1. Name of Property

historic name: Stebbens Farm
other name/site number: Hraback Farm, NPS Tract #103-53 and Buildings #1226-32

2. Location

street & number: 8255 Riverview Road
not for publication: N/A

city/town: Brecksville
vicinity: X

state: OH county: Cuyahoga
code: 035 zip code: 44141

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-Federal

Category of Property: Building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Agricultural Resources of Cuyahoga Valley
4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

Barbara Power

Signature of certifying official Date

Ohio Historic Preservation Office - OH SHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Date

National Park Service

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.  Patrick Andrews  4/17/96

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): ____________

Signature of Keeper Date of Action
6. Function or Use

Historic: Domestic Sub: single dwelling Agricultural Sub: agricultural outbuilding

Current: Vacant Sub: __________________________

7. Description

Architectural Classification:
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

Other Description: Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: foundation: sandstone roof: asphalt walls: weatherboard other: metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance. _X_ See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Agriculture

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Period(s) of Significance: 1861 - 1930

Significant Dates: c. 1870 1924 ___

Significant Person(s): N/A________________________

Cultural Affiliation: N/A________________________

Architect/Builder: N/A________________________
State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. 
_X_ See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

_X_ See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_x_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
__ previously listed in the National Register
__ previously determined eligible by the National Register
__ designated a National Historic Landmark
__ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # ________
__ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # ________

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State historic preservation office
__ Other state agency
_x_ Federal agency
__ Local government
__ University
__ Other -- Specify Repository: ____________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 45____

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 17 449930 4576430 B 17 450530 4576430
C 17 449930 4576170 D 17 450600 4576160

_X_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: _X_ See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.
The nominated property includes the structures, buildings, and acreage associated with the historic farming practices that retain their historic integrity.
11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Jeff Winstel, Historian
Organization: National Park Service
Street & Number: 15610 Vaughn Rd.
City or Town: Brecksville
Date: 4/15/92
Telephone: 216/526-5256
State: OH ZIP: 44114
The Stebbens farm is situated in the Township of Brecksville, Cuyahoga County. The farmstead is located on a plateau in a grove of trees to the east of Riverview Road. To the south and east of the buildings, stretching to the Valley Railway, lie the cultivated fields. From Riverview Road, the farmstead is hidden behind a row of trees and houses that line the east side of the road.

Adjacent to the eastern boundary of the farm lies the historic Valley Railroad (NR 1984), the Cuyahoga River, and the Ohio and Erie Canal (NHL 1982). An old, overgrown drive connects the farmstead to Riverview Road. The farmstead is partially open to the south, and is protected by a pine tree windbreak to the west, and native forests of oak, ash, and willow to the north and east. Contributing buildings include the house, barn, and garage. The farm’s contributing structures are the corn crib, the chicken house and the privy.

The house is a one-and-one-half story structure with an eave orientation and gable roof pierced by a central chimney. Evidence of a house on this site with a rectangular plan and similar orientation can be found on the 1874 Atlas map. The house could have originally been a New England one-and-one-half, as indicated by the frieze window. The c. 1930 alteration resulted in a building that contains craftsmen/bungalow features. These include bands of horizontal windows, exposed rafter ends and a dominant porch that wraps around two thirds of the building.

The Barn on the farmstead is one-and-one-half story wood frame building with a gable roof covered with seamed metal. The envelope of the barn is similar to that of an English or 3 Bay Barn and the framing matches the description of what is called a "modern" plank frame barn; the roofs are supported by purlins, which in turn are supported by self-supporting trusses. Plank frame barns were popular in the Midwest during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The interior is divided into four bays, two contain horse stalls below a hayloft area and the other two are large open areas. The gable-end bay with the open area looks to have originally housed the hayloft. Although there is no loft floor, there is a gable-end hay door at this level and a built-in ladder that leads to nowhere.

