

**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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Hoffman Round Barn

other names/site number Gentry Round Barn; Gentry Farm / DHR File No. 056-5034

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**2. Location**

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street & number 4864 Wolftown-Hood Road not for publication N/A

city or town Wolftown vicinity X

state Virginia code VA county Madison code 113 zip code 22727

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

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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. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>AGRICULTURE</u>	Sub: <u>Animal facility; barn</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>Single Dwelling; residence</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>AGRICULTURE</u>	Sub: <u>Storage; barn</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>Single dwelling; residence</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>Agricultural outbuilding; barn</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements  
other: Round Barn

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD; CONCRETE

roof METAL: Steel

walls WOOD;METAL: Steel

other \_\_\_\_\_

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance circa 1781-1941

Significant Dates 1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Haywood Montebello "Tiny" Dawson

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

Hoffman Round Barn

Madison County, Virginia

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository: VDHR, Richmond, Virginia; Madison county Virginia Public Library; Madison, Virginia .

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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**Acreage of Property** 148.66 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	732787	4247954	2	733352	4247841	3	733358	4247707	4	733479	4247688

See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

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

=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

name/title Beth Pastore, Certified Landscape Architect , Land Conservation Officer

organization Piedmont Environmental Council date September 29, 2008

street & number PO Box 183 telephone 540-948-3854

city or town Wolftown state VA zip code 22748

=====  
**Additional Documentation**  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

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

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

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

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

name Ms. Joyce J. Gentry

street & number 4864 Wolftown-Hood Road telephone 540-948-6196

city or town Madison state VA zip code 22727

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions,

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   1  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:**

The Hoffman Round Barn, located east of Wolftown in Madison County, Virginia, is a one-and-a-half-story wood frame barn with twelve sides and a twelve-sided standing-seam metal, mansard-like roof. The half story has three gable-roofed dormers with shuttered hay doors; the doors are missing on the east elevation. A wooden center silo protrudes several feet above the level of the main roof, has a gable-roofed dormer on the east side, and is capped by a metal roof, resembling a cupola. The dormer presumably provides ventilation to the silo. The barn sits on a ridgeline overlooking the headwaters of the west fork of Elk Run, a tributary of the Rapidan River. It is approximately 932 feet from Wolftown-Hood Road, behind and to the south of the Hoffman farmhouse, cemetery, machine shop, silo and tractor barn. Because of the open pastures surrounding the barn on all sides and its elevation on a ridge, the Hoffman Barn is a very visible landmark in the valley directly to the east of Wolftown. The barn in its open pasture setting is visible from State Route 663, State Route 662, and Wolftown-Hood Road and has been the subject of many photographs, paintings, and locally notable scenic vistas. Travelling west on Wolftown-Hood Road from its intersection with U.S. Route 29 the road traverses a series of gentle hills and sweeping pastoral views of farms, barns, vineyards, and row crops. The Hoffman Farm and Round Barn appears just over one such hill and populates the view as one looks south. From the road on the southwest of the farm, State Route 662—Shelby Road—the barn occupies a prominent ridge as one looks to the northeast. On State Route 663, Willis Road, to the south, the Hoffman Barn is glimpsed intermittently but most notably across the road from another historic property, Ashland, and from the approximate historic location of what was known as Rucker Mill (now gone) on Willis Road.<sup>1</sup>

The buildings and 18<sup>th</sup>-century graveyard on the Hoffman Farm are strung out on a ridgeline roughly perpendicular to Wolftown-Hood Road. Contributing resources include the 1941 farmhouse, which sits about 180 feet back from the road, a spring box located 50 yards to the east of the farmhouse, and the cemetery located about 40 feet behind the house. A machine shop is 30 feet behind the cemetery, a pole barn is another 65 feet behind the machine shop, and across a 250-foot storage lot is the concrete silo just north of the round barn. Built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, these resources are all noncontributing.

