

REUBLE FARM, BARN  
593 South Fort Casey Road  
Coupeville vicinity  
Island County  
Washington

HABS WA-251-A  
WA-251-A

HABS

WA-251-A

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

REUBLE FARM, BARN

WA-251-A  
HABS No. WA-251-A

Location: Whidbey Island, Island County, Washington

Present Owner: National Park Service

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: With the passing of the Donation Land Claim Act in 1850, Congress agreed to grant land in the Oregon Territory to American settlers willing to farm it. It was during this time that settlement of Central Whidbey Island accelerated, and that Hugh Crockett claimed 160.73 acres of prairie south of Penn Cove. Adjoining the DLCs of his brother and father, the area soon came to be known as Crockett Prairie.

Charles T. Terry sold his land to the north of Hugh Crockett's DLC in 1862 to John R. Williamson. Two years later, Williamson bought an additional 10 acres from the northern end of Hugh Crockett's DLC, giving him 170 acres total. Williamson's land changed hands several times until 1883 when it was purchased by James Gillespie.<sup>1</sup>

Gillespie lived on the land with his family, building a small house and outbuildings. Not much is known about how this land was used in the fifty-three years following Gillespie's purchase. In 1937, 126.47 acres of the land were purchased by Charles Gustave "Gus" Reuble.<sup>2</sup> Gus started farming with nine Guernsey heifers and three work horses. For the next forty years Gus Reuble, his wife, and three sons ran a dairy on Crockett Prairie. It was named the "Dairy Family of the Year" in 1961 by Darigold.<sup>3</sup>

When Gus retired from farming in 1972, the farm passed to his youngest son, Jerry. Jerry sold the land and herd to Bob and Len Engle in 1978. The Engles added the Reuble herd to their own, and used the farm to house their heifers and dry cows.<sup>4</sup>

In 2001, the National Park Service (NPS) bought the farm after the Engles declared bankruptcy. Today, the barn is under extensive rehabilitation and stabilization.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Walters, *Historic Structures Report: Gus Reuble Barn* (Coupeville, WA: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve), 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon (Coupeville, WA: 7 February 1997), 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd (Coupeville, WA: 8 March 2007), 00:41:50.

<sup>5</sup> Craig Holmquist, Unrecorded Phone Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 26 September 2008.

The barn went through three stages of construction and expansion from 1937 until 1952. Its construction technique is typical for this time period, and can be found in two other barns in the area. The plank-frame construction technique was ideal because it saved up to sixty percent of building materials, required fewer builders, shortened the construction time, opened the floor plan in the hayloft, and eased the construction of additions onto the barn.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 20-21.

## I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction: ca. 1935
2. Carpenter: Ralph Story and Warren Stockton
3. Original owner: Gus and Marie Reuble
4. Subsequent owners: When Gus Reuble retired from farming in 1972 because of health problems, the dairy was passed to his youngest son, Jerry. Jerry ran the dairy until 1978 when he sold it to Bob and Len Engle. In 2001, the National Park Service bought the property after the Engles declared bankruptcy.
5. Original plans and construction: The original barn was constructed to house a herd of eighteen Guernsey cows. It was 36'-0" square with a pole frame and gambrel roof.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1948, a 35'-3" addition was added to the northern end of the barn. Between 1951-52, the barn's ground floor was expanded to the south. This addition added 28'-6" for milking stanchions and a 10'-2" x 16'-6" office.

### B. Historical Context:

"From A.D. 1300 until white settlements in the 1850s, Salish villagers occupied Whidbey and Camano Islands. When the whites arrived, four groups of Salish Indians – the Skagit, Snohomish, Kikialos, and Clallam – shared the island."<sup>7</sup> These groups, classified as saltwater or canoe Indians, built three permanent villages along Penn Cove on Whidbey Island. Their lifestyle and settlement patterns relied heavily on salmon, although they also hunted and gathered berries and roots. Along with salmon, their diets consisted of: steelhead, rainbow trout, shellfish, cattail, salmonberries, strawberries, camas, wild carrots, rose hips, bracken ferns, acorns, hazelnuts, crab apples, elk, and deer.<sup>8</sup>

Before white explorers reached the area, the Salish did not cultivate the prairies of Central Whidbey Island, but rather manipulated them to fit their needs. They repeatedly burned the prairie lands and into the surrounding woods. This encouraged the growth of bracken and camas in the prairie, and renewed undergrowth in the woods that became habitat for game animals.<sup>9</sup> The Salish Indians also used the forest wood to build their canoes and villages.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Richard White, Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>9</sup> Land Use, 20-21.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 16. "In each village a single row of three to five large cedar houses, together with smaller buildings, faced the water with the forest looming at their backs. Often from 100 to 200 feet long, these buildings normally housed several families who partitioned the interiors into separate living quarters."

Captain George Vancouver carried out the first effective European exploration of Central Whidbey Island, claiming it for the British Empire on June 4, 1792.<sup>11</sup> In 1833 the Hudson Bay Company explored Whidbey Island in search of game to trap and hunt, and in 1839 the first missionaries reached Whidbey Island.<sup>12</sup> By this time, after contact with sailors, hunters, trappers, and missionaries, the Native populations in the area were devastated by smallpox and syphilis.<sup>13</sup> By the 1850s syphilis was credited with a hundred deaths in the Puget Sound area every year. And in 1852 and 1853 the last great smallpox epidemic to strike the area took the lives of entire villages.<sup>14</sup>

Along with disease, the white explorers and settlers brought potatoes to the area and by 1830 the British at Fort Nisqually recognized potatoes as a staple in the economy and diet of the Salish villages.<sup>15</sup> The potatoes' easy growing cycle and high production brought the Salish Indians to first cultivate the prairies of Central Whidbey.<sup>16</sup> This cultivation was documented and continued by the first American settlers to the area. Within a few years most Native Americans had moved on to the reservation in La Conner, and by 1904 only a few Salish families remained in Central Whidbey Island.<sup>17</sup>

In 1850 the United States Congress passed the Donation Land Claim Act which accelerated settlement of Central Whidbey Island, Washington. Settlers that were compliant with certain conditions<sup>18</sup> were granted 320 acres if single or 640 acres if married. Colonel Isaac Neff Ebey was the first to stake a DLC in Central Whidbey Island. On October 15, 1850, Ebey claimed "640 acres on the rich black loam of the prairie that now bears his name."<sup>19</sup>

In 1851, Ebey's wife, Rebecca Davis Ebey, the two Ebey sons, Rebecca's three brothers, and the Col. Walter Crockett family crossed the Oregon Trail to join Isaac Ebey on Whidbey Island.<sup>20</sup> Col. Crockett's son, Hugh, claimed 160 acres of prairie in the spring of 1852 adjoining the DLC of his father and his brother, Samuel Black Crockett. This area soon came to be known by the name "Crockett Prairie."

On April 4, 1853, Hugh Crockett was appointed the first Sheriff of Island County by the Board of Commissioners after their first choice, George W.L. Allen, refused the position.<sup>21</sup> Crockett served as Sheriff for two years while continuing to farm his land. In 1863, he married Jessie Rachel Bond,<sup>22</sup> also of Island County.

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<sup>11</sup> A Particular Friend, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>13</sup> Land Use, 26-29.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>17</sup> Mimi Sheridan, *How Coupeville Grew: A Short History of Town Development: Excerpts from the Town of Coupeville's Historic Preservation Plan* (Coupeville, WA: McConnell/Burke, Inc., 1998), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Conditions included: age, sex, nationality, and race, along with the date of arrival in the area, and the agreement to cultivate the land for four years.