The horse barn/garage is a two story frame structure with a steep gable roof and an addition that extends around an eave and gable elevation. The eave addition gives the roof a catslide profile. Drop siding covers the exterior of the core and the additions.
The remaining outbuildings include the chicken house, the corn crib and a privy. The chicken house is a shed roofed, rectangular structure covered with drop siding. The south facade is pierced by two doors and 2 windows, one of them being a large rectangle framed by a band of small panes. The corn crib is a rectangular structure with slat walls that slope outward, and the square privy has vertical siding and a pyramid roof. These three outbuildings appear unaltered. The one noncontributing building is a small 1940s cabin that is a converted granary.
Significance Statement

The Stebbens Farm is being submitted under Criterion A for agricultural significance. The context for the property is outlined in the Agricultural Resources of Cuyahoga Valley MPD, Associated Property Type: Farmsteads.

Historic Development

The 1840 Cuyahoga County Tax Records show that Samuel Hinckley (& Heirs) owned the southeast parcel of Lot 96, consisting of 60 acres and valued at $402. Henry Stebbens, the next owner, is also listed in the 1840 records. He is not listed as owning any land, but his personal property in Brecksville Township for that year consisted of 2 cattle and no horses. It is possible that he farmed someone else’s land. Samuel Hinckley is not shown as owning any taxable personal property (horses, cattle, or merchandise) in Brecksville Township. The 1850 County Tax Records indicate that the East Parcel of Lot 96, consisting of 60 acres, belonged to Samuel Hinckley and heirs, and was valued at $567.

The 1850 Population Manuscript Schedules for Brecksville Township indicates a population of 1,116. 295 people listed New England as their place of origin and 241 listed the Mid Atlantic States. The census considered New York a Mid-Atlantic state, however cultural geographers consider New York to be part of the New England cultural hearth region. This information indicates a strong New England cultural heritage for the township.

The 1852 Cuyahoga County Atlas confirms Hinckley’s ownership of the east parcel of Lot 96 and also shows Hinckley owning a total of 4 lots -- 2 in Brecksville and 2 in Independence, making a total of 474 acres. The east parcel of Lot 96 was the smallest of these. No structures are indicated on the 1852 Atlas. H. W. Stebbens is shown as owning 100 acres in Strongsville Township, Lot 99.

In 1860 Brecksville had a population of 1,024, the third smallest township in Cuyahoga County. Lot 96 doesn’t appear in Tax Duplicate Records. Henry Stebbens is shown to own Lot 97, east parcel, consisting of 23.71 acres valued at $240. In 1861, however, Henry Stebbens, is listed as owning the east end of Lot 96, 75.83 acres, valued at $1,366. This represents an increase of 15.83 acres, and more than double the 1850 valuation. The value of personal property owned by Henry in 1860 was $179. His wife, Francis, is listed as owning $97 worth of property and A.Q., perhaps a brother, having personal property valued at $179. The 1870 tax records indicate the same value for Lot 96, east parcel, as the 1861 information.
The 1874 Cuyahoga County Atlas shows H. Stebbens owning 55.82 acres in the east part of Lot 96 and A.Q. Stebbens owning 20 acres in same lot. The atlas map shows a house on Lot 96, located on the 55 acre parcel between the proposed RR and the river. This house does not appear on the 1892 atlas map and there is no remaining visible evidence of the structure. On the 20 acre lot, the 1874 map indicates a house in the same location as the current house.

The 1880 Tax Records show Henry Stebbens as owning the east end of Lot 96, consisting of 55.82 acres and valued at $1,665. This represents a decrease in 20.01 acres and an increase in value of $301.

Based on the tax record and map information, the house could have been built anytime between 1861 and 1874. The noticeable jump in valuation that occurred in the 1870s, along with the decrease in acreage, strongly suggests that the barn was built or expanded during that time. Plank frame barn construction, which the barn exhibits, was popularized in agricultural journals at this time.

The 1880 Agricultural Record of the U.S. Census shows Henry Stebbens as the owner of 55 acres of tilled land and 10 acres of woodlands and forest. The value of the farm (land, fences and buildings) is listed at $3,200, considerably more than county tax records valuation for the same year. The census records show that Henry Stebbens paid $7.00 to a hired hand for one week. He owned 1 horse and 2 milk cows, no working oxen and 3 animals, which are listed under the heading of "other". In 1879 he produced 2 tons of hay and 450 lbs. of butter on the farm. One-half acre of his land was used to raise 50 bushels of Irish potatoes. Six acres were planted with Indian Corn and produced 250 bushels. Six acres of wheat produced 85 bushels.

