

TAYLOR FARM LAYING HOUSE
5526 East Dublin-Granville Road
New Albany
Franklin County
Ohio

HABS No.

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service
Northeast Region
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TAYLOR FARM LAYING HOUSE

HABS No.

Location: 5526 East Dublin-Granville Road in New Albany, Plain Township, Franklin County, Ohio.

Date of Construction: c. 1920

Present Owner: City of New Albany

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Contributing structure to the Taylor Farm.

Project Information: In the summer of 2021, the City of New Albany, Ohio, acquired the Taylor Farm property with the intent of creating a new park. The City commissioned Hardlines Design Company to assess the condition of the five buildings associated with the Taylor Farm and to make recommendations to stabilize and secure them from the public once the Taylor Farm park became operational. The chicken laying house was determined to be located in a flood plain and may have to be moved or reconstructed in order to be usable in the new park. In 2023, the City of New Albany hired Hardlines Design Company to complete a HABS-level short form documentation of the chicken laying house in case it needed to be reconstructed. The documentation consisted of measured floor plans and elevations as well as digital photographs printed on archival black-and-white photographic paper. The digital written and photographic files were also submitted on an archival compact disc (CD).

Description:

This wood frame building sits on concrete foundation walls and has a concrete slab floor. The rectangular floor plan sits with the long axis facing east-west. The south half of the building is one story tall with a shallow corrugated metal shed roof. The north half of the building has a monitor with clerestory windows looking over the south roof. A steeply sloped corrugated metal shed roof extends from the top of the monitor down to the first floor. The north elevation, which faces the barn, has no windows or doors and is completely covered with wood siding.

At the center of the east elevation is a plank entry door with diagonal reinforcement planks and a screen door. To the left of the door is a large window opening that likely once contained a wooden 6-over-6 double hung window but is now covered with metal screening mesh. The south elevation facing the farmhouse contains a pair of windows with remnants of wooden 6-over-6 double-hung sashes in the end bays. Between these windows are eight rectangular window openings covered with screening mesh. At the clerestory level are nine wooden 6-pane sashes that may have originally been operable hopper or awning windows. Only three sashes remain intact. On both the main floor and clerestory level the roof rafters have exposed rafter tails that have been shaped down to a cross section that is about 2" square in size. The exposed concrete foundation on the south side has three square openings that once allowed chickens to freely pass. The west elevation faces the creek and consists of a single window with wooden 6-over-6 double-hung sashes that sits opposite the entry door.

The laying house measures approximately 36 feet in length and 20 feet in width. The walls are framed with 2x4 studs on a 2x4 sill plate that rests on a concrete foundation that extends about 15 inches above grade. The studs are exposed on the interior but are covered by diagonal plank sheathing on the exterior, over which is wood siding with a 4-1/2 inch reveal. On the north wall the diagonal sheathing starts at the center and angles up and out towards the east and west walls. On the east wall the diagonal sheathing has a similar arrangement with the north edge of the entry door as the starting point. A similar layout is on the west wall. The sheathing on the south wall is only laid in one direction, possible due to the number of window openings. On top of the 2x4 roof rafters is plank sheathing similar to what is on the walls, laid in a north-south direction.

The monitor wall is supported by the end walls and two built-up posts in the center that rest on concrete bases. The northwest corner has been partitioned off and contains what may have once been roosting platforms. Along the south wall were originally three pens (one for each opening on the south concrete wall) that have since been altered and subdivided.

History:

Plain Township was organized in 1810 into four quadrants. The southeast quadrant was divided into 100-acre lots reserved for veterans of the American Revolution. The north half of the township was laid out into sections of 640 acres and then subdivided into quarter sections to be sold as Congress lands.¹ The area that would become New Albany was located in the southwest quadrant and began in 1802 when Dudley Woodridge was granted a tract of land designated as Range 16, Township 1, for 4000 gallons of Monongahela Whiskey or \$1.00 per acre. Early settlers Adam and Sevilla Huffman Baughman and Henry Huffman came to this area by cutting a path through the woods and built their cabin near Rocky Fork Creek. In 1810, Plain Township was organized and named for the “flat” land, which along with good water, made the area very attractive to pioneers. In 1815 – 1816, Plain Township was reduced to its present size – about 20,000 square acres.²

The 1830 census lists 842 free people living in Plain Township. The Taylor Farm was originally part of a larger tract of land (about 650 acres) owned by Anthony Wayne (A.W.) Taylor (1798-1883) who was born in Virginia but settled in Plain Township c.1825 with his wife Melinda (1800-1874) and two sons, John (1821-1879) born in Virginia and Lorenzo (1828-1910), born in Ohio. Lorenzo apparently had a twin sister Orlena who died in 1857. A.W. and Melinda would have two more sons and a daughter before 1848.

In 1837, Nobel Landon and William Yantis platted the land that they owned in the center of the Township. Nobel Landon was from Albany, Vermont, and gave the village the name New Albany when it was platted. This land was split into lots 50 x 100 feet and sold to new settlers.³ By 1840, the population of Plain Township had grown to 1264 and by 1850 it had reached 1561.⁴

A.W. built the current brick farmhouse around 1842, along with a separate outbuilding that may have functioned as a detached kitchen since it was also near the water pump and well, where a privy would not have been located. In the 1850 census, the Taylor property was valued at \$6,720, the largest by far of his immediate neighbors. Lorenzo Taylor was 22 years old and is listed as living in his father’s house with “tailor” as a profession. This soon changed and by 1856, A.W. had given the eastern-most L-shaped tract of 147 acres that included the original farmhouse and land on the other side of the road to Lorenzo while A.W. lived on a tract of land on the west side of Rocky Fork Creek. Also in 1856, New Albany

¹ William T. Martin, “Chapter XXI Plain Township” in *History of Franklin County*, (Columbus, Follett, Foster & Company, 1858), 220. https://www.genealogybug.net/franklin_1858/plain_220.htm, accessed November 22, 2022.