<sup>19</sup> A Particular Friend, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>21</sup> A Particular Friend, 29.

<sup>22</sup> Hugh Crockett's wife is referenced by a variety of names. On an 1864 Island County Deed, vol. 3, pp. 96-97, "Hugh Crockett and Jessie R. his wife" are listed as the grantors; in A Particular Friend, Cook refers to her as "Rachel Bond" p. 28, and "formerly Miss Rachel Good" p. 30.

Charles T. Terry arrived in the area in 1853, at the age of 17, after a six-month journey via wagon trail from Michigan.<sup>23</sup> Upon arrival, Terry was too young to file for a DLC, but by 1862, John R. Williamson bought land north of Hugh Crockett's DLC from Terry that was listed as his Preemption Act of 1841 claim.<sup>24</sup> On January 20, 1864, Williamson bought 10 acres of the northern end of Hugh Crockett's DLC for \$150.00, giving him 170 acres.<sup>25</sup> The land then changed hands several times, passing from Williamson to Robert Abrams, N.C. Haley, P.H. Lewis, and finally in June of 1883, to James Gillespie.<sup>26</sup>

The *Gus Reuble Barn Historic Structure Report* written for the National Park Service outlines the Gillespie family's history in the area and use of the land.

"James Gillespie and his heirs retained ownership of the farm from 1883 until 1937. He was born in Wisconsin in 1853 and came west with his family in 1856. They settled on Whidbey Island ca. 1859 where they purchased a large portion of Joseph Smith's donation claim. Even though James Gillespie bought 170 acres of his own in 1883, he evidently stayed on the family farm and leased out his land. He operated a meat market in Coupeville for many years. He and his wife, Keturah Coupe Gillespie, had five sons, three of whom survived to adulthood. At some point, perhaps after his death in 1914, James Gillespie's land on Fort Casey Road transferred to his three sons. The land was leased for many years to John LeSourd, a local farmer, who may have lived in the small house on the property."<sup>27</sup>

In September 1937,<sup>28</sup> the property was sold to Charles Gustave "Gus" Reuble whose parents owned the farm across Fort Casey Road. The young Reuble bought 126.47 acres (just over eight acres from Hugh Crockett's DLC, and less than 120 acres of Charles Terry's original claim) for \$7, 500.00.<sup>29</sup>

Gus' father and namesake, Gustave Reuble, came to the United States in the early 1900s from Germany. Upon arriving in the country he joined the U.S. Army and gained citizenship. As part of the Spanish-American War he was sent to the Philippines where he learned the blacksmith and wainwright trades. After hearing about his father's failing health, he returned to Germany. While there, he was reunited with a former schoolmate, Regina Oexle. The two were married and returned to the United States in 1908.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A Particular Friend, 17.

<sup>24</sup> "A search of the deed records did not turn up the original deed granting Terry his 160 acres, but when he sold his claim in 1862, the land was described as the 'Charles T. Terry Preemption Claim.'"

Footnote 1. *Chapter 2: Developmental History, Historic Structures Report: Gus Reuble Barn*, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Island County Deed Record. Vol. 3, pp. 96-97.

<sup>26</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> During oral interviews, both Gus Reuble and his son, Ray Reuble, stated the date of purchase as 1932. In the *Historic Structure Report* the date is cited as September 1937 with reference to Island County Deed Record, Book 50: 554.

<sup>29</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 4, 10; Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:01:00, 00:03:50.

Gustave was hired by the military at Fort Casey on Whidbey Island to serve as their blacksmith. The family lived in the original Admiralty Lighthouse, where their first child, Charles Gustave, was born. In 1909, the second child, Mary Regina<sup>31</sup> was born, and soon after Gustave lost his job at the Fort when cars replaced draft animals.<sup>32</sup>

At this time, the family moved away from Fort Casey and in 1915 bought 100 acres west of Fort Casey Road from local land owner and farmer, Edward Jenne. The Reuble family grew with the addition of Frederick, Tom, Lawrence, and Millie, and the farm grew into a productive dairy, supplying milk to Coupeville. Gus, as the oldest son, worked hard to help his father expand the family farm. They sold meat, milk, butter and vegetables to Fort Casey. And when it was time to move onto his own land, Gus did not travel far from home.<sup>33</sup>

After finishing high school in Coupeville, he worked for John Le Sourd on Ebey's Prairie. Using horses, Gus plowed, disked, harrowed, and hauled hay on the Le Sourd farm. He earned enough money to buy himself a team of horses and move away from his childhood home. Gus rented the Gillespie farm across the street from his parent's place before he purchased the land.<sup>34</sup>

The Reubles socialized with other German families in the area. However, this generation of settlers did not learn to drive and depended on their children for transportation to social calls. Gustave and Regina frequently visited Mr. and Mrs. Tesch in Coupeville. During this time Gus would pass his time visiting with the Tesch's daughter, Marie.<sup>35</sup> Marie's family came from the town on Neu Stettin in the state of Pomerania, Germany when she was eleven. Marie Tesch married Gus Reuble in 1932.<sup>36</sup>

When the Reubles began farming at the old Gillespie place they had just over 126 acres, nine heifers, two draft horses and only forty acres of cleared land. The property had a four-room house, an outhouse to the east, and a lean-to shed with stanchions for milking.<sup>37</sup> Gus milked by hand in an old barn built by the Gillespies. He shipped cream off the island and had hard times during the Depression years.<sup>38</sup> In an interview with *The Skagit Darigold* in 1958, Gus Reuble recounted the struggles of farming during the Depression:

“Hogs sold for \$6 apiece, and we fed ours skim milk and wheat so they were prime. We got \$5 a month for cream from 9 heifers. We bought a separator and the payments were \$5 a month for that, so it was hard to pay for.”<sup>39</sup>

During one particularly hard winter Gus used his team of horses for extra income. He helped his neighbors remove stumps and clear their land, noting, “I worked like a dog but really made money, \$4 a day, which saved our bacon for us that winter.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Mary Regina became a nurse and in 1944 died of tuberculosis.

<sup>32</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 4, 10; Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:01:00, 00:03:50.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 9, 20; Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:52:10.

<sup>35</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 3.

<sup>36</sup> “Darigold Is People...The ‘Gussie’ Reuble Family,” *The Skagit Darigold*, October 1958, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:05:31.

<sup>38</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 8-9.

<sup>39</sup> *Darigold*, 19.

