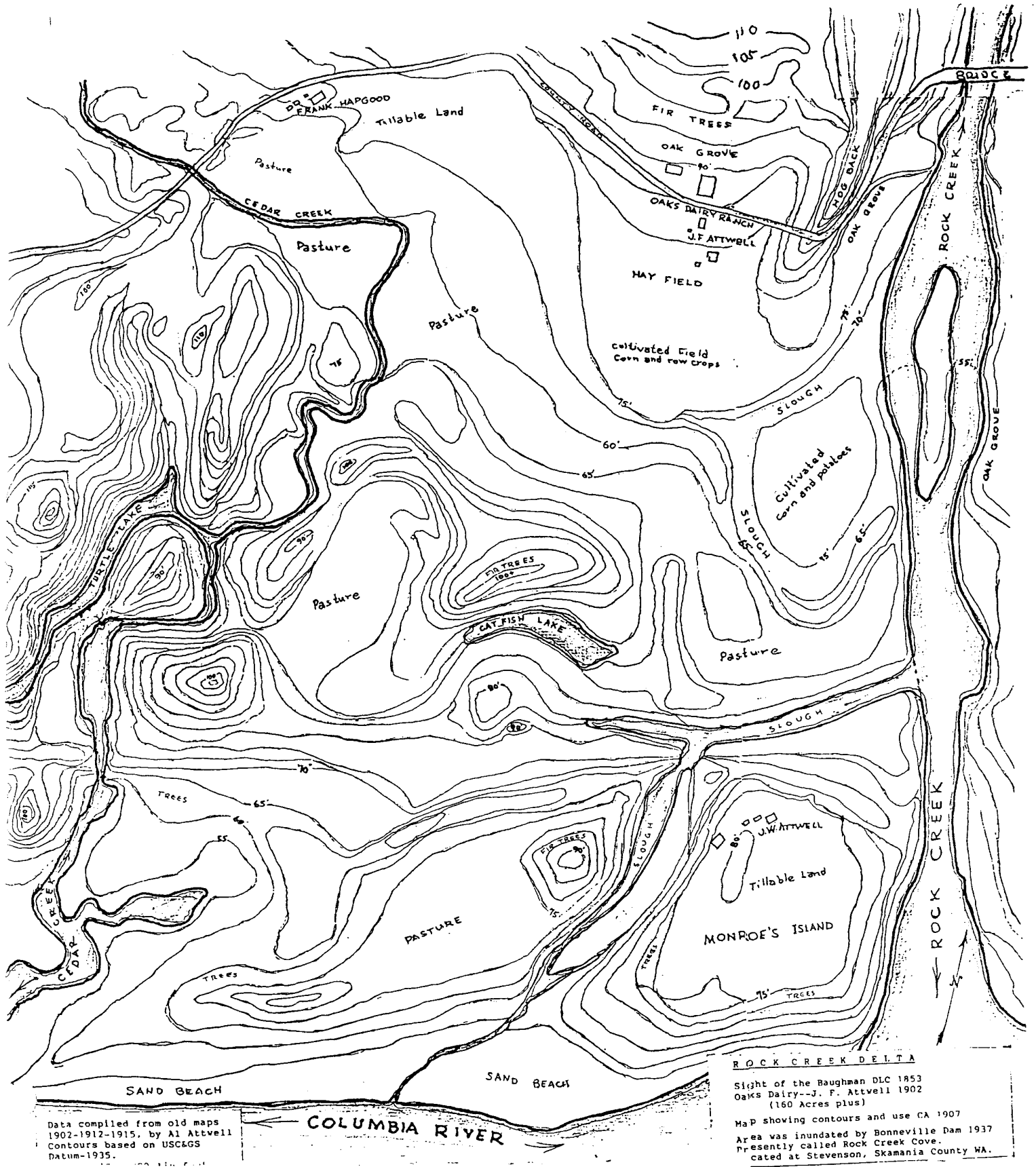


ROCK CREEK DELTA

ONCE A STREAM DELTA
ONCE A DAIRY RANCH
ONCE A MILL LOG-POND
NOW A BEAUTIFUL COVE

Maps-Story and Illustrations
© by Albert W. Attwell
1996



Data compiled from old maps 1902-1912-1915, by A1 Attwell
 Contours based on USCLGS Datum-1935.

COLUMBIA RIVER

ROCK CREEK DELTA
 Slight of the Baughman DLC 1853
 Oaks Dairy--J. F. Attwell 1902
 (160 Acres plus)
 Map showing contours and use CA 1907
 Area was inundated by Bonneville Dam 1937
 Presently called Rock Creek Cove.
 Located at Stevenson, Skamania County WA.

OAKS DAIRY FARM

It was in 1902 that J. F. (Monty) and Bertha A. Attwell, purchased a piece of land, that was the delta of a mountain stream, called Rock Creek.

Rock Creek was not big enough to be called a river, except at the times of the January thaw. It was a beautiful stream with three water falls within two miles from its mouth, where the creek emptied into the Columbia River.

An early pioneer by the name of D. Baughman, established a Donation Land Claim in 1852 or 1853 that included most of the delta of Rock Creek. It wasn't until 1902 that the area was secured for the use of cultivation and a dairy ranch.

At this period Albert J. Blackwood with his nephew, Walter G. Attwell, surveyed the area. Albert Blackwood was a civil engineer. The area was to become the Oaks Dairy Ranch. It was a beautiful piece of land for farming. The low lands of the delta was flooded every year in late May and early June, by the runoff of the annual Spring high waters of the Columbia. This was a natural act of nature. This water covered the low lands along the river with its back water loaded with rich silt. A great benefit for the low land farmers along the river. Who planned their crops to fit the timing of this spring run-off. Called by the natives the "high-water".