The 1880 Agricultural Census shows Eliza Stebbens as owning 18 tilled acres and 2 acres of woodland. The farm including the land and buildings was worth $2000. Twelve acres of this was grasslands, which produced 4 tons of hay. Four horses were kept on the farm, along with 2 milk cows and 1 "other" cow. 416 pounds of butter were produced on the farm. Four acres produced 160 bushels of Indian corn and one acre was used to produce 125 bushels of Irish potatoes. Two acres were planted with 50 apple trees.

The county tax records of 1890 list George H. Stebbens as owning 55.82 acres,  

1The National Archives only have the 1880 U.S. Census Agricultural Production Records for Cuyahoga County.
valued at 1,320. The 1892 Cuyahoga County Atlas confirms this and shows land owned by other Stebbens family members. Eliza Stebbens is shown as owning a 13 acres parcel, a part of what was the 20 acre A.Q. Stebbens parcel. G.H. Stebbens is shown as owning 7 acres in the shape of triangle located between Eliza and Henry’s property.

In 1901 George Stebbens died and the courts ordered his wife, Eliza, to sell the property. (Cuyahoga County Court Docket 61 No. 24050). In 1902 Eliza Stebbens deeded the property to Josefa Sauer, who maintained a small beef and dairy herd, supplemented with row crops, wheat and oats. In 1910 Josefa’s son, Vincent, took over the farm. In addition to running the farm, Vincent also ran a small commercial butchering operation on the farm. Neighbors recall the large singletree in the garage being used to hang beef for Sauer to skin and dress.

In 1923 the Vincent Sauer sold the farm to Laura and Bertha Hraback of Cleveland. Bertha suffered from tuberculous and was advised to rest in the country as much as possible. The Hrabacks purchased the farm to aid in Bertha’s recuperation and serve as a weekend retreat for the family. In 1924, Laura Hraback married George Waibel, owner of a Cleveland hardware store. George housed his polo horses at the farm. The family spent the weekends gardening and taking care of the horses. The 1928 Cleveland City Directory lists a residence and business address for George Waibel and a residence address for Bertha, Clara, and Mary Hraback. Ground not used by the Hrabacks was rented to neighboring farmers. For years the Bejeck family rented the land and managed a truck farm operation.

Criterion A: Agriculture

The Stebbens Farm reflects a transition in agricultural practices in the Cuyahoga Valley. The Agricultural Resources of Cuyahoga Valley MPD outlines two periods of agricultural development that are represented by the farm: Railroads, Industrialization and Scientific Farming: 1851-1913, and Agricultural Decline and Economic Diversification: 1913-1930.

The U.S. Census Agricultural Records indicate that the Stebbens farm represents the typical area farm in terms of size and production. During the Hraback tenure the farm was used for truck farming, weekend gardening, and boarding horses.

2Raymond Bejeck. Interview by Dean R. Dickerson, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. 10 July 1989.

3ibid.
These practices allowed for the maintenance and use of valley farmsteads during a time when competition from western farmers resulted in the abandonment and subsequent loss of many farms.

Farming was the principal economic activity of Brecksville Township during the 19th century. The 1880 "Productions of Agriculture in Brecksville" shows that the Stebbens farm typified farming practices in that area at that time. The average acreage for tilled land per farm in Brecksville was 77.85. The Stebbens farm (Eliza and Henry's holdings) consisted of a total of 73 tilled acres. The average farm value, which included land, fences and buildings, was $5,153. The Stebbens combined holdings were valued at $5,200. The "estimated value of all farm production sold, consumed or on hand, for 1879" shows that the Stebbens farm did a little better than average. The average Brecksville figure for this value was $696.20, while the Stebbens farm had a production value of $1,033.

The outbuildings that exist on the farmstead would have been needed to store the types of crops and livestock listed in the 1880 census records. The barn with the haydoor and central, open threshing bay most likely stored the wheat and hay. The horse barn, now garage, would probably have housed the five horses owned by George and Eliza. The corn crib would have been needed to store the 460 bushels of Indian Corn harvested in 1880, and the chicken house was probably functioning at capacity with the farm's 70 chickens.

In the early 20th century, the economics of farming was greatly changing, along with the character of the Brecksville Township community. Changes in transportation policies made larger scale, specialized western farms more profitable. This coupled with increased agricultural production in the western part of the state provided very stiff competition for smaller scale farming in the Cuyahoga Valley.