On September 18, 1933, Gus and Marie's first child, Raymond Charles Reuble, was born in the Gillespie house. And even though the times were difficult, Gus Reuble expanded his operations during the Depression. He hired local farmer and carpenter, Ralph Story, to construct a new barn on the farm. Gus had admired the construction technique of two barns built in the area by Story: one built on the Sherman Farm on Ebey's Prairie,<sup>41</sup> and an identical barn on Story's own land on the north end of Fort Casey Road. Story, with the help of another carpenter, Warren Stockton, built a 35'-0" square, two-story barn along the road and north of the Gillespie house.<sup>42</sup> The barn was designed to provide space for sixteen milking stalls on the first floor.<sup>43</sup> The roof's plank truss system provided an open plan on the second floor to maximize hay storage. It was designed with a hay door on the north façade at the gable peak. A hay fork track ran the length of the ridge board and brought loose hay through the door into the loft for storage.<sup>44</sup>

In 1939, an addition was added to the Gillespie house. A living room and bedroom were built on the east end of the house. That same year Gus bought his first tractor, a Ford. He began to use it for disking, as it was difficult for the work horses to walk on the loose ground. Gus kept work horses and saddle horses in a horse barn near the Gillespie house.<sup>45</sup> After two years he traded the Ford for a John Deere.<sup>46</sup>

According to Gus Reuble, he owned the first bailer on the island. In a 1997 interview with Theresa Trebon he explained the workings of the bailer, saying that, "it wasn't an automatic. You had a man sitting on one side poking the wires through, and the other guy on the other side hooking them. And one on the tractor. Three men."<sup>47</sup> At that time, there were numerous farm families in Central Whidbey Island that worked together. The bailer was not only used on the Reuble property. The farmers came together and helped each other; it was a community effort.<sup>48</sup>

In April 1940, Gus Reuble's cows were named the highest producers in Island County, averaging 1,004 pounds of milk and 50.7 pounds of butter fat per cow, well above the other farms in the area.<sup>49</sup> Other services on the farm needed expanding or updating to support the growing dairy. In 1941 an 11' deep well was hand dug between the house and the farm. The Gillespies' well, east of the house, was no longer big enough to service the herd.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> This barn is located at 44 South Sherman Road in Coupeville.

<sup>42</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 16

<sup>43</sup> "Based on standard stall size of the period (42"), the barn was designed to accommodate sixteen cows. This is in sharp contrast with the historical information that states the barn was built for thirty-six cows. Allowing even a 36" space for each cow, the barn would have to have been 54' long. It may have been the case that the barn milked eighteen cows in two shifts. This would then mean additional shelter was available for some of the cows during inclement weather. The original size of the barn does not match historic accounts." Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>45</sup> The horse barn, a small machine shed, and the kitchen gardens were located where the large workshop is currently located. Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:30:42.

<sup>46</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon 20.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>48</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:56:40.

<sup>49</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:18:25.

The Reuble's second son, Karl, was born in 1943. A year later a bunk house was moved to the farm from a beach resort near Fort Casey. The building was moved on skids from the beach and placed behind the house. The two-room structure provided a bedroom and a sitting room with a stove. The hired man ate their meals with the family, and worked in the dairy with Gus.<sup>51</sup>

The bunk house was not the only thing moved from the beach and put to use on the Reuble Farm. Frequently, large creosote-soaked logs were pulled from the beach by horses and used in construction projects. In 1946, creosote logs were used to construct a granary. The building had two distinct spaces under one roof: an enclosed area for grain storage, and an open-air machine shed.<sup>52</sup>

In 1946, the last Reuble son, Jerry, was born. With five in the family and the continual presence of hired help, there was again need to expand the Gillespie house. From 1948-49 the Reubles built away from the road to enlarge the kitchen and bathroom and to add a laundry room.<sup>53</sup>

The Reubles always sold their milk to Darigold, a commercial creamery. The Darigold driver lived on the southern end of the island. He drove north in the morning, picking up milk cans from the different family dairies. He delivered them to the Darigold plant off the island in Burlington, Washington. He then returned south at the end of the day, returning the milk cans in time for the evening milking.<sup>54</sup>

In the late 1940s, Darigold switched from ten-gallon cans to bulk tanks, a costly investment for small dairies. Many farmers decided to give up the dairy business; Gus Reuble decided to expand.<sup>55</sup> In 1948, four 12' wide bays were constructed on the north end of the barn, adding four plank trusses in the hayloft. The original cladding on the north façade was reused; however the hay track was not extended, nor was the large hay door added to the new façade. Instead, a small opening at floor level was used to load baled hay into the barn. The barn addition allowed Gus to expand his herd. The barn would now hold forty-two cows, twenty-one per side.<sup>56</sup>

In the *Gus Reuble Barn Historic Structures Report*, Fred Walters explains the design of the barn:

“The interior design of the barn placed the cows so they faced inward. This resulted in manure being deposited along the outer edges of the barn. The original design had a mechanical device with a chain and paddles that ran in a gutter behind the stanchions. Gus Reuble called it a ‘state of the art’ method of removing manure from the barn. According to his son [Ray], the device lasted only seven or eight years before wearing out.”<sup>57</sup>

When the mechanical device wore out, the Reubles constructed an underground trench system that allowed the manure to drain to a large collection hole north of the barn. Every three or four

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<sup>51</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:13:40.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 00:12:45.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 00:17:10.

<sup>54</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 17; Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:33:30.

<sup>55</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>57</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 18.

days the manure was pumped out and spread as fertilizer into the fields, a labor-intensive process.<sup>58</sup>

As the herd expanded on the Reuble farm, more buildings were needed to facilitate the dairy operations. An upright silo was constructed on a concrete foundation north of the barn the same year the addition was added.<sup>59</sup> Southeast of the barn, a milk house was constructed of concrete masonry units. During this time the family installed their first milking machine. This allowed for automated milking, but they still hand-carried the ten gallon cans of milk into the milk house.<sup>60</sup>

In 1950, a calf barn was built north of the granary. The two-story structure provided loafing stalls on the ground floor and hay storage above. The walls were insulated to keep the calves warm, but the insulation was too effective and blocked air circulation, causing the calves to easily get sick.<sup>61</sup>

A garage was added between the house and the well in 1952. The building also provided a fruit room for storage of canned goods, potatoes, and root vegetables. Marie Reuble raised a large kitchen garden and maintained an orchard of apples and pears. She canned 100 quarts every fall.<sup>62</sup>

The barn was expanded once more between 1951-52. At this time, the south wall was removed on the first floor. A single-story addition was added, making the milking parlor 112'-6" long, allowing for sixty-two milking stanchions. Two feed rooms and an office were also added on the south end of the barn.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, the lower part of the barn walls were rebuilt with concrete blocks. In the *Historic Structures Report*, it's explained that this stabilization "necessitated shoring the second floor, cutting off the first floor sections of the plank truss column legs, building a new short stud first floor wall, and installing new louvers in the first floor."<sup>64</sup> The louvers were most likely added to increase the ventilation into the milking parlor. The concrete blocks served two purposes: they replaced deteriorating wood elements of the original barn, and also served as a retaining wall along Fort Casey Road, creating a more stable access point for trucks loading hay bales into the loft.<sup>65</sup>

In 1952, a pipe line was added in the barn to carry the milk directly into the milk house. The 2-1/2" Pyrex glass pipe ran the full length of the barn above both rows of stanchions. The milk was pumped directly from the cow into the milk tank, eliminating its contact with contaminants.<sup>66</sup>

Because the herd was again expanded, new loafing sheds were constructed on the property. The area north of the barn was developed into a series of loafing sheds, feeding mangers, and fenced pens.<sup>67</sup> At this time, the dairy hit its peak with 180 cows milked in sections of sixty-two. In a 2007 interview with Anne E. Kidd, Ray Reuble explained the process:

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<sup>58</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:47:40.

<sup>59</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:22:05.

<sup>60</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 17; Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:20:10.

<sup>61</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:11:33.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 00:15:40.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 00:19:50; Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 26.

<sup>64</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 26.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:20:10.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 00:23:55.