The primary historic integrity of the nominated property is its unique polygonal design by a locally known carpenter in response to a national trend in building round barns.<sup>2</sup> The secondary historic integrity of the property lies in its fixed location for the last 258 years in a historic farmyard documented to be on the same farm which was part of the John Rucker land grant of 1727.<sup>3</sup>

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   2  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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**DETAILED NARRATIVE**

The barn is a one-and-a-half story, twelve-sided wood frame barn with post-and-beam framing. The first-floor exterior walls were probably originally sheathed with vertical rough-sawn siding; this siding has been replaced with corrugated metal, painted red.<sup>4</sup> Two of the twelve first-floor sides are concrete block, which appear to be original and are also painted red.<sup>5</sup> The barn is entered by three narrow three-foot-wide doors equidistant from one another. The three-by-eight-foot doors are vertical boards joined by three horizontal interior battens and a simple cutout for reaching inside to release the interior wrought-iron hooks fastening the doors shut. The remaining nine barn sides each have a two-foot-square framed opening, or window, covered by a hinged shutter that swings inward. The metal siding has been damaged in several places and some of the original framing is exposed to the elements. The half story is entirely under the upper level of the mansard-like roof, and includes three gable-roofed dormers located above each of the ground-floor doors. These dormers each had a hinged pair of hay doors which swung out; two pairs remain but the pair on the south elevation is now absent; the hinge pins remain in the door frame. All of the roofs are covered in standing-seam metal painted galvanized silver. They appear to be in good shape.

The top portion of the silo, protruding above the barn roof, is clad on its vertical exterior by painted weatherboards. It appears to be about three feet high before meeting the eaves of the twelve-sided roof, coming to a point three feet above the walls and topped by a decorative metal finial and a thinner metal lightning rod, together about six feet tall. The overall height of the barn, including the lightning rod is about forty-three feet; its width between all flat elevations is forty-eight feet. The ceiling height on the ground floor is only nine feet; tall enough for humans and livestock, but not for modern farm machinery.

The interior framing of the first floor is post-and-beam framing with peeled logs, measuring ten-to-twelve inches in diameter, at all the vertices of the twelve sides, and the balance is dimensioned rough-sawn oak lumber. There is no interior sheathing. As one enters the barn there is an eight-foot-wide circular stock passage around the perimeter, enclosing a raised wood platform with hay racks on ten faces and six partitioned feed bunks on the remaining two. This platform is eight feet deep and surrounds the center wood silo, and is about sixteen feet in diameter. The silo is fashioned of vertical planed boards, each approximately five inches wide and of variable lengths, fitted together by tongue-and-groove joints. The silo is encircled by horizontal steel rods joined by threaded connectors and positioned at three-foot vertical intervals on the silo. The interior of the silo is accessed on one side by an eighteen-inch-wide opening that can be closed by inserting one-foot-high, two-piece hinged doors into the opening. When these doors are fitted together the silo is tightly sealed against leakage. These silo doors are still stacked on the first-floor ray racks and in the haymow above. The interior of the silo is empty except for a little debris; it is open to the cupola framing at the top of the barn which can be seen from within the silo. Above the raised wood hay racks, on the second floor, is the haymow from which hay could be forked down through the square opening in the second-floor boards. Hay was loaded into the haymow through the three dormers and their

double hay doors from a hay wagon. These doors also provided light and ventilation to the haymow.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   3  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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Round steel ducts pumped the silage from the ground level up to the top of the silo, it hangs inside the barn still. The dormer in the cupola could have been used to fill the silo and it almost certainly was also used to provide ventilation to prevent spontaneous combustion.

The steel, standing-seam galvanized, mansard-like roof is by far the most striking architectural feature of the structure, covering the upper two thirds of the building on all twelve sides. It has been kept painted and appears to be solid and sound when viewed from the barn's interior. The roof's style is carefully detailed with its four neatly fitted dormers, its cupola, and the crowning finial. This is vernacular architecture at its best; drawing on folk traditions and forms, stressing utility rather than the conventions of the day while still employing ornamentation worthy of high-style architecture.

The Hoffman barn remains today much as it did when it was built in 1913; only the first-floor sheathing is a replacement. Two upper hay doors are missing and several of the silo bands have slipped through the years, causing a slight lean in the silo and the cupola which, if unchecked, might prove very damaging to the barn. There is slight damage to the metal siding, as noted earlier.