² *Township History* on <https://plaintownship.org/township-history/>, accessed November 21, 2022.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Martin, 220.

Village had just been chartered with a population of 50 people.⁵ By the time of the 1870 census, A.W.'s property was worth \$25,000 while Lorenzo's was worth \$5,500. A.W.'s other sons also lived nearby: William's property was worth \$11,000 and John's property was worth \$6,000. His youngest son Buren at age 30 was listed as living with his father working as a farmer and cattle dealer.

In the 1880 census, A.W. at age 83 is listed as "boarding" with Lorenzo. Sons William and Buren Taylor are also shown on neighboring properties (son John had passed away the year before). It is uncertain when A.W. started living with Lorenzo, but it may have occurred in the 1870s, when the addition to the rear of the farmhouse and the third floor were added.

When A.W. passed away in 1883, his estate was significant. The reading of his will was delayed so that one of the witnesses could be summoned from Minnesota to testify to the authenticity of the document, which was written in 1869 before his wife passed away in 1874. A.W.'s will left \$400 cash to his widow along with all of his household property and goods. He also left her his "homestead farm" of 102 acres, which included the house he built with his son Buren. He desired that his widow be allowed to live in the house until her death, at which point the property would belong to Buren. He also left Buren, son William, and his daughter Deborah portions of a separate 193-acre tract of land and another 15-acre parcel, including the house in which she was living. She was also given \$200. Another tract of land was to be split evenly between Buren and his eldest son Lorenzo. The remaining property was bequeathed to his three sons to be evenly divided. He desired his son Buren to remain with and take care of his mother, but did not make it mandatory, and made Lorenzo his executor.

Lorenzo's son Herman W. Taylor (1864-1925), inherited the property and it was likely under his ownership that new outbuildings were constructed and/or modified in the early 20th century. The hen laying house was likely constructed at the same time as the garage, as both are built of similar materials. This laying house likely replaced an earlier version.

Early chicken houses tended to be small, nondescript buildings, often converted from an older and different use. At the turn of the last century, chicken farming, along with other types of agriculture, became more specialized and industrialized.⁶ Specialized buildings were created for hens laying eggs (laying house), for raising young chicks (brooder house), and for raising chickens for meat (broiler house). With improvements to transportation and communications, advances in agriculture and agricultural buildings were more easily disseminated across the country.

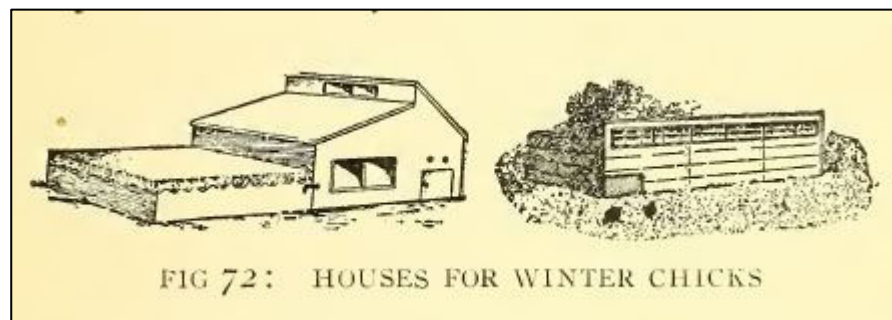
⁵ Martin, 220.

⁶ Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*, Rutgers University Press, 1995, p. 136.

Agricultural literature first emerged in the United States after farmlands and crops were devastated after the Revolution. Wealthy “gentlemen” farmers turned to improved, scientific methods of farming contained in British journals. They acquired and reprinted British journals that promoted fertilization, crop rotation, selective breeding, and improvements to buildings and equipment. The first successful American farming journal appeared in 1819 and by 1840 there were five different journals circulating the country. In 1842, the *American Agriculturalist* was founded in New York and grew to 30,000 subscribers in its first decade, reaching its peak in 1869-1872 with 160,000 subscribers. The popularity of the journal may have been due to its use of common rhetoric instead of scholarly prose, emphasis on scientific methods, and lavish use of illustrations.⁷ The journal bought up many of its competitors over the decades and remains in publication today.

Orange Judd was an editor at the *American Agriculturalist* from 1853 to 1878 and later founded a publishing company to print agricultural books, often using information that originally appeared in the *American Agriculturalist*. The federal government also recognized the need for a strong agricultural base. It became federal policy in 1862 when Abraham Lincoln created the U.S. Department of Agriculture to “provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.”⁸

In 1902, the Orange Judd Company published a book titled *Poultry Architecture*, which contained 100 illustrations. Figure 72 shows a Brooder House for winter climates that is an early version of the half monitor roof design.



