

CRBIB # 000463

3 VAMA. 035

389/133786

DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF THE VANDERBILT FARMS

by

John L. Hover

Park Guide

ROOSEVELT-VANDERBILT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

DIVISION OF HISTORY

N.P.S.

FILE COPY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. Development of the Farm
 - 1. Early Developments
 - 2. Construction of the Barns

- B. Description of the Farm
 - 1. The Barns
 - 2. Vegetable Garden
 - 3. Chicken Houses
 - 4. Dairy
 - 5. Other Buildings

- C. Employees on the Farm
 - 1. Organization of Employees
 - 2. Wages of Employees
 - 3. A Day in the Barn

- D. Livestock on the Farm
 - 1. Cows
 - 2. Pigs
 - 3. Horses
 - 4. Chickens
 - 5. The Dutchess County Fair

A. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARM



1. Frederick W. Vanderbilt came to Hyde Park in 1895 when he purchased the Walter Langdon Estate. After extensive work on the park section, including a 54-room mansion, he began the development of the farm. The farm comprised about 400 acres of land and was situated on the east side of the Albany Post Road opposite the park section of the Estate.

The work began with repairs on the old Langdon barns in 1898. In 1899 roads and driveways were built. It was in these early years that the roads through the wooded section of the farm were started. Eventually there was to be 26 miles of roads. The road leading into the farm from the Post Road was called the Avenue. It was stated in the local newspaper of the time that the drives through the woods were very picturesque, and Mr. Vanderbilt delighted in driving his guests over these roads.

In order to facilitate the work on the farm, Mr. Vanderbilt had a sawmill set up not too far from where the large barns are located. (See sketch of farm.) Here much of the rough-cut lumber used for fences and pens was cut. A stonecrusher was also located near the sawmill. The sawmill and stonecrusher were used until about 1900. After this year all materials were purchased commercially from local concerns. (1)

The vegetable garden and apple orchard were improved and enlarged in this early period. The vegetable garden covered

about $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres including the greenhouse. (See sketch.) The apple orchard was approximately 20 acres in which four varieties of apples were grown, including Baldwin, Spies, McIntosh, and Yellow Delicious. (2)

2. Construction of the barns. In 1901 a contract was awarded to the firm of Creegan & Collins of Morristown, New Jersey. The huge barns were built in the comparatively short time of five months. Work was started in June, and the barns were completed in October of that year. Built in the shape of a , the barn covers about an acre, including the barnyard. The center section of the barn, or the top of the  is 250 feet long and 75 feet wide. The two wings extending to the south on either side are 500 feet long and 35 feet wide. It is a wood frame building covered with wooden shingles, painted brown. The roof is also of wood shingles. The building is trimmed in white. (See sketch #2 for floor plan.)

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE FARM

1. The Barns. The center section of the barn was used for the storage of hay. Beneath this section there was a cold room for storage of vegetables, grain room, coal bins, and stalls for calfs. The right, or east, wing contained stalls for 24 cows, feed room, box stalls for cows about to calve, storage for wagons, a silo, and the office. Over the office on the second floor was a recreation room for the employees. The left, or west, wing contained a lunchroom, grain room, stalls for the draft horses, tack room or harness room, stalls for six polo ponies, storage area for wagons, and a bull pen. The second floor over the lunchroom was used for hay storage. (See drawing #2.)

The interior of the barn was painted with white enamel, except for the hay loft. The ceiling on the first floor of the barn was curved. The floor was of concrete. (3)

2. Vegetable Garden. The vegetable garden covered about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre and was located east of the barn. The vegetables grown here supplied the Mansion and also the New York City house. In the summer vegetables were grown outside. In the winter they were grown in the greenhouse, which was across the road and to the north of the vegetable garden. (See drawing #1.) This greenhouse was originally located on the other side of the Albany Post Road, near the railroad bridge on the boathouse road. About 1920 the greenhouse near the barn was built. This greenhouse was purchased by William Allt, a local florist, and relocated in the villare of Hyde Park.