**Dwelling (contributing building)**

Built in 1941, the three-bay, brick, Colonial Revival dwelling has two interior brick chimneys with six-over-six, double-hung-sash, wood windows, and is topped by an asphalt-shingle roof. The dwelling is fifty-seven feet wide and sixty-four feet deep with a ten-foot-deep front porch. Additions, also of brick, include a kitchen wing to the east and a family room to the south. The additions partially enclose the rear yard in an "L" configuration which is a brick-on-sand-patio further enclosed by a brick privacy fence to the east of the family room.

**Spring Box (contributing structure)**

The precise date of the spring box is unknown but the present owner, Joyce Gentry, says it was present in her pre-school childhood, before 1940, when the Victorian farmhouse was still in existence. The spring box was downhill to the east of the farmhouse and used for storing milk, butter, melons, and other perishables produced on the farm. The children were sent to fetch items as needed for meals.

**Cemetery (contributing site)**

A family cemetery with graves from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is located directly east of the farmhouse approximately forty feet behind the dwelling's rear wall. Surrounded by mature boxwoods are at least seven fieldstone grave markers, and two dressed-stone markers of Blakey family graves. The earliest legible gravestone is dated 1781. Just to the north of the boxwoods is the grave of Captain Angus Rucker,

Revolutionary War soldier and grandson of John Rucker, the original land grantee. Also to the north of the boxwoods is the grave of "Little Kate", 1852. Just to the south of the boxwoods are two graves of the Hoffman family.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   4  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

---

**Machine Shop (noncontributing building)**

A concrete block machine shop, built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, is twenty-feet wide by forty-feet long and lies thirty-feet behind the last grave in the cemetery and one-hundred-thirty feet behind the rear of the farmhouse.

**Pole Barn (noncontributing building)**

A pole barn with corrugated metal siding, used to house tractors, is sixty-five feet behind and to the east of the concrete block shop. Built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it measures sixty-five feet wide by one-hundred and ten feet long.

**Silo (noncontributing structure)**

Built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a concrete silo is located two hundred feet behind and sits east of the pole barn. The structure is approximately twenty-four feet in diameter and ninety-feet high.

**Landscape**

About ninety percent of the 145-acre Hoffman farm is open pasture, treeless rolling hills bisected by small streams and studded with granite outcroppings. There is a woodlot of approximately thirteen acres on the farm's southwest side, adjoining Shelby Road. The owner relates that the farm looks much as it did in her childhood when her uncle and aunt lived here. The owner's son and daughter-in-law graze beef cattle on the property and own a logging business as well; the woodlot contains a small area for log storage and the splitter for firewood which Brad Gentry sells regionally.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   5  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

Eligible locally under Criterion A for agriculture and Criterion C for its architectural significance, the Hoffman Round Barn, located on Route 230 east of Wolftown in Madison County, Virginia, is a distinct and rare example of a twelve-sided barn built during a period in American history when round barns were promoted by agricultural colleges as economical in construction, labor-saving for farmers, efficient as livestock quarters, and as storage for grain and hay.<sup>6</sup> Constructed in 1913, this barn is one of only three twelve-sided barns built by Haywood Montebello Dawson in the upper Rapidan River watershed circa 1910-1920. The three barns are the only known examples of round barns in Madison and Greene counties in Virginia. The period of significance of the property dates from 1781, the date of the earliest legible marker in the family cemetery, to 1941, the construction date of the Colonial Revival dwelling located on the property. This evolved farmstead with over 250 years of history has continued to be an important agricultural property in Madison County.