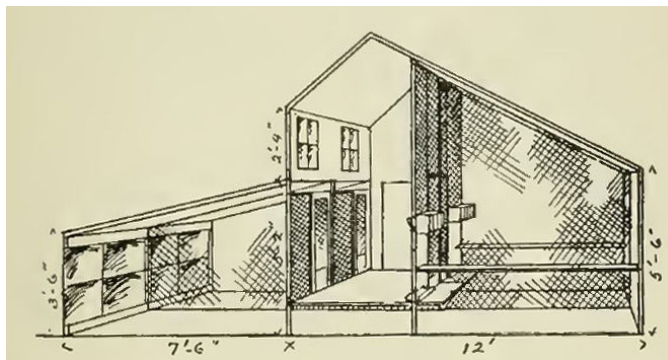
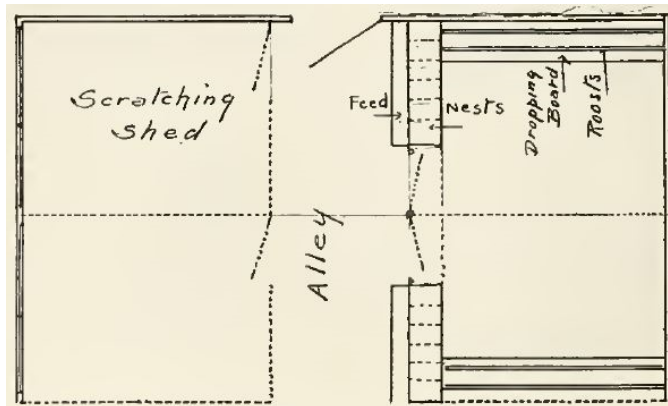
At left, a Brooder House with a Chick attachment in the 1902 book *Poultry Architecture*

⁷ Stephen Mandravelis, “The *American Agriculturist*: Art and Agriculture in the United States’ First Illustrated Farming Journal, 1842–78,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 20, no. 3 (Autumn 2021), <https://doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2021.20.3.2>. Accessed June 23, 2023.

⁸ “About the U.S. Department of Agriculture” <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda> accessed June 23, 2023.

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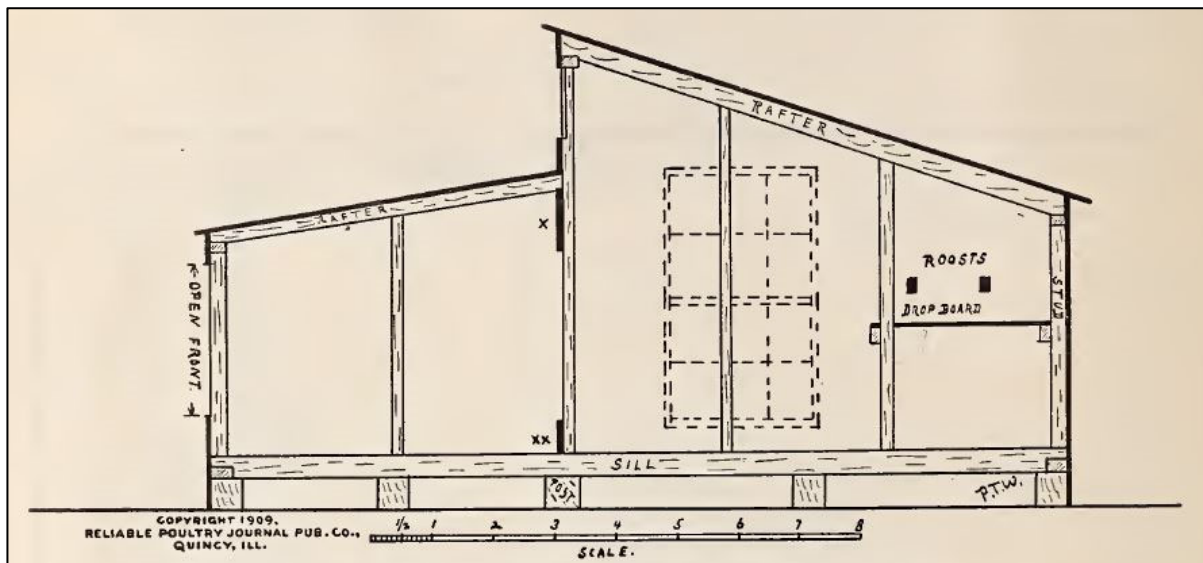
The 1906 book titled *Poultry Houses Coops and Equipment* published in Minnesota provides photographs and drawings of buildings and equipment suitable for cold climates. One photograph shows a two-part building: the taller section contains a monitor with windows for the roosts that overlooks a shorter section in front that contains the “scratching pen.” The scratching pen is very low with the monitor providing just enough head clearance for the farmer to pass. A door on each side provides access to a raised platform that allows the chickens to cross from one to the other without getting in the farmer’s way.



