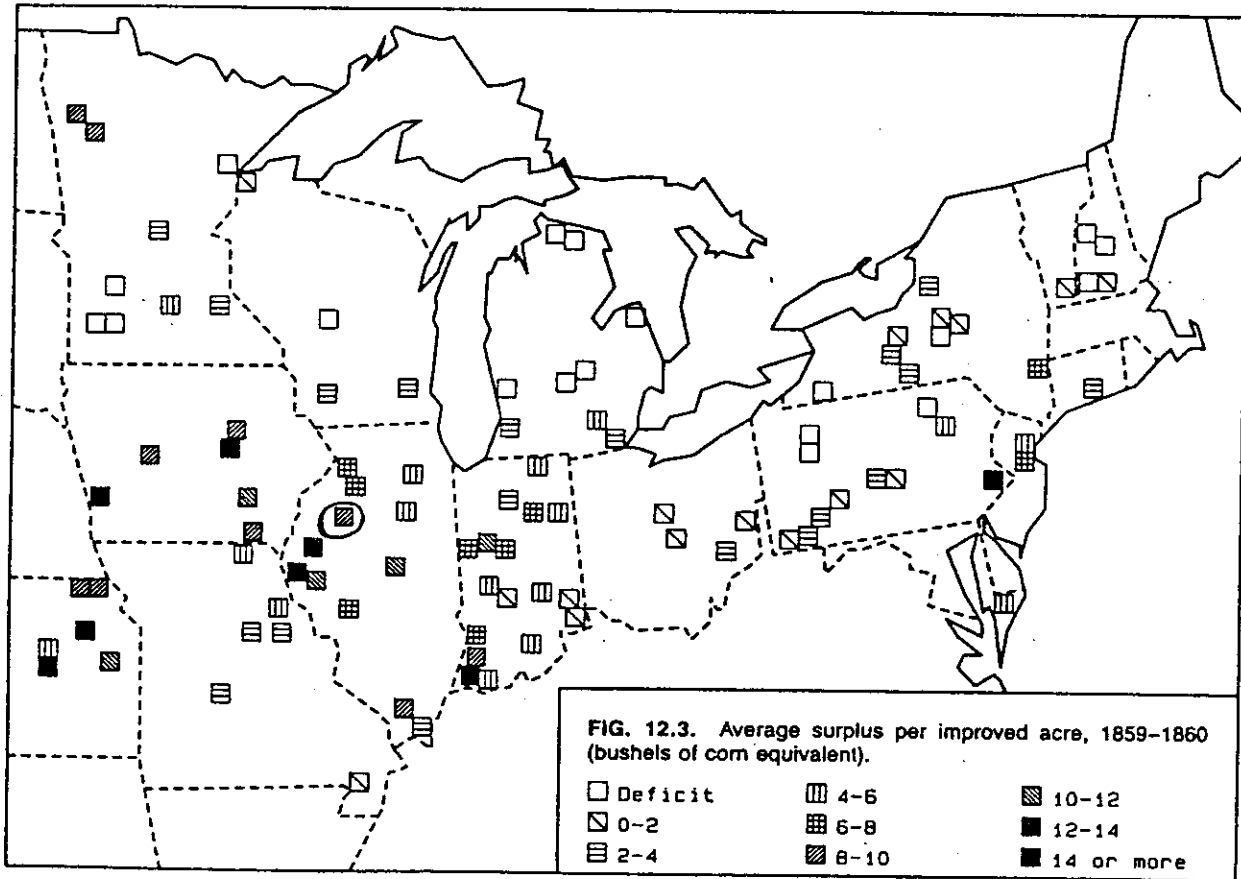
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M. The garage is a rectangular, gable roof, one-story, wooden structure with exposed rafters and asphalt shingles. It is approximately 15 ft x 9 ft x 10 ft at the peak. A four light, single sash window is centered on the north and south sides of the building. There are two swinging doors on this one stall garage. It needs paint, but it's sound.

N. A most unique structure is the water holding tank. This round 12 ft diameter, brick facility has a low gable roof and is situated next to the pump house. It accepts water when it is pumped from the adjacent, slow-recovering well. The water is then pumped by a pressure tank in the tenant house to various outlets throughout the farm, including the main house. The 12 ft x 6 ft pump house is about 7 ft tall. It has wooden, tongue and groove siding and a metal shed roof. The windmill was removed in the 1950's.



Map 2 Key: Knox County is circled
 Source: To Their Own Soil by Jeremy Atack

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

Period of Significance

1865-1927

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Walnut Grove Farm, located north of Knoxville, Illinois on portions of sections 21 & 22 of Knox township along Knox Station Road, is in the heart of rural Knox County, which has traditionally derived its economy from agriculture. The farm is a fine example of what has evolved as a result pioneering rural development. The Charles family came to Illinois seeking the personal success that the rich prairie had to offer. They developed a successful cattle feeding/breeding business, while helping determine the dynamic governmental and political changes that were evolving in Knox County. The buildings are not only a tribute to the confident, forward-thinking settlers who believed that they could make vast improvements in the business of agriculture, but they are a tribute to the local, unknown barn builders, artisans and carpenters. The significant development of Knox County and the Walnut Grove Farm parallel; the Charles family's influence during that time of 1831-1927 was invaluable. The specific period of significance for the Walnut Grove Farm buildings is 1865-1927, relating to criterion A for the contribution that the Charles family made to the agricultural history of Knox County.

THE SETTLERS

Original land entry for the Walnut Grove farmstead was May 22, 1835 to George A. Charles whose father, Captain John Charles, was one of the founding fathers of Knoxville, the first county seat of Knox County, IL. George came to Knox County in 1831, at age 20 from Buffalo, New York with his parents, John and Eunice Charles. When the Charles family came to Knox County, it was estimated that there were 350 inhabitants, the number required by law to organize, which was done in June of 1830.