“You bring in sixty-two cows and you tie all the stanchions together. And then you have a cart on four wheels that you dumped all your grain into, and you go down and feed each cow what she’s supposed to get. You go down one side and back the other side. And each cow perhaps got different amounts, depending on what their production was. ...And after the cows finish their grain, you fed them all their hay.”<sup>68</sup>

Hay bales were dropped into the milking parlor through an opening in the hayloft floor. For each set of sixty-two cows, about ten bales were distributed. It took two men and six milking machines ninety minutes to milk each set of sixty-two cows.<sup>69</sup> The Reubles started with an all Guernsey herd. Slowly, the herd transitioned into all Holsteins. Even though Holsteins are bigger and cost more to feed, they were more productive and brought in more money to the dairy.<sup>70</sup>

By the early 1960s, the eldest Reuble son, Ray, had graduated from Coupeville High School and was attending Walla Walla College in Walla Walla, Washington. In 1961, the Reubles were named “Dairy Farmer of the Year” by Darigold.

A fact sheet used to collect data about the family’s operation gave a snapshot of the farm in 1961:

1. The farm produces 1.5 million pounds of milk a year, cultivating 127 acres of cleared land.
2. They own 137 acres, rent or lease another 325 acres for a total of 462 acres.
3. They grow grass (clover and alfalfa), wheat, oats, barley, and winter squash.
4. “Buildings now include modern home, garage, machine shed, large dairy barn with 62 stanchions and loft above, milk house, grass incubator, upright and bunker silos, three loafing sheds, calf barn, granary, and squash storage house. With complete silage, haying, grain harvesting and squash machinery including tractors and trucks.”
5. They milk 128 cows, with 89 young. They also have a registered bull, but breed artificially. Their herd is half Holstein, half Guernsey.
6. They’re the largest herd in Island County.
7. They average 12,682 pounds of milk and 510 of butter fat per cow.
8. Each cow is fed 3,300 pounds of grain, 4,800 pounds of hay, and 7,200 pounds of silage every year.
9. Besides the dairy, the biggest crop is winter squash. 300-400 tons are produced every year.<sup>71</sup>

The fact sheet also explained the family’s activities. Gus served as the Weed District Director. Marie was active in the Parent Teachers Association, The Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Ladies of the Round Table. Ray was president of Island County’s 4-H Leader’s Council, and was a member of the County Sheriff’s Posse.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:45:18.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 00:45:18.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 00:41:19.

<sup>71</sup> “Gus Reuble & Sons, ‘Island Glow Farm’ Fact Sheet” *Island County Entrant in the Washington State Dairy Farmer of the Year Contest 1961*.

<sup>72</sup> “Gus Reuble & Sons, ‘Island Glow Farm’ Fact Sheet.”

Ray Reuble married his college sweetheart, Dora, in 1962. The couple returned to the farm and lived in the Gillespie house, while Ray continued to farm with his father. At this time, Gus and Marie Reuble moved into a house across Fort Casey Road from the farm.<sup>73</sup>

The upright silo was taken down in 1962 because it was no longer needed. A pit silo with concrete floor and walls was constructed north of the loafing pens. Alfalfa and grass clippings were dumped into the pit silo via a landing for trucks off Fort Casey Road. In the pit they used a tractor to scoop, level, and pack the silage. It was stored in the pit silo until it was needed for feed for the herd.<sup>74</sup>

Major building construction ceased in the 1960s. The Reubles were comfortable with the size of their herd, and the dairy operation was a well-developed machine. By the late 1960s, the Reuble crop farming flourished. Along with operating the dairy, the family had 1,000 acres of farm land producing the crops needed to maintain the herd. They leased land in Smith's Prairie and at four or five other local farms. They also farmed at Maylor's Point in Oak Harbor, ten miles north. They were growing squash, alfalfa hay, grass hay, wheat, oats, and barley.<sup>75</sup>

In 1970, after thirty-seven years of farming, Ray Reuble left the family business. He explained this decision in 2007:

“That was the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life...leaving the farm. Well, all those cows were my babies. I lived with them - seven days a week with them. And I knew each cow like I did 180 people. ...My dad was not a good money manager. He put everything back into the farm, and never had anything to live on.”<sup>76</sup>

When Ray was first married, Dora had to work outside the home immediately, even though they had a young family, something which Ray always regretted. He had also developed leg problems from kneeling and working in the barn.<sup>77</sup> The family moved off the island to Burlington, Washington where Ray worked for a company that artificially inseminated cows. At this time, the Gillespie house was rented, and Jerry continued to farm with Gus.<sup>78</sup>

After Ray left the business, Jerry built a new metal-clad workshop east of the garage.<sup>79</sup> In 1972, he also built an additional barn directly east of the primary barn. The two barns were connected with a covered passage.<sup>80</sup>

In the mid-1970s, Gus Reuble retired from the farm. His health was failing and his doctors told him that farming was too taxing on his body. “What happened,” he explained in an interview with Theresa Trebon, “the doctor said, ‘you have to quit farming.’ They took part of my stomach and I couldn’t hack it anymore. I was all done. The doctor said ‘you either quit or we’re going to put

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<sup>73</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:36:26, 1:00:00.

<sup>74</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:22:05.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 00:32:21.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 00:57:59.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 00:28:29.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 00:15:40.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 00:11:33.

you on Boot Hill, take your choice.’ So I wanted to sell the farm and everything I had.”<sup>81</sup> Gus also explained the direct effect it had on his body,

“[I] just worked my buns, that’s what it amounts to - from daylight till dark. That’s what happened to my stomach, ulcers got started. It was too much, didn’t get enough rest. Worked till 10:00, 11:00 at night. Get up at 4:00 in the morning. Day after day you do that and after a while something’s going to have to give.”<sup>82</sup>

The farm was passed to Jerry, who made payments that aided his father’s retirement. Jerry ran the dairy until 1978, at which time he sold the farm to local farmers, Bob and Len Engle. Jerry moved to Ellensburg, Washington and began a business raising calves.<sup>83</sup>

The Engles ran a dairy at 144 South Fort Casey Road. The Reuble herd was mixed in with their own 1,100 cow operation. The Reuble farm was used to house their heifers and dry cows.<sup>84</sup> The Engles built a corral system north of the barn and added concrete water troughs. They also constructed a manure lagoon east of the farm buildings. Instead of pumping out the manure every three or four days like the Reubles had done, the manure lagoon was only emptied once a year, saving valuable man power.<sup>85</sup>

In the late 1970s, farming changed in Central Whidbey. The Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve was established by an act of Congress in 1978 in order “to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time.”<sup>86</sup> The reserve encompasses 17,400 acres, including Penn Cove, Coupeville, and surrounding land of Central Whidbey Island; 5,500 acres are agricultural. When the Engles declared bankruptcy in 2001, the National Park Service bought both properties: the Reuble farm, and the Engle dairy at 144 South Fort Casey Road, to prevent development.<sup>87</sup>

After a few years, NPS began an extensive stabilization program on the Reuble farm. In 2003, work began and focused on rebuilding the southwest corner of the Reuble barn. In the 1990s, a severe windstorm had blown in the walls of the south addition, exposing the structure to the weather. Once the deteriorating walls were reconstructed, the structure was reroofed; 5,000 square feet of roofing was put on the barn. The *Historic Structures Report: Gus Reuble* was produced by Fred Walters to guide the Park Service in the rehabilitation effort.<sup>88</sup>

Between 2004-06, the work crews focused on the windows, siding, and framing on the ground floor. Rotting members were replaced, and water drainage was rerouted. Floor boards in the hayloft were replaced, the milking stanchions and plumbing was removed, and the barn office became functional again.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 20.

