Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa



1908 postcard, Floyd County Historical Society

June 6, 2011

Prepared for:

Charles City Historic Preservation Commission

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1. Executive Summary

The Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Sherman Nursery Company "proper" in Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa, is part of a phased program to identify, evaluate, register, and protect the cultural resources of Charles City. Historic preservation projects have been completed in Charles City since the 1970s. A Planning for Preservation study was completed in 1996 to make recommendations for future projects and work for the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission. The survey of the Sherman Nursery Company was recommended through this project and developed locally with interest in the future of the property. The Charles City Historic Preservation Commission received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant in spring 2010 to conduct this survey. The survey area is the approximately 20 core acres of the Sherman Nursery Company proper in Section 12 on the west side of Charles City that contains the office building, primary greenhouses, bridges, and packing and shipping facilities. The larger Sherman Nursery Company holdings stretch into Section 11 to the west, as well as include other scattered properties in the area.

Erwin M. Sherman moved to Charles City from nearby Chickasaw County and launched the Sherman Nursery Company in 1884 on rented land. He bought his first 200 acres in 1894-95. Construction in Section 12 from 1902 to 1909 included the stone office, a large stone packing/shipping building, six greenhouses, and a heating plant. The complex expanded in the 1910s, and two railroad bridges were built for railroad spurs to the property in 1910. The company grew rapidly through the 1910s and 1920s, becoming known for its evergreens, fruit trees, and other hardy trees and plants, as well as for its cut roses. Products were sold wholesale and retail through a system of sales agents. Sherman continued to serve as president of the Sherman Nursery Company until he sold it to an investment company, Ellis & Ellis, in 1931, a few years prior to his death in 1934. The company was sold in 1947 to M.R. Cashman, and the entire physical plant was refurbished, rebuilt, or constructed new from 1948 to 1964. This work positioned the company for success through the next couple decades, with nursery practices shifting to container growing. Additional construction and rehabilitation was undertaken after Bailey Nurseries purchased the Sherman Nursery Company in 1983 through the 1990s. Sherman Nursery Company continues to operate as a division of Bailey Nurseries in Charles City in 2011, though the local operations have been scaled back over the last few years.

The goal of this intensive level survey was to research and evaluate the historic resources within the Sherman Nursery parcel associated with the office building and majority of the buildings and structures. The primary goal of the project was to evaluate a potential historic district and to identify boundaries and contributing buildings. The buildings were evaluated for individual eligibility as well. Research was conducted to develop a historic context relating to the company history to evaluate the historic resources surveyed. As a result of the survey project, six individual historic resources (built by 1960) were surveyed, as well as several later buildings. These historic resources include the stone office (1906), stone arch bridge (c.1896), two concrete railroad bridges (1910, 1910), stone carpenter/blacksmith shop (c.1906), and a frame tool shed (c.1910s). One previously surveyed resource had been demolished (stone packing/shipping cellar built in 1906-07 with 1958 roof). Two potential historic districts were identified and documented on Iowa Site Inventory forms, a small one including the office and three bridges (the individually significant resources) and a significantly larger one including the greater Sherman Nursery Company property. Thus, a total of nine Iowa Site Inventory forms were prepared.

II. Project Design and Objectives

The Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa, is part of a phased program of the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission to identify, evaluate, register, and protect the cultural resources of the community. Previously, 12 properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Charles City. A Planning for Preservation study was completed in 1996 to make recommendation for future projects and work. The intensive level survey of the Sherman Nursery Company property was one of the recommended projects. The parcel included in this survey project is outlined on Figure 1 (page 4). The survey area is the approximately 20 core acres of the Sherman Nursery Company proper in Section 12 on the west side of Charles City that contains the office building, primary greenhouses, bridges, and packing and shipping facilities. The larger Sherman Nursery Company holdings stretch into Section 11 to the west, as well as include other scattered properties in the area.

Previous work in Charles City

The earliest organized survey effort in Charles City dates to a survey by Environmental Planning and Research of Chicago, Illinois for the City of Charles City in 1975, published as *Charles City, Iowa: A Historic Inventory* in 1976. This survey developed initial historic contexts for the community and made recommendations for future survey and nomination work. Through this project, a reconnaissance level survey was completed for the community as a whole, as well as an intensive level survey for selected properties. The town was divided into areas, with each examined for historic districts as well as individually significant properties. Individual properties were the primary focus of the evaluation phase. Finally, the findings and inventory of 107 properties were published in the final report. These properties were divided into four groups based on rankings for significance and integrity. Through this initial work, the Central Park - North Main Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Since this initial work, a number of sites have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Charles City through individual projects and efforts, including nine individual properties and one historic district:

- A.B.C. Dodd House – 1978 - 310 3rd Ave., Charles City
- Alvin Miller House - 1978 - 1107 Court St., Charles City
- Charles Walter Hart House - 1980 - 800 3rd Ave., Charles City
- Charles Henry Parr House - 1980 - 100 W. Hulin St., Charles City
- Suspension Bridge - 1989 - Over the Cedar River at end of Clark St., Charles City (demolished by flood in 2008)
- Lucius and Maria Clinton Lane House - 1995 - also known as Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Family Home - 2379 Timber Ave., Charles City
- Dr. Salsbury's Laboratories, Main Office and Production Laboratory Building - 1996 - also known as Floyd County Museum - 500 Gilbert St., Charles City
- Wildwood Park Historic District - 1998 - 1 Wildwood Rd., Charles City
- Main Street Bridge - 1999 - Main St. over Cedar River, Charles City
- Floyd County Court House - 2003 - 101 S. Main St., Charles City

The Main Street Bridge was listed as part of a comprehensive statewide study by the Iowa Department of Transportation in 1996 to evaluate historic bridges in Iowa. Likewise, the Floyd County Court House was listed as part of a statewide Multiple Property Document nomination on WPA courthouses in Iowa.

The Charles City Historic Preservation Commission was established by local ordinance in 1994. In 1995, they received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to conduct a Planning for Preservation study. William C. Page was hired to coordinate the project, and he completed the project report in July 1996. The report included initial development of historic contexts for Charles City, review of previous cultural resource work in town, summary of National Register of Historic Places listings, overview of resources for future preservation projects, relationship of the newly formed historic preservation commission to other planning efforts in Charles City, and recommendations for future surveys and historic preservation activities. Through this work, eight potential historic districts were recommended for further survey and evaluation. Individual properties were also noted within the report, though this list was noted not to be inclusive. The only nomination work that appears to have followed this study and recommendations was the Wildwood Park Historic District listed in 1998. Other historic preservation activities recommended in the study have been implemented in Charles City. This Sherman Nursery Company survey is the second survey/nomination project to be undertaken as a recommendation from this report.

Survey objectives and structure

The intensive level historical and architectural survey of the Sherman Nursery Company initiated the first survey for this property, and it has positioned the commission and community to potentially undertake a future nomination of a portion of the company holdings to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The goal of this intensive level survey was to research and evaluate the historic resources within the core 20 acres of the nursery property. This survey report includes a historic context, identification and evaluation methods, a summary of the survey results, and recommendations for future nomination of a historic district and/or individual properties.

The Charles City Historic Preservation Commission hired consultant Rebecca Lawin McCarley to supervise and undertake the intensive level historical and architectural survey of the Sherman Nursery proper in Charles City and prepare the survey report, including a historic context developed for this project. The project was defined as the survey of Sherman Nursery "proper" as it will involve the portion of the property with the majority of the buildings, including the 1906 office building and three bridges. This area is approximately 20 acres and depicted on Figure 1. The additional acreage associated with the nursery, including approximately 250 acres immediately to the west in Section 11, will not be included as part of the survey project, though the greater land holdings are addressed in the historic context section and to a limited extant in the evaluation section. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate these historic resources for their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places as individual buildings and/or as contributing buildings in a potential historic district. No buildings associated with the Sherman Nursery Company have been previously listed on the National Register. In addition to the survey work, a historic context was developed and included in the survey report. This historic

context assisted in the evaluation of the identified historic resources. It focused on the history of Sherman Nursery, with limited context on the commercial nursery business in Iowa and the Midwest.

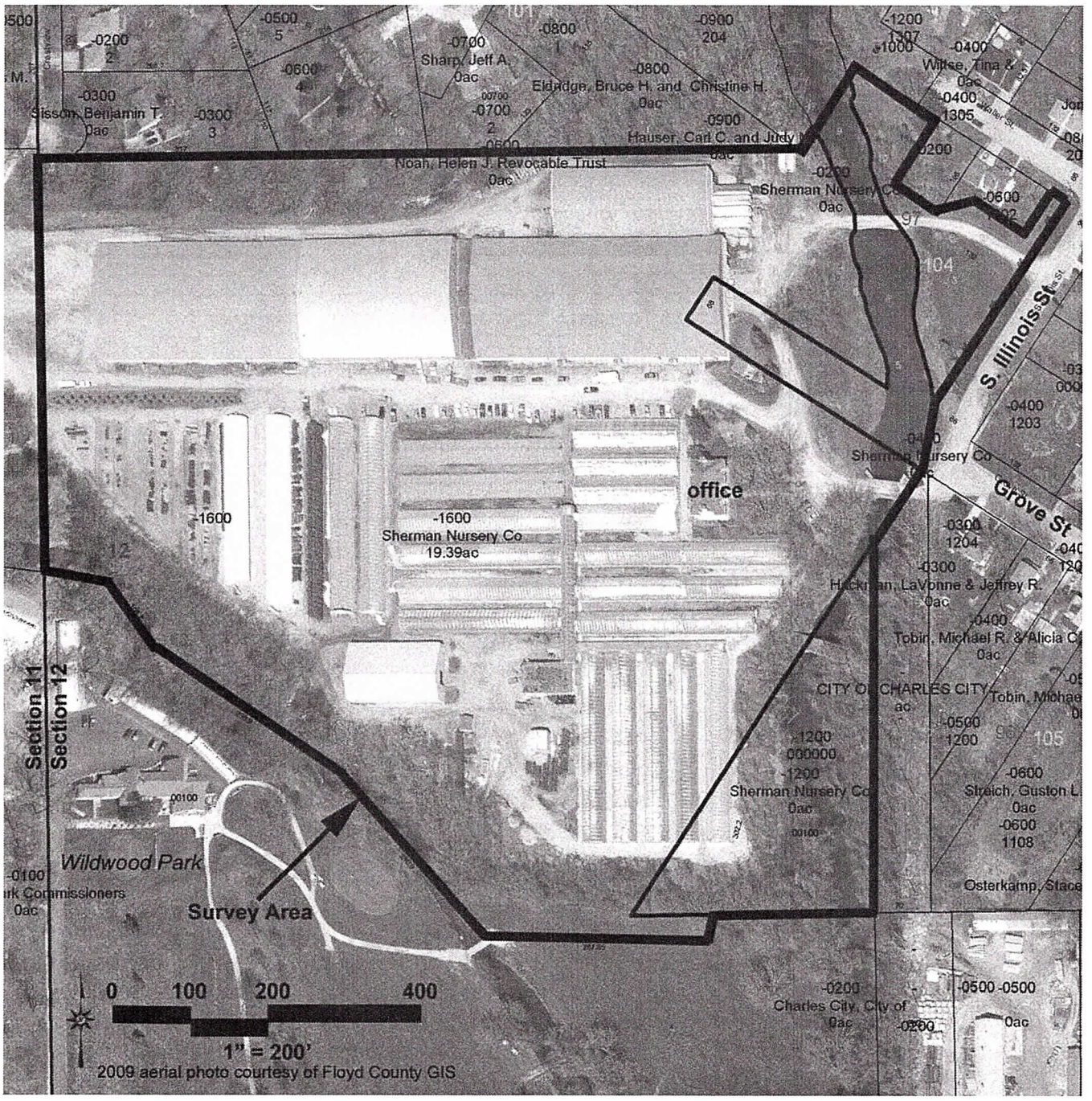


Figure 1. Survey area for Sherman Nursery Company survey project.

(aerial photograph courtesy of Floyd County)

Methodology

The methodology for this survey and evaluation of the Sherman Nursery Company proper in Charles City included a combination of field survey and archival research. The work for this project was divided between an architectural historian consultant (Rebecca Lawin McCarley) serving as Principal Investigator and local historic preservation commission members as research volunteers The primary responsibility of the consultant was project supervision and the development of the survey report, inventory forms, and recommendations. The report includes the components of a Multiple Property Documentation form, such as historic context, property types, bibliography, evaluation of surveyed resources, and recommendations. Additionally, the consultant trained volunteers to conduct research on the Sherman Nursery Company. Local volunteers conducted research for the Iowa Site Inventory forms and survey report.

The project began with the consultant reviewing information collected to date. A site visit was conducted in July 2010 to complete a field survey of the historic resources associated with the property. Preliminary research was completed at the Charles City library and Floyd County Historical Society to assess resources and areas for volunteers to complete research. After this work was complete, the consultant held a training session for the volunteers on research and documentation techniques and utilization of local historical resources in September 2010. Volunteers were limited to the members of the historic preservation commission, and the research training was held in conjunction with their regular monthly meeting. Their research primarily focused on local newspapers, as well as city directory research and local historic contacts. A research progress meeting was held in October, and the final meeting with the commission was held in November. Floyd County staff assisted in the development of mapping for the project by providing aerial photographs with parcel boundaries. At the same time, the consultant worked to develop the historic context for the project. The consultant also developed Site Inventory Forms for the Sherman Nursery Company as a district as well as for six individual historic resources (built by 1965) and one demolished resource associated with the property. The consultant prepared the draft and final survey reports, including the historic context, survey results, mapping, and recommendations.

Research for the historic context and historic resources utilized local, county, and state resources. These resources included, but were not limited to, city directories, state gazetteers, Sanborn fire insurance maps, other historic maps and aerial views, county and local histories, newspapers, previous survey reports, and historic postcards and photographs. Research into historic photographs and postcards was particularly tailored to determine the historic appearance of resources and the overall grounds at various points in history. Limited research was also completed into commercial nurseries in Iowa and the Midwest, as well as similar properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places across the country.

Throughout the project, the work conformed to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation as published on pages 44720-44726 of the *Federal Register* of September 19, 1983. The timeline for the project generally extended from May 2010 to April 2011.

Overview of survey results and products

As a result of the survey project, six individual historic resources (built by 1960) were surveyed, as well as several later buildings, and two potential historic districts were identified. One previously surveyed resource had been demolished (stone packing/shipping cellar built in 1906-07 with 1958 roof). Five extant resources/properties associated with the Sherman Nursery Company had been previously surveyed. These resources further documented on new forms include the two-story stone office building completed in 1906 (34-00232), granite arch bridge built around 1896 (34-00227), concrete south railroad bridge built in 1910 (34-00368), concrete north railroad bridge built in 1910 (34-00226), and the overall Sherman Nursery Company property as a potential historic district (34-00231). Two additional historic buildings were identified in the survey area, and new Iowa Site Inventory numbers were assigned. These buildings include the one-story stone carpenter/blacksmith shop built around 1906 (34-00640) and a small frame tool shed built around the 1910s (34-00641). Finally, a smaller potential historic district consisting of the office and bridges was identified and documented on a new Iowa Site Inventory form (34-00642). For this intensive level survey, Iowa Site Inventory forms for each historic resource were filled out completely, utilizing the information collected during the field survey and research phases of the project. Additional information on survey results and evaluation of the surveyed properties is found in *Section V: Survey Results.* Recommendations for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places are discussed in *Section VI: Recommendations*.

Through this intensive level survey project, this survey report was developed that includes an introduction, project methodology, historic context, identification and evaluation methods, survey results, and recommendations. Additionally, Iowa Site Inventory forms were developed for the six historic resources and two potential historic districts, as noted above. One set of the survey forms, as well as the survey report, was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office in Des Moines. The other set of survey forms and additional copies of the survey report were retained in Charles City. It is anticipated these products of this survey will be stored at City Hall. A copy of the survey report will also be placed in the Charles City Public Library and with the Floyd County Historical Society. This will provide for public access under controlled conditions and the information will be readily available for community planning and economic development purposes.

III. Historic Context

With the scope of this project limited to a survey of the Sherman Nursery Company property, this historic context is largely a history of the physical and business development of the company, set within the greater contexts of Charles City, Iowa, the Midwest, and nurseries across the country. These broader themes are intertwined with the history of the company, and particular nursery properties identified in Iowa and the United States are addressed more specifically in *Section IV: Identification and Evaluation Methods*.

The Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City, 1884–1964

Erwin M. Sherman moved to Charles City from nearby Chickasaw County and launched the Sherman Nursery Company in 1884. He started the company on rented nursery land. His business focus was on raising hardy nursery stock, including evergreen and fruit trees. As the company grew, Sherman began purchasing property, starting with 100 acres in the northwest quarter of Section 11 in 1894. In December 1895, he bought an additional 80 acres in the northeast quarter of Section 11 and about 20 acres in Section 12, creating a connection from the west side of Charles City to his property in Section 11. Around the turn of the century, he expanded into the cut rose business, with the first greenhouse built in 1902. This construction launched a building campaign on the land in Section 12 that included the office, a large packing/shipping building, six greenhouses, and a heating plant by 1909. The complex expanded in the 1910s, and two railroad bridges were built for railroad spurs to the property in 1910. The company grew rapidly through the 1910s and 1920s, becoming known for its evergreens, fruit trees, and other hardy trees and plants throughout the Midwest and Northwest. Products were sold wholesale and retail through a system of sales agents. The greenhouses filled with roses cut and shipped daily to large Midwest cities were widely known as well. Sherman continued to serve as president of the Sherman Nursery Company until he sold it to an investment company, Ellis & Ellis, in 1931, a few years prior to his death in 1934.

Many of the personnel and officers remained consistent through the 1930s and 1940s as the company continued to build on its foundation from the previous decades. Several sales agents also offered landscape design services in this period, selling products featured in their designs and supervising installation. The wholesale market continued to occupy a large share of business as well. With the sale of the company in 1947, Richard Cashman of Owatonna, Minnesota, moved to Charles City to guide the development of the Sherman Nursery Company over the next several decades. Other officers of the company remained consistent through this transition and into the 1950s. A subsidiary, Cashman Greenhouses, Inc., was formed in 1949 for the rose and cut flower aspect of the business. From 1948 to 1964, the entire physical plant was refurbished, rebuilt, or constructed new. This work positioned the company for success through the next couple decades, with practices shifting to container growing. Additional construction and rehabilitation was undertaken after Bailey Nurseries purchased the Sherman Nursery Company in 1983 through the 1990s. Sherman Nursery Company continued to operate as an independent company for several years, prior to becoming a division of Bailey Nurseries in 2009. It continues to operate at a reduced scale of operations in 2011.

Background of the nursery industry and formation of Sherman Nursery Company, 1830-1890

When the Sherman Nursery Company was incorporated in 1888, the nursery industry in the United States had existed for a century. The nursery industry in the United States started in the late 18th century and grew across the country in the 19th century. Through this period, New York was considered the center of the nursery industry. With the completion of the Erie Canal in 1824, the orchard industry moved into and prospered in western New York. This area remained ranked at the top of horticultural production until 1940. Prominent, successful nurseries were founded in the 1830s, and nurserymen published books that promoted use and proper methods of raising their stock. As settlement moved west into Pennsylvania and the Midwest, these areas also became key centers for the industry. A survey of the 39 "century" companies in 1990 listed 17 in seven Midwestern states. These nurseries largely grew with the railroad connections of these areas in the 1850s and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 38-40; Block, June 15, 1990, 83-86)

The nursery industry developed in eastern Iowa after settlers moved into this area in the 1830s. A center of early nursery production was Salem in Henry County, with the orchard business of Henderson Lewelling that he brought west from Indiana. By the 1840s, the Lewellings had made their mark on Salem and the surrounding area. Their trees included apple, pear, peach, plum, and cherry, as well as fruit shrubs. They supplied homesteads in southern Henry County, Lee County, and Des Moines County. Henderson was focused on maintaining the best stock available, traveling at least 14 times to Indiana and other eastern nurseries between 1837 and 1847. With the abundant apple harvest, they saturated the local market and started a group of teamsters to haul fruit to markets, regularly as far away as 80 miles to the west to Oskaloosa and 80 miles to the north to Cedar Rapids. They stopped at points along the way, as well as traveling further to Marshalltown and Newton. An advertisement in the Burlington newspaper listed 150 varieties of fruit stock available at the nursery, selling for around $1 or $1.50 each. The Lewellings' move to Oregon in 1847 is credited with starting the orchard industry in that state (Garretson 1929: 551; SHBC 1996: 19). The 1865 *Iowa State Gazetteer* listed 26 nurserymen, seedsmen, and florists in Iowa, including 11 in southeast Iowa within 50 miles of Salem (two in Burlington, one in Fort Madison, four in Keokuk, two in Mt. Pleasant, one in Muscatine, one in Ottumwa). Others in Iowa included two in Decorah, one in Delhi, one in Des Moines, two in Dubuque, one in Eddyville, one in Fayette, one in Iowa City, two in Lyons City, one in Marengo, one in Pella, one in Volney, and one in Waukon (Hair 1865: 532)

While the Sherman Nursery Company would not be organized until 1884, events in the early 1860s influenced the formation and development of this company. On March 2, 1862, Erwin Milo Sherman was born to Buell and Celia Sherman near Fredericksburg in nearby Chickasaw County. His father was a farmer raising Durham cattle, and he also maintained a small nursery. Settlers first arrived in the Charles City area in Floyd County in 1852, with land platted for various sections of the city over the next few years. The courthouse for the county was built on the south side of the river in Charles City in 1861, and a number of downtown buildings were rebuilt using local limestone after a devastating fire in 1862. A number of bridges were built in this period to connect the portions of town on the north and south sides of the Cedar River, with the iron bridge constructed in 1870 standing the longest (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1311; Hanson and Hull 1996: 25-27; EPRI 1976: 5-6).

The earliest nursery in Charles City was started in this period. In 1864, Charles G. Patten moved to Charles City with new wife Anna. He would later write that in 1866 "without the least practical knowledge in nursery work, I began in that business, impelled to it by my natural love for trees and fruit for which I saw such a pressing need in this country. In 1868 I made quite a large planting of apple seed with a view of improving the then known varieties here, tho I had made some effort in this work in Wisconsin. The year following, in 1869, I planted the seeds which secured my 'Duchess No. 3,' afterwards known as 'Patten Greening.' From that time on my planting and care of the seedling work has been continuous. Twenty-two years were devoted to the breeding work by selection and since then both by cross-breeding and selection" (Beach, December 1922, 353). Charles G. Patten continued his nursery and experimental fruit trees in Charles City until his death in 1921.

Other nurseries in Iowa that were successful well into the 20th century were also founded in the late 1860s and 1870s. In 1869, Soloman W. Ferris founded Ferris Nursery and Florists in Bristow, about 25 miles southwest of Charles City. This company started as a mail order nursery, and it moved to Hampton around 1889. It continued to operate there into the 1990s. Across the state in southwest Iowa, the prominent nursery businesses of Shenandoah in Page County date their history to this period as well. In 1870, David S. Lake started the Shenandoah Nursery, later joined in business by his sons A.F. and Ralph Lake who continued the business after his death in 1922. In 1890, he had 400 acres assembled, selling 800,000 apple trees in the wholesale market. By 1909, they had a brick packing shed that covered one acre that was fireproof and frostproof, employed 150 people, and specialized in apple seedlings. In 1875, T.E.B. Mason began Mount Arbor Nursery four miles to the south of Shenandoah. He sold the business in 1885, and it was sold again in 1891 to Edward S. Welch and E.I. Martin. They were one of the earliest retail nursery businesses. The Welch family continued to operate the business into the 1980s (Block, June 15, 1990, 85, 87; Kershaw 1909: 419-420, 472-73; *History of Page County, Iowa* 1890; Page County Genealogical Society 1984: 7).

Through the 1870s, the nursery industry developed across the United States. The industry received a boost in the deciduous seedling market in 1873 as the federal government mandated that new prairie homesteads should contain 40 acres of timber trees. In this period, four general types of nursery operations developed: small nurseries producing fruit and ornamental products for local sale largely through grafting, mail order nurseries who advertised in newspapers or catalogs and shipped stock by mail or railroad, wholesale nurseries supplying other growers and retail nurseries through railroad shipments, and retail nurseries selling stock door-to-door through "tree agents" with agents from Western companies offering both fruit and deciduous tree seedlings. With poor economic and weather conditions in the early 1870s, the industry banded together to form the American Association of Nurserymen to identify problems and promote solutions. Key issues at the time were transportation, postal rates, dishonest agents, compilation of industry statistics, and consistency in grading of stock (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 40, 42).

Focus also continued in the 1870s and 1880s on the development of better or hardier nursery stock. Charles G. Patten in Charles City was active in this aspect of the industry, serving as chair of the standing committee on new fruits of northern origin for the Iowa State Horticultural Society in 1879 and then on the committee on experimental horticulture. This committee

developed a plan of inaugurating experiment or trial stations for testing new seedlings and little known varieties in 1883, and Patten successfully advocated to the state legislature in 1884 for funding. Each of these stations was managed by a designated station keeper, and Patten served on the committee supervising the stations. Through his own experimentation in 1874, the Eastman apple was developed, and it was first offered to the nursery industry in 1884 (Beach, December 1922, 354).

Though not specifically documented, the work and prominence of Charles G. Patten in Charles City likely attracted the attention of Erwin M. Sherman to start his business in this location. Sherman attended Upper Iowa University to study the nursery business, while assisting his father on the farm and with his nursery. He assisted his father in closing out this business, and then he moved to Charles City in 1882 at age 20. He would later note that he chose Charles City as it was the coldest place in Iowa, and thus trees raised here would have a natural hardiness not obtained any other way. Sherman reportedly worked for Patten for a few years, and he certainly was close to the Patten family, as he married daughter Gertrude in 1889. E.M. Sherman rented his own land in 1884 to start his own nursery stock, and the Sherman Nursery Company dates its origination to spring 1884. His initial stock was developed through trial and error as he experimented with different varieties. The *Charles City Advocate* noted on April 29, 1886 that E.M. Sherman was busy in the last week shipping nursery stock to different parts of the state, with ten salesmen on the road doing good business (*History of Floyd County, Iowa* 1917: 510; *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1312; "E.M. Sherman, Nurseryman," May 15, 1910, 12; Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3; *Charles City Advocate,* April 29, 1886).

In spring 1888, the Sherman Nursery Company was incorporated with $100,000 in capital stock. Paperwork was filed in the county on March 10 and recorded in the Office of Secretary of State on April 13, 1888. Officers listed were E.M. Sherman, president; B. Sherman, vice president; M.B. Sherman, secretary; and S.F. Farnham, treasurer. The 1880 census lists the Sherman family in Fredericksburg, including father Buel (age 54), son Erwin (age 18), and son Marinus B. (age 15), and interestingly the 1885 Iowa census continues to list the family living together in Fredericksburg. Thus, the company appears to have been incorporated as a family business, with local banker Samuel F. Farnham as investor and treasurer. Erwin M. Sherman was the largest stockholder. Buel appears to have died by 1900, and Marinus B. Sherman moved to Idaho, where he had a fruit farm in the 1910s. The purpose of the company was to purchase, propagate, cultivate, and sell nursery stock, including all kinds of trees, plants, vines, shrubs, and flower, as well as sell seeds. The officers were authorized to buy, own, or sell real estate and equipment related to this function. At this time, the company operated on rented land (Articles of Incorporation, Recorder's Office ; "Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3; Census records on Ancestry.com; *History of Floyd County, Iowa* 1917: 510; *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1313).

The incorporation of Sherman Nursery Company occurred as the nursery industry moved into a strong period of prosperity. In 1888, the Association of American Nurserymen successfully secured a reduction in freight rates for nursery stock, which was previously charged first class rates. This reduced operating costs for wholesale growers shipping to retail clients and customers across a region (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 42). The 1889-90 *Iowa State Gazetteer* listed 135 nurserymen in Iowa, a significant increase in the last 25 years. Both the

Sherman Nursery Company and C.G. Patten were listed in Charles City. Only one company listed in 1889 dated back to the 1865 gazetteer (located in Fort Madison), with nurseries now scattered throughout the extent of the state. Additionally, nurseries were typically located in smaller towns than in large urban areas with only a few exceptions. Nurseries promoting themselves with bold listings in the directory include Green Hill Nursery, Cherokee; Nichols & Lorton, Davenport; and Shenandoah Nurseries, Shenandoah (R.L. Polk 1889: 1415-1416).

Growth and development of Sherman Nursery Company, 1890-1930

Charles City offered several benefits for the Sherman Nursery Company in 1890, in addition to its climate. The population grew to 2,802 in 1890, and two railroads served the community, the Iowa & Dakota division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad and the Cedar Falls & Minnesota branch of the Illinois Central Railroad. The town boasted a fire department, water works, good hotels, typical stores, good schools, eight churches, and three newspapers. They had strong additions to their businesses in town, including the Sherman Nursery Company. The company was "one of the largest nurseries west of the Mississippi River" and was planning to plant the largest and finest grove of evergreens in the state. They were already noted for their large plantations of evergreens. They annually planted millions of trees, including native trees and vines as well as plants, trees, and shrubs from other climates to determine what varieties would prove to be the hardiest in this climate (*Charles City, Iowa, as it is in 1890*: 1, 6).

While Erwin M. Sherman followed the lead of counterpart Charles G. Patten in experimentation, he focused his business and interests in a different direction. In 1893, E.M. Sherman was listed as a life member of the Iowa State Horticultural Society, among approximately 50 other nurserymen in the state. C.G. Patten and J.W. Smith were also listed in Charles City. Sherman spoke at the annual meeting on "Native Trees and Plants," with attention given to their destruction over the last 50 years (*Report of the Iowa State Horticultural Society for the Year 1893:* 13, 339). With business success sustained for several years and focused on evergreens and hardy nursery stock, E.M. Sherman also looked to invest in his own land, likely purchasing land that he had previously leased. On May 1, 1894, he bought land in the northwest quarter of Section 11 from William Braudeau and wife. The 1895 atlas depicts the 100 acres owned by Sherman in this area, including a building labeled as "nursery" near the creek and road on the south end (Figure 2). On December 19, 1895, E.M. Sherman bought additional land that was owned by James R. Doolittle on the 1895 atlas. This land included 80 acres in the north half of the northeast quarter of Section 11 and about 20 acres in Section 12 at the end of Grove Street on the west side of Charles City that provided a connection from the town to his land in Section 11 (Figure 3). Thus, by the end of 1895, he owned about 200 acres. In comparison, the 1895 map shows C.G. Patton owning 70 acres on the south side of Charles City. Over the next year, Gertrude Sherman bought the various interests in the 20 acres in the east half of the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter, adjacent to their other land (Floyd County Transfer Books).

Since it was not until 1894 and 1895 that E.M. Sherman bought this land, it is likely that he did not make any significant improvements on the land until after this point. The building noted as nursery on the 1895 map in the northwest quarter of Section 11 was likely built for Sherman after the purchase of this land in May 1894 or may have been an earlier building then used by

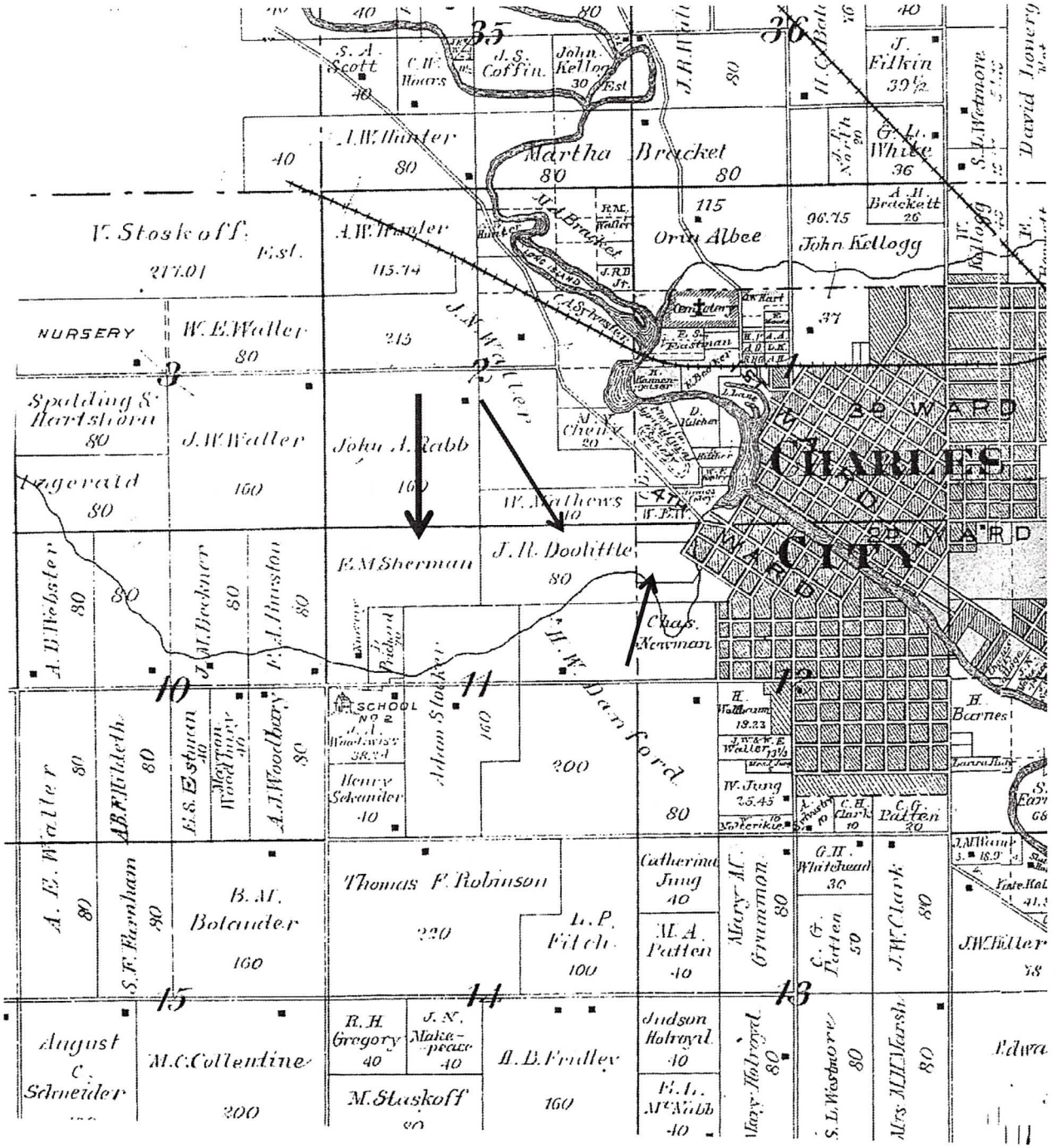


Figure 2. Sherman land west of Charles City in 1895 (*Atlas of Floyd County, Iowa* 1895: 22-23).

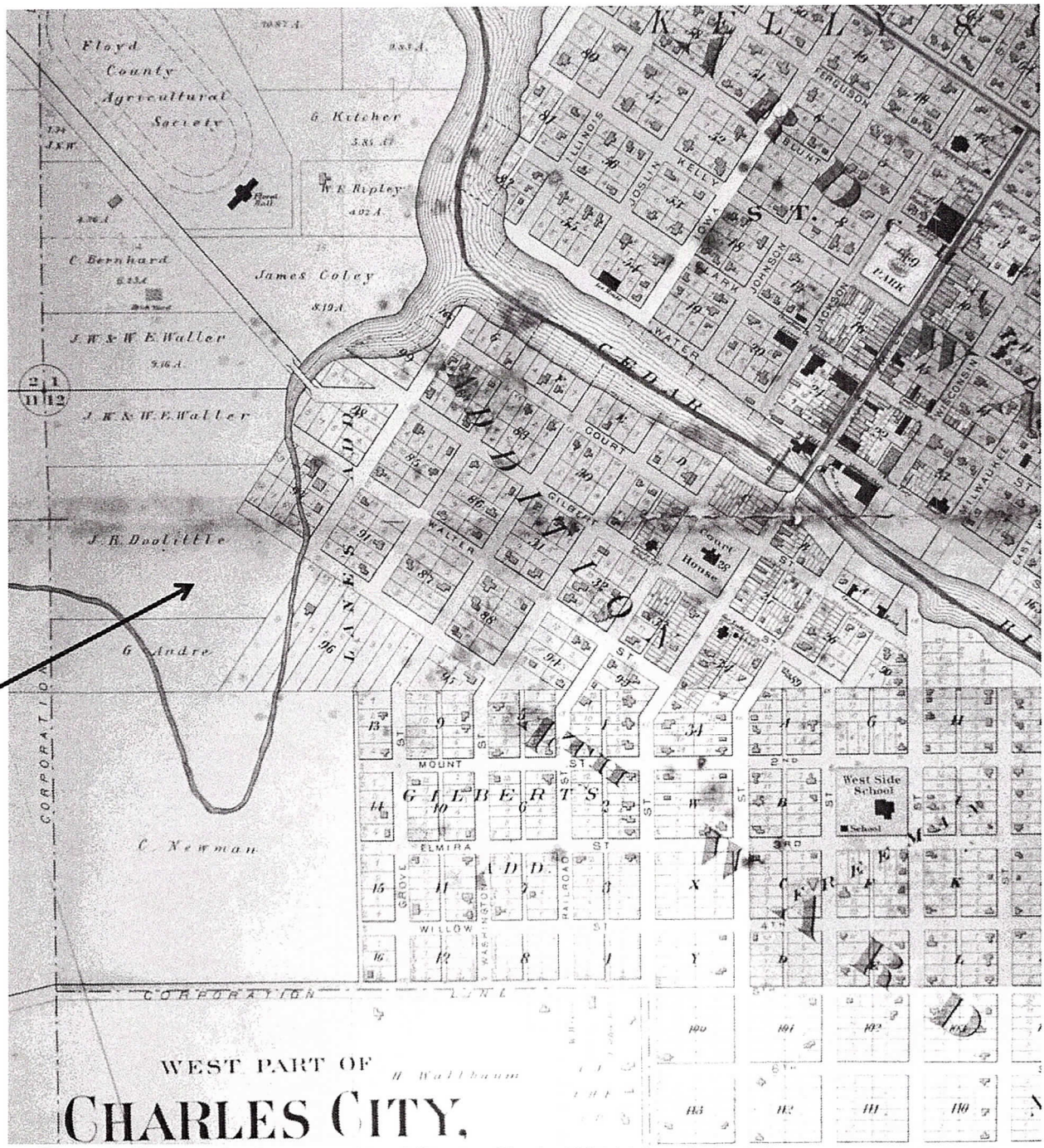


Figure 3. Sherman land on west side of Charles City in 1895 (*Atlas of Floyd County, Iowa* 1895: 22-23).

