NPS Form 10-900
1024-0018
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No.

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Garst, Roswell and Elizabeth, Farmstead Historic District

other names/site number Bob and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead; Garst Home Place; Apple Farm Farmstead

2. Location

street & number 1390 HWY 141 not for publication N/A
city or town Coon Rapids vicinity X
state Iowa code IA county Guthrie code 077 zip code 50058

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally X statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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 Keeper Date of Action

Patrick Andus 8/12/2009

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
_X_ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
___ building(s)
_X_ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
12	1	buildings
1	0	sites
3	0	structures
0	0	objects
16	1	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
BRICK
roof ASPHALT
METAL
walls WOOD
SYNTHETICS
other

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

Garst, Roswell and Elizabeth, Farmstead Historic District
Name of Property

Guthrie County, Iowa
County and State

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.

__X__ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

____ **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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance
1916-1959

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

____ **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.

Significant Dates
1916
1959

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Garst, Roswell

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
McBroom, Leland Albert

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (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 # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
__X__ Other
Name of repository:
Iowa State University/Parks Library/Special Collections

Garst, Roswell and Elizabeth, Farmstead Historic District — Guthrie County, Iowa
Name of Property — County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 53.3 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	361157	4635958	3	15	361423	4635574
2	15	361475	4635674	4	15	361425	4635270

X 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 Jan Olive Nash & Rebecca Conard / Historians

organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date February 2009

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319.354.6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

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 Whiterock Conservancy

street & number 1390 HWY 141 telephone 712-684-2964 ext. 111

city or town Coon Rapids state IA zip code 50058

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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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

7. Description

Summary Paragraph

The Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead (Garst Farmstead) is located in west-central Iowa, in the far northwest corner of Guthrie County, just across the county line from the community of Coon Rapids, which is located along the Carroll/Guthrie border in the southeast corner of Carroll County. Though located in a different county and separated from Coon Rapids by the diagonal course of busy Iowa Hwy 141, the Garst Farmstead is nearly within the current city limits of Coon Rapids. The farmstead lies along the southwest side of Hwy 141, and is reached by a gravel and chip-sealed drive from the highway (Fig. 1). The short drive crosses a straightened creek that parallels the highway using a steel truss bridge recycled from a county road. The drive continues through the sprawling farmstead on a southwest trajectory and is curved in spots to form an overall lazy "S" shape that terminates at the tenant's house along the westernmost edge of the farmstead. Between Hwy 141 and the tenant's house, the drive bifurcates to form an oval near the farmhouse and again toward the center of the farmstead to form a circle around a nonextant feed mill (scale extant). Generally speaking, what lies to the northwest of the farmstead drive is domestic in nature, by design or by happenstance; what lies to the southeast is agricultural and forms the essential components of this still-working livestock farm. With the exception of the tenant's house, the farmhouse and other domestic buildings are located nearest the highway, with the working agricultural buildings positioned farther into the farmstead's interior. The Garst home sits at the top of a slight rise and has a wide grassy yard, well shaded with mature trees, separating it from the highway below. Nearby and behind the farmhouse is a small hen house-turned-hired hands' abode, now used as one of the units in the farmstead's bed-and-breakfast operation (operated by Whiterock Conservancy). The other principal farmstead building—the large gable-roofed barn—is located opposite the house, southeast across the oval driveway which has been widened in front of the farmhouse for parking. This relatively compact positioning of the farmhouse and barn reflects the turn-of-the-twentieth century origins of this farmstead. The greater farmstead that sprawls beyond the house and barn reflects the innovative and expansive twentieth century farming operations of Roswell Garst and his descendants.

Principal Buildings

The 1½ story, wood frame, Garst *farmhouse* (Figs. 2-6) has an irregular footprint and clearly grew to its present shape through numerous additions and expansions, most of which were completed between Roswell Garst's initial association with the farm in 1916, and 1959 when the Soviet Union's leader, Nikita Khrushchev, made his much publicized visit to the farm.[1] It is difficult to discern today precisely what part of the house existed prior to 1916 as the "bachelor" quarters used by brothers Jonathan and Roswell when they began to farm their father's, Edward Garst's, 200 acres here.[2] The primary façade is the southern elevation that faces the drive and the barn beyond, and which contains the front entrance. Parking spaces for vehicles are available just outside the picket fence in front of this south elevation. The parking area is shaded by an enormous cottonwood tree, thought to predate Roswell and Elizabeth's tenure on the farm.[3] The house's east side faces the highway and Coon Rapids beyond, and overlooks a bucolic vista of a sweeping lawn leading down to a small creek. Following the highway's straightening to its present location in the mid-1950s, this side would be a very public elevation but for its distance from the highway and the privacy afforded by the many trees dotting the lawn. The west elevation is a busier, working side of the building, with direct access between the kitchen and its entryway pantry, and a narrow sidewalk leading out to a side yard with clothes lines, gardens, a concrete patio and, once upon a time, a swimming pool constructed around 1938 and now filled in with dirt and used for garden plantings. The final elevation, the north side, is private and relatively shielded from the farmstead's hustle by the house, mature trees, and bushes. A single-story rear wing that contained the Garst children's bedrooms extends into this quiet side of the yard and has an exterior entrance.

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[1] Roswell briefly farmed with his brother, Jonathan, in the fall of 1916 before heading off to college. Harold Lee, *Roswell Garst: A Biography* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984), 23-24.

[2] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 28. The farmhouse was occupied by tenants prior to 1916 (William Lester Jones and family, c. 1911-1916), but little is known about tenants prior to the Jones family (Don Stiles to Liz Garst, verbal communication, February 28, 2009). Stiles's mother, Louise, was William Lester Jones's daughter and was born in the Garst farmhouse in 1912.

[3] Elizabeth "Liz" Garst to Jan Olive Nash, verbal communication, February 20, 2009.

Figure 1 With the exception of the nonextant central feed mill (marked by an X), this 2002 aerial view of the Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead remains accurate today. ***Taken from http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu/ on December 10, 2008***

The foundation under the house varies in materials depending on which part of the house is involved and includes clay tile block and what appears to be concrete block under a heavy coating of paint. Red clay tile block was used for the foundation of the last additions, including the expanded east end of the living room, and the north, one-story bedroom wing. Basement floors are poured concrete. Portions of the basement have been converted to office space used by the Whiterock Conservancy staff and a gift shop for the bed-and-breakfast operation. The furnace room, under the dining room, may be the earliest foundation but is covered with parging and reinforced with lower buttress walls, leaving its original material obscured.

Exterior walls of the Garst farmhouse are wood-frame and uniformly clad with horizontal wood siding painted white. The siding is butt-joined at the corners to vertical boards and there are varying widths of fascia boards trimming the many gable peaks. Windows are singles and doubles, largely with double-hung sashes, but there are some vertical casements as well. The casements visible in historic photographs are not modern. Muntins in both double-hung and casement sashes unify the windows and give the house a Colonial Revival feeling. Most windows have crown molding across the top sash, unless the wall space above is too cramped by an angled gable roofline. Classically-inspired wood pilasters flank either side of the front entrance, enhancing the stylishness of the house in a restrained manner. Brown tabbed asphalt shingles cover the complex roof structure and the many dormers that pierce it. Adorned with a large cursive "G" the exterior brick chimney next to the front entrance is one of the iconic features of the Garst house, preserved in published photographs.

Figure 2 South primary façade, Roswell and Elizabeth Garst farmhouse (#1). The well-known 1959 Joe Munroe photograph of the Garsts (see Fig. 6 below) was taken with the couple standing in front of the picket fence.[4] ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2005***

Figure 3 East side of the farmhouse (#1), as seen from the sweeping front lawn. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

[4] This photograph was published in Roswell Garst's biography; see Lee, *Roswell Garst*, between pages 224 and 225.

Figure 4 The west side of the house (#1) contains a doorway leading through a storage pantry into the kitchen.
Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008

Figure 5 The north side of the farmhouse (#1) sports a single-story wing, seen here with the dark door. The working west yard is to the right, while the lawn chairs under the trees to the far left are positioned to look toward the sweeping east lawn toward the highway. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 6 Elizabeth and Roswell Garst stand in front of their farmhouse, 1959. ***Photo by Joe Munroe and used with permission***

House Interior

The floor plan of the Roswell and Elizabeth Garst farmhouse is essentially as it was in the 1950s, with the exception of three new bathrooms necessitated by its conversion to a bed-and-breakfast operation in the 1990s. The front entrance is housed in its own small vestibule wing, from which one enters a large living room with a fireplace on one wall and a large bay window on another (Figs. 7-8). A gateleg stairway ascends to the second floor from the north wall of the living room, while doorways and a corridor near the stairs lead into the kitchen, the dining room, downstairs to the basement, and down a long hallway toward the north wing rooms. This north wing now houses a Whiterock Conservancy office and bed-and-breakfast bedrooms. Another corridor doorway leads to a hallway bathroom. Wall and floor surface materials on the first level are fresh and modern (paint, wallpapers, carpet), but suggest the Garsts' tenure from the 1940s and 50s. Trim work and molding date to the 1940s, if not before. Kitchen cabinetry appears to be from the 1940s or 50s and built-in china cabinets in the dining room are the same as those visible in historic photographs of Elizabeth Garst in that room (Figs. 9-10). One corner china cabinet suggests the Early

American décor that was popular during the late 1930s through the 1950s and was the counterpart to the Colonial Revival architectural style.[5] The staircase to the basement is accessed from a hallway doorway that is located under the gateleg staircase to the second floor. The basement is divided into a remodeled office for Whiterock Conservancy personnel, a gift shop, and various storage spaces. All surface treatments in the basement are either quite modern (carpet) or covered with a thick coat of paint. The staircase from the living room ascends to the second floor central hallway, from which three bedrooms and a bathroom are accessed. Two of the bedrooms are small, while the master suite is much larger. Bedrooms ceilings are slanted, reflecting the gable lines outside, and the west bedroom is stepped down slightly reflecting its lower roof. Again, carpet and most wallpapers are modern.

Figure 7 Elizabeth Garst sits in her living room following the Khrushchevs' visit in 1959, surrounded by family members. The ceiling beam over their heads is structural and marks the location of the former exterior east wall. The screened porch where Roswell Garst once stored his seed corn was located beyond this ceiling beam. The remodeling project that saw expansion of the living room, also permitted a much enlarged master bedroom above on the second floor. ***Photo by Joe Munroe and used with permission***

[5] Information about interior furnishings from both the original early American period and the later "Early American" revival may be found at Marian Hoffman, ed. *Americana Treasures* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company); Martin M. Pegler, *The Dictionary of Interior Design* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1983); and J. Randall Cotton, "Furniture & Architecture," *The Old-House Journal* (March/April 1987): 39-45. A three-cornered cupboard that fits into a corner is called a "coin" according to Pegler, 48.

Figure 8 The Garst farmhouse living room today. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

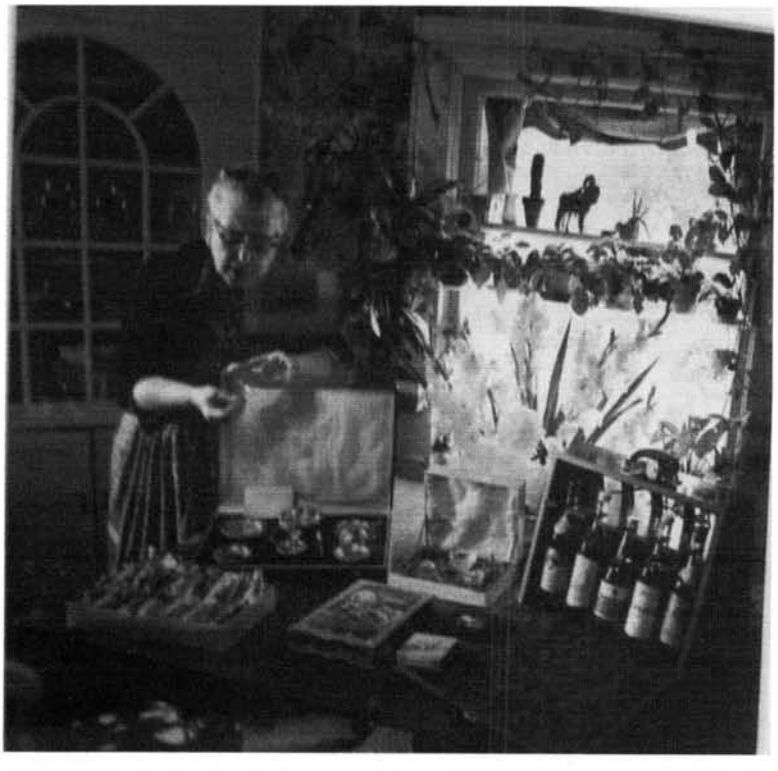

Figure 9 Elizabeth Garst in her dining room. ***Historic photograph hanging on the wall of the Garst farmhouse. Collection of the Garst family***

Figure 10 The dining room of the Garst house retains its wood floors and corner china cupboard. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Evolution of the Garst Farmhouse

While the precise construction and remodeling dates of the house and its various additions may never be known, some of the stages in the evolution of the Garst farmhouse are better understood than others.[6] Physical examination of the house and available historic photographs suggest the earliest building had a T-shape, with a north/south aligned gable on the main mass.[7] The south-facing front gable was unadorned by the present chimney with the "G." A smaller wing with a slightly lower roof ridge was attached at right angles to the west side of the main block. A 1918 photograph reveals that a long screened front porch filled the inside of the T on the south front, which porch likely sheltered the front door (the approximate location of the present front entrance). This T-shaped building would have been a very traditional vernacular farmhouse commonly seen throughout Iowa and the upper Midwest by the end of nineteenth century (Figs. 11-12).

The T-plan rural house (and its cousin the ell), according to one historian, was the "most numerous and familiar farmhouse type in the Upper Midwest" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Constructed by the thousands, such farmhouses were of balloon frame construction and often wrapped rooms around a central chimney that vented a heating stove. A second chimney vented the cooking stove in the kitchen, which usually occupied the smaller wing attached to the main block. Cross gable T-plans could be built at one time, or evolve by "add ons," which could be either a kitchen wing added to the bigger main block, or the other way around. T-plans were common because their balloon frames were efficient to construct, easy to expand,

[6] Investigation of the building is limited by the fact that only the east and south elevations are well documented with historic photographs. The number of additions and remodelings also obscure physical information that might otherwise be gleaned about the original building.
[7] There is some thought supported by scant physical evidence that the room used today as the dining room was the original abode, dating back to the 1880s or before. If so, the T-shape configuration was probably formed by 1890. Elizabeth "Liz" Garst to Jan Olive Nash, verbal communications, February 20-23, 2009. The floor joists for the dining room floor run in a different direction than the south/north facing gabled block.

and flexible in their room functions. They could be left unadorned, even unpainted, or decorated according to popular styles and the owners' persuasion and economic means. T-plans were considered the "right kind of house" in newly settled areas where frugality ruled.[8]

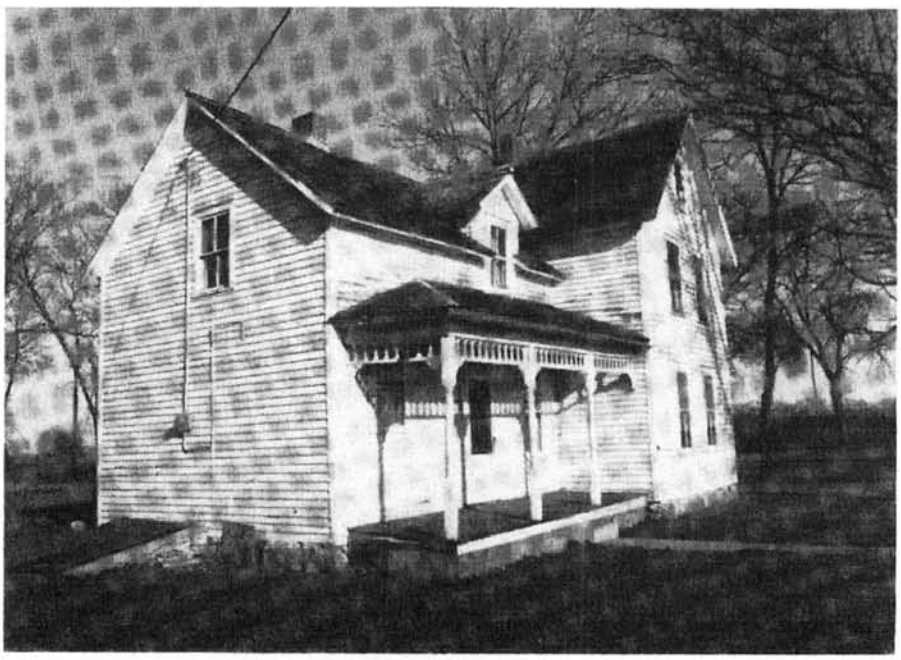

Figure 11 This c. 1895 T-plan farmhouse is located in Pope County, in west-central Minnesota. Note the wing has a roof ridge that is slightly lower than the main ridge; also note the porch has been decorated with spindle work typically associated with Victorian styles, though the house itself is otherwise unadorned. ***From Peterson, 106***

Figure 12 This 1½ story, c. 1890 T-plan farmhouse is located in Lac Qui Parle County, in southwest Minnesota, near the South Dakota state line. Roof gables add head room and increase the amount of daylight in the second floor interior. ***From Peterson, 106***

[8] Fred W. Peterson, *Homes in the Heartland: Balloon Frame Farmhouses of the Upper Midwest, 1850-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 124-125.

Despite the many alterations, "add ons," and remodelings seen by the Garst farmhouse over the years, the basic T-plan remains its most likely ancestor. Hints of it are found still in the central heating chimney stack, and the stepped down roofline of the current dining room wing attached at right angles to a slightly larger main block. The tall, 2 over 2 sash windows seen in the 1918 photograph (Fig. 13) also suggest the nineteenth-century origins of the building.

If a T-plan was the original structure, by 1918 it had been expanded to include a large screened porch along the east side and, over the porch, a big shed dormer with one-over-one sash windows. An exterior concrete block chimney had been attached to the front of the south gable, perhaps to vent a new boiler or even a new stove added for the bedroom space provided by the big dormer as this enlarged room would have been some distance from the central stove chimney. Under the dormer, the new screened porch sat on a rock-face concrete block foundation, a material not seen commonly in Iowa until after 1905.[9] This porch and the dormer overhead probably date to the construction period of the farmstead's large barn, carpenter shed, and the hen house to the west of the house, all of which also display a generous amount of rock-face concrete blocks in their construction materials. The hen house's gable end walls are composed of the two sizes of block seen in the other buildings, suggesting it was constructed using the left over materials from the other projects.