Photograph and drawings for a “Continuous House With Raised Alley”
in the 1906 book *Poultry Houses Coops and Equipment*

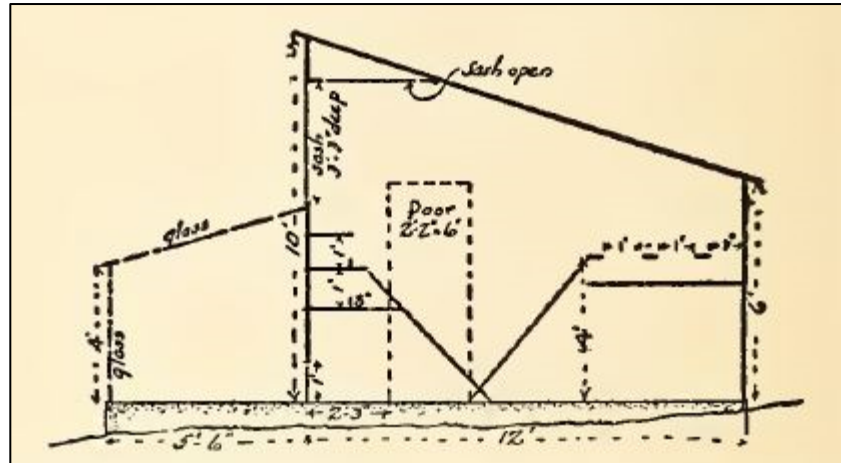
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In 1910, an agricultural journal in west central Illinois promoted the concept of the “open air” poultry house, in which the author noted that the increased fresh air also increased the percentage of eggs hatched and the chicks were stronger and more vigorous. The design for “Woods’ Open Air Poultry House” consists of a shed roofed scratching pen with open windows screened just with mesh and a monitor with windows to provide sunlight in the winter and removed to provide more air in the summer. This design is elevated on posts to make it easier to clean the droppings. The design shown is 10’ x 14’ in plan, which would support up to 25 hens. The Taylor laying house could therefore support up to 100 hens.



Section for Woods’ Open-Air Poultry House with a monitor roof to the roosting area and a shed roof over the scratching pen

A variation of this design appeared in the 1912 publication *Making a Poultry House*, where the scratching shed is mostly glass and functions like a sunroom. The nesting boxes are under the operable monitor windows and the roosting platforms are against the rear wall, both accessed by climbing boards.



Design from 1912 for a 12' x 20' building that can house 75-100 chickens

In 1920, Harry Trafford, editor of *Poultry Success*, noted that a typical pullet (young hen) would lay 150 eggs the first year and 100 eggs the second year, after which the pullet would be sent to market presumably to be sold as meat. Most hens would also stop laying in the winter. Trafford had developed a system that would keep hens laying for 4-6 years and in the winter, when eggs were the most expensive⁹. The numerous designs for laying houses and interior equipment in the early 20th century were designed to keep laying hens healthy and laying productively for many years, all year round. The Taylor laying house was large enough to house 75 to 100 hens, which could in turn produce up to 10,000 eggs per year, enough for the family to use and to sell for extra money at market.

Many of these poultry publications came out of Chicago or Quincy, Illinois, and may have led to a refinement of the half monitor design by the University of Illinois extension service in the 1920s. This design kept the basic half monitor shape but deliberately faced the windows to the south to maximize heat and light, especially in the winter. The north elevation has no windows and the steep monitor roof slope caused north winds to easily blow over the building¹⁰. The windows in the Taylor Farm building are a combination of sashed and open air openings. The windows in the monitor may be fixed in place but could be easily removed in the summer to vent hot air¹¹. The lower level south windows are sashed at the ends and open air in the center. The east and west end elevation windows are sashed, although the east elevation window is missing its sashes. The entry door is also fitted with a screen door to maximize air flow in the summer.

⁹ Beth Lane, "Once Upon a Time: Raising chickens in 1920 wasn't for dumbclucks," *Herald-Whig*, January 2, 2021. Accessed online at https://www.whig.com/lifestyles/history/once-upon-a-time-raising-chickens-in-1920-wasnt-for-dumbclucks/article_293172ea-cbf6-5492-ab74-71fa5788669d.html, June 27, 2023.

¹⁰ Chicken Coop, Half Monitor Style, Lg. T15-313 F. Image for sale on Peddlers Den, accessed June 27, 2023, at <https://www.peddlersden.com/product/chicken-coop-half-monitor-style>

¹¹ "Half Monitor Chicken Coop," *Backyard Chickens*, January 11, 2012. Accessed online at <https://www.backyardchickens.com/articles/half-monitor-chicken-coop.48434/> on June 27, 2023.

Herman's son Clare H. Taylor (1893-1989) inherited the property in 1925. Clare had married Elma Alwilda Oldham (1897-1985), a graduate of Denison University and K-12 teacher, in 1923. Under Clare's ownership the wide opening in the outbuilding was infilled with a stud wall with masonry veneer, leaving a 4' foot wide opening on the east side. The original part of the building was finished with plaster board walls and a sink with two spigots was installed, likely to allow farm workers to wash up without entering the main house. Clare worked the farm himself and in the 1950 census, at the age of 56, he listed himself as a farmer working 60 hours a week with the assistance of one hired hand who also lived on the property.

Clare and Elma were the parents of two daughters: Dorothy (1925-2005) and Eleanor (1926-2021). Eleanor never married and stayed in the house. Her mother Elma passed away in 1985 and when Clare Taylor passed away in 1989, Eleanor inherited the property along with her sister. Eleanor acquired her sister's half of the property in 1992 for \$90,000. The property was placed in a trust and sold to the New Albany Company for almost \$2.6 million in 2020.¹² The New Albany Company used the land to build a wetland as mitigation for removing a wetland in another location. When the wetland was completed in 2021 the property was transferred to the City of New Albany.

¹² Franklin County Auditor data for Parcel 222-002057-00.
https://property.franklincountyauditor.com/web/datalets/datalet.aspx?mode=sales_summary&sIndex=0&idx=1&LMparent=20, accessed November 22, 2022.