Sherman. Likewise, the 1895 map does not show the stone arch bridge at the end of Grove Street over the creek into the Sherman (then Doolittle) property. Bridges are depicted on this map two block north on Gilbert Street and leading from the courthouse to downtown on Main Street. Thus, though company histories note a construction as early as 1884, the main stone arch likely was built in 1896 at the earliest. No information on its construction could be located in local newspapers, in the period from the 1880s to 1910. Stone for the bridge was reportedly taken from a large granite boulder in the quarry on the property along the creek and blasted for the material, and the bridge then connected the grounds to the city ("Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907; *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1313).

The 1896-97 city directory for Charles City listed Erwin M. and Gertrude Sherman living at 405 Clinton, and this address was also provided for the Sherman Nursery Company. The company was listed under nurserymen in the business listing, along with Charles G. Patten on the south side of the city. Mark H. Wetherbee was listed with a florist business at 804 Main, living next door at 802 Main (Weber 1896). Both E.M. Sherman and C.G. Patten were listed as life members of the Iowa State Horticultural Society in 1897, with a notation of "deceased" for J.W. Smith. E.M. Sherman again spoke at the annual meeting, this year on "The Mission of Horticulture" and utilizing trees and floriculture around the home (*Report of the Iowa State Horticultural Society for the Year 1897*: 1, 339). The 1899-1900 *Iowa State Gazetteer* listed the Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City under both nurserymen and florists, indicating an expansion in their products. C.G. Pattern (nurserymen) and M.H. Wetherbee (florists) were other local listings among the 150 nurserymen and 105 florists listed (R.L. Polk 1899: 1439-1440).

With Sherman Nursery Company expanding into the florist aspect of the nursery industry, specifically cut roses, new buildings were required to meet their needs. The listing in 1899 suggests that they began to explore the rose business a few years prior to the construction of their first greenhouse with a heating plant in 1902. This building was constructed to grow roses for cut flowers ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3). The rose industry blossomed quickly, with three additional greenhouses under construction by July 1906 ("Big Building Under Way," *Charles City Intelligencer,* July 12, 1906). The Sherman Nursery Company also offered design services in this period, with Lewis E. Pricer in Buffalo Center for several days in December 1905 to survey and design the grounds of the Chicago Stock Farm for owner B. B. Young. He was striving to introduce the latest in landscape design by bringing out the artistic beauty of the natural lay of the ground and the large number of elegant buildings on site (*Buffalo Center Tribune (Buffalo Center, Iowa),* December 22, 1905, 5).

Major expansion for the Sherman Nursery Company occurred around 1906 with both acquisition of additional land and construction of several buildings. On February 14, 1906, E.M. Sherman bought the 160 acres of Adam Stoecker in the center of Section 11, bringing his land holdings in this immediate area to 360 acres (Floyd County Transfer Books). The noteworthy two-story stone office building for the Sherman Nursery Company was built through this period. Accounts of the construction or completion have not been located in local newspapers. However, a note in the *Weekly Florists Review* on March 10, 1906 related to the subsequent construction of the packing cellar and greenhouses states that they are "adjoining the new office building" (*The*

Weekly Florists Review, March 10, 1906, 1). Thus, the construction appears to have been complete by 1906. Later company histories likewise cite 1906 as the date of completion for the stone office building. The building is described in 1907 as follows:

> The office building of the Sherman Nursery Co., as before noted, is a magnificent specimen of architecture designed and constructed with a view to the same permanence that characterizes government buildings. The heavy stone walls, the tile roof, the solid oak finish of the interior and the splendid adaptation of the building to its uses are all in harmony with the purposes and plans necessary to carry on a great business. The main floor of the office building is devoted to the private offices of the managers, a large room for a dozen stenographers, with an adjoining dictating booth, toilet rooms, vault, etc. The basement is devoted to greenhouse work, has a cold storage room for cut flowers with rooms for packing, pipe-fitting, etc. The upper floor is a large room devoted to the storing of seed and office materials.
>
> ("Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907).

The completion of the office building in 1906 brought the offices from one-and-one-half miles out in the country to within four blocks of Main Street ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3; "Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907). Later company histories state that construction was slow, with stones cut by hand and only four or five stones laid each day. An Italian stone mason reportedly set the arch above the front entry. The limestone was taken from the quarry about one-quarter mile to the west along the creek on the property. Since the building was considered to be fireproof, no insurance was carried on it (*Looking Back* c.2000; Buehner, Kristin, "Aged to Perfection," *Mason City Globe Gazette,* November 30, 2006).

In addition to the significant construction of the new greenhouses in 1906, construction of the large packing cellar to the north of the office building was a large undertaking that stretched from 1906 into 1907. The foundation for the large new packing house was noted as under construction in July 1906, and the building was described while still under construction in March 1907. It was built into the hillside, assisting in the year-round regulation of the temperature and considered to be "frost proof." The building was 150 by 300 feet with 16 foot walls that were 22 inches thick, and it had every modern feature for moving the shipments conveniently and economically through the building and then off site to the railroad connection. It was built of stone from quarries on the property, with a gravel roof and three rows of skylights on the roof for light. The company had 150 people on payroll in this period and the construction in progress "will give the company one of the best equipped nurseries and greenhouses in the United States" When completed, the 45,000 square foot building was largest packing and storage cellar in the nursery industry, with 175 workers here in the fall and 225 during the busy season in April (*The Weekly Florists Review*, March 10, 1906, 1; "Big Building Under Way," *Charles City Intelligencer,* July 12, 1906; "Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907;"Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3; Hanson and Hull 1996: 118). To better connect their growing facilities and grounds, the company also installed a system of 50 telephones to connect all parts of the nursery with the office as well as an electric bell system in all of the buildings (*The Weekly Florists Review*, March 10, 1906, 1).

The buildings and business of the Sherman Nursery Company were profiled in March 1907 in the *Iowa State Register and Farmer* under the headline of "Largest Nursery in World." Data is unknown to either prove or disprove their claim. Needless, the company is noted to have 600 acres stretching a mile to the west of the newly completed magnificent office building at entrance of grounds, though they would not actually own the extent of this land for another few years. However, this does suggest that they were already renting the extensive land holdings of H.W. Danford in this area prior to their official purchase. The office, moved recently into the west edge of the city, was joined by five iron and glass greenhouses to the west sited somewhat among native trees and a mammoth packing house under construction on the hillside to the north. The quarries on the grounds provided stone for the construction of the buildings and arch bridge. A modern telephone system connected all areas of the nursery with the office, and the company made its own boxes for packing trees for shipment using 400,000 feet of lumber annually. The company had grown to an office force of 40 to 50 people. Charles City had been selected as the location for the nursery as the coldest place in Iowa, which was ideal for growing the hardy nursery stock that the company specialized in. Five acres were devoted to arbors for evergreen seedlings, with nearly 10 million young evergreens growing on the property for shipment across the country. There was high demand in the Northwest for quick growing trees, such as the Laurel Willow and Carolina poplar trees. Over 300 acres were planted with nursery stock, including 500,000 apple grafts on ten acres, 40 acres for grape vines, ornamental trees, shrubs, vines for northwest. Nearly a full section of land was laid out in fruit and ornamental trees, conveying the beauty and size of the enterprise. The other acreage was planted with forest stock ("Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907).

The profile also provided insights into the rose business of the Sherman Nursery Company as well as their sales and distribution strategies. The author noted that the rose industry built up by Sherman was only second to its great nursery business. A select few varieties of the best roses were grown in the five greenhouses behind the office building with cut flowers sold to the large Midwest cities, particularly Minneapolis and St. Paul. The modern greenhouses that maximized light were substantial, with two 250 feet in length and three 125 feet in length. Each July, roses were dug out, new soil installed, and roses planted for the next season. Sherman had started with other plants as well, but he found roses to be the most profitable. Then, he worked to produce the best varieties from American Beauty to tea roses, which were considered the most beautiful on the market. Maiden Hair ferns were also sent to the same markets as the roses. While cut flowers were shipped on a regular basis, packing season for the nursery stock started in the first week of March. Sherman Nursery Company had a systematic plan for distribution with orders shipped to distribution points in larger cities, thus only incurred the billing cost to that city. Then, Sherman's sales force of over 1,000 men across the county distributed orders from that point, carefully handling all stock to insure that they arrived in excellent condition ("Largest Nursery in World," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* March 15, 1907).

The activities and success of Sherman Nursery Company was well documented in the *Charles City Daily Intelligencer* throughout 1907. The spring packing season was nearly over by May 11, with the largest delivery in the history of the company. Over 1,000 deliveries were made in a dozen states to more than 15,000 customers. The wholesale trade was also the heaviest in the history of the company. The new packing shed was a benefit in protecting stock as well as for

efficiency in the packing and shipping process. Mini flats cars carried prepared orders through the building. By May 20, a carload of lumber arrived for making crates and boxes for the fall packing season. Workers were busy transplanting evergreens, and the greenhouses were producing heavy shipments of flowers weekly, meeting the increased demand for Memorial Day due to poor weather conditions. With heavy demand, 1,500-2,000 roses were cut each day for local and wholesale orders. Evergreen planting continued on May 26, with hundreds of thousands of seedlings moved out from the ten acres under the screen for additional growth. Sherman reportedly grew more evergreens from seed than any other nursery in the country. About 30 bags of mail were also filled to send out the 1907-08 calendar. The calendar featured the office building, stone arch bridge, packing cellar, greenhouses, and grounds. In June, nearly 30,000 roses had been transplanted to open fields, transplanting evergreens was finished, and planting new seeds was underway. Orders were also beginning to come in for fall deliveries. The grounds around the office were cleared by June 12, with the remodeled Stoeger barn moved onto a foundation near the office. By July 1, rose production ceased as they began the annual process of removing and resetting the beds. New soil was installed and over 13,000 young plants six to ten inches in height were planted starting around July 10. These roses then produced flowers from September to the following July. A staff of six to eight people worked with them in the greenhouses through this period. On August 22, the company was building concrete sidewalks radiating from the office entrance to the stone arch bridge and the packing cellar as well as grading and planting the surrounding grounds. Black dirt from the removed rose beds was laid around the office, and crushed rock or cinders were planned for roads within the property. With a light plum crop, the Sherman Nursery Company put out a call for a couple hundred bushels of pits for planting on September 9, 1907.

Construction to expand the buildings and operations of the Sherman Nursery Company also continued in late 1907 and into 1908. On November 16, 1907, the *Charles City Daily Intelligencer* reported that work had begun on the sixth greenhouse on the property, located to the north of the others towards the packing cellar. It would be the same size as the three north greenhouses (125 feet) when completed in spring. Work was also underway to connect the greenhouse water system with the motor pump station at the barn. Crews were setting posts for an extension of the evergreen screen west of the office, which would permit Sherman to retain their place as the heaviest growers of evergreens from seed in the United States. The rose propagating house was doing well as reported on January 10, 1908, with over 25,000 plants anticipated to be planted in greenhouses next summer. E.M. Sherman was gone for horticultural conventions during the week of January 25. Box construction was underway on January 31 for spring packing on the property, with 25,000 grafts completed in the last week. On March 14, a large number of workers in the new storage cellar were making boxes for shipment of spring stock with the assistance of electric circular saws installed this spring. The greenhouse construction was also progressing rapidly and would be ready for glass next week. By April 21, men and women were working to pack the spring shipment, with 160 people on payroll for the company in Charles City. They expected to ship 80 carloads for the season, with four loaded that day. Boxes were loaded on small cars in the building and then taken to the team sheds, who then delivered them to the railroad tracks. With shipments increasing, a railroad spur connection to the grounds was begun to be investigated. Once again, the *Charles City Daily Intelligencer* reported on May 10, 1908 that the company had the largest spring shipment of nursery stock in

history, sending orders as far as New York, Texas, Montana, and Alberta and delivering to more than 1,000 towns and more than 18,000 customers.

> The grounds and business were again described in print in 1908 with a visit from Charles H. Clarke, the editor-in-chief of *Iowa Register and Farmer.* He wrote: "The entrance to the grounds is reached over a beautiful stone arch bridge, which leads up to the imposing office building with its red roof, partially hidden by the foliage of trees." Nearly 1,000 acres in nursery and packing grounds were now associated with the company. The immense, frost proof, packing shed continued to be the largest known in the country, and it was well-lit on the interior. Agents from Pennsylvania to the Rocky Mountains marketed and took orders for the stock, which was accurately and efficiently shipped. Customers were assured that the stock would grow, as the cold climate of Charles City made the stock particularly hardy. The rose greenhouses to the south and west of the office building were the best arranged and most beautiful in America, as well as one of largest group west of the Mississippi. American Beauty, Bride, Bridesmaid, Ivory, Perles Des Jardin, Richmond, and Kate Moulton roses as well as greens were grown under the head of Mr. Krohn. Stables for the 35 horses were located to the north and west of the greenhouses ("Sherman Nursery is Praised by Writer," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* February 24, 1908). The grounds were documented in a series of postcards dating to this period as well (Figures 4-6).

Thus, 20 years after its incorporation, the Sherman Nursery Company had not only survived but was quite successful. A special meeting of stockholders was held on May 28, 1908 to renew the charter for another 20 years, with the paperwork filed by E.M. Sherman, president; A.G. Page, secretary (Renewal of Articles of Incorporation, Recorder's Office). The Floyd County directory for 1908 listed Sherman Nursery Company with an office at the corner of Grove and Illinois under the direction of E.M. Sherman. The directory also included a photograph of the grounds (Figure 7). They were listed under both nurserymen and florists in the business section. Other nurserymen included C.G. Patten and Sons at the east terminus of 9th Street and the Charles City Orchard and Nursery Company run by another son of Patten. Mark H. Wetherbee continued to be listed as a florist at 800 N. Main as well (Overman 1908). In the *Iowa State Gazetteer* for 1908-09, 143 nurserymen were listed, including 32 with generally the same name and location as in 1889. Both the Sherman Nursery Company and C.G. Patten were among these 32 companies that had survived and prospered over the last 20 years. Nurseries with bold listings included S.A. Love, Centerville; Oaklawn Nursery Co., Cresco; M.J. Wragg Nursery, Des Moines; A.L. Glasner, Dubuque; G.N. Heyne, Dubuque; Mount Arbor Nurseries, Shenandoah (R.L. Polk 1908: 1866).

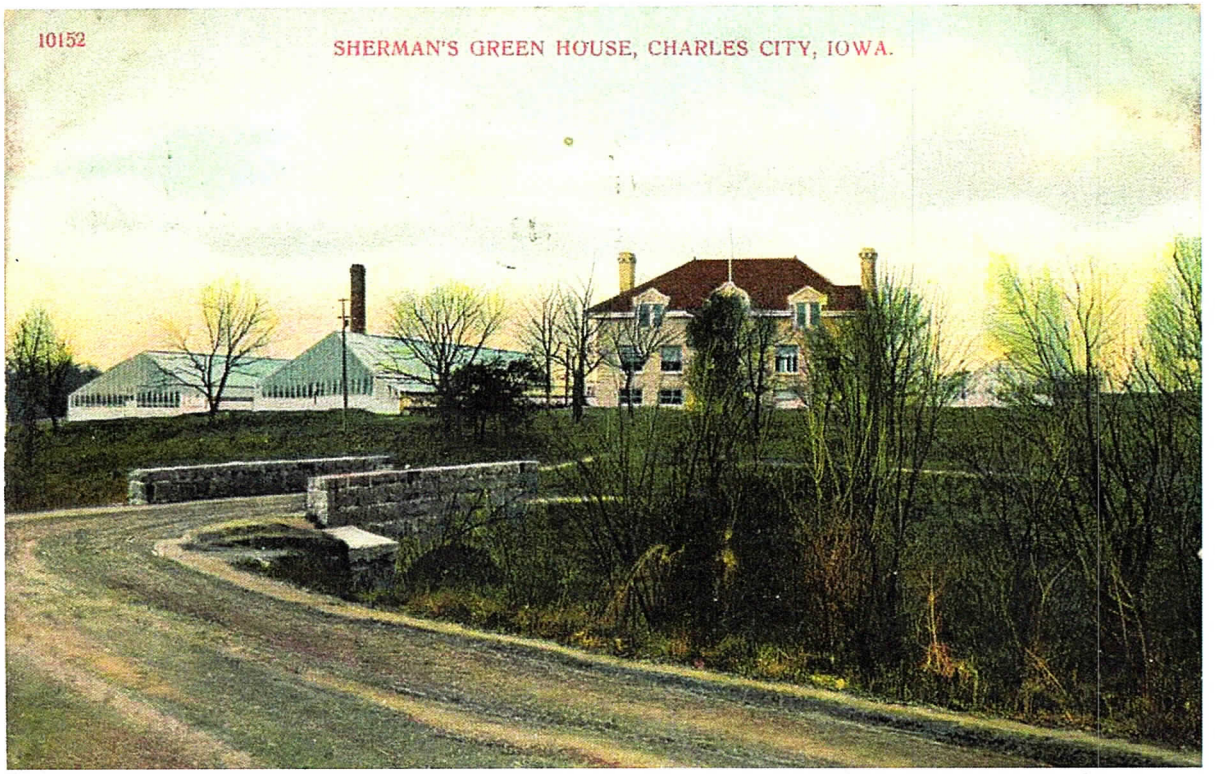


Figure 4. Popular postcard of Sherman Nursery Company with 1908 and later postmarks (Floyd County Historical Society).

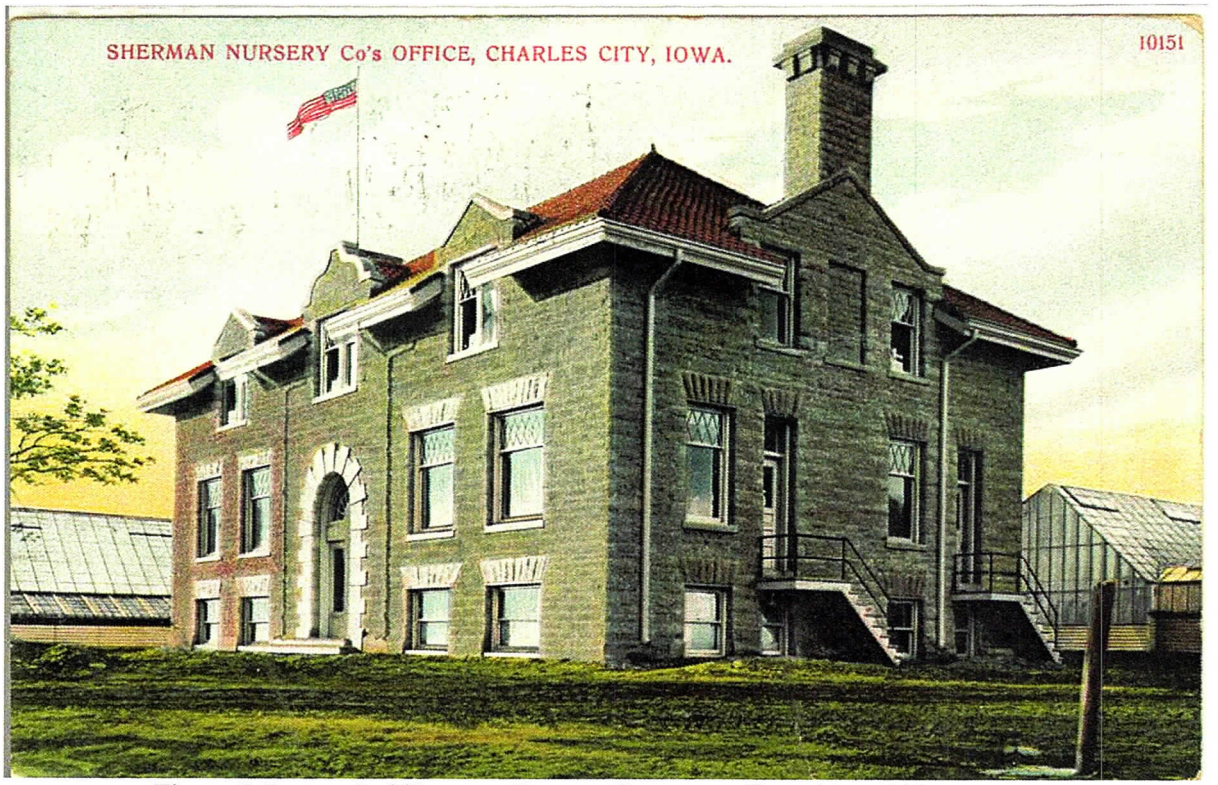


Figure 5. Postcard of Sherman Nursery Company office with a 1909 postmark (Floyd County Historical Society).

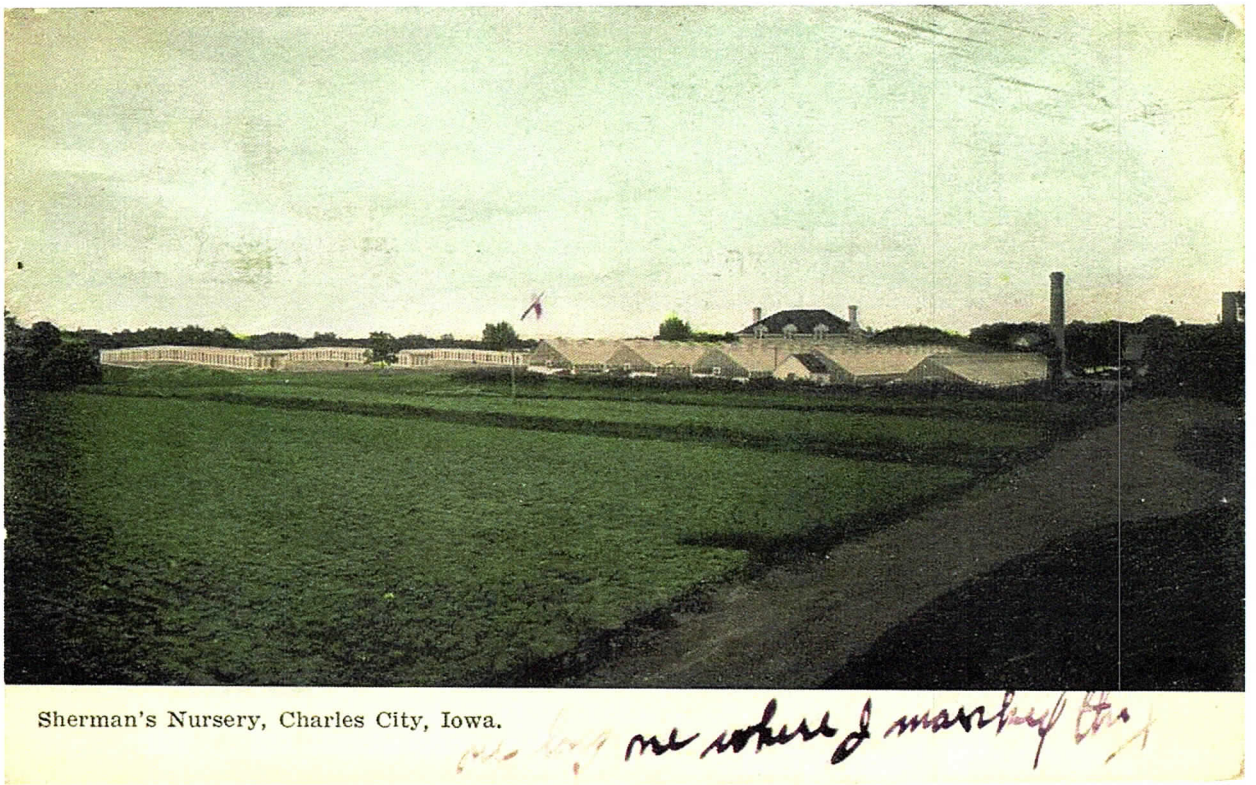


Figure 6. Postcard of Sherman Nursery Company grounds and greenhouses with a 1909 postmark (Floyd County Historical Society).

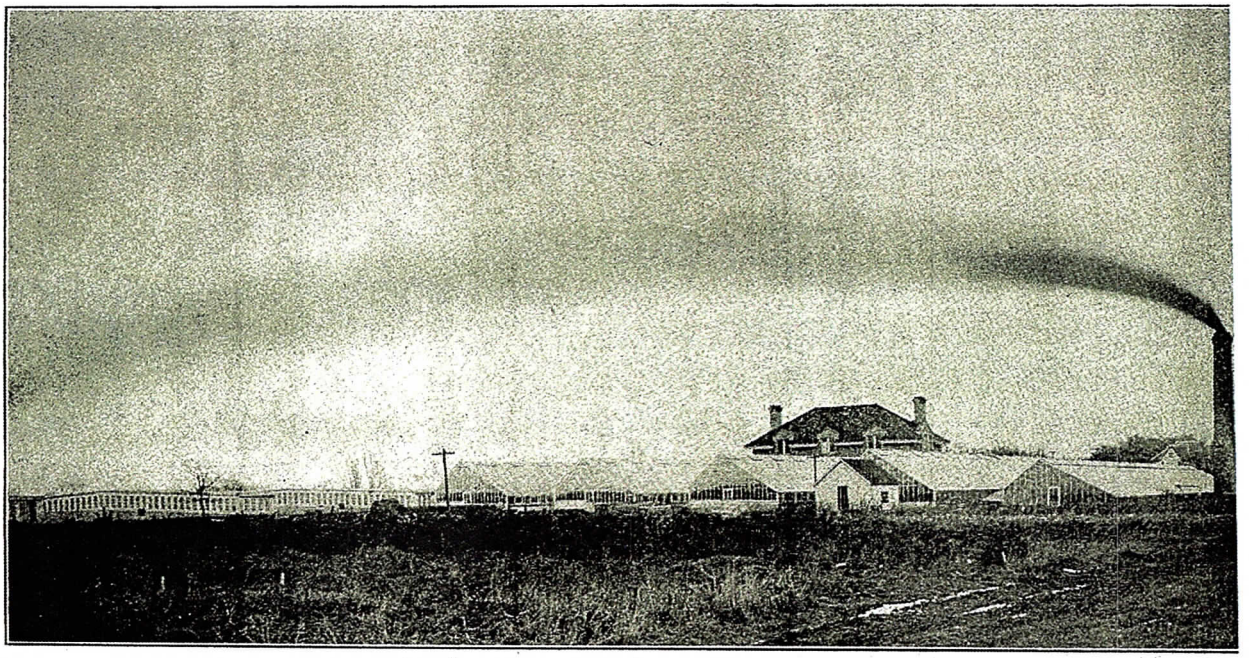


Figure 7. Photograph of the Sherman Nursery Company grounds and greenhouses in the 1908 county directory (Overman 1908: 106).

Other documents and maps provide further information on the Sherman Nursery Company buildings and operations around this time. A multi-page promotional brochure for the company also included a number of photographs of buildings and operations around 1908 as well as testimonials for the company (Figures 8-14). Letters from Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota also suggest the focus for the market area for the company and its hardy nursery stock. A photograph of the interior of the main room on the first story of the office building depicts the historic layout and features of this building. The 1909 Sanborn fire insurance map also shows the buildings in the immediate area of the office (Figure 15). The office (1906), packing cellar (1907), and six greenhouses (1902-1908) are depicted on this map, including the heating plant on the south side of the south (1902) greenhouse. Other buildings outside this immediate area are not depicted, including the barn/stables for the 35 horses described as northwest of the greenhouses and an extant one-story stone building later labeled as carpenter shop or box factory. The barn was destroyed by fire after a lightning storm on June 28, 1908, and it was immediately rebuilt along with a new granary in fall 1908 ("Sherman Nursery Co. Lose Big Barn by Fire," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* June 29, 1908; "Sherman Nursery Company," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* September 5, 1908).

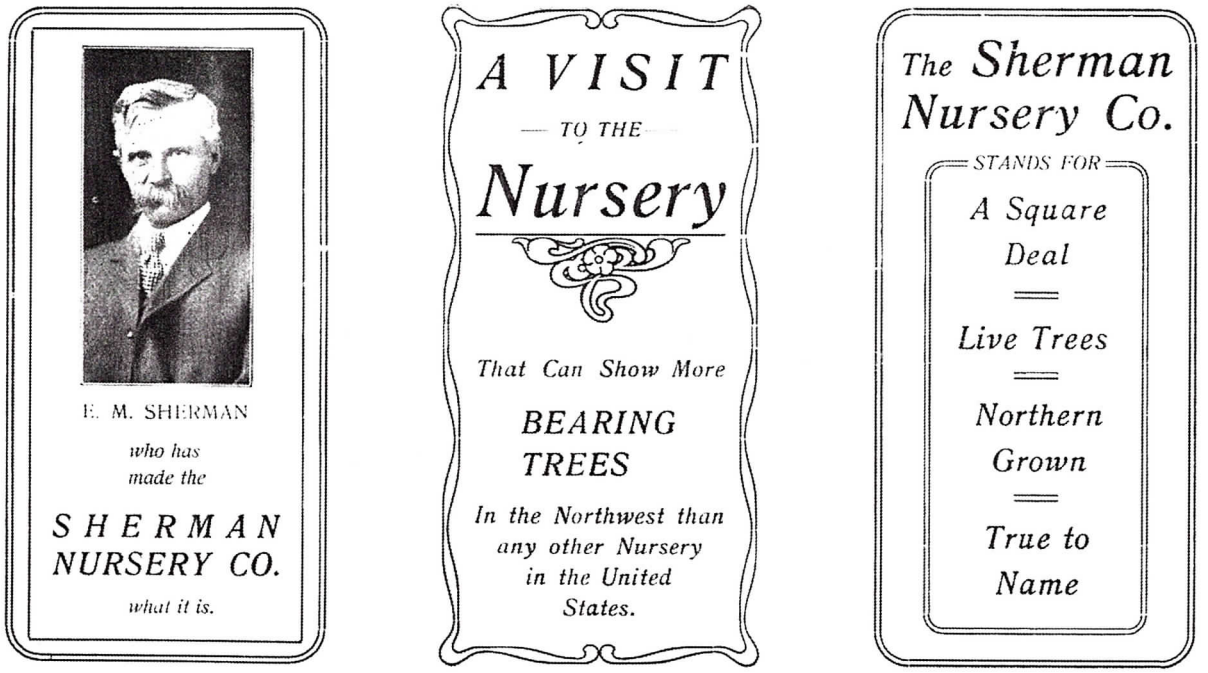


Figure 8. Cover of promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).



A block of our apple trees four years old, from the graft, showing their height.

Harvey, N. Dak., February 10. 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: Thinking you might be interested and to demonstrate that fruit can be successfully grown in this state, I wish to inform you that in the spring of 1906, I planted some plum and apple trees received from you. In 1907, I had one plum tree that produced about nine hundred plums and one smaller tree, one-half dozen.

The apple trees blossomed but they were too small to bear fruit. However, my neighbor raised apples from trees six years old. I raised large quantities of currants, gooseberries and raspberries of excellent quality.

Yours truly
AUGUST PETERSON.

The Best There Is.

The Only Words that will Fitly Describe the Sherman Trees.—The Best there is.—Everybody says so that has tried them.

Bushnell, S. Dak., June 25, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Co., Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: Within the last dozen years I have bought nursery stock from a number of nurseries, including your own, and that purchased of you has grown the best of any. I have blackberries of you, delivered in the spring of 1907, that are now loaded with fruit. I can recommend your stock as the best of any I have planted and true to name.

Very truly yours,
W. S. SPAULDING.

I heartily endorse Mr. Spaulding's statement. The Sherman trees are the best I ever put into the ground.

F. D. NORTON,
Brookings, S. Dak.

I heartily endorse the two above gentlemen's statements and would recommend that anyone buying stock from the Sherman Nursery Company will be well pleased with their goods and fairly dealt with, and further will state their evergreens are the only ones I have had success with. Out of ten set out there are ten living and growing nicely.

S. B. ELSTON,
Brookings, S. Dak.

Watertown, S. Dak., August 24, 1908.

This is to certify that I have known the Sherman Nursery Company for the last fifteen years and believe it to be a first class nursery. I am personally acquainted with the proprietors and believe that any contract entered into by them will be carried out to the letter. At the present time I have over a thousand trees growing that I have purchased from the company and am well pleased with all the trees and ornamental stock received of them. The stock was well packed and came through in perfect condition. Some of the street trees have grown over three feet the first season. I do not hesitate to recommend the Sherman Nursery Company as a good reliable place to get trees from to plant in this soil and climate.

Very truly,
H. M. FREEBURG. M. D.

Moorhead, Minn., March 21, 1908.

Hon. E. J. Sarles, Hillsboro, N. Dak.

DEAR SIR: In traveling through Trail, Steele and Cass counties in North Dakota, I find that the Sherman Nursery Company, of Charles City, Iowa, have the largest percentage of living, growing and bearing apple trees.

Yours truly,
C. H. SIKES.

Figure 9. Apples trees and letters in promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).

A FEW NICE THINGS THEY SAY

Canton, Minn., August 7, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

I am pleased to say that the trees and small fruit shipped to me and to my care are making fine growth. Some of my grape vines have clusters of grapes. The currants bore fruit and the one-half dozen Columbian raspberries are a wonder. We have been and are yet using delicious berries from them. The rose bush, Mrs. John Laing, that we received from you this spring, has grown eight beautiful, large and fragrant roses. Everything true to description.

With best wishes for the Sherman Nursery, I am

Yours truly,
C. E. MILLER.

Chamberlain, S. Dak., June 14, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: I bought one hundred Carolina Poplars, three Russian Golden Willows, twelve apples, six plum and four cherry trees of your agent last year and they are all growing. Am well pleased with the goods you have sent me.

TRUMAN SOMERS.

St. John, N. Dak., July 2, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Co., Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: My orchard purchased three years ago from you has been replaced and looked after as per your agreement made with me and am satisfied with my order and have given an additional order to be delivered at St. John this coming season. I have recommended your company to my friends and believe you treat all your customers with fairness and liberality.

WILLIAM BAARLY.

Rolla, N. Dak., July 2, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Co., Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: My bill of nursery stock purchased from your company is growing and doing finely. My order was for one hundred dollars.

(Signed) PAUL LAFRANCE.

This is to certify that I have purchased trees from the Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa, for the past three years. I have plum and cherry trees bearing fruit this year purchased from the Sherman Nursery Company, and am satisfied with my dealings with the above company.

(Signed) C. D. GARDNER.

Rollette, N. Dak., June 10, 1908.

This is to certify that I have purchased nursery stock from the Sherman Nursery Company, of Charles City, Iowa, for the past three years. I have an orchard of one acre of fruit trees. All are growing and doing nicely with the exception of a few that have died and been replaced for me. In every way the Sherman Nursery Company have done exactly as they have agreed with me and their stock has been just as represented. I can not say too much in favor of the company and can truly say that they are honest, reliable and trustworthy.

Rolla, N. Dak., June 18, 1908. JOHN SEGERBORG.

This is to certify that I can recommend the Sherman Nursery Company to all people wishing to purchase trees as being perfectly reliable and trustworthy. In all my past dealings with the company they have fully complied with every agreement made with me, and from my dealings with many companies during the last few years I believe the Sherman Nursery Company deserving of patronage in preference to any other company doing business in this section of country.

Rolette, N. Dak., June 10, 1908. JOHN W. HARTSOCH.

Avon, S. Dak., Sept. 21, 1908.

The Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: This is to certify that I have on my farm the White Niagara Grape that is loaded down and I have one peach tree that has fifteen peaches on at this writing and last year had one bushel of peaches. And after all of the frost I have some very fine apples now.

PETER REISDORFER.

Rugby, N. Dak., August 21, 1908.

The Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: I take pleasure in informing you that all the trees and shrubbery, including crabapple and cherry trees and strawberry plants you delivered to me last year, are doing fine and living. Cherry and crabapple trees I can recommend for this climate and I think everyone should have a few of each.

Yours truly,
A. M. IVERSON.

Chamberlain, S. Dak., June 4, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: I have been dealing with you for two years and have always found your goods all O. K. My stock all looks nice and I gave your agent an order for this spring for one hundred more apples. Wishing you well, I am,

Yours truly,
LAWSON BEACH.

Geddes, S. Dak., June 30, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

DEAR SIRS: I bought a bill of trees from your firm in the spring of 1907, consisting of plums, cherries, apples, pears, peaches and Russian Golden Willow. They are all doing remarkably well. I can recommend your goods to anyone wishing to plant trees.

Respectfully yours,
HENRY KALSKA.

Hillsboro, N. Dak., September 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

DEAR SIR: My two grape vines set out this spring grew nicely in spite of the dry weather for their first season. I believe they will do well here as they are said to be perfectly hardy in our climate.

Yours truly,
WM. VON STEINWHER.

P. S. The Norway spruce bought of you some twelve years ago are all doing well and are some twenty feet high now.

Eagle Grove, Iowa, May 15, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: I received my trees in first class condition and I write to tell you that you have treated me right and I appreciate it and thank you for your kind favors in the past. I assure you I shall be glad to speak a good word for you whenever the opportunity presents itself. The cherry trees I received from you last year are in blossom this year and the apple trees are in fine condition. If I need any more in your line at any time, I shall certainly give you my order.

Yours truly,
GEO. M. WINTER.

Chamberlain, S. Dak., June 14, 1908.

Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City, Iowa.

GENTLEMEN: I bought an orchard of your agent last year and they all grew but four. Your agent, R. E. Snodgrass, called and replaced them and I am well pleased with the goods you have shipped me.

Yours very truly,
JOHN DUSSEAN.

Figure 10. Letters in promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).