By 1925, another gabled dormer and a rear wing had been added to the north side of the house (Fig. 14). The foundation material under this new north expansion matches the present kitchen and indicates they were part of the same construction project. Also by 1925, the entrance door to the big eastside screened porch had been removed and the south gable "front" had begun to assume its current appearance. The larger shouldered "G" chimney, centrally located on the gable wall, replaced the offset concrete stack seen in the 1918 photograph and, importantly, the new pilastered entrance replaced the smaller screened porch at the juncture of the wing and main block (Fig. 15). The large eastside porch—on which Roswell stored seed corn—and shed dormer over it still existed as of 1934, when Elizabeth Garst posed with her two sons in front of her house (Fig. 16). This porch was later removed in order to expand the living room and the master bedroom above it. Louise Garst's husband, Leland McBroom, was an architect from Des Moines.[10] McBroom assisted Roswell and Elizabeth in remodeling their house once again around 1940. Some of the present interior appearance and perhaps that last major expansion to the east wall might be credited

[9] The cast-iron machine that produced decorative concrete blocks was patented in 1900 by Harmon S. Palmer of Chicago, who first started producing them in 1902, but both his machine and his concrete blocks were quickly and widely imitated. By 1907, there were nearly a hundred companies competing with Palmer, and concrete block-making machines had flooded the market. They were popular because of the options the concrete block gave to the builder. An individual mason, carpenter, or even handy property owners, could buy a machine from Sears, Roebuck, & Co., or other mail order catalogs as early as 1905, set it up in the front yard, and produce the blocks for the project with relative ease. Molded concrete blocks were available also through small, local businesses such as the Jensen and Bennedsen Co.—operating just 30 miles from Coon Rapids—which began selling them in 1904. A second concrete manufacturing plant opened in Kimballton in 1907. Following World War I, the demand for drainage tiles shifted the focus of production. By 1930, the popularity of decorative concrete block had waned. Jan Olive Nash, "Concrete Block House: Historical/Architectural Study of the Sarah Burkholder House, Clarksville, Iowa" (unpubl. report prepared for the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments, 2006); also see Leah D. Rogers, "Architectural and Historical Survey of the Danish Community of Kimballton..." (unpubl. report prepared for the Kimballton Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historical Society of Iowa, 1993), 35-37.

[10] Louise Garst was Roswell's cousin, daughter of former Iowa governor Warren Garst (Edward's brother; Roswell's uncle). Leland Albert McBroom (1891-1945), also called Micko and Mickey by the Garst family, was born in Salt Lake City, Utah but moved to Des Moines as a child. While attending Iowa State College in Ames, he worked in the architectural offices of Smith & Wetherell (1909) and Hallett & Rawson (1910-1911). Then, after attending the University of Illinois, he worked for Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson (1915), also of Des Moines. McBroom took his architectural degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1916. After service in World War I, he was back in Des Moines, where he married Louise Garst in 1922 and set up practice in 1924. He had various partners over the years until 1940 when, in poor health, the couple left Des Moines on a year-long world cruise. When the Second World War erupted, the McBrooms returned to Washington, D.C. in 1941 or early 1942. Louise died of an accident in 1944 in McComb, Illinois, and Leland died in 1945 "while on a convalescent leave in Des Moines" (Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects* [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999], 113-114). McBroom designed "many of the finest homes in Des Moines" and his "major accomplishment" was the Bankers Life headquarters in that city (Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects,* 113).

to McBroom.[11]

Figure 13 This historic photo is from 1918 and shows a much simpler farmhouse behind Roswell Garst's sister, Dorothy Garst Chrystal. The large screened porch and dormer overhead are additions to the east side of the house.
Lee,* Roswell Garst, *plate follows page 96

[11] Elizabeth "Liz" Garst, "The Garst Family, Hybrid Corn, and the Khrushchev Visit" (unpubl. t.s., no date, but c. 2000), 1. Liz Garst is Roswell's granddaughter.

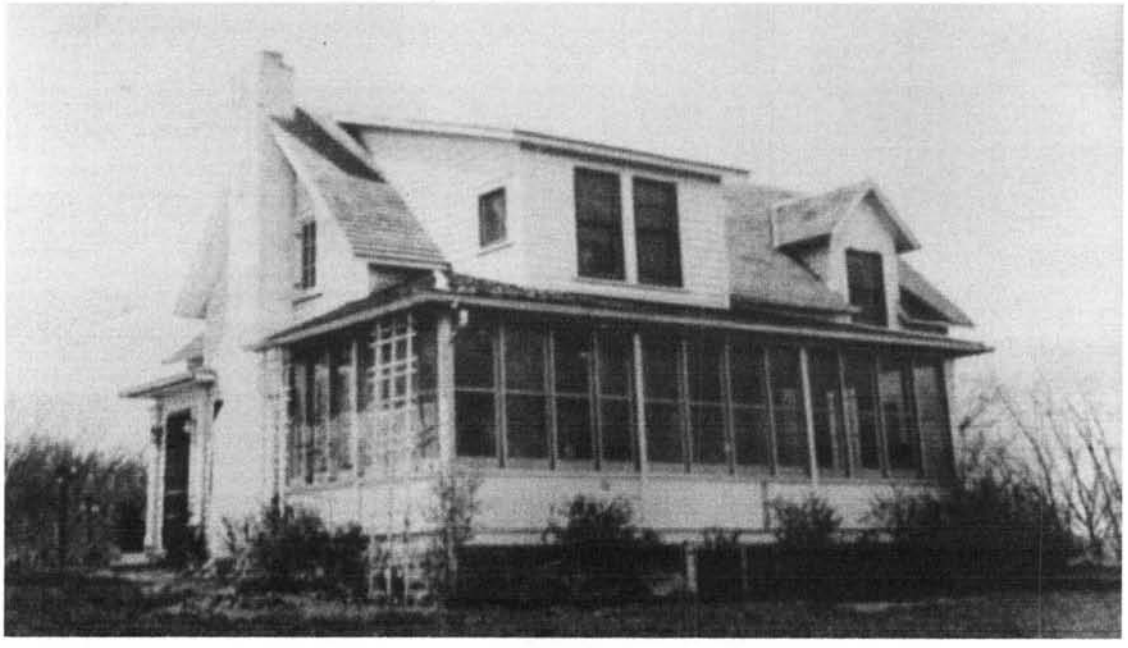

Figure 14 Garst house, 1925. Note the new dormer on the right, atop an expanded north wing; also the new entrance at left.
Collection of the Garst family

Figure 15 Cousins Ann Merrill and Jane Garst stand at the new (and current) front door in 1932.
From Lee,* Roswell Garst, *plate following 96

Figure 16 The handwritten caption under this framed photograph hanging in the Garst farmhouse is "Elizabeth and sons [Stephen and David], about 1934." ***Collection of the Garst family***

Barn

Across the drive from the Garst farm house stands the large barn built for Edward Garst and used by Roswell Garst for his early dairy operation and, later for corn sorting (Figs. 17-19).[12] Constructed sometime between 1905 and 1920, its gables align north and south, leaving the building with long side elevations on the east and west. Its placement on a slight hill resulted in an exposed "raised" basement foundation of large rock-face concrete blocks on the long east side, but necessitated

[12] Edward Garst, who died in 1923, was a Coon Rapids merchant without farming interests other than as an investment. Little is known of the farm's tenant or operator at the time of the barn's construction, or the arrangements Edward had with the farmer (Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 15). The land abstract for the farmstead reflects mortgages both in 1905 ($4000) and 1917 ($8000), but with Edward's mercantile interests, the funds may have been for off-farm uses as easily as for farm improvements. None of Edward's sons were residing on the farm in the following the summer of 1917 or had clear intentions of doing so in the near future according to Roswell Garst's biographer, Harold Lee. Goodwin, the eldest, was working in the store with his father; Jonathan was a soldier in Europe destined for scholarly pursuits; Roswell was attending Iowa State College, the agricultural college, in Ames, and talked of farming in Canada eventually. Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 24-26.

Figure 17 Large barn (#3), north gable end and east long side, looking southwest. Also visible on the left is a small outbuilding (#4). ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 18 Large barn (#3), south gable and west long side, looking northeast over the feed lot. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

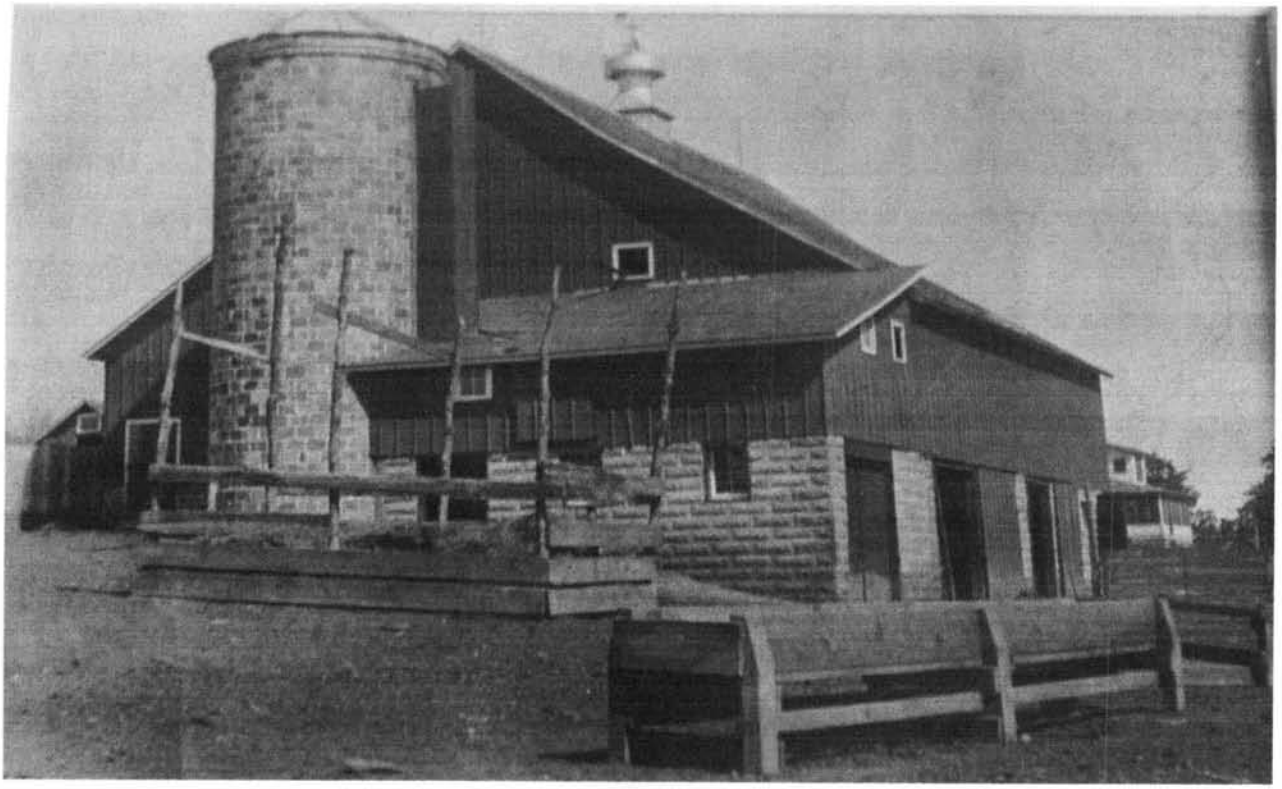

Figure 19 The large barn (#3), around 1925. This view is of the south end wall and east side wall of the barn, looking northwest from what is the cattle feeding alley today. The clay tile silo, used in Roswell Garst's dairy operation, is nonextant. Just visible in the background on the right is the farmhouse. The gable peak at the far left edge is the carpenter shed (#5). ***Historic photograph hanging on the wall of the Garst farmhouse. Collection of the Garst family.***

an earthen ramp up to a concrete deck for access on the north side (facing the house and the farmyard drive). South and west side walls rest on a waist-high or lower foundation wall of the same concrete block. The walls of the barn are clad with vertical board and batten siding, painted red initially and overpainted with white today. Small fixed sash windows dot the walls, though not in the amounts one might normally expect of a livestock barn housing horses and dairy cattle. Dutch-doors, divided in the middle, are present in several locations on the gable ends to provide access to the barn's interior. Wider livestock slider doors are found on the lower east side. The roof overhead is covered with a new metal cladding, as are most of the historic wooden farm buildings.

Inside, the barn is divided into numerous smaller compartments and cattle runs for moving livestock around, leaving the interior dark and difficult to examine. Its framing system is composed of relatively light sawn timber uprights and paired plank cross members. Loft floors high on the side bays were used for hay storage initially and seed corn sorting or storage later. Hay doors are visible high on the gable walls and indicate loft storage on the upper central area of the barn as well, though this area was inaccessible (Fig. 20).

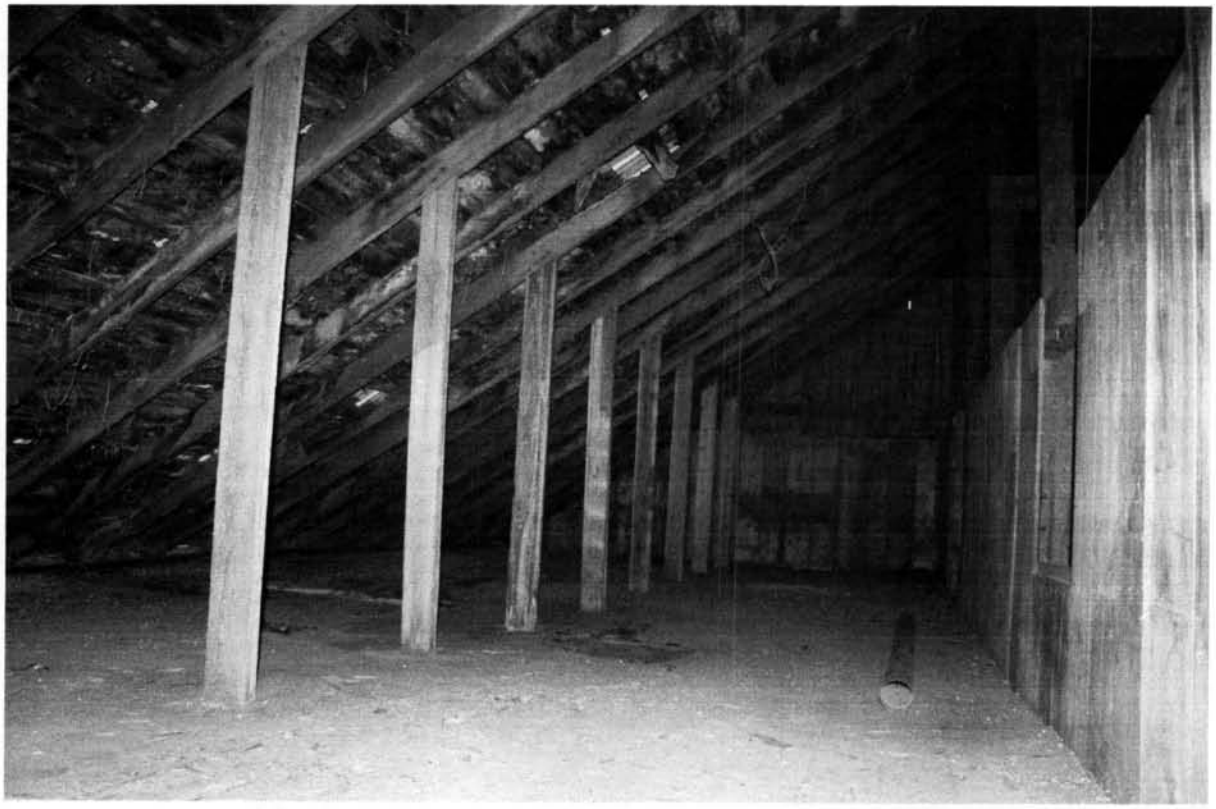

Figure 20 This view of the east side loft bay of the large barn (#3) interior looks south. The plank cross beams of the middle bents and central loft are visible over the partition wall on the right. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Other Buildings

Table 1 below gives details of the remaining buildings, structures, and sites on the farmstead, but several buildings are worthy of special note. Photographs of these buildings follow the table and are keyed to both the table and the site plan in the Additional Documentation continuation sheets.

Table 1
Descriptions of Features on the Roswell & Elizabeth Garst Farmstead[13]

No. & Resource	Contributing or Noncontri-buting	Date or Era of Construc-tion	Historic Use	Current Use	Description/Remarks
1. farmhouse	C	c. 1890, 1910s, 1920s, 1930s , c. 1940	residence	commercial bed and breakfast	exterior intact from c. 1940; interior floor plans essentially intact to the 1950s era (except several new bathrooms), surface treatments modern
2. hen house ("Hollyhock cottage")	C	c. 1910s	hen house, hired hand house, garden shed	B&B unit	wood frame, but end walls have both types of cast concrete blocks seen in the foundations of the carpenter shed and the large barn
3. large barn	C	c. 1910s	livestock shelter, dairy barn, seed corn sorting	cattle sorting	foundation is of large, rock-face concrete block, walls are board & batten siding, white paint over red, historic ventilator on roof
4. sheds & outbuildings (3)	C X3	c. 1920	unknown ancillary uses	unused	one nearest barn was a cob shed, then held firewood; one located east of barn in pasture; one located in far west area
5. carpenter shed	C	c. 1910s	workrooms	equipment storage	foundation is rock-face concrete block (similar but smaller version of barn's), has the appearance of a wagon shed
6. horse barn	C	1920s or later	horse shelter	horse shelter & tack room	L-shaped, poured concrete foundation, vertical tongue-groove siding, interior post frame
7-8. "cotton-wood" Quonsets (2)	C X2	early 1940s	feed storage	hay storage	built during WWII using economic and available green cottonwood and metal sheathing, laminated, arched roof rafters spring from short concrete side walls; used for storing hybrid grain sorghum
9. calving barn	C	c. 1952	hog farrowing house, then calving barn	calving barn, unused, and midsection workrooms	intended to house large farrowing operation, but plan quickly scaled down and then abandoned, used as calving barn most of its existence
10. tenant house	C	c.1940	residence	residence	single story, gable end, wood frame, double hung sash windows, 896 sq. ft.
11, driveway bridge (Warren pony truss)	C	c. 1920s	county road bridge	private drive bridge	channel steel superstructure; concrete deck; no makers' marks; relocated in mid-1950s from unk. original location
12. sorting shed	NC	1970s	holds chute system used to sort cattle	holds chute system used to sort cattle	gable roof, walls are clad with synthetic material
13. silage bunker group	C	early 1950s	silage production & storage	silage production & storage	largest one holds 15,000 tons of fermented chopped corn stalks & other feedstuff
14. feed alley & lot system	C	mid to late 1940s	cattle feed alley & pens	cattle feed alley & pens	cow/calf breeding operation; lots hold different groups of cattle, rotated by season; trucks dispense feed to cattle in each lot daily
15. fishing pond system	C	1956	soil & water conservation, recreation	soil & water conservation, recreation	fishing by public permitted; created when the highway next to it was straightened

[13] *Sources:* Physical descriptions are from the author's personal observation in 2005 & 2008. Dates of construction, historic uses, and current functions are a combination of visual estimates, family memories (Elizabeth "Liz" Garst, verbal and email communication to Jan Olive Nash, 2005, 2008), the text of "The Garst Farm: Family Home of Roswell & Elizabeth Garst" (unpubl. B&B pamphlet, no date but early 2000s), and Lee, *Roswell Garst* (1984).