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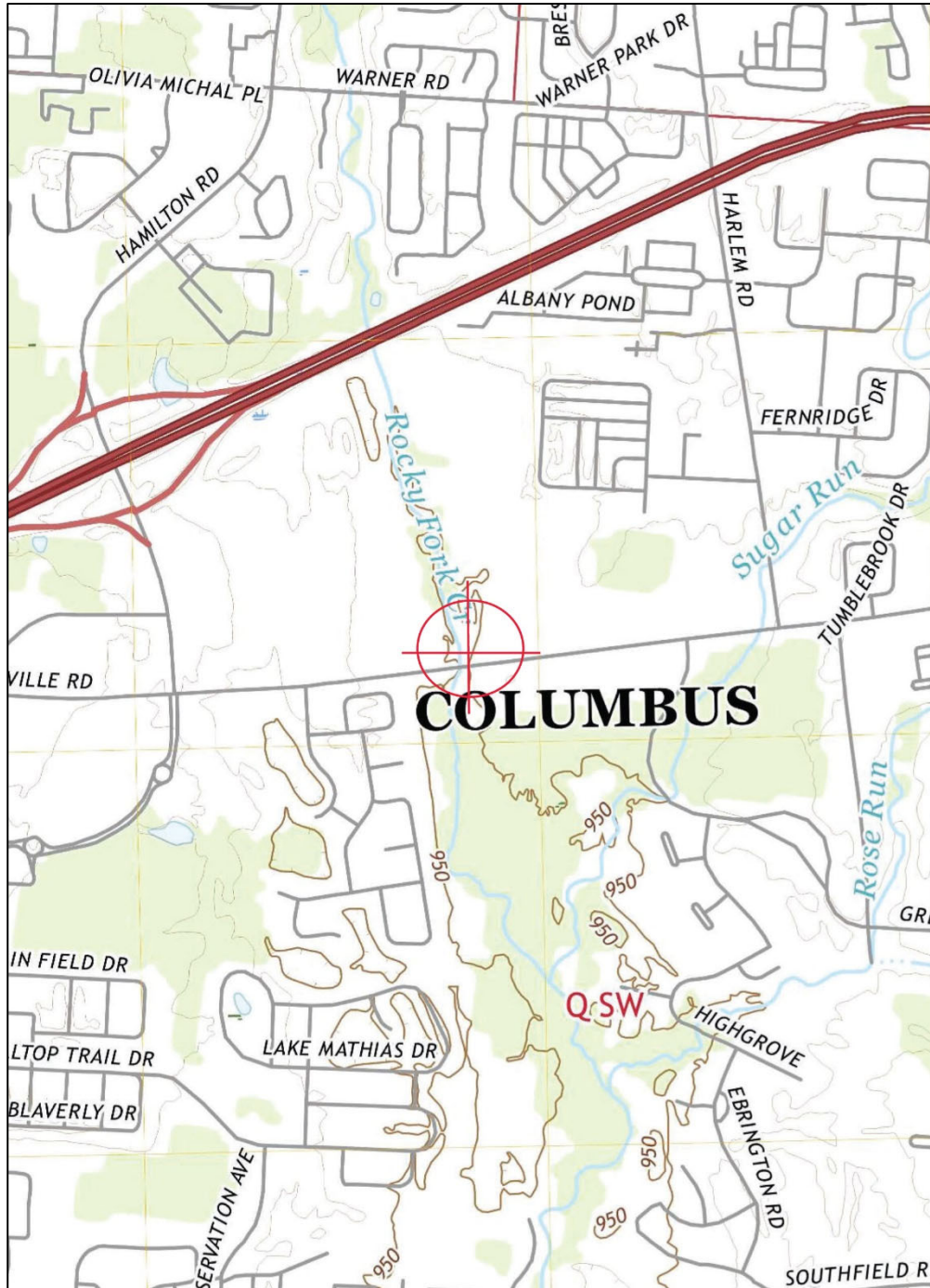
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Woods, Prince T. *Open Air Poultry Houses for All Climates*. Chicago: American Poultry Journal Publishing Company, 1913.