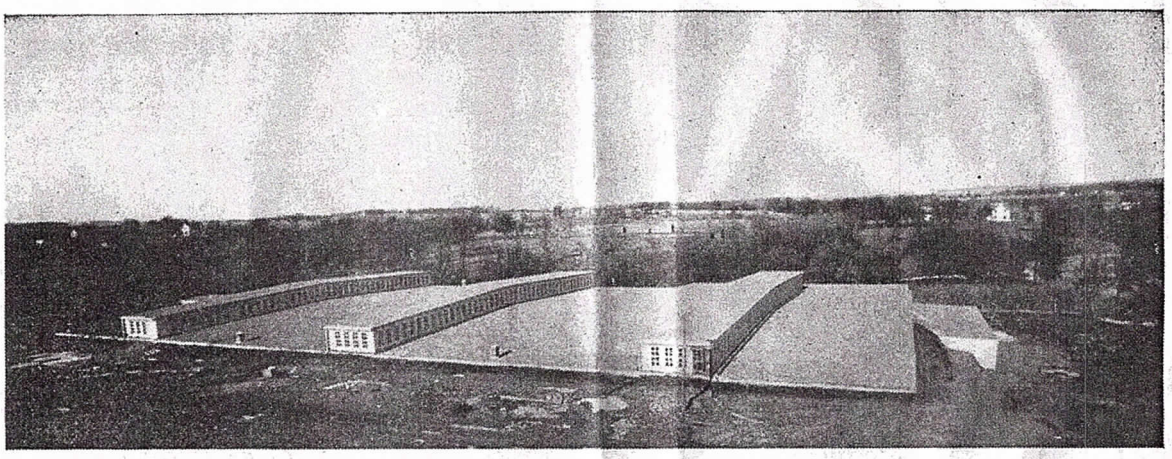
The Stenographers Room, Sherman Nursery Company.

Figure 11. Main room on first story of office, promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).



A gang planting grafts on grounds of Sherman Nursery Company.—We plant them by the million each spring. Note that they are planted on the open prairie, no shelter belt, no bluffs, no protection of any kind. No "molly-colly" trees here.

Figure 12. Planting photograph in promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).



A Birds-eye View of our Frost Proof Packing Cellar, covering nearly two acres of ground.
Built of solid rock quarried on our own grounds.

This is the largest structure of its kind in the west. It is fully lighted by electricity enabling us to pack both day and night when necessary.

Figure 13. Photograph of packing cellar in promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).



A part of the Packing House gang outside one of the entrances to the Packing Cellar.

Figure 14. Photograph of packing cellar in promotional booklet on Sherman Nursery, c.1908 (Siems collection).

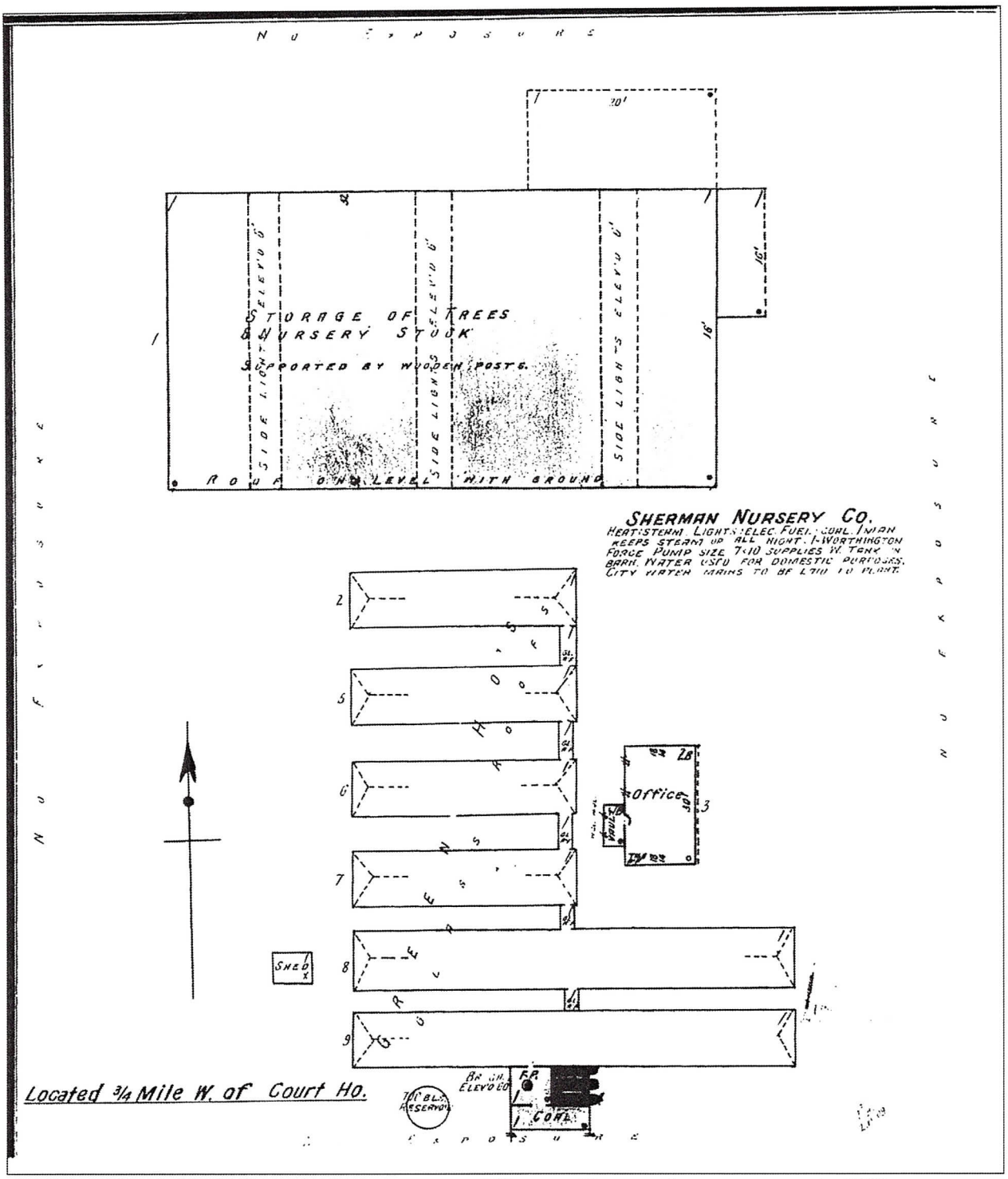


Figure 15. Sanborn fire insurance map of Sherman Nursery Company property, 1909 (Sanborn Map Company 1909).

Packing cellar – top – completed in 1907
Office with vault – right – completed in 1906
Greenhouses – from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902
stone carpenter shop (box factory), assuming complete, would be further south than the depicted area
large barn/stables for horses are also not shown on the map, described as northwest of the greenhouses

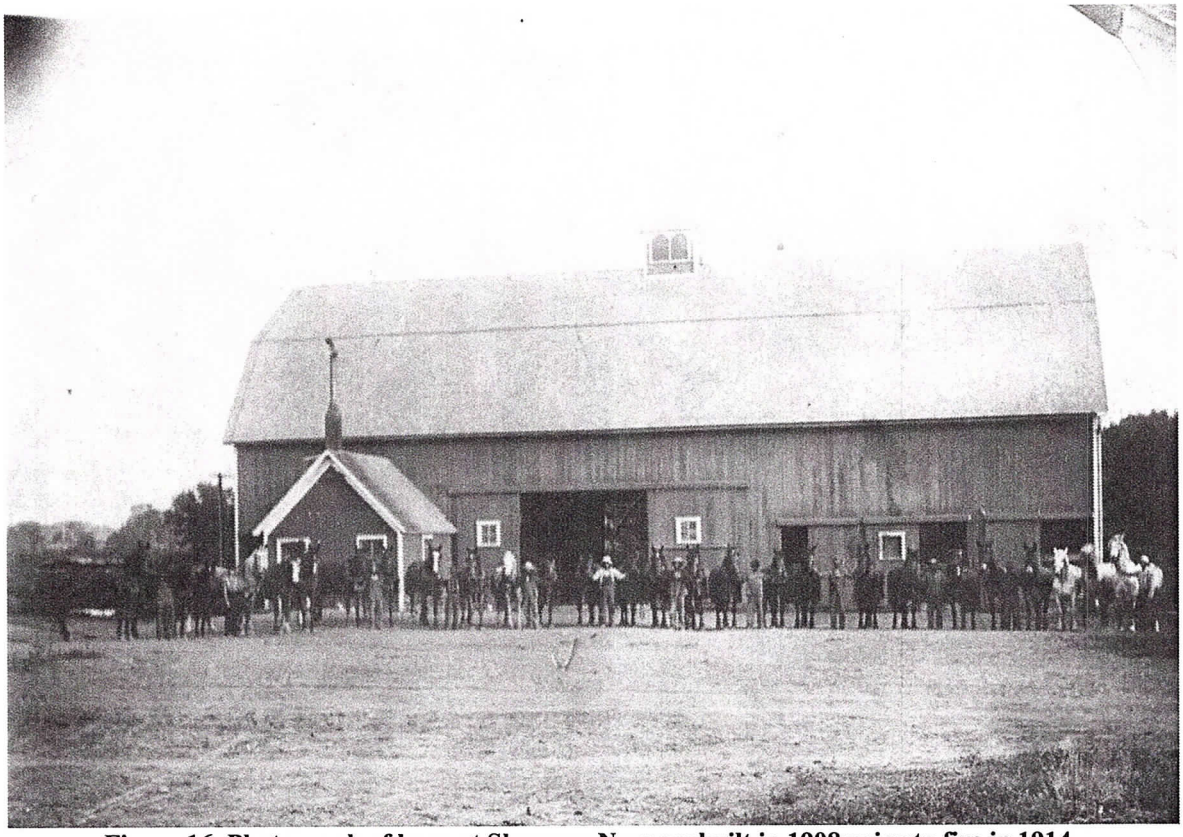


Figure 16. Photograph of barn at Sherman Nursery built in 1908 prior to fire in 1914 (Floyd County Historical Society).

The year 1909 was again prosperous for the Sherman Nursery Company, with deliveries reportedly up 30% for the spring packing season. The packing cellar was busy with 175 people on payroll on April 14 working on orders to be sent to the southern states where the climate was ready for planting. The new barn built was modern with a concrete floor, electric lights, steam heat, stalls for 40 horses, loft for hay, and a grain elevator with an electric motor. Work had begun on an addition to the greenhouse, measuring 11 by 106 feet ("Nursery is in Midst of Shipping Season," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* April 14, 1909). The company profile in the *Charles City Intelligencer* on July 29, 1909 noted that Sherman Nursery Company conducted both wholesale and retail business, with sales agents handling the retail customers in Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and all states to the north of these states. Past customers could also order stock through the mail order business, though this business was not promoted so as not to detract from the business of their agents. Workers in the fine office building totaled 18, with typewriting machines, dictation machines, and phonographs of the latest design. The greenhouses employed eight to ten year round, with the boiler house and coal bunkers to the south of the greenhouses. Roses were cut daily for shipment to the Twin Cities and Chicago. Ten foremen led the other departments for the company whose grounds totaled over 600 acres. Sherman Nursery Company specialized in growing evergreens, and they were the largest grower of this class of tree in United States. Over ten acres were devoted to seed beds, protected by large arbors. Additionally, they were one of the largest growers of hardy apple trees in the north with 8,000 to 10,000 apples trees grafted annually. They also grew grapes, current, plum, and Compass cherry trees. Their well-lit

packing house ensures that orders were packed and shipped correctly ("The Sherman Nursery Company," *Charles City Intelligencer,* July 29, 1909, Part 2, page 9).

The Sherman Nursery Company continued to grow in multiple ways from 1909 and into 1910. Though their land holdings were cited at over 600 acres for the past few years, the company only owned 360 acres in the immediate area of the office, either leased adjacent land or adding land from other areas to their total. However, the company's success necessitated additional land by spring 1909, and E.M. Sherman bought land south of the office, including the 40 acres of Charles Newman in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 12 on June 29, 1909 (see Figure 2). This purchase meant that Sherman owned all the land from the office in a direct line south to Rockford Road ("Buys Still More Land," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* August 23, 1909). Sherman's Creek was located through the tract, now named in respect to the company. This purchase was followed by a larger purchase of 200 acres from Hobart Danforth (Danford) that encompassed the remainder of the land not owned by Sherman in the east half of Section 11. The 80 acres homestead tract in the west half of the southwest quarter of Section 12 was then bought by E.M. Sherman on February 15, 1910. This purchase brought the total land owned by Sherman Nursery Company to 720 acres (*Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* February 17, 1910). Across the country, Sherman employed 400 agents. Labor was short for spring packing season in 1910, with at least 225 people needed. A number of Greeks previously working at the cement mill at Mason City were hired, and ads were published in nearby newspapers for additional workers. Wholesale shipments to Montana, Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio, Nebraska, New York and southern Canada were started by March 25, with retail orders to be filled second. Over 25,000 orders were to be filled this spring, and 15 carloads of lumber had been used to make boxes. By the end of the packing season on May 1, 75 carloads had been shipped from the company and several large orders had been refused, particularly for apple trees, due to a lack of stock. The recently purchased 330 acres would help meet this demand next year ("Nursery Stock Being Sent All Over Country," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* March 25, 1910; "Sherman Nursery Co. Refuses Many Orders," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* May 2, 1910).

The *Iowa State Register and Farmer* again visited and highlighted the Sherman Nursery Company in an article on May 15, 1910. They reported that the grounds had grown to over 700 acres, with all in use for growing or propagating nursery stock. The 40 by 60 foot office was built from limestone quarried on the site. Three boilers heated the office and greenhouses to the west and south. The greenhouses totaled 75,000 square feet of glass for the roses that were cut and shipped daily to Minneapolis, St. Paul, Chicago, St. Louis, and other cities in wholesale lots. The office was thoroughly modern with a telephone system connecting all parts of the property, adding machines, copying machines, and phonographs for dictation. The underground packing cellar covered more than two acres with electric lights for packing around the clock as needed. A total of 12 to 15 carloads of lumber were used annually to make boxes for shipping stock. Customers of the company could be assured of the good quality of the product, with trees raised in a manner to ensure that they are hardy in cold weather. The company advocated planting trees on waste land on farms to make this land productive for lumber. They also encouraged the planting of evergreens for windbreaks. Upwards of one million apple trees were grown annually, with over two million planted on new land in spring. With this expansion, they then claimed to have more apple trees than any other nursery in America. J.E. Case had worked with E.M. Sherman for 23 years, and he was superintendent of sales. A.G. Page, superintendent of

grounds, had worked for Sherman for a similar length of time. Other employees also had worked for the company for several years assisting with the growth and development, including H.O. Clark, sales manager assistant for 12 years; H.L. Petersen, head of the auditing department for 10 years; J.C. Grinde, head of the bookkeeping department for 10 years; and F.A. Thomas, head of wholesale department for 8 years. The author noted: "All over this country are groves and orchards that owe their origin to the Sherman Nursery company and myriads of owners attest to the company's generous and fair dealings, square business methods, and integrity" ("E.M. Sherman, Nurseryman," *Iowa State Register and Farmer (Des Moines, IA),* May 15, 1910, 13).

The population of Charles City grew in this period from 4,227 in 1900 to 5,892 in 1910, with the Sherman Nursery Company as one of the largest local businesses. Another successful large local business was the Hart-Parr Gasoline Traction Engine Company on North Main Street (demolished). Charles W. Hart and Charles H. Parr started manufacturing tractors in Wisconsin and were attracted to Charles City in 1900 by local investors to expand and develop their company here. They produced the first successful production farm gas traction engine, forerunner of the modern tractor, in the winter of 1900-1901. By 1907, one-third of all tractors were manufactured in Charles City, with the term "tractor" coined that year by Hart-Parr sales manager, W.H. Williams (Page 1996: 1-7-8).

Both Hart-Parr and Sherman shipped extensively by rail, benefiting from the Illinois Central and Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroads crossing on the northeast side of town. However, the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad crossed about 13 miles to the southwest through Marble Rock, and the companies desired a direct connection to this route as well for lower shipping rates. As early as 1908, Sherman had discussed a railroad spur directly to their grounds with the Milwaukee railroad. With the incorporation of the Charles City Western Railroad on February 3, 1910, Sherman Nursery Company achieved both goals. The railroad was incorporated by C.W. Hart, C.H. Parr and E.M. Sherman, who also served as the officers. The railroad was then built to Marble Rock with a line around the west side of Charles City and direct spurs into the Sherman property to their coal bunker (for delivering coal) and packing cellar (for shipments). A streetcar system was started for transportation within Charles City, with passenger service later expanded to Marble Rock. The line became electric in 1915, with city passenger service running until 1921. Alva J. Grover served as chief engineer with W.S. Beattle as resident engineer for grading, bridge construction, and other design elements. Construction was well underway by August 1910, with areas being cut and filled as needed for laying of the railroad track ("Nursery Spur," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* March 27, 1908; *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* July 22, 1910; Hanson and Hull 1996: 120; EPRI 1976: 47).

After consulting with other bridge builders, E.M. Sherman decided to have the two railroad bridges onto his property over Sherman Creek for the two spurs built himself. The north spur and bridge would lead to the packing cellar for shipments, while the south spur and bridge would lead to the coal bunker for deliveries. Both bridges are extant. Due to the layout of the property, these facilities were best served by two bridges. Both bridges were concrete with steel reinforcement. Construction on the north bridge began by August 1910. The 80-foot bridge was designed with an elongated, flattened arch measuring 42 feet. The initial goal was completion in time for the fall shipping season. Work was then started on the south bridge by October. It was also 80 feet in length, with a more typical arch measuring 30 feet in length. While there was

some discussion on extending the south spur to the quarry one-quarter mile west of the office along the creek and expanding the quarry operations, this does not seem to have occurred. With the new spur to the coal bunker, Sherman decided to build a large heating facility, 38 by 45 feet, with the track crossing the roof for direct deposit down into the building. This was built of limestone from the quarry on the grounds with a reinforced concrete roof ("Will Build Own Bridges," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* August 25, 1910; "To Open Big Stone Quarry Next Year," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* July 22, 1910; "Sherman Nursery Co. Grounds Busy Place," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* October 11, 1910, 1; "Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3).

On December 4, 1910, the Charles City Western Railway picked up its first carload of outbound freight – a car of nursery stock from Sherman Nursery Company – which was delivered to the Illinois Central line. Already, a number of incoming carloads had been delivered to Sherman Nursery Company. The line was nearly complete to Marble Rock at this time, with the line opening for passenger service in January 1911. South of town, the lines around the east and west side of Charles City split at Sherman Junction, on the south portion of the Sherman property in the southwest corner of Section 12 (Figure 17). The majority of the freight traffic was routed on the line around the east side. The new railroad connection was a great benefit for the 1910 spring packing season, which opened on March 18. With increased land, a summer drought, and continual expanding business, shipments again exceeded previous years. Up to four carloads were shipped daily with 75 people working in the packing cellar at the height of the season in late April. Additionally, 15 teams of horses and an "army" of Greek laborers were working the fields digging and planting. Roses continued to be shipped daily to Chicago and Minneapolis. By June, normal freight traffic began on the Charles City Western Railway to Marble Rock. On July 31, 1911, right of way in Sections 11 and 12 was officially deeded over from Sherman to the Charles City Western Railway ("Western Will Soon Enter Marble Rock," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* December 5, 1910; Hanson and Hull 1996: 121; "Western Big Aid in Handling Shipments," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,*" April 26, 1911).

While the Sherman Nursery Company's market extended well beyond Charles City, they also satisfied local customers. The 1911-12 city directory for Charles City listed them under nurserymen, fruit trees and orchard supplies, and florists. It also listed C.G. Patten & Son at 9th Street and Grand Avenue under the same three headings, who continued to have a local market as well as the state experiment station. Mark H. Wetherbee continued to be listed under florists at 800 N. Main Street (Polk 1911). In addition to Iowa, Sherman Nursery Company also held licenses to operate in other states. For example, a list of licensed nurseries in Wyoming in 1912 included the Sherman Nursery Company of Charles City, Iowa, with certificate through July 1, 1913. They were among 24 nurseries listed from out of state, and one of four nurseries based in Iowa. They were also a member of the Wyoming State Horticultural Society (Wyoming State Board of Horticulture 1912: 43).

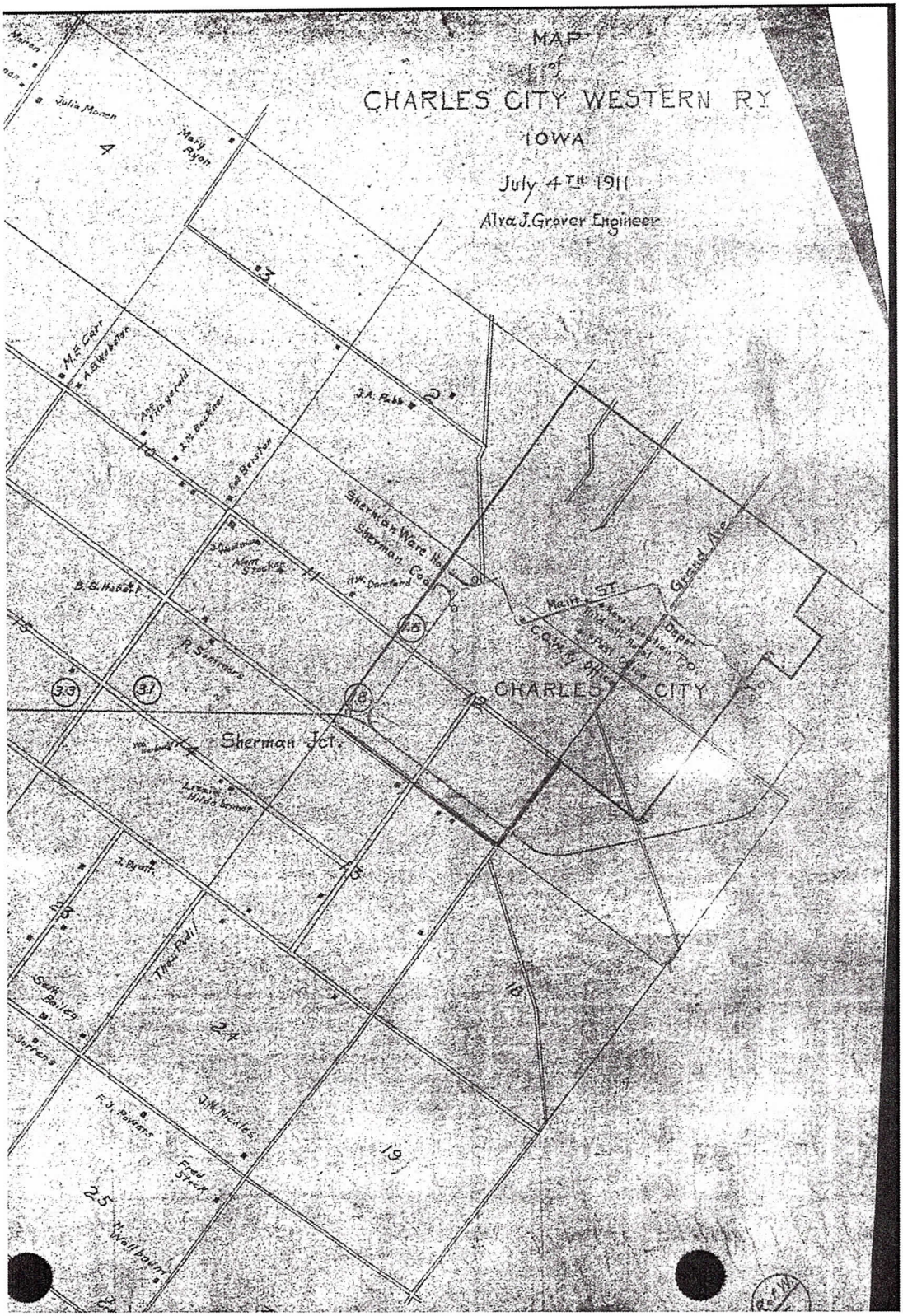


Figure 17. Map of the Charles City Western Railroad (Floyd County Historical Society).

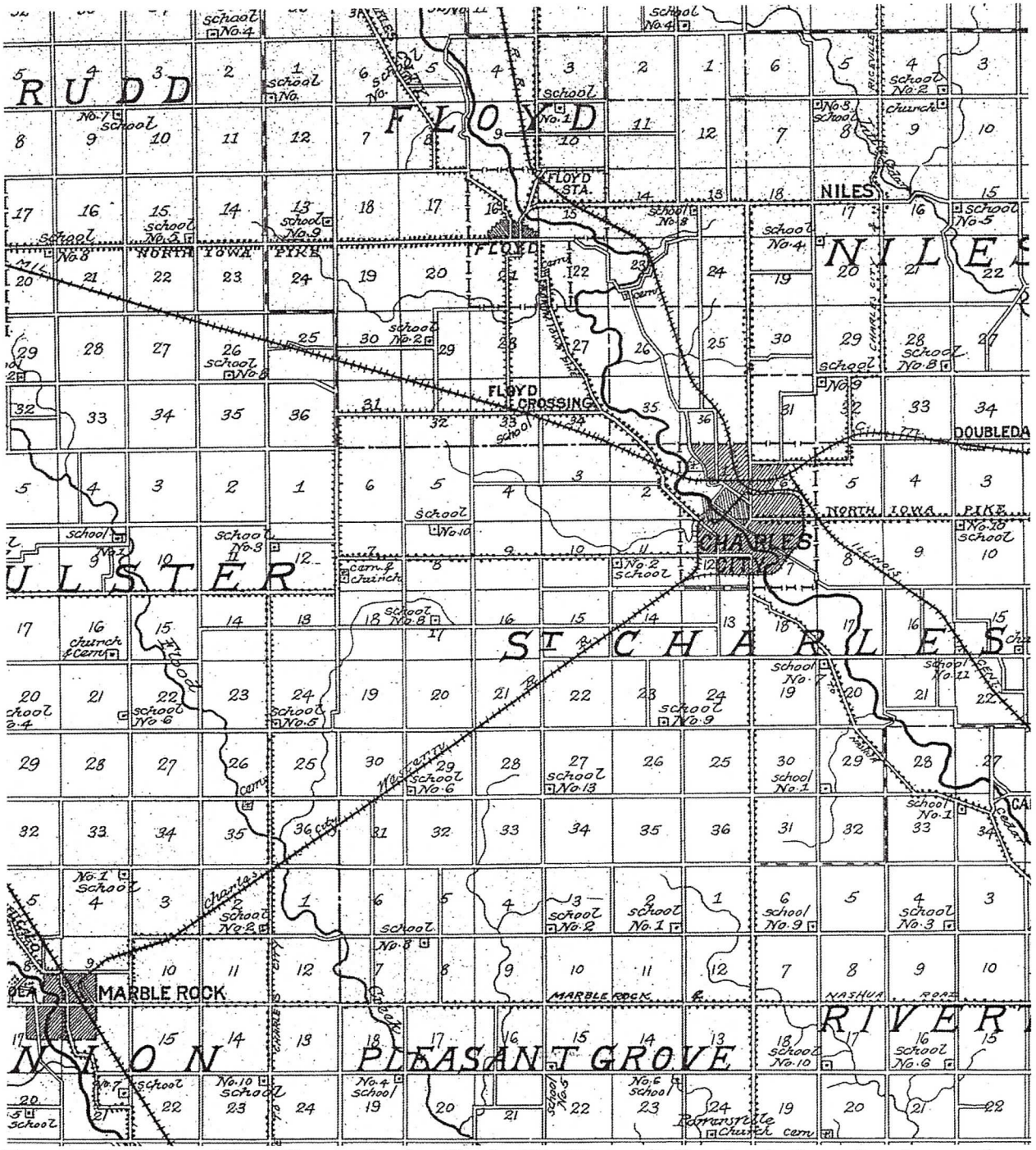


Figure 18. 1913 map of Floyd County showing Charles City Western Railroad and other railroad connections in Charles City (*Atlas of Floyd County, Iowa* 1913: 3).

The 1913 map of the Charles City area shows the extent of the Sherman Nursery Company holdings prior to the transfer of the land for Wildwood Park (Figure 19). The map outlines land owned by E.M. Sherman at the start of 1912 on the west side of Charles City, including 140 acres on the west edge of Section 12 (with office and other buildings) and 539 acres through most of Section 11, as well as the 20 acres owned by Gertrude Sherman in Section 11. By comparison, C.G. Patten owned 106 acres on the south side of Charles City. On February 11, 1912, E.M. and Gertrude Sherman deeded 74.5 acres to City of Charles City for a park, currently known as Wildwood Park. This land was located immediately south of Sherman Creek in the northwest quarter of Section 12 and northeast quarter of Section 11 and access by the Charles City Western Railroad. Wildwood Park would be developed with a nine-hole golf course, club house, and stone retaining walls and bridges over the next three decades (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, see nomination for additional details). Later company histories report that Sherman Nursery Company then owned 712 acres in Floyd County as well as 160 acres in Emmet County in northwest Iowa (*Atlas of Floyd County* 1913: 20; Floyd County Transfer Books; "Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3; Hanson and Hull 1996: 117; *Looking Back* c.2000; Page 1996: 1-6; "Public Invited to Use Sherman Park," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* June 10, 1914). Until February 27, 1914, E.M. Sherman owned the company land in his own name, and he transferred 12 tracts in Section 11 (N ½ NE and SW NW and E ½ SW and W ½ SW NE and W ½ NW SE and SW SE and E ¾ N ½ SE and E ¾ S ½ NE and N ½ NW except corner and SW NW except west edge and pt NW SW and Lot 3 NW SW) and four tracts in Section 12 (Lot 2 NW NW and SW NW and W ½ SW and Lot 3 NW NW) to the Sherman Nursery Company on this date (Floyd County Transfer Books).

A company booklet published around 1913 provides an update on the business of the Sherman Nursery Company since the circa 1908 pamphlet. This 16-page booklet focused on letters from satisfied customers, organized to highlight the various strengths of the company and its nursery stock. Letters were published from customers in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana, with the focus on customers in these five latter states. Numerous accounts noted the hardiness of the Sherman trees, surviving and bearing fruit in conditions fatal to other trees. L.M. Strain of Stamford, South Dakota wrote: "I have been dealing with the Sherman Nursery Co. of Charles City, Iowa, for four years and can highly recommend the company to anyone who wants to buy trees. Their stock is hardy, all grown in the North, and will stand the test of the Dakota climate. I have the finest orchard west of the Missouri River and so acknowledged by everyone who has seen it" (*The Tree Man's Story Come True* c.1913: 3). Another customer in South Dakota bought 27 fruit trees, six grape vines, and 12 raspberry plants last year that all grew well despite the drought. A sales representative visited a Montana customer to see how the stock was doing in adverse circumstances, and the customer was happy to write a letter that their 714 fruit trees, 660 grape vines, 362 small fruit plants, and 300 ornamental shrubs that were planted in April had arrived well packed and fewer than 10 had died despite no irrigation until June (*The Tree Man's Story Come True* c.1913: 7). Spirea and hydrangea were blooming nicely in Minnesota, and roses and shrubs were reported as doing very well in Nebraska, living up to the talk of quality (*The Tree Man's Story Come True* c.1913: 8, 10). Only three or four of the several hundred arbor vitae bought by a Minnesota customer two years ago for a windbreak on the open prairie had died, and the customer reported five years later that only three more had died despite a drought that had killed numerous on neighboring properties (*The Tree Man's Story Come True* c.1913: 13).

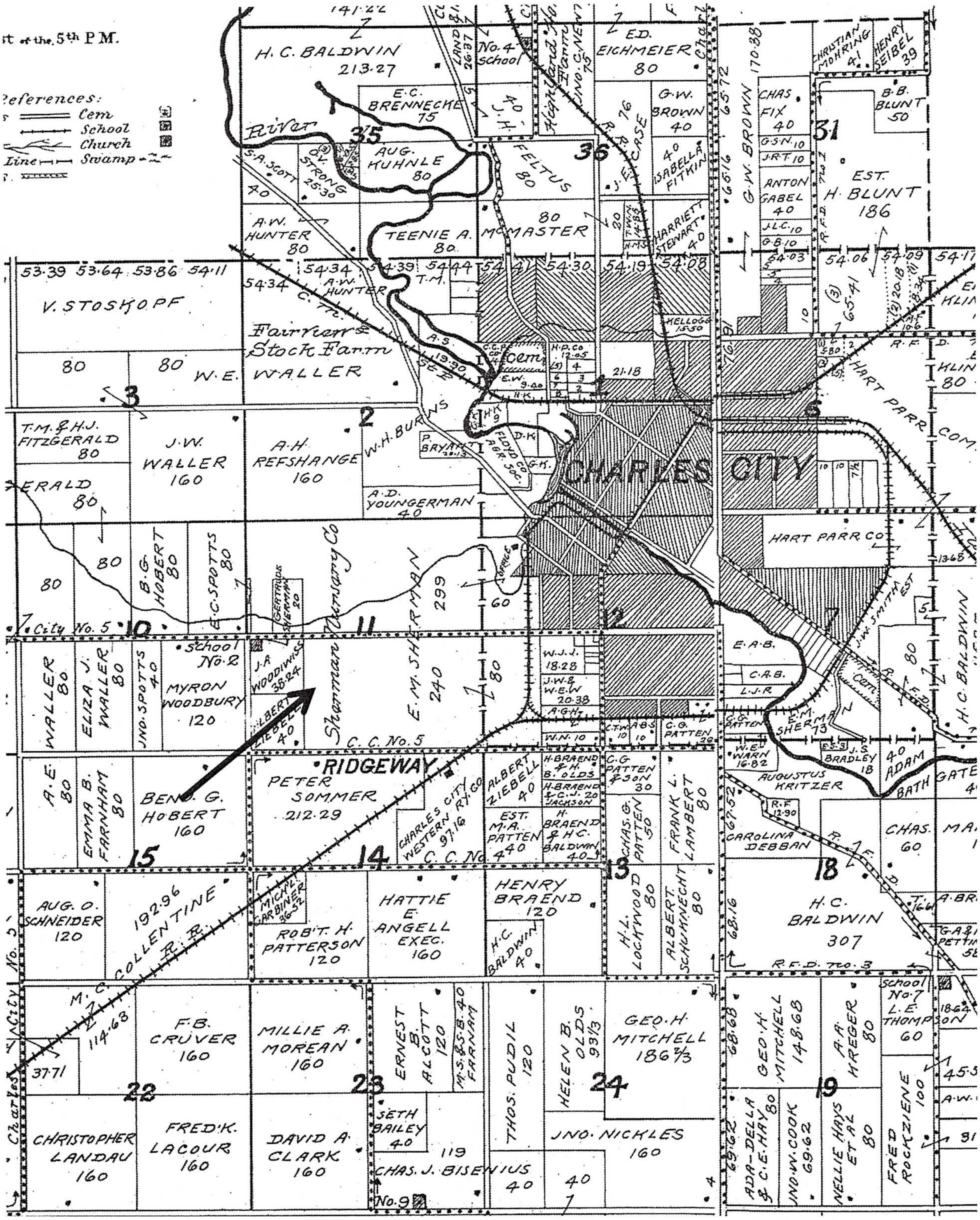


Figure 19. 1913 map of the Charles City area with Sherman property indicated (*Atlas of Floyd County, Iowa* 1913: 20).

E.M. Sherman continued to develop and expand his nursery business as well as starting another interest in 1914. Fire struck his new barn in November 1913, killing 25 horses specially trained for work in the nursery. H.G. Patten, son of C.G. and brother of Gertrude, was cited in the article as general overseer of nursery grounds. The 1914-15 city directory then listed the other son, Ernest C. Patten, as managing C.G. Patton & Son. Other listings were similar to the 1911-12 directory, with the addition of Arthur M. Briscoe and Edward B. Stowell's florist business at 97 N. Main and greenhouses on Chautauqua Avenue. Construction on a new barn at Sherman Nursery Company started in 1914, as well as construction of a new greenhouse to the west of the earlier ones that would be the largest yet at 300 feet. In early 1914, E.M. Sherman started a modern dairy farm with pure bred Jersey cattle. The manure was utilized for fertilizer in the greenhouses, and the farm grew to over 150 cows by 1925. Sherman also focused on quality production at the dairy farm, developing stock that would set records for milk and butterfat production in the 1920s ("25 Horses Burn as Fire Destroys Barn," *Charles City Intelligencer,* November 18, 1913; "New Greenhouse for Sherman Nursery Co.," *Charles City Daily Intelligencer,* January 7, 1914; Polk 1914; "Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3).

The new greenhouse as well as the full extent of the development near the office is depicted on the 1915 Sanborn map of the Sherman Nursery Company property (Figure 20). The three bridges over Sherman Creek – one vehicular and two railroad – are shown on this map and are extant. Likewise, the office with vault is extant. The packing cellar to the north and seven greenhouses to the west and south are demolished, along with the heating plant and coal bunker. The small stone building to the southwest of the greenhouses is extant, labeled on this map as box factory and blacksmith shop. Large scale box production appears to have been undertaken in the packing cellar, so this building may have been more of a carpenter and blacksmith shop. A small frame building to the southwest of this stone building currently exists, which is labeled as the tool house on this map assuming it is the same building. The other lumber sheds and small buildings in this area have been demolished. Again, the stables/barn were not shown in the immediate area of the office. The buildings continued to be depicted in postcards through the 1910s as well (Figures 21-30).