3. Chicken Houses. The chicken houses were located to the east and north of the barn in back of the vegetable greenhouse. In the two buildings, which were of wood frame, were kept a flock of 2,000 to 2,300 white, leghorn chickens. Each of these buildings was about 75 feet long. The front faced south to take advantage of the sun. Meat and eggs were sent to the New York City house and also supplied the Mansion. Eggs were gathered twice a day. Average production for a day was about 50 dozen. A portion of the flock were pullets used for meat, poor laying hens and old chickens were also killed. Eggs were sold to local residents in Hyde Park and nearby towns. (4)

4. Dairy Building. The dairy building was located across the road from the barn. This is a frame and fieldstone building with a wood shingle roof. The inside was of white tile. It contained a separator and machinery for bottling milk. Production of milk averaged about 6 cans a day. It was brought over from the barn in a Ford truck. Butter was made twice a week. Average production for a week was 50-60 pounds. The skim milk left over after churning and bottling was fed to the pigs. The Vanderbilts always used sweet butter on the table and salted butter for cooking. Fresh butter and cream was sent to the Vanderbilts wherever they were, in Hyde Park, New York, or at any of their summer homes. Excess butter was sold. (5)

5. Other Buildings. Across the avenue from the barn was a duplex house. This was the home of the Dairyman (Everett Newman)

and the herdsman ('Cap', Manford Newman). It was a wood frame building with clapboard siding and was painted white.

Garage. The garage was up the avenue to the east of the dairyman's residence. The dairy was between these two buildings. (See drawing #2.) The garage was used to house the Ford truck and the cars used by the superintendent (Herbert Shears) of the Estate. This was a frame and fieldstone building trimmed with brown paint and had a wood shingle roof. Mr. Shears had a Model Ford for use on the farm and a Franklin, later a Studebaker, for trips away from the farm.

Paint Shop. This was a small wood frame building located between the barn and vegetable garden. (See drawing #2) The painter, Thomas Golden, used this building for mixing and storing paints and related equipment. Mr. Golden painted all year. In the summer he painted outside; in winter, inside.

Blacksmith Shop. This building was located east of the barn and north of the paint shop. (See drawing #2) Here the Blacksmith (Everett Moller) shod all the draught horses used on the farm. After his death in 1924, the horses were taken to the Blacksmith in Hyde Park. (Burt Burdick). Attached to the blacksmith shop to the south was a shed that was used by the employees to park their cars. Mr. Vanderbilt did not like the men to park their cars anywhere else. (6)

Pig Shed. There was no other building down here, other than a small shed used as a shelter for the pigs. The pig pen was located to the north of the chicken houses. The pigs were cared

for by the dairyman and herdsman. Also located in this area was
a Bull pen and calf pens.

C. EMPLOYEES ON THE FARM

1. Organization of employees. In 1938 there were 40 men working on the farm. This was above the average of 25. The number of men would vary with the season and also the workload. Extra men were hired in the summer for haying and sometimes in winter for snow removal. (7)

Superintendent - Herbert Shears

Vegetable Garden - 4 men

Foreman - Carl Hermann
.3 other men

Cattle & Pigs - 4 men

Dairyman - Everett Newman
Herdsman - "Cap" Manford Newman
2 other men

Horses - 3 men

Foreman - August Traudt
2 other men

Chickens - 2 men

Foreman - Fay Crittenden
1 other man

Farm Gang - 14 men

Foreman - Bart Pollard
13 other men

2. Wages of Employees. In 1899, the men on the farm worked six days a week and twelve hours a day. The day was 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. They were paid \$1.50 a day. In 1917 wages were raised to \$2.00 a day and the hours reduced to ten. (7 a.m. to 5 p.m.) After 1920 and until 1937 they worked the same hours for the same wages but were given Saturday afternoon off. After 1937 wages slowly rose to \$40.00 a month for the laborers to \$125.00 a month for the foremen.

The Vanderbilts treated the men on the farm very well. All of the men who lived on the estate, not just the farm, were given milk, vegetables, butter, coal, and wood. The employees who lived off the farm could buy these things at a very substantial discount.