Between 1890 and 1930 farm productivity greatly increased due to improvements in feeding, growing, harvesting, transportation and marketing. The horizon-to-horizon wheat production of the western plains' "Bonanza" farms, some as large as 40,000 acres, became more profitable in the early 20th century due to the improvements in transportation regulations. In 1906, Congress passed the Hepburn Act, designed to eliminate flagrant and long-standing abuses in railroad transportation and storage. In 1916, Congress approved the U.S. Warehouse Act, authorizing licensing, bonding, and inspection of public warehouses storing agricultural products. Western states had national as well as world markets.

The draining of the Black Swamp in northwest Ohio, along with ditch digging laws of the late 19th century, resulted in farmlands that contained very rich and
productive soils. The construction of thousands of miles of open ditch between 1870 and 1920 transformed the waterlogged soils of the Black Swamp into the most productive agricultural land in Ohio. Areas of Northwest Ohio produced wheat and corn in quantities that ranked as some of the highest per square mile figures in the Eastern United States.

The smaller scale farms located on the clay soils of the Cuyahoga Valley found it increasingly difficult to compete with the agricultural expansion in western Ohio and in the western plains states. An 1880 source characterizes Brecksville farmland as follows:

> The soil varies from a stiff clay to a sandy loam, and is best adapted to grain and grasses, the latter being the principal product.\(^4\)

The same source goes on to describe the "greasy nature of the clay of which the whole hill (Great Hog Back Hill) is composed." Only the most prosperous of the valley farms survived this transition period, and usually by growing market produce rather than staple crops.

Concurrent with the decline in valley agriculture was the development of municipal park lands and recreation facilities in Brecksville. The community's character changed from an agriculturally oriented rural area to a suburban community of a major metropolitan area.

The second decade of the 20th century began a time of rapid change for Brecksville township. Throughout the 19th century, the township had one of the smallest populations in Cuyahoga County, and was predominately a farming community. As nearby Cleveland grew, and new roads provided better access, the open spaces of Brecksville Township became more important for their recreational potential than their agricultural production.

A statute was enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in 1911, providing the County Commissioners the empowerment to "take over in the name of the County any land

\[^4\]Guide Book for Tourists and Travelers over the Valley Railway from Cleveland to Canton, 1880. Canton, Ohio: J.R. Reese Publisher, 1880.
By 1915, the Cuyahoga County Commissioners had the right to appropriate money for the Park Board for the purposes of condemnation of private property for public park purposes.

The results of the early 20th century acquisition and condemnation rights given to the Cuyahoga County Commissioners and the Metropolitan Park Board are summed up as follows in a local history:

A group of men tramped through our hills and dales, and purchased for the Metropolitan Park System 2,500 acres of Brecksville land.6

The transformation of Brecksville is more specifically recalled by Frank Wilcox:

In 1910 Brecksville was a sleepy village lit at night by a few oil lamps on posts about the square. Abruptly, within ten years, it became the noisy intersection of a national and state highway; it had city water, electric light, and its personality as a rural village came to an end . . . .7

By 1929, "Brecksville was in much turmoil... Old landmarks were being remodeled and the new road was causing great concern."8

The Hraback's occupancy of the farm reflects the pattern of events that effected the development of the community during the 1920s. As a representation of agricultural development in the valley, the use of the farm for a weekend retreat and leased truck farm illustrates the type of diversified function that accommodated limited agricultural practices of this time. Despite the growing

---


6ibid.


8Reminiscent
development pressures from an expanding metropolitan area, the farm was still being used for farming.

The alterations that occurred to the house, horse barn/garage and barn at this time reflect this later period. It is reasonable to assume that the large sun porch was added in order to provide more light and air, commonly prescribed for tuberculosis patients. The horse barn was probably converted to a garage at this time and the barn appears to have been altered in order to board George Waibel's polo horses; the loft was probably moved from one end to the other, dutch doors were added and interior animal stalls were modified. By leasing the fields to the Bejecks, the property still maintained an agricultural function -- truck farming.

Historic Integrity

The nominated farm maintains its integrity of location, setting, and materials. The basic features of the contributing buildings and structures are intact, enabling the resources to communicate their historic functions. The Agricultural Resources MPD defines a farmstead as a group of agricultural buildings that functioned as a related unit.