The prominence of the Sherman Nursery Company in Iowa is highlighted through the biography of Erwin Milo Sherman in *Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* published in 1915. The biography starts:

> Erwin Milo Sherman is president of the Sherman Nursery Company, which has one of the largest nurseries of the entire country, and his name is widely known in that connection. He has built up a mammoth business from a comparatively small beginning, his success being based upon first, a love of nature; second, an intimate knowledge of plant life, together with practical and systematic methods of propagation; and third, the close application and unfaltering industry which are always concomitants in the attainment of prosperity. (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1311)

The new stone office is noted to have grand old trees nearby, and "stretching away for over a mile is the farm of seven hundred and twenty-five acres devoted to growing of trees and shrubbery and to the propagation of plants" (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1312). The stone buildings and bridge on the grounds were constructed with stone from quarries on their grounds. The up-to-date telephone systems connected all parts of the property, and the

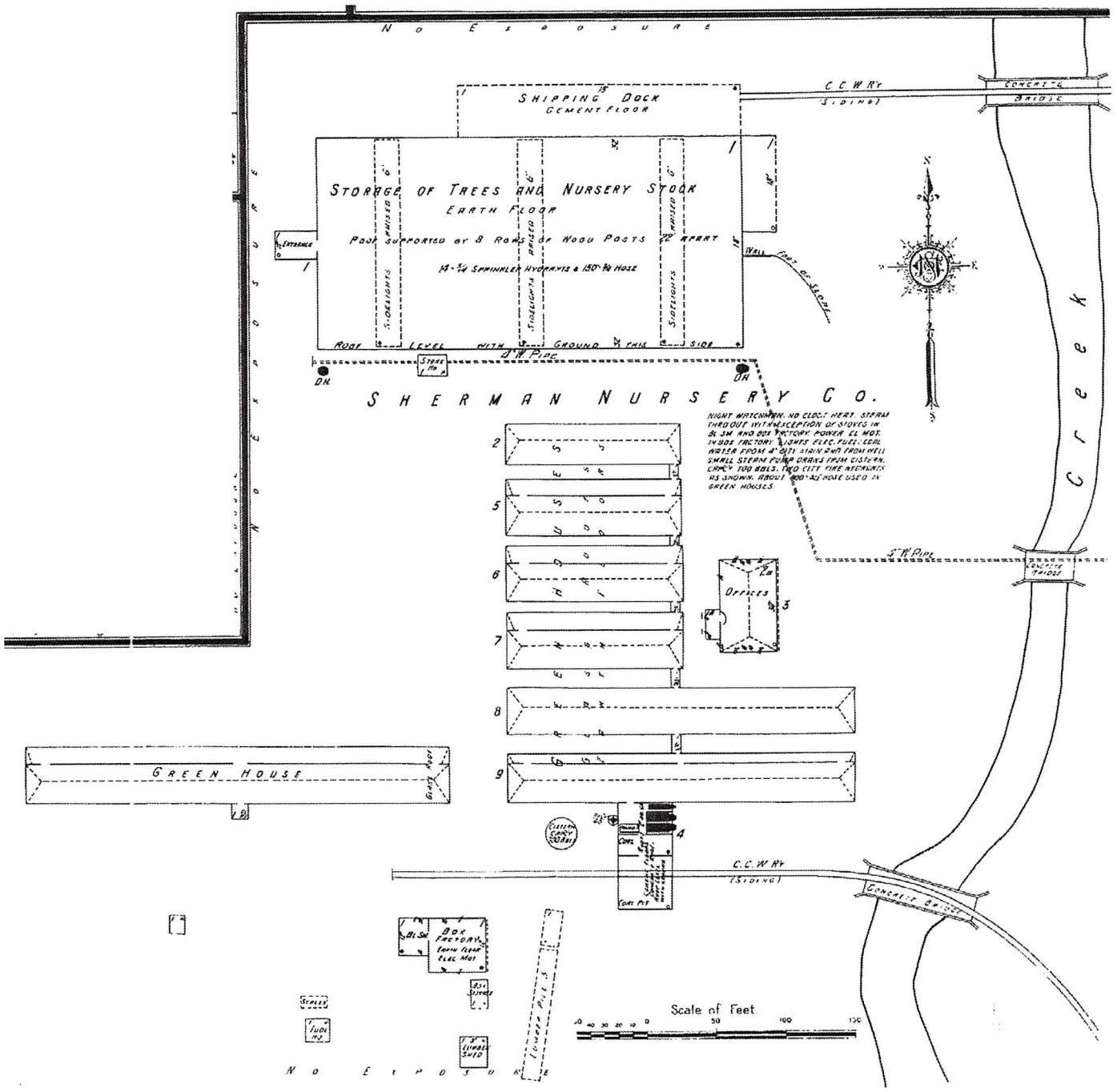


Figure 20. Sanborn fire insurance map of Sherman Nursery Company property, 1915 (Sanborn Map Company 1915).

Three bridges over creek (extant) at right – 1910, c.1896, 1910
Packing cellar (demolished) – top – completed in 1907
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906
Greenhouses (demolished)– from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902, west greenhouse – 1914; heating plant, chimney, coal bunker – 1910 (all demolished)
Box factory/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – nearby lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner – extant if same frame building
Large barn/stables for horses not shown on the map (demolished)



Figure 21. View looking west over stone entry bridge to office, 1913 postmark (Floyd County Historical Society).



Figure 22. View of stone arch entry bridge, 1912 postmark (Floyd County Historical Society).



Figure 23. View south to arch railroad bridge with greenhouses at right, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).



Figure 24. View looking west over south railroad bridge toward office, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).

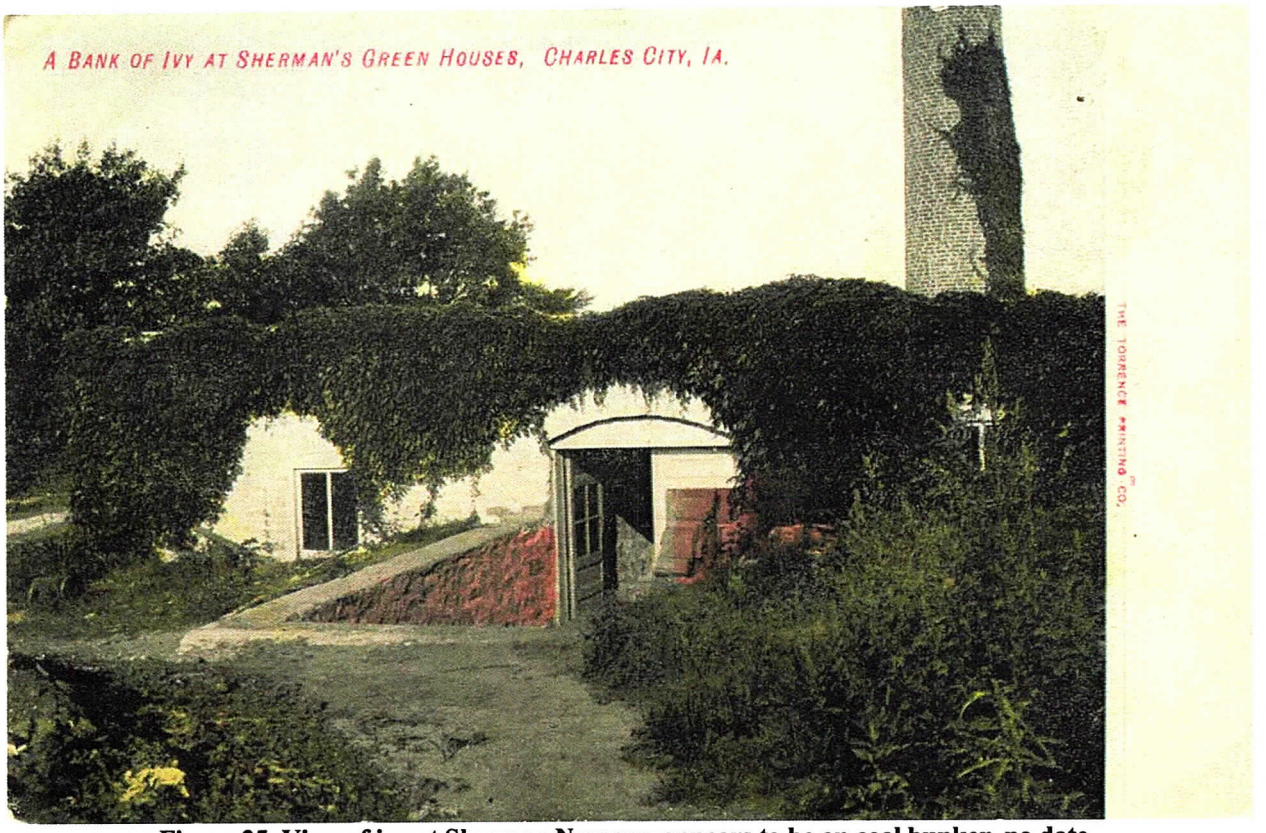


Figure 25. View of ivy at Sherman Nursery, appears to be on coal bunker, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).

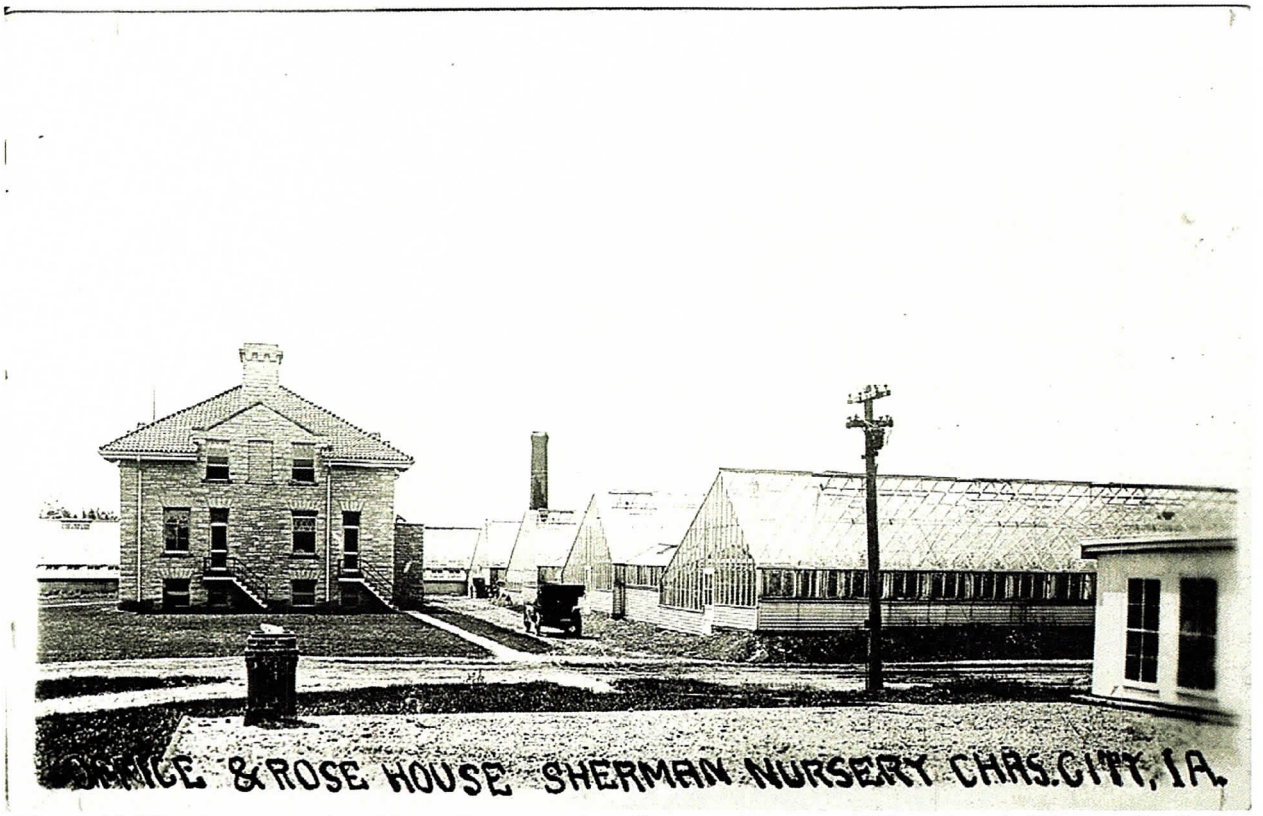


Figure 26. View from top of packing cellar to south at Sherman Nursery, 1912 postmark (Siems collection).

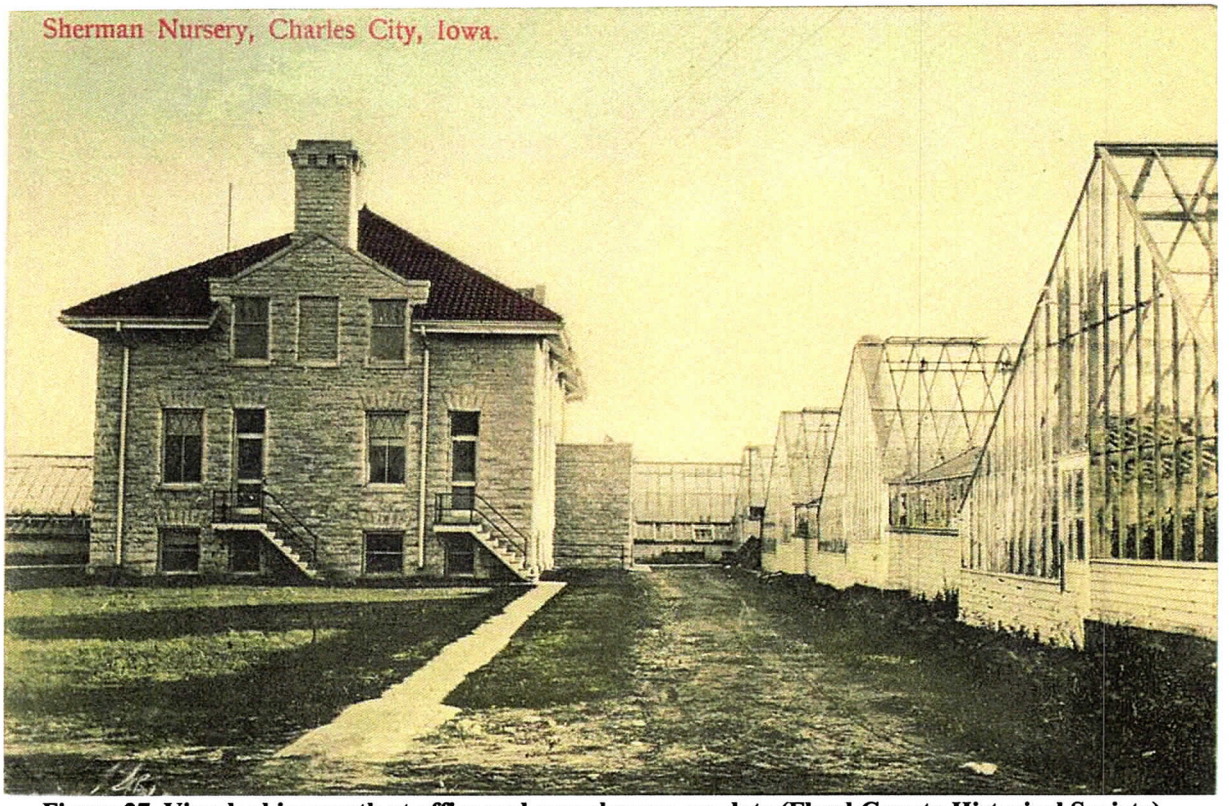


Figure 27. View looking south at office and greenhouses, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).



Figure 28. View looking southwest at office, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).



Figure 29. View looking at greenhouses prior to 1914 construction (Floyd County Historical Society).

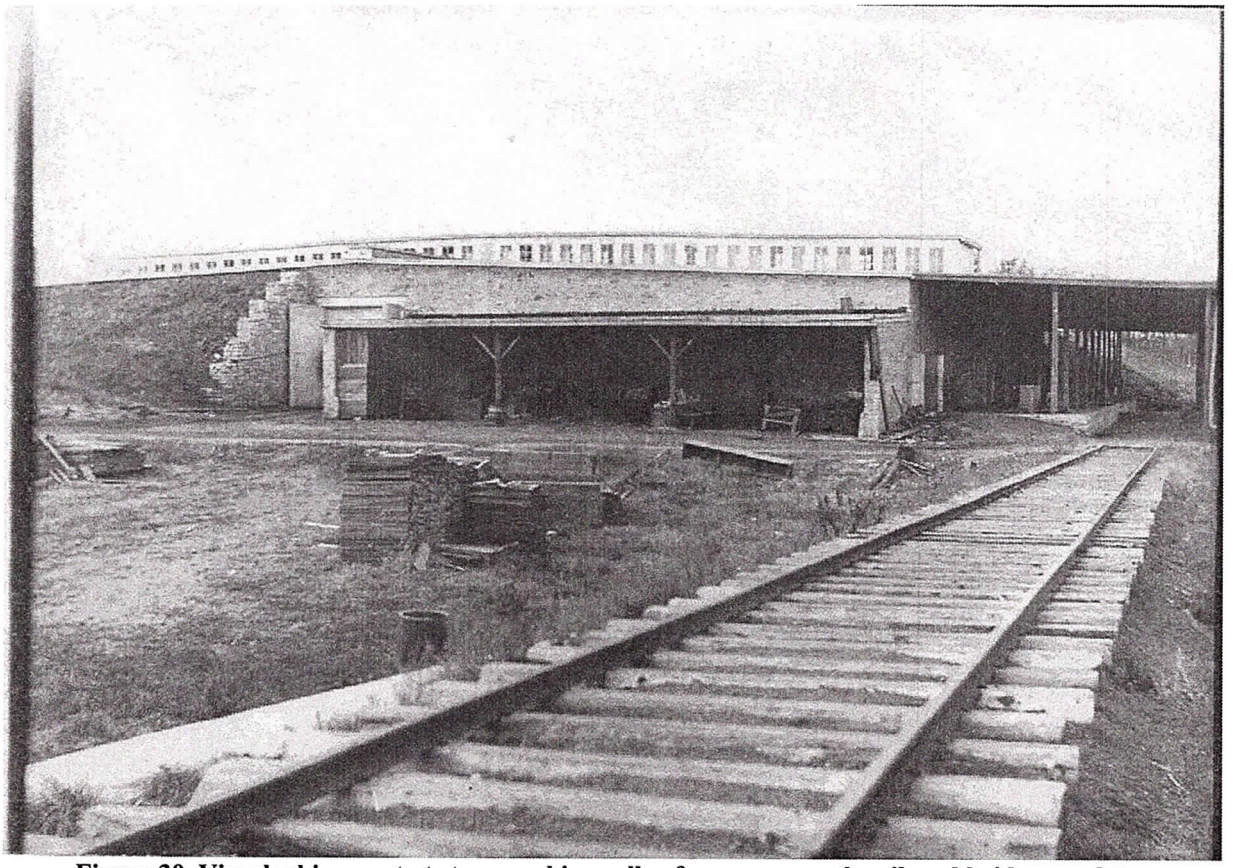


Figure 30. View looking west at stone packing cellar from near north railroad bridge, no date (Floyd County Historical Society).

greenhouses were built of iron framework and glass for maximum light. The special feature of business was growing of roses for the wholesale trade, including American Beauty, Killarney, Sunburst, My Lady, Aaron Ward, Melody, and Minatonka. The author had visited the spectacular plants that filled the greenhouses, which were worth the trip to see. The roses were shipped to dealers in St. Paul and Minneapolis where they were considered the best grown on the market. The Maiden Hair fern industry was a counterpart with the rose industry, with several thousand cut and sent daily with the roses (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1312-13).

The majority of the grounds at the Sherman Nursery Company were devoted to growing of trees and shrubbery and to the propagation of plants. The company was cited for its significant role in beautifying the county with its stock, and its resulting impact as "beauty leads to contentment, good cheer, and happiness, especially that beauty which finds its expression in growing things of nature" (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1314). Sherman's success over the last 30 years was attributed to his love of his products, excellent business ability, and distribution system. The packing house, 150 by 300 feet with 16-foot walls, was the center of activity at the company when 175 were employed in fall for digging and packing and 225 were employed in spring for packing and shipping. The company made its own boxes, using 400,000 feet of lumber each year. On the grounds, 20 acres of arbors protected evergreens grown from seed, with about 50 million young evergreens in the nursery. These were shipped to all parts of North America, with demand in the Northwest for laurel willow and Carolina poplar. Additionally, nearly three million apple trees were grown on the grounds and over one million grape vines. The company had made a careful study of soil and climate, developing stock even for the coldest areas of the country. They had sales in every state across the country as well as Canada. Reportedly, Sherman had the best salesmen in the industry, with each carefully selected (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1313-14). Sherman had also started a dairy farm near Charles City with "his object in so doing being to get manure for his greenhouses" as he was unable to get enough from other local farms. His thoroughly modern dairy farm consisted of 20 Jersey cows at this time (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* 1915: 1313).

The Sherman Nursery Company also continued to stand out for its impact locally. E.M. Sherman was active in the construction of the new $75,000 Y.M.C.A. for the community, serving on the board of trustees since its organization. He also continued to serve as vice president of the Charles City Western Railroad. In July 1915, the railroad became an electric line through town and to Marble Rock, and it expanded its track to Colwell to potentially connect with the Chicago Great Western Railroad in the future. This line was in operation by November 1915. The Sherman Nursery Company was cited in promotional material on Charles City as the largest nursery west of the Mississippi. Hart-Parr Company appears to have been the largest employer in town at this time, with 1,000 workers. They were also cited as the largest manufacturer of gasoline traction engines in world. Other prominent companies included the Fisher-Stevens Company (store fixtures), George P. Smith Company (sash, doors, millwork), and Patten & Son (nurserymen and experimental orchard and seedsmen). Both local nurseries continued to be among the 88 nurseries listed in the 1916-17 edition of the *Iowa State Gazetteer.* They were also among only 13 nurseries with listings dating back to the 1889-90 *Iowa State Gazetteer.* At this time, Charles G. Patten was in his mid-80s, and the Patten Plant Breeding Station was discontinued in 1915 by the Iowa Horticultural Society with work transferred to the

State Experiment Station. On April 28, 1917, the State of Iowa bought the 17 acres associated with his experimental section in the southeast quarter of Section 12, and he served as an associate in fruit breeding until his death on November 28, 1921 (Hanson and Hull 1996: 121; Vertical Files, Floyd County Historical Society; Beach, December 1922, 356; Floyd County Transfer Books; *History of Floyd County, Iowa* 1917: 511).

The *History of Floyd County, Iowa* published in 1917 noted that the Sherman Nursery Company was the largest nursery or florist in Charles City, with extensive gardens and grounds. The complex included a large two-story stone office building, 50,000 feet under glass in greenhouses, and a side track from the electric railroad into the property. The connection permitted ease of shipping from their large cold storage cellar to Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. E.M. Sherman was president as well as the largest stockholder. They had over 700 acres of land locally plus land elsewhere, and they specialized in small evergreen trees. They also shipped roses extensively. They supplied customers in Charles City with milk from their Jersey dairy farm, which supplied manure to keep their soil rich. Other florists and greenhouses in town included M.H. Wetherbee and the Briscoe and Stowell business (*History of Floyd County, Iowa* 1917: 192, 510-11).

The extent of the land holdings of Sherman Nursery Company was maintained in Charles City through the 1920s with additional growth within the industry. In April 1919, the company had over 50 people working for two weeks to dig and ship 1.5 million Norway Spruce trees to a large lumber company in Michigan. It was noted as one of the largest evergreen order ever known within the industry. With additional federal regulation on imported plants after World War I, nurseries across the country scrambled to produce additional stock to fill the void, and nurseries entered a strong period of prosperity. The activities of E.M. Sherman were logged in other newspapers across the state as well. The company advertised landscape architecture services in the *Emmetsburg Democrat* on February 16, 1921. The newspaper had previously published an interview with E.M. Sherman in July 1920 advocating the planting of trees to reforest the country and produce lumber for building materials. He had personally sawed 500,000 feet of lumber from land owned near Nashua that had belonged to his father. Interestingly, in addition to his extensive nursery business, Sherman was noted as a very successful breeder of Jersey cattle and Poland China hogs with 60 cows and 300 hogs ("The Sherman Nursery Makes a Big Shipment," *Charles City Press,* April 14, 1919; Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 44; *Emmetsburg Democrat (Iowa),* February 16, 1921, 4; "Sawed 500,000 feet of Lumber," *The Democrat (Emmetburg, Iowa),* July 28, 1920, 5).

The nursery and florist industry in Charles City and across Iowa evolved in the 1920s as a generation retired and new names appeared. The 1922-23 city directory for Charles City listed the Sherman Nursery Company (E.M. Sherman, president) at the west end of Grove Street and C.G. Patten & Son (Ernest C. Patten) at 9th and Grand. Sherman was also listed under greenhouses. Long-standing florist Mark H. Wetherbee was last listed with a business in 1920, with the Ferris Greenhouse listed at his old address of 800 N. Main in 1922. A. Rey Ferris likewise lived next door at 804 N. Main. The Briscoe & Stowell business evolved into Riverside Greenhouses, with a flower shop at 92 N. Main and greenhouses on Chautauqua Avenue north of Gilbert. E.B. Stowell continued to be listed as an individual florist at the same addresses. Sherman and Patten continued to be listed under nurserymen in Charles City in the 1925-26 city

directory. Riverside Flower Shop and E.B. Stowell continued to operate at 92 N. Main, with the florist at 800 N. Main changing to Howard W. Fay and the Fay Greenhouse. By the 1922-23 *Iowa State Gazetteer,* only 10 of the 90 listings for nurserymen dated back to 1889, with identical or similar names: Morris J. Graham, Adel; Nicholas M. Shaffer, Cascade; C.G. Patton & Son, Charles City; Sherman Nursery Company, Charles City; Des Moines Nursery Company, Des Moines; C.L. Hull, Fort Madison; Earl Ferris Nursery, Hampton; Pierce Bechtel, LeMars; Gardner Nursery Company, Osage; Shenandoah Nurseries, Shenandoah. By comparison, 37 of the 90 companies reflect identical or similar names to the listings 15 years earlier in 1908 (R.L. Polk 1922: 1606-1607).

The 1924 Sanborn map depicts the complex around the main office as similar to the 1915 map (Figure 31). The bridges off the map to the east are extant. An ice house, 25 feet in length, is noted at the top of the map, extending off of the page north of the large packing cellar. The seven greenhouses are located to the west and south of the stone office, with the coal/power house appearing somewhat reduced in size. The one-story stone "box factory" is now labeled as carpenter and blacksmith shop, likely a similar use as 1915 despite the different labels. The miscellaneous sheds to the east and south have been replaced by a large attached lumber shed. The small building noted previously as a tool house is still standing, with a granary now located to its south. The rose business expanded in 1924 with the construction of two more greenhouses, bringing the total up to nine. The company had one of the largest greenhouses west of Chicago with roses shipped daily. Nearly two city blocks were now under glass and devoted exclusively to growing roses (Sanborn Map Company 1924; "Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 3).

By 1925 at age 63, E.M. Sherman began to look over the success of his company over the last 40 years and position it to continue in the future. In June 1925, the directors of Sherman Nursery Company voted to increase capital from $100,000 to $300,000 and sell preferred stock at $100 per share with a 7% rate of annual return over a minimum of five years. In November, they issued a four-page booklet profiling the company and highlighting its history and success. It was noted as one of the oldest and largest nurseries in the country. The company boasted nearly 1,000 acres of land with scores of substantial up-to-date buildings, splendid horses, one of finest Jersey herds in world, the latest and best machinery, and hundreds of acres of nursery stock. They were self-proclaimed as the "largest growers of Evergreens in the world," "largest growers of Hardy Nursery Stock in the Northwest," and operated one of the largest number of greenhouses west of Chicago for their roses. Each year, 10 to 15 carloads of lumber were used to make boxes for spring shipping, and they used at least 50 carloads of coal each year to heat the greenhouses. Their current stock included: 50 million evergreens, 1 million apple trees, 150,000 plum trees, 35,000 cherry trees, 500,000 grape vines, 200,000 currants, 150,000 gooseberries, 200,000 raspberries, 575,000 ornamental shrubs, 20,000 roses, 20,000 climbing vines, 5 million seedlings, 3 million forest and shade trees, 300,000 phlox, and 130,000 peonies. Anyone was invited to visit to see for themselves ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 1, 4).

The Sherman Nursery Company had grown considerably over its 41 year history, and it had a strong wholesale as well as retail trade. E.M. Sherman remained at the head of the company, with several long time employees as well as a "corps of younger men" with strong experience ready to carry the company forward. The company was well-known across the county with

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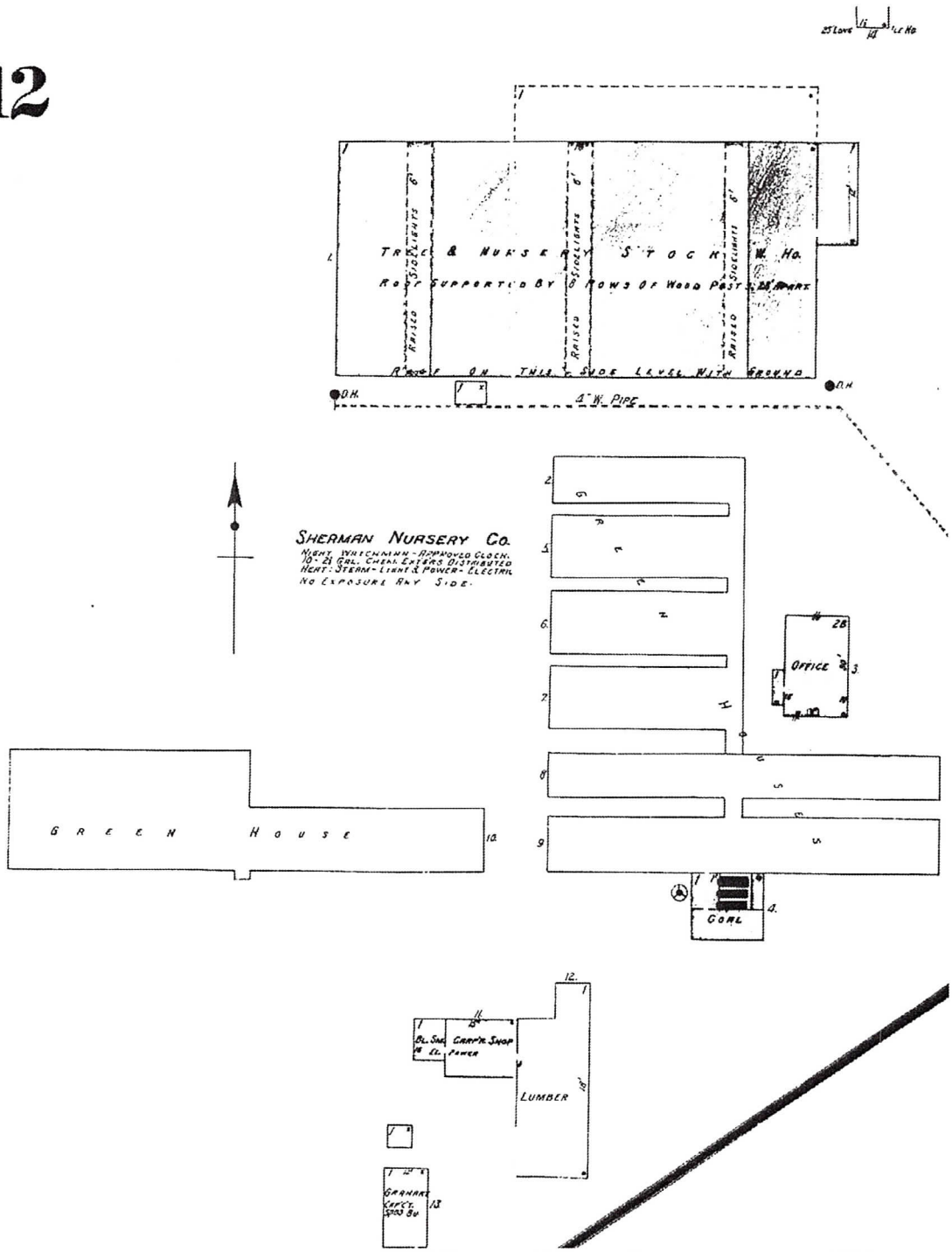
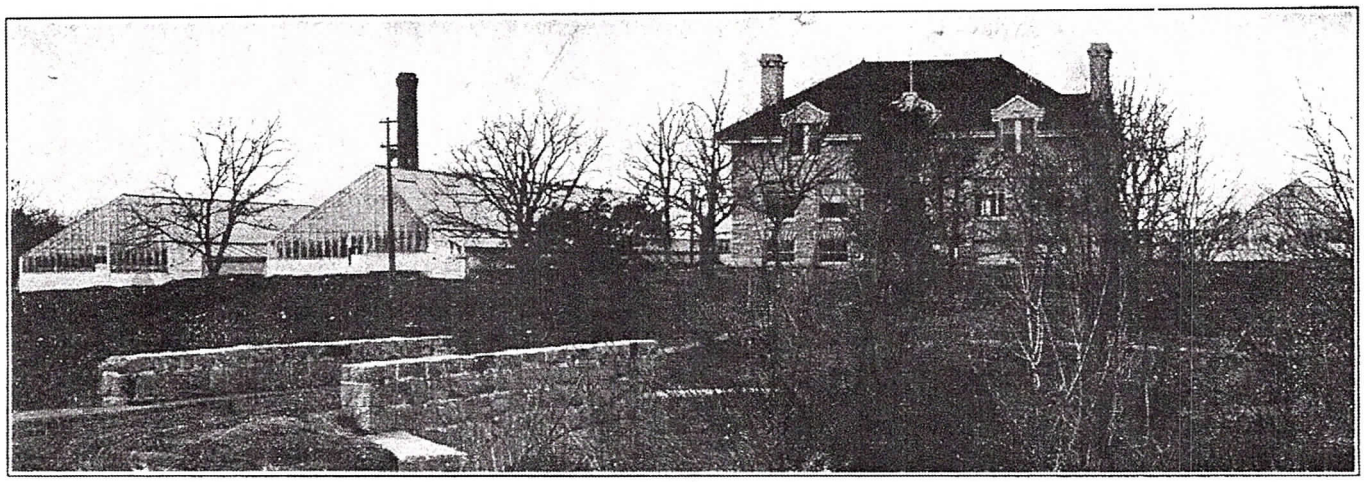


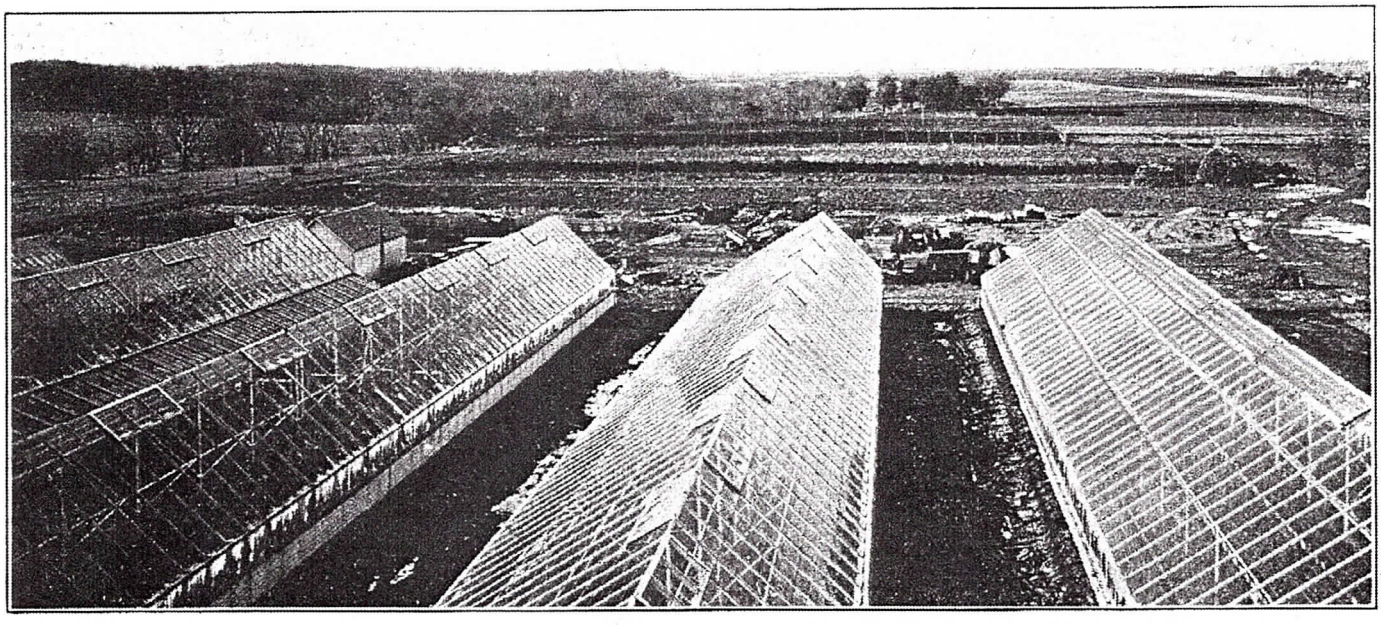
Figure 31. Sanborn fire insurance map of Sherman Nursery Company property, 1924 (Sanborn Map Company 1924).