At Thanksgiving Mrs. Vanderbilt gave all married male workers a turkey and all the single men \$5.00. At Christmas all the married male employees with children received \$50.00. All these gifts stopped when Mrs. Vanderbilt died in 1926. Mr. Vanderbilt gave all employees on the farm \$10.00 at Christmas from 1895 to 1938 when he died. (8)

3. A Day in the Barn. Although the other men on the farm started work at 7 o'clock in the morning, the men who worked in the cow barn had to be there at 5:30 a.m. When the dairyman and herdsman came to the barn in the morning the first thing they did was feed the cows grain. The cows were then washed and made ready for milking. The cows were fed hay and then milked. Milking was finished by 6:30. There were never more nor less than 24 cows milking and all milking was done by machine. The milk was put into 20 quart cans and transported to the dairy building and put in the cooler. At about 7 a.m. the men went to breakfast.

After breakfast the herdsman and the dairyman went to the dairy where the milk was bottled. Some of the milk was run through the separator and the cream bottled. If it was one of the days for making butter, then some of the milk would be churned. When the work in the dairy was done, the men went back to the barn to let the cows out and to clean up. Besides the dairyman and herdsman there were two other men in the barn. It was their job to keep the barn clean. Since these men never knew when Mr. Vanderbilt or Mrs. Vanderbilt would come in, the barn had to be kept spotless. This work was usually done by lunchtime.

The dairyman and herdsman then had nothing to do until 2:30 p.m. when the cows were milked again, and the whole routine of the morning

was repeated except for bottling the milk. By about 4:30 p.m. the dairyman and herdsman were free for the rest of the day. The other two men worked until 5 o'clock.

During the summertime, the farm gang would be bringing in hay and in the fall filling the silo. Other activity around the barn would include feeding and harnessing the horses, caring for the wagons and other farm equipment, and cleaning the barnyard. The polo ponies also had to be exercised once a day.

D. LIVESTOCK AND PRODUCTION ON THE FARM

1. Cows. There were always 24 cows milking, but this was not the entire herd. The entire herd numbered about 35 or 40, including calves and bulls. All these cows were purebred Jersey's. The milking herd produced about 120 quarts of milk per day. All the feed for the cows was produced on the farm. Four hundred tons of hay was put in the hay loft in the barn every year. The silo was filled with chopped corn and grain. The grain produced on the farm was milled, mixed, and bagged by a local feed mill. (Dickensons). Crops grown were rotated among the various fields. For instance, a field may have been used for hay for one or more years, then next used for oats.

2. Pigs. There were two Berkshire pigs kept on the farm. These pigs were bred twice a year. The young pigs were used for meat by the Vanderbilts and some of it was sold. The pigs were fed grain grown on the farm and also the skim milk from the dairy.

3. Horses. There were 15 Belgian draught horses for use on the farm. These horses, as were cows, were pure-breds. One, named King, was purchased in Belgium when he was three years old for \$3,000.

4. Chickens. 2,000 - 2,300 white Leghorn chickens were kept on the farm. The eggs were used by the Vanderbilts and some were sold. Young chickens were raised for meat.