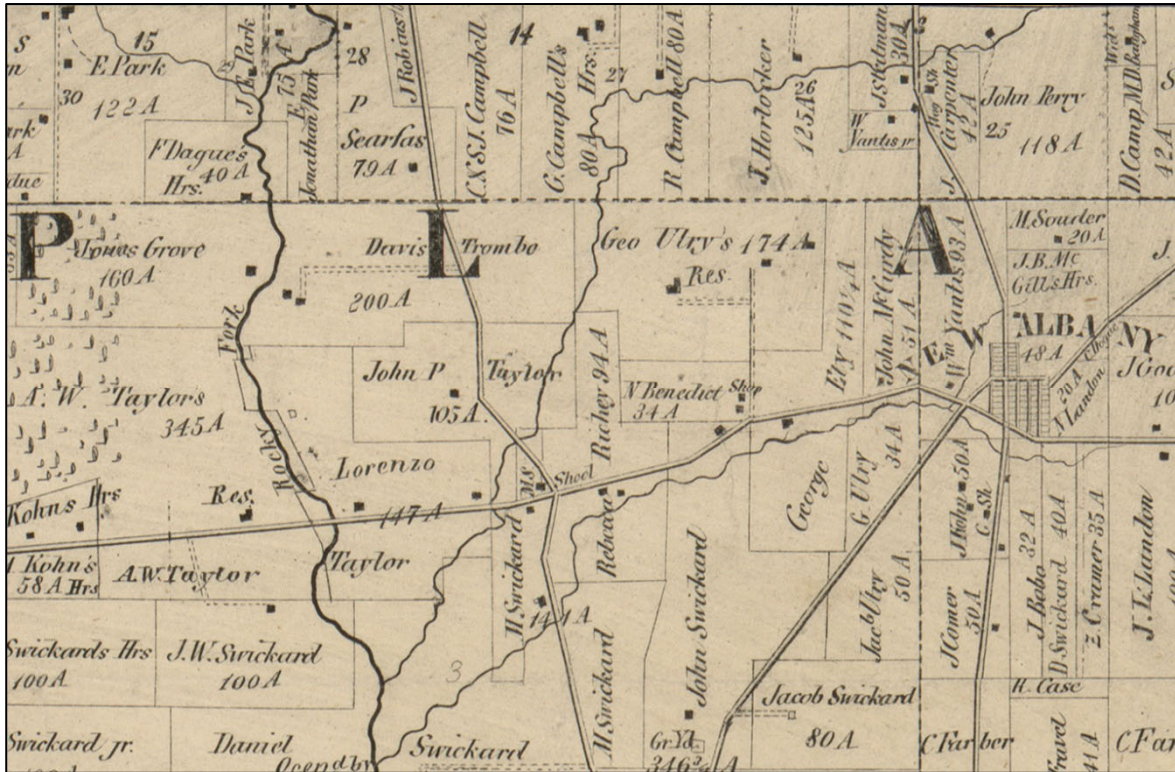
Historian:

Charissa W. Durst, AIA, LEED AP
Hardlines Design Company
4608 Indianola Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43214
Tel: 614-784-8733
Email: cdurst@hardlinesdesign.com



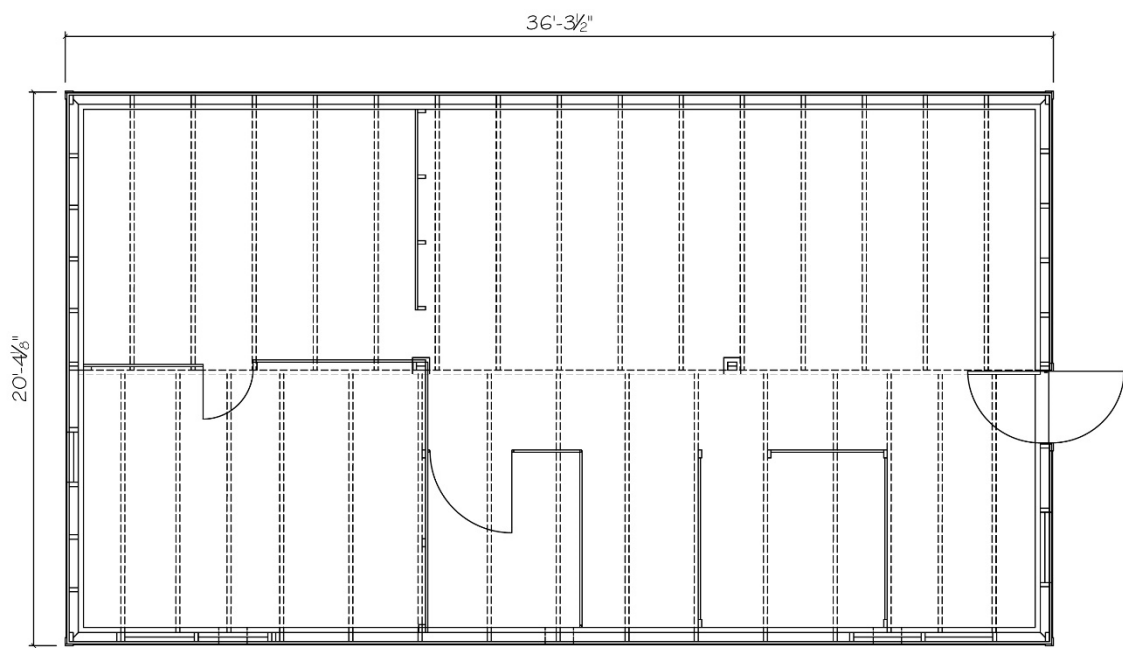
7.5 Minute New Albany, Ohio, USGS Quad Map
with location of the Taylor Farm
(Circle and cross hairs added by HDC)