Figure 21 As seen from the south end of the large barn (#3), from left to right, the buildings visible here are the horse barn (#6), the carpenter shed (#5), and the hen house/hired hand's house (#2). ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

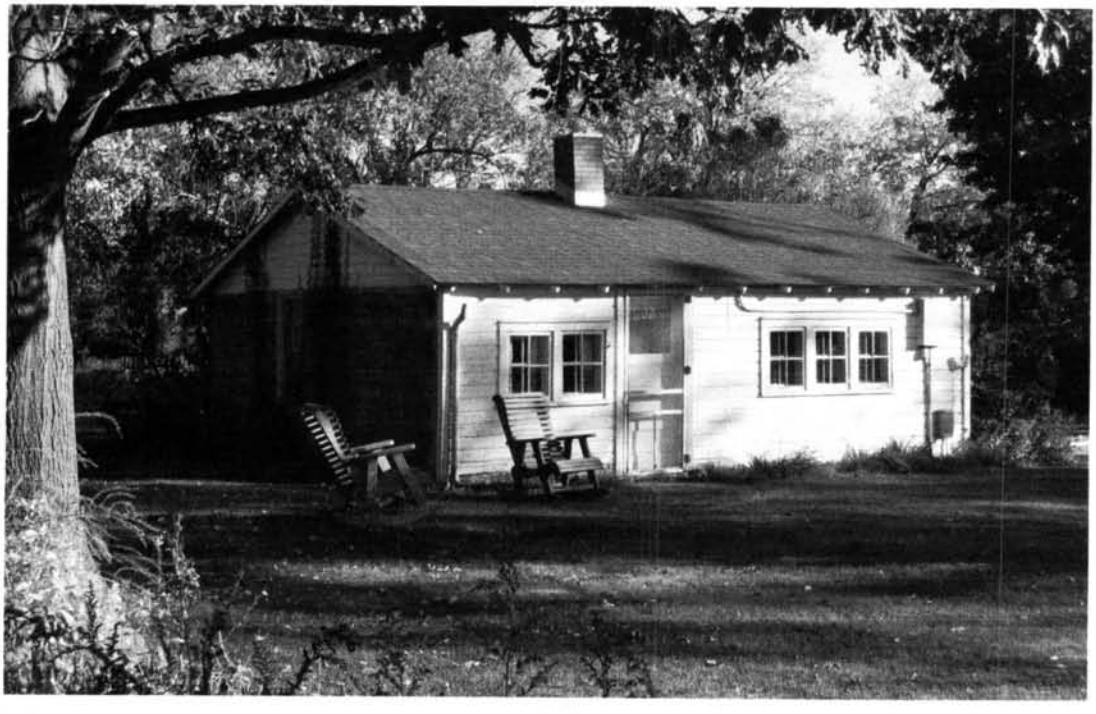

Figure 22 Now called the "Hollyhock Cottage," this building was a hen house (#2) and is located near the west side of the farmhouse (which is to the right, beyond the edge of the photo). Elizabeth Garst used it as a garden shed and it is also thought to have served as a hired hand's quarters in the past. Its gable end walls are made of both large rock-face concrete block similar to that used in the large barn's foundation, and the smaller blocks seen in the carpenter shed. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2005***

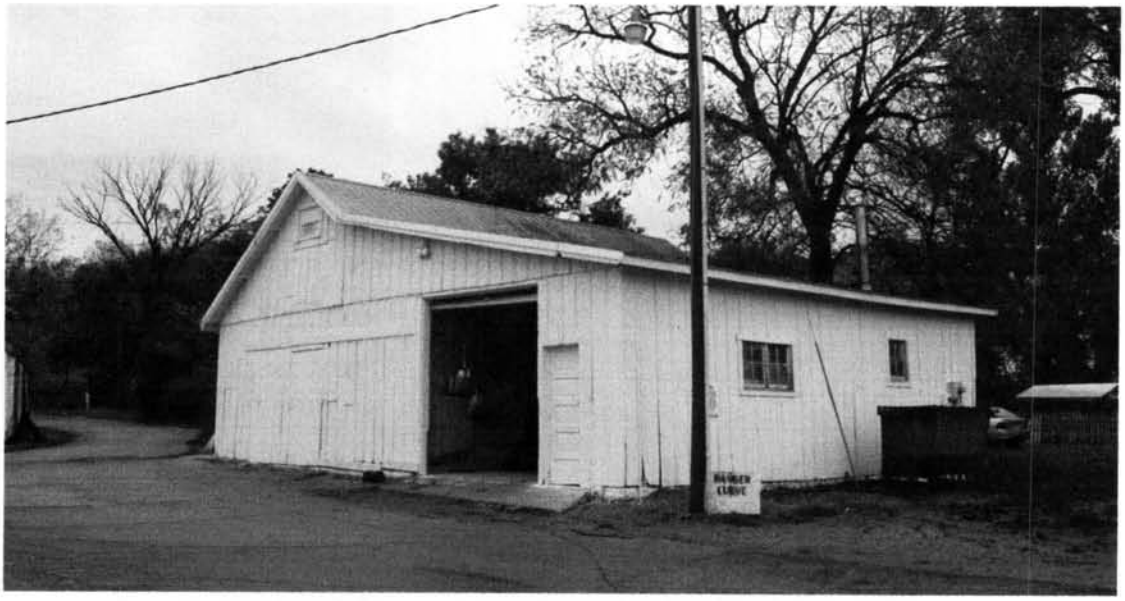

Figure 23 The carpenter shed (#5), also called the equipment shed, dates to about 1905. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 24 The horse barn (#6) is ell-shaped and pole framed and may date to the 1910-1920 era also. It has exposed rafters. This is the east wing. See Fig. 25 as well. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 25 The horse barn's (#6) location (here looking to the southeast at its north and west sides) in the center of the farmstead has become awkward, necessitating a dangerous curve and exposing drivers and pedestrians to blind spots. This position suggests it was once the western edge of farmstead, early in the twentieth century, and is an indicator of a once compact farmstead. Roswell Garst and his descendents' agricultural pursuits expanded the farmstead well beyond the horse barn by mid-century. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 26 The calving barn (#9) was constructed as a hog house around 1952, but is only partially used now.
Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008

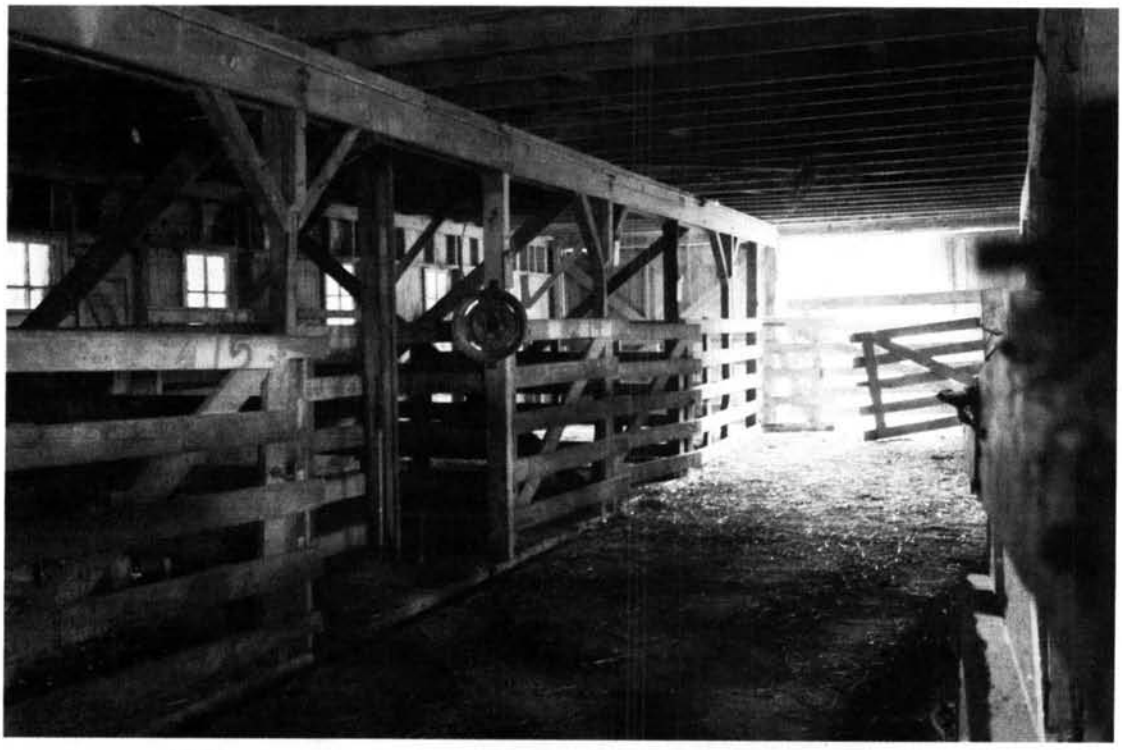

Figure 27 Interior of the calving barn (#9), looking west. ***Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008***

Figure 28 The farm lane trails off in the front yard of the small tenant house (#10), constructed c. 1940.
Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2008

Integrity

Integrity of the Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead is very good to excellent and reflects the long period of significance associated with Roswell Garst, who died in 1977. The farmhouse's exterior and interior is generally as the Garsts left it, though after Elizabeth Garst's death in 1996, the home and the nearby "Hollyhock cottage" were fully converted to an operating bed-and-breakfast hostelry—the Garst Farm Resorts—and this necessitated the addition of three new bathrooms, plus new carpet, paint, and the majority of wallpapers (Fig. 29). The front entrance wallpaper is original. The large barn is essentially unchanged since Roswell last used it, with the exception of the removal of a tile silo at the south end, and other outbuildings throughout the rest of the farm similarly display excellent historical integrity. The recent removal of the feed mill in the center of the farmstead does not affect severely the farmstead's integrity though it does open the landscape in the center of the farmstead. The mill's "Fairbank Morse" scale remains intact. Overall, all seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) are maintained at high levels. The farmstead and its major resources all sit in their original location, bordered by Coon Rapids to the north and agricultural land to the south and west. To the north, the farmstead is buffered from the highway traffic by two fishing ponds constructed during the Garsts' tenure. To the northwest of the ponds, fronting a county road, is a Garst seed corn facility, now operated by non-Garst interests. The viewshed in all directions still supports excellent integrity of setting and feeling. The property's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are intact considering the long period of significance and the many alterations and remodelings of the buildings supervised by the Garsts themselves. Currently, most of the buildings are used in conjunction with the Whiterock Resort (formerly Garst Farm Resorts) bed-and-breakfast now owned and operated by the Whiterock Conservancy. Integrity should remain protected well into the future also, due to the non-profit nature and conservation mission of the Whiterock Conservancy.

Figure 29 Entry sign to Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead in 2005, looking north. The farmstead is to the left. The view beyond the sign looks over Hwy 141 toward Coon Rapids and parkland that was once a part of Edward Garst's Section 3 farm.
Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2005

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead (Garst Farmstead) reflects a multi-faceted picture of the settlement and growth of agriculture in one location in west-central Iowa, where it served as the stage for a major development in an important component of Midwest agriculture—the advent of hybrid corn—a development that changed agriculture forever and spread to become the dominant paradigm of the corn-growing industry worldwide. The Garst Farmstead traces the trajectory of one man in particular who, raised by a successful entrepreneurial father and a talented, college educated mother, did not hesitate to think and act big, even globally, within the theater of life's universal essential—food. Roswell Garst's career path intersected with some of the more significant innovators and leaders of not only modern agriculture, but of postwar United States and the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. Through his role in the development and distribution of modern hybrid seed corn, Roswell Garst rubbed shoulders with the likes of Henry Wallace as early as the 1920s and, during one exceptional day at harvest time in 1959, the Garst Farmstead hosted Nikita Khrushchev in a chaotic event also attended by statesmen Adlai Stevenson and Henry Cabot Lodge. The day brought thousands of reporters and spectators to the farmstead, creating a media frenzy that stopped traffic and all of life's normal daily activities for thousands of Iowans from Des Moines to Coon Rapids. The efforts of this one private citizen, Roswell Garst, to create bridges between countries during the Cold War and in the shadow of the McCarthy era, remarkable as they were, also served to establish the family legacy of expansively considering "community" to be well beyond a single farm's boundaries or the city limits of a small town.

The Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead (Garst Farmstead) is of state and local significance under Criterion A because of the farm's association with significant developments and trends in agricultural history, specifically with the production and distribution of the hybrid seed corn developed by Henry A. Wallace, and under Criterion B through its association with Roswell Garst, an important innovator and expansive promoter of the new agricultural methods and science being developed in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. The Garst Farm is also significant under Criteria A and B at the national level as the place of an important event associated with the long duration of Soviet-American détente and with Roswell Garst in his self-styled role as citizen diplomat during the 1950s.

I. Setting the Stage: Early History of Land Acquisition and Town Building

Commencing in the mid-1850s, the settlement patterns of the Garst Farmstead region reflected the efforts of both the land speculators operating at the edge of the frontier and of prairie farmers hoping for more permanent residency in this west-central region of Iowa. Settlement history here serves not only to illustrate the patterns of farm land acquisition, but also the town-building impulses of a third group bent on creating new communities at the edge of the nation's frontier—the mercantile-minded who would profit by serving the needs of all varieties of settlers. Viewed through a wider lens, the region occupies the unusual position of being at the junction of two political jurisdictions—Carroll and Guthrie counties[1]—as well as two geological landforms—the aged Southern Iowa Drift Plain and the more recent Des Moines Lobe, last of the state's regions to experience glacial activity (Fig. 30). This area of Iowa, then, while settled during a particular era of westward settlement that ultimately closed, remained during its development stage "at the margins" where cultures, motives, goals, and possibilities mixed and fermented. It was and is a crossroads location and this helped set the stage for many of the important events that followed.

[1] Siting at the juncture of two political jurisdictions carries with it the potential for being ignored by both, not to mention the increased complexity of legal relationships when town limits spill over county lines.

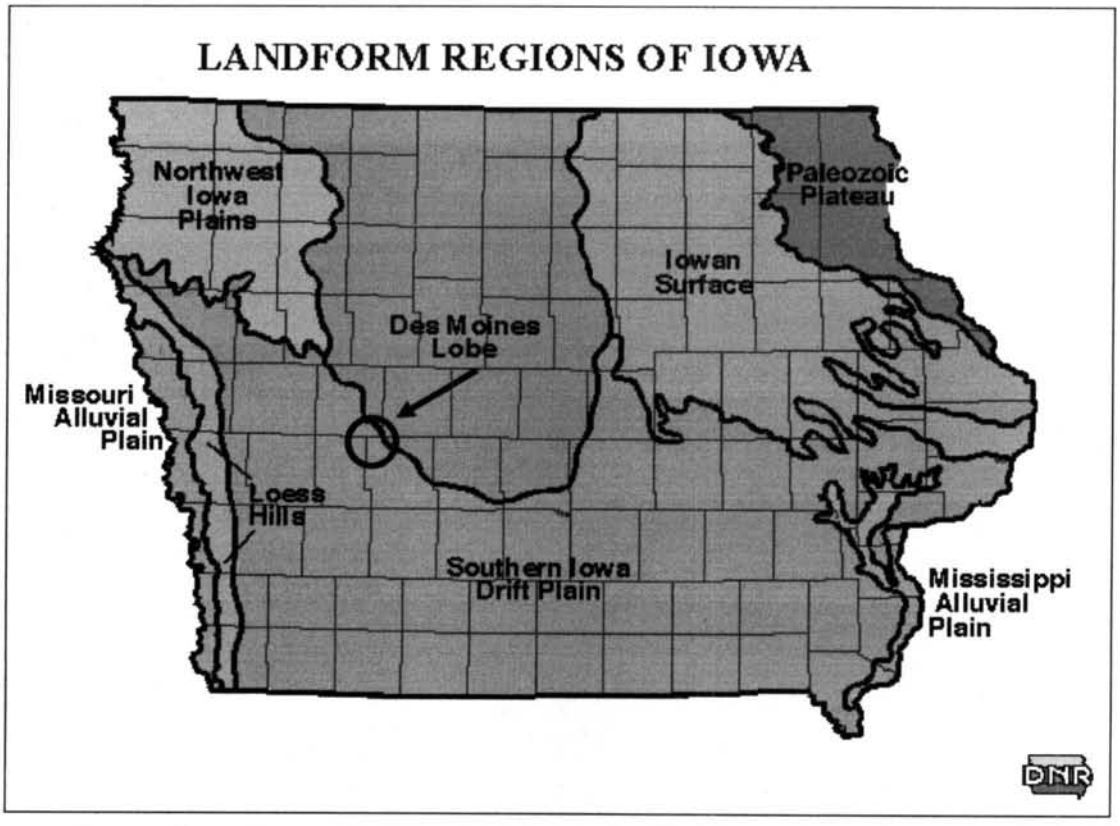

Figure 30 Landforms of Iowa, with the general location of the Garst Farmstead marked.

Courtesy Iowa Department of Natural Resources

By the time settlers reached west-central Iowa, often as not they were cash poor but well armed with military land warrants that had purchasing power. Federal military warrants, first issued following the Revolutionary War, were handed out in payment and appreciation for soldiers' service. Issued in amounts of 10, 20, or 80-plus acres, depending on the rank and details of a soldier's service, warrants could be used as currency in government land offices to purchase land. Military warrants at first could only be used to acquire land in designated unsettled areas of the nation, but after the War of 1812, all public lands were made available for entry using warrants. Warrant holders, including the heirs of deceased soldiers, could travel to the public lands and choose their acreage, but many had no such desire to head west. Congressional action in 1847 that permitted the assignment of warrants to others inadvertently created a market for the sale of warrants that fluctuated depending on speculators' demand for them.[2] In this initial market of assignable warrants, for example, a 160-acre warrant was worth $200 at the land office, but only $125 on the market.[3] Until 1860, when most of the government's land warrants had been issued and used (or, the land had been "located" and "entered" on the land office records), public land acquisition by warrant exceeded cash sales, causing some officials to fret over the potential for fraud and loss of government revenue.[4]

[2] Roscoe L. Lokken, *Iowa Public Land Disposal* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1942), 135-137.
[3] Ibid., 137.
[4] Ibid.

Many of the land warrants redeemed for Iowa prairie were issued to veterans and heirs of the War of 1812 (1812-1815) and the Mexican War (1846-1848). Warrants had claimed 257,600 Iowa acres by 1848 but this grew to sixty-three million acres by 1879, leading one historian to muse that "it was inevitable that Iowa, the goal of the great migrations of the mid-century, should be subject to a large number of land warrant locations."[5] Indeed, Iowa led the 19 states subject to Mexican War warrants—many of them Midwestern states—in the amount of acreage claimed this way. Further, during the midcentury decades when most of Iowa's land was sold (primarily before 1860), the *largest* land sales consistently used military warrants rather than cash for the transaction. The average size of these large, speculative purchases was 9860 acres, but one transaction amounted to a quarter of a million acres.[6]

Iowa was in the midst of this "speculation fever" in the 1850s, when the western Iowa land offices opened, and the Garst Farmstead was definitely part of it.[7] It is unclear how many times the future Garst farm in Section 3 of Township 81 North, Range 33 West changed hands between speculators before a farmer began to improve it. The first owner in 1859 was surely a speculator, however, and, two decades later, when Roswell Garst's uncle Julius bought the land in 1880—not long before the arrival of the railroad—it was probably for speculative purposes as well. Certainly, when Julius Garst's brother, Edward, the most successful merchant in Coon Rapids, bought the farmland from Julius in 1889, Edward's goal was speculation, though perhaps not in the same vein as the earlier nonresident speculators. The era of realistically hoping for dramatic leaps in land values had passed and a stable investment for his mercantile profits likely concerned Edward more. He also had four children, including three sons, and they lived in the middle of some of the most fertile agricultural land in the country. One of his children just might become a farmer.[8]

The land under the oldest, core portion of the Garst farmstead [9] left the government rolls in 1859 by way of a military warrant issued to a Georgian militia private, William Burgammy, who had fought in the War of 1812. Burgammy assigned (sold) his rights to 80 acres of government land to John Montgomery and Montgomery, in turn, sold the warrant to Byron Rice. It was Rice, or his agent, who actually trekked out to Guthrie County to "locate" an 80-acre parcel and "enter" it on the government's land office records by turning in his warrant in 1859.[10] Adjacent parcels that eventually held the expanded Garst farmstead and much of the grazing and crop land south and west of it, likewise left the government rolls via military warrants issued for War of 1812 service, including one to a Pennsylvania private, William Tolen, and one issued to Elizabeth Rudolph, the widow of another Pennsylvania private, Samuel Rudolph. The same man, Eliphalet W. Wood, purchased both Tolen's and Rudolph's warrants, each worth 120 acres, and traveled (or sent an agent) to Iowa to locate the land he wanted.[11] Wood selected two land parcels next to each other, just south of Rice's 80 acres and about a mile south of the nascent village of Coon Rapids.