This product of nature,formed over many geological changes has played an interesting role in this part of the gorge.

On the west side of Rock Creek, about one half-mile above the

normal flow of the Columbia, before 1937, is a hog-back that was perhaps formed during one of the laval flows that built the Cascade Mountains. This hogback acts as a wall on the west bank of the stream. There is evidence in the debris caught by this lava rock ridge, of the past action of the Columbia River including the Missoula Deluge, at the end of the ice age. East of Rock Creek where the City of Stevenson is now located are ridges of what at what was once called Sheppards Point. Further west of Rock Creek, about another one half mile is another group of ridges caused by the geological flow and earthquakes related to the mythical “Bridge of the Gods”.

These geological actions, over time created a kind of basin that became Rock Creek Delta. Erosion and the Spring-high-water runoff of the Columbia slowly filled the Rock Creek Basin with river silt. Leaving a river low land with many small islands, sloughs and small lakes. The rich river silt-soil refreshed with every Spring’s high water. Here Monty and Bertha saw the possibilities and created the Oaks Dairy Ranch.

The Ranch Was Born

Monty Attwell’s parents, Roger and Mary Jane, came to the Columbia Gorge, by way of the Oregon Trail. They both arrived late in the month of August 1852. They had not met until they arrived at the Bush’s Hotel at Bradford’s Landing at the Upper Cascades. The hotel was located on the south western edge of the Rock Creek Delta. At that time a central meeting place for travelers in the area. It was here that the parents of Monty fell in love and were married.

They decided to stay in the area, establishing their own donation land claim just across the river at the head of the Cascade Rapids (now Cascade Locks, Oregon). They built a small saw mill and boat yard on the river’s edge. Five of the first Mid-Columbia River Steamers were built at this site. The Mary, Wasco, Hassaloe, Idaho and Umatilla.

Monty, Mary and Roger’s first son was born at the Cascade site on January 5, 1855. He always loved the river and became a river steamer pilot at the age of 27 years. He also helped manage the family farm. Where they raised oxen and horses for timber work and trade. Bertha was the daughter of Hampton and Eliza Blackwood, who were also pioneers of the

western trail, who settled in the Washougal Area. Both Monty and Bertha often spoke of the time when Monty retired from the river they would like to develop the Rock creek Delta into a comprehensive type farm. This became possible when Monty's mother, Mary Jane died in 1901. The original site was sold and Monty and Bertha purchased the area of the Rock Creek Delta in 1902.

It was at this time they moved to a house at Bradfords Landing. The first step in the development of the Oaks Dairy Ranch.

Monty and Bertha had three children at the time of the move in 1902. Percy B. was twelve, Walter G. was ten and Adele was eight years old. With the three children they moved to a house at Bradford's Landing. Where they lived while building a home and barn on their new place.

They chose a location near the west side of the Rock Oreek hog-back, just above the flood line of the Spring high water. There was a large grove of Oak trees there for shelter and aesthetic character. Thus the name Oaks Dairy Ranch.

It was a busy time and much activity. James, their fourth child, was born that summer, on July 27, 1902. It was 1904 before all the buildings, the barn and house were finished and a first class dairy was in operation. Alice, the second daughter and fifth child, was born that year, February 22nd.

In a way they moved from one ranch to another just across the Columbia River. The animals, household goods and farm equipment were moved by boat. Monty had a sail boat and row boats. Lucky Monty was skilled and everything was moved without any major mishaps. The animals, farm equipment were moved by steamer. John, Monty's brother, moved about the same time to Monroe's Island, at the mouth of Rock Creek. So the whole move was a family affair. Bertha's brothers Albert and Guy and sisters Eunice and Annie lending a hand.

The Buildings

The house had six rooms plus washing room for dairy and house-

hold, bathroom and two porches on the first floor, including a parlor (music-room), sitting room, dining room and large farm kitchen. Two bedrooms and a large dormitory room on the second floor. A large house with much activity.

Bertha was also a music teacher, taught lessons and had a small orchestra. It was a busy place. A community center for many activities.

A farm or ranch is a kind of community within itself for a total operation. As animals and equipment also need structures, all are in operation as a ranch and at the same time.

A Farming Community

The barn and house seem to have been built at the same time period.

The following sketches will give a general idea of the house and farm buildings. The milk-house then the silo were the last structures of the original buildings.

Structures and Produce of The Oaks Dairy Ranch

A dairy ranch to be a complete unit, needs to be a comprehensive type of agri-business, in total. Care of the land, the animals, the buildings, the labor and product are to operate as a unit. This was the Oaks Dairy Ranch. Just called the ranch by the family members.

There were several buildings in addition to the ranch house. A large earthen red barn, color mixed paint from the red rock of Red Bluff, that had been ground to a powder and mixed with linseed oil. There was adequate space for seven horses and tack space. Milking stantions for several cows. Calving pens and equipment storage. The center area was large enough for winter hay and other feed storage. At the rear was a silo to hold feed for the dairy stock. The silo was one of the tallest buildings on the ranch. When the stock was out of the barn it became a winter play area for the children.

Just west of the barn was a building for farm machinery and

equipment storage, plus a place for an automobile. Monty and Bertha were the proud owners of the third car in the County, a 1913 Michigan. The cars in the county at that time were more for show and a problem for horses than a mode for travel.