Packing cellar (demolished) – top – completed in 1907 – ice house to north off map (demolished)
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906
Greenhouses (demolished)– from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902, coal bunker – 1910 (demolished), west greenhouse – 1914 with later north side addition
Carpenter/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – attached lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner – extant if same frame building – granary to south is demolished



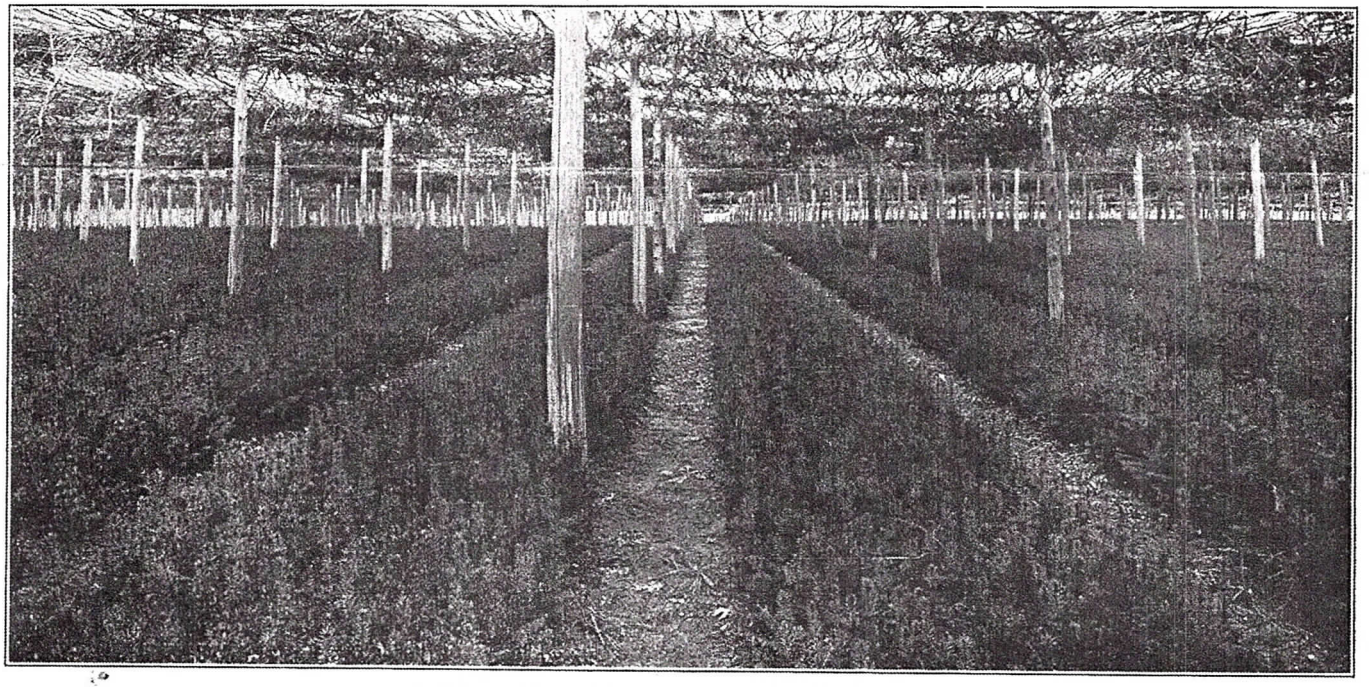
THE HOME OF THE BIG NURSERY

Figure 32. View west across stone bridge to office and greenhouses in 1925 ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock," 1925).



A view from office window showing "lay" of ground—Sherman Nursery

Figure 33. View west from office across greenhouses to nursery grounds in 1925 ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock," 1925).



A View of Evergreen Beds—Sherman Nursery Company
Millions of Evergreens in Sight

Figure 34. Evergreen seedlings under the arbor at Sherman Nursery Company in 1925 ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock," 1925).

1,500 salesmen working for the company. The United States had the largest nurseries in the world, and Sherman was one of the largest in the United States, thus in the world. The value of its land, buildings, and equipment was estimated at $1.5 million, with gross business in 1924 ten times that of 1903. The company did sound business supplying nursery stock, including trees of all kinds, vines, rose bushes, and various kinds of seedlings. They boasted the goodwill of over 250,000 satisfied customers. Their land holdings appear to be identical to 1912, with 712 acres of land around Charles City and 160 acres two miles from Estherville in Emmet County. Nursery stock was grown on over 500 acres. Other visible resources included the limestone office building with tile roof, 150 by 300 foot packing cellar with 16 foot stone walls accessed by 1,000 feet of track and switch and concrete bridge, nine greenhouses covering two city blocks with heating plant and coal bunker of reinforced concrete accessed by 1,000 feet of track and switch and concrete bridge, a blacksmith shop and box factory with electrical machinery, lumber shed with capacity of 10 carloads of lumber, 25 line private telephone system, several thousands of dollars in office equipment, and 2,000 sets of plate books of stock for sales. Additionally, the company had eight sets of farm buildings, including dairy farm with a large herd of pure bred Jersey cattle, tractors, automobiles, and trucks ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 2-3).

Through this period, the Jersey cattle of E.M. Sherman gained additional attention. Since fall 1920, they had completed Register of Merit work with high production records logged. In 1925, Raleigh's Torono's Meme was a World Champion two-year-old Jersey with a record 902.15 pounds of butterfat in 365 days. Likewise, Brown Lady's Little Jewel was a Champion Jersey of the Middle West with a record 1,019.73 pounds of butterfat in 365 days. A group of Hart-Parr boosters from Illinois toured the Sherman Nursery and Sherman Jersey Farm in February 1925.

Many farmers had ordered trees from the nursery, and they desired to see the prize winning cattle. Sherman was noted as known across the country for having developed one of great production herds of Jersey cattle over the last few years, and the manager offered practical suggestions to the visiting farmers. Newspapers outside the immediate area also covered the Sherman Jersey Farm. In July 1927, the *Waterloo Evening Courier* cited the farm as a good example of a dairy farm, which was operated as a not for profit farm by the Sherman Nursery Company. They noted that the farm was started 20 years ago for the nursery to supply fertilizer for the large green houses on several acres of ground. E.M. Sherman was raised on a pure bred stock farm and decided to make the herd strictly pure bred Jersey cows. His herd had grown to over 100 cattle, with 46 cows producing 13,345 pounds of milk containing 638.23 pounds of butterfat at a high net profit of $260.76 for each cow. Merry Maiden's Brown Lady and her daughter Brown Lady's Little Jewel were cited as particularly high butterfat producers. The buildings on the farm were noted to be inexpensive and ordinary, while the dairy herd included nine gold medal cows and 21 silver medal cows ("Sherman Nursery Company Stock" 1925: 4; "Illinois Boosters Visit the Sherman Nursery and Jersey Farm," *Twice a Week News,* February 10, 1925, 1; "Nursery Concern Develops Noted Jersey Cow Herd," *Waterloo Evening Courier,* July 9, 1927, 17).

Profits continued to be strong in 1928, 40 years after the original incorporation of the company. The charter was renewed this year, with E.M. Sherman maintaining his position as president. Advertisements through the year continued to emphasize the hardiest of the nursery stock, and the nursery stock included shrubbery, evergreens, and fruit trees grown here for the cold climate. The trees were noted as having a strong root system and thus were fast growers ("The Sherman Nursery Co. – Charles City," *Nashua Reporter,* March 14, 1928, 8). Sherman Nursery Company was in the process of constructing a large arbor covering ten acres of land, though already "the Sherman Nursery company leads the world in the number of evergreen seedlings started each year, and the addition of the new arbor will greatly increase the present production" ("Sherman Leads the World in Evergreens," *Charles City Press,* January 1, 1929). Clifton C. Smith served as sales manager for over 250 active salesmen. A sales convention was held at the nursery this year for the salesmen to visit and inspect the nursery stock, something noted to likely become an annual event. The packing cellar under August Ebert was running efficiently with work on grafts over the winter in the cellar under the direction of R.E. Page. The rose department under C.E. Smith also continued to gain outstanding recognition for the quality of the roses ("Sherman Leads the World in Evergreens," *Charles City Press,* January 1, 1929; "1928 Best Year in the History of Charles City," *Charles City Press,* January 1, 1929).

The Association of American Nurserymen launched a national marketing campaign in 1928 to maintain demand for nursery products by focusing more on landscaping. Their efforts included booklets, advertising, yard and garden contests that introduced the concept of an "outdoor living room." They saw the industry to shifting from fruit trees focused on production to more ornamentals planted to beautify a property. Already, ornamentals were three-quarters of the sales volume across the industry, a notable shift over early years of nurseries. While the market for fruit trees was saturated, they encouraged nurseries to focus on shrubs, evergreens, roses, and ornamental trees (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 44). The Sherman Nursery Company followed this suggestion. The *Waterloo Evening Courier* noted that E.D. Allan, landscape architect for Sherman Nursery Company's interests in Waterloo, spoke to the Commercial Club of Monona

on planting of shrubs and beautifying the lawns of homes and the town parks ("Talks on Landscaping," *Waterloo Evening Courier,* April 10, 1929, 19). Their evergreen business also continued to grow with the addition of the new arbor for evergreens and ornamental shrubs. In 1929, they saw unprecedented business as the "world's largest growers of evergreens," and they were working to clear more land for additional nursery stock in 1930. Their sales force had reportedly climbed to nearly 450 agents covering 15 states across the Midwest. They reaped benefits from the company's connection with the national publicity campaign of American Association of Nurseryman with an emphasis on landscape gardening. Many of the new sales men were also skilled landscape designers. Additionally, several cities had sent representatives to Sherman in the last year to pick out shade trees for parks and streets ("Nursery is Speeding Up for New Year," *Charles City Press,* January 1, 1930, 7).

Despite declining economic conditions across the country after the stock market crash in 1929, the Sherman Nursery Company continued to fare well in 1930. Locally, the population of Charles City had grown to 8,039 in 1930. Two nurseries continued to operate in town, Sherman Nursery Company with E.M. Sherman as president and C.G. Patten & Son with Ernest C. Patten as president. Four florists were listed in town: Riverside Flower Shop – 401 N. Main, E.B. Stowell – 401 N. Main, Fay Greenhouse – 800 N. Main – Howard W. Fay, and Mark H. Wetherbee – 602 Clark. Though E.M. Sherman continued to serve as president, Clifton C. Smith appears to have taken a more active leadership role by this time. He started with the company as an assistant bookkeeper in 1912, and he became secretary in 1925. He served as sales manager through this period. In a talk to the Rotary Club in April 1930, he noted that Sherman had 750 salesmen including 20 that had worked for the company for at least 15 years. The company employed 112 people year round, including an office staff of 20 clerks and stenographers. During the shipping season, they paid $1,000 a day in labor. The nursery continued to grow many varieties of apple trees, evergreens, spruce, and pine for distribution from coast to coast (Polk 1930; "Rotary Club is Told about the Nursery," *Charles City Press,* April 29, 1930, 8).

The Sherman Nursery Company was active locally in 1930 as well. In spring, they planted 200 or more Black Hill Spruce evergreens around the Hanford McNider home. Samples of their Arbor Vitae were displayed in the window of the Torrence Printing Company with pages from the company's catalog showing beautifully illustrated examples of the shrubs, flowers, fruits and evergreens grown by them. The plants were in pottery jars and noted for their symmetry and color, appropriate to ornament an entry. The company was cited as over 1,000 acres at the end of 1930 and the "largest growers of evergreens in the world" with demand for evergreens increasing. The company did a large volume of retail business in 1930 with hundreds of salesmen across 15 Midwestern states. Additionally, several large eastern nurseries and landscape firms handled Sherman grown evergreens exclusively. This demand required strict planning on the part of the nursery with the average evergreen sold for retail sale at age six. Other evergreens were grown in the nursery for ten or even 20 years. The system in place at Sherman insured the quality of the stock as well as availability of several sizes of trees. Additionally, they carried a large assortment of hardy stock of shade and ornamental trees, fruit trees, berry bushes, shrubs, perennial plants, and vines (*Charles City Press,* June 5, 1930, 5; *Charles City Press,* July 25, 1930, 3; "Sherman Nursery Gives Much Encouragement in Prospects for Thirty-one," *Charles City Press,* December 31, 1930, 5).

Changes and evolution of Sherman Nursery Company, 1931-1946

Likely a combination of the economic conditions and the near retirement of Erwin M. Sherman led to the reorganization efforts of the Sherman Nursery Company in the early 1930s. The articles of incorporation were amended in January 1931 to reflect a shift in the management structure of the company, certified by E.M. Sherman, president, and C.C. Smith, secretary. The "general nature of the business" section was expanded to include the livestock and dairy products of the Sherman Jersey Farm. A board of directors was given greater prominence within the following sections. The annual meeting of stockholders would now elect a board of directors, rather than officers. The officers would then be elected by the board of directors to a one year term. The president would no longer also serve as business manager per the by-laws, and the secretary and treasurer positions could be held by the same person. Transfers of shares of stock no longer required approval by the board of directors. Finally, the limit on the debt of the company as corresponded to the capital stock was eliminated ("Notice of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation of Sherman Nursery Company," *Charles City Press,* February 28, 1931, 6).

These amendments to the articles of incorporation preceded a sale of 3,001 shares of new stock to local holding company Ellis & Ellis with a reorganization plan presented by C.C. Smith to the stockholders for approval in a special meeting on August 25, 1931. The company would continue to operate over the next 16 years under this new ownership (*Looking Back* c.2000; Hanson and Hull 1996: 118). The 1934 city directory lists J.F. Christiansen, president; W.B. Johnson, vice president, and C.C. Smith, secretary and treasurer. E.M. Sherman was listed in 1934 as living at 800 Gilbert and as associated with the Sherman Jersey Farm with an office at 219 S. Main Street. Patten & Son is no longer listed under nurseries, though Ernest C. Patten continued to be listed as a nurseryman. Wetherbee and Ross were a short-lived listing under nurseries at 1714 Clark, and florists in town included Fay Greenhouses (800 N. Main), Mary E. Homaas (104 3rd Ave), and Riverside Flower Shop (401 N. Main).

The context of the Sherman Nursery Company operations in the 1930s is set against the Depression that impacted all areas of business across the United States. The economic troubles were complicated by a drought in 1930 and large decrease in sales in 1931 and 1932. Prices dropped as supply of stock was high. However, a bad winter in 1933 and subsequent drought in 1934 reduced the overall amount of stock. The industry found a new market with the rise of the garden club movement over the next few years. This movement increased landscape gardening in the middle class and created new demand for stock. Single companies began to offer design and installation services, laying the groundwork for modern retail companies. By the late 1930s, a large number of wholesale growers also operated retail outlets. With an increasing number of department and chain stores also carrying bare-root nursery stock, the need for sales agents began to decline. New government regulations such as plant patent law affected the industry, as well as the creation of conservation and forestry programs that resulted in government nurseries (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 44-46).

The Sherman Nursery Company had already begun to offer the design and installation services as well as the plants for landscaping by the early 1930s. Agents and landscape architects were one and the same or worked together. Thus, advertisements for design services appeared in communities across the Midwest. For example, the *Tribune and Leader-Press* in La Crosse, Wisconsin carried an advertisement for the company on February 19, 1931 with local

representatives listed as A. E. Snyder, Salesman; L. B. Snyder, Landscape Architect; and L. E. Pricer, Landscape Architect. The ad noted that successful growth depended on the timing of the planting and the use of sturdy, high grade nursery stock, such as that of the Sherman Nursery Company of Charles City, Iowa ("Plant this Spring," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press (La Crosse, WI),* February 19, 1931, 3). The *Mason City Globe-Gazette* (Iowa) noted that George J. Barbour had been working for the Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City and now was transferring to Mason City as head of sales. He was a landscape architect and gardener with a degree from the American Landscape School of Newark, New York. Barbour could be consulted to discuss landscape design, rock garden, trees, shrubs, or plants of any kind as well as proper pruning and maintenance ("Sherman Nursery Company," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* June 29, 1931, 9). E.D. Allen, landscape architect and superintendent of landscape division, supervised the design and installation of landscaping for the home of Archbishop Beckman in Dubuque in 1931. Likewise, the company was awarded the landscaping and installation of the municipal swimming pool in New Hampton. Around their office, they completed extensive landscape development of grounds including several hundred evergreens, shrubs, and trees as well as a large rock garden on side hill near east end of packing house in 1932. In 1933, the *Estherville Enterprise* noted that the Sherman Nursery had shipped eastern Iowa limestone to the city for rock gardens. A number of elms from the company as well as rock gardens were being installed in town as well as on rural farms ("Nursery Here Landscapes Dubuque Home," *Charles City Daily Press and Evening Intelligencer,* November 18, 1931, 8; "Sherman to Landscape Pool Grounds," *Charles City Daily Press,* November 18, 1931, 8; "Nursery has Completed Landscaping," *Charles City Daily Press,* July 14, 1932, 6; "Sherman Nursery to Ship Limestone Here for Rock Gardens," *Estherville Enterprise (Iowa),* July 26, 1933, 1).

The Sherman Nursery Company also worked to maintain a national presence through this period. They began advertising in the national publication, *American Nurseryman,* in 1932, a tradition that would continue through the 1990s and was later noted as key in the growth and development of the business. Clifton C. Smith, serving as secretary, treasurer, and sales manager, appears to have been the active nurseryman and face of the company in this period. He was elected president of the United States Retail Nurserymen's Association at their annual meeting in Chicago in July 1933. This office was then followed by election as president of Northern Retail Nurserymen's Association, which included Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota, in December 1934 ("Integrity is a valued industry tradition," Sherman Nursery Company ad in *American Nurseryman,* September 1, 1997; "C.C. Smith is New President of Nurserymen," *Charles City Daily Press,* July 24, 1933, 6; "Is Elected President of Nurserymen," *Charles City Daily Press,* December 20, 1934, 6)

Both Erwin M. Sherman and his wife Gertrude died in Charles City in 1934. Gertrude, daughter of C.G. Patten, a nationally recognized horticulturalist, died on February 17, 1934. She was the wife of E.M. Sherman, the former president of Sherman Nursery ("Four Deaths Bring Sorrow to the City," *Charles City Press,* February 27, 1934). A few months later, Erwin M. Sherman died on June 9, 1934 at age 72. He was cited as "one of Charles City's most prominent citizens and formerly president of the Sherman Nursery company and of the Charles City Western Railway and owner of a very fine Jersey herd, numbering among it many champion animals." He started the Sherman Nursery Company in 1884 and served as president until a few years previous. He was also an organizer of the U.S. Retail Nurseryman's Association, as well as serving as

president, vice president, and secretary at various times. He was a past president of the Iowa State Nurseryman's Association, past vice-president of American Plant Propagator's Association, and director of Iowa State Horticultural Society. Locally, he was active in as the president of the board of trustees at First Methodist Church, president of the Y.M.C.A., and charter member of the Rotary Club. He was also president of the Charles City Western Railway, and he achieved national medals and records for his Jersey herd. E.M. and Gertrude Sherman's daughter Katherine died in 1910 at age 9, and they had no other children. E.M. was survived by brother M.B. Sherman of Modesto, California, and sisters Ida Caulkins, Minnie Sherman, and Dora Gordon ("Started the Nursery that Bears His Name," *Charles City Press,* June 9, 1934; "Tributes Paid to Nurseryman," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* June 12, 1934, 5).

The Sherman Nursery Company continued to operate successfully in Charles City through the end of the 1930s and the 50th anniversary of its incorporation. By 1936, L.H. Bloom took over as vice president, with J.F. Christiansen continuing as president and C.C. Smith as secretary and treasurer. He noted at the Chamber of Commerce meeting in January 1936 that he expected that 1936 would have a greater increase in sales than 1935 with the noted strides in overall business last year. Sherman Nursery's landscape architect A.E. Snyder spoke at the first meeting of the garden and home department of the Women's Club in Charles City in March 1937. D. Unsell was listed as contact for landscape architect and designer for shrubbery and trees with the Sherman Nursery Company in the *Ada Evening News* in November 1938. The south portion of the first story of the stone office building was repaired after extensive damaged by fire in March 1937. The 1939 city directory for Charles City listed the Sherman Nursery Company and Riverside Greenhouse (100 Chautauqua Avenue) under local nurserymen. The officers at Sherman were J.F. Christiansen, president; Harly J. Deecus, vice president; Clifton C. Smith, secretary, and Morris W. Swartz, treasurer. The only other florist listing was for Fay Greenhouse at 800 N. Main ("Optimism is Key Note at C of C Meeting," *Charles City Daily Press,* January 22, 1936, 1; "Nursery Offices at Charles City Damaged by Fire," *Waterloo Daily Courier,* March 9, 1937, 12; "First Meeting Held by Department of Town's Women's Club," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* March 17, 1937, 8; *Ada Evening News,* November 27, 1938, 9; Polk 1939).

An aerial photograph dating to July 1939 shows the Sherman Nursery Company property through Section 11 and into Section 12 (Figure 35). The buildings are clustered at the northwest corner of Section 12 (Figure 36). The size and number appear to be generally the same as shown and constructed in 1924. Thus, the built landscape does not appear significantly different over the 15 year period. The land stretching to the west and southwest from the office and greenhouse area is planted in nursery stock with visible rows on the aerial photograph. Overall, these use patterns on the landscape are similar in 2010 within the current land in this immediate area still association with the Sherman Nursery Company, with the buildings concentrated at the east end in the northwest corner of Section 12 and nursery stock growing on the land throughout Section 11 to the west.

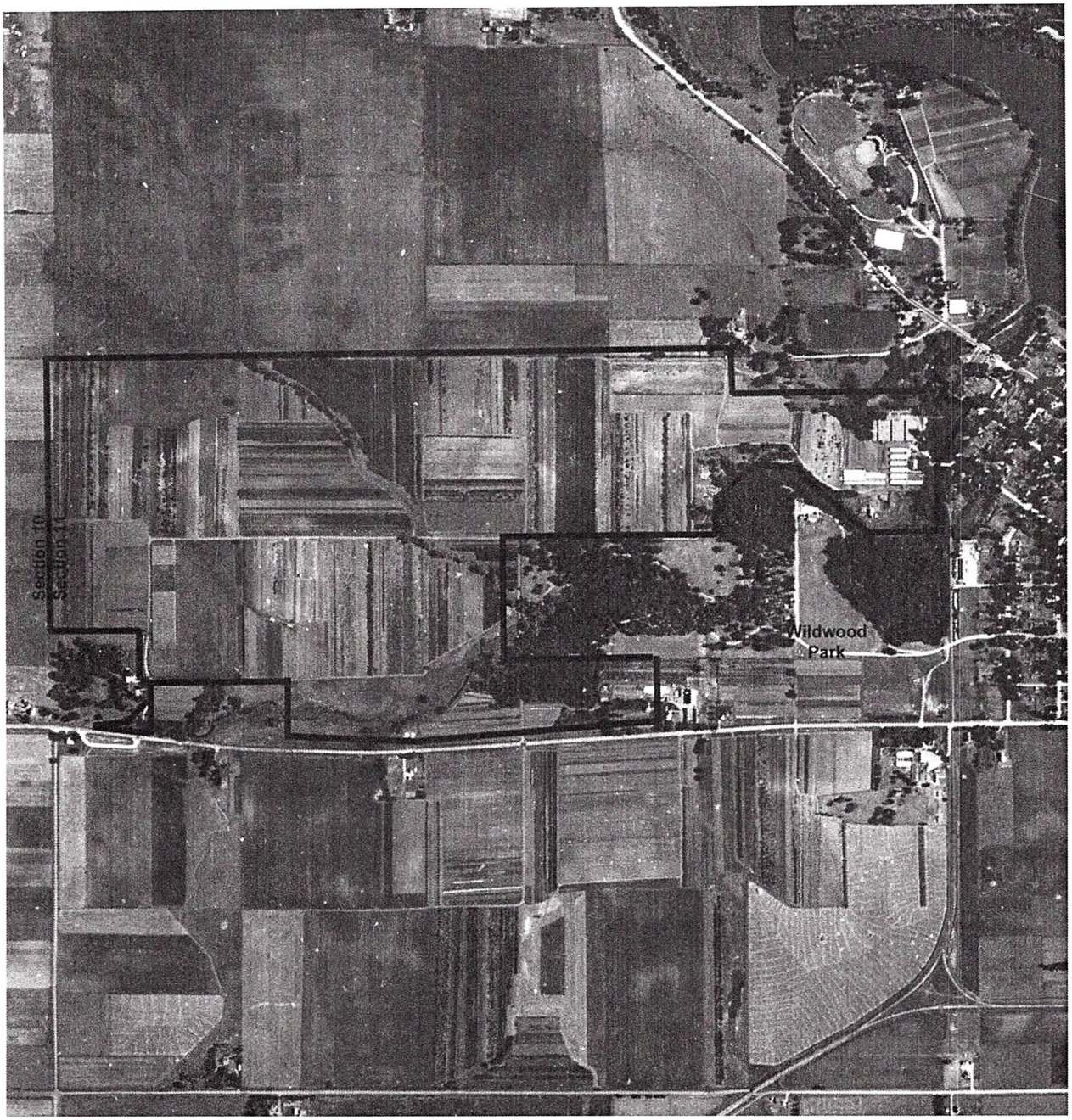


Figure 35. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on July 14, 1939 with 2010 boundary overlaid for holdings in the north half of Section 11 and northwest corner of Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-3-40, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

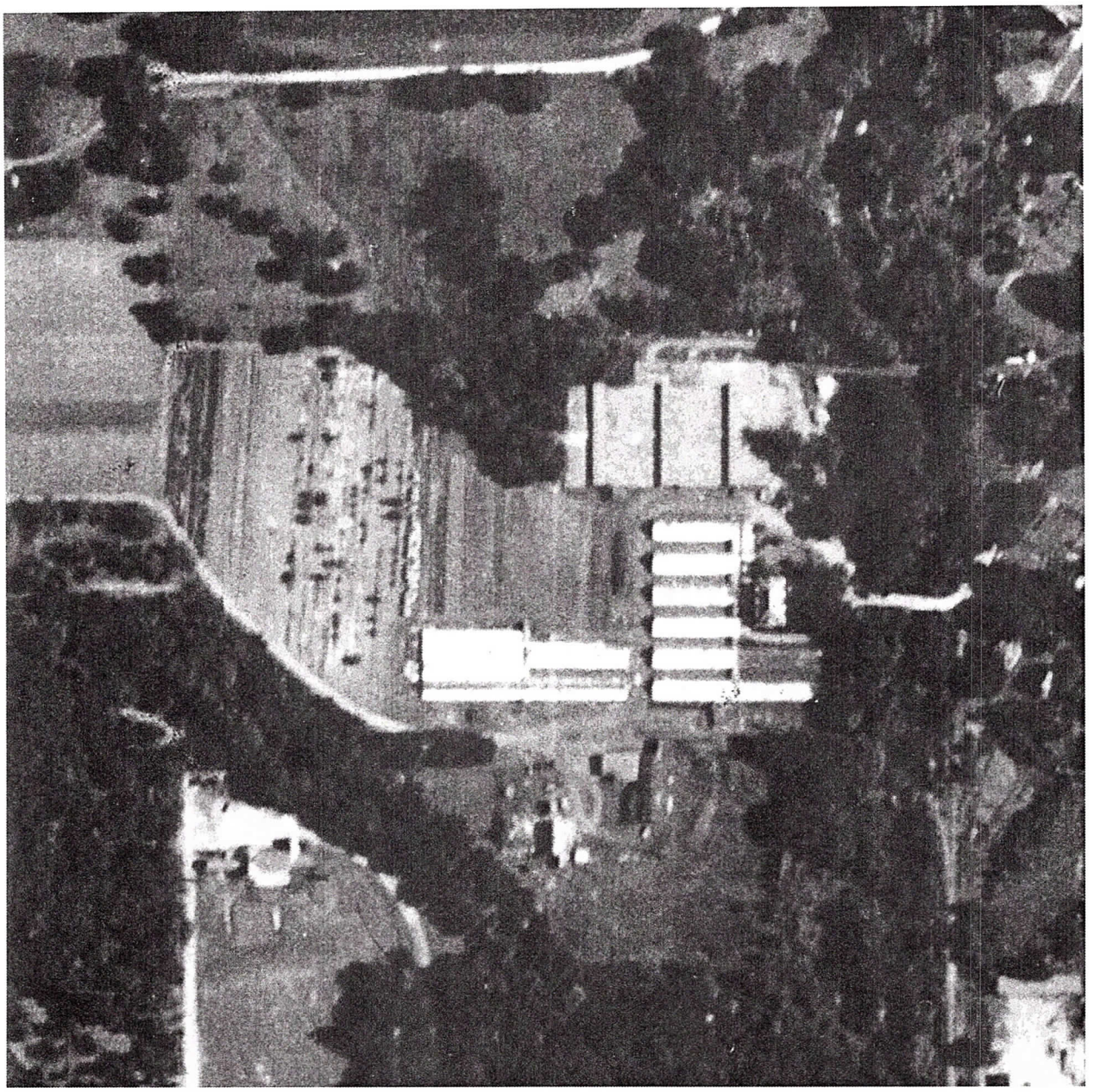


Figure 36. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on July 14, 1939 in Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-3-40, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

Packing cellar (demolished) – top – completed in 1907
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906 – bridges visible in trees over creek at right
Greenhouses (demolished) – from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902, greenhouses to west – construction in 1914 and 1924 (demolished)
Carpenter/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – attached lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner – extant if same frame building – building to south is demolished

Similar to companies around the world, the nursery industry and Sherman Nursery Company were impacted by World War II. The Association for American Nurserymen secured "essential" status for industry, permitting companies to access materials needed to maintain operations. They encouraged companies to grow fruit for war-torn countries, plants for camouflage, and ornamental shrubs for morale support. Acreage was also diverted for agricultural production. The nursery industry benefitted from promotion and popularity of the Victory Garden, resulting in demand for products. With a labor shortage, nurseries hired other types of workers, including women, high school students, Mexican migrants, and prisoners of war (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 46). Like other companies, Sherman Nursery Company found that adjustment needed to be made through the war years. Labor was key for the nursery, and increasingly labor shortages in the later war years became problematic. In October 1944, they reached an agreement with the War Manpower Commission to hire 50 German prisoners of war from Algona branch camp No. 17 as no other labor was available for the fall packing season. The prisoners lived at the nearby country club and worked under the supervision of Captain K.F. McClintic ("Company Hires War Prisoners," *Mason City Globe Gazette,* October 25, 1944, 8; "War Prisoners Housed Here," *Des Moines Register,* October 29, 1944).

With the end of the war, the housing and building boom across the country spurred new growth within the nursery industry with demand for landscaping products. The design contest for "sales and display grounds" sponsored by the National Landscape Nurserymen's Association stimulated the growth of seasonal retail garden centers in the 1940s and into the 1950s (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 48). Sherman Nursery Company continued to supply wholesale and retail customers in this period. The 1945 city directory for Charles City lists the company at the west end of Grove Street with familiar officers: J.F. Christiansen, president; Harly J. Deecus, vice president; Clifton C. Smith, secretary; and Morris W. Swartz, treasurer. The Riverside Greenhouse at 100 Chautauqua Avenue is also listed under local nurseries, with an independent landscape gardener, Roy Jurrens, listed at 92 ½ Main Street. A newspaper advertisement from August 1946 shows the office building and its setting at this time (Figure 37).

The 1947 Sanborn map depicts the complex around the main office as similar to the 1915 and 1924 maps (Figure 38). The majority of the substantial construction was complete by 1915, with the addition of the last two greenhouses to the west in 1924 to bring the total to nine. The bridges off the map to the east are extant. An ice house continues to be shown at the top of the map, extending off of the page north of the large packing cellar. The six older greenhouses are located to the west and south of the stone office, with the coal/power house appearing similar to the 1915 map. The one-story stone carpenter and blacksmith shop continued to be used as such, with the large attached lumber shed. The small building to the southwest was still noted as the tool house. The granary to the south was replaced or rehabilitated for worker housing, with an attached garage. A smaller dwelling was also shown to the east. The reason or date of this housing is unknown at this time, but it is likely related to migrant workers.

Our Market is the whole U. S.
IOWA is our home!



THE SHERMAN NURSERY OFFICE

From only a few acres we have grown to one of the largest and finest nurseries in the middle-west . . . 600 acres in 62 years . . . in Iowa, the most bountiful land in the world!

SHERMAN NURSERY

LANDSCAPING
Cut Flowers For All Occasions

Figure 37. Advertisement in *Charles City Daily Press on* August 14, 1946.

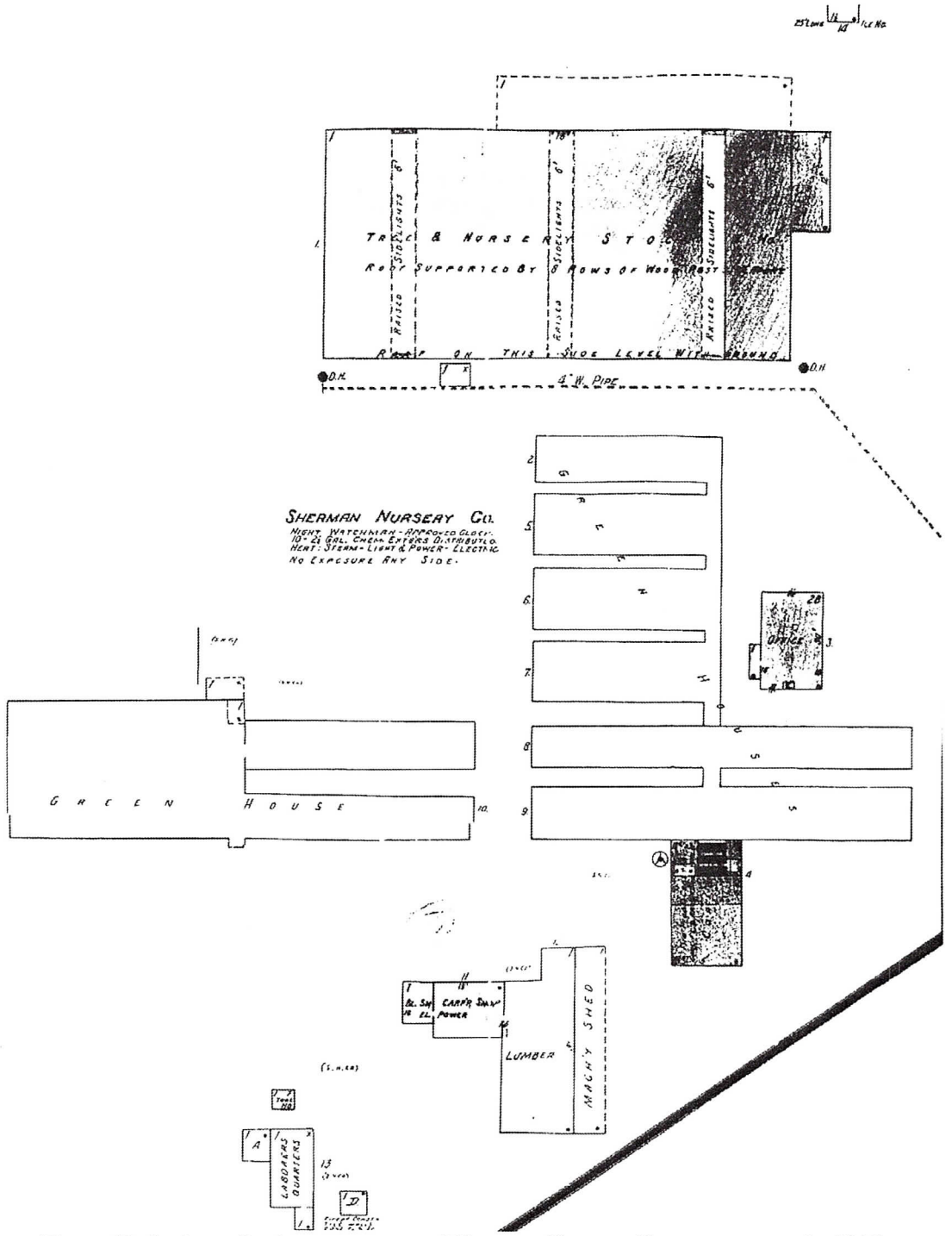


Figure 38. Sanborn fire insurance map of Sherman Nursery Company property, 1947 (Sanborn Map Company 1947, revised 1924 map).

Packing cellar (demolished) – top – completed in 1907 – ice house to north off page is demolished
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906 – bridges off page to right
Greenhouses (demolished) – from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902, heating plant to south expanded since 1924 – three greenhouses to west – construction in 1914 and 1924 (demolished)
Carpenter/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – attached lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner – extant if same frame building
laborers' quarters with garage and adjacent small dwelling – built since 1924 (demolished)

Development of Sherman Nursery Company under Richard J. Cashman, 1947-1964

The Sherman Nursery Company started a new chapter in its history on July 1, 1947 with the purchase of the company by M.R. Cashman. On March 26, 1947, M.R. Cashman, manager of Cashman Nursery, Inc. in Owatonna, Minnesota, announced that he had agreed to purchase Sherman Nursery Company by buying all the shares of stock. With the death of president J.F. Christiansen earlier this year, the managing company, Ellis & Ellis, was looking for a new direction. M.R. Cashman was a friend of E.M. Sherman with a comparable nursery in Minnesota and sought to maintain the success and name of the company. He was a veteran nurseryman at age 71, with his son Richard J. Cashman to be active in the Sherman nursery management. With the recent sales of about 100 acres along the east edge of Section 11, the Sherman Company holdings totaled approximately 500 acres, concentrated in Section 11. This land is depicted on the 1949 highway map (Figure 39). The company continued to sell stock wholesale for other nurseries, retail direct to customers with 500 full or part time salesmen, and by mail orders through catalogs. The nursery was known across the country for its evergreen trees, complete line of hardy nursery stock, and around 100,000 square feet of greenhouses that provided cut flowers for wholesale and retail trade. Sherman Nursery Company employed around 50 people, with up to 100 in the spring packing season. Cashman took over operations on July 1, 1947 ("M.R. Cashman of Owatonna purchases nursery," *Charles City Daily Press,* March 26, 1947; "Nursery Passes to New Owners," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* March 28, 1947, 7).

By January 1948, Richard J. Cashman moved to Charles City and started implementing his vision for the growth and development of the Sherman Nursery Company to expand production and sales. Other officers of the company remained familiar, with the 1948 city directory for Charles City listing Richard J. Cashman, president; Clifton C. Smith, vice president; H.J. Deems, vice president; Morris W. Swartz, secretary and treasurer. The directory noted that they provided hardy nursery stock and cut choice flowers. Riverside Greenhouse at 100 Chautauqua Avenue was the only other local nursery or florist (Polk 1948). Other employees also stayed with the company. In April 1949, Sherman landscape architect Art Snyder was supervising the installation of landscaping around the swimming pool at Lions field in Mason City. The landscaping included 100 shrubs, some of which were planted to screen the filter tank on the north side of the pool ("Beautify Pool Site," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* April 18, 1949, 7).