Coon Rapids, Outpost Trading Village to Small Town, 1854-1890s

The tiny hamlet of a community that Mr. Wood or Mr. Rice might have encountered in 1859 along a branch of the Raccoon River could hardly have been called a real town. It sat along the river bank, just a few cabins and small shops clustered around a mill. But the river flowing diagonally through this southeast corner of Carroll County and into Guthrie County had a good fall of water for powering the mill, and this industry promised hope for future population growth. In any nascent agricultural region, operating saw and grist mills could attract settlers and encourage them to locate nearby. Saw mills

[5] Ibid., 139.
[6] Ibid., 140-141. After 1862, homesteading became a more straightforward means for a farmer to acquire land in Iowa, which still remained available in the northwest corner of the state.
[7] Ibid., 142.
[8] The years of Julius Garst's acquisition of the land and the later transfer to Edward Garst are recorded in the property's abstract.
[9] The core farmstead sits in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 3.
[10] Burgammy's warrant was issued as Warrant No. 2826 and is available for viewing online at *http://www.glorecords.blm.gov*.
[11] Warrant Nos. 44371 and 52752, respectively, are also available at *http://www.glorecords.blm.gov*.

provided the lumber for building their farmsteads and grist mills ground their grain harvests. Proximity to a grist mill avoided long, uncomfortable, and often dangerous wagon hauls over roadless prairies during the winter months. A mill could be the heartbeat of a new village, enhancing its chances for growth and survival.[12] But despite its mill, the earliest Coon Rapids settlement would struggle for decades, its survival not assured until the arrival of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad in 1882, when life in town changed dramatically.

The roots of the Coon Rapids settlement along the banks of the Raccoon grew as early as 1854, just a year after the first white settler moved into the territory, some 18 miles to the north. The locale was attractive because of its timber for log cabins, fencing, and fuel, and because the river had a rapid fall of water, both features of the ridge-and-valley topography of the area. This rugged terrain was created eons before by glacial sheets that stopped here and then began to melt and back up, dropping their load of scoured gravel, sand, and cobbles as they receded. The Coon Rapids townsite sat near the terminal moraine of the Des Moines Lobe's "Bemis advance," the deepest penetration of glaciers into the state, which stopped just north of today's state capital, Des Moines.[13] Land to the southwest of the townsite was older geologically with well-developed drainage networks and wide rolling hills that supported diverse prairie grasses and promised fertile farming. Land to the northeast of the townsite grew more poorly drained and became dotted with marshes and wetlands. Long after it was tamed with proper fenced farms, the landscape around Coon Rapids still reflected the diversity of being at the margins of two landforms. The local newspaper publisher's flattering description of his home in 1892 makes it clear the landscape was a major agent in this location's nineteenth-century development:

> To the north and east the plain gradually rises, a nice growth of timber extending as far around toward the west as the eye can reach. To the west there is a long stretch of rolling prairie, dotted with excellent farms, and to the south the picturesqueness of imposing hills, devoted to cattle range, meet the eye. As you stand on one of these promontories, either to the south or east, and look down into the valley below, you see a little city of tall church spires, large grain elevators and commodious store rooms, presenting a most delightful site, and this is Coon Rapids.[14]

This bucolic sounding town was not attained without starts and stops. Early on, the settlement was just a frontier outpost, a trading spot and a crude mill, with few residents other than the miller and a few peddlers who sold goods hauled from hundreds of miles away. When Carroll County was organized in 1856, the county's 250 or so residents—surely including more than a few land speculators—quickly organized a commission to locate the first county seat.[15] They chose a location a few miles northwest of the mill that—perhaps not surprisingly—was already owned by a land company. This "real estate firm of Lease & Harsh of Des Moines" promptly donated the townsite for Carrollton (nonextant), its owners thereby enjoying the increased land values that county seat status brought.[16] While the aftermath of the Panic of 1857 may have slowed real population growth between 1856 and 1860, the available land continued to be claimed through land warrants, much of it by speculators if the Garst family land records are any indication.

The Garst story in the Coon Rapids area begins with a distant relative, Crockett Ribble, who arrived in the early 1860s and was probably the catalyst for Edward Garst's move to the Coon Rapids settlement in 1868. Ribble purchased the crude mill and succeeded in being elected County Treasurer. While in office, the county sold bonds to finance thousands of dollars

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[12] The role of a mill in increasing chances of town survival is discussed in Jan R. Olive [Nash] Full, "Hinterland or Heartland: The Survival of Small-town Lake Mills, Iowa, 1850-1950" (unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 2006), 69-70.

[13] For a discussion and maps of the Des Moines Lobe and the Bemis advance, see Jean C. Prior, *Landforms of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1991). The Des Moines Lobe was an advance of the Wisconsinan glacial expansion, which took place 10,500 to 30,000 years ago. Prior, *Landforms of Iowa*, 20.

[14] S. D. Henry, "Coon Rapids, Carroll County, Iowa: Sketch of Town and Country" (typed transcription of an article written in the *Coon Rapids Enterprise*, January 1, 1892), 7-8. [Located in the Coon Rapids Public Library.]

[15] Paul McClean, *History of Carroll County* (Chicago: St. Clark Publishing Company, 1912), 29.

[16] Ibid.

worth of improvements to Ribble's mill, improving both its lumber and flour production (Fig. 31). The new mill brought more efficient industry to the riverbank townsite, promised better service to the area's growing numbers of farm families, and certainly convinced more merchants to set up shop in the town now called Coon Rapids. A bright, if perhaps quiet, future looked possible.

Ohio born, Edward Garst was the son of a Boone, Iowa physician-turned-merchant, Michael Garst, and his wife, Maria Garst. When the elder Garsts' Boone store failed, Edward collected the remaining inventory and joined Ribble in Coon Rapids, setting up a small general merchandise shop. The years spent along the Raccoon River before the railroad's arrival were uncertain ones, but Edward clearly prospered as a merchant. According to one historian, "a number of early settlers around Coon Rapids gave up, often coming into Edward's store where they bought their supplies, to announce that they were moving back to Ohio or Indiana. Edward would frequently either buy the land from them for cash, or offer to outfit the family with new clothes, trunks, and suitcases...taking in return their title to the farm and assuming the debts they owed." By the time the Milwaukee railroad arrived in 1882, Edward Garst owned about 10,000 acres of land around Coon Rapids.[17]

The Milwaukee's construction about a half mile to the south of Coon Rapids boosted the village, with its 59 inhabitants, into a bit of a boom town. The railroad had avoided intersecting the village itself, probably because the land was too rugged for its tracks, but also because it was already privately owned and not a part of the railroad company's land grant. Either way, the railroad's course to the south so worried the village residents that they shifted their reliance and hopes for the town's engine of growth from the mill and its water power, to the railroad and its steam power. Residents literally lifted their buildings off their foundation stones and moved the structures nearer the railroad's path.[18] The railroad company was quite happy to sell them newly platted town lots through its real estate arm, the Western Town Lot Company. A main street town lot, where Edward Garst moved his store, cost a modest $75, though that amount may have seemed a fortune for less successful shop owners.[19] Citizens of the new town quickly incorporated the same year, and population began to climb.[20] Three years later, in 1885, the 59 "old settlers" of the mill town had been joined by hundreds of new residents and the new town's population reached 729. Edward Garst, joined by his brother Warren—a future governor of Iowa—constructed "the first brick building in this part of the country" (Fig. 32).[21] With the town moved and growing, and the railroad linking it to outside markets, Edward Garst's entrepreneurial instincts and growing wealth from commerce and land holdings ensured that his daughter and sons' futures were bright, indeed.[22] One son, Roswell Garst, clearly picked up the father's mantle and continued to expand the family's considerable impact on the life and pace of his home town, and well beyond.

[17] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 13-14. Ten thousand acres was Roswell Garst's estimate of father's land holdings at the time.
[18] Henry, "Coon Rapids, Carroll County, Iowa: Sketch of Town and Country," 10; also *Recollections of a Half Century: The Garst Store, 1869-1919* (n.pub., c. 1919), 22. [Located in the Coon Rapids Public Library.]
[19] McClean, *History of Carroll County*, 127.
[20] The town incorporated on September 29, 1882, according to Carroll County Recorder records.
[21] *Recollections of a Half Century*, 22.
[22] The fortune amassed during Edward Garst's lifetime does not play an obvious role during his son Roswell's early adult years when the latter was newly married and, by all accounts, struggled to provide for his family and launch a successful career as a farmer and hybrid corn salesman.

Figure 31 "View of Mill Coon Rapids, IA" probably late in the nineteenth century. By 1906, the mill and its adjacent dam were operated by G.S. Mitchell & Son according to an advertisement in the *Carroll County Atlas.* ***Reproduced by Tallgrass Historians L.C., in 2000, from a framed print hanging in the public lobby of the Coon Rapids City Hall and Public Library. The photograph was donated to the City by Adelaide Carpenter in memory of her husband, Dale Carpenter, and Ethel Brutsche Riis.***

Figure 32 The Garst Store's corner brick building was constructed in 1884 and the store later expanded into the second building next door. ***Collection of John J. Schumacher; reproduced in 2000 with permission by Tallgrass Historians L.C.***

II. The Agricultural Revolution: Roswell Garst's Role in the Development of Hybrid Seed Corn

Roswell Garst (1898-1977) was born at the close of the nineteenth century, to a family who had clearly succeeded at capitalism on the fertile prairies of western Iowa. By the time of his death 79 years later, Garst would witness, indeed prod and push forward, a revolution in American agriculture. Pied piper to this revolution, Garst led conservative, disbelieving, and reluctant American farmers away from traditional, horse powered, family farming to modern corporate agri-business, with all its implications. During his long career, Garst befriended giants of twentieth-century science and politics, whose ideas he grasped with gusto and converted to innovative new methods for improving farmers' yield and output. Roswell Garst was neither scientist nor politician, but the driving salesman who disseminated the ideas in practical ways the American farmer could adopt. Garst worked in the margins where met, mingled, and sometimes clashed both old and new theories, traditional farming methods and modern technologies, and the nineteenth and twentieth century eras of agriculture. His primary significance in the history of American agriculture derives from championing the hybrid corn developed by Henry A. Wallace, but Garst also conceived of other innovations that changed the farm in lasting ways. His efforts to use the mountains of corncobs annually created by his corn plant in Coon Rapids, for example, led to a new cellulose-based program of cattle feeding and resulted in the movement of cattle herds back to the Midwest from the grasslands of the Great Plains. Also, Garst's conviction that the old-fashioned method of crop rotation limited the output of farmers' fields boosted the acceptance of the use of nitrogen fertilizer and other farm chemicals—chemicals that substituted for more traditional means of replenishing nutrients and keeping the soil healthy. Indeed, each of Garst's major interests was accompanied by multiple side forays into related but, perhaps, less successful or less widely-adopted experiments in farm improvements. When Garst died in 1977, the editor of the local newspaper suggested that "an era had ended."[23] Indeed, it had for the town of Coon Rapids, but writing just a few years later, Garst's biographer wisely realized "Roswell's impact is still fresh."[24] Now, more than 30 years following his death, understanding Roswell Garst's impact on world agriculture may be evolving still, but his participation in the revolution is unmistakably clear.

Roswell Garst's Early Days

Edward Garst (1843-1923) married Roswell's mother, Bertha Goodwin, and brought her to Coon Rapids in 1889.[25] English born, Illinois-farm raised, and college educated,[26]Bertha Goodwin Garst (1855-1922) was 12 years younger than her husband. Between 1891 and 1898, the couple had four children, Goodwin, Jonathan, Dorothy, and Roswell, the last of whom was born when his mother was 43 and his father 55. According to Roswell's biographer, to the boy growing up in the small west-central Iowa town, Roswell's successful "father was a grandfatherly figure, a man of leisurely habits, given to aphoristic lectures."[27] Roswell acquired business knowledge and Iowa land values from his father and respect for education and literature from his mother. Roswell learned to listen and learn from those around him with authority and expertise, whether it was his father or the long-time town newspaper publisher, S.D. Henry.[28] Roswell's ability to receive the wisdom of others and use it for his own purposes would serve him well as an adult.

During the summer of 1916, when Roswell was still a teenager, he joined his older brother Jonathan on Apple Farm, his father's 200-acre holding just south of Coon Rapids. There the brothers practiced, in their words, "old-time Americana" farming, using implements powered by horses and following seasonal planting rotations and harvesting practices that Thomas

[23] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 286.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 14.
[26] Bertha was among the first women to graduate from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, while Edward was a graduate of the University of Michigan. Ibid., 16, 11.
[27] Ibid., 21.
[28] Ibid., 22-23.

Jefferson would have found familiar.[29] By the fall, Roswell was in Ames, a new student at the land grant institution, Iowa State College, though his tenure there was brief and he never graduated. Over his long career in agriculture, Roswell would be both an admirer of the professors and scientists at that institution, and a vocal critic when he thought the institution moved too slowly or failed to recognize the importance of his message.

Between 1916 and 1921, when he returned to Apple Farm (later the Garst Farm or Home Farm), Roswell tried semesters at other schools, briefly returned to Iowa State, and, upon Jonathan's return from military service in France, joined his brother in 1919 in Canada to farm. But the postwar bubble of inflated agricultural prices collapsed in 1921, as the harvest from other war-torn countries returned to world markets, and Roswell went home to become a dairyman with a small herd on the Home Farm. "He lived alone on the farm, cooked for himself after a fashion, and consumed prodigious amounts of milk and butter."[30] He also met Elizabeth Henak (1896-1996), a school teacher from Eastern Iowa who was teaching summer school students in the nearby community of Harlan. Henak had a degree from the State University of Iowa (now University of Iowa) and had been a teacher for two years. It was during the "courtship of Elizabeth" that indications of Roswell's persistence and salesmanship surfaced.[31] "Roswell travelled to Cedar Falls [where Elizabeth had returned] as often as he could, quoted poetry, sang the ballads of his favorite songwriter Jerome Kern, and did a lot of fast talking," and succeeded in marrying Elizabeth in 1922.[32]

The farmhouse on the Home Farm, to which Roswell and Elizabeth returned in 1922, had been freshly painted and papered, but was still a "bachelor's house."[33] The house and its improvements became Elizabeth's realm, while Roswell hired a farm hand, Henry Moore, and began to increase his Holstein dairy herd, doubling its size.[34] The years spent on the Home Farm between 1922 and 1926 were filled with important family events, both joyful and sad. Roswell's parents died, Bertha in 1922 and Edward in 1923. His uncle, Warren Garst, who had been Edward's partner in the Garst Store and then governor of Iowa, died in 1924 in Des Moines. But Roswell and Elizabeth's children, Jane and Stephen, also arrived in 1922 and 1924, respectively. Their third child, David, was born 2 years after Stephen, about the time Roswell's drive for new challenges again manifested itself.[35] Intrigued by prospects for selling real estate in Des Moines' growing suburbs during the heady times just before the stock market crash and Great Depression, Roswell moved the family of five to the capital city in 1926, where they would stay until the Depression drove them back to the countryside five years later.[36]

Elizabeth Garst's life in Des Moines, between 1926 and 1931, represented "among the most satisfying [years] of her life," according to her husband's biographer, Harold Lee.[37] Social connections were made with the help of Warren Garst's daughter, Louise, and her husband, architect Leland "Micko" McBroom.[38] It was through the McBrooms' circle that Roswell Garst met Henry Agard Wallace. These two men's careers would become closely linked for the next decade, with profound implications for agriculture.[39]

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[29] Ibid., 24.
[30] Ibid., 27.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 28.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 28-29, 110.
[36] Ibid., 30.
[37] Harold Lee is married to Antonia "Tosh" Garst Lee, fourth of Roswell and Elizabeth's five children.
[38] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 31; also see Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects*, 113-114.
[39] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 31.

The Wallace Connection and Hybrid Seed Corn

The theoretical world of American agriculture was a ferment of progressive ideas in the 1920s, even if practical farming was not. And by that time, Henry A. Wallace and his family had been in the thick of it literally for generations. Wallace's grandfather, "Uncle Henry" Wallace (1836 -1916) was a preacher-journalist who around 1883 founded the *Iowa Homestead*, "a farming newspaper that became a forum for his popular editorials on modern farming methods, morality, and politics."[40] Uncle Henry Wallace championed agrarian reform in the 1880s, a time of depressed farm prices,[41] and "helped turn the agricultural college at Ames into a respected scholarly institution."[42] His son Henry C. Wallace (Henry A.'s father) taught at the land grant college in Ames, now Iowa State University, and in 1898 became editor of the newly named *Wallaces' Farmer*, a competitor and then successor to the *Iowa Homestead*.[43] Henry C. Wallace died in Washington, D.C., in 1924 while serving as Secretary of Agriculture under President Harding.[44]

The two elder Wallaces brought Perry G. Holden to Iowa in 1902. "Part teacher, part salesman, part businessman—and all showman—Holden was known as the Corn Professor, the Evangelist of Corn, and the nation's leading exponent of lovely looking Reid yellow dent" corn, winner of the blue ribbon at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.[45] Up to this point, the attractiveness of corn—its uniformity of development, length, and girth—were deemed to produce the best chances for the succeeding year's crop. Farmers selected and saved the ears from their fields based on these aesthetics. Elaborate "corn shows" were held and ears of corn were judged on appearance. In 1904, a precocious 15-year-old Henry Agard Wallace challenged and proved wrong the Corn Professor's position regarding the merits of the most attractive ears of corn. "Holden continued to be a celebrity in Iowa, and corn shows remained popular for years. But the beginning of their decline was there...[and] Henry A. Wallace would become the most outspoken opponent of corn shows in the Midwest, relentlessly mocking the pseudo-science on which they were based."[46]

After graduating at the top of his class at the agriculture college in Ames in 1910, Wallace joined his father at *Wallaces' Farmer*.[47] Married in 1914, Henry A. and Ilo tried dairy farming but were disastrously unsuccessful due to bovine disease, and eventually Henry A. returned his focus full-time to corn growing in the early 1920s.[48] Two decades had passed since he challenged P.G. Holden, but Wallace had been watching the scientific experiments with corn at various academic institutions and had never given up hybridization experiments with small corn plots, where he controlled and restricted the traditional "open pollination" of his corn by covering or cutting the tassels in certain rows.[49] Hybridization involves the crossbreeding of inbred strains of a plant to produce varieties with more desirable characteristics. While most plants may be subject to hybridization, corn is particularly so. The only way to avoid random, open pollination of corn, where the pollen released from one stalk's tassel floats down to its own silk below (to be inbred) or is blown on the wind to the silk of its neighbors (crossbreeding) is by controlling the mature tassels' pollination or by planting each variety in well-separated plots of ground. Efforts to improve corn in North America, by manipulating its pollination, are wide-spread both in time and place, and range from the New World maize cultures of Central and South America to the East coast experiments of botanists such as George Harrison Shull of New York, and Edward East and Donald Jones of Connecticut.[50]

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[40] John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 4.
[41] Ibid., 10.
[42] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 31.
[43] Ibid., 32; also Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 18.
[44] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 65. Son, Henry A. Wallace would serve later in a similar capacity, as well under other federal appointments.
[45] Ibid., 27.
[46] Ibid., 29.
[47] Ibid., 33.
[48] Ibid., 40-41, 66.
[49] Ibid., 67-68.
[50] Ibid., 67; Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 33; Betty Fussell, *The Story of Corn* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 59-67.