John Charles was originally from Pennsylvania and of German parentage. In his younger days, Captain Charles had driven a stage coach, commanded a vessell on the Great Lakes, and farmed near Buffalo, New York. Journeying by flatboat on the Ohio River to St. Louis, they traveled on to Illinois. John Charles bought a claim for farming purposes from Parry Morris, the first settler in Knox township. (Little did he know that soon Knoxville would be laid out there.) Settling on section 28 in a small log house, they started with a "few broken acres". "During the summer of 1831, the family started on foot for a more secluded spot that would insure them protection from the inroads of the Indians."⁴ (Knox Station Road is part of what was an Indian trail between Peoria and the Rock River known as the Galena Trail.) Later, they returned and built a hewed-log house to adjoin the cabin that they left.

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When George came to this country, it was reported that his "means did not amount to \$300., and by the dint of industry and perseverance and good judgment he succeeded in achieving success."⁵ He settled on section 22 with his wife, beginning housekeeping in a log cabin, erected a frame house some time after 1843 and, during the years before he moved to Knoxville in 1870, built several fine barns and out-buildings. At the time of his death in 1878, his estate including several farms, livestock, bank stock, city home was valued at \$105,000. The farms he bequeathed to his sons A.P., A.G. and Harley.

POLITICS AND COMMUNITY

The abilities that gained George A. Charles his business success also served him and Knox County well during the formative years of Knoxville. George was a community leader whose activities from 1832-1877 were documented in many Knox County history books. Charles was county surveyor from 1838-1842. He held numerous public offices, usually treasurer of organizations and helped charter three: County Main Law Alliance, a temperance organization in 1854, First National Bank of Knoxville in 1865, Knox Agricultural School in 1877. He was Knox Township Supervisor for many years: 1855-61 & 1867-73, "a well respected Democrat in a predominately Republican township". Though George never won, being a member of the minority party, he ran for several higher public offices: judge, representative and state senator. "Politically, Mr. Charles...attained a great deal of influence, not only in the country, but was also a strong factor in the Democratic party of this portion of the State, and his counsel was often sought and his opinion relied upon as to his methods of conducting campaigns."⁶

George Charles was directly involved in the erection of the first two Knox County Courthouses in Knoxville as well as the hall of records which is now Knoxville City Hall. "September 15, 1832, we find the following orders: Upon the request of the court, George A. Charles and John B. Gumm having taken into consideration the contract of Robert K. Hendricks, and having examined the work performed under said contract, gave it as their opinion to the court, that the said Robert Hendricks is not entitled to full compensation for said work ..."⁷ George's actual position is not stated in the court records (which at the time were being taken in a log cabin). It is clear that Mr. Charles (who was 21 at that time) and Mr. Gumm were not pleased with that work performed on the courthouse. Later in 1838, when a permanent courthouse was built in Knoxville, George Charles signed the original contract for the building of that structure as one of the sureties. In 1867, George returned to the Board of Supervisors and fought with the Knoxville faction to keep the county seat from moving to Galesburg. This argument waged on and finally ended in 1873 when a second election was held on the county seat issue and Knoxville lost.

George's oldest son, Alanson George (A.G.), was a member of the building committee of the present Knox County Courthouse in Galesburg which was built from 1884-1886. A.G. rather disliked public office, but "has now and then, accepted it at the urgent importunities of friends."⁸ During the Courthouse Centennial Celebration, Judge Harry Bulkely relates, "We're indebted to the people of the past who built this courthouse, in particular the members of the building committee ...because they had a sense of public service... wanting to do something for the citizens of Knox County." According to Bulkely, the

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committee consisted not of slick lawyers, businessmen or politicians, but rather of hardworking men who farmed in Knox County. "When they built this building, it was truly a temple of justice, because early Knox County residents knew that law was the only way society was going to exist out on the prairie."⁹

A.G., even though he was elected Supervisor for four terms, Treasurer of the Knox County Agricultural Board for 12 years and President of the Knox County Farmer's Institute (organized in 1894), seemed most interested in offices that most directly related to farming, his business. In 1899, the county atlas recorded that, "He is a sturdy, thrifty farmer, and is the owner of 1200 acres of beautiful rolling prairie land ..."¹⁰

A.G.'s son, George, like the three generations of Charles before him, was involved in community service. He was treasurer and a member of the executive committee of the Knox County Farm Bureau. Because of the having the support of the state and national governments, the Farm Bureau was considered the most important agency for promoting crop increases and farm interests at that time. It was organized in 1918 and by 1921 was one of the largest in the state.

NATURAL RESOURCES, LOCATION

The early settlers considered the best locations as those which had abundant wooded areas as well as pasture land; often the potential of soil was judged by the kinds of trees that grew upon it. An early government survey of Knox Township sections 21 and 22 shows that the northwest was largely covered by trees while the southeast had wide open prairies. The Charles family had an abundant source of wood for fuel and building materials as well as rich prairies for grazing and corn production.

Rock outcroppings in section 21 were the source for early building materials, including the bank barn on the Walnut Grove Farm. "In the early days there was considerable stone quarried in Knox County but at the present time there is but very little owing to the better quality of stone that can be procured elsewhere. The early quarries were situated not far from Knoxville. North of that city, along the bank of a small stream that runs into Court Creek can be seen the site of a quarry in a sandstone bluff. This stone is in large blocks and hardens on exposure. It was used in the construction of some of the buildings in Knoxville and elsewhere in the country"¹¹

Knox Township's location 50 miles between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers made it an early crossroad of trade. An Indian trail, referred to as the Galena Trail, was part of what is now called Knox Station road (See map 5). Knoxville, the first county seat, was destined for great progress with three railroad lines heading towards it, when Galesburg's leaders convinced major lines to go through Galesburg instead, making Galesburg one of the leading railroad centers in the state. The fact that one line did go through Knoxville and the Santa Fe line was 2 miles north of Knoxville (Knox Station) with a stockyard and loading dock, still gave adequate access to Chicago markets for area farmers.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Between 1835-1935 agriculture changed dramatically. "The amazingly rapid development of railroads and the introduction of the steel plow and mechanical reaper, opening the tallgrass prairie of the Midwest to agricultural exploitation, resulted in rapid westward expansion of cattle raising."¹² As these implements became available, farming on a large scale was possible. The steel plow in particular had a great effect upon the change from subsistence farming to a specialized agriculture. The steel plow broke the heavy, prairie soils and thick grasses so that corn could be grown. Instead of cattle raising being pushed ahead of the settlements to the open areas, now cattle could be fed on farms. Farmers produced the corn and hay to feed them. As the railroad came through Knox County in 1854 making Chicago and New York markets accessible, premium prices were a strong incentive to produce cattle.