The business development of the company evolved in September 1949 when a subsidiary was established for the greenhouse department, known as Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. Sherman Nursery Company also announced a plan to expand production within their facilities, which had been modernized and updated. Around this time, they had 500 acres planted in trees, shrubs, and flowers, and the company continued to specialize in evergreens. In the 100,000 square feet of greenhouses grew roses, carnations, and miscellaneous cut flowers that were shipped to Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin florists. Their packing cellar at 150 by 300 feet remained the largest in the industry. Stock dug in the fall was graded by size and stored in the cellar with violet ray germicidal lamps to guard against disease. The side track of the Charles City Western Railroad provided access from the cellar for shipping. The company sold wholesale to nurseries and florists in every state, and they had 260 agents in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Nebraska, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Locally, around 50 people were employed with up to 140 in the peak spring season. The stone office building

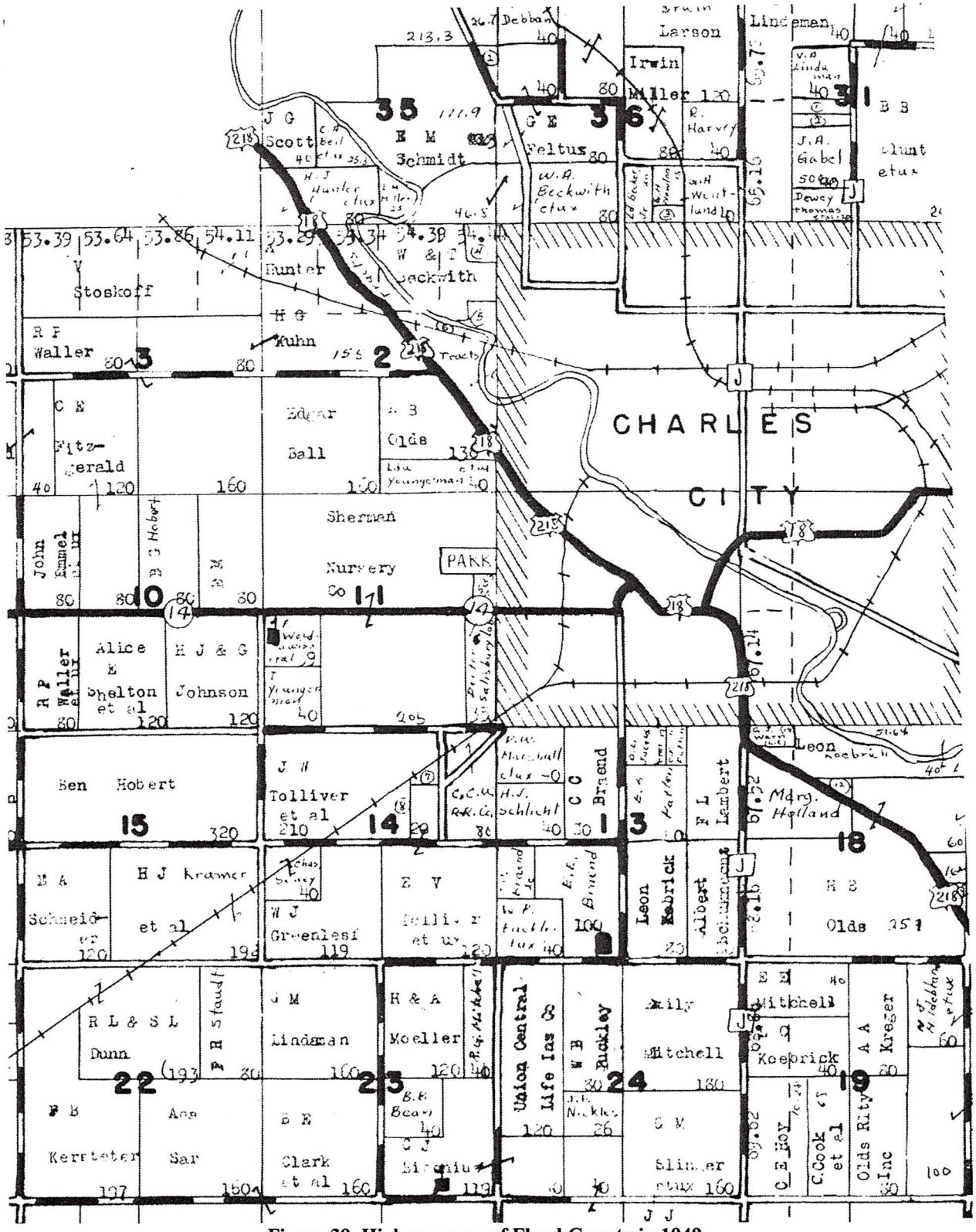


Figure 39. Highway map of Floyd County in 1949.

continued to have the administrative offices with cooling and packing facilities for greenhouse products in the basement. Advertisements in December 1950 showed Christmas greens and plants for sale at Cashman's retail store at Gilbert and Illinois.

Richard J. Cashman continued the development of the Sherman Nursery Company after he bought out his father in August 1951. Cashman's Gift and Flower Shop opened on December 7, 1951, operating with the Sherman Nursery Company on Grove Street. New greenhouses built in the late 1940s brought the total up to 14, followed by two additional greenhouses built in 1950. A third new greenhouse was built for the flower shop in 1951. The three new greenhouses added over 25,000 feet of glass to the grounds. The shop was located in the basement of the stone office building, with the related greenhouse immediately behind it up a flight of stairs from the basement. The shop was decorated in a provincial theme, with plants displayed in the greenhouse. The other greenhouses were open to the public for the gift shop grand opening weekend, with several thousand roses noted to be in bloom. Cashman Greenhouses was one of the largest growers of roses in the Northwest. The new Cashman's Gift and Flower Shop was also covered by *Florist Review* in February 1952 (Figure 40). The article noted that more than 3,000 of the local population of 10,000 attended the grand opening held in December, with a rose given to every woman. The basement storeroom in the office building had been transformed into an attractive, inviting shop with a yellow and brown theme. A short flight of stairs at the rear connected the shop to the adjoining greenhouse ("Cashman Opens Gift, Flower Shop for Inspection," *Charles City Press,* December 6, 1951; "Cashman's Flower Shop," *Florist Review,* February 7, 1952, 23).

The Sherman Nursery Company continued to be prominent locally, statewide, and regionally in this period. The 1952 city directory for Charles City lists Richard J. Cashman, president; Clifton C. Smith, vice president; and Morris W. Swartz, secretary and treasurer. They are the only nursery listed locally. Additionally, two other listings are found at 1300 Grove Street under florists: Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. and Cashman Gift and Flower Shop. The Riverside Greeenhouse also continued to be listed at 100 Chautauqua Avenue. An article in the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* on March 17, 1952 noted that Iowa, California, and New York were the three leading nursery states in the country, with larger nurseries found in Iowa and more smaller nurseries found in the other states. In Iowa, Shenandoah, Hampton, Charles City, and Hamburg were the centers of the nursery industry, with the largest number of companies found in Shenandoah. Leading Iowa nursery companies included Mount Arbor, Henry Field, Earl May, Welch Nursery, and Lakes Nursery in Shenandoah; Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City; Earl Ferris Nurseries in Hampton; and Interstate Nurseries in Hamburg. An estimated 2,000 people would be employed in the busy spring packing season across the state. While companies such as Interstate relied on a mail order business, Sherman maintained a system of sales agents for orders. They were also involved in the wholesale business to supply other nurseries, along with two nurseries in Shenandoah ("Spring Means Heavy Rush for Big Iowa Nurseries," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil,* March 17, 1952, 1). Advertisements in various newspapers across Iowa and neighboring states promoted the Sherman Nursery Company's landscape design services and sale of evergreens, roses, shrubs, vines, hedges, bulbs, grapes, fruit trees, shade trees, and ornamental trees through local sales agents.

FLORIST REVIEW

CASHMAN'S FLOWER SHOP

Holds 3-day Opening

More than 3,000 of the 10,000 population of Charles City, Ia., attended the 3-day opening of Cashman's Gift & Flower Shop, December 7 to 9. A rose was given every woman who came to the opening ceremonies, and a grand prize of a dozen roses every week in 1952 was awarded to a lucky winner.

Prior to the opening, Richard Cashman, owner of Sherman Nursery and Cashman's Gift & Flower Shop, planned and executed a large advertising program. The shop, located several blocks from the business district, had to be brought to the attention of the town.

One week in advance, every family at Charles City received a formal invitation to the opening. Four days previous to the opening, newspaper and radio advertising was launched. Every day the newspaper carried a large ad, with a full-page announcement the day before the opening. Five spots a day were used on the radio for the entire week.

Since the opening, the shop has continued a definite advertising program. A 15-minute program of music, with three commercials, is heard daily at 10:15. The newspaper carries two ads a week; one on Wednesday, the other on Friday.

Provincial Decor

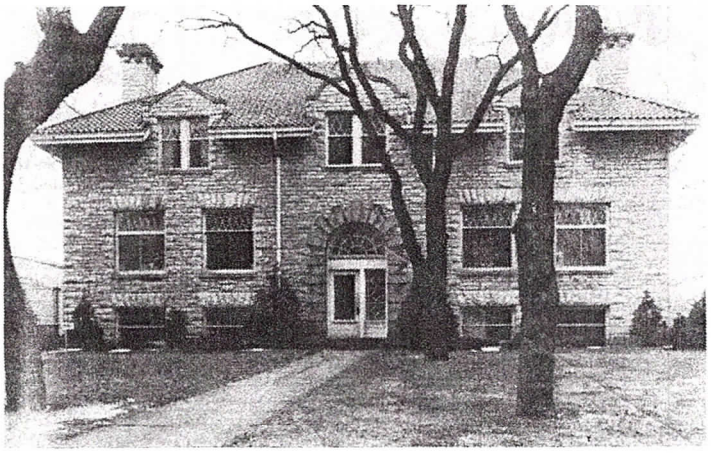
When Mr. Cashman took over the operation of the nursery, the grounds were overgrown and cluttered with debris. The transformation of the drab, basement storeroom into an attractive, inviting shop required thought and planning.

A provincial theme was carried out in shades of mustard yellow with accents of brown. Sunk into one wall is a large glass door refrigerator filled with flowers. On the same wall is an old schoolmaster's desk painted the mustard color, in front of which is a tall stool topped with a fabric-covered, ruffled pillow that matches the wallpaper. Full, shirred valances of the matching fabric top the two high glass-shelved windows over a cabinet the length of the room. Display shelves of glass line another wall. A large, central display table is changed constantly with new arrangements of flowers and gifts.

The mustard-colored walls not only give light to the basement room, but also make a perfect background for the flower and gift items. Five brass light fixtures, copies of early American hanging oil lamps, illuminate the room. The floor is covered with light brown asphalt tile.

The new greenhouse, connected to the shop by a short flight of wide, native limestone stairs, is one of the most attractive features of the shop. Displayed there are green and flowering plants, ranging from the smallest to those suitable for floor use. Many of the unusual containers from the gift shop are planted, adding to the eye appeal of the greenhouse.

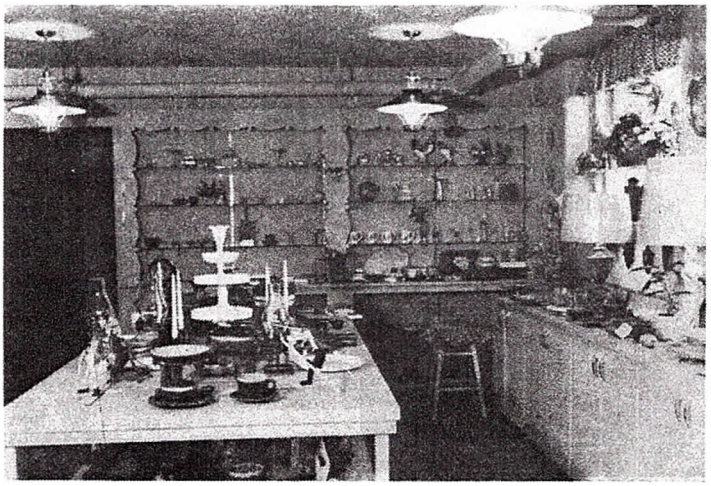
Imported items from Europe and Asia are included in the shop's inventory, as well as a large and different collection of plant and flower containers. Gracious service, high-quality gift merchandise and excellent plants and flowers draw visitors from all over the surrounding territory.



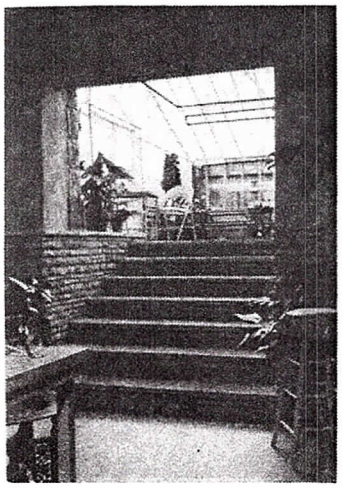
Spacious Nursery Office Building Houses Cashman's Flowers and Gifts.

Pittsfield, Mass.—James H. Letourneau has become associated with his brother, Joseph L., in the Park Floral Shop, 60 Adams street, having purchased the interest of Howard J. Guinan, who founded the concern. Mr. Guinan has left the florists' business.

Slayton, Minn.—An open house, featuring free roses, contests, prizes and a treasure hunt, was held recently by Mr. and Mrs. Dwaine Linson, owners of Slayton Greenhouse, in celebration of the firm's 10th anniversary.



Attractive Basement Gift Section of Cashman's Gift & Flower Shop.



Stairway Leads to Greenhouse.

Figure 40. Photos and article in *Florist Review* on February 7, 1952.

Photographs from the 1950s show the development of the Sherman Nursery Company through this period. The retail greenhouse offered cut flowers and potted plants for sale (Figure 41). Though the upper portion of some greenhouses were rebuilt, they continued to exist in the same locations with four directly west of the office building, two longer ones toward the south (with smokestack of heating plant to south), and the four larger greenhouses then to the west (Figure 42). The large packing cellar is distinctive through this period with the three rows of raised windows along the roof (Figure 43). Through the 1950s, the greenhouses were modified and expanded with two new buildings to the west built by 1957 (Figures 44-46). Land use patterns through the land associated with the property appear to have generally remained the same, with land in production for nursery stock (Figure 45). Land previously in nursery stock immediately to the west of the greenhouse was converted for new greenhouse use in this period (Figure 46).



Figure 41. Photograph of the retail greenhouse around 1951 (Siems collection).

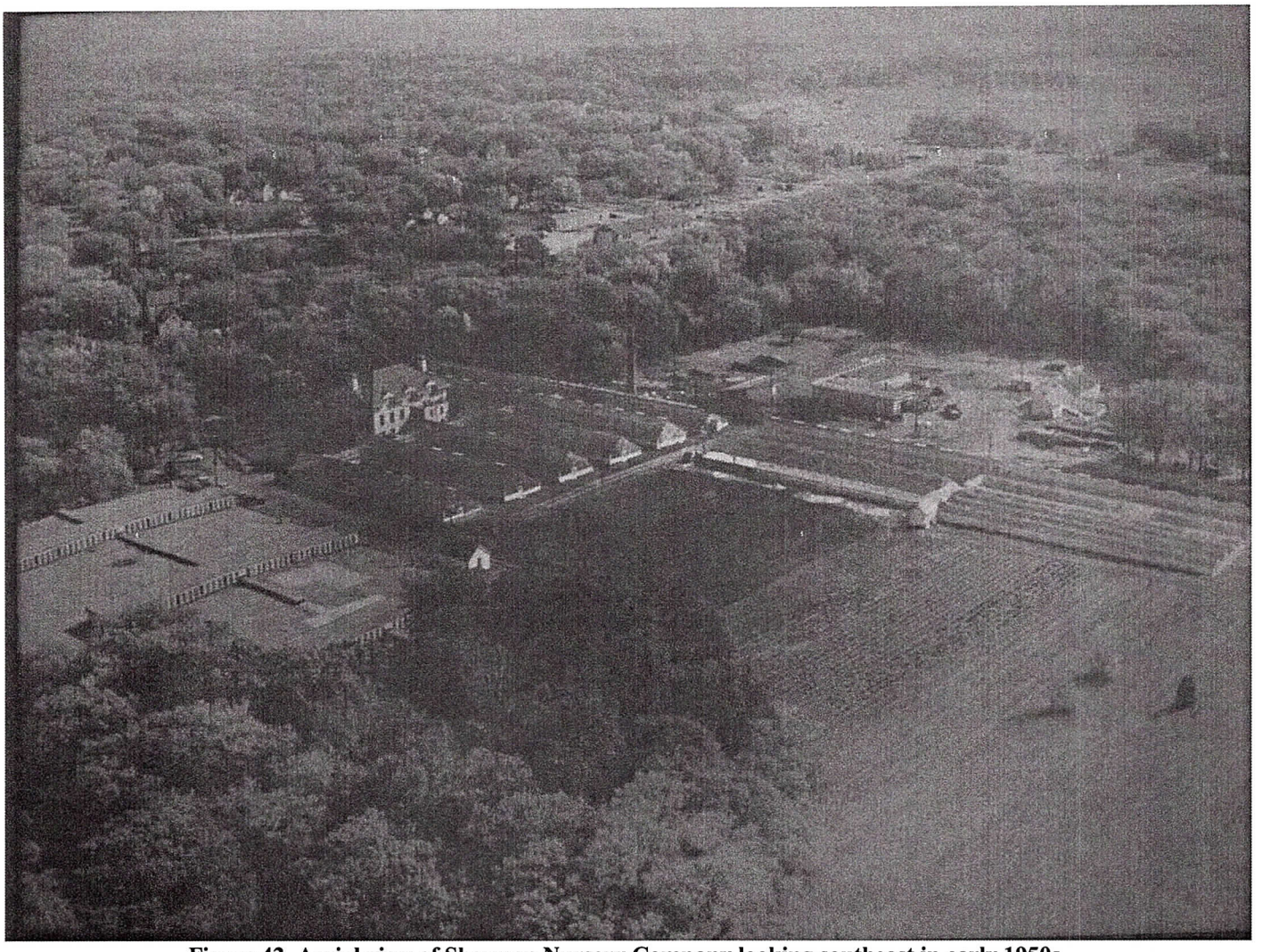
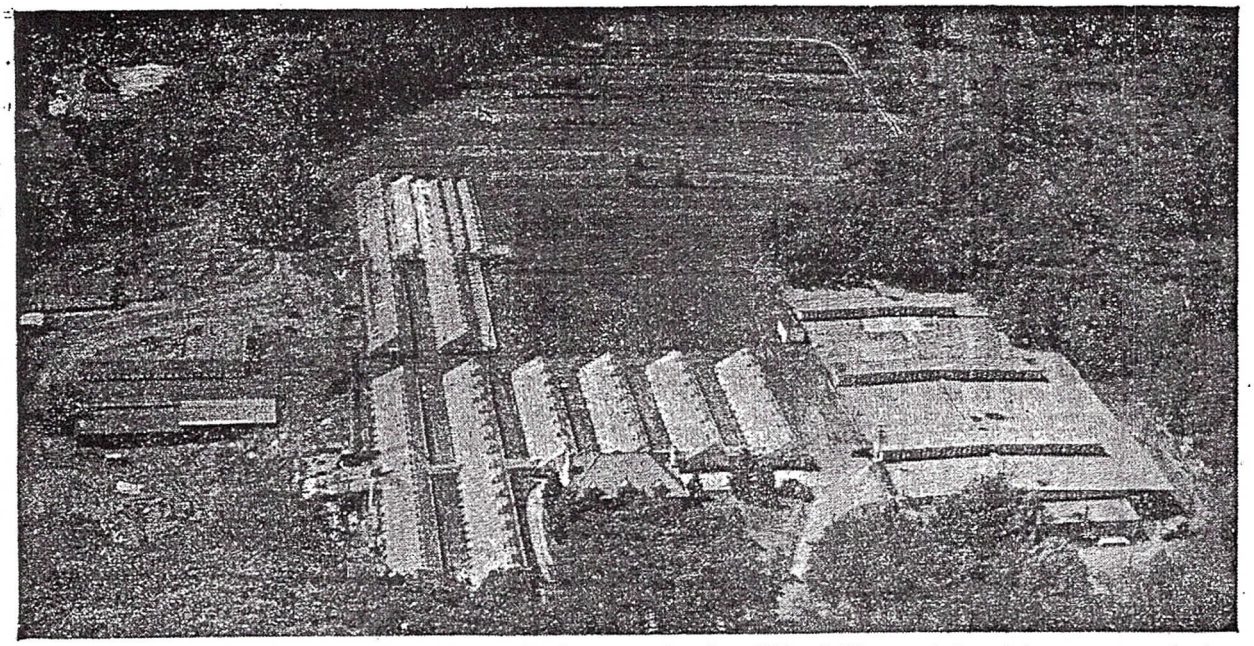


Figure 42. Aerial view of Sherman Nursery Company looking southeast in early 1950s (collection in office of Sherman Nursery).



ONE OF OLDEST—This view of Sherman Nursery Co. from the air shows one of Charles City's oldest industries. The nursery, founded 70 years ago by E. M. Sherman on a small tract of land, now includes 500 acres in the southwest corner of the city. An additional 250 acres is leased for nursery production. Cashman Greenhouse, a subsidiary corporation of Sherman's, operates over 125,000 square feet of greenhouse space.

Figure 43. Aerial view of Sherman Nursery Company looking west around 1954 (*Charles City Daily Press*, FCHS files).

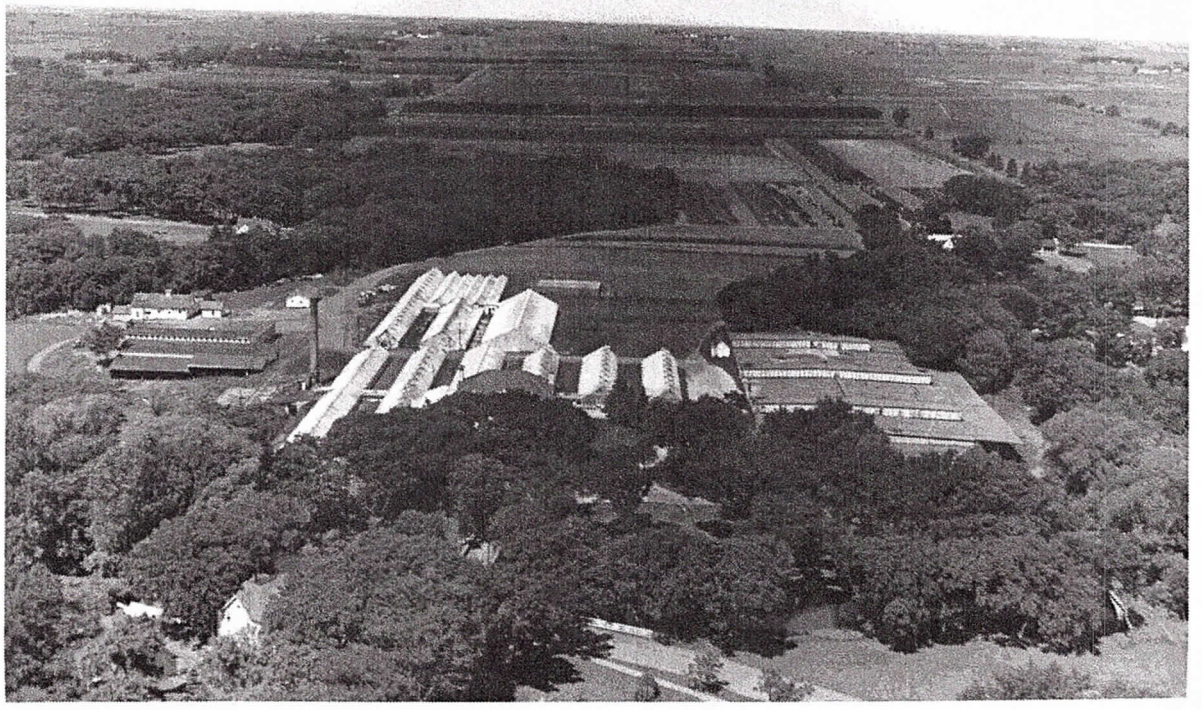


Figure 44. Aerial view of the Sherman Nursery Company looking west in the 1950s (Siems collection).



Figure 45. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on August 7, 1957 with 2010 boundary overlaid for holdings in the north half of Section 11 and northwest corner of Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-3T-190, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

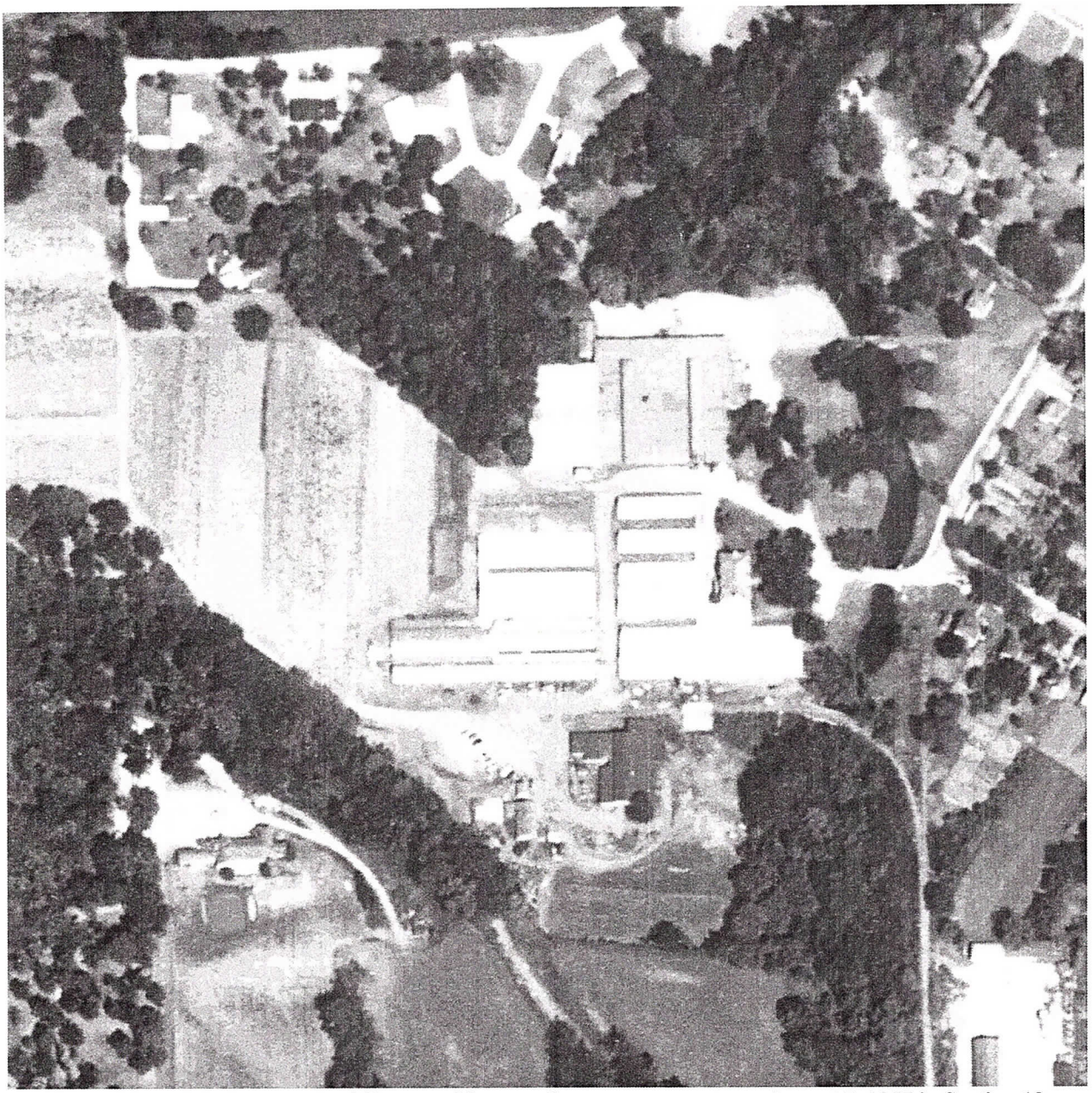


Figure 46. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on August 7, 1957 in Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-3T-190, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

Packing cellar (old roof still on - demolished) – top – completed in 1907
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906 – bridges visible in trees over creek at right
Greenhouses (demolished) – from top to bottom – completed in 1908, 1906, 1906, 1906, c.1902, 1902 – some rebuilt in late 1940s-50s - greenhouses to west – construction in 1950s, 1914, 1924 (also demolished)
Carpenter/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – attached lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner (extant) – building to south is demolished

The nursery industry in general evolved through the 1950s with changes on several fronts. The Association of American Nurserymen launched the "Plant America" campaign in 1950 to encourage rural and urban beautification with efforts praised through landscaping awards. This period also saw a rise in container growing, which started in California and spread across the country. There quickly proved to be a market there for young, inexpensive but healthy plants in metal containers, and many nurseries began to offer these products. The containers helped sustain the root system better through the summer months than burlap, which tended to break down. The construction of the interstate highway system starting in 1956 changed preferences for shipment of stock, with a rise in transcontinental trucking over the traditional railroad shipments. Tractors and mechanized machinery also replaced horses and traditional implements in this period. These changes continued into 1960s. Problems during this time included rising freight rates, competition from government nurseries, and the need for better industry research. By the late 1950s, there was an increase in specification of particular ornamental shrubs and plants for particular locations as the variety of plants available continued to increase. Books on landscaping and gardening encourage designers and home owners to integrate landscape plans with pools, walls, walkways, decks, and other hardscape elements, all supplied from the nursery company. This approach evolved into modern design-build companies (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 48-50).

Sherman Nursery Company evolved along these industry-wide patterns through the 1950s as well. The benefit of landscaping for "growing" property values was advertised in newspapers across Iowa. According to a Sherman Nursery advertisement in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* on September 12, 1954, attractive landscaping would add up to 12% to city property values, as well as increase the comfort and beauty of farm and city homes ("Growing Property Values with Sherman Nursery Landscaping," *Cedar Rapids Gazette,* September 12, 1954, 50). During December, Christmas trees were offered through their Christmas Store at 813 E. Riverside Drive in Charles City. An article in 1954, when Sherman Nursery had operated for 70 years in Charles City, noted that the company owned 500 acres of land with another 250 acres rented for nursery production. Cashman Greenhouses operated as a subsidiary, with over 125,000 square feet of greenhouses that contained roses, carnations and other cut flowers. The stone office building had offices for both entities, with a gift shop in the basement. Since 1947 when most of cultivating and farm work was done with horses and mules, the company had modernized operations with a fleet of 14 tractors and caterpillars, as well as 10 large trucks, to prepare soil, cultivate, dig, and distribute nursery products. The original large storage cellar continued to be one of the largest and best in the industry. Over the winter months, dug products were carefully inspected, graded, and labeled for spring shipping. The company employed 75 people year round with over 100 in the shipping season ("Sherman Nursery Has Served Floyd County for 70 Years," *Charles City Daily Press,* 1954, in business file at Floyd County Historical Society).

The focus of Sherman Nursery Company in the 1950s shifted to ornamental and flowering shrubs, shade trees, and ground covers. In the late 1940s, the traditional focus on evergreens was shifted to the other nursery stock. Though some evergreens continued to be grown and sold, the numbers were significantly reduced over the previous decades. Varieties of ornamental and flowering shrubs, shade trees, and ground covers began to be expanded in the 1950s, a trend continued at Sherman Nursery in the 1960s. The greenhouses continued to be utilized for growing cut flowers and potted plants, though this was a small aspect of the greater Sherman

operations in this period. Greenhouse production included poinsettias, Easter lilies, geraniums, and other potted plants. Through the 1950s, over 400 sales agents continued to market Sherman products direct to retail customers and visiting homeowners door-to-door. At the same time, the wholesale business to garden centers, nurseries, and landscapers was increasing. By the late 1950s, this business strategy was adopted as the focus of the company's operations, with sales agents discontinued in 1961. Production of boxes for shipping stock shifted primarily to the large storage/shipping cellar by the 1950s. This production of boxes on the grounds of Sherman Nursery would end in the early 1960s, with boxes and containers purchased elsewhere for use of shipping nursery stock (Siems 2010).

Officers of the Sherman Nursery Company in 1954 included M.R. Cashman, chair of board; Richard J. Cashman, president and general manager; Clifton C. Smith, vice president and general sales manager; and Morris W. Swartz, secretary and treasurer. Clifton C. Smith, or "Smitty," had 45 years of service with the company, working his way up from assistant bookkeeper when he started working for E.M. Sherman in 1912. Over his tenure with the company, it had grown to wholesale trade of young trees and other plant stock to nurseries in 48 states and retail sales to public through over 400 retail sales men and ladies. The 1957 city directory listed the officers as Richard J. Cashman, president; Clifton C. Smith, vice president; Morris W. Swartz, secretary and treasurer for the Sherman Nursery Company, Cashman Gift and Flower Shop, and Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. The companies also shared the address of 1300 Grove Street. Riverside Greenhouse (E.L. Willson) continued to operate as the other florist in Charles City at 100 Chautauqua ("Long Years at Nursery Have Been Enjoyable for Smith," *Charles City Daily Press,* 1954, in business file at Floyd County Historical Society; Polk 1957).

Improvements to the physical facilities at Sherman Nursery Company and Cashman Greenhouses continued in the late 1950s. In 1958, the original roof on the packing cellar completed in 1907 was demolished and replaced (Figures 47-49). At this time, the packing cellar was noted as the largest single building of this type in the country, measuring as long as a football field. Sherman Nursery was recognized throughout the country for the quality of its nursery stock, and the packing cellar was a vital part of the operations. The wood roof with rows of raised windows was demolished and replaced with a roof of pre-stressed concrete beams and forty concrete columns ("Vast 'Cellar' Provides Space for Handling Nursery Stock," *Charles City Press,* June 21, 1958; *Looking Back* c.2000). In a letter to customers on July 20, 1959, Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. wrote that they were working to overhaul their operations. Over 25,000 square feet of greenhouses had been demolished and replaced with 31,500 square feet of new greenhouses with glass and iron frames. More greenhouses were slated for replacement next summer. Thus, production of cut flowers was curtailed during these improvements. With the new greenhouses, the company planned to expand to additional pot plant production as well as seize other opportunities envisioned for their retail and wholesale departments. Robert H. Van Schoick had also been hired as general manager of Cashman Greenhouses (Siems collection).

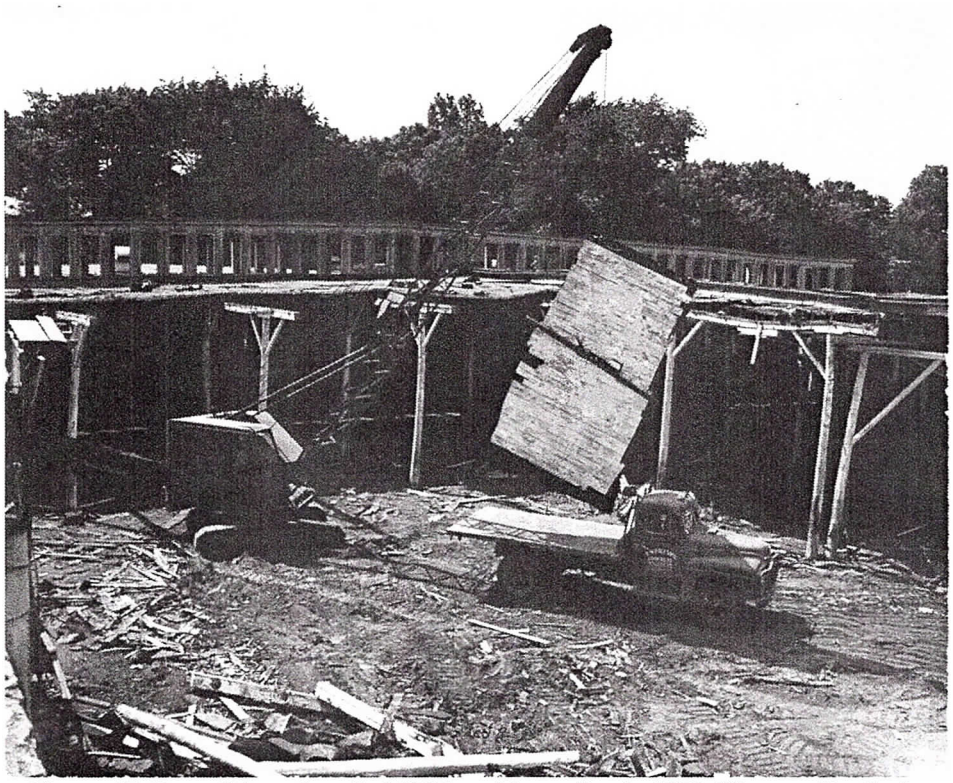


Figure 47. Demolition of roof of 1907 packing cellar in 1958 (Siems collection).



Figure 48. Demolition of roof of 1907 packing cellar in 1958 (Siems collection).

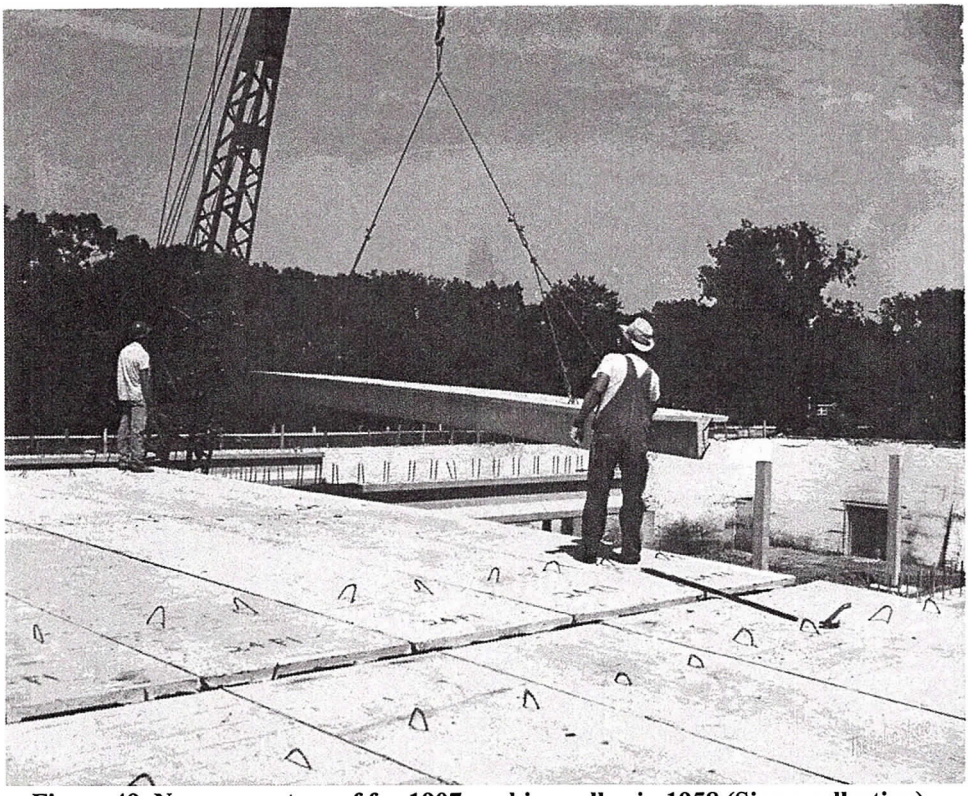


Figure 49. New concrete roof for 1907 packing cellar in 1958 (Siems collection).