The Milk House was the last major structure. It was built of concrete with a wooden roof. The building was used for cooling, storage, separating and preparing milk for delivery. Milk was supplied to the railroad crews for those years of the building of the SP&S Line and for the residence of the area.

In additions to horses and cows they also had hogs chickens and other fowl for eggs and home use. Monty also bred hogs especially for ham and bacon. Care of the animals and fowl was important to the ranch. Monty always believed pasture was important to all of the creatures. He always felt the quality was better.

Row and field crops were also a part of the ranch. Hay was very important as a field crop in addition to pasture control. Corn was grown for both domestic and as a field crop. Crops like potatoes and other root vegetables were grown for both domestic and commerical use. They also had a large family garden with a large variety of vegetables and fruits.

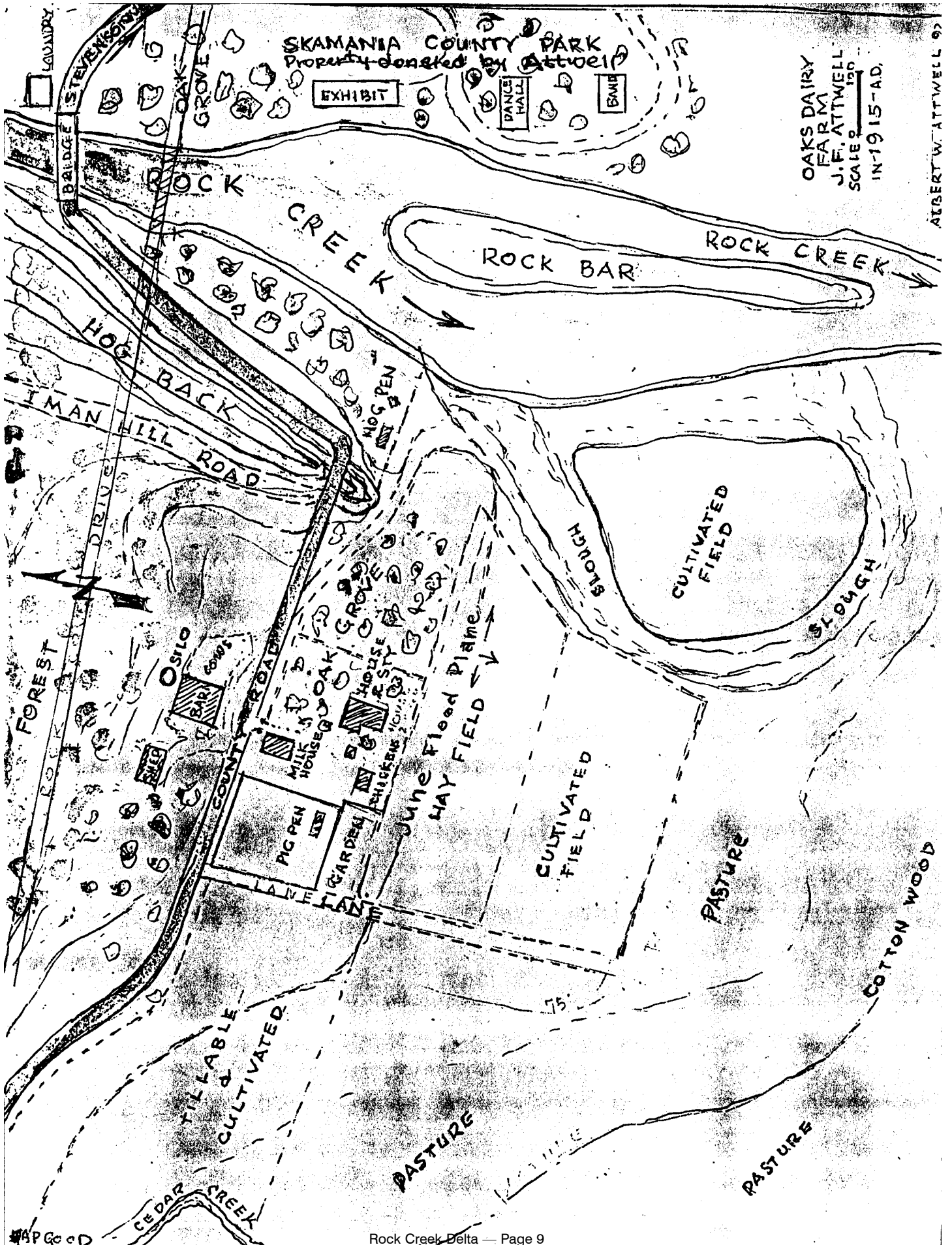
A large spring was developed in the side-hill above the barn and there was never a lack of water for its many uses. Wood for heat and other uses was never a problem. It was a true comprehensive type ranch.