According to Henry Wallace's biographers, by 1919 the botanists' experiments were producing corn with desirable qualities but had failed to produce hybrid corn with anything but disappointing vigor. "Jones had carried inbreeding and crossbreeding one vital step further. He had inbred a line of Leaming corn, a popular midwestern variety, and produced a hybrid with good results. He also inbred a variety called Burr and produced another hybrid. Then he crossed the two hybrids. The resulting grandchild of this 'double cross' was a hybrid of splendid vigor." Henry Wallace, upon reading a paper by Jones about his double-crossed hybrid "recognized at once the vast implications of Jones's experiment. With the double cross it would be possible to maintain pure lines [and therefore the sought after characteristics of the first cross] and at the same time produce enough seed to make hybridization commercially feasible."

In 1923, Wallace entered his own variety of a cross between Reid's yellow dent and "certain Mexican varieties" in the annual Iowa Yield Test and it did well."[51] In 1924, Copper Cross won a gold medal, "demolishing its competition."[52] "Wallace grew only 15 bushels of Copper Cross seed but it was apparently the first hybrid developed from inbreds to be produced and sold in the Corn Belt."[53] As later historians would conclude, "the age of hybrid corn had arrived; the revolution had begun."[54]

Origins of Garst and Thomas Seed Company

Uncle Henry Wallace claimed it took seven years for farmers to accept a new idea.[55] Roswell Garst insisted farmers had to see it, and then see it, and see it again before they would change their ways. Henry A. Wallace knew that hybrid corn could and would bring about a seismic shift in agriculture, but also that it would take innovative marketing methods to do it. To that end, in early 1926, just as Roswell and Elizabeth Garst were moving to Des Moines and entering the social circles where they would cross paths with Henry and Ilo Wallace, the latter man organized the Hi-Bred Corn Company.[56] In 1927, and again in 1928 and 1929, Wallace gave or sold (sources differ[57]) a bushel of his limited hybrid seed corn supply to Garst, who would take it back to his tenant on the Home Farm, or to his friend, Charlie Rippey, to plant. Garst family lore claims that while Elizabeth thrived in the culture and social circles of urban Des Moines, Roswell could not keep himself from driving the 65 miles back to the farm on weekends.[58] By the time Garst harvested his third small crop in the fall of 1929, the yields were substantially higher than the older open-pollinated corn he or his friend, Charlie, grew along side the hybrid variety. Garst was sold on hybrid corn and was determined others would be too.

Described as a "gregarious young man from Coon Rapids," Roswell Garst was the "most colorful member of the fledgling team" that Wallace was assembling for his Hi-Bred Seed Company.[59] In 1930, after three years of privately testing the seed, Garst proposed a franchise-type deal to Wallace rather than a traditional employer-salesman arrangement. If Wallace would give him the "foundation stock" to produce greater quantities of hybrid seed, Garst would then return a royalty based on the volume of sales. While Wallace initially wanted a flat 25%, Garst negotiated a return that decreased inversely with the increase in sales, up to 50,000 bushels.[60] Amused and skeptical at the brashness of this offer, Wallace predicted they would not see 50,000 bushels sold in either's lifetime. In fact, it took only 8 years to realize *twice* that amount.[61] Over the next few years, Roswell devised his plan for selling the expensive new hybrid to skeptical farmers accustomed to paying nothing at all

[51] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 34.
[52] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 71.
[53] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 35.
[54] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 34; Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 71
[55] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 68-69.
[56] The company is now known as Pioneer Hi-Bred. Ibid., 82.
[57] Ibid., 90; Roswell Garst, *40 Exciting Years: 1930-1970* (Coon Rapids: The Garst & Thomas Hybrid Corn Company, 1970), 1.
[58] Elizabeth "Liz" Garst, "The Garst Family, Hybrid Corn, and the Khrushchev Visit" (unpubl. t.s., no date, but c. 2000), 2.
[59] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 82, 90.
[60] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 40.
[61] Ibid.; Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 90-91.

for their seed corn, a plan some called a "brilliant method of marketing."[62] Garst's franchise arrangement with Wallace, as well as the marketing structure he then evolved, set the pattern for the industry, a pattern still in use today.[63]

During the growing season of 1930 the prospects of selling hybrid seed to farmers in a deepening economic depression seemed less than bright, but Garst's enthusiasm and optimism, as well as Elizabeth's support and patience, prevailed. Roswell planted his first 15 acres of foundation stock on the Home Farm that spring. Elizabeth raised the money to pay for the detasselers' labor by holding a camp for Des Moines children on the farm that summer, a reflection of her teaching interests as well as the ability to rally her personal skills and experience for the benefit of the family enterprise. In the fall, 300 bushels of seed corn were harvested, bagged, and stored on the big east side porch that had been added to the Home Farm house. Placed thus within the domestic realm of the Home Farm, it fell on Elizabeth to caretake the precious resource that was the family's future and protect it from both playful children and, perhaps more importantly, the various critters of the countryside who would have stolen it away one kernel at a time over the cold months.[64]

During that first winter of 1930-31, "Roswell loaded 20 bushels at a time into the back of his Buick and drove until he sold them. He worked the area fifteen miles north to Glidden, turned west on Highway 30 [primarily along the old Lincoln highway route] through Carroll and then to Denison, [and back through] Manning, and Manilla. In subsequent journeys he drove north into the rich [and recently drained] farmlands of north-central Iowa to Pocahontas, Humboldt, and Webster counties. It was hard going—usually he sold 1 or 2 bushels at a time, perhaps 5 if he was lucky, often none at all."[65] Elizabeth held down the fort at the Home Farm that winter, with three small children underfoot and a dairy herd under her supervision. During the next growing season in 1931, Roswell and Elizabeth joined forces with another Coon Rapids couple, Charley and Bertha Thomas, to form the Garst and Thomas Seed Company in Coon Rapids. Eventually the seed handling activities would be moved away from the Home Farm, but before that happened, in 1932, Roswell and Elizabeth sold the dairy herd and converted the large barn to sorting and storing that year's hybrid seed crop, reflecting the growth in the harvest.[66]

Stories abound of Roswell's sales technique with Iowa farmers in these early years. While the details vary depending on the speaker, the gist of his activities remains the same. The technique was to figure out which farmers in a new region were the best and most progressive, often by stopping by the local bank and talking with the banker.[67] Roswell would then approach those farmers and offer enough seed to plant half the farmer's field along side his regular, open-pollinated corn. At harvest time, Garst would receive half of the increased yield produced by the hybrid over the regular corn. In other words, if the open-pollinated seed produced 25 bushels an acre and the hybrid 45, then Roswell would get 10 bushels.[68] Occasionally it would take several seasons to convince farmers in an area that the dramatically increased yields were not flukes of nature, but reliable. Once convinced, that farmer would sell both the idea and the corn to his neighbors and the region would be converted to hybrids. In 1956, then 58-year old "Bob" Garst, as he was informally known, told one of his stories to a writer that illustrates both Garst's innovative brashness for selling to his contemporaries and his folksy story telling abilities:

> When the time arrived to start selling seed for next year's planting, Garst took along an inexperienced salesman. They approached the farmhouse of a prospective customer before it was light. "We can't stop here," protested the new man. "There isn't even a light on." "Drive up anyway," said Garst, "and we'll get them up." Garst pounded on the front door of the house. Finally, the farmer came to the window. "Who is it?" "It's Bob Garst and I have something important to tell you." The farmer hurried downstairs to open the door; they were ushered into the living room while the farmer's wife put

[62] Ibid., 90.
[63] Garst, "The Garst Family, Hybrid Corn, and the Khrushchev Visit," 3.
[64] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 40.
[65] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 41.
[66] Ibid., 43.
[67] *Garst & Thomas Hybrid Corn Company*, (commemorative publication [50th anniversary], 1980), 3; Garst, "The Garst Family, Hybrid Corn, and the Khrushchev Visit," 3.
[68] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 91.

on a pot of coffee. "Now, what is it?" asked the farmer. "Why, Orville," began Garst, "we're practically out of corn this year and I wanted to get your order before it's all gone." "Well, if that's the case, Bob," Orville replied, "maybe you'd better hold eleven bushels for me." And so the season started.[69]

As explained in a 1970 company brochure published to commemorate 40 years of Garst and Thomas Seed Company history, "in the 1930s, all corn planters were 2-row planters and almost all were 'horse drawn' with a team. Our best method of promoting sales was to divide a bushel of Pioneer hybrid seed corn into 7 samples that weighted 8 pounds each. We would give a sample to any farmer if he would put the Pioneer hybrid seed in one box of the planter—leave his own corn in the other box. When he turned around at the ends of the field, he would have two rows of Pioneer and two rows of his own, alternatively across several acres. The Pioneer was almost sure to outyield his own seed by 35% or 40% and equally sure to stand up better—and be easier to harvest."[70]

The arrival of hybrid corn brought major shifts in the traditional way of harvesting. Old fashioned, open-pollinated corn grew to irregular heights with ears at different spots along the stalk. Open-pollinated corn often blew over or down in the wind, which could be fierce in the high open fields of the Corn Belt and Great Plains states. Both characteristics meant the old corn could not be mechanically harvested but required hand picking each season by farmers who walked down rows plucking off ears by hand and tossing them over their shoulder into horse-drawn wagons with a high bang board on the far side of the wagon bed. Hybrid corn, however, was bred to have consistent favorable characteristics, like sturdier stalks and stronger roots to withstand the wind, and ears uniformly growing in the same location on each stalk. This uniformity of plant enabled mechanical harvesting and brought about a sea change in agriculture that benefited implement and tractor manufacturers like John Deere Company.

By the end of the 1930s, the Garst and Thomas Seed Company was producing annually over 100,000 bushels of Pioneer hybrid seed corn, sold by nearly 900 farmer salesmen.[71] Following a bumper crop in 1937, Roswell expanded sales beyond western Iowa, into Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado.[72] Because of drought and lack of irrigation, farmers in these states were growing virtually no hybrid corn before this time, making Garst and his company "pioneers" of the industry in those states.[73] Nationwide, according to a Garst and Thomas publication, between 1930 and 1945 corn production went from practically no hybrid seed used to almost all hybrid seed, and from horse-power and hand harvesting to nearly all mechanized harvesting. Horse numbers on the farm dropped from 30 million to fewer than 5 million, while numbers of tractors climbed in the reverse order.[74] Further, what took 30 minutes of labor in 1930 to raise and harvest a bushel of corn took 2 minutes by 1970. If the development of hybrid seed corn brought about a revolution that would forever change agriculture,[75] then Roswell Garst was that revolution's foot soldier, and his personal good fortune in crossing paths with Henry A. Wallace in Des Moines in the 1920s was a "landmark" event in the history of agriculture.[76]

Clearly by the time Roswell Garst and the Garst and Thomas Seed Company celebrated their 40th anniversary in business, Garst already understood the implications of the statistics he helped create. In 1930, when Garst embarked on his crusade with missionary zeal to spread hybrid seed around the state, the Midwest, and, ultimately, the world, about one-third of the nation's population still lived on farms.[77] "We now have less than 7% of our population [there]," Garst's company brochure

[69] Curt Harnack, "Farm Messiah from Coon Rapids," *Iowan* 4 (June-July 1956): 19.
[70] Garst, *40 Exciting Years*, 5.
[71] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 78.
[72] Des Moines-based Pioneer was expanding eastward. Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 70.
[73] Garst, *40 Exciting Years*, 5.
[74] Ibid., 2.
[75] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 147.
[76] Mary Hutchinson Tone, "Coon Rapids: At the Crossroads of Change," *Iowan* 32 (Fall 1983): 32.
[77] Garst, *40 Exciting Years*, 3.

remarked.[78] This figure would drop to less than 2% by the end of the century.[79] Fewer farmers were raising vastly increased amounts of corn, using mechanized means that encouraged larger farms and corporate ownership structures able to manage the capital investment farming on such a scale required.[80] In turn, with fewer farmers on the landscape, the small town merchants that catered to and traded with farm families shrank in numbers. They and their families left for the city.[81] Roswell appears to have recognized these implications and struggled to keep his own innovative farm improvements affordable for use by smaller farmers. This struggle was evident in his activities during the 1940s.

Growing Concerns with Leveling Yields, 1940s

When corn yields leveled off after 1945 and continued flat through the mid-1950s, Roswell Garst worked to promote the use of synthetic fertilizers, which he was convinced could take the place of the traditional crop rotation system and allow farms of all sizes to grow more corn. All plants need many nutrients for growth, but one of the main ones—nitrogen—was naturally fixed (made available) by plants "through extraction from the air and soil by bacteria that live in the nodules on the roots of legumes such as alfalfa, red and sweet clover, and soybeans. Consequently, alfalfa and clover are used in rotation farming to build up nitrogen and organic matter in the soil."[82] Synthetic nitrogen and other chemical fertilizers replace the natural nitrogen in the soil, permitting crop rotation to be abandoned in favor of planting corn year after year. Garst recognized this and, together with his brother Jonathan, encouraged the federal government to release more nitrogen to farmers during World War II, when it was restricted as a bomb making component. Following the war, the brothers continued their petitioning as munitions plants were converted to civil uses. According to Roswell's biographer, "the fertilizer companies were delighted with Roswell's educational campaign....Roswell was committed to the widespread use of fertilizer whether he was a direct beneficiary of sales or not, so that the fertilizer companies had in effect a first-class volunteer."[83]

As farmers realized the value of synthetic nitrogen[84] and other fertilizers, another momentous shift in agriculture took place at midcentury, the advent of chemical farming. Garst and Thomas, in its 1970 commemorative brochure, explained it succinctly:

> [In the mid-1950s] fertilizers—especially nitrogen fertilizers—increased in availability—and decreased in price. As fertilizer use increased, more and more farmers planted continuous corn—year after year on their very best land. So the use of soil insecticides became almost mandatory. And, the soil insecticides were effective. Farmers soon discovered that fertilizer stimulated weed growth as well as crop growth. So soon the chemical manufacturers developed effective herbicides. Farmers now use hybrid seed—generous, well-balanced fertilizer, insecticides, and herbicides. And they are using less and less rotations such as the old corn, oats and clover—or corn, corn, oats and clover. With cheap nitrogen available, it is far cheaper to buy nitrogen than it is to raise it."[85]

It took a few years for the side-effects of this shift to become apparent and enter the public discourse. Despite growing concern over the impact of farm chemicals on the environment following Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962,

[78] Ibid.
[79] U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service: About Us" (obtained on March 11, 2009 at *http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinnks/extension.html*), 1.
[80] Full, "Hinterland or Heartland," 3. "Between 1949 and 1992 the average acreage of farms in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio more than doubled, after half a century during which it had hardly changed...The number of farms in the four Corn Belt states shrank from three-quarters of a million in 1949 to only one-third of a million in 1992." John Fraser Hart, *The Rural Landscape* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 281.
[81] Full, "Hinterland or Heartland," 2-3.
[82] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 100.
[83] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 143.
[84] Synthetic nitrogen is derived from natural gas. Ibid., 282.
[85] Garst, *40 Exciting Years*, 4.

"Roswell chose from the beginning of the controversy over chemical runoff from cornfields to simply ignore it. His kind of ecology was the abundant crop."[86]

A Use for the Corn Cobs

By the middle of the 1940s, Roswell Garst's constant efforts to find good new uses for the massive, annual corn cob piles created at the Garst and Thomas processing facility took an unexpected turn. Thanks to a Californian who stopped by Coon Rapids one day in 1946 and offered to buy the entire corn cob mountain produced by that year's harvest, Roswell discovered the nutrient value of corn cobs.[87] Ruminants it seemed—those animals possessed of a "rumen, or first stomach" such as cattle, sheep, and buffalo—could digest the cellulose of ground corn cobs.[88] Disbelieving, Roswell checked with the scientists at the Iowa State College in Ames and Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, who confirmed it.[89] Thereafter, Garst installed feeding lots on the Home Farm and over the next few years conducted his own experiments in different feeding formulas using corn cobs as part of the mix.[90] His tests had varying results, but in the fall of 1948, Garst & Thomas hosted its annual open house and "3,500 visitors got their first look at cob-fed cattle."[91] Cob feeding was not economical for small farmers with only hillocks of corn cobs to dispose of each year, however, and "would not take hold among small farmers."[92] Still, in his enthusiasm for the new process, Roswell thought it might be the "biggest discovery since hybrid seed corn...because celluloses are wasted all over the world—and hybrid seed corn only affects about 100 million acres."[93] Between utilizing the cobs previously considered waste, chopping some corn stalks grown by the farmer for silage, and using the now well fertilized grasslands that many Iowa farmers had, including his own south of the Home Farm, Garst proclaimed in 1954 that "any corn belt farmer can now decide whether he wants to carry twice or three times as many cattle as he has been carrying without changing the number of acres he has planted to any of his present crop..."[94] According to Garst's biographer, "this time farmers acted, and a significant shift eastward began in the distribution of cattle from the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain pastures to the feedlots of Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa." First hand experience with Roswell Garst, whether face to face, or through a national magazine article, or a Garst and Thomas publication seemed to be the factor that convinced western Corn Belt farms to adopt Garst's cellulose feeding recommendations.[95]

Roswell Garst's accomplishments in disseminating the gospel of hybrid corn, in touting the benefits of chemical farming, and in encouraging efficiency on the farm by better utilizing its existing resources, were all consistent with Garst's overarching philosophy of bettering the world and its growing population. At midcentury, Roswell could look at the bright side of "the new style of farming" he had helped to create, including its ramifications for social and economic changes.[96] The passing of the small farmer and the small town was justified by the abundance of food that would feed a growing world population. "You hate to see farming on a large scale," Roswell chided an academic in 1941. "You would love to think of farming as a way of life rather than as a commercial enterprise." Pragmatist in business and economics, Roswell could still be a romantic about the breadth of his impact. "I frequently get a dream and ride it," he confessed to that academic. His biggest dream would be achieving world peace by supplying it with abundance.[97]

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[86] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 282.
[87] Ibid., 144.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Garst, "The Garst Family, Hybrid Corn, and the Khrushchev Visit," 10.
[91] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 147.
[92] Ibid., 150.
[93] Ibid., 155.
[94] Ibid., 159.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 115.
[97] Ibid., 116.

