

MCCONNELL FARMSTEAD, THRESHING BARN
6102 Broadway Street
Richmond
McHenry County
Illinois

HABS IL-1235-A
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

McCONNELL THRESHING BARN

HABS No. IL-1235-A

Location: 6102 Broadway Street, Richmond, McHenry County, Illinois.

The coordinates for the McConnell Threshing Barn are lat: 42.478342 and long: -88.316250, and they were obtained through Google Earth in November 2011 with WGS84 datum. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Significance: The threshing barn was constructed by a young man from Lycoming County, Pennsylvania named William Alexander McConnell who was the first documented European settler of Richmond Township, Illinois. Proficient at carpentry, McConnell constructed his log home in 1838 followed shortly thereafter (circa 1840s) by a hand-hewn threshing barn. He would become a very prosperous farmer and key public figure, holding various positions over the years, such as first Justice of the Peace of the township and county, first Postmaster of Richmond, Associate Judge of McHenry County, and elected Commissioner of McHenry County. He also served one term in the Illinois State Legislature.

Description: Constructed of hand-hewn oak timbers, the three-bay threshing barn measures 30 feet, 9 inches by 60 feet, 6 inches. The structure rests upon a rubble stone and limestone foundation, and has a side-gable roof that peaks at 27 feet, 10.5 inches above the floor of the barn. The barn contains a lean-to addition on the north side, presumably constructed prior to 1900, for livestock, machine storage and fowl. The outer shell of the structure is finished with five inch vertical tongue and groove siding. The doors are located along the gabled ends of the barn. The door along the western side of the barn has been modified and enlarged to encompass the entire side, allowing for its later use as machine storage. Inside of the structure, massive hand-hewn timbers compose the sill, measuring at their widest over 17 inches and stretching 30 feet, 10.5 inches long before being lapped to the next. Four pairs of hand-hewn bents divide the space into three bays. The bents consist of posts and girts joined together by mortise and tenon in combination with wooden pegs. The center and western bays measure 18 feet, 2 inches and 17 feet, 1 inch, respectively, with the eastern bay measuring the largest at 24 feet, 2 inches. The roof of the structure is composed of pit sawn rafters pegged to the hand-hewn plate and purlins before butting up to its opposite counterpart at the peak. It should be noted that at the peak the rafters are not jointed or pegged in any way, but maintain their position by precision and compression. The purlins are braced by a pair of queen posts at each bent. Laying perpendicular atop the rafters are rough sawn boards measuring in excess of 12 inches, and spaced a few inches apart, upon which cedar shakes are still present under the asphalt shingles.

History: The threshing barn was constructed shortly after 1838 on the initial McConnell claim of 480 acres overlooking the Nippersink Creek. In 1852 the McConnell family moved south across Broadway Street, out of the log cabin and frontier life

and into a stately Greek Revival house. They took the threshing barn to the new farm and reconstructed it. In 1872 McConnell and his wife would move once again north across the street to the site of the original log cabin and into a new Greek Revival house. In this final move they again took the threshing barn with them to be sited near its original location, where it stands today.

Historian: Submitted for 2011 Holland Prize competition by McHenry County Conversation District, Austin Taylor and Amy Peters