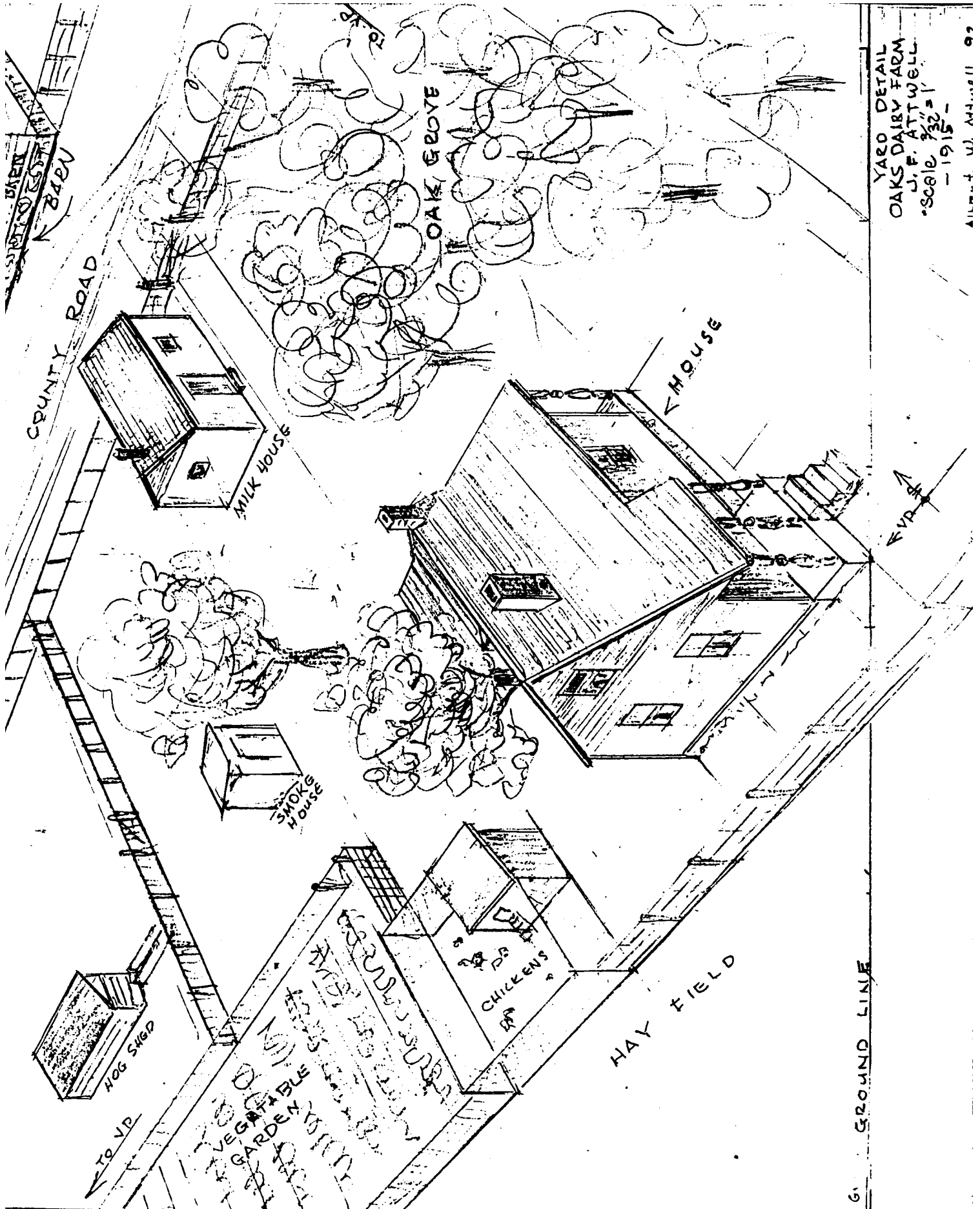
The Oaks Dairy Ranch was an ideal place to grow-up. All the children had chores. Which were very important for our total education. We learned how to work as a unit. There was also time to explore the land, time to fish and hunt, to pick wild berrys. Row a boat and swim. To sleep out in the hay shocks or camp and hike in the back country, to join in community activities. And of course go to school. Trips down or up river were fist taken by river steamer, then by train. It was in 1918 before there were roads good enough to travel by car.

In 1916 Bertha, our mother, a full time partner, died of pneumonia. A shock to the family and community. The two older boys, Percy and

Walter, were graduating from college in the engineering fields. Adele was married and had her own home. This left Monty with James 14, Alice 12 and Albert just five years old.

The country was also getting ready to enter World War I. Labor was being extended to the national effort. Monty tried to carry on. In 1918 he sold his beautiful ranch to the Lott Family and they continued to run the ranch. It was farmed by several different individuals until the time of the Bonneville Dam. The back water covered most of the farm land creating a river bay. For several years it was a log pond. It is now again a beautiful place called Rock Creek Cove. Where the Rock Creek Community Center, The Skamania County Fair Grounds and a new church is located. Its purpose is changed but its spirit of community is very much alive. A new trail is planned along the water-front so in a way its nature is still of service to all creatures.