III. Roswell Garst, Citizen Diploma, and Nikita Khrushchev, 1950s

Nikita Khrushchev's 1959 visit to the United States took place during a brief period when moderates within the Soviet Union were seeking to diffuse international tensions that were coming to a head over the issue of western powers in divided Berlin. Historian Walter LaFeber observed that Khrushchev's trip produced "few diplomatic results," and this was true in the context of subsequent events.[98] The U-2 incident in May 1960, construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis of 1963, along with the Vietnam War, exacerbated diplomatic relationships in the 1960s. Yet, in the broader context of détente, the day that Khrushchev spent on the Garst farm stands as a signal event. The entire trip was a media frenzy, but the fact that Khrushchev chose to spend a day on an Iowa farm provided Americans with an image of the Soviet leader that contrasted sharply with divisive Cold War rhetoric. Reporters captured the affable repartee Garst and Khrushchev shared throughout the day. They captured Garst's protective hospitality when he infamously threw corn silage to keep the media throng from crowding the state party. They captured Elizabeth Garst and Nina Khrushchev chatting on the front lawn, and they captured the Garst and Khrushchev families posed side-by-side in front of the farmhouse. In doing so, reporters transmitted to America glimpses of Khrushchev's essential humanness. To be sure, Khrushchev used the trip propagandistically, and the writers and journalists who accompanied Khrushchev hyperbolically informed the Soviet public that "the seeds of Soviet-American friendship have flourished in [Iowa's] fertile soil."[99] Even so, American journalist Harrison Salisbury observed more shrewdly that although Garst was "not a diplomat[,] he became a remarkable instrument of diplomacy."[100] According to Richard Lowitt and Harold Lee, 1959 marked the apogee of Garst's relationship with Khrushchev, which began in 1955 and lasted until the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stripped him of his power in 1964. Garst was a key figure in the "personal exchange of delegations [that] began a major transfer of agricultural technology" to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Marketing and the potential for business profits certainly motivated him, but, as his letters to Khrushchev reveal, Garst genuinely "hope[d] that agricultural rapprochement could play an important role in establishing a new era of coexistence."[101]

Des Moines Register editor Lauren Soth has been cited by many as the catalyst for the Soviet-American agricultural exchange efforts that began in 1955, and Roswell Garst subsequently became Iowa's chief advocate for transferring modern agricultural technology and practices to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. When Nikita Khrushchev began his ascent to power, he sought to rebuild Soviet agricultural production, which had suffered under Stalin's policies of promoting rapid industrialization and re-militarization after World War II. In a January 1955 speech before the Central Committee of the Communist Party, widely reported in U.S. newspapers, Khrushchev praised the high productivity levels of American feed-livestock agriculture and called for an eightfold increase in Soviet corn production by 1960. Soth picked up on the story and wrote an offhanded editorial "extend[ing] an invitation to any delegation Khrushchev wants to select to come to Iowa to get the lowdown on raising high quality cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens" and promising that "everything we know about corn, other feed grains, forage crops, meat animals, and the dairy and poultry industries will be available to the Russians for asking. We ask nothing in return." Soth's bravado was backed by a conviction that, "of course, the Russians wouldn't do it. And we doubt that even our own government would dare to permit an adventure in human understanding of this sort."[102] To the surprise of many, however, Khrushchev took Soth's invitation seriously. That summer, Soth traveled with a delegation of 12 Americans to the U.S.S.R. while a Soviet delegation visited Iowa. Soth's editorial won him a Pulitzer

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[98] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2002*, updated 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 213.
[99] A. Ajubei, et al., *Face to Face with America: The Story of N.S. Khrushchov's Visit to the U.S.A.* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), 299. [The spelling of the leader's name here accurately reflects the book title.]
[100] Harrison E. Salisbury, "Foreword" to Harold Lee's *Roswell Garst: A Biography* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984), ix.
[101] Richard Lowitt and Harold Lee, eds., *Letters from an American Farmer* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987), xix, 104.
[102] Lauren Soth, "If the Russians Want More Meat . . . ." *Des Moines Register*, February 10, 1955, reprinted in *Des Moines Sunday Register*, February 15, 2009.

Prize in 1956; it also set in motion an agricultural exchange program of sorts that Roswell Garst transformed into a campaign of citizen diplomacy.

Although Garst promoted Soth's proposal in Iowa and in Washington, D.C., he was not among the five Iowans who were part of the U.S. delegation, and his farm was not selected as one the Soviet delegation would visit because the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation determined that only "small family farms" would be showcased. However, chance handed him an opportunity when two members of the delegation, economist Alexander Tulupnikov and agronomist Boris Savelev, were overnight guests of his uncle and aunt, Warren and Eleanor Garst, in Jefferson, who arranged for the two men to take a quick tour of Roswell Garst's farm early the next morning. Impressed, Tulupnikov and Savelev subsequently arranged for the head of the delegation, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Matskevich, to break away from the group the following day. With only a small entourage and out of the media spotlight, Matskevich spent the better part of a day inspecting Garst's 2,600-acre farm and hybrid seed corn plant. It was the only farming operation he saw that approached the scale of Soviet collective farming operations, and Garst's open sharing of information was precisely what Soth had promised and the Soviets had come to find.[103] Matskevich invited Garst to come to Russia and wrote to Khrushchev that he believed the U.S.S.R. could in a few years match American agricultural productivity. Speaking of Khrushchev's eagerness to acquire American agricultural know-how in the 1950s, biographer William Taubman wryly noted that "at the height of the cold war, when not many Americans dared to provide it, his main American supplier turned out to be the shrewd, earthy Iowa farmer Roswell Garst, who was as interested in easing East-West war tensions as in selling hybrid corn seed."[104]

In the fall of 1955, Garst traveled extensively throughout the Soviet Union, Romania, and Hungary. He proved to be as adept at negotiating the bureaucracies of the U.S. departments of state and commerce as he was at bargaining with party leaders abroad. He and Dr. Geza Schutz, a long-time acquaintance who acted as his interpreter, cleared numerous bureaucratic hurdles before departing and even more along the way. Despite delays and inconveniences, the trip was highly successful. In each country, Garst met with agricultural experts, gave daily speeches, visited research stations, inspected collective farms and state farms, tramped through corn fields, toured tractor factories, dined sumptuously, and offered innumerable toasts to "peace through corn." He spent two days with Khrushchev, Matskevitch, and other high-level agricultural officials at Khrushchev's Yalta summer home, where he negotiated the sale of 15,000 tons of Pioneer hybrid seed corn. By the end of the trip, Garst had negotiated seed corn sales in Romania and Hungary as well. Delegates from all three countries then came to the U.S. to finalize sales in time for spring planting in 1956.[105] Garst did more than sell seed corn on that first trip. In Hungary, he "influenced the direction of their major research station and plotted the locations for thirteen regional seed corn plants." In Romania, he helped the government purchase "ten complete sets of farm machinery" and then sent his sons, David and Stephen, "to oversee the planting and harvesting of the 1956 crop." Thus began Garst's long personal associations with agricultural experts and high-level officials in the Soviet Union and several Eastern European countries–Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in addition to Romania and Hungary. While the Cold War officially got colder, Garst opened up a friendly East-West dialogue on agriculture, and he remained a major interlocutor until his death in 1977. The Soviet Union and Eastern European countries quickly expanded the scope of their contacts in the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe, but "all considered Garst their original source of help and continued to regard him as their principal Western agricultural adviser."[106]

Among Garst's contacts, none was more important, diplomatically, than Nikita Khrushchev. Garst was, indeed, "earthy" and his temperament matched Khrushchev's perfectly. Liz Garst, granddaughter of Roswell and Elizabeth, characterized their similarities better than anyone else: "they were absolutely passionate about agriculture and the land and food production.

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[103] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 178-182.
[104] William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 372.
[105] Lee, *Roswell Garst*,186-203; see also Roswell Garst to Fred Lehmann, Jim Wallace, Bob Wood, and Hugh Morrison, November 2, 1955, a letter account of his trip, published in Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 5-17.
[106] Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, xix.

They were big-idea men, not into the details. They both liked to argue for fun...were quite gregarious, and quite cantankerous." More importantly, both Garst and Khrushchev had humble backgrounds: "they were both very much peasants; neither of them were refined men. To tell you the truth, they were both kind of crude."[107] As a result, the two men established a comfortable rapport rather quickly, and Garst never hesitated to speak his mind. For instance, in a letter of August 19, 1958, he suggested to Khrushchev that he "never mention war or threats of war in another speech...[T]he charges and countercharges between [our] two governments seem never to be true of the individual citizens of the two countries. Your country's citizens have always treated me with great cordiality in spite of the fact that the two governments charge and countercharge each other with war threats and all sorts of other unfair and unwise and unjust tactics."[108] In another vein, Garst complained to Khrushchev "that bureaucracy and the lack of arriving at decisions has made it impossible to have any good demonstrations within the Soviet Union of the American methods which I recommended." Invoking an aphorism of his father's, he continued: "If he wanted to describe a man who had small ideas, he used to say of him, 'He would take two bites at a cherry'...I have never thought of the Soviet Union as being a nation that does little things...yet it seems to me that so far as agricultural programs, your nation is 'taking two bites at a cherry.'"[109]

At the invitation of the Soviet ambassador to the U.S., Roswell and Elizabeth Garst traveled again with a U.S. delegation to Russia in the fall of 1956, then went on to Romania and Hungary. The party had planned to go on to Czechoslovakia and Poland but happened to be in Budapest when Soviet tanks rolled into the city, brutally suppressing a popular uprising against Soviet rule and signaling that Khrushchev would not allow East European countries in the Soviet buffer zone to establish independent governments. Stranded for ten days in a hotel, the party finally made its way out of Hungary to Czechoslovakia on a coaling ship. Disgusted with this act of Soviet aggression, Garst returned to the U.S. and refused to conclude a second agreement to sell the U.S.S.R. seed corn.[110]

By 1958, his pique had passed and he was ready to try again. From June to October, Garst hosted Soviet geneticist Ilya Emilianov and two fieldworkers, who literally worked in the fields planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops to gain practical experience in American farming methods. That fall, Garst traveled to Yugoslavia, then hosted a Bulgarian delegation in January 1959. Early in 1959 he also approached Anastas Mikoyan, First Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union, who was in Washington, D.C. Garst made it known that he wished to see Khrushchev again, and Mikoyan arranged it. An invitation came from Khrushchev while the Garsts were in Rome on vacation, at which point they changed their schedule to join Khrushchev and his wife, Nina, at a state dacha on the Black Sea. The visit was a mixture of pleasantries and discussions of agriculture, which Garst interspersed with appeals to Khrushchev "to divert money from arms to agriculture." When it came time to leave, Elizabeth Garst hoped she might have an opportunity to host them in Coon Rapids. Khrushchev reportedly replied, "If I ever come to the United States, I'll come see you."[111] A few months later he did just that.

Garst requested his third visit with Khrushchev at a point when the Soviet leader was provoking international tension over the issue of Berlin. In November 1958 Khrushchev had issued an ultimatum giving western powers six months to withdraw from Berlin, which, of course, the U.S., Great Britain, and France refused to consider. Realizing that he was backing himself into a diplomatic corner because he did not want to provoke war, Khrushchev withdrew the deadline and instead insisted on meeting with the western powers. Mikoyan came to Washington, D.C. in January 1959 to lay the groundwork for a summit, which finally began in May. Three months of sessions failed to reach any important agreements, but they did lead to Vice

[107] As quoted in Jerry Perkins, "When Russia Met Iowa," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, February 15, 2009.
[108] Garst to N.S. Khrushchev, August 19, 1958, in Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 138-141.
[109] Garst to N.S. Khrushchev, February 8, 1959, in Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 141-144.
[110] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 203-214.
[111] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 215-223; Jerry Perkins, "Two Sons Revisiting History," *Des Moines Register*, February 6, 1995; Perkins, "When Russia Met Iowa."

President Richard Nixon's trip to Moscow in late July, a trip marked by non-stop contentiousness, followed by Khrushchev's September visit to the United States.[112]

When Khrushchev's "look at America" tour was announced in August, he made it clear that the itinerary was to include a visit to with his "friend" Roswell Garst in Iowa.[113] Accordingly, Garst wrote the premier to express his delight and promised that, "we will leave no stone unturned to have it a pleasant day in your memories."[114] Almost daily, the *Des Moines Register* ran front-page articles, op-ed pieces, or political cartoons related to Khrushchev's upcoming trip. It announced and re-announced the official schedule, displayed an aerial photo of the Garst home farm, reported that Khrushchev would bring his family, profiled "farmer Garst," described the suite reserved for the Khrushchevs at the Hotel Fort Des Moines, instructed Iowans to greet the Soviet premier with courtesy but "not enthusiasm," and also alerted them that protesters would be exercising their free speech rights.[115] Khrushchev's two-day Iowa stop followed two days in Washington, D.C., two days in New York, and a day each in Los Angeles and San Francisco. At the Des Moines airport on the afternoon of September 22, a crowd of 25,000 gave him a "friendly but unenthused" welcome, but 600 guests attending a dinner hosted by the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce that evening applauded him warmly when he called for producing "more corn and more meat" instead of hydrogen bombs.[116] During the afternoon, Khrushchev visited the John Deere Des Moines Works and the Des Moines Packing Company plant, where the entourage munched hotdogs.

All of this was prelude to the main event of September 23. Seven hundred National Guardsmen lined the 76 miles of highway between Des Moines and Coon Rapids as the official party and seven busloads of reporters drove to the Garst home farm. While the women retired into the relative quiet of the house, the press swarmed around the main party as Garst walked Khrushchev from place to place explaining farm operations. James Reston remarked that there were "more reporters in the trees than birds" and instead of covering the story, they "smother[ed] it and each other at the same time."[117] Garst himself gave reporters the most colorful incident when he kicked at the media throng and threw silage to move them away. All in all, it was a chaotic day, but one that also revealed a smiling Khrushchev linked arm-in-arm with Garst and Adlai Stevenson; Stevenson and Henry Cabot Lodge conducting a "farmyard conference" with Garst and Khrushchev on a range of international problems as they lunched outdoors on fried chicken and barbecued ribs; and the Garst and Khrushchev families happily assembled for a photo shoot. At mid-afternoon, the entourage moved on to Ames for a stop at Iowa State University, and later a crowd of about 5,000 waved and cheered as Khrushchev approached the Des Moines airport for an evening departure.[118] From Iowa, Khrushchev went on to Pittsburgh, which gave him a similarly warm welcome, then returned to D.C. for talks with Eisenhower at Camp David.

Garst was to visit personally with Khrushchev once more, in May 1963, when he traveled to the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Romania with his nephew John Chrystal, whom Roswell groomed to continue the East-West exchange. In Moscow, they spent the better part of a day with Khrushchev and his family; and although the conversations began with agriculture, Garst

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[112] Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 396-419.
[113] Charles Bailey, "Map Khrushchev's 12-Day U.S., Iowa Visit," *Des Moines Register*, August 20, 1959.
[114] Roswell Garst to N.S. Khrushchev, September 9, 1959, in Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 148-151.
[115] See, for instance, "Nikita in Iowa Sept. 22-23," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, August 23, 1959; "Where Nikita Khrushchev Will Be Guest of Iowan," *Des Moines Register*, August 26, 1959; "The Khrushchevs Are Coming," *Des Moines Register*, August 30, 1959; "In Iowa Nikita Will See a 'Revolution' in Farming," *Des Moines Register*, September 2, 1959; George Mills, "$65-per-day Rooms for Nikita Here," *Des Moines Register*, September 4, 1959; George Mills, "Iowans Discuss How to Welcome Nikita," *Des Moines Register*, September 6, 1959; Richard Wilson, "Ike Asks Courtesy to Nikita," *Des Moines Register*, September 11, 1959; Lule Mae Coe, "100 Iowa Latvians Stage Protest Parade in D.M.," *Des Moines Register*, September 13, 1959.
[116] "25,000 Greet Khrushchev" and "Khrushchev Urges Peaceful Competition," *Des Moines Register*, September 23, 1959.
[117] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 223-228; James Reston, "Khrushchev's Odyssey: Army of Newsmen Said to Interfere with the Premier's View of America," *New York Times*, September 24, 1959.
[118] Harrison E. Salisbury, "Stevenson Reports Khrushchev Hints at 'Give' in Negotiations," *New York Times*, September 24, 1959; "Jovial Nikita Leaves Iowa," "Russians Grin as Garst Berates Newsmen," and "The Russians at Coon Rapids and on Ames Campus," *Des Moines Register*, September 24, 1959.

persistently returned to the futility and economic burdens of the arms race. A year later, Khrushchev was removed from office and retired to relative obscurity.[119]

Garst's relationships with Soviet and Eastern European agricultural experts and political leaders, especially with Nikita Khrushchev, reflected his strong internationalist outlook, which was shaped, according to Lowitt and Lee, by Garst's own experience and by values he adopted from those he admired. He was influenced by his uncle Warren Garst, a progressive Republican who served as governor in 1908-1909; by Wendell Willkie's "one world" ideas; by President Franklin Roosevelt's struggle against U.S. isolationism; and by Henry A. Wallace's conviction that the U.S. should confront totalitarianism abroad. The trajectory of Garst's successful career as businessman and spokesman for the new science-based agriculture of superabundancy, also fired his zeal. During an era when American agricultural surpluses were mounting, vast populations around the world were agriculturally impoverished and Cold War aggressions threatened world stability. Garst, who never sought political office, easily adopted the mantel of citizen diplomat. He "chose to foster agricultural abundance for all . . . as the foundation of his hopes for a peaceful, fruitful international community," a goal he pursued most vigorously through the agricultural exchanges of the 1950s and 1960s and through his special relationship with Nikita Khrushchev.[120]

IV. Recent Developments

Following Elizabeth Garst's death in 1996 at nearly 101 years, her heirs founded Garst Farm Resorts, and the Garst farmhouse was converted to a bed-and-breakfast inn as a part of the operation. The venture was seen as a way of preserving the history of the larger complex of farms that she and Roswell acquired over the years, and to "continue to engage the public with history and eco-tourism opportunities." In 2004, the Garst family announced the formation of a new nonprofit, Whiterock Conservancy, to ensure protection and public access to this unique land base. In 2007, Garst Farm Resort became Whiterock Resort, encompassing some 5,000 acres on either side of the Middle Raccoon River, from the southern edge of Coon Rapids, south several miles into Guthrie County. In addition to the Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead Historic District, Whiterock Conservancy lands include approximately 1600 acres of timber, 1200 acres of crop ground, 900 acres of pasture, 200 aces of hay ground, 200 acres of wetland reserve, and 50 acres of ponds.[121]

Whiterock Conservancy is described on its website as "an Iowa non-profit land trust dedicated to conserving and protecting Iowa's natural resources, demonstrating sustainable rural land management, and engaging the public with the environment through outdoor recreation and education." Further, "Whiterock Conservancy-managed lands are among the largest of contiguous tracts of land owned by conservation-based organizations or agencies in Iowa, and serve as the largest land gift in the Midwest to date. Our lands are a treasure and asset to our state, providing ecosystem services as well as space for wildlife habitat, a working farm, and recreational and educational pursuits for Iowa residents and visitors."[122]

Plans are currently underway in 2009 for a 50-year anniversary celebration of Khrushchev's visit to the Garst farm.

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[119] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 257-262.
[120] Lowitt and Lee, *Letters from an American Farmer*, xiii.
[121] "Whiterock Conservancy Master Plan Request for Qualifications," 2005. [Collection of the author]
[122] Obtained from *www.whiterockconservancy.org/* on March 7, 2009.