Knox County's fine prairie soils and abundant rainfall made this area a perfect location for corn and livestock production. "As people moved into the region, they quickly shifted farming from a pioneering way of life to a business. Corn and livestock thrived on the rich land and favorable climate from the beginning of settlement; and although there were distractions, corn and cattle remained major products. By the end of the century, they accounted for the largest percentage of the value of farm products in Illinois ... In 1859, a Knox County Illinois farmer exclaimed: "Corn, the county is one immense corn field".¹³

From 1840's-1870's, farmers were encouraged to manage their cattle herds more efficiently by improving their breeding stock and providing better shelter and more convenient methods feeding. Extensive efforts were made to import breeding stock from Europe to upgrade the quality of the herds in Illinois. Farm publications implored farmers to shed their cattle instead of leaving them on the prairies and woodlots. Even though it was considered inhumane by some, open range feeding of lower grade cattle, which was easier and cheaper, was very common.

After 1870, A.G. and his brother, Albion P. (A.P.) owned the Walnut Grove Farm and developed the livestock business importing fancy breeding stock from Europe. Indications from the abstract and family descendants are that Albion had ideas that were too grand and got into financial trouble. It was reported A.P. overextended buying fancy horses. (A.G. bought the farm from Albion, who moved to Kansas around 1910.) Albion, however was the one who was credited with importing the blooded stock. See the enclosed photo copy of the lithograph of the Walnut Grove Farmstead from the Portrait and Biographical Album of Knox County Illinois 1886. Albion's talent for judging the quality of animals was evident in the 1881 Knox County Agricultural Board Premium List of the 27th Annual Fair where he was listed as judge for the thoroughbred horse class.

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The Charles family was an influential cattle breeder in Knox County, which was part of a major breeding area in the Corn Belt (see maps 6 & 7). A.P. and his brother, A.G., were described in Knox County annals as extensive, successful breeders. They imported animals, raised purebred stock of several varieties and experimented with crossbreeding, which later became a widely accepted, economic method of cattle production. (There is no breed of cattle native to this country although the U.S. is the world leader in the beef industry. "Currently, over 72 breeds are raised in the U.S. American cattle were imported in the early to mid 1800's, their traits improved and now they are being exported to improve the native cattle of other lands."¹⁴

In 1886, it was reported that "stock raising in Knox County has become one of the chief and most profitable enterprizes of many of her leading citizens. It is not simply stock that they raise, but the best pure-bred animals known in the world. Here are to be found some herds of cattle equal to almost any to be found anywhere. Many of the farmers have displayed great enterprize, as well as rare good judgment, in the way they have taken hold of the breeding of high grades of cattle, horses and swine. Some of them have had the courage to invest vast sums of money in a few animals. These, however, have invariable, we think, proven good investments, besides doing much toward lifting up the standard of the grade of the home stock. A.P. Charles, whose fine stock farm is near Knoxville, has a splendid herd of Short-horns, and is quite an extensive breeder ...also raising Polled Angus."¹⁵

To better understand the size and evolution of the Walnut Grove Farm, consider this reference information: one man and a team could successfully farm 80 acres; if a man had sons and another team, he could farm 160 acres; more acres than that meant tenant farmers were needed. George Charles started with 160 acres in 1835. The 1868 tax collector's records of real estate showed that George Charles then owned 567.5 acres in Knox Township. By 1887, son A.P. woned 577.5 acres; son A.G. owned 1,375 acres. A.G. divided his section of land between his four children. His son, George, owned the Walnut Grove Farm in 1909 which was approximately 360 acres. A random selection of 14 farm sizes chosen from the Portrait and Biographical Album of Knox County 1886 gives a range of 55 acres to 700 acres with an average size of 284. One must keep in mind that these history books were not all inclusive and usually included information about the wealthiest people, who were able to pay to have their stories included in the volume. Further consider that people invested in farmland when they achieved success. Wayne Price, noted Illinois barn expert, states that "There were a few in every county that owned 1000 acres, but this was the exception. The Charles farm 100 years ago was a result of farmers that were successful, excellent, dedicated managers."

A.G.'s son, George, was the last Charles to own the Walnut Grove Farm. He continued the farming operation of his father and grandfather. George fed cattle, only he purchased feeder calves in Kansas instead of raising the calves himself. Cattle were pastured on the acreage around the west barns, which was the main feedlot. Corn and wheat, which were grown north of the tenant house, were a source of feed for the animals as well as a

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source of revenue when the excess was sold. A community owned threshing machine was used at harvest. When the cattle were ready for market, George drove them by horse a mile north to Knox Station, boarded one or two carloads on the Santa Fe to deliver them to Chicago. "Pa rode in the caboose of the cattle train." (daughter, Gertrude Watkins)

George also established an orchard, filling the lower level of the bank barn with several varieties of pears and apples. He had 20 acres of apples, but also raised persimmons, grapes, strawberries and raspberries. Cattle farming and corn were usually the main income sources, but Georgia Rounds, George's daughter, relates, "the fruit crop was a lifesaver when the crops failed one year". George, who was considered by his family a horticulturist, sold the farm and moved to Florida to raise oranges. The depression and the lack of a master horticulturist, like George Charles, were the factors contributing to the orchard's decline. The orchard lasted on a smaller scale until the 1940's when the last 15 acres were severely damaged by an ice storm and consequently bulldozed-returning the land to its previous use of cropland and pasture.