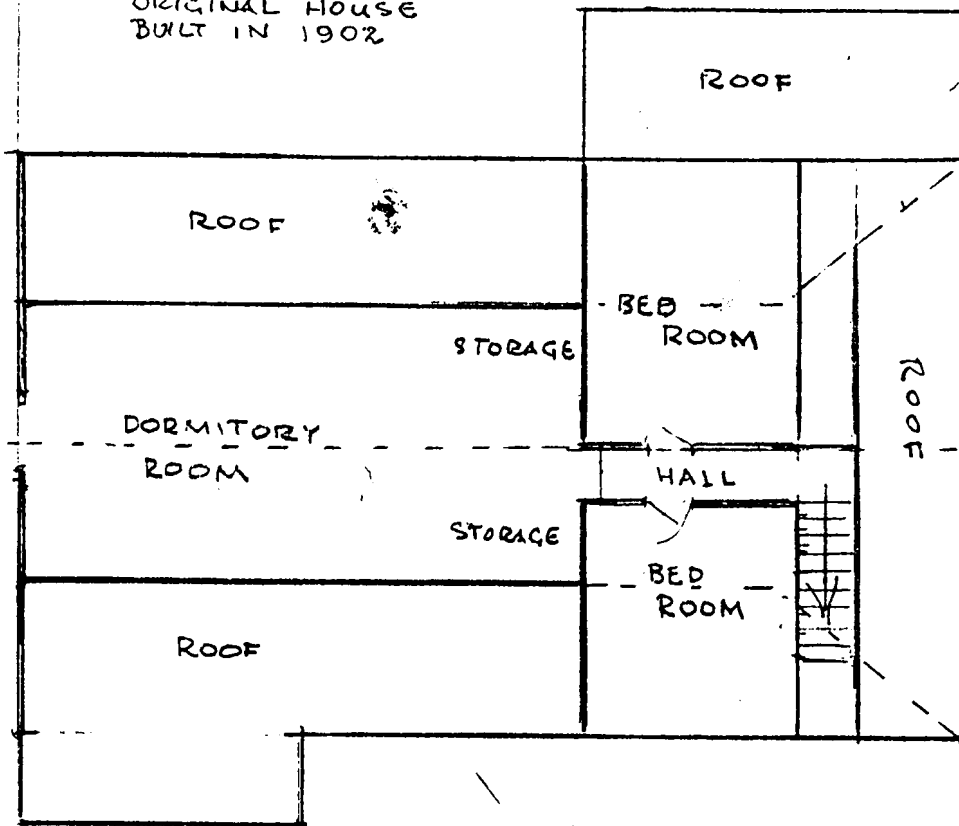
YARD DETAIL
 OAKS DAIRY FARM
 J. F. ATTWELL
 SCALE 3/32" = 1'
 - 1915 -