**HISTORY BACKGROUND**

**THE FARM**

The Hoffman Farm is part of a 1727 land grant given to John Rucker consisting of 977 acres. The grant is identified as being in Spotsylvania County (later Orange County and then Madison County as they were split from the original Spotsylvania County) and on a run of the Rappidan (sic) River.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Rucker had an adjoining land grant of 876 acres and the road that ran between the two properties was named Rucker Road in 1728. Rucker Road was approximately the same alignment as present-day Shelby Road, VA State Route 662, which follows the southern boundary of the present day Hoffman Farm.<sup>8</sup> The chain of title in the land grant went from Rucker to Blakey to Hoffman and, thus, the cemetery behind the house is known as the Rucker-Blakey-Hoffman Graveyard.<sup>9</sup>

The Hoffman Farm is bounded by the two major historically significant roads from the eastern part of Madison County, which led to Wolftown at the mountain pass between Simpson Ridge and German Ridge. The pass at Wolftown was the intersection of the earliest roads in the county leading from Graves Mill south, from the Conway River east, and from Neal Mountain (just outside Wolftown) to Liberty Mills on the Rapidan and from Wolftown to Hebron Church's present location on the Robinson River.<sup>10</sup> The original building locations—of the house, outbuildings, barns, and cemetery—on this land grant as it was originally settled have remained consistent over the last 250 years while the surrounding acreage has also remained consistent in agricultural use and appearance. The only proximate change to the landscape near the barn is just to the east of the Hoffman House on Route 230 where the owner's son and daughter-in-law Bradley Gentry and Amy Gentry built a new house on a 5.136-acre parcel subdivided from the Hoffman Farm. This parcel is not part of the nominated property but is mentioned to show that the Hoffman heirs still work the

Hoffman Farm and live next door to the historic barn and residence.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   6  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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The present farmhouse is a brick, two-story, Colonial Revival house built in 1943. It replaced a Victorian Farmhouse on the same site that burned to the ground in 1941. Joyce Gentry has a picture of this house and she identifies her mother, Mary Hoffman Jenkins, on the porch. Not only did the farmhouse burn but also the meat house, which was full of hams, and a wash house were also destroyed before the closest fire company, from the Town of Orange, could respond to the alarm.<sup>11</sup> The prior known house on the site is of indeterminate age and is pictured in a photograph owned by Mrs. Joyce Gentry. It is possible that this wood-frame house, also destroyed by fire sometime before 1922-23, was the original house of John Rucker who occupied his land grant as a settler.<sup>12</sup>

Behind the farmhouse is evidence of the long-standing historic significance of the property--a cemetery ringed with ten-foot-high American boxwoods, containing graves from the 1700s, 1800s, and 1900s. Soldier Angus Rucker was a captain in the American Revolutionary War and his grave is marked in the cemetery. Additionally, the family cemetery has at least seven fieldstone grave markers, two stones marking Blakey family graves, and two large gravestones marking Hoffman family graves.

### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **The Round Barn**

American round barns have been intermittently constructed from the time of the earliest known American polygonal barn, constructed near Mount Vernon by George Washington on Dogue Run farm in 1792. Theories to account for the shape of non-orthogonal barns include their evolution from the roofed circular treading mills of the English, the reported derivation of the Shaker round barns beginning in 1824 from the native Americans' use of the circle for teepees and wigwams, from the Shaker preference for round barns because they felt that evil spirits could not hide in the corners, and lastly that the railroad round-houses to turn steam locomotives around—steam locomotives being invented in 1820—were a model for the circular barn construction.<sup>13</sup>

The height of the round barn building boom in America was 1910 when more round barns were built in Indiana than in any other year. 1910 was also the year the University of Illinois published a booklet, 'The Economy of the Round Barn', and in 1911, the Kansas State Board of Agriculture's eighteenth biennial report made a lengthy and detailed case for the efficiency of cost and labor in building and using round barns. The Kansas Board specifically gives "great credit" to the Illinois agricultural college for its efforts to popularize the round barn.<sup>14</sup> Many land grant colleges in the nation were publicizing round or polygonal barns in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily in newspapers and trade publications aimed primarily at farmers.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   7  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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Round barns were promoted for a number of reasons. The circular form has a greater volume-to-surface ratio than the rectangular or square form. For any given size, therefore, a circular building will use fewer materials than other shapes, thus saving on material costs. Such barns also offer greater structural stability than rectangular barns. And because they can be built with self-supporting roofs, their interiors can remain free of structural supporting elements, thereby providing vast storage capabilities. The circular interior layout was also seen as more efficient, since the farmer could work in a continuous direction. The national popularity of the round barn peaked around 1910, falling into disfavor relatively quickly thereafter. One scholar observed, "our rectangular society has no room for a round structure."<sup>15</sup>