Even though cattle farming has remained a part of the development of The Walnut Grove Farm beyond the Charles family ownership, that family had the greatest positive influence, of any owners, on the farm as well as Knox County's agricultural development. Cattle and corn continued to be the dominant type of farming, but the level of operation was much less. Subsequent owners were less involved in the community's affairs, and seemingly not a part of the cutting edge in the development of agricultural issues and trends of the day as the Charles family were.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WALNUT GROVE FARM

The fine barns on the Walnut Grove Farm resulted from the needs and the successes of the cattle operation. As more cattle were raised, more shelter was needed for hay, corn and feeding. More feed meant a need for more acres of crops and more horses to do the work. Each facet of the farming operation demanded buildings suited to its purposes. For example, hogs have traditionally been known as "mortgage lifters" because of their ability to turn quick profit. Even though cattle farming was dominant on The Walnut Grove Farm, during periods of low cattle prices, hogs were raised. Therefore, as farming needs changed, or prices for commodities fluctuated, the buildings were changed or new ones built (farrowing house) to meet new demands. The Walnut Grove Farm has four barns which were adaptable to be used for cattle, hogs, sheep, horses and dairy cows as well as feed and equipment storage. However, the outbuildings reflect the emerging trend of specialization in farming, in this case, cattle farming.

The bank barn, which was built specifically for cattle feeding, was one of the largest in the state at that time, according to Wayne Price, noted Illinois barn expert. He stated, "Its size is indicative of the success that the Charles' obtained. The barns and home are exemplary of hard work and a family who made the most of what the prairie had to offer and invested their money, thoughts and energies to ensure progress as well as their comfort." Their forward thinking was prophetic and we are the beneficiaries of a fine collection of buildings that signifies the hey day in agriculture and specifically cattle feeding industries.

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FOOTNOTES

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4. Ibid p. 762
5. Ibid p. 762
6. Ibid p. 762
7. Perry, History of Knox County Illinois Its Cities, Towns and People, 1912, p. 22
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13. Walter Ebeling, The Fruited Plain The Story of American Agriculture, 1907, p. 200
14. James Whitaker, The Feedlot Empire: Beef Cattle Feeding In Illinois and Iowa, 1840-1900, Ames, Iowa: 1975.
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Knox County Historic Sites, Knoxville, IL
- GA Charles "Custom Cloth and Dye Book", Ledger from G.A. Charles woolen mills. Included is a report by A.G. Charles of G.A. Charles estate, 1879.
- Knox County Tax Assessor's Office-records, Knox County Courthouse, Galesburg, IL
- Government survey map, Jan. 20, 1855, Knox County Courthouse, Galesburg, IL
- Walnut Grove Farm Abstract

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CONVERSATIONS WITH:

Ruth Carlson, former owner of Walnut Grove Farm, RR Knoxville, IL

David Ciolek, barn builder/expert, 1940 E. Curtis Road, Birch Run, MI

H. Wayne Price, Save Our Barns Committee, Illinois State Historical Society,
RR #6 Box 90, Springfield, IL

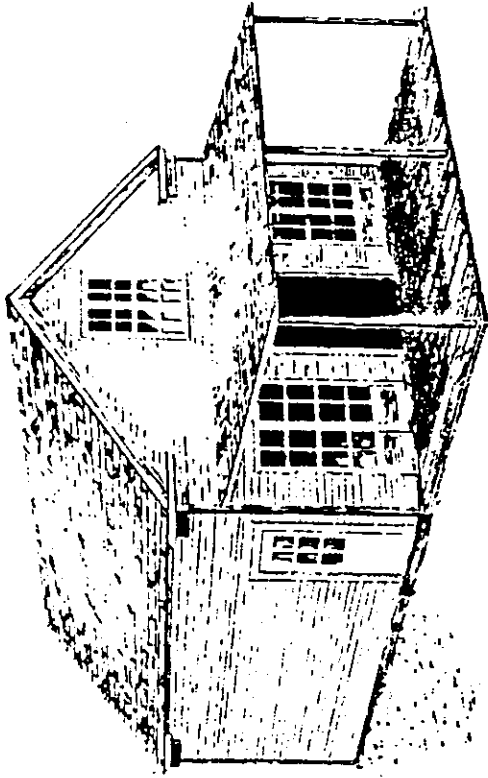
Robert Rader, former owner, RR, Knoxville, IL

Georgia Rounds, Charles descendent/former owner, 1682 Pintail Way,
Sarasota, FL

Gertrude Watkins, Charles descendent/former owner, 1684 Pintail Way,
Sarasota, FL

UTM REFERENCES:

E	<u>16</u>	<u>728730</u>	<u>4533340</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

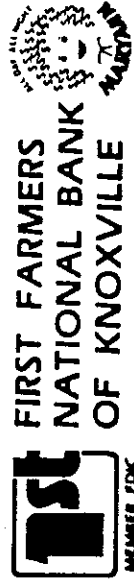


ON JUNE 16, 1857 CORNELIUS RUNKLE'S STORE

...became a bank. Answering the growing needs of area residents, Cornelius Runkle started a bank in the back of his store. And that bank has prospered because it was committed to caring for the financial needs of its customers.

Times have changed since the days of Cornelius Runkle. Today the First Farmers National Bank of Knoxville is a modern organization in a modern facility; All designed to better serve our customers. One thing hasn't changed during the past 127 years. The First Farmers National Bank of Knoxville is here to serve you, our customer.