The buildings and structures are in their original locations and the spatial relationships between the contributing resources is not impacted by new construction. The one noncontributing resource is the cabin, which is a 1940s reconstruction that completely masks the building's former function as a granary. The farmstead is overgrown but surrounded by open or cultivated fields and wooded areas, evidencing an agricultural setting.

The alterations done to the house, horse barn and barn are associated with the Hraback occupancy of the farm. Although the alterations of the house and the horse barn significantly changed the massing of the structures, their original function is still evident. The alterations occurred during the period of significance, 1861-1930, and both of these buildings are integral parts of this agricultural district. The alterations done to the barn did not effect the massing, profile or scale of the structure. The privy, chicken house, and corn crib appear to be unaltered. The open and cultivated fields included in the boundary are those fields historically associated with the farm that have not been overgrown or reverted back to woodland.
Bibliography

Bejeck, Raymond. Interview by Dean R. Dickerson. 10 July 1989, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Cuyahoga County Tax Records, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1861, 1870, 1880, and 1890.

Cuyahoga County Atlas, 1852, 1874 and 1894.


Guide Book for Tourists and Travelers over the Valley Railway from Cleveland to Canton, 1880. J.R. Reese Publisher, Canton, Ohio.


A Reminiscent History of Brecksville, July 14, 1962, Berea Publishing Company

U.S. Census Population Manuscript Schedules for Brecksville Township, 1850.

U.S. Census Records, Schedule 2. - Productions of Agriculture in Brecksville, County of Cuyahoga.

Waible, Marie. Interview by Dean R. Dickerson. 10 July 1989, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Wilcox, Frank, Ohio Indian Trails. Cleveland; Gates, 1983.
The nominated area is known as Tract No. 103-53 and is situated in the Township of Brecksville, County of Cuyahoga and known as being a part of original lot 96 in said Township and bounded as follows: Beginning 1333.20 feet west of a cherry tree standing in the south of said Lot 96 at a stone in the south line of the said lot and running thence N.-01-45' E., 865.92 feet to a stone in the north line of said lot; thence along the north line of said lot S.-88-15'-E., thence up stream along the west bank of said river at low water mark to the south line of said Lot No. 96; thence along the south line of said Lot, N.-88-20-W., 2849.22 feet to the place of beginning and containing 55.82 acres of land per plat of said Lot in Brecksville Township Map Book Page 31, subject to the right-of-way of the Valley Railroad Company. Excepting from the above described parcel 10.09 acres as conveyed to the Board of Park Commissioners of the Cleveland metropolitan Park District as recorded in Deed Volume 5810, Page 697, on September 22, 1944, as recorded in Cuyahoga County Records.
NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs

---------------------------------------------------------------------

Stebbens Farm Page 12
Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Photographer: Dean R. Dickerson
Date: May 30, 1989
Location of Negatives: National Park Service
Midwest Region, Omaha, NE

The above is the same for each photograph unless otherwise indicated. Although
the photographs are over 2 years old, they depict current conditions of the
property as verified by site inspection conducted April of 1992.

1. House, camera direction west
2. House, porch and foundation detail, camera direction northwest
3. Barn, camera direction northwest
4. Cabin, camera direction northwest
5. Horse barn/ garage, camera direction northwest
6. Farmstead, camera direction northwest
7 Chicken House, camera direction east
8. Corn Crib, camera direction southwest
9. Privy, camera direction southwest
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area

Tract #103-53

FLOOR PLAN

1st Level: = 560 Sq.Ft.
2nd Level: = 560 Sq.Ft.
Total Liv.Area: = 1,120 Sq.Ft.
Basement: = 560 Sq.Ft.
Enclosed Porch: = 820 Sq.Ft.
NOT TO SCALE

TRACT 103-53

SITE SKETCH MAP

TRACT 103-53

SHEE ATTACHED FARMSTEAD SKETCH MAP

STEBBENS/HRABACK FARM

BRICKSVILLE, OHIO

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
NOT TO SCALE

FARMSTEAD

SKETCH MAP

STEPBENS/HRABACK FARM
BRICKSVILLE, OHIO
CUYAHOGA COUNTY