ALBERT W. ATTWELL 99

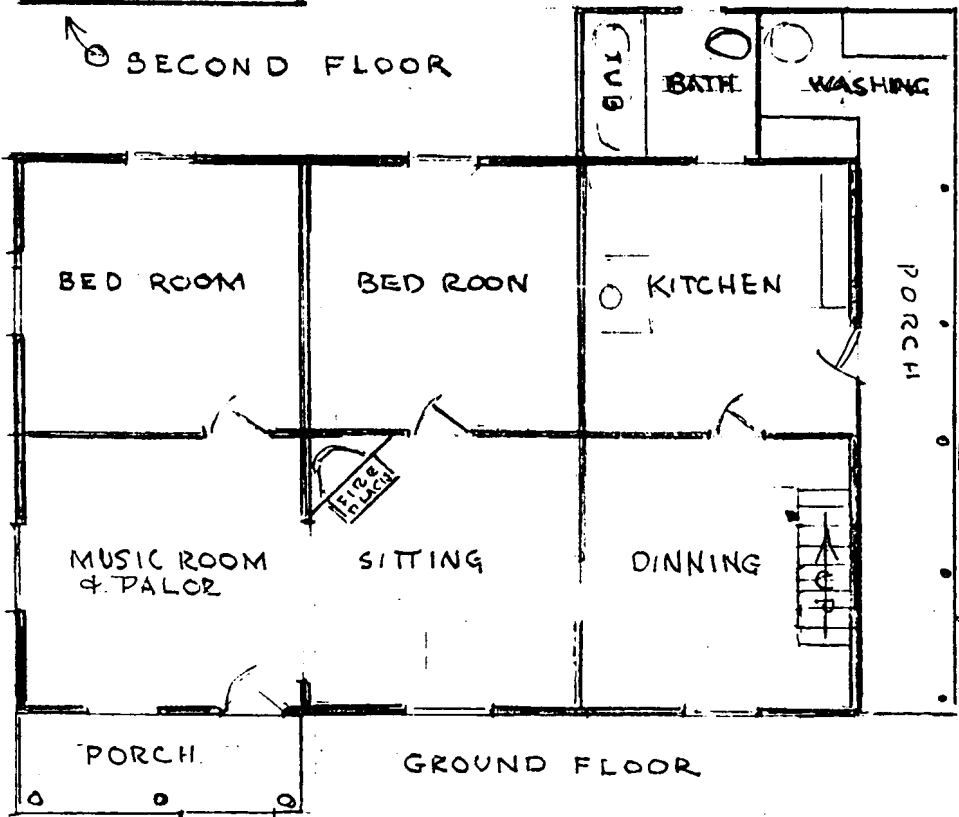
OAKS DAIRY FARM HOUSE

J.F. ATTWELL

ORIGINAL HOUSE
BUILT IN 1902



SECOND FLOOR



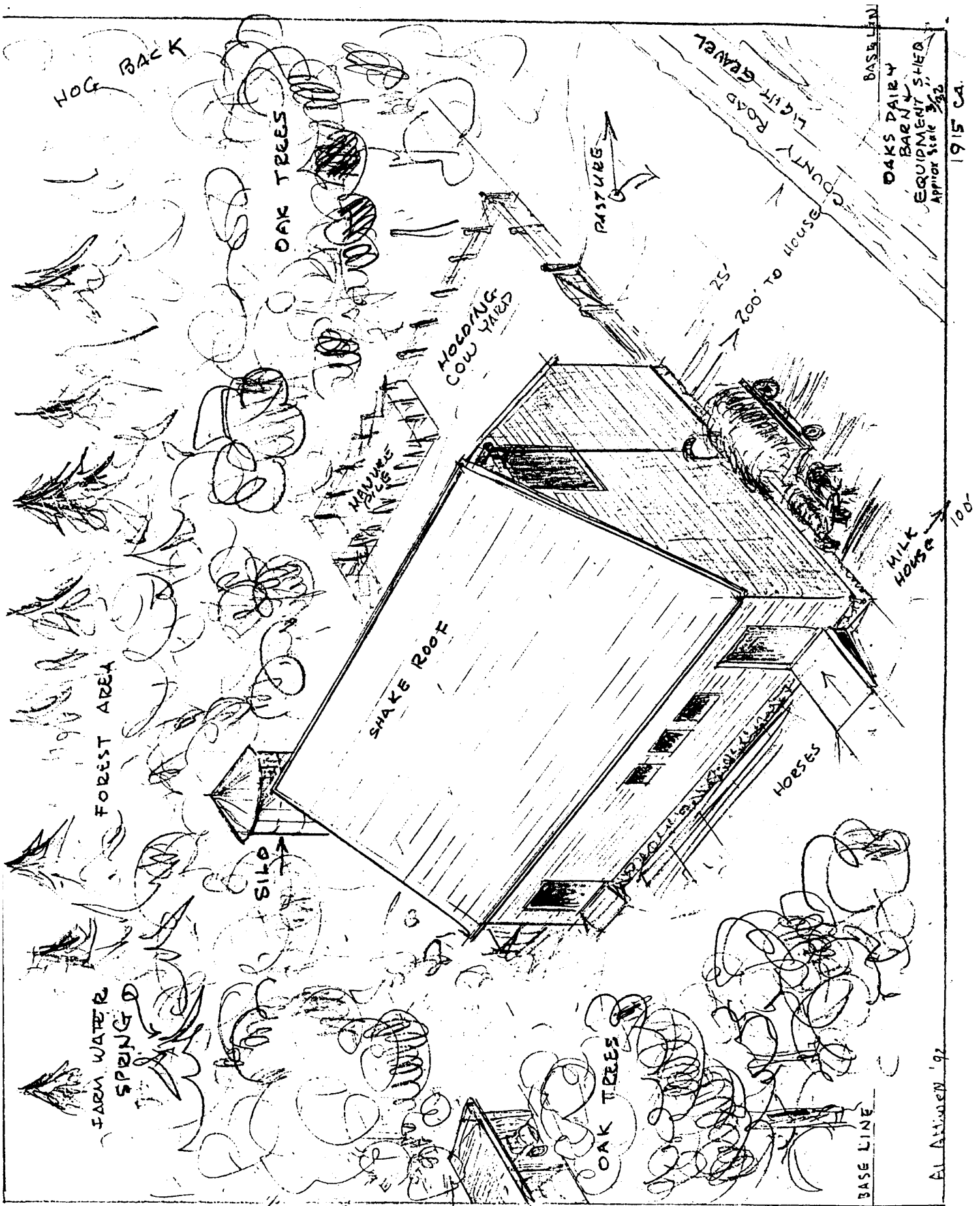
GROUND FLOOR

COUNTY ROAD
100'



HOUSE PLAN

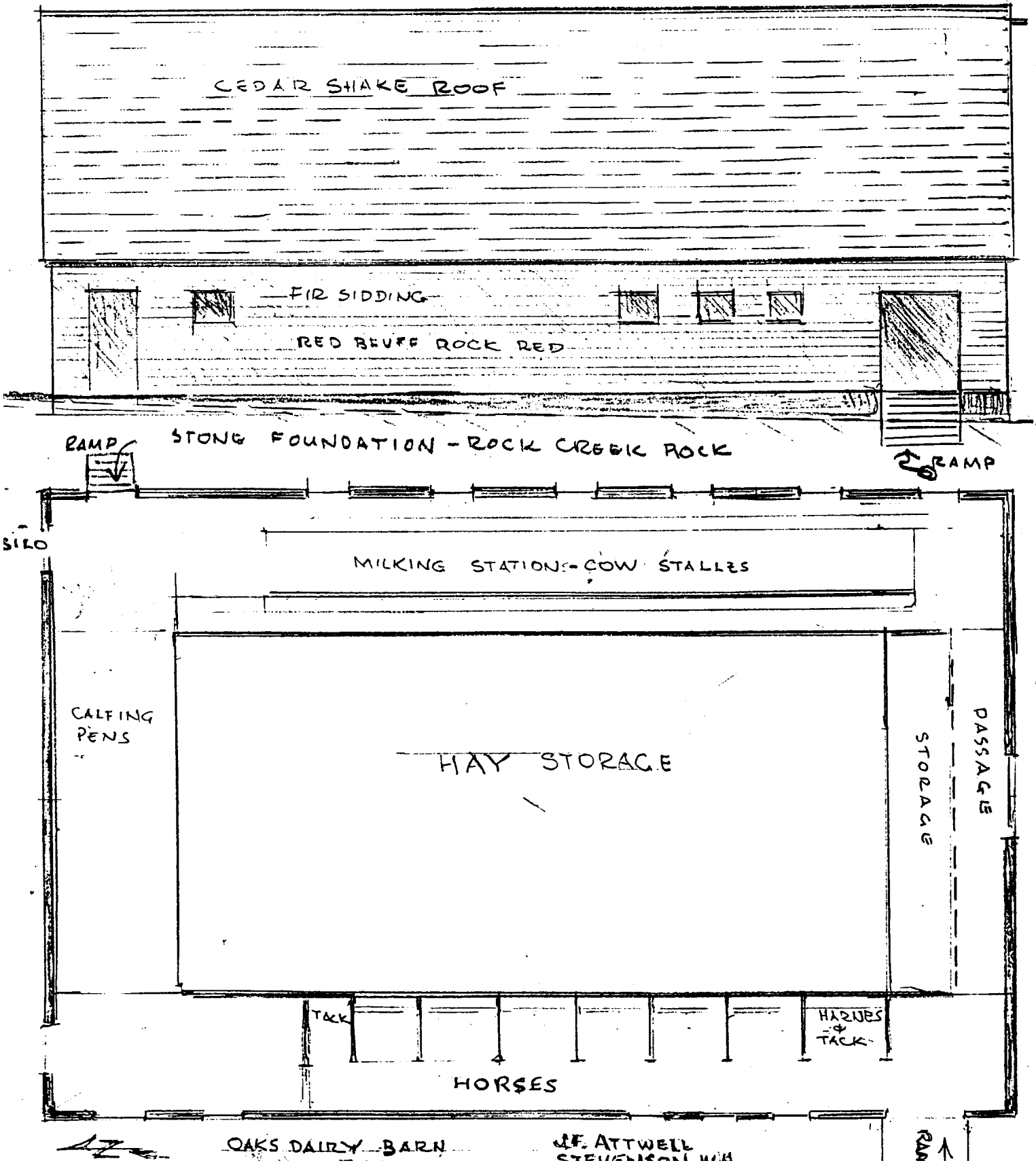
Scale $\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'$