"The Down To Earth Bank"

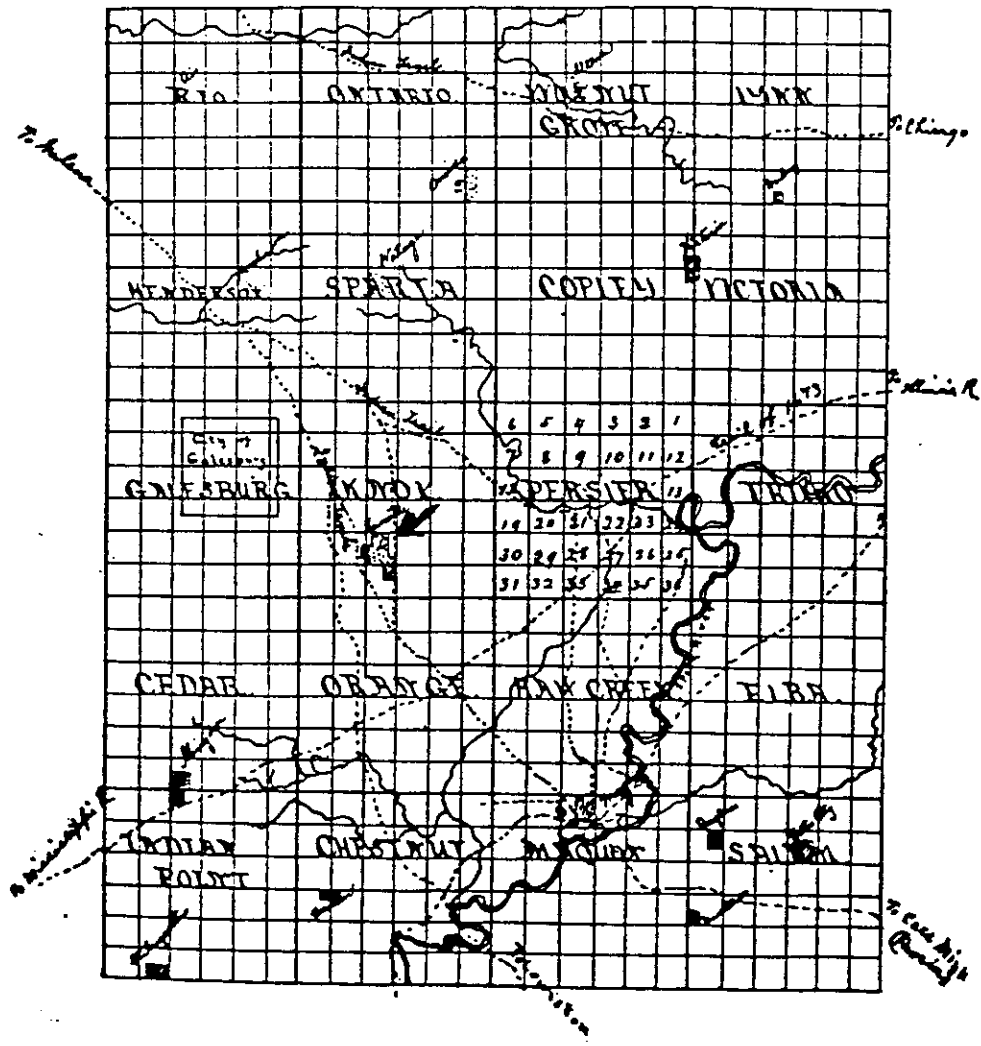


Visit Knox County's
Oldest Bank
Today!

Box 199 Knoxville, IL 61448 Phone 289-2346

Source: The Prairie Journal p.22 Spring 1984

G.A. Charles was a charter board member of this bank. It was the first bank in the county to receive a national charter in 1865.