<sup>83</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:27:30, 00:29:40.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 00:41:50; Gus Reuble, Transcription of Oral Interview with Theresa Trebon, 9.

<sup>85</sup> Ray Reuble, Oral Interview with Anne E. Kidd, 00:47:40.

<sup>86</sup> Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve (<http://www.nps.gov/archive/ebla/lpp/lpp1.htm>), Website Accessed April 2007.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Craig Holmquist, Unrecorded Phone Interview with Anne E. Kidd.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

The NPS work crews used the Gillespie house while on site. They made immediate stabilization changes to the other buildings on the farm. A roof was put on the granary to protect it from further deterioration. Doors were rebuilt on the milk house and the garage. In 2005, a metal roof was put on Jerry Reuble's large workshop. In 2006, the crew repainted the Gillespie house and updated its plumbing. That same year, the laundry room of the Gillespie house was converted into a Park Service office. In 2006-07, the additional barn directly east of the Reuble barn was reroofed.<sup>90</sup>

## II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Reuble barn illustrates a construction type typical in the area during the mid-1930s. Two other remaining barns in Central Whidbey Island have the same construction. The plank-frame construction technique was ideal because it saves up to sixty percent of building material, requires fewer builders, shortens the construction time, opens the floor plan in the hayloft, and facilitates the construction of additions onto the barn.<sup>91</sup>
2. Condition of fabric: The barn is currently in excellent condition. Though it once showed wear after more than seventy years of use by both livestock and farming equipment, it has now been stabilized and rehabilitated by the National Park Service.

### B. Description of Exterior<sup>92</sup>:

1. Overall dimensions: 121'-11" x 36'-2"
2. Foundations: The barn sits on a foundation of concrete masonry units.
3. Walls: The walls of the primary space (used for milking) are constructed of 6" square posts with 2" x 4" studs spaced every 2' on center. The walls are clad in 1" x 12" vertical planks with 1" x 3" battens. On the north, gable end of the hayloft, walls are constructed of 7" diameter posts with similar board and batten cladding attached to a series of five 2" x 6" girts. The south gable end is clad in shiplap siding. The office space has stud walls and 1" plywood cladding. The exterior of the barn is painted red.

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<sup>90</sup> Craig Holmquist, Unrecorded Phone Interview with Anne E. Kidd.

<sup>91</sup> Walters, *Historic Structures Report*, 20-21.

<sup>92</sup> At the time of this description, the barn is under intense rehabilitation by the National Park Service. This writing is an account of the barn's current condition.

4. Structural systems:

The original building is a plank-frame construction type typical of the 1930s. The barn's ground floor was constructed of square posts: 6" posts making up the wall construction, and two rows of 8" posts running the full length of the barn and supporting the 2" x 10" floor joists above. The plank truss roof construction of 2" x 6" boards supports the gambrel roof. The south addition has stud walls that support a gable roof.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways  
and doors:

The barn's primary entrance is through three openings on the north façade. Two 10'-0" wide framed openings without doors flank a central sliding door. The sliding door is 7'-2" x 4'-6" and covers a 7'-0" by 4'-0" opening with chamfered corners. This door is mounted to the barn's exterior, slides open to the west, and is constructed of 1" x 12" vertical boards.

The two sliding doors on the south façade are mounted to the exterior and have identical construction to the sliding door on the north façade.

There is a door opening on the east façade that gives access to the milk house from the barn's south addition. The opening is unframed and there is no door.

On the west façade are two 10'-0" x 5'-8" sliding doors that open into the hay loft. These doors are constructed of 1" x 12" vertical boards and are also mounted to the exterior of the barn. All the doors are painted red.

A framed door opening into the office on the west façade is covered by the temporary plywood cladding covering the walls. No door is in place.

b. Windows  
and openings:

A series of twelve one-over-one single-sash windows line the west façade of the original barn and the north addition. These sashes are painted white and held into place with blocking boards on the interior of the barn. On the west façade of the south addition are three paired window openings. These openings have no sashes, but are currently covered by vertical plank boards with horizontal bracing on the interior. The boards are painted red to match the barn's exterior. Two window openings on the east façade are also framed, but have no sashes.

They are boarded with matching plank and bracing construction.

The window openings in the office are currently covered with the plywood exterior cladding that is temporarily covering the walls. The framing indicates a single window opening on the east façade and a pair of windows opening to the south.

Each gable end of the barn has two, two-over-two single sashes nailed into place. The sashes are painted white and the openings have no trim.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The original barn was constructed with a gambrel roof and was covered with wood shingles. The gambrel roof form remains over the original barn and its north addition. The south addition is covered in two separate gable roofs: one covering the milking stanchions and feed room, and another covering the office. The office and the gambrel roof are covered in wood shingles. The other gable roof is covered in corrugated metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The barn has white-painted fascia boards that run the length of the cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The barn has a rectangular floor plan. The primary space on the ground floor is divided by two rows of 8" square posts. Two aisles, running along the exterior walls, provide milking stalls and flank a center aisle used to distribute food and water to the cows. The southern end of the barn provides three feed rooms for grain storage and an office.  
  
The plank-frame construction in the hayloft allows the space to have an open floor plan.
- 2. Flooring: The ground floor of the barn has a poured concrete slab floor. The barn floor was originally trenched along the outer edges to provide manure removal, and the central aisle was trenched on either side to provide feeding troughs for the cows. Plywood sheets cover the hayloft's original 1" x 6" plank flooring.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The barn has no wall or ceiling finishes. The posts, beams, joists, and rafters are all exposed throughout the barn.

4. Openings:

a. Doorways  
and doors:

On the east, the barn is attached to an additional barn building. The passage between the two buildings is accessed through a sliding door mounted on the interior of the main barn. The door is constructed of vertical boards with vertical, horizontal, and diagonal bracing.

The office space and one feed room once had hinged doors. The openings are still framed, but no doors remain.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: The Reuble farm complex sits in Crockett Prairie south of Coupeville. The site is accessed by a dirt drive that runs east off S. Fort Casey Road. The complex is made up of the barn and eleven additional buildings, with a pit silo, manure lagoon, loafing pens, water troughs, hedgerows, and a fruit orchard.

A one-story vernacular farm house sits along the road, south of the barn. Built for the Gillespie family prior to World War II, the building was expanded by the Reubles beginning in the early 1940s. The house sits on a foundation of both post and field stone, and concrete block. It is covered in lap siding and has vertical corner boards, both painted blue, with diagonal sheathing visible beneath. Its hipped roof has wood shingles and a brick chimney south of the gable. A hipped roof addition was added to the south façade in 1955. The doors and window sashes are white with trim. The building is entered on the north and west façades. The east façade has a row of ten casement windows. The house has corrugated metal skirting.

Behind the house, to the east, is a one-story bunk house. The building sits on a post and pier foundation. It has a gable roof with wood shingles. A front-gable roof covers the entry stoop on the west façade, but the door is missing. The building is covered in lap siding painted white. The window trim and vertical corner boards were once painted a blue-green. One three-over-three single-sash window remains in place on the north façade.

A garage sits north of the Gillespie house. The building has a gable roof and sits on a board-formed concrete foundation. It is divided into a car park to the north, and a fruit room for food storage to the south. It is covered in shiplap siding painted white with blue trim around the windows, doors, and at the corners. The door openings on the west façade have chamfered corners. A lean-to roof clad in corrugated metal sits on the south end of the west façade and serves as a car port.

Directly north of the garage is a small covering for the well. It has plywood cladding and a gable roof that is covered in wood shingles. It sits on the poured concrete walls of the well and has an access door on the west façade.