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10. Geographical Data

UTM References

5. 15 361059 4635275

6. 15 361064 4635852

Verbal Boundary Description

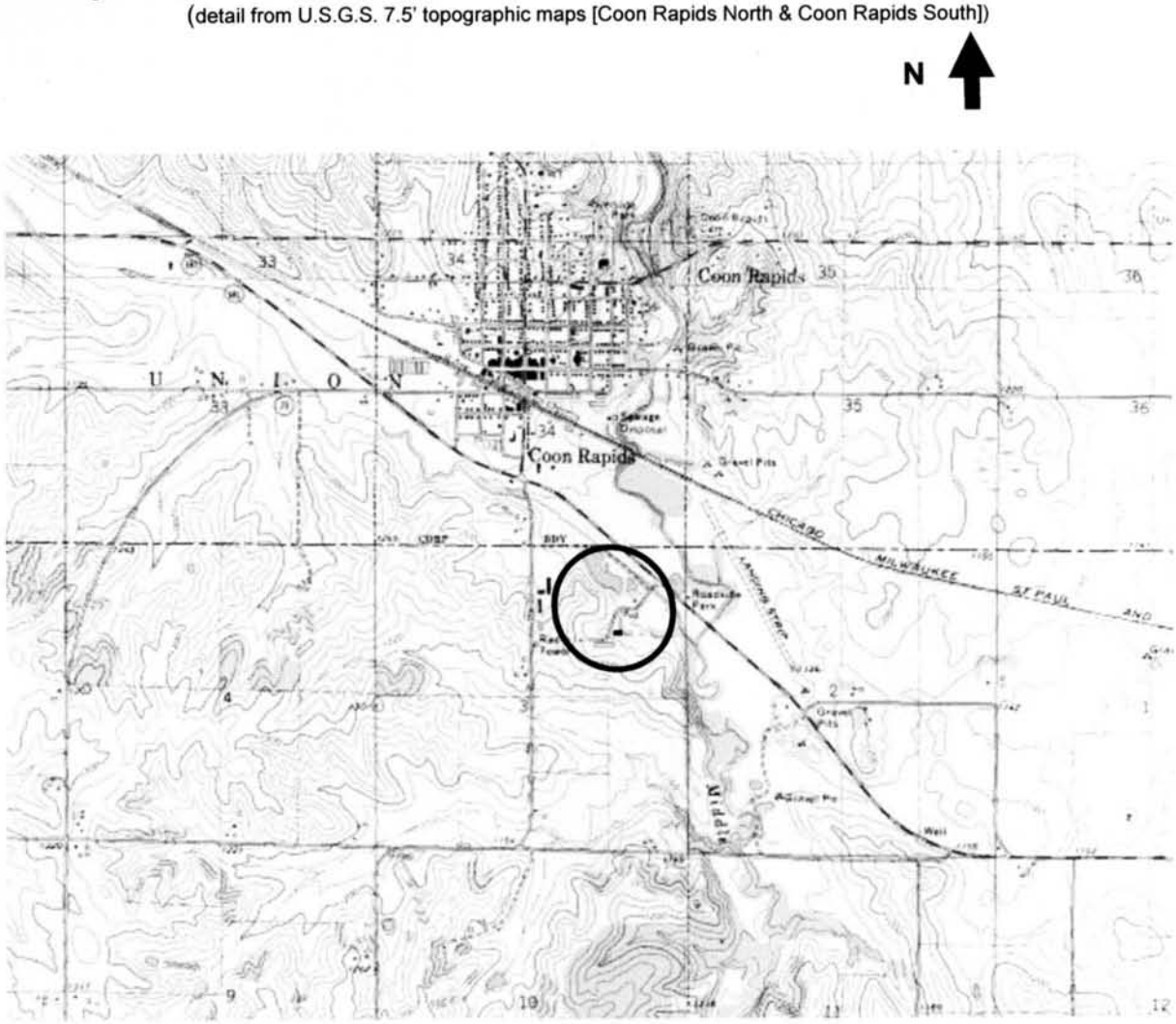
The nomination includes the farmstead land and buildings as shown on the Additional Documentation Continuation Sheet titled "Historic District Boundaries" and described as falling between the following landmarks in Guthrie County: on the north, the property line running along the south right-of-way of Hwy 141; on the west, a generally north/south line between Hwy 141 and running along the west edge of the westernmost fishing pond, past the backyard west boundary of the tenant house, and south to a point equal to the intersection of the following south line; on the south, a west/east line running past the southern edge of the silo bunker group and extending west to the point of intersection with the west boundary and east to the fence line separating the easternmost feed lots and the lagoon system; on the east, a north/south line running from the southern border as described north to driveway, then angled northeast back to Hwy 141 along the southeast edge of the driveway.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the entire parcel historically associated with the Garst Farmstead during the years Roswell and Elizabeth Garst lived there and actively used the farmstead for domestic and farming purposes.

SE Carroll County and NW Guthrie County, Iowa with the location of the nominated property circled.

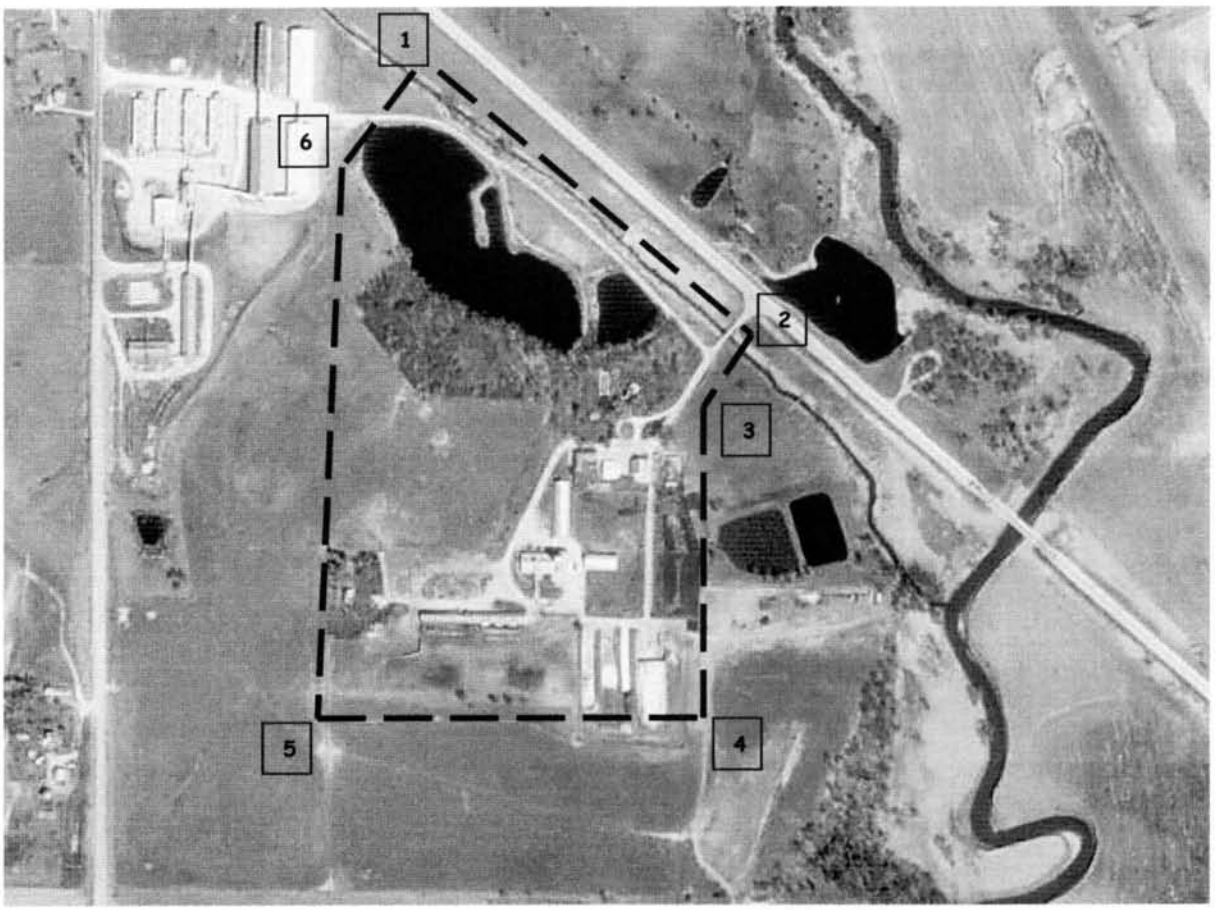
(detail from U.S.G.S. 7.5' topographic maps [Coon Rapids North & Coon Rapids South])



Historic District Boundaries

(underlying 1990s aerial obtained from http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu on January 12, 2009)

Numbers correspond to UTM coordinates.

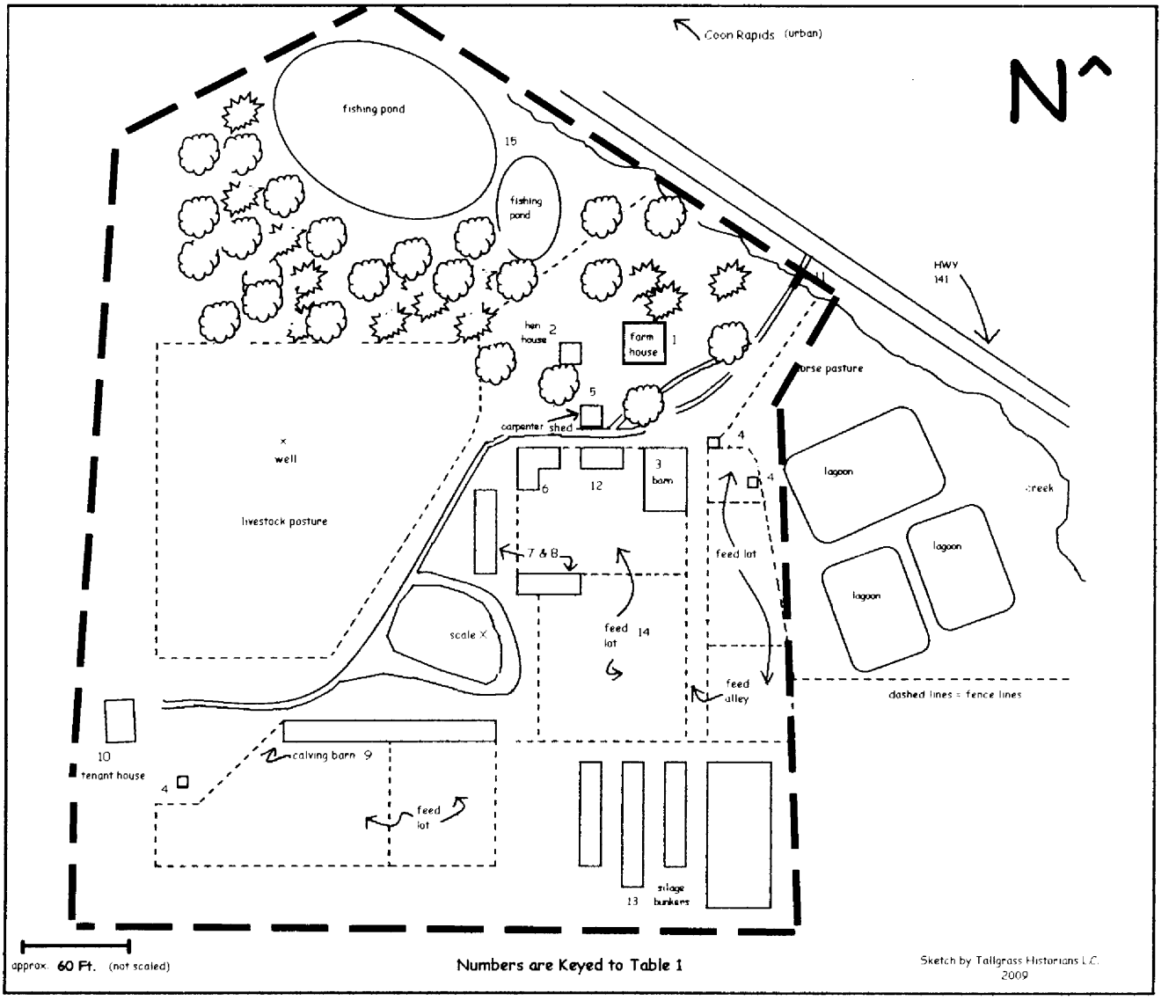


N ^

0 50 100 200m
0 200 500 1000ft.

Site Plan

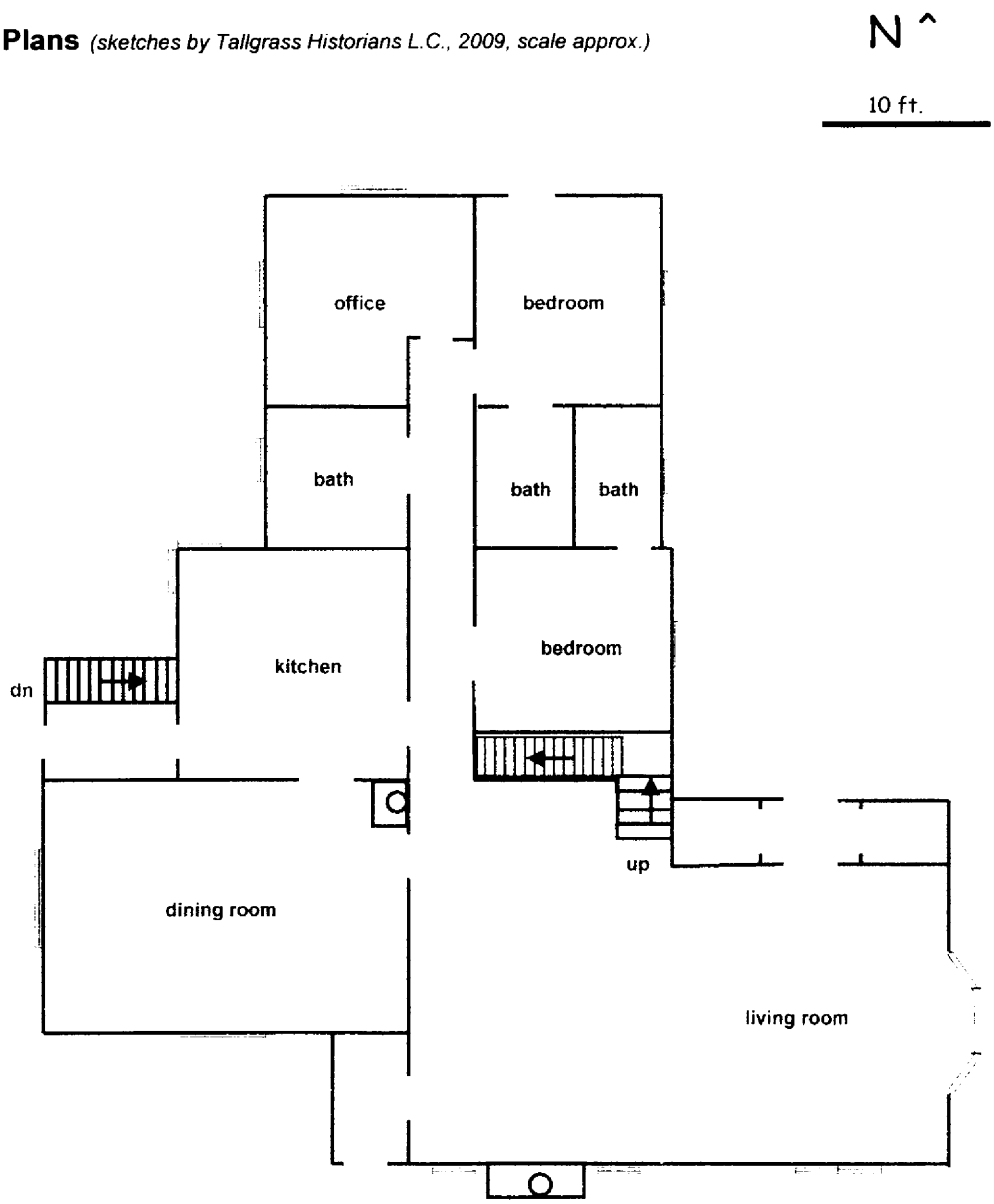
(sketch map by Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2009)



N ^

10 ft

Farmhouse Floor Plans *(sketches by Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2009, scale approx.)*

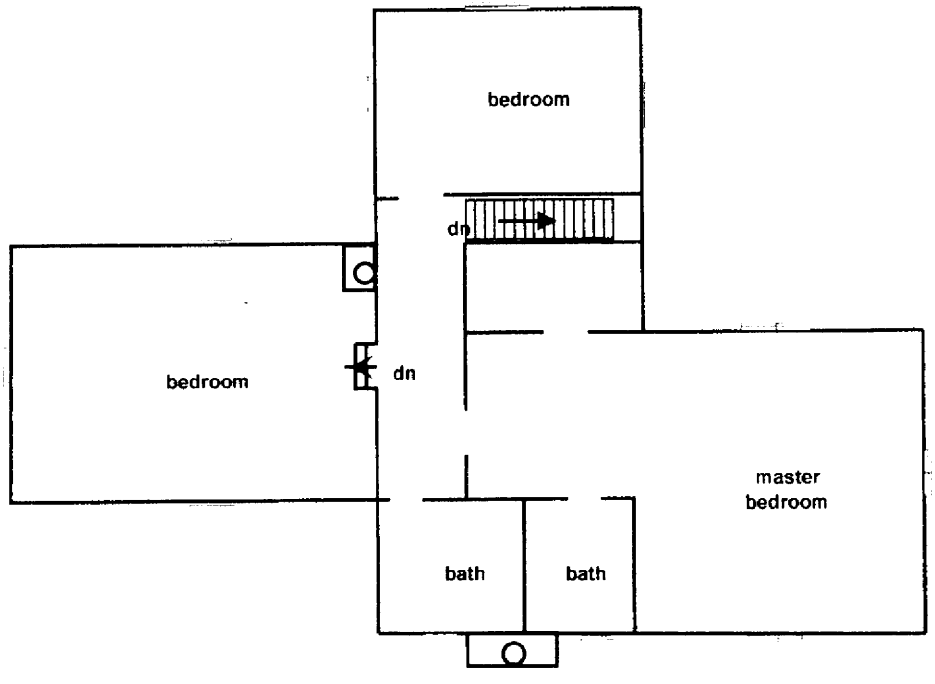


First Floor

Farmhouse Floor Plans (continued)

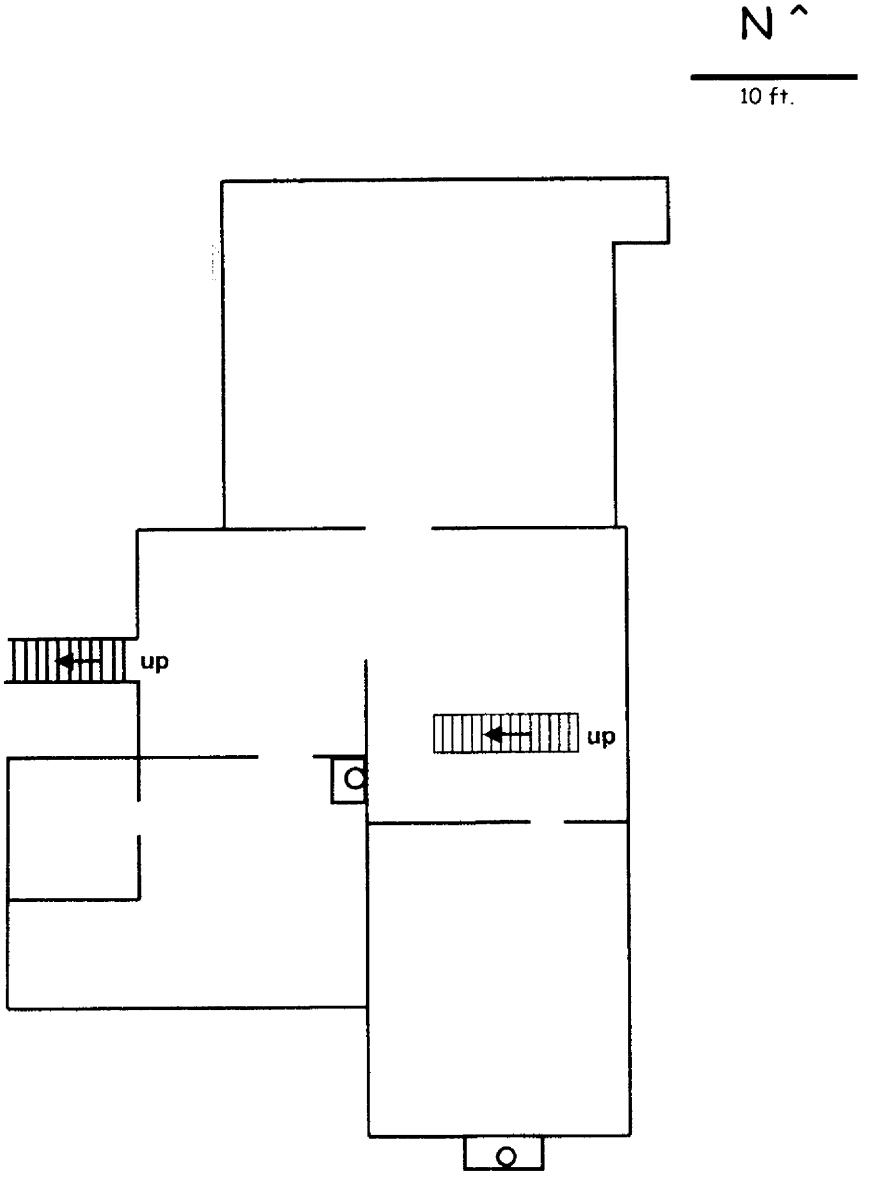
N ^

10 ft.