MAP SHOWING INDIAN TRAILS THROUGH THE COUNTY

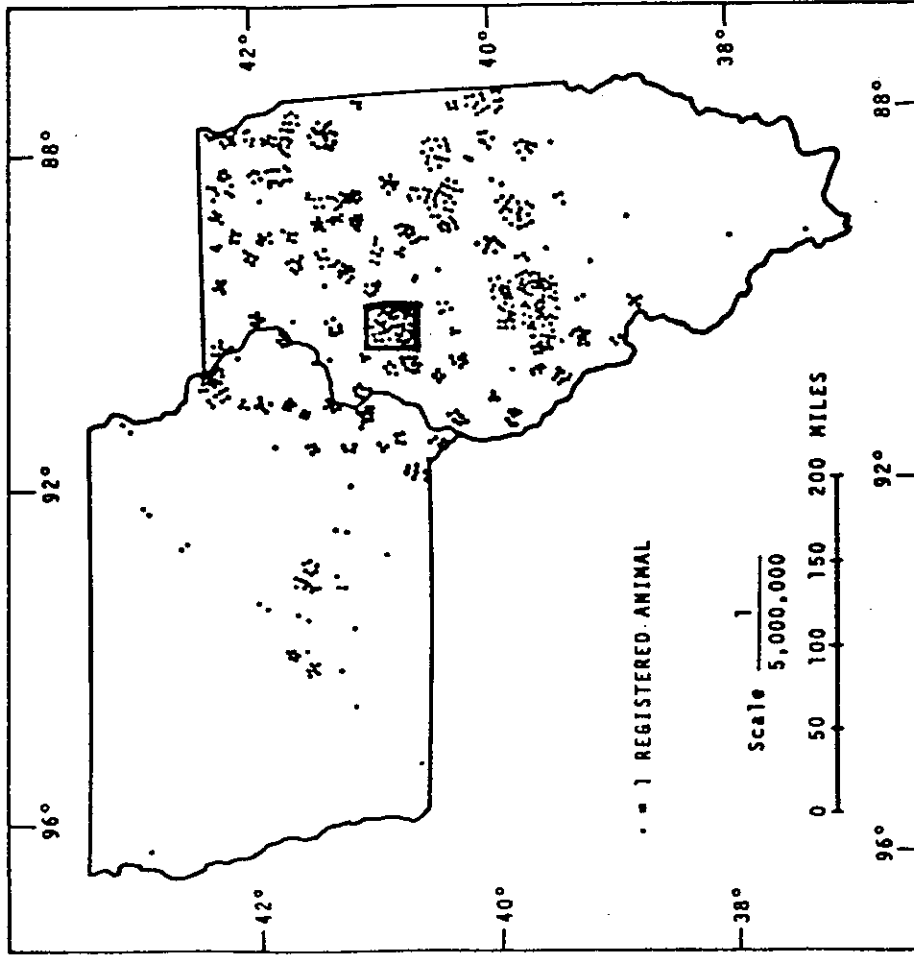
Map 5

Source: History of Knox County, Illinois, Its Cities, Towns and People c.1912

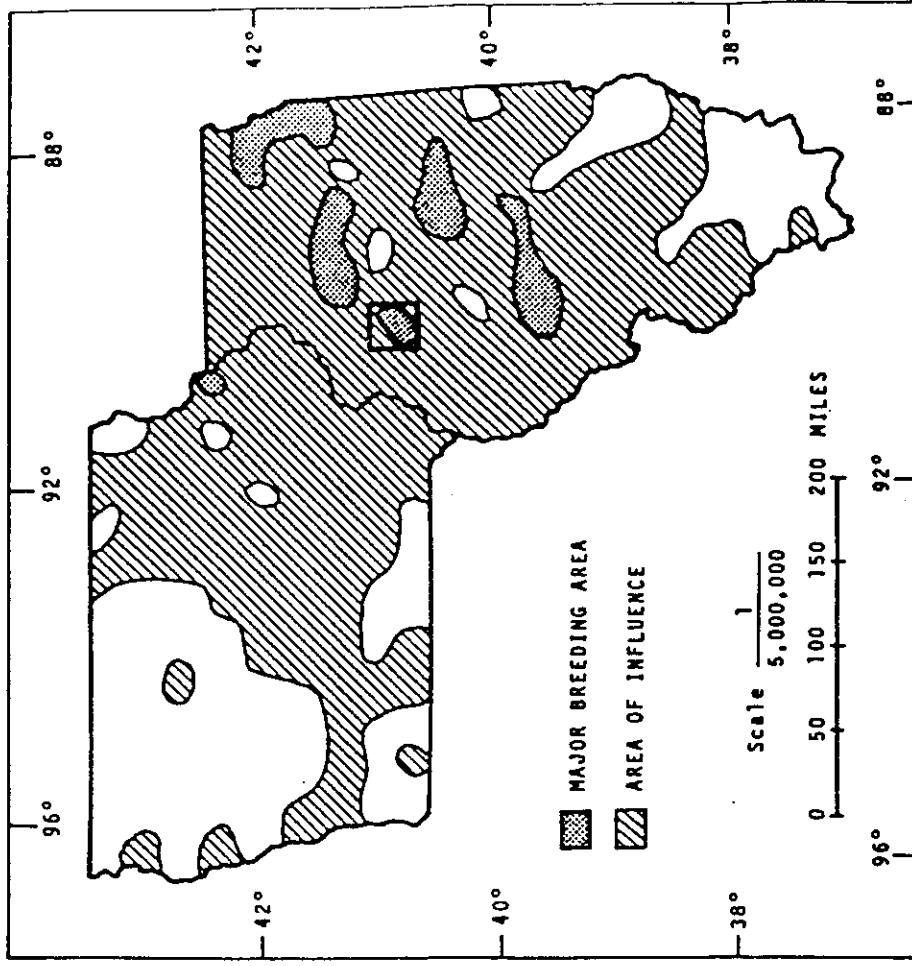
Key: Knox Station Road →

Source: The Feedlot Empire: Beef Cattle Feeding in Illinois and Iowa, 1840-1900 by James Whitaker

Registered Cattle Calved or Imported, 1870 (Source: Brinkman, "Historical Geography," 1964; map 28, used by permission)



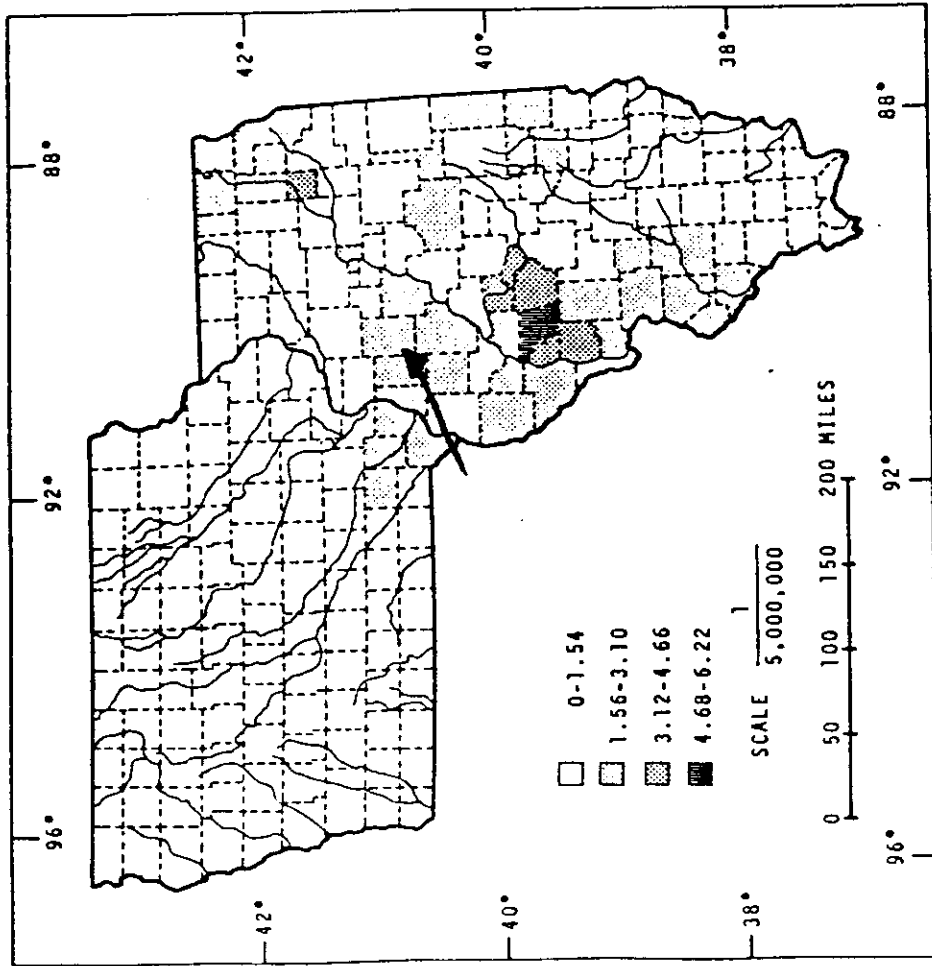
Presumed Areas Influenced by Improved Breeds of Cattle, 1870 (Source: Brinkman, "Historical Geography," 1964; map 26, used by permission)