Directly east of the garage is a mechanic shop. This large building is clad in plywood sheets and has a gable roof covered in standing seam metal. It has a concrete foundation and slab floor. A vinyl door on the south façade is accessed from the house via concrete stepping stones. A vinyl hinged door and vinyl overhead door open on the north façade.

East of the mechanic shop is the granary. The building includes the enclosed granary to the south, and a machine shed to the north. Both parts are covered with a side-gable roof with metal roofing. The building is clad in shiplap siding painted red. The south end has been rebuilt with plywood sheets, but the shiplap remains under the gable. The building sits on a post and pier foundation. The machine shed is supported by creosote logs painted red that were dragged from the beach landing at Fort Casey. A lean-to addition was added to the north end of the east façade. It has a corrugated metal roof and vertical plank cladding. Southeast of the granary are the remains of the pear and apple orchard used by the Reuble family.

North of the granary is a calf barn and its loafing pens. The building has two roof lines both covered in shingles. To the east, the building is two-story, providing hay storage on the second floor. To the west, the one-story portion provides pens for calves. The building is clad in board and battens painted red. It sits on a concrete foundation and has a concrete slab floor. On the south end, the building opens into loafing pens with a concrete slab floor. There remains evidence of wood fencing around the pen. A lean-to shed sits east of the calf barn.

It has a corrugated shed roof that slopes to the south. It is constructed of creosote logs and plywood.

The Reuble barn and its adjoining buildings sit west of the calf barn and north of the garage. The barn itself sits along S. Fort Casey Road. The plank truss building was constructed in three stages starting in the late 1930s. The main portion of the barn has a gambrel roof covered in wood shingles with walls clad in board and battens painted red. A later addition to the south has a gable roof clad in metal, and the office addition is clad in plywood with a gable roof covered in wood shingles. The barn sits on a concrete masonry unit foundation and poured concrete slab floor. The ground floor is divided into three aisles with sixty-two milking stanchions flanking a central aisle with feeding troughs. A row of twelve windows along the west façade allow light and air circulation into the milking stalls.

The milk house sits east of the barn's office addition. It has a board-formed concrete foundation and walls of concrete masonry units with lap siding in the gable ends. Its gable roof is covered in corrugated metal. The south façade has a one-over-one-sash double-hung window and double doors that are painted red.

An additional barn was constructed east of the primary barn. This building connects to the barn via an enclosed breezeway with a gable roof. The additional barn sits on a board-formed concrete foundation and has plywood sheet cladding painted red. Its gable roof is covered in standing seam metal. On the north and south façades are metal sliding doors mounted on the exterior and approached by ramped drives.

North of these barn buildings are the remains of a corral system with concrete slab flooring. A foundation for an upright silo sits directly north of the main barn. Along S. Fort Casey Road is a loafing shed with sixty-two stalls. It has a board-formed concrete foundation and slab floor. Its gable roof is covered in corrugated metal. The building is open to the north and south but has no doors. Clerestory openings line both the east and west walls.

North of the loafing shed is the pit silo. The silo is accessed by trucks off S. Fort Casey Road. Its walls are lined with horizontal planks reinforced with pole trusses.

The final building on the property sits east of the loafing shed and north of the calf barn. It is a metal pole-constructed feeding manger. It has a gable roof covered in standing seam metal. Its poles sit on a poured concrete foundation that forms a feeding trough. The area under and around the feeding manger has a textured poured concrete slab floor.

East of the other farm buildings is a large manure lagoon. Its edges are banked and lined with berry bushes. It is accessed by two gated truck paths on the west side.

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### IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Reuble farm property was documented by Anne E. Kidd, candidate for Master of Science in Historic Preservation at the University of Oregon, (Kingston Heath, Director) during the 2006 and 2007 school years. The project was executed as a terminal project under the guidance of Donald Peting, Professor Emeritus in Architecture at the University of Oregon, Hank Florence, National Park Service Historical Architect, Leland Roth, Professor of Art History at the University of Oregon, and Dan Powell, Professor of Art in Photography at the University of Oregon. The National Park Service and the Student Conservation Association sponsored the project. Anne E. Kidd performed the field recording, large format photography, and historical

documentation. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve and the community of Coupeville, Washington, provided additional support and assistance.

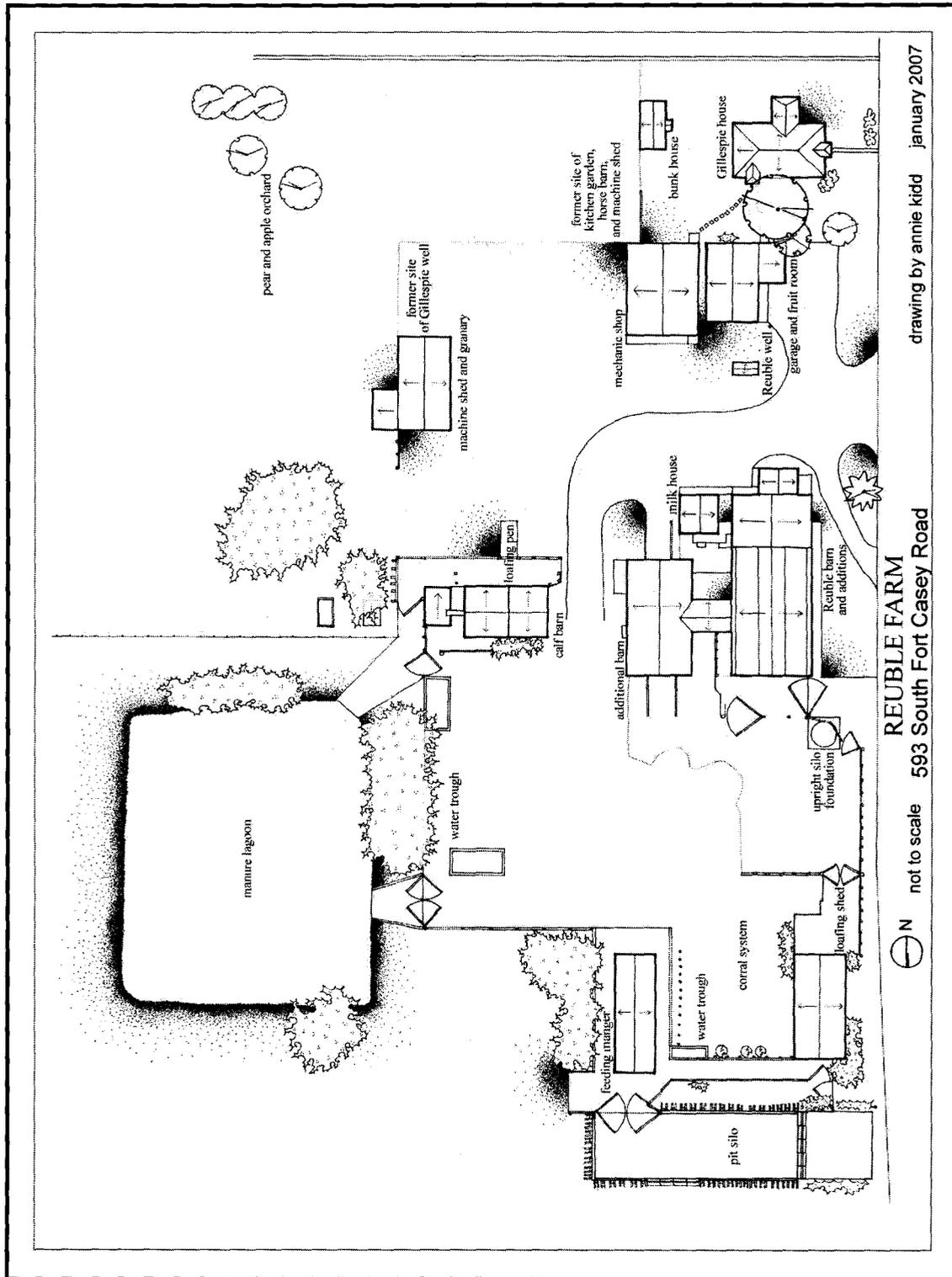
REUBLE FARM  
593 South Fort Casey Road  
Coupeville Vicinity  
Whidbey Island  
Island County  
Washington