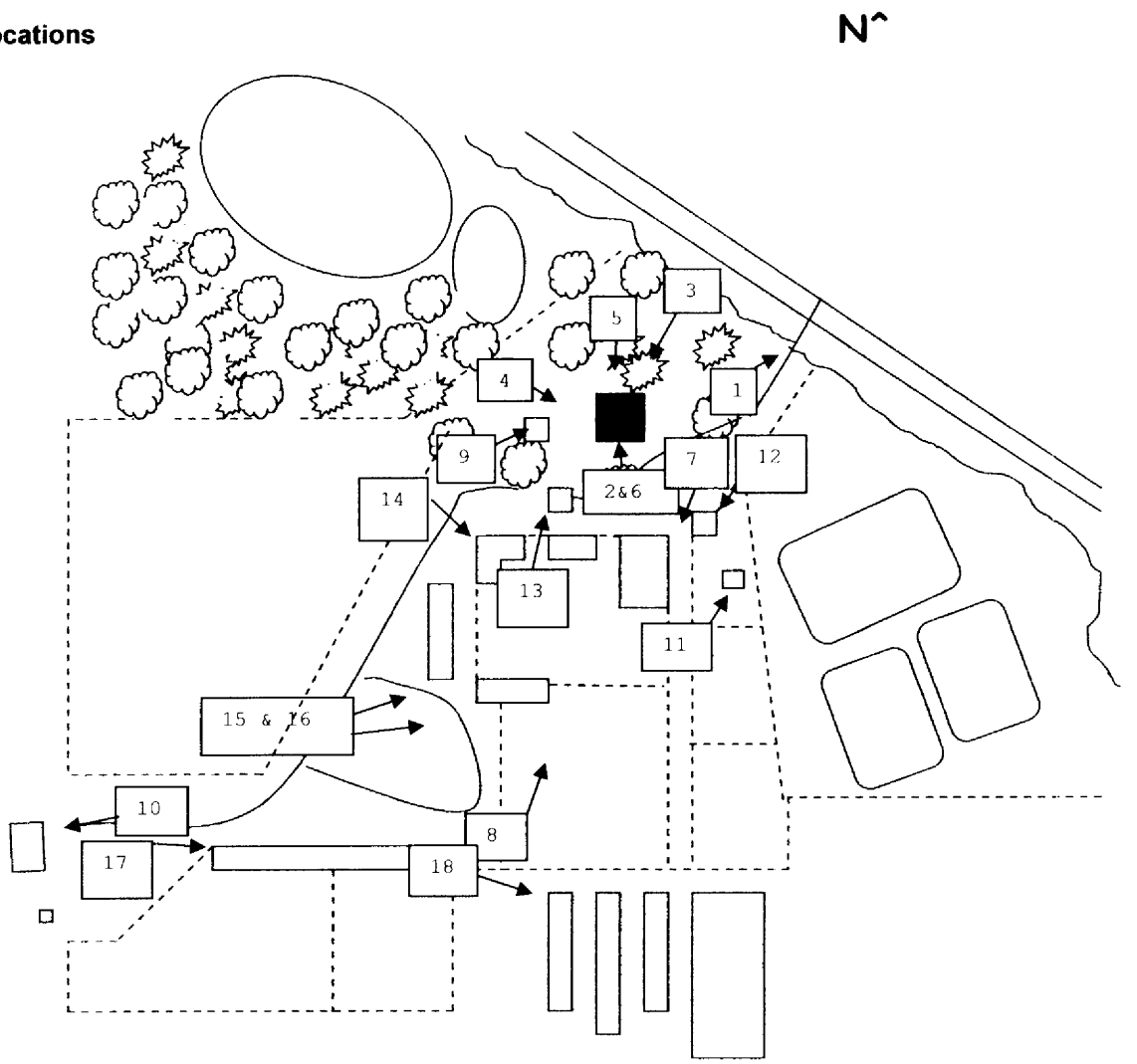
Second Floor

Farmhouse Floor Plans (continued)



Basement

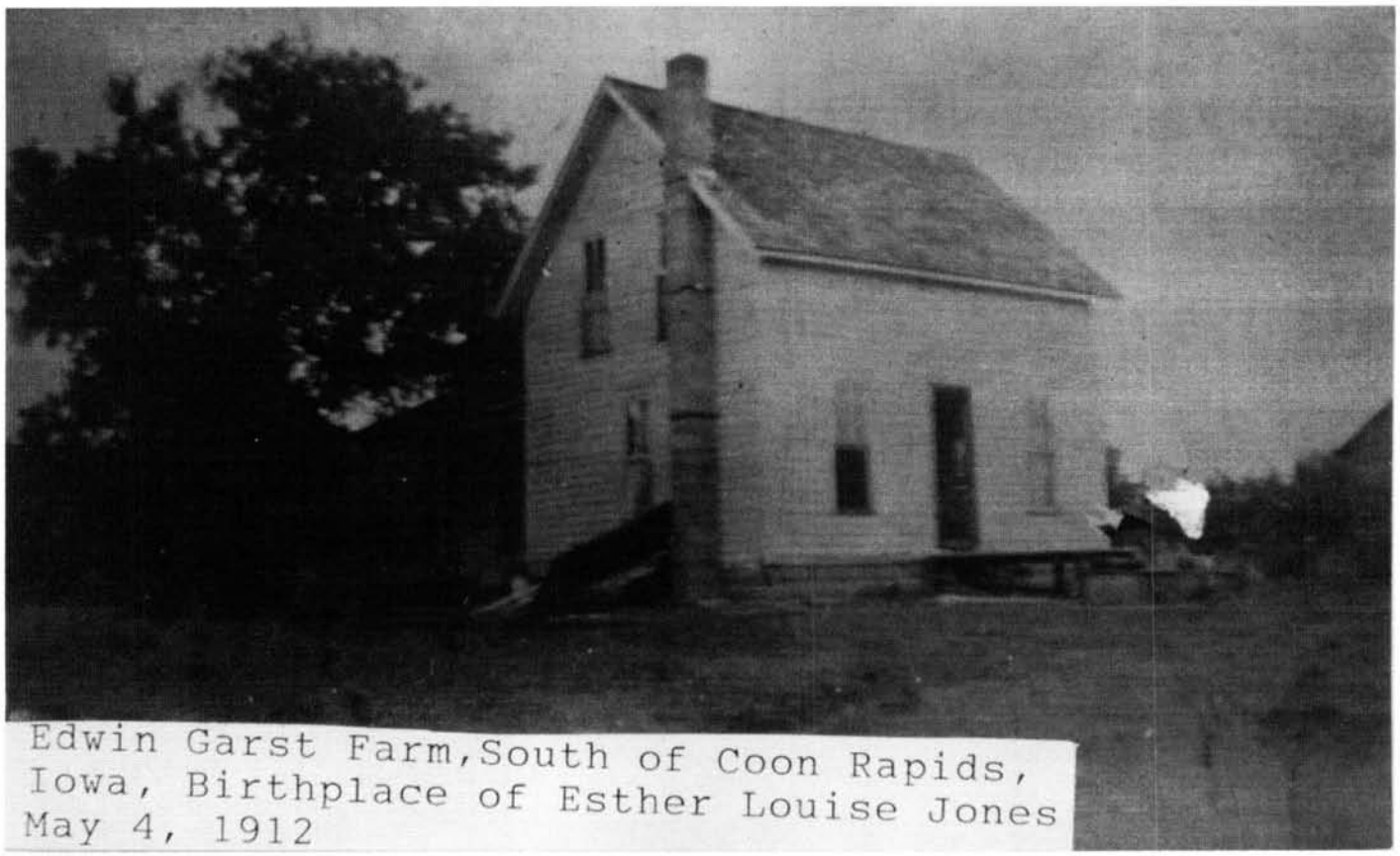
Photograph Locations



Photograph Label Information (## 3, 4, & 5 share information; arrows point to bldg. location & approx. direction of photo)

3. Tallgrass Historians L.C., Jan Olive Nash
4. October, 2008
5. Tallgrass Historians L.C., Iowa City, Iowa
6. Photograph #1: Driveway and bridge, facing NE
   Photograph #2: Farmhouse, south side, facing N
   Photograph #3: Farmhouse, east and north sides, facing SW
   Photograph #4: Farmhouse, west side, facing E
   Photograph #5: Farmhouse, north side, facing S
   Photograph #6: Farmhouse, facing N
   Photograph #7: Large barn, north end wall and east side, facing SW
   Photograph #8: Sorting shed and large barn, south sides, facing NE
   Photograph #9: Hen house, east and south sides, facing NW
   Photograph #10: Tenant house, east side, facing W
   Photograph #11: Outbuilding, facing E
   Photograph #12: Shed (cob/firewood), facing E
   Photograph #13: Carpenter shed, facing SW
   Photograph #14: Horse barn, west side, facing NE
   Photograph #15: Quonset bldg., west and south sides, facing NE
   Photograph #16: Large barn & quonset, facing NE
   Photograph #17: Calving barn (hog house), facing E
   Photograph #18: Silage bunker, facing SE

Additional Photographs & Images. (Unless otherwise credited, all photographs are by Joe Munroe and used with permission; original prints are held in the Garst Family Collection; negatives are located at the Ohio Historical Society.)



This newly discovered photograph of the Garst farmhouse is the earliest view known to exist. The date of the photo is unknown, but is implied by the caption to be at least 1912. The front door has a narrow and awkward-looking plank platform extending from it. This entrance arrangement suggests the house may have been raised and set on a new foundation of rock-face concrete block, perhaps in order to excavate a basement. The exterior chimney is strapped to the house, also indicating later construction. The size, scale, fenestration arrangement, and two-over-two windows reflect a much earlier nineteenth-century construction date for the house itself. ***Collection of Don Stiles Family.***

1959 Photographs of the Khrushchev Visit

Dozens of vehicles parked on ground now serving as feed lots and horse pasture. The tall silo seen here is nonextant. The future lagoon site is off the left edge of the view. This is only a portion of a panoramic photo. The parking area extended well to the north (right), across the drive and in front of the farmhouse itself.

This view, looking south, probably was taken from an upstairs window of the farmhouse.

View from barn loading platform, looking over media covering the event, toward the farmhouse.

Roswell Garst being interviewed for TV in the west side yard. The next photograph below is from the opposite angle.

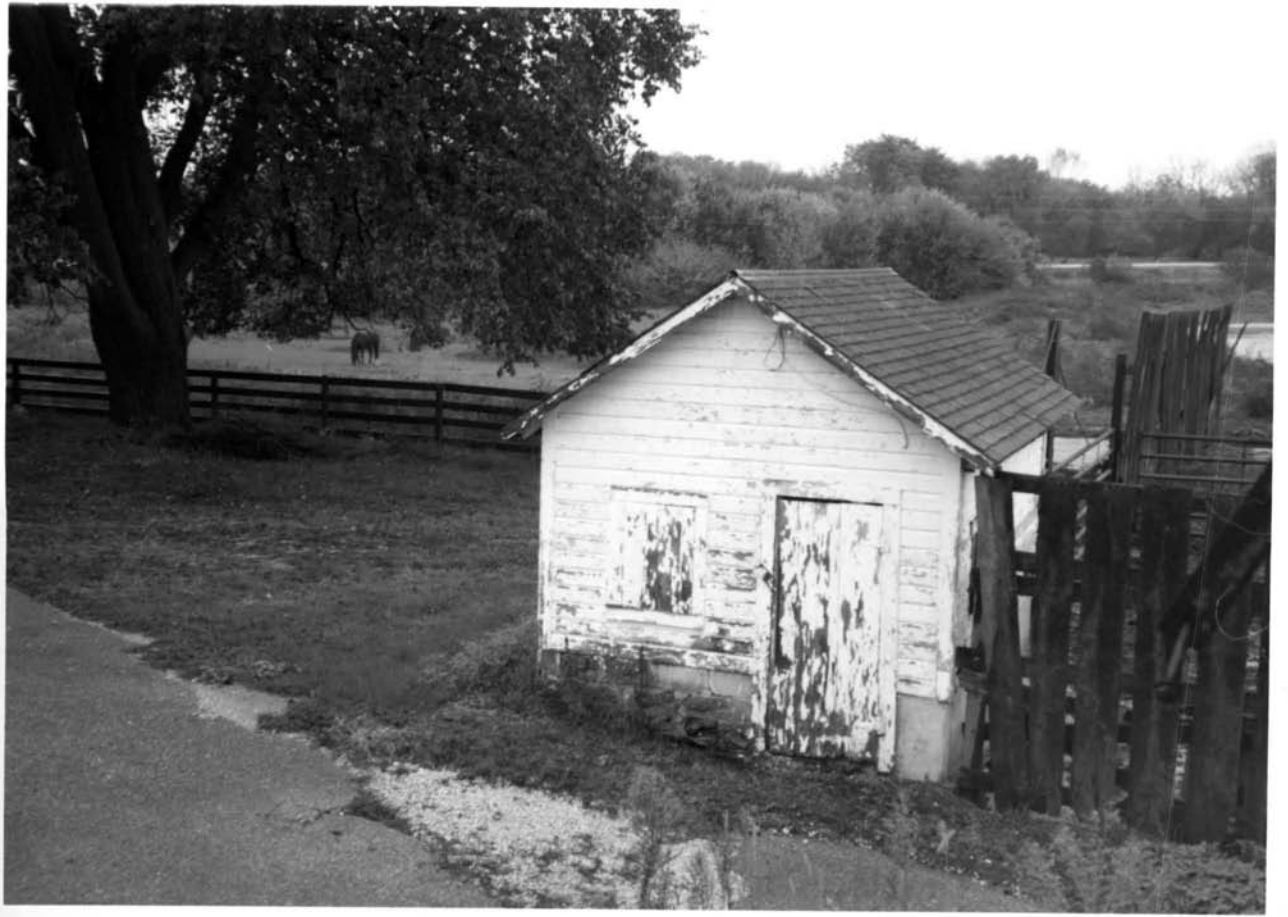
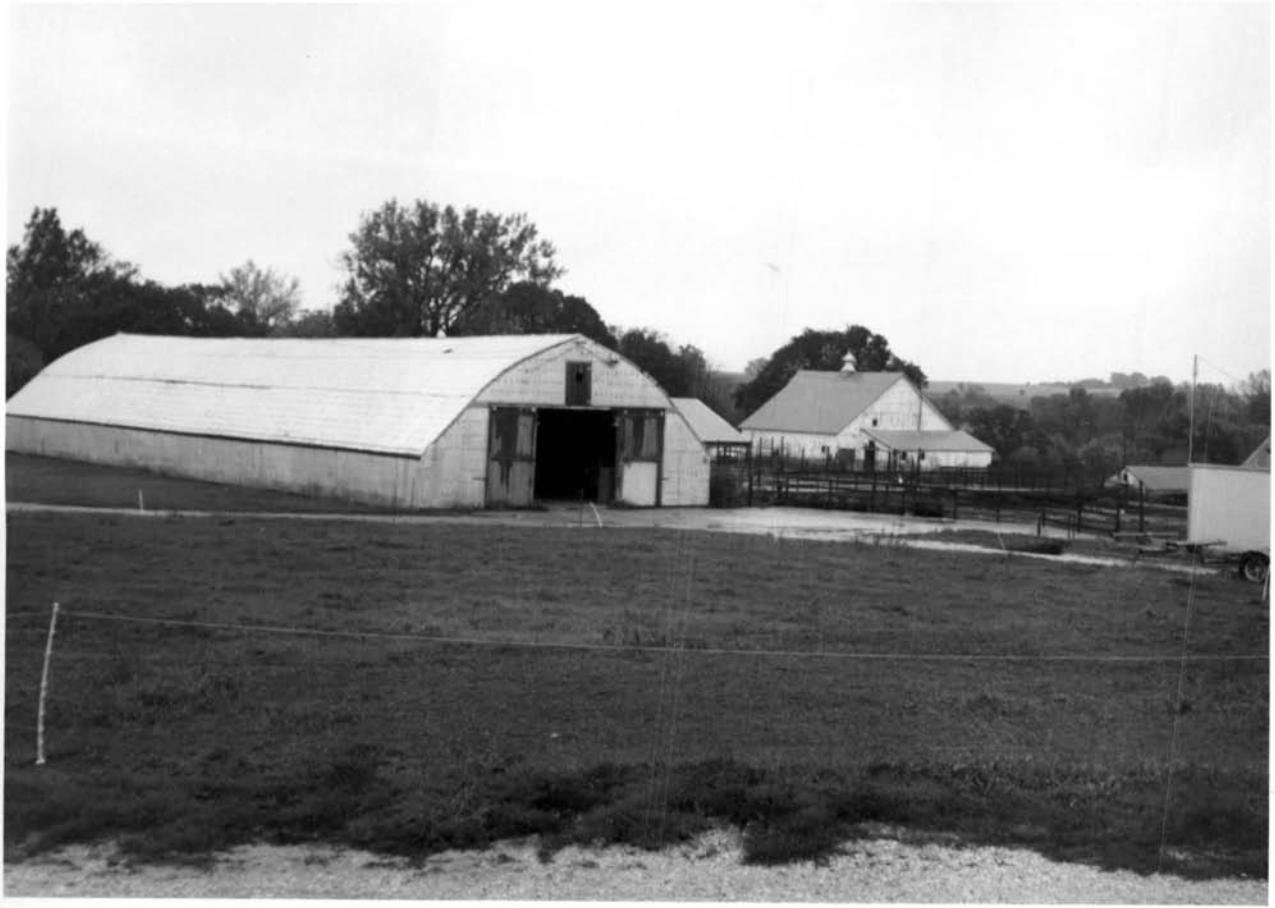
The media themselves became subjects for photographer Joe Munroe.

Roswell Garst leads as this group strolls across the farmstead. The carpenter shed is in the background.

Nikita Khrushchev and Roswell Garst share a humorous moment as Garst holds a fishing rod over a feed trough. Both men immediately behind Garst have rolled up their pants cuffs to keep them clean during the tour, and both men look a bit uncomfortable with the setting. Uniformed police or highway patrolmen are seen in the background of many Munroe's photographs of the day.

In this familiar view, the two couples appear to have just emerged from the kitchen side door and are headed around the west side of the house, probably for lunch under the large tent set up for that purpose. From left to right, they are Nina Petrovna Khrushcheva, Elizabeth Garst, Roswell Garst, and Nikita Khrushchev.

Khrushchev and Adlai Stevenson confer over lunch served in the large tent, while Garst looks on.

The Khrushchevs and Garsts, along with numerous other members of the Garst family, gather for photographs in front of the farmhouse. Eight-year-old granddaughter Elizabeth "Liz" Garst is the little girl in the front row on the right.

The unfavorable comparison of traditional farmers and farming methods to Roswell Garst's progressive ideas—about agriculture if not international politics—is clear from this political cartoon published in 1959 in the *Des Moines Register and Tribune.* Here the farm wife's apron is ragged and torn; likewise the farmer's bib overalls are patched. The porch shutter needs repair and the barn roof has a hole in it, while the well still draws water by a windmill. Showing a remarkable lack of ambition in the face of so much work to be done and progress that could be made, the unshaven farmer merely rocks on the porch, smoking his corncob pipe, his jug liquor conveniently within reach. ***Garst Family Collection.***