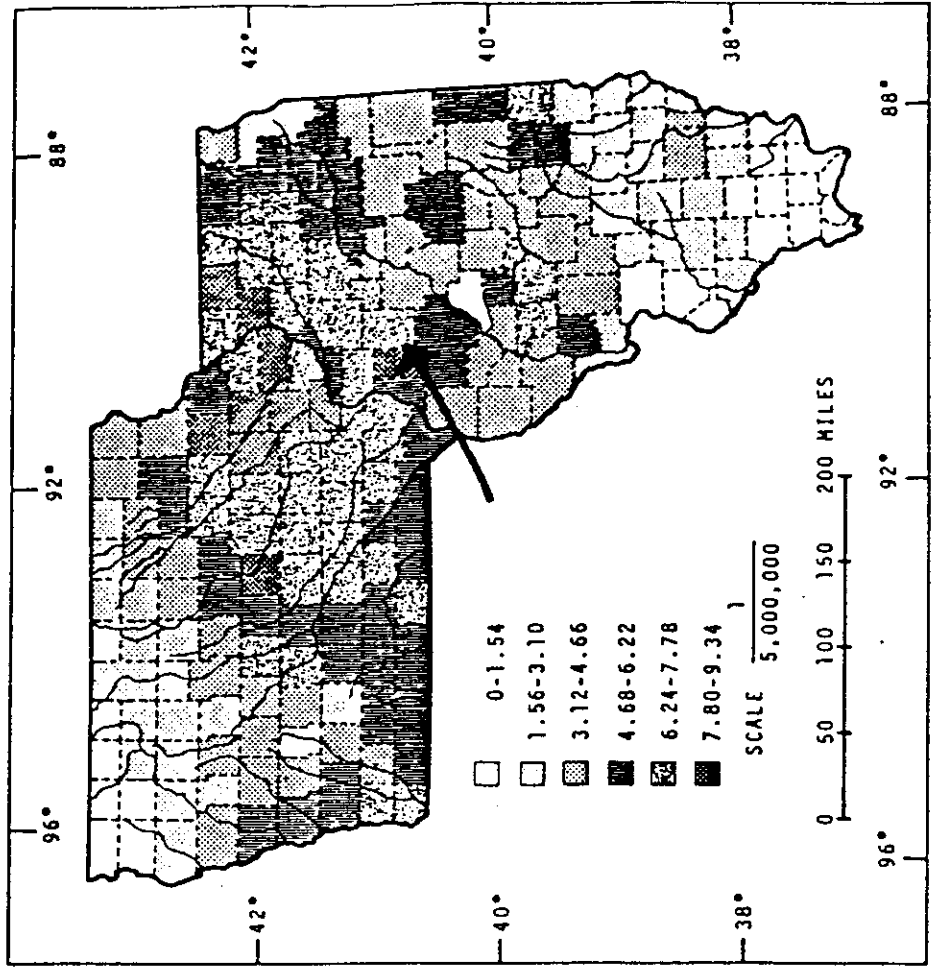
Maps 6 Knox County: Outlined

Source: The Feedlot Empire: Beef Cattle Feeding in Illinois and Iowa, 1840-1900 by James Whitaker