HABS No. WA-251

## APPENDIX

HABS No.	
WA-251	Reuble Farm
WA-251-A	Reuble Barn

Anne E. Kidd  
162 Cemetery Road  
Coupeville, WA 98239



WA-251: REUBLE FARM SITE PLAN



Photograph 1: REUBLE FARM IN ITS SETTING, LOOKING WEST

(The view from Patmore Road shows the Gillespie house, and the bunkhouse to its east. North of the house are the garage and workshop. The calf barn, barn, and milk house can be seen through the pear and apple orchard.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 2: REUBLE BARN LOOKING NORTH

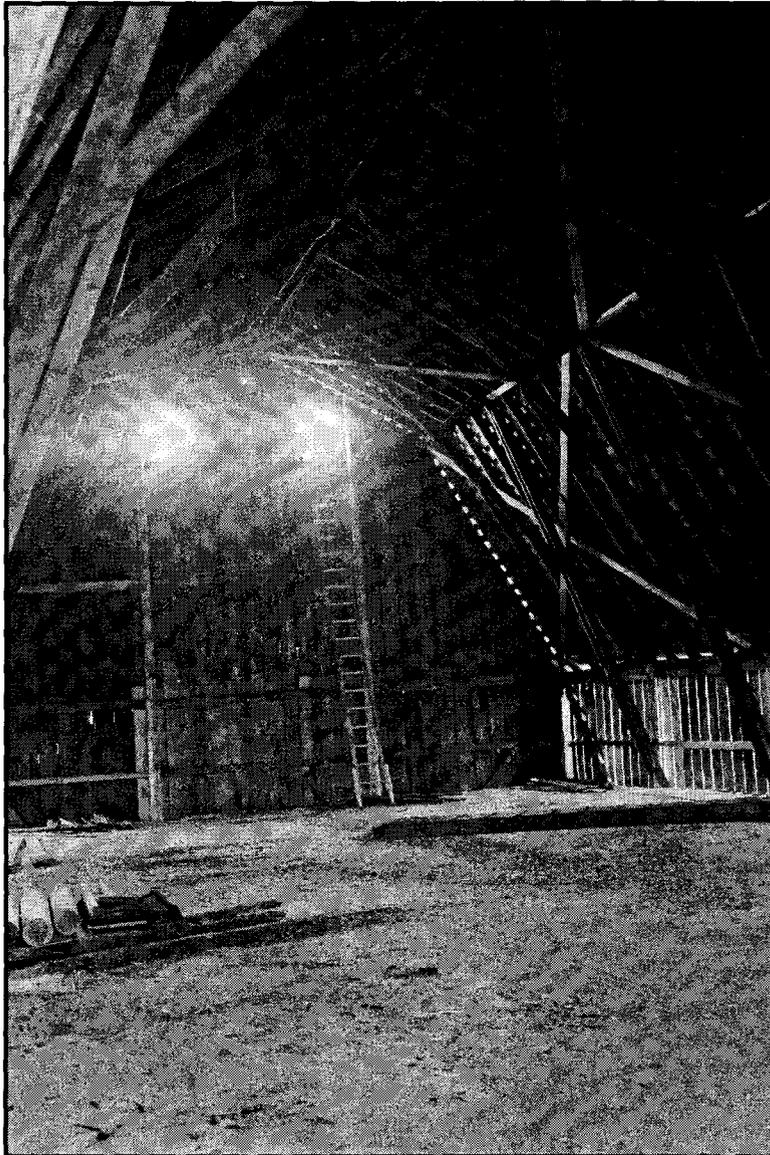
(The Reuble barn was expanded twice. In 1948, an addition was added to the north end, expanding the gambrel roof, the ground floor, and the hayloft. Between 1951-52 the barn was expanded to the south, with the addition of a one-story space for additional milking stanchions and a farm office. Also seen in the image is the milk house, directly east of the 1951-52 addition.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 3: REUBLE BARN, ADDITIONS, AND MILKHOUSE, LOOKING  
NORTHWEST

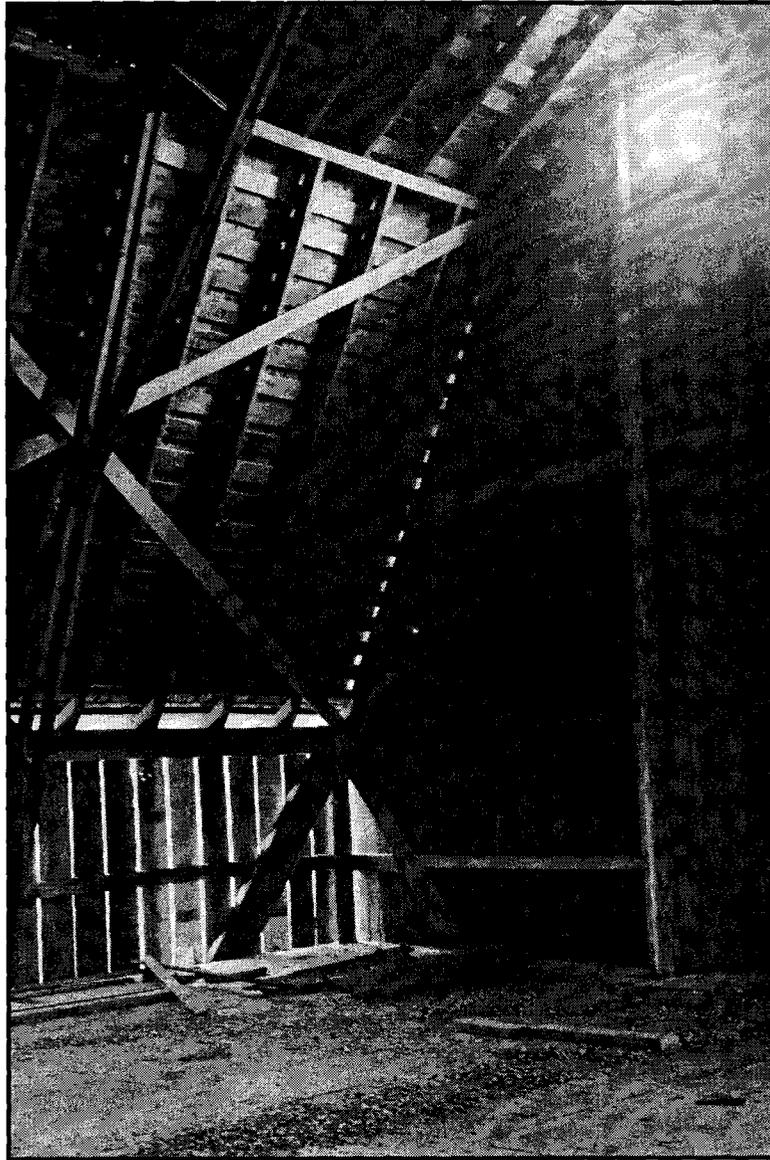
Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 4: REUBLE BARN INTERIOR OF NORTH FAÇADE IN HAYLOFT