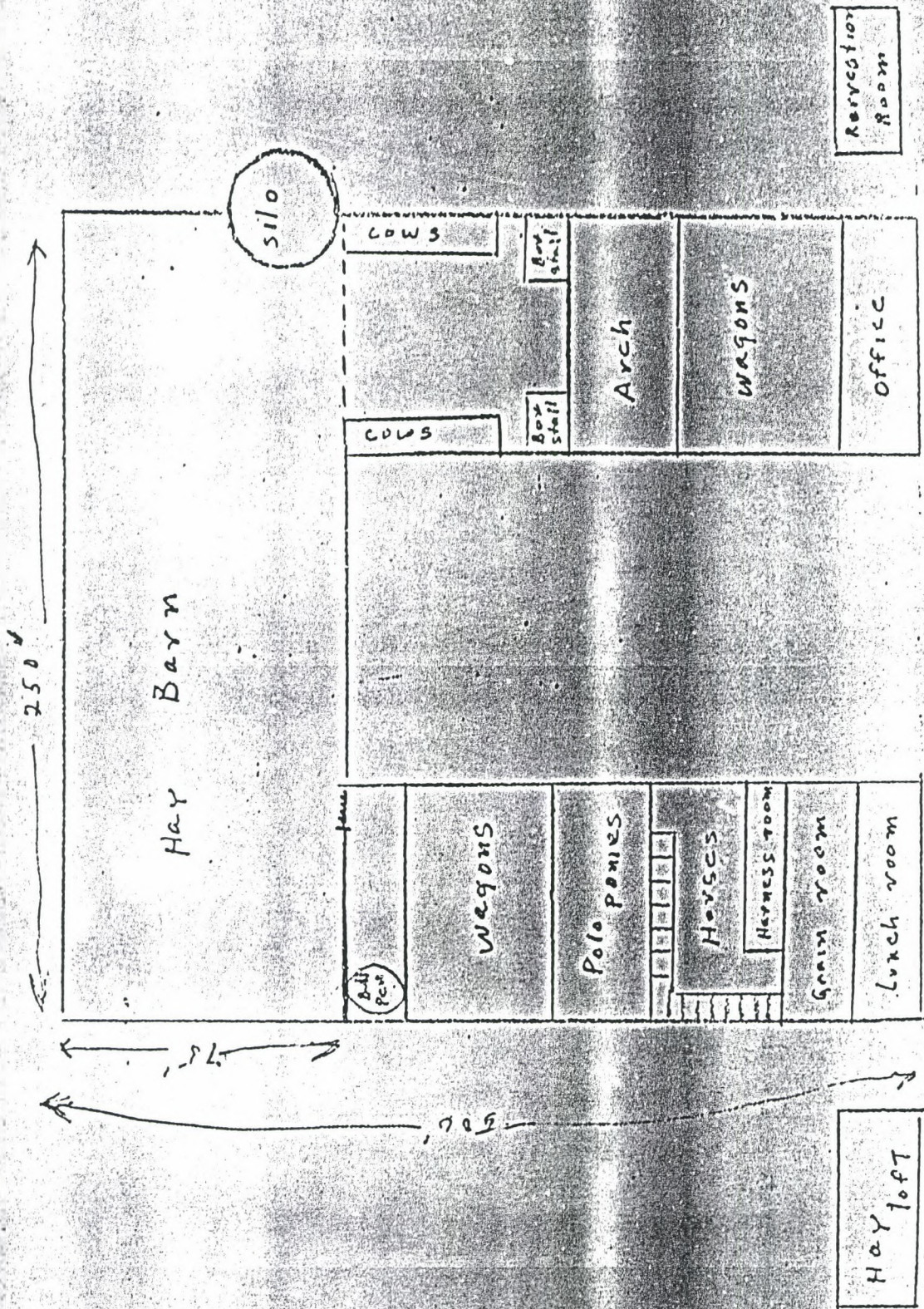
5. The Dutchess County Fair. Mr. Vanderbilt entered the Dutchess County Fair for the first time in 1919. That year the horses and cows were entered. The horses won six prizes and the cows won four. Mr. Vanderbilt paid all the entry fees and the men

who handled the stock at the fair were allowed to keep the prize money. Most of the time this prize money totaled about \$200.

The Farm consisted of about 400 acres. Of this amount about 100 acres were tilled, the remainder was woodland and pasture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

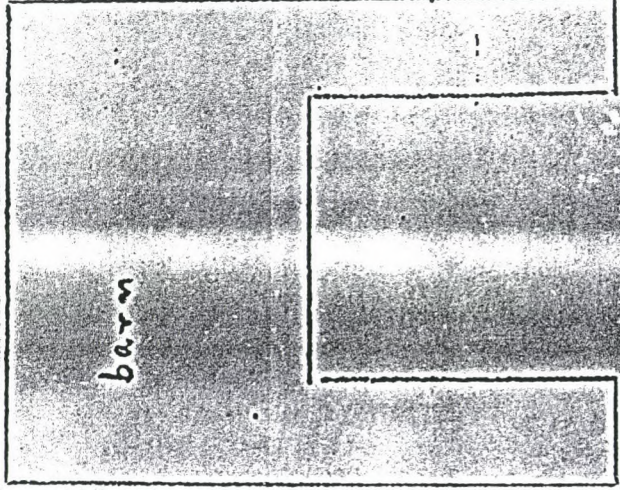
- (1) Poughkeepsie Courier
- (2) Account books from the Farm
- (3) Interview with Soules Newman
- (4) Interview with Fay Crittenden
- (5) Interview with Everett Newman
- (6) Interview with "Cap". Manford Newman
- (7) Poughkeepsie Courier
- (8) "Administrative History" by Charles Snell



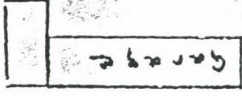
Drawing No. 1

bull
pen

manure



Black Sm.