In general, multi-sided barns--frequently of 12 or 16 sides--are earlier than "true round" barns. Earlier examples also tend to be wood sided, while later ones tend to be brick or glazed tile. Interior layouts also underwent an evolution. Early round barns placed cattle stanchions on the first floor, with the full volume of the floor above used for hay storage. In later barns, the central space rose from the ground floor through the entire building. Cattle stanchions arranged around a circular manger occupied the lower level; the circular wagon drive on the level above permitted hay to be unloaded into the central mow as the wagon drove around the perimeter. In the last stage of round barn development, a center silo was added when silos became regular features on the farm (in the last decades of the nineteenth century). In some cases, the silo projected through the roof.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Hoffman Round Barn**

The Hoffman Round Barn was built in 1913 by Haywood Montebello "Tiny" Dawson, a local carpenter and builder. The farm owner at the time was T.M. Hoffman, the grandfather of the present owner Joyce Gentry. This 12-sided 'round' barn is one of two in Madison County, Virginia, both on the same road—State Route 230. The second barn is located five miles to the east and was also built by "Tiny" Dawson for owner Will Goodall.<sup>17</sup> Known locally as the Round Barn at Buffalo Hill, the barn is clad in vertical siding of rough-sawn boards on the first floor and has not been preserved as well as the Hoffman barn. A third round barn of the same size and pattern in adjoining Greene County, on Route 607, Octonia Road, burned to the ground in about 2000. All three were built by "Tiny" Dawson with almost identical forms and similar materials.<sup>18</sup> The Greene County Barn is reported by a next door neighbor, Mrs. Pat Roberts, to have had a cinder-block first story.

The Hoffman Barn cost \$75.00 which T.M. Hoffman, the farm owner, could not afford to pay all at once so "Tiny" Dawson took his money in trade from the flour mill over time.<sup>19</sup> The barn was laid out by pounding a wooden stake in the center of the proposed location and cutting and piecing the twelve wooden barn sides

on site. The story told by one of the builder's sons—William C. Dawson of Brightwood—to Dewey B. Lillard is that the original layout stake or 'staub' was then hung at the very top of the interior silo. Dewey

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page   8  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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Lillard, a local historian whose grandfather built the barn, says it is likely the barn and its center silo are both made of oak cut on the property and milled at a sawmill in Wolftown called "Pumpkin Center."<sup>20</sup>

**AGRICULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

In Madison County, Virginia where, according to United States Agriculture Department historic census data, the average farm size has been one-hundred acres or less for as long as data has been maintained, the Hoffman Farm is distinguished by its size alone. The farm was originally nine hundred seventy-seven acres when it was granted to John Rucker in 1727; 281 years later it is one hundred forty-eight acres.<sup>21</sup>

In 1913 much of the farm labor in Piedmont Virginia was accomplished using horses and mules. Joyce Gentry recalls her uncle Clint Hoffman plowing fields with a mule, even in the late 1930s.<sup>22</sup> Hay was either stacked or baled in square bales so it could be handled by a man rather than the present day machinery-scaled round bales. Barns such as the Hoffman Round Barn were built on a human and animal scale, rather than to a scale suitable for large tractors. They were built of locally milled woods, by local carpenters, and in an era when it was possible for barter to be substituted for cash payments. Small, carpenter-built barns are emblematic of a different scale of farming, a more local economy, and a way of life where families stayed on their land for generation after generation. It is for these reasons that the Hoffman round barn is locally significant as an artifact of a community of farmers, craftsmen, sawyers, and millers who were not so isolated from national building trends to have been immune to this interesting and attractive architectural barn style. The farm is still in operation today, farmed by family members descended from the persons named in the chain of title of the 1727 land grant of John Rucker.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Although archaeological investigations have not taken place on the property, there is potential to yield information related to locations of former buildings located on the farm, three centuries of domestic and agricultural material culture, as well as unmarked graves located in the cemetery.