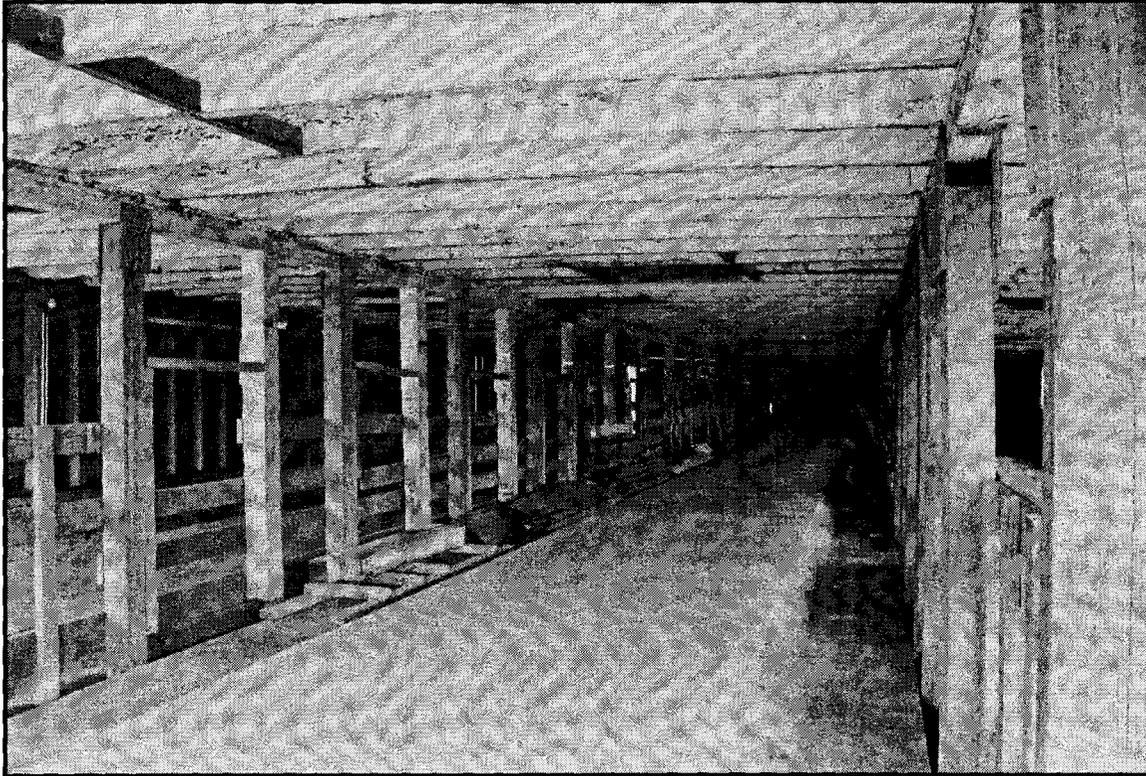
(The barn is constructed with a plank truss roof system of 2" x 6" boards supporting the gambrel roof. This construction technique is typical of barns built in the 1930s in Central Whidbey Island.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 5: INTERIOR DETAIL OF SOUTHEAST CORNER OF HAYLOFT

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 6: CENTRAL AISLE OF BARN'S GROUND FLOOR, LOOKING SOUTH

(The ground floor of the Reuble barn was divided into three aisles. Pictured is the central aisle where livestock were fed and watered. The central aisle is flanked on either side by milking stanchions.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 8: GILLESPIE HOUSE LOOKING SOUTHWEST

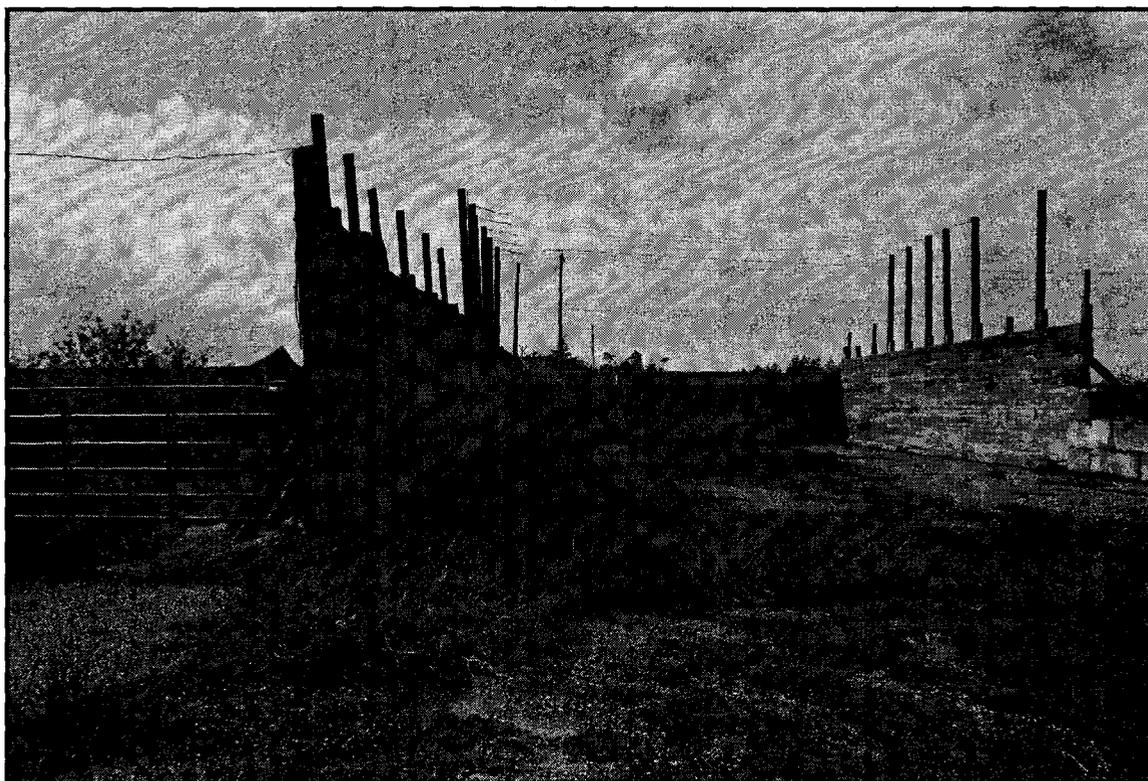
(The Gillespie house sits at the southern end of the property, along South Fort Casey Road. Shown in this image is the 1948-49 addition that was added to the east end of the Gillespie house to enlarge the kitchen and bathroom and add a laundry room. Pavers lead from the house to the workshop (not shown). Pictured on the right side of the image is the garage.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 8: INTERIOR OF LOAFING BARN SHOWING CONFIGURATION MILKING STALLS AND CLERESTORY WINDOWS.

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007



Photograph 9: PIT SILO LOOKING WEST

(The pit silo sits on the north end of the Reuble farm complex along South Fort Casey Road. The silo was used to store alfalfa and grass clippings until they were needed to feed the herd.)

Anne E. Kidd, Photographer, April 2007