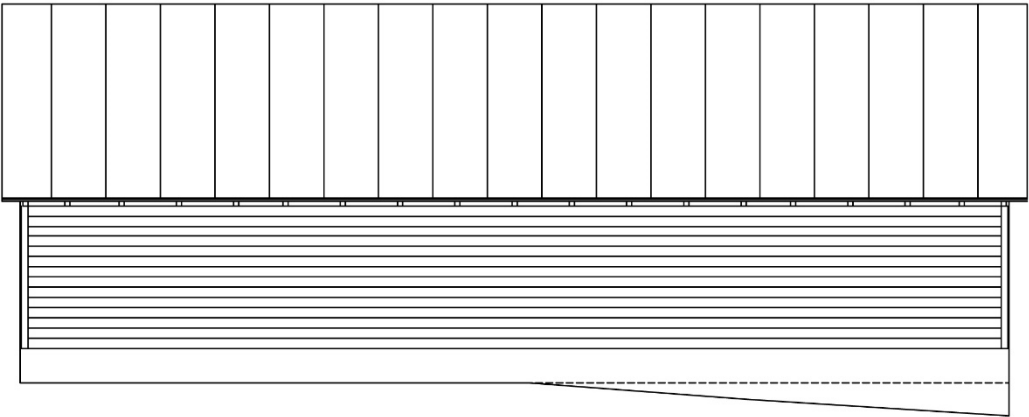


Detail from 1856 map of Franklin County, Ohio



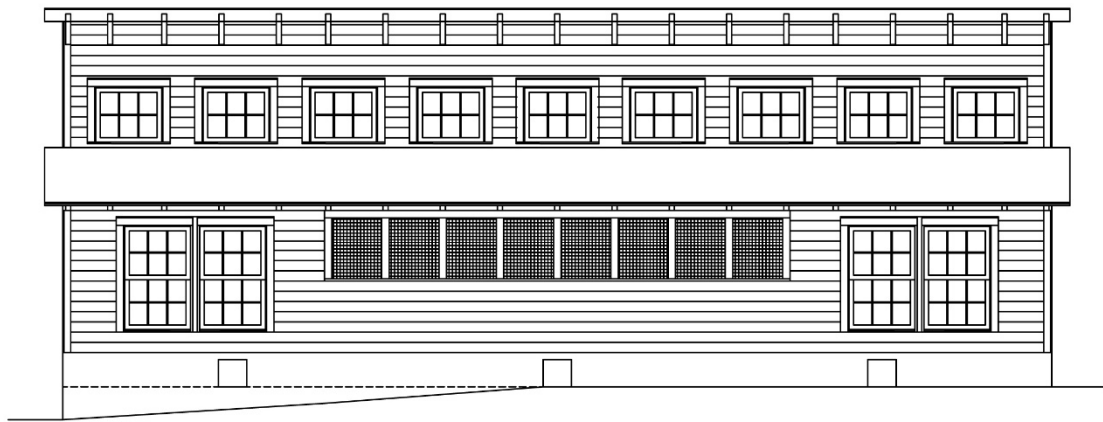


Laying House Floor Plan 

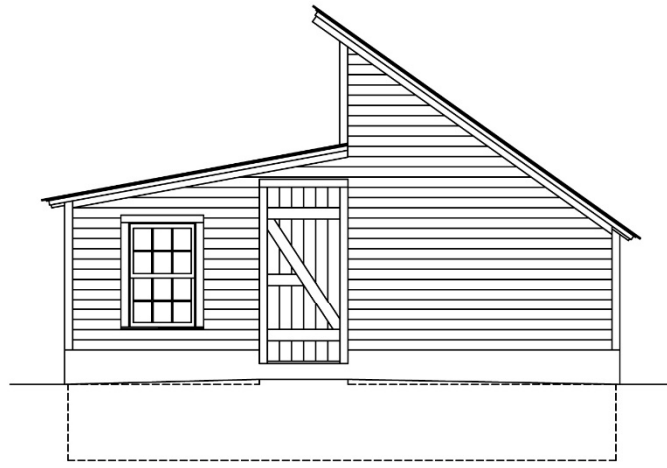


North Elevation

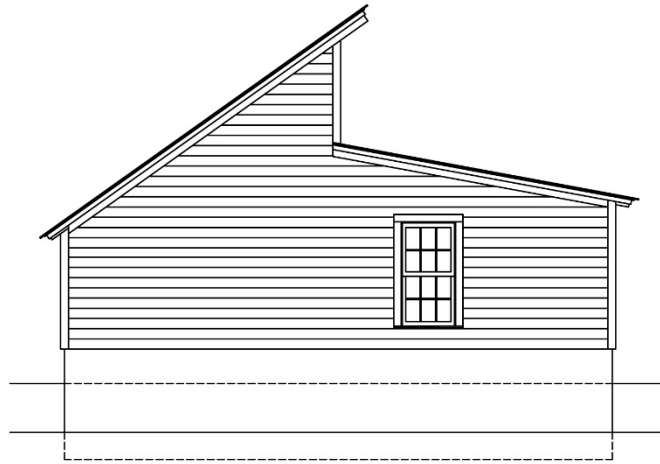
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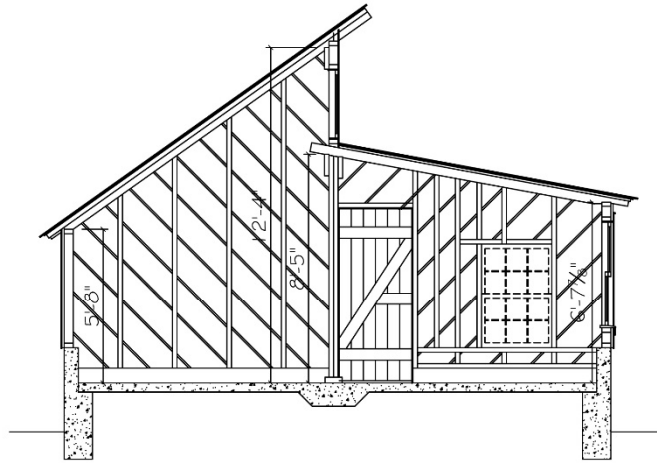
South Elevation