Rain
Shop



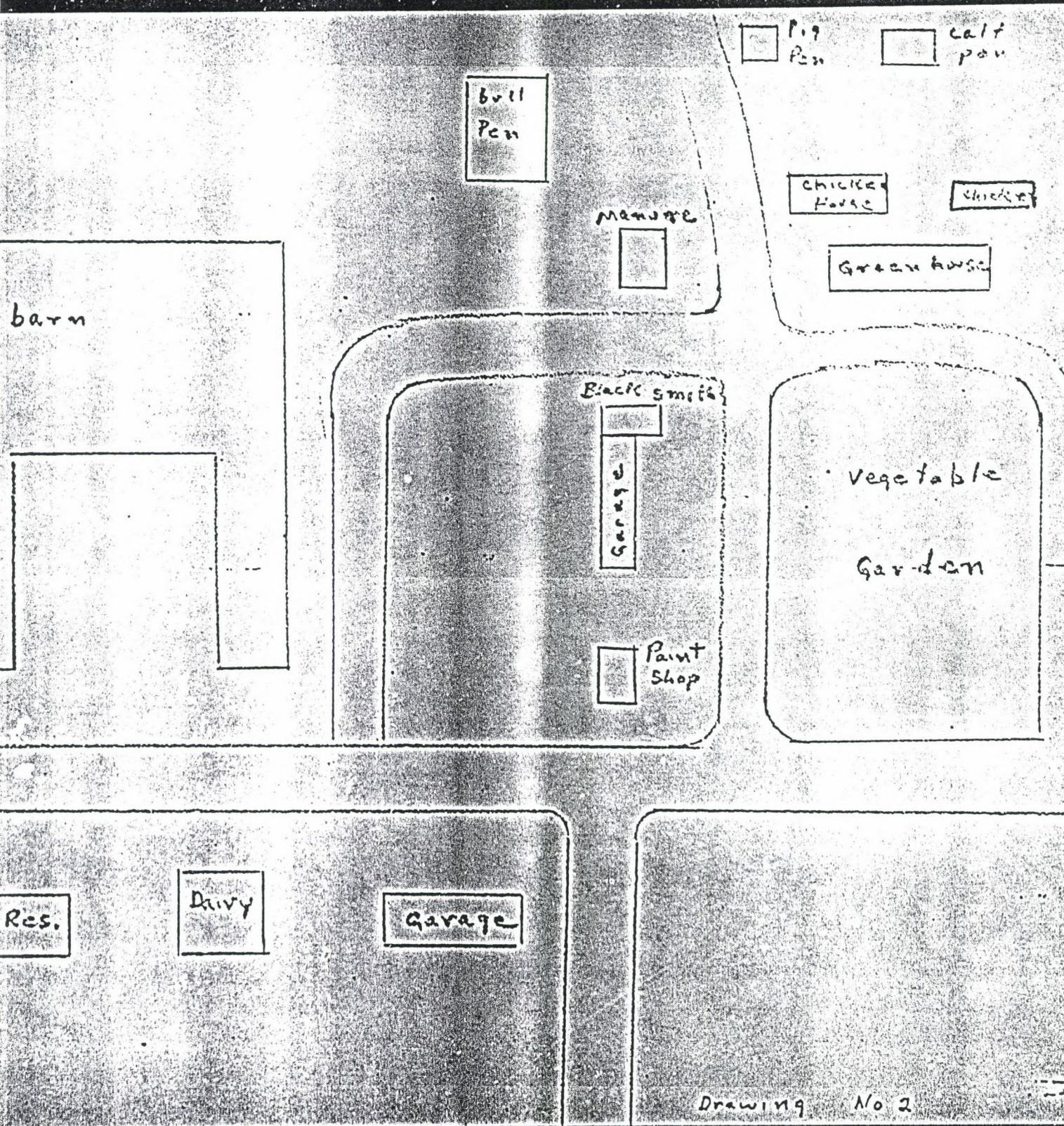
supt.
cottage



Driv

Res.

Garage



Drawing No 2