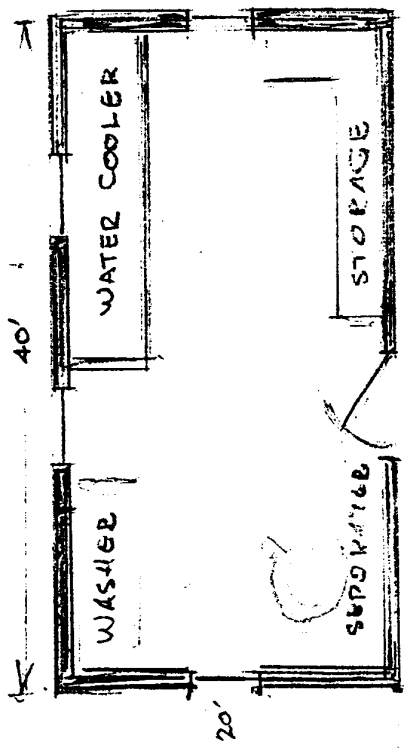
BASE LINE
 OAKS DAIRY
 BARN
 EQUIPMENT SHED
 Approx. Site 3/82
 1915 CA.

Al Attimen '92

THIS BUILDING WAS MADE FROM LOCAL MATERIALS,
THE CEDAR SHAKES FOR THE ROOF WERE HAND
SPLIT. THE RED PAINT ON THE BARN WAS FROM
LOCAL GROUND RED ROCK. LINSSEED OIL IMPORTED.