The picket fence visible in the Victorian Farmhouse predating the existing residence is shown with a concrete foundation. Portions of that foundation remain on the west side of the front yard with visible casting for the fence posts.

The first Rapidan Baptist Church building used to reside in the farmyard; it was a log structure moved to the Hoffman Farm when the present Wolftown church was built. The Hoffmans used it as a corncrib, but it was

destroyed in the 1980s by persons not recognizing its historical significance.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   9   Page   9  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County,**

**Virginia**

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**Major Bibliographical References:**

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   10   Page   10  

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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**GEOGRAPHIC DATA**

Zone Easting Northing  
  5  733524 4247828

Zone Easting Northing  
  6  733706 4247828

Zone Easting Northing  
  7  733689 4247644

Zone Easting Northing  
  8  732819 4247047

Zone Easting Northing  
  9  732438 4247593

**Verbal Boundary Description :**

The boundaries for the Hoffman Round Barn property are those of the Hoffman farm property owned by the Joyce Jenkins Gentry Family Trust as it now is constituted. The Madison County tax parcels included are #46-80A (2.4133 acres) and #46-80 (142.2466 acres.) Please refer to the included scale map with tax parcels.

**Boundary Justification:**

The primary reason for including the entire acreage of the Hoffman farm as the nominated property is that the significance of the round barn is in part predicated on its historic setting. That historical setting, at the geographic center of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century farmyard, which was at the center of the land grant given to John Rucker in 1727, gives historic continuity to the property, the barn, the house, and the graveyard as a agricultural landscape. The barn is visible from surrounding properties and public rights-of-way only if the open farmland serves as its frame; additional buildings on Shelby, Willis, and Wolftown-Hood Roads would block its visibility.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photographs Page 11

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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All photographs are common to:

PROPERTY: Hoffman Round Barn  
LOCATION: Wolfstown, VA; Madison County, Virginia  
DHR FILE NUMBER: 056-5034  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Pastore  
DATE: March 14, 2008  
DISC STORED: Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

VIEW: Round Barn, southeast elevation  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_001.tiff  
Photo 1 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, south elevation  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_002.tiff  
Photo 2 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, northeast elevation  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_003.tiff  
Photo 3 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, southeast elevation  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_004.tiff  
Photo 4 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, north elevation  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_005.tiff  
Photo 5 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, looking to the northeast from Shelby Road  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_006.tiff  
Photo 6 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, looking to the southeast from Wolfstown-Hood Road  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_007.tiff  
Photo 7 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, looking to the northwest from Willis Road  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_008.tiff  
Photo 8 of 13

VIEW: Round Barn, interior view of the ground floor level  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_009.tiff  
Photo 9 of 13

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photographs Page 12

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

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VIEW: Round Barn, interior view up the silo to the roof interior framing  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_010.tiff  
Photo 10 of 13

VIEW: Cemetery, within the old boxwoods, looking down  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_011.tiff  
Photo 11 of 13

VIEW: Captain Angus Rucker's memorial marker  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_012.tiff  
Photo 11 of 13

VIEW: Residence, front elevation facing Wolftown-Hood Road  
Name of photo: VA\_MadisonCounty\_HoffmanRoundBarn\_013.tiff  
Photo 13 of 13

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

Section Endnotes for Sections 7 and 8 Page 13

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**END NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Ashland still stands and is the present home of Bill and Ann Tidball; it is described in Madison County Homes by Vee Dove, 1975. The mill across the street is no longer there but its existence in this location is identified on Eugene M. Scheel's map of Madison County.

<sup>2</sup> The carpenter who built the Hoffman Round Barn, Haywood Montebello "Tiny" Dawson, was the uncle both of William "Bill" Dawson, presently of Brightwood, VA and also of Dewey B. Lillard. Mr. Lillard is a respected authority on early construction materials in Madison County and is the author of several locally significant histories of the County.

The period during which most round barns in the country were constructed corresponds to the period from 1890 to 1920 when state land grant colleges published materials aimed at farmers touting the efficiencies of round barn construction and operation. It is perhaps significant that, in an area with a very conservative population and almost no history of architectural experimentation, three such radically different barns would have been constructed in a twenty-mile radius.