While Richard J. Cashman had only been associated with the company since 1947, he retained officers with a longer history with Sherman Nursery Company. Clifton C. Smith served briefly as president in the early 1960s. In January 1961, Richard J. Cashman, chair of the board, announced that Clifton C. Smith had been appointed as president. He had worked for Sherman Nursery Company for 49 years of its 76 year history, since age 18, including working for E.M. Sherman for two decades. He was elected secretary on November 7, 1925, and he became vice president on July 14, 1947. Additionally, he was past president of Iowa Nurserymen's Association, Western Association of Nurserymen, and U.S. Retail Nursery Association, a two term president of Iowa State Horticultural Society, secretary of the Western Association of Nurserymen for 12 years, and secretary of the Iowa association for seven years. At this time, treasurer Morris W. Swartz had worked for Sherman Nursery since 1921. He had been appointed assistant treasurer in 1937 and then treasurer in 1946. These men had seen the renovation of nearly all the greenhouses by Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. over the last few years. Production had been expanded from roses and carnations to a full line of flowering pot plants, green plants, and miscellaneous cut flowers to keep pace with changing market conditions. Leo J. Girard had also been hired as general manager of Cashman Greenhouses. Helen L. Cashman, wife of Richard, served as secretary in this period ("C.C. Smith is Named President of Nursery Here," *Charles City Press,* January 4, 1961; "C.C. Smith named head of Sherman Nursery Co.," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* January 5, 1961, 17).

Officers and owners would shift over the next few years as the renovation and reconstruction efforts were finished throughout the Sherman Nursery Company grounds. In 1962, Clifton C. Smith retired from Sherman Nursery Company and started his own nursery at age 68. Richard J.

Cashman then returned to the office of president as well as chair of the board. Helen L. Cashman continued as secretary, and Morris W. Swartz continued as treasurer. The company's payroll in 1962 was $580,000, including $150,000 to salesmen and others outside of Charles City. They employed 65 to 100 locally, depending on the season, with peaks in early spring and late fall. They had plans to build 38,000 cubic feet of refrigerated warehouse space. The business strategy evolved from over 400 independent salesmen in seven states in the 1950s to a focus on selling wholesale to garden centers, landscapers and other nurseries in the early 1960s (Todd Davis, "Sherman Faces Bare Facts," *Nursery Management and Production,* September 2006, 26-28; "Clifton C. Smith," *Waterloo Courier,* June 3, 1970, 22; "Sherman Nursery," newspaper article, no date, in business file at Floyd County Historical Society; Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; Siems 2010).

In 1964, Richard Cashman became sole owner of the Sherman Nursery Company and its subsidiary Cashman Greenhouses, Inc. In July 1965, the latter then became R.J.C. Corporation, established for flowers, pot plants, and supplies. By 1965, the entire physical plant had been refurbished, rebuilt, or constructed new since 1948. The company utilized 1,000 acres of land for nursery stock and had four acres under glass in greenhouses. They employed 60 people year round with 100-150 in peak seasons and through the summer. The stone packing cellar with its new roof continued to be used for storing and grading the deciduous stock dug in the fall, with temperatures of 38 to 40 degrees maintained. It also continued to be the largest single packing cellar in the nursery industry. Sherman Nursery Company shipped stock to nearly every state, with shipments to Alaska significantly increasing over the last few years (Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; *Looking Back* c.2000; H.P. Stafford, "Nurseryman has "growing" business indeed in spring," *Mason City Globe Gazette,* May 15, 1965, 3).

Although 1964 has been chosen as a logical break for the end of the historic context on the Sherman Nursery Company near the traditional 50-year cutoff for National Register of Historic Places nominations, this later history is presented to better understand the ongoing business and development of the complex over the last 45 years.

Later years of the Sherman Nursery Company, 1965-1984

The nursery industry improved across the country by the middle of the 1960s with economic conditions rebounding and new house construction on the rise creating a demand for landscaping. The Federal Highway Beautification Act of 1965 created additional demand for nursery products, ending the surplus of stock of the previous years. Technology in the industry evolved in this period with overhead irrigation evolving to drop systems and later trickle systems (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 53). New names took leading roles at the Sherman Nursery Company with Richard J. Cashman as sole owner. Leo J. Girard was appointed executive vice president of the Sherman Nursery Company and its subsidiaries (including R.J.C. Corporation) in 1965, and he became general manager in August 1966. Dale Siems, who had started with the company as a credit manager in 1955, became the wholesale manager in 1966. When Leo Girard left the company in 1969 to form his own business, Dale Siems became vice president and general manager ("Charles City Promotion," *Waterloo Daily Courier,* August 21, 1966, 21; Buehner, Kristin, "50 Years, Still Going Strong," *Mason City Globe Gazette,* February 21, 2005).

After a destructive tornado hit Charles City on May 5, 1968, Sherman Nursery Company became the oldest surviving industry in Charles City. The tornado cut a path four to six blocks wide through town, impacting 90 blocks and resulting in the demolition of 60 commercial buildings, three schools, six churches, and more than 500 homes. It destroyed the operations of millwork company George P. Smith, who then closed after operating in Charles City since 1870. Thus, Sherman Nursery Company was left as the oldest local industry (Hanson and Hull 1996: 55, 117; Page 1996: 1:3-4; EPRI 1976: 5). In 1969, the Sherman Nursery Company had 964 acres for nursery stock and farm crops, and the R.J.C. Corporation had over 150,000 square feet of greenhouses. Officers included Richard J. Cashman, chair of board and president; Dale Siems, vice president; Helen L. Cashman, secretary; M.W. Swartz, treasurer. Trees and plants were shipped to all states, including Alaska, as well as Canada and Mexico. The acres of land owned were located within three miles of the original Sherman Nursery holdings in Section 11 and 12 (Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; *Looking Back* c.2000; "Sherman stock growing on all parts of the continent," *Charles City Press,* October 15, 1969; Siems 2010). Dale Siems notes that Richard Cashman considered liquidating these interests in Charles City in 1969, but he decided to continue operations with Siems as active manager (Siems 2010).

The aerial photograph of the Sherman Nursery Company in 1971 shows the development of the property over the previous ten to twenty years. The overall landscape of the acres associated with the company remained similar to the early 20th century. The land throughout Section 11 was utilized for growing nursery stock (Figure 50). The buildings were concentrated on the portion of land owned in Section 12 at the east end of the property (Figure 51). The three bridges over Sherman Creek remain, as well as the 1906 stone office building. The packing cellar, with new roof from 1958, stood at the north end of the complex. The new greenhouses

occupied the land to the west and south of the office building, standing where earlier greenhouses were originally built nearly 70 years ago.

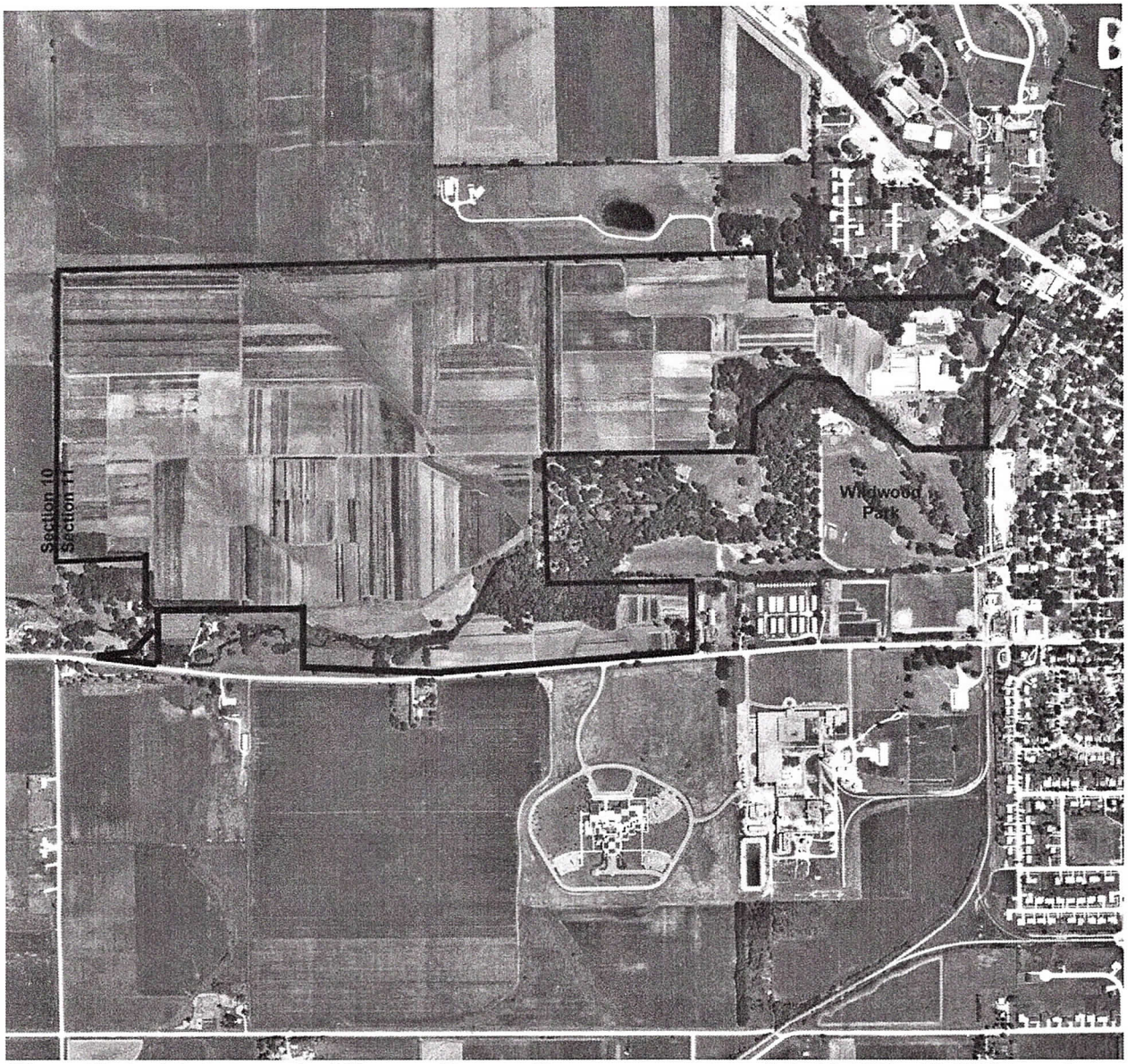


Figure 50. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on July 16, 1971 with 2010 boundary overlaid for holdings in the north half of Section 11 and northwest corner of Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-1MM-218, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

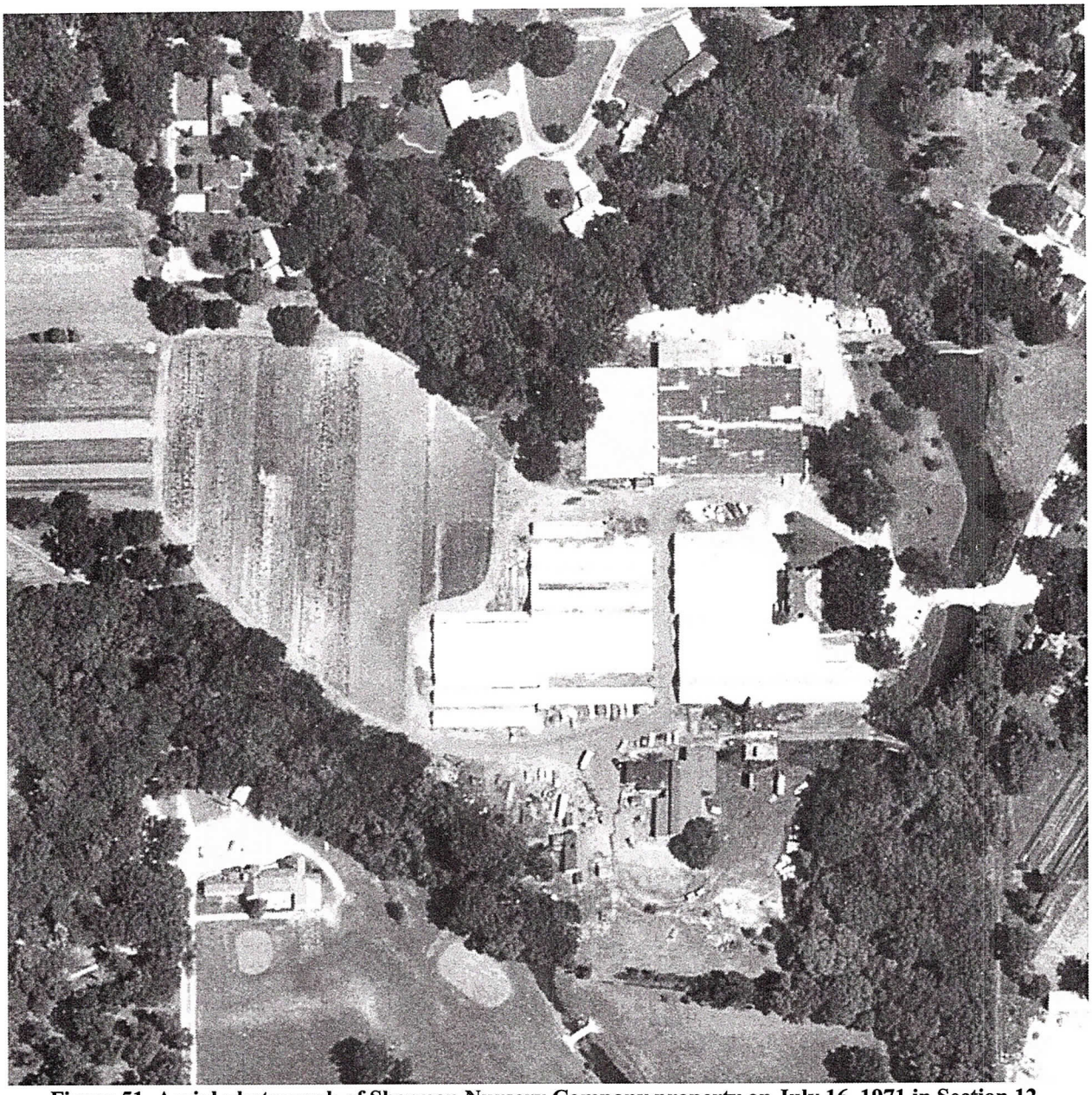


Figure 51. Aerial photograph of Sherman Nursery Company property on July 16, 1971 in Section 12 (Floyd County BZN-3T-190, Map Collections, University of Iowa).

Packing cellar (new roof - demolished) – top – completed in 1907
Office with vault (extant) – right – completed in 1906 – three bridges visible in trees over creek at right
Greenhouses (demolished) – rebuilt from 1948 to 1965
Carpenter/blacksmith shop (extant) – built around 1906 – attached lumber sheds demolished
Tool house at southwest corner (extant) – building to south is demolished

The nursery industry continued to evolve across the country in the 1970s. With environmental concerns growing in this period, the Association for American Nurserymen launched their "Green Survival" program. This initiative stressed plants' role in buffering noise pollution, trapping air pollutants, cooling the earth, etc. Through the 1970s, there was a rise in horticultural distribution centers. These centers acted as a middle man between growers and wholesale customers. This practice of "rewholesaling" started in the middle of the 1950s but gained popularity in the 1970s. Interior house plants became more common in this decade as well. Increased demand for nursery products and poor weather conditions resulted in stock shortages by the late 1970s. National nursery production and sales increased significantly from $283.6 million in 1970 to $1.15 billion in 1982 (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 52-53).

After working for Sherman Nursery Company for 20 years, Dale Siems became president of the company in 1975. Business at this time focused on wholesale sales to independent garden centers, nurseries, and landscapers. Production increased on new acres bought by the company, and additional space was required for storing and shipping. Thus, a new 150 by 200 foot warehouse building was constructed in 1976 (Figure 52). The cut flower and potted plant business in the greenhouses had decreased significantly, and profits were eaten up by rising fuel costs and the deteriorating condition of the greenhouses. The basement of the office building stopped being used for cut flowers around 1975. Thus, this aspect of the operations was ended in the 1970s, with the subsidiary R.J.C. Corporation liquidated in 1981. The greenhouses shifted in use to starting small plants that were later transplanted to open fields. Ornamental shrubs, flowering shrubs, and ground covers become the focus of the local nursery land by 1980. At this time, Sherman Nursery began contract growing of shade trees in Oregon, where they fared better with the longer growing season (Siems 2010; Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; *Looking Back* c.2000).

A birds-eye aerial photograph from the late 1970s and early 1980s shows the extent of the Sherman Nursery facilities at this time (Figures 53 and 54). Greenhouses were depicted on the 1971 aerial photograph to the west and south of the main stone office, as well as in the second row to the west. Three new hoophouses appear to have been built in the open corner of this second row. The carpenter/blacksmith shop with the attached lumber shop, heating plant with smokestack, and other small buildings were depicted to the south of the greenhouses. The original packing cellar with its 1958 roof as well as the new storage building with arch roof built in 1976 extended across the north side of the building complex.

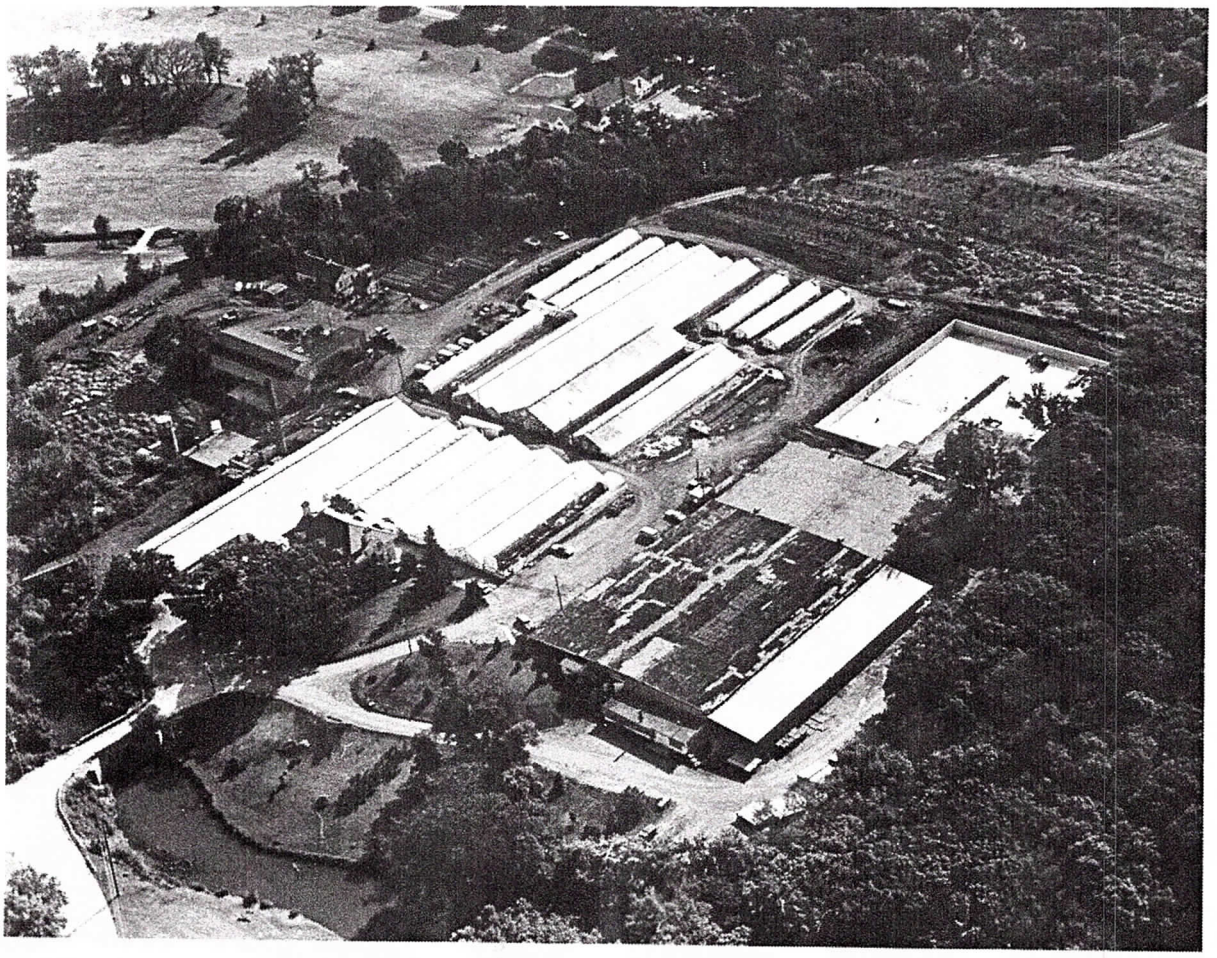


Figure 52. Buildings associated with Sherman Nursery Company in 1976 with new packing/storage building under construction, looking southwest (Siems collection).

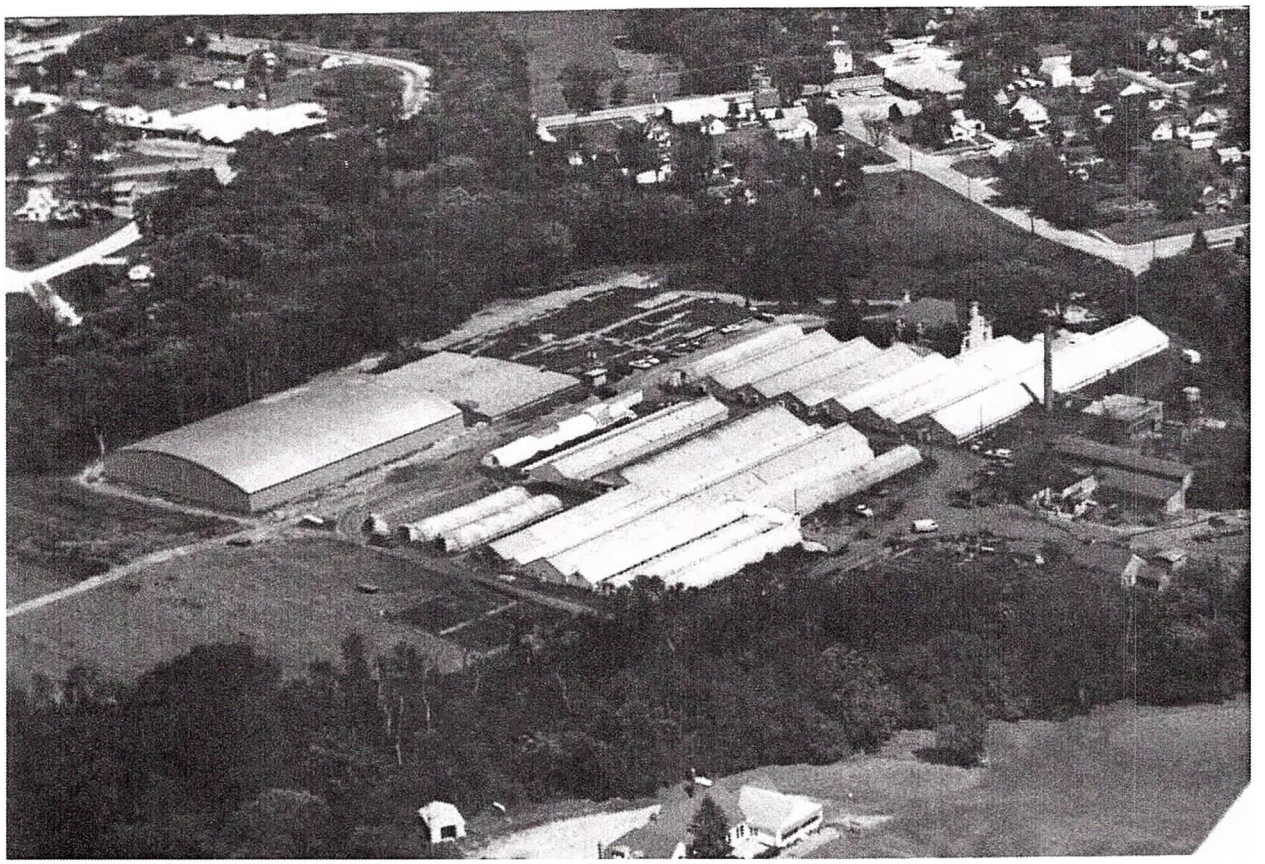


Figure 53. Buildings associated with Sherman Nursery Company with 1976 packing/storage building complete, looking northeast (Siems collection).

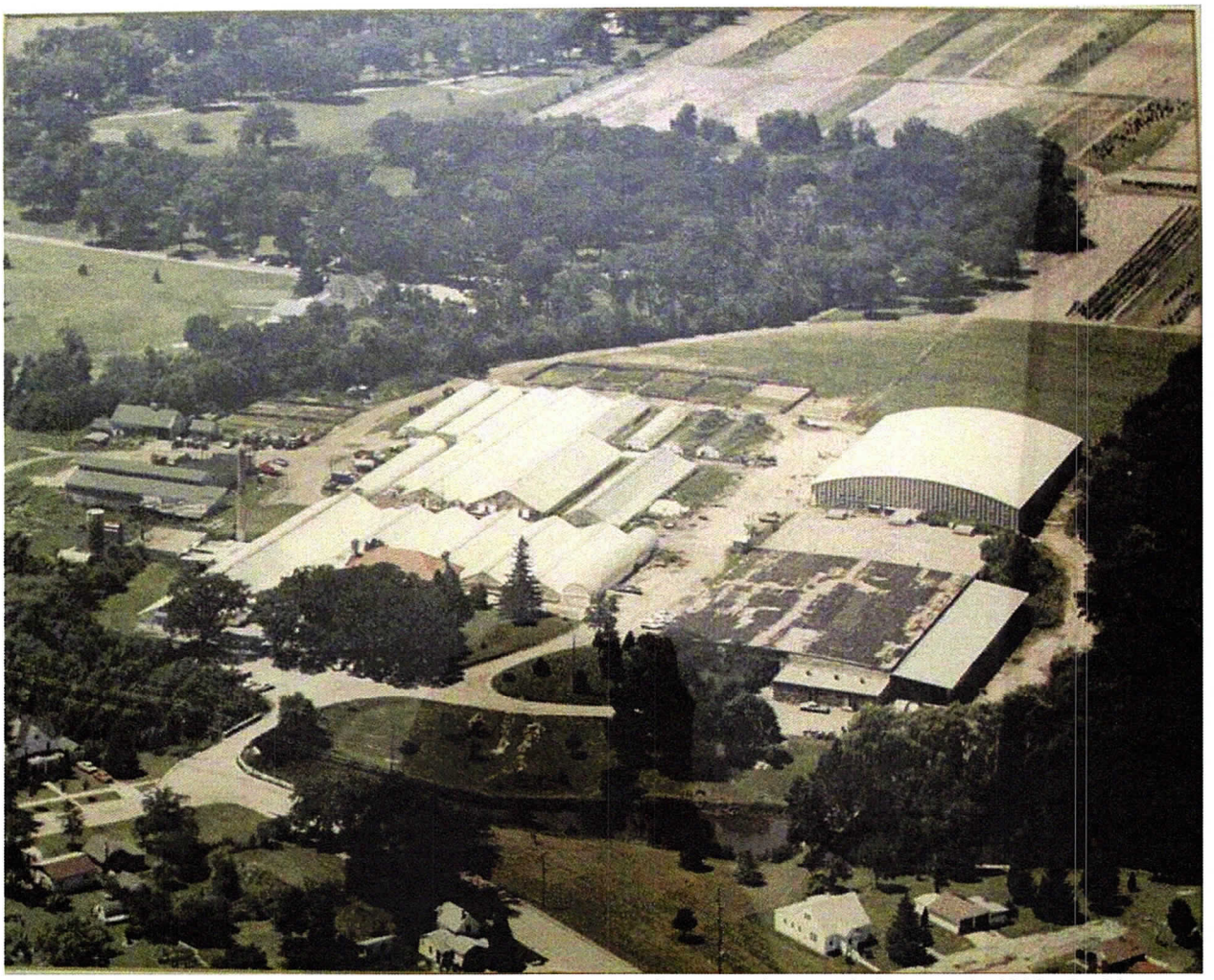


Figure 54. Buildings associated with Sherman Nursery Company in late 1970s or early 1980s, looking southwest (collection in Sherman Nursery office).

Sherman Nursery Company under Bailey Nurseries, 1984–2009

The Sherman Nursery Company entered the most recent chapter in its history with the purchase of the company by Bailey Nurseries of St. Paul, Minnesota. Negotiations began and plans announced in 1983, with the official transfer of ownership in February 1984. Bailey Nurseries decided to leave the Sherman name in place, as it had been associated with the company for 100 years. At this time, Bailey owned a 1,200 acre operation near St. Paul and an 800 acre operation near Portland, Oregon. Though Bailey owned the company, Sherman Nursery Company continued to operate as an independent nursery and business, with finances separate from the parent company. Sales at Sherman were around $3 million annually in 1984. The sale resulted in an extensive program to renovate and update the facilities at Sherman Nursery. The office was carefully rehabilitated with historic features retained and restored in 1986. Painted woodwork was stripped and restored, and decorative wood windows were retained and painted. At the same time, the original heating plant and most of the original greenhouses were demolished and replaced. Four newer greenhouses were updated, and four additional greenhouses were built. In 1987, a third packing/shipping facility was built to the west of the one constructed in 1976. Storage area along this row of three massive buildings along the north edge of the property was increased to 2.5 million cubic feet (*History of Sherman Nursery Company* c.1990; Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; *Looking Back* c.2000; "Sherman Nursery continues building a bright future," *Charles City Press,* August 11, 1988, 2; Siems 2010).

Recovery from the economic recession and high interest rates of the early 1980s began by 1983 and the nursery industry saw full demand for products again by 1985. In this period, there also became an increased demand for larger plants and trees, creating more of an instant landscape for a house or property. Trees were also increasingly planted for shade or as windbreaks. Century old problems such as droughts and labor shortages plagued the industry in the late 1980s. Technology introduced new insecticides and Integrated Pest Management. Within the office, new technology brought computerized job estimating and bookkeeping. Rewholesale centers, popular in the 1970s, became integral in the nursery product distribution pattern. By 1990, nursery stock sales reached nearly $2 billion with an array of products and services (Higginbotham, June 15, 1990, 53-54).

In 1988, Sherman Nursery Company expected sales to reach $7 million, with increase of 10% to 20% per year since 1984. The company served over 2,000 retail garden centers and wholesalers across the United States and Canada, with business concentrated in the northern one-third of the country. Fifty percent of their business was in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Products included flowering shrubs, vines, shade trees, evergreens, ground cover, and fruit trees suitable for winter climate. About 1.5 million cuttings were made each spring from plants and placed in greenhouses. The company owned around 500 acres, with 350 acres planted with nursery stock. Sludge from the Charles City waste treatment plant was mixed with the soil every three years for fertilizer. Traditional digging continued from mid-October through November after several frosts, with trees and shrubs dug, graded, and packed for spring shipments. The spring shipping season from six to eight weeks around April continued to be the other busy time of the year ("Sherman Nursery continues building a bright future," *Charles City Press,* August 11, 1988, 2).

A brochure on the history of the company published around 1990 noted that the Sherman Nursery Company was one of the largest wholesale nurseries in North America at this time. They served over 2,000 retail garden centers and landscapers in the United States and Canada, and the company had over 50 full time employees. Their three storage and shipping buildings covered over 91,000 square feet, providing over 2.1 million cubic feet of controlled storage. Increases in production and need for additional storage space necessitated the construction of a third storage building in 1989, measuring 268 by 150 feet. This building was located to the west of the 1976 building, continuing an expansion of this land use along the north edge of the property. Over 350 acres were planted with quality northern grown nursery stock, with an additional 250 acres in rotation with farm or green manure crops. Over 1.6 million rooted cuttings were in production in modern greenhouses, which included automatic mist, fertilizing, and pest control systems (*History of Sherman Nursery Company* c.1990; Siems 2010).

A special edition of *American Nurserymen* on June 15, 1990 included profiles of nursery companies in continuous existence for 100 years across the country. The Sherman Nursery Company was included in the magazine, having operated continuously since it was founded in 1884. Though the company changed ownership, many employees and officers remained with the company through the years, such as C.C. Smith who worked for Sherman Nursery under three separate owners from 1912 to 1962. Likewise, Morris W. Swartz worked as treasurer/comptroller from 1923 to 1983. The current president, Dale Siems, retained his position through the sale of the company to Bailey Nurseries in 1983. He credited company loyalty for the continued success of the business (Block, June 15, 1990, 92). Sherman Nursery Company had also reached a national market through semi-monthly advertisements in the *American Nurseryman* since 1932 ("Integrity is a valued industry tradition," Sherman Nursery Company ad in *American Nurseryman,* September 1, 1997).

Overall, Sherman Nursery Company was among 39 nurseries across the country that had operated for at least 100 years in 1990. Two other companies in Iowa were included on this list, the Ferris Nursery and Florists in Hampton (founded 1869, now closed) and Mount Arbor Nurseries in Shenandoah (founded 1875). Solomon Ferris founded Ferris Nursery in Bristow, Iowa in 1869, and the family moved it to Hampton in 1899. The company evolved from a mail order nursery to nursery, garden center, and floral operations by 1990, continuing to be run by the Ferris family. Mount Arbor Nursery was founded in 1875, and it was sold to the Welch family in 1891, who continued to operate it in 1990. It had been one of the earliest retail nurseries, though it no longer sold plants to the public in 1990. Illinois and Kansas had the most century nurseries of any state, with five in existence in each state. Nine other operated in the Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri. Thus, half of the century nurseries were found in the Midwest in 1990. Eastern states had six century nurseries (PA, CT, NY, VA, MD). Seven century nurseries were found in the South (TN, KY, FL, GA, MS), and four century nurseries were found in the West (CA, WA, OR) (Block, June 15, 1990, 83-87).

One of the original buildings associated with Sherman Nursery Company was demolished and replaced in 1991. The stone walls of the original 150 by 300 foot packing cellar (with the new roof structure from 1958) were deteriorating. On July 26, 1991, the building was demolished. The company built a new 150 by 300 foot building with prestressed concrete with Behlon roof in

its place. With this construction, the company had spent over $5 million in building improvements since Bailey Nurseries gained ownership. According to president and general manager Dale Siems, the company was optimistic about future success and growth. They had over 350 acres in active production, with an additional 250 acres in rotation. Sherman Nursery was recognized as one of the largest wholesale nurseries in North America, serving over 2,500 garden centers and landscapers throughout the United States, Canada, Holland, and Japan and employing 60 people full-time (David Smith, "Sherman Nursery bids farewell to a century-old piece of its history," *Charles City Press,* July 27, 1991, 1-2).

Sherman Nursery Company continued this strong tradition of business success through quality nursery stock through the 1990s. In 1994, they bought the former warehouse of Allied Products warehouse at 13th Avenue and Cleveland for their stock. Sales reached $7.6 million in 1994. In 1995, the company was noted as the third largest nursery in the United States in number of retailers supplied, as well as the oldest continuously operated business in Charles City. Their growing methods evolved with new technology, with gravel beds utilized for bare root stock permitting digging and sale as bare root plants year round. They also expanded to grow and market container stock. In the busy six to eight weeks of the spring season, they distributed 150 to 200 large semi-loads of nursery stock to around 2,800 retailers in 36 states. Sherman Nursery carried a complete line of ornamental flowering shrubs and evergreens. The number of greenhouses locally increased to 20 by 1996. The company grew and sold shade and ornamental trees, flowering shrubs, vines, peonies, and perennials, both bare root and container, to landscapers and garden centers in the northern two-thirds of the United States in 1997. The company success was attributed to operating with integrity by meeting or exceeding customer expectations, encouraging personal and professional development, providing leadership in community and industry, protecting and enhancing the environment, and improving profitability through efficiency and team work (Teresa Forbes. "A growing concern," *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* April 2, 1995, sec C, p 1; Hanson and Hull 1996: 119; "Integrity is a valued industry tradition," Sherman Nursery Company ad in *American Nurseryman,* September 1, 1997).

The company brochure published around 2000 noted that Sherman Nursery Company continued to be one of largest wholesale nurseries in North America, employing over 60 people full-time and serving over 3,000 retail garden centers and landscapers through United States and Canada. The grounds in Charles City had more than 20 greenhouses, which produced over 2 million softwood cuttings and 250,000 three-and-one-half-inch potted liners annually. A container processing building had been added in fall 1999 further west of the earlier buildings. The "beautifully preserved main office building, warehouse, and various structures" were noted as "a symbol of the rich heritage and firm foundation on which the Sherman Nursery Company was founded" (*Looking Back* c.2000).

In 2005, Dale Siems celebrated his 50th year working for the Sherman Nursery Company as well as his 30th year serving as its president at age 78. He started on March 2, 1955 as a credit manager, not knowing anything about the nursery business. When Bailey Nurseries agreed to buy the company in 1984, they stipulated that Siems would continue to serve the Sherman Nursery in his previous capacity. Over his decades of management, the company grew to a large part of the bare-root nursery business in the United States. It evolved from a business in which independent door-to-door salesmen sold landscaping directly to homeowners, to a wholesale

company supplying ornamental flowering shrubs, shade trees, vines, ground covers and evergreens to garden centers in 40 states. Annual sales now reached $13 million. Additionally, Dale Siems was active in the broader industry, as a member of the Western Association of Nurserymen (since 1975); president of the Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association (1980), president of the American Nursery and Credit Association (1985), president of the Wholesale Nursery Growers of America (1990), and president of the Iowa Arboretum (Kristin Buehner, "50 Years, Still Growing Strong," *Mason City Globe Gazette,* February 21, 2005; Siems 2010).