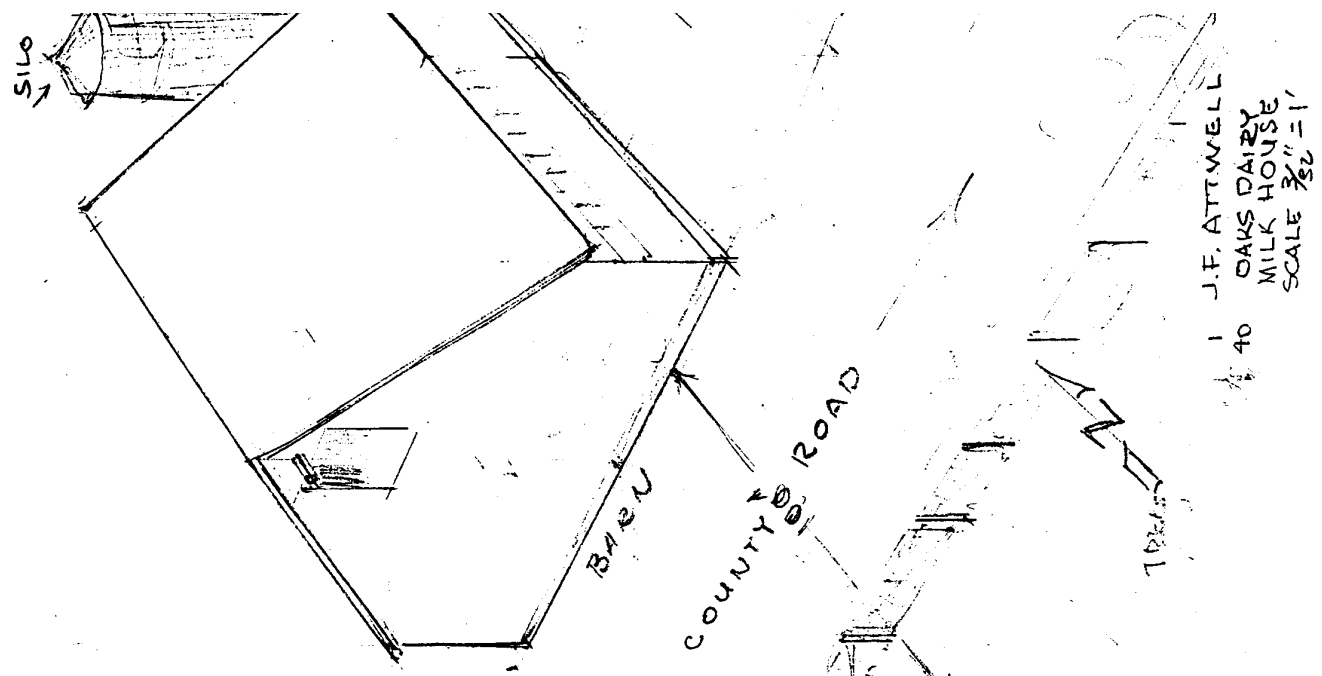


R
3/4



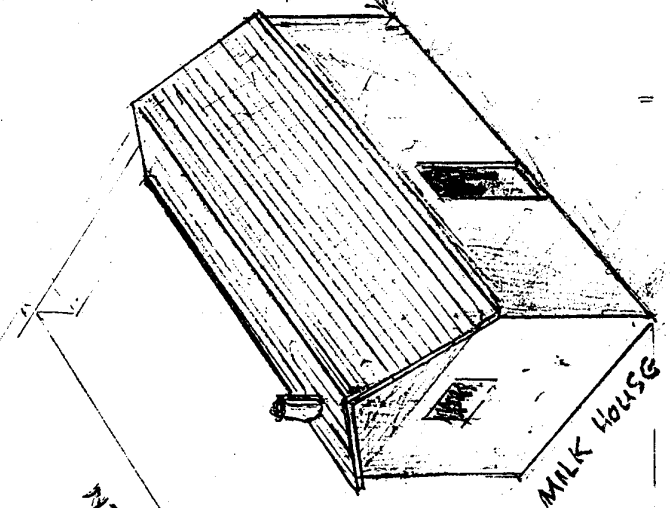
MILK HOUSE PLAN
CONCRETE & STONE

Scale 3/32" = 1'

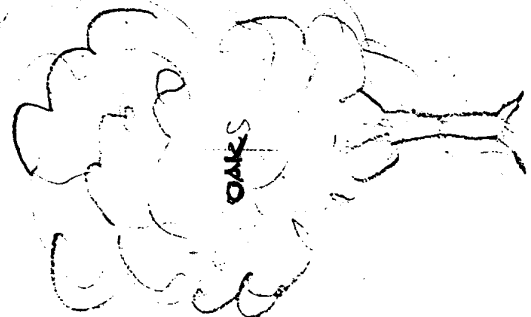


J.F. ATTWELL
OAKS DAIRY
MILK HOUSE
SCALE 3/32" = 1'

40



TOP VIEW



BASE LINE

Horticulture Society to County

The Grantor the Skamania County Horticulture Society a corporation of the State of Washington for and in consideration of the sum of one thousand dollars to it in hand paid by Skamania County does hereby convey and warrant unto said Skamania County its successors and assigns the following real-estate situated in the County of Skamania State of Washington to-wit:

Beginning at the quarter section corner on the north line of section one in Township two North of Range seven East of W.M., running thence south 1250 feet to the center of Rock Creek, thence north 30 deg. 22 min west 1449 feet to center of Rock Creek; thence east 732½ feet to place of beginning containing ten and one half acres more or less. To have and to/hold the same forever.

In Testimony Whereof the said grantor has caused its name and corporate seal to be hereunto affixed by its authorized officers this 18th day of March 1912

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of	Skamania County Horticulture Society
Raymond C.Sly	by Sam Samson, Vice President
State of Washington	A. C. Sly)
County of Skamania, ss.	J. F. Attwell) Trustees
	P. S. C. Wills)
	Attest: W. S. Young, Secretary

I, Raymond C. Sly a Notary Public in and for said County and State do hereby certify that on this 18th day of March 1912 before me personally appeared Sam Samson Vice President, A. C. Sly, J. F. Attwell and P. S. C. Wills, Trustees, and W. S. Young, Secretary respectively of the corporation that executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledge the same to be the free and voluntary act and deed of said corporation for the uses and purposes therein mentioned and on oath stated that they were authorized to execute the same in behalf of said corporation and that the seal affixed is the corporate seal of said Corporation.

In Testimony Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal the day and year in this certificate first above written.

(Notarial Seal)	Raymond C. Sly, Notary Public for Washington residing at Stevenson Wash.
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Filed for record by Co. Auditor on April 11th 1912 at 1:15 P.M.
A. Fleischhauer
Co. Auditor

Continue to page ---

Attwell to Skamania Co. Horticulture Scty.

The grantors J. P. Attwell and Bertha Attwell his wife for and in consideration of One thousand dollars in hand paid convey and warrant to Skamania County Horticulture Society a corporation of the State of Washington the following described real estate situated in the County of Skamania State of Washington to-wit:

Beginning at the quarter section corner on the north line of section one township two North of Range seven East of W.M. and running, thence south 1250 feet to the center of Rock Creek; thence North 30 deg. 22 min. west fourteen hundred forty nine feet (1449) to the center of Rock Creek; thence east seven hundred thirty two and one half (732½) feet to the place of beginning containing ten and half acres more or less.

Dated this 14th day of March 1912

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of

Raymond C. Sly

Walter G. Attwell

State of Washington

County of Skamania, ss.

J. P. Attwell (Seal)

Bertha Attwell (Seal)

I, Raymond C. L. Sly do hereby certify that on this 16th day of March 1912 before me personally appeared J. P. Attwell and Bertha Attwell his wife to me known to be the individuals described in and who executed the within instrument and acknowledged that they signed and sealed the same as their free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

Given under my hand and official seal this 16th day of March 1912.

(Notarial Seal)

Raymond C. Sly

Notary Public for Washington, Stevenson, Wash

Filed for record by Co. Auditor on April 11th 1912 at 1:15 P.M.

A. Fleischhauer

Co. Auditor

Note:

The Skamania County Horticulture Society established a partial of land on the east-side of Rock Creek Skamania County on March 18, 1912.

This small piece of real estate was to become the Skamania County Fair Grounds. The land was at one time a part of the Oaks Dairy Ranch. It is now a parking lot for the county.