<sup>3</sup> Lillard, Dewey B. The Land Grants of Madison County—1722-1865. Dewey B. Lillard. 1999. Reference here is made to the 1727 land grant of 977 acres to John Rucker (p. 3), later identified as adjacent to Thomas Rucker's 1730 land grant of 876 acres (p. 7.) The road that ran between the two was named Rucker Road in 1728, after the John Rucker land grants. It went from "Gath's Run down to Wolftown and then to the Rapidan River below Shelby." (p. xxv)

<sup>4</sup> Joyce Gentry relates that she remembers the siding on the barn being wood, also painted red.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Gentry remembers that the barn has always had two concrete block sides. Pat Roberts, a next-door neighbor of the Greene County Round Barn, which burned in about 2000, says she remembers that barn having twelve block sides and wood framing above.

<sup>6</sup> [www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html](http://www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html) . citation from the article "Efficiency of the Round Barn", from the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1911 – 1912, pgs. 139 – 142.

<sup>7</sup> Lillard, Dewey B. The Land Grants of Madison County—1722-1865. Dewey B. Lillard. 1999. p. 3

<sup>8</sup> Scheel, Eugene M. "Madison County"—map. Published in 1984 by the author; reprinted in 1992. Available in the Madison County Public Library. This map was compiled with the assistance of over 200 people and is essentially a record of the historical place names and locations of frequently long-gone mills, shops, and graveyards of Madison County.

<sup>9</sup> Lillard, Dewey B. "Wolftown, Virginia Area History". Unpublished research paper, 2003. p.4.

<sup>10</sup> Joyce Gentry, oral history in March, 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Hoffman Round Barn  
Madison County, Virginia**

Section Endnotes for Section 8 Page 14

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**END NOTES (Continued)**

<sup>11</sup> Not only is John Rucker's grandson, Angus buried in the family cemetery but John Rucker was described as a pioneer settler. "Specific examples of the pioneer type would be John Rucker, Michael Holt, and John Eddins. They built their own homes and cleared the lands; some of these owned slaves." Is the description in Lillard, Dewey B. "Wolftown, Virginia Area History". Unpublished research paper, 2003. p.4.

<sup>12</sup> *Round Barns*. National Park Service, Preservation Briefs from Technical Preservation Services, HPS.

<sup>13</sup> [www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html](http://www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html) . citation from the article "Efficiency of the Round Barn", from the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1911 – 1912, pgs. 139 – 142

<sup>14</sup> Vlach, John. *Barns*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York and London. 2003. p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Vlach, John. *Barns*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York and London. 2003.  
also the web site : [www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html](http://www.thebarnjournal.org/roung/efficiency/html) where the editor notes: "I assume a Gurler silo was constructed of wood studs with a smooth wood interior surface, and the point being made is that if located inside a barn there was no need for an outer skin to protect the wood from the weather thereby saving materials." While the Hoffman Barn's silo is constructed of tongue and groove rather than wood studs, the same protection from the weather is afforded by putting it under roof with the barn.

<sup>16</sup> Told to Beth Pastore by Dewey Lillard in March, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Told to Beth Pastore by Dewey Lillard in March, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Told to Beth Pastore by Joyce Gentry and Dewey Lillard in March, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Told to Beth Pastore by Dewey Lillard in March, 2008.

SECTION 8; PAGE 8

<sup>20</sup> [www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2002/Census\\_by\\_State/Virginia/index.asp](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2002/Census_by_State/Virginia/index.asp)

<sup>21</sup> Told to Beth Pastore by Joyce Gentry, September, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Lillard, Dewey B. "Wolftown, Virginia Area History". Unpublished research paper, 2003. p.15. The old log church was in a state of deterioration so it was sold to John M. Huffman (the family name later changed to Hoffman) for \$51.00 and "he had it moved to his farm down Route 230 about 1 ½ miles from the forks of the road at Wolftown." .."Unfortunately, the former Rapidan Church building was bulldozed and burned in the 1980's."

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