Beef Cattle per Hundred Acres, 1850



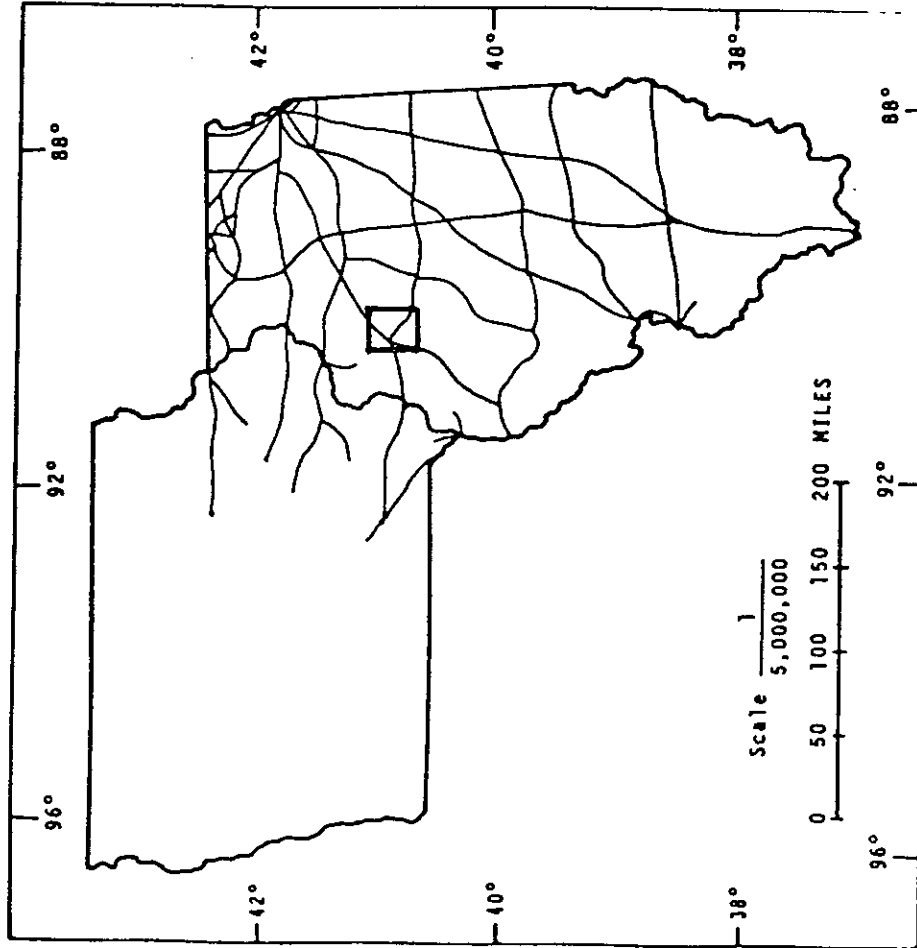
Beef Cattle per Hundred Acres, 1880



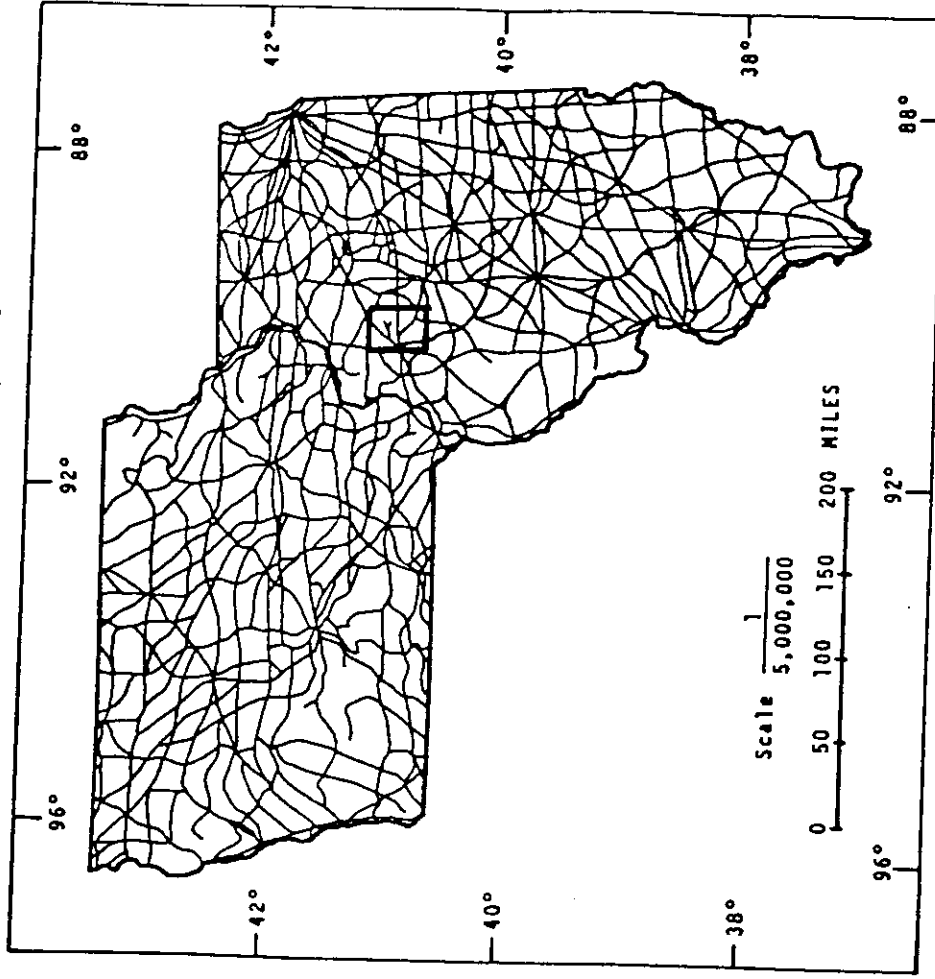
Maps 7 Knox County: →

Source: The Feedlot Empire: Beef Cattle Feeding in Illinois and Iowa, 1840-1900 by James Whitaker

Railroads, 1861



Railroads, 1900



Knox County: outlined

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

Acreage of property 360

UTM References

A

1	5
7	2
8	7
0	0

4	5
3	3
8	0
0	0

C

1	5
7	3
1	1
4	0

4	5
3	3
4	4
0	0

B

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7	3
1	1
3	0

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3	3
8	7
0	0

D

1	5
7	3
0	9
5	0

4	5
3	2
9	4
0	0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All N of Hwy E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW S21 T11 R2 and All N of Hwy 74 SW & N 60 A W $\frac{1}{2}$ SES22 T11 R2.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This acreage has been historically associated with the Walnut Grove Farm and is now owned by Janis and Ted King.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janis J. King, co-owner date May 10, 1989
 organization Walnut Grove Farm telephone (309) 289-4770
 street & number RR #1 Box 138 city or town Knoxville state Illinois zip code 61448



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

SEP 01 1989

WEEKLY LIST OF LISTED PROPERTIES

8/21/89 THROUGH 8/25/89

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Certification Date, Reference Number, NHL status

CALIFORNIA

Orange County

Huntington Beach Municipal Pier
Main St. and Ocean Ave.

Huntington Beach 8/24/89 89001203

Ventura County

Women's Improvement Club of Hueneme
239 E. Scott St.

Port Hueneme 8/21/89 89001150

CONNECTICUT

Fairfield County

Ball and Roller Bearing Company
20--22 Maple Ave.

Danbury 8/25/89 89001087

ILLINOIS

Cook County

Bohlander, Jacob, House
316 N. 4th Ave.

Maywood 8/21/89 89001113

Kane County

Geneva Country Day School
1250 South St.

Geneva 8/21/89 89001111

Knox County

Walnut Grove Farm
Knox Station Rd., 1 mi. S of Knoxville

Knoxville vicinity 8/24/89 89001114