East Elevation



West Elevation



Cross Section

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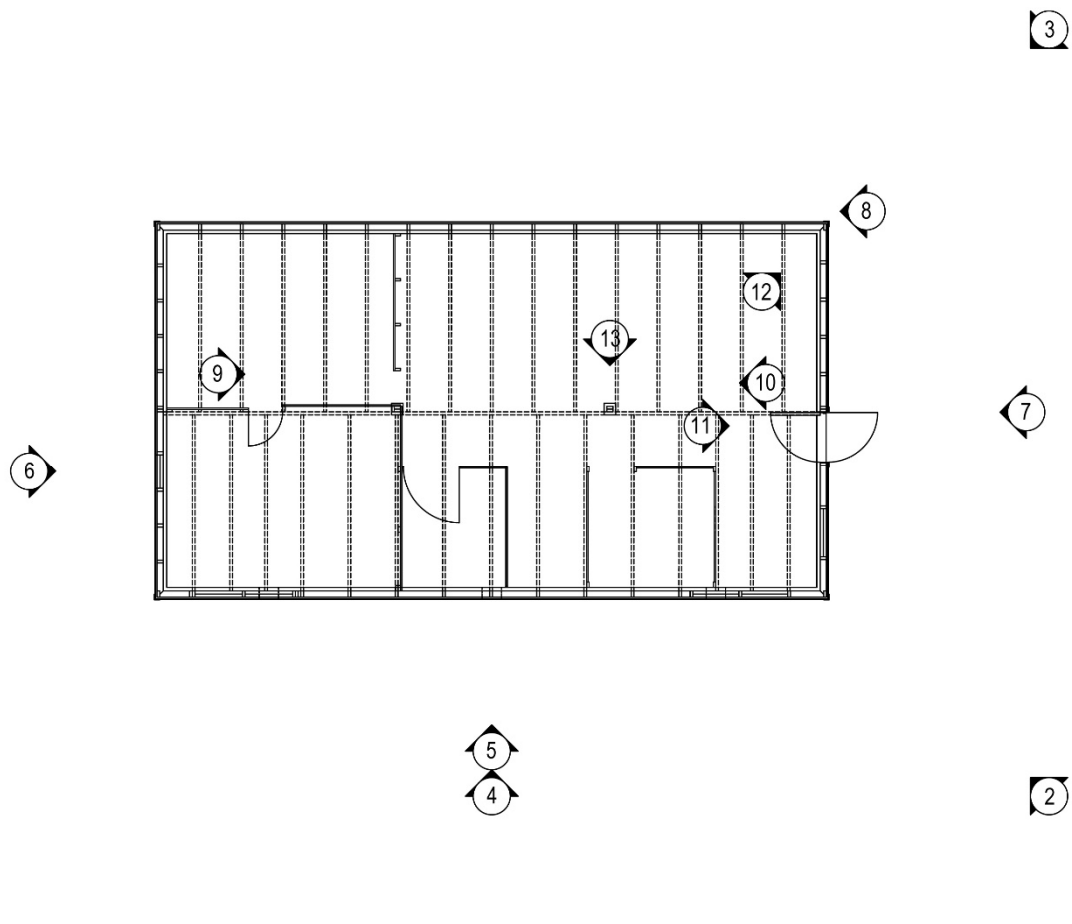
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Franklin County
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Jeff Bates, Photographer, Hardlines Design Company, March 23, 2023

- 1 CONTEXT VIEW OF LAYING HOUSE WITH BARN IN BACKGROUND,
LOOKING NORTHEAST
- 2 SOUTHEAST CORNER, LOOKING NORTHWEST
- 3 NORTHEAST CORNER LOOKING SOUTHWEST
- 4 SOUTH ELEVATION FACING THE FARMHOUSE, LOOKING NORTH
- 5 DETAIL OF MONITOR WINDOWS ON SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING
NORTH
- 6 DETAIL OF DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW ON WEST ELEVATION, LOOKING
EAST
- 7 DETAIL OF MONITOR ROOF STRUCTURE, LOOKING WEST
- 8 DETAIL OF EXPOSED RAFTER TAILS ON NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING
WEST
- 9 OVERALL INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST
- 10 OVERALL INTERIOR, LOOKING WEST
- 11 DETAIL OF INTERIOR SIDE OF ENTRY DOOR, LOOKING EAST
- 12 DETAIL OF DIAGONAL PLANK WALL SHEATHING IN NORTHEAST
CORNER, LOOKING NORTHEAST
- 13 INTERIOR DETAIL OF MONITOR WINDOWS, LOOKING SOUTH

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Photo 1. Context view of Laying House with Barn in background, looking northeast

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Photo 2. Southeast corner, looking northwest

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Photo 3. Northeast corner looking southwest

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Photo 4. South Elevation facing the Farmhouse, looking north

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Photo 5. Detail of monitor windows on south elevation, looking north

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Photo 6. Detail of double hung window on west elevation, looking east

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Photo 7. Detail of monitor roof structure, looking west

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Photo 8. Detail of exposed rafter tails on north elevation, looking west

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Photo 9. Overall interior, looking east

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Photo 10. Overall interior, looking west

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Photo 11. Detail of interior side of entry door, looking east

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Photo 12. Detail of diagonal plank wall sheathing in northeast corner, looking northeast

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Photo 13. Interior detail of monitor windows, looking south