Dale Siems and the Sherman Nursery were also highlighted in the national trade journal *Nursery Management and Production* in September 2006. The company continued to market field grown, bare-root nursery stock successfully, a product that they had promoted since founding in 1884. The core of their business was wholesale sales to smaller, "mom and pop" nurseries rather than "big box" stores. National trends resulted in higher demand for container grown stock, and Sherman had increased this aspect of their business. With rising fuel costs, Sherman Nursery's centralized location in the country permitted them to supply garden centers at a lower cost than competitors. The heavier container products were primarily sold on a regional basis, while the bare-root stock, a lighter product, was shipped across the country. Sherman Nursery had launched an educational campaign with a booklet "Bareroot Basics" for nurseries, landscapers, and landscape architects to outline the advantages of bare-root stock, as well as methods for handling, storing, pruning, planting, and selecting this stock. The company had expanded its nursery stock to include 1 ½" to 1 ¾" trees sold as bare-root products, which was less expensive than container stock (Todd Davis, "Sherman Faces Bare Facts," *Nursery Management and Production,* September 2006, 26-28). While Dales Siems continued to enjoy leading the company at age 80 in 2006, his time to retire arrived in 2007.

Over the last few years, Bailey Nurseries consolidated operations at Sherman Nursery Company into this parent company. David Fuchs, former accountant and comptroller, stepped in as president of the company in June 2007. The company had operated as an independent wholesale supplier of nursery stock under the ownership of Bailey Nurseries since 1984. However, Bailey sought to consolidate various aspects of Sherman's operations into Bailey Nurseries, and the company was to become Bailey Nurseries, Sherman Division. While the plans were announced in October 2008, the transition extended through June 2009. Terri McEnaney, President of Bailey Nurseries, noted that "For well over a century the employees of Sherman have given their customers quality plants and superior service, setting the highest standard for Bailey Nurseries to uphold." Production facilities remained in Charles City, and the grounds and greenhouses continue to be used for growing nursery stock. However, the 65 workers and 20-25 seasonal workers were reduced significantly (Mark Wicks, "Sherman Nursery parent company to consolidate local operations, change name," *Charles City Press,* October 8, 2008, 1). David Fuchs guided the Sherman Nursery Company through the end of the sales year in summer 2009 and consolidation of the company into Bailey Nurseries. Dale Siems also continued to serve as a consultant for local operations through the end of 2009. Thus, in 2009, Sherman Nursery Company closed as an independent company, becoming solely a division of Bailey Nurseries. Growing operations were reduced on the 800 acres that continued to be associated with the company to about 40 acres, with the number of employees dropped to around 30 (Siems 2010).

According to the current company website in November 2010, Bailey Nurseries is a fourth-generation family-owned nursery serving customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. They are one of the largest wholesale nurseries in the United States, with products distributed by more than 4500 independent garden centers, landscapers, growers and re-wholesalers. Their main offices and growing fields are located in Newport, Minnesota (just outside St. Paul), and they also operate nurseries in Yamhill and Sauvie Island, Oregon; Sunnyside, Washington; Onarga, Illinois; and Charles City, Iowa. Both the Iowa Division in Charles City and the Onarga Illinois Division in Onarga are noted as "new" growing locations (www.baileynurseries.com). Bailey Nurseries acquired a portion of the Bork Nurseries in Onarga in January 2009, at the same time as it consolidated Sherman Nursery into its operations.



Figure 55. Buildings associated with Sherman Nursery Company in early 2000s, looking northeast (Siems collection).

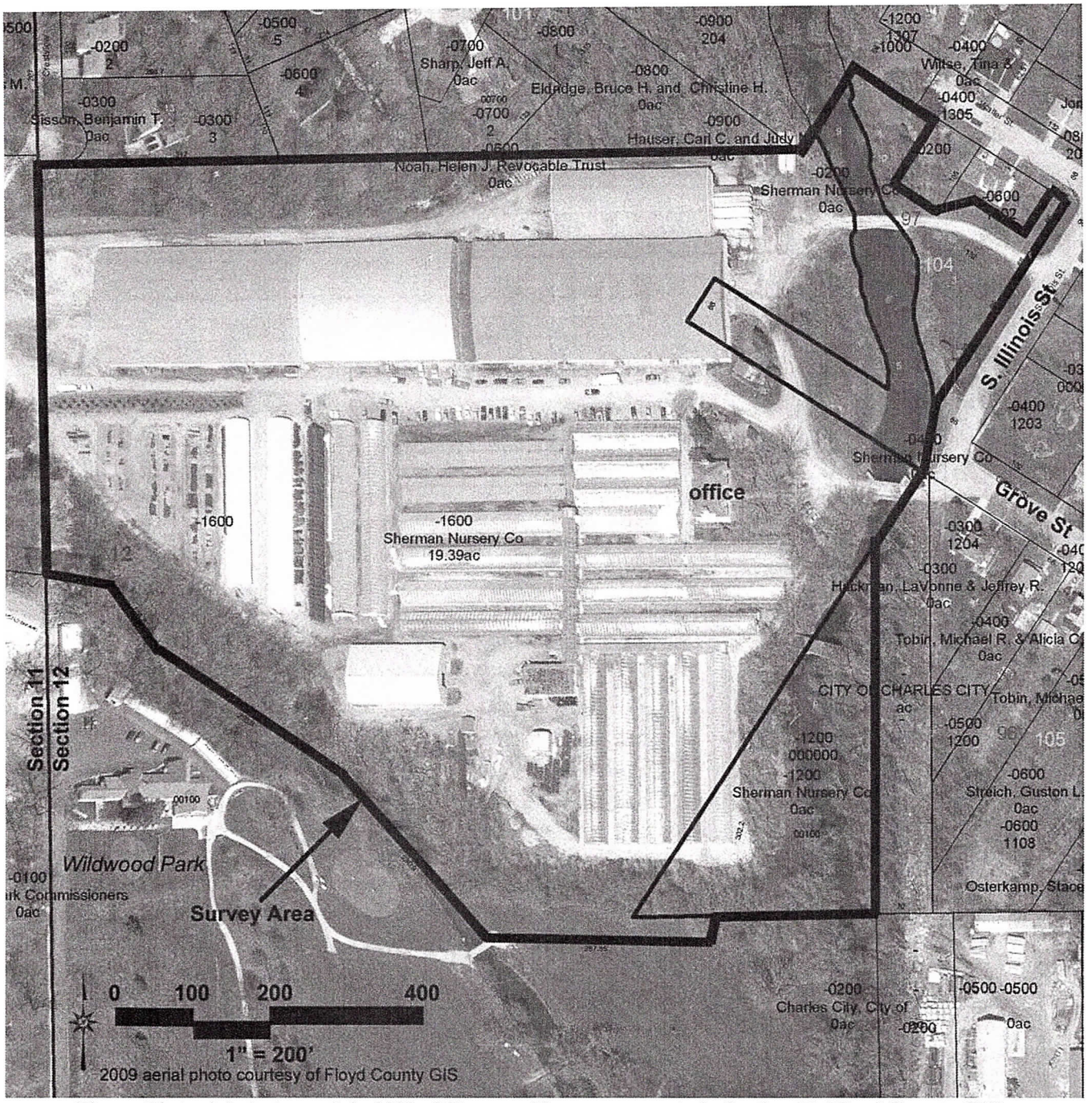


Figure 56. Aerial photograph in 2009 of Sherman Nursery property in Section 12 (Floyd County GIS).

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Charles City Press
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IV. Identification and Evaluation Methods

The intensive level historical and architectural survey of the Sherman Nursery proper is part of an ongoing effort to identify, evaluate, register, and protect the cultural resources of Charles City, Iowa. This project initiated the first survey for this property, and it will position the commission and community to potentially undertake a future nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The goal of this intensive level survey was to research and evaluate the historic resources within the Sherman Nursery parcel associated with the office building and majority of the buildings and structures. The primary goal of the project was to evaluate a potential historic district and to identify boundaries and contributing buildings. The buildings were evaluated for individual eligibility as well. No archeological sites were included in this survey.

Sherman Nursery Company

The methodology for the intensive level historical and architectural survey of the Sherman Nursery proper included a combination of field survey and archival research. Guidelines for this survey work were provided by Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation as published on pages 44720-44726 of the *Federal Register* of September 19, 1983 and *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning, Bulletin #24* (National Park Service 1985). The work for this project was divided between a consultant serving as Principal Investigator, Rebecca Lawin McCarley (d.b.a. SPARK Consulting); the local project director; and the local historic preservation commission, which served as research volunteers for the project. The local project director was Ron Turner, chair of the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission. He was assisted by Veronica Litterer, director of Charles City Community Development and liaison to the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission. As such, she performed the usual management functions and acted as the liaison between the City of Charles City and the State. The volunteers for the research and survey project were members of the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission. The project was funded through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant awarded in spring 2010.

The principal investigator (consultant) was responsible for the organization and coordination of the project, as well as specific project activities. These included research for the historic context, development of the historic context, survey of historic resources associated with the Sherman Nursery proper (an approximately 20 acre parcel with the office building and other historic resources), evaluation of surveyed resources, completion of site inventory forms, and preparation of the final report and recommendations. The consultant was also responsible for the training of the local volunteers and, in cooperation with the project director, providing project direction. The volunteers were responsible for conducting the archival and other research on each of the properties included in this survey, particularly utilizing historic newspapers. This research information was then provided to the consultant for use in development of the historic contexts, preparation of Iowa Site Inventory forms, and evaluation of the historic resources. The consultant prepared the photographs for forms as well as the other final products.

The project began with a field survey in July 2010 by the consultant to assess the historic resources within the survey boundary for the Sherman Nursery Company (Figure 1). Sanborn fire insurance maps for the Sherman Nursery Company were accessed online prior to the site

visit. At this time, it was assessed that three buildings and three bridges composed the extent of the historic resources (built at least 50 years ago) associated with the company within the survey boundary. A reconnaissance survey of the property also owned by the Sherman Nursery Company to the west of the survey boundary was completed to determine if additional historic resources may exist beyond the project area. It was determined that it did not appear that other historic resources were found beyond this survey area. The initial field survey findings were later confirmed through an analysis of county property records and research on the history of the company and buildings. During the site visit in July 2010, the consultant also met with Dale Siems, president of the Sherman Nursery Company from 1975 to 2008. Mr. Siems shared information on the history of the company and provided a tour of the buildings on the nursery grounds, particularly the stone office building completed in 1906. The consultant also visited the Floyd County Historical Society to research their files on the Sherman Nursery Company, as well as more typical historic resources. These resources included county and local histories, city directories, newspapers, and historic photographs and postcards. The consultant also visited the county courthouse to obtain property records and begin research using transfer books on historic transactions involving the property.

The initial project meeting and training was conducted on September 8, 2010 at the regularly scheduled meeting for the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission. Other potential research volunteers were previously identified and invited to the meeting, but no additional persons were in attendance. The consultant, Rebecca Lawin McCarley, presented a timeline history of the Sherman Nursery Company that she had prepared following the research conducted in July. Additionally, photographs of the identified historic resources were distributed. Volunteers, consisting of the seven commission members, then signed up for particular research tasks, as divided into the seven areas by the consultant. One area concentrated on city directory research from the earliest available directories through 1960. The other six areas concentrated on research in historic newspapers for additional information and verification of information on the identified historic resources as well as general history and development of the Sherman Nursery Company. This research tasks were further discussed to ensure that the commission understood the necessary research methods and goals of the research.

The project continued through September and October 2010 with the research by the volunteers on the Sherman Nursery Company, under the direction and supervision of the consultant. Volunteers utilized old newspapers archived on microfilm at the Charles City Public Library as well as bound old newspapers in the collection of the Floyd County Historical Society in Charles City. Volunteers in the earlier newspapers (1880s to 1910s) combed the majority of the newspapers page by page for references to the Sherman Nursery Company and any building projects. Volunteers in the later years (1920s to 1960s) concentrated on year end editions, known dates, and busy seasons (May, October). A teleconference was held with the consultant and historic preservation commission at their October 13, 2010 meeting to check progress on the research, answer questions, and ensure that the research goals were being met. Research was shifted from one commission member who was unable to work on the project to two other members. November 3, 2010 was set as the deadline for completion of the assigned research tasks, as December 1, 2010 had been identified as the deadline for the first draft of the survey report. Research continued until this date, with the consultant answering questions by email as needed.

The consultant and volunteers met in Charles City on November 3 for the volunteers to present the research information collected to the consultants. Problems and challenges were discussed, and a few areas for additional research were identified. While information had been found on the construction of several greenhouses and the two concrete railroad bridges, no articles had been identified on the construction of the main stone arch bridge, the stone office building, or the stone carpenter/blacksmith shop. Articles on construction of nearly all buildings/resources from 1907 to 1914 had been located, with the majority of these resources demolished. Research had not yet been completed on the 1880s and 1890s, and it was reassigned to three members to complete within the next week, with hopes of locating articles on these three buildings. The chair also volunteered to check 1905 again, as the stone office building was noted to be "newly complete" in a March 1906 article. Likewise, with the parcel associated with the office building not purchased until December 1895, the 1896 newspapers were again combed for any references of the stone arch bridge that reportedly was as early as the company (1884). During this site visit, the consultant also completed the remainder of the photographs for the resources associated with the Sherman Nursery Company, as well as meeting again with Dale Siems to research his information and photographs associated with the company.

The consultant completed other research and developed a draft of the survey report in November 2010. Previous research and historic surveys in Charles City were also utilized. The research for these resources was primarily conducted at the State Historic Preservation Office in Des Moines. This research was then utilized to develop the historic context (*The Sherman Nursery Company, 1884-2010*), included within this report. Finally, this survey report was compiled for the project, includes the historic context, survey and evaluation methods, survey results, and recommendations. The completion of the survey forms continued through January 2011. Draft reports were completed for December 1 (to commission) and February 1 (to state) deadlines, and the final report and site inventory forms were submitted in June 2011.

The historic context and site-specific research were utilized to evaluate the historic resources individually and as contributing within a potential historic district for their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The properties (complex and individual resources) were evaluated with the National Register of Historic Places criteria. In general, in order for a property to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it must be at least 50 years old and possess both historic significance and integrity. Significance may be found in four aspects of American history recognized by the National Register:

A. association with historic events or activities;

B. association with important persons;

C. distinctive design or physical characteristics; or

D. potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

A property must meet at least one of the criteria for listing. Integrity must also be evident through historic qualities including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For this survey, resources were primarily evaluated based on Criteria A, B, and C. These guidelines were utilized in evaluating the historic resources that appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The results are summarized in *Section V: Survey Results*.

In addition to the standard National Register of Historic Places bulletins on researching and evaluating historic properties, the bulletin on Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes was also consulted. A rural landscape is defined as a geographical area that historically has been used by people and possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features. Eleven characteristics have been developed for reading and evaluating a historic rural landscape:

1. Land Uses and Activities
2. Patterns of Spatial Organization
3. Response to the Natural Environment
4. Cultural Traditions
5. Circulation Networks
6. Boundary Demarcations
7. Vegetation Related to Land Use
8. Buildings, Structures, and Objects
9. Clusters of Features
10. Archeological Sites
11. Small-scale elements

A checklist and additional information is provided within the bulletin for surveying and evaluating these aspects of rural landscapes. Rural landscapes must meet one of the four standard criteria for significance as well as possess historic integrity. Historic integrity requires that various characteristics that shaped the land during the historic period be present today in much the same way that they were historically, while recognizing that landscape features change over time. The general character and feeling of the property must be retained for eligibility, which will likely be defined through several of the eleven characteristics listed previously.

Nurseries in Iowa

In addition to the research on Sherman Nursery Company, the consultant also conducted research on other nurseries companies in area to provide context for the evaluation of the property. No particular resources were identified on the history of the nursery industry in Iowa or the history of other large nurseries that significantly contributed to the development of the historic context. A number of state archives and people resources were consulted. Thus, the historic context primarily addresses the history of the Sherman Nursery Company, set within the general background of the national and statewide nursery industry. However, individual nurseries identified, as well as lack of buildings identified, contributes to the general context of the Sherman Nursery Company in the state of Iowa, and it was utilized for the evaluation of the property and resources.

The site inventory records at the State Historic Preservation Office in Des Moines were searched for surveyed resources with "nursery" in the name and functions related to nursery operations, such as horticultural facility or greenhouse. Resources associated with approximately a dozen properties were identified through this file search. Nearly all of these properties were evaluated as "not eligible" within the database, and a number of the resources were built within the last 50 years. Properties evaluated as eligible in some respect include:

- Dubuque County, Dubuque, 189 Hill St - 31-01604 - Harkett's Floral Nursery – evaluated as eligible in potential residential historic district in 2004 and listed – the nursery was

previously located on the property in the 1890s, with a house built in 1902 – the business focused on floral designs

- Linn County, La Fayette, LaFayette Rd - 57-07250 - William Kolb and Sons Nursery and Fruit Farm – evaluated as eligible by consultant (Tallgrass Historians) in 2006 and 2008 – farm operations included an early nursery and fruit farm on 18 acres of the 100 acre property in 1880 – sons continued to experiment with fruit crops
- Page County, Tarkio Twp., Sec. 28 - 73-00085 - US Soil Conservation Service Experimental Farm, – buildings constructed around 1935 and associated with the farm evaluated as eligible by SHPO in 1989

It was determined that none of these properties, nor any of those evaluated as not eligible, were particularly relevant to the large commercial operations of the Sherman Nursery Company spanning from the 1880s to the present, with historic resources concentrated from 1905 to 1910.

Particular nurseries were also targeted for identification of existing resources. Shenandoah in Page County had been noted as a particular center for nursery operations, with leading local companies including the Mt. Arbor Nursery (1875) and Earl May Nursery (1919). Leading Iowa nursery companies in March 1952 included Mount Arbor, Welch Nursery, Lakes Nursery, Earl May, and Henry Field in Shenandoah; Sherman Nursery Company in Charles City; Earl Ferris Nurseries in Hampton; and Interstate Nurseries in Hamburg ("Spring Means Heavy Rush for Big Iowa Nurseries," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil,* March 17, 1952, 1). In June 1990, three century nursery companies operated in Iowa: Ferris Nursery and Florists – Hampton, IA – 1869 (now closed), Mount Arbor Nurseries – Shenandoah, IA – 1875, and Sherman Nursery Company – Charles City, Iowa – 1884 (Lori Block, "A Century (or more!) and Counting," in *American Nurserymen,* June 15, 1990, 83-86). Thus, the state inventory was particularly examined for these properties and local resources were tapped long distance as available for additional information on the history and operations of these companies.

The additional review of the state inventory records did not reveal any additional surveyed properties related to these nursery companies. No buildings or other resources associated with the Earl Ferris Nurseries in Hampton (Franklin County, 30 miles southwest of Charles City), Interstate Nurseries in Hamburg (Fremont County, 20 miles southwest of Shenandoah), Welch Nursery, Lakes Nursery, or Earl May Nursery in Shenandoah appear in the records of the State Historic Preservation Office. While resources may be extant associated with these nurseries, they have not been formally surveyed or identified.

A number of resources associated with Mt. Arbor Nursery in Shenandoah were surveyed as part of a Section 106 review and compliance project in 1992 related to the acquisition of the properties by Green Valley Products, Inc., with financial assistance through a Community Development Block Grant. Inventoried resources included buildings on the north side of town, two agricultural/nursery parcels to the north, and a separate "south farm" to the southwest of town. All the resources identified are listed in the state database as determined "not eligible" by SHPO through this review. It is unconfirmed if these resources have since been demolished. Many were assessed as not 50 years old but now meet this threshold, and it may be worth re-surveying these resources with additional contextual work on the role of the Sherman Nursery Company within the industry statewide.

An assessment report was also identified for the Henry Field Building (73-005) in Shenandoah, prepared by Anderzhon/Architects in March 1990 to examine potential rehabilitation and new uses for the acquisition of the building for the Shenandoah Park Board. This 60 by 106 foot building constructed in 1907 was associated with the mail order seed and retail nursery business of Henry Field Seed Company, with three later additions. This building appears to have since been demolished. Other seed company buildings also exist in Iowa, but they are not directly related contextually to the Sherman Nursery Company as they focus on seeds rather than nursery products.

According to Sallie Brownlee with the Greater Shenandoah Historical Museum in August 2010, the unused office and greenhouses for Mount Arbor Nursery are still there. The last Henry Field store is there but is now a church, and the old Field store was torn down several years ago. The corporate offices for Earl May Seed and Nursery are still located in Shenandoah. According to the company website, a new distribution center was built just outside of Shenandoah on Highway 59 in 1971, and the county assessor lists a retail store built in 1976 in this area. Other properties owned by Earl May within the town include one or more brick warehouses built in the 1920s with later large additions.

Additional research may be completed on these other identified nurseries in Iowa at a future date to further develop the statewide significance of the Sherman Nursery Company.

Nurseries listed on the National Register of Historic Places

With no nursery properties similar to the Sherman Nursery Company listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Iowa, a review was also conducted of nurseries listed across the country. Through a search of the online NRHP database, seven nursery properties were identified as listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Brief information is provided below on each of these properties. No further research was conducted on these properties or other potential eligible nurseries nationwide. If national significance is desired to be pursued for the Sherman Nursery Company, further research on these and other nurseries would need to be conducted for national context on the nursery industry. Interestingly, none of these particular nurseries are similar in operations or scope to the Sherman Nursery Company. These nominations also provide possible approaches for a nomination regarding the larger property of the Sherman Nursery Company.

Glen Saint May Nurseries Company, Glen St. Mary, Baker County, Florida, listed in 2003
This property consists of several buildings and land totaling approximately 640 acres near Glen St. Mary, Florida. A total of 18 contributing buildings, 1 contributing sites (cultural landscape), 3 contributing structures, and 4 non-contributing buildings or structures are listed within the boundary. The nursery consisted of more than 1,000 acres and remains as a large commercial operation. It is listed under Criterion A and B at a state level of significance. The nursery began as a 20-acre farm of George L. Tabor in 1882, who expands operations to a several thousand acre complex of fields, buildings, and roads. The nurseries were one of the leading developers of fruit trees in Florida and the South, and their introduction of the Hamlin orange and Lue Gim Gong orange were major contributions to the Florida citrus industry. The earliest historic building is the 1883 home of George Tabor. Other major contributing resources include a truck

barn from the 1890s, a brick office building from 1912, a series of abandoned glass greenhouses from 1922, and 11 laborer houses dating from 1895 to 1920. The cultural landscape of the buildings, roads, and land use through the 640 acres with these buildings was evaluated as intact and significant as well.

Tinga Nursery, Wrightsboro vicinity, New Hanover County, North Carolina, listed in 2000
This property consists of several buildings and land on approximately 30 acres on US 117 near Wrightsboro, North Carolina. The nursery was established in 1913 and continued operations at the time of the nomination. The property was listed under Criterion A for it significance with Hugh MacRae's agricultural colonies and the impact on the growth of the nursery industry in this area. A total of 6 contributing buildings, and 8 non-contributing buildings, sites, or structures are listed within the boundary. Contributing resources include the 1918 house, 1921 laborer quarters, 1918 wash house and wood shed, 1913 barn, 1930 bulb barn, and 1930s garage. In the 1960s and 1970s, the nursery was evolved from in-ground to above ground plant production (containers), and several non-contributing features related to this development also fall within the boundary. Additionally, the overall cultural landscape of the nursery was considered a contributing resource for the property.

C.E. Moyer Nurseries Property, Winston vicinity, Douglas County, Oregon, listed in 1988
This property consists of several buildings and land on 3.8 acres near Winston, Oregon. This parcel is the operational and administrative core of the nurseries within the larger 14.5 acre property. Clarence E. Moyer owned and developed the nursery from 1921 to 1962, with the period of significance spanning from 1921 to 1925 during which Moyer developed and marketed his trademark Moyer prune. By 1925, the prune was the largest single fruit crop in Douglas County, and it continued to contribute significantly to the local economy in 1988. This 3.8 acre area was developed with native and exotic trees in 1952 with thought of a future park or arboretum in this area. The property consists of two contributing buildings (Moyer House, laborer quarters), one contributing site (landscaped site), two contributing structures (lath house, water tank), and one non-contributing building (1964 office/residence building).

California Nursery Company Guest House, Fremont, Alameda County, California, listed in 1971
The adobe house on the property of the California Nursery Company was listed individually in 1971 for its significance in the areas of architecture and agriculture. The nursery property had been recently sold at this time with housing tracts platted, and there was local concern regarding the fate of the buildings and nursery grounds. According to Fremont city website, "After 1972, the former nursery grounds became a city park featuring the Vallejo Adobe, with the retail/wholesale yards being leased out over the years to various nurseries. The Roeding Family continues to operate the California Nursery Co. as a retail mail order business, but does not have any retail sales yards." No further assessment of the larger nursery grounds appears to have been conducted. The nursery was founded in 1865 and bought by George C. Roeding in 1917. The nursery started as a wholesale company and then became a retail operation, reportedly the largest firm of its kind west of the Rockies. Annual bulb shows in March and April drew up to 5,000 on a weekend. The one square mile nursery was developed with housing incorporating many of the nursery trees in the 1970s, leaving 20 acres owned by the City of Fremont as the California Nursery Historic Park.

Farmer Seed and Nursery Company, Fariboult, Rice County, Minnesota, listed in 1982
This property consists of a large warehouse at 818 NW 4th Street built from the 1890s to 1920s. Less than one acre was listed with this property. The property is significant as the most visible surviving structure lined to Fariboult's role as a major agricultural processing and distribution center for south central Minnesota from the 1890s through the 20th century. The company started as a mail order seed business in Chicago in 1888, moved to Fariboult in 1894, and added a nursery department in 1907.

Savenac Nursery Historic District, Haugan vicinity, Mineral County, Montana, listed in 1999
This property consists of several buildings and land on 340 acres in western Montana. A total of 10 contributing buildings, 6 contributing sites, 16 contributing structures, 2 contributing objects, and 8 non-contributing buildings or structures are listed within the boundary. Seed beds, transplant beds, roads, and formal landscape plantings are included as contributing features. The first period of significance spans from 1907 to 1932 with the original development of the nursery by Elers Koch, supervisor of the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests. The second period of significance spans from 1932 to 1948 after the construction of Highway 10 led to a significant reconstruction effort for the nursery including Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) labor for a number of buildings in 1937-38. Savenac became the largest tree nursery in the northwest producing up to 12 million trees per year for replanting forests after fires and logging cleared areas. It also illustrates the role and importance of the Forest Service in the development of western Montana and the American west in general as well as the role of the CCC in restoration and development of natural resources.

Bessey Nursery, Halsey vicinity, Thomas County, Nebraska, listed in 1977
This property consists of a few buildings on approximately 42 acres of land near Halsey, Nebraska. The nursery was established as the Halsey Nursery in 1903 to produce seedling trees for the Dismal River Forest Preserve, which later became the Nebraska National Forest. It was the first Federal forest tree nursery and was developed by the U.S. Bureau of Forestry, later the Forest Service. The name became Bessey Nursery in 1915 to honor professor Dr. Charles E. Bessey, who advocated for the establishment of the nursery and conservation efforts in the area. The nursery continued to operate in 1977, producing approximately three million conifer seedlings annually. Contributing resources include the 1930 headquarters building, 1910 shop expanded in 1930, and hillside arboretum.

V. Survey Results and Evaluation

The Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Sherman Nursery Company proper in Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa, included the parcel of approximately 20 acres with the core office/greenhouse/shipping area of the Sherman Nursery Company in Section 12 on the west side of Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa. As a result of the survey project, six individual historic resources (built by 1960) were surveyed, as well as several later buildings. A survey map was created to show the location of all the resources included within this survey area (Figure 57). The surveyed resources are summarized on Table 1 and further described below. An Iowa Site Inventory form was developed for each of these six resources. One previously surveyed resource has been demolished, and an Iowa Site Inventory form was prepared to update this record. Additionally, two potential historic districts were documented on Iowa Site Inventory forms, one including a small acreage and one including a significantly larger acreage. Thus, a total of nine Iowa Site Inventory forms were prepared for this project.

Six resources/properties associated with the Sherman Nursery Company were previously surveyed, though none of these resources had extensive information on the associated Iowa Site Inventory forms. These resources/properties were further documented, researched, and evaluated on new Iowa Site Inventory forms prepared as part of this project. One of these previously surveyed resources, the 1907 packing shed (34-00233), was demolished in 1991. The extant five resources further documented on new forms included the two-story stone office building completed in 1906 (34-00232), granite arch bridge built around 1896 (34-00227), concrete south railroad bridge built in 1910 (34-00368), concrete north railroad bridge built in 1910 (34-00226), and the overall Sherman Nursery Company property (34-00231). Each of these resources/properties was listed within the state database as surveyed in 1975 but not evaluated for eligibility. Two additional historic buildings were identified in the survey area, and new Iowa Site Inventory numbers were assigned. These buildings include the one-story stone carpenter/blacksmith shop built around 1906 (34-00640) and a small frame tool shed built around the 1910s (34-00641). Finally, a smaller potential historic district consisting of the office and bridges was identified and documented on a new Iowa Site Inventory form (34-00642).

For this intensive level survey, Iowa Site Inventory forms for each historic resource were filled out completely, utilizing the information collected during the field survey and research phases of the project. Additional historic information for each resource is found on the individual Iowa Site Inventory forms submitted with this report. Iowa Site Inventory forms were also prepared and submitted for the overall Sherman Nursery Company (34-00231), including the large acreage associated with the property to the west, as well as the Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District (34-00642), which encompasses the office, three bridges, and setting and landscape of the creek and approach to the complex.

The inventory of historic and non-historic resources associated with the Sherman Nursery Company survey area is found on Table 1 and mapped on Figure 57. The resources labeled with an "A" prefix are resources built prior to 1960. These resources include A1 – stone office, A2 – stone arch bridge, A3 – north railroad bridge, A4 – south railroad bridge, A5 – stone carpenter/blacksmith shop, and A6 – tool shed. These six resources have individual Iowa Site Inventory forms prepared with additional discussion of their history and significance. The

remaining 28 resources labeled with a "B" prefix are resources built after 1960. The majority of these resources (21) are greenhouses, with large packing and shipping buildings along the north edge of the survey area and property. One of these packing/shipping buildings (B22) sits on the site of the demolished 1907 packing/shipping building. Though these resources are non-historic from the perspective of construction within the last 50 years, the resources in the east half of the survey area largely replaced earlier buildings that performed similar functions. The resources in the west half of the survey area were constructed over the last few decades on the site of earlier arbors for seedlings with an evolution of growing practices and expansion of the company. The resources associated with the property within the survey area are depicted in the survey photographs on the following pages taken in fall 2010 (Figures 58-89). Though the property owned by the Sherman Nursery Company in Section 11 to the west was not included in the survey area, photographs were taken to show the features and character of this area (Figures 90-99). This area includes approximately 250 acres, and it consists of the nursery and container growing area for the company (Figure 100).

Following the field survey and research, these resources were evaluated for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, according to the national criteria assessing significance and integrity. The evaluation of these buildings is also included on Table 1. Identification of a potential historic district was the first goal of the survey project. Resources must retain sufficient integrity to reflect the period of significance and demonstrate significance within the history of a historic district to be considered contributing resources. Two potential historic districts were identified through this project.

The first, noted as District1 on Table 1, includes the entry area for the Sherman Nursery Company property, referenced as the Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District (Figure 101, State #34-00642). The status of the buildings within this district is indicated on Table 1. Four contributing surveyed resources are found within this area: A1 – stone office, A2 – stone arch bridge, A3 – north railroad bridge, and A4 – south railroad bridge. The creek may also be considered a contributing feature. Integrity is strong through this area and for the resources included in this boundary. A potential boundary extension might include the greenhouses immediately to the west and south of the office (new buildings on area historically occupied by greenhouses) and the stone carpenter/blacksmith shop. Inclusion of this area would result in two contributing buildings, three contributing structures, and six non-contributing buildings in the historic district boundary. Further consideration of integrity of this extended area would be completed during the National Register of Historic Places nomination preparation process to define the final boundary.

The Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District (District1, Figure 101, State #34-00642) appears to be eligible under Criterion A for its association with the significant development of the Sherman Nursery Company from 1896 to 1910 (or 1931) and under Criterion B for its association with Erwin M. Sherman. It may also be significant under Criterion C for the architecture of the office building and bridges. The Sherman Nursery Company operated on the west side of Charles City from 1884 to 2008. The company bought its first land in 1894-95, including this section of land bought in December 1895. The subsequent construction of the stone arch bridge over the creek on the east side of the property connected the Sherman Nursery Company property to the town of Charles City. This core area was initially developed from 1902 to 1909 with the construction of the stone office building, a large stone packing/shipping

building, six greenhouses, and a heating plant. The complex expanded in the 1910s, and two railroad bridges were built for railroad spurs to the property in 1910. The company grew rapidly through the 1910s and 1920s, becoming known for its evergreens, fruit trees, and other hardy trees and plants, as well as for its cut roses. Products were sold wholesale and retail through a system of sales agents. Sherman continued to serve as president of the Sherman Nursery Company until 1931 when he sold it to an investment company, Ellis & Ellis, a few years prior to his death in 1934. E.M. Sherman was recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for his success in and contributions to the nursery business. His 1888 Shingle-style home also continues to stand in Charles City at 800 Gilbert Street (34-00214). No other sites are known to be associated with him in the Charles City area. The Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District area provides the entry to the property from Charles City, and this approach and view over the creek to the office is well-documented through historic postcards and photographs. While the greenhouses to the west of the office building have been replaced by new greenhouses and the packing/shipping facilities have been replaced and enlarged along the north edge of the property, the immediate area of the office building and three bridges remains intact. Thus, this section of the property best represents the early development and operations of the Sherman Nursery Company. The design of the office building and bridges are also significant and intact within this core area. The office is architecturally significant for its notable stone Italian Renaissance architecture, including arch entry marked by cut stones, decorative wood windows with jack arch stone lintels, gable roof dormers, red clay tile roof, and end chimneys. Likewise, the stone arch bridge and concrete arch bridges appear to be locally significant for their designs. The overall design relationship between the office, bridges, creek, and entry drive may also be significant. If architectural significance is included within this district nomination, additional architectural context will need to be developed in the course of the nomination preparation.

The second potential historic district identified includes the larger, contiguous Sherman Nursery Company property in Section 11 and 12, referenced as the Sherman Nursery Company Historic District (Figure 100, State #34-00231). If the approach for this district would be pursued, then the smaller area would be listed as part of this larger area rather than separately. While this 2010-11 survey project did not include the nursery area in Section 11, it was examined through a windshield survey and research with historic maps for land uses patterns and current features. The nomination of this larger area would require some additional research and documentation of features through the property. It would rely heavily on the eleven characteristics that have been developed for reading and evaluating a historic rural landscape: Land Uses and Activities, Patterns of Spatial Organization, Response to the Natural Environment, Cultural Traditions, Circulation Networks, Boundary Demarcations, Vegetation Related to Land Use, Buildings, Structures, and Objects, Clusters of Features, Archeological Sites, and Small-scale elements. Preliminary work indicates that the property exhibits many of these features. Historically and currently, the office, greenhouses, and shipping/packing buildings have been clustered at the east end of the property in Section 12. The land use to the west in Section 11 has focused on raising nursery stock for sale. Historic aerial photographs show similar spatial field patterns and circulation networks through this area. The creek along the south edge of the property provided a natural boundary and division in the land, and trees as fence lines stretch along many areas of the north and west boundary of the property as well. Views of open space with nursery stock through this area are similar. This larger historic district boundary would include significantly more non-contributing resources than contributing resources (see Table 1), and a strong argument for the significance of the property and integrity of land use and clusters would need to

be developed through the National Register of Historic Places nomination process for a successful nomination.

The Sherman Nursery Company Historic District (District2, Figure 100, State #34-00231) appears to be potentially eligible under Criterion A for its association with the significant history of the Sherman Nursery Company from 1896 to 1964 (or potentially 2009). Further assessment and evaluation would need to occur as noted in the previous paragraph and in *Section VI: Recommendations*. Erwin M. Sherman moved to Charles City from nearby Chickasaw County and launched the Sherman Nursery Company in 1884 on rented land. He bought his first 200 acres in 1894-95. Construction in Section 12 from 1902 to 1909 included the stone office, a large stone packing/shipping building, six greenhouses, and a heating plant. The complex expanded in the 1910s, and two railroad bridges were built for railroad spurs to the property in 1910. The company grew rapidly through the 1910s and 1920s, becoming known for its evergreens, fruit trees, and other hardy trees and plants, as well as for its cut roses. Products were sold wholesale and retail through a system of sales agents. Sherman continued to serve as president of the Sherman Nursery Company until he sold it to an investment company, Ellis & Ellis, in 1931, a few years prior to his death in 1934. The company was sold in 1947 to M.R. Cashman, and the entire physical plant was refurbished, rebuilt, or constructed new from 1948 to 1964. This work positioned the company for success through the next couple decades, with nursery practices shifting to container growing. Additional construction and rehabilitation was undertaken after Bailey Nurseries purchased the Sherman Nursery Company in 1983 through the 1990s. Sherman Nursery Company continued to operate as an independent company for several years, prior to becoming a division of Bailey Nurseries in 2009. The contiguous land holdings in Section 11 and 12 represents the majority of the land in this area operated by the Sherman Nursery Company through its significant history from 1884 to 2009. While buildings on the landscape have changed, the overall land use and patterns have been consistent with aspects of the nursery operations for over 100 years.

In addition to evaluation within a potential historic district, the six identified historic resources were evaluated for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places as individual buildings. The evaluation of the resources in this regard is also included on Table 1. Within the Sherman Nursery survey area, the 1906 office building (State #34-00232) appears individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for association with the significant Sherman Nursery Company, under Criterion B for association with E.M. Sherman, and under Criterion C for its significant stone architecture. Three structures (bridges dating to c.1896, 1910, 1910) appear potentially individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as well. The c.1896 stone arch bridge on the entry drive would likely be listed under Criterion C for its stone arch design. The concrete railroad bridges (1910, 1910) would likely be listed under Criterion A for association with transportation (specifically railroad development) in Floyd County and/or Criterion C for the concrete arch designs of the bridges (one flat arch, one full arch). These resources would not need to be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places if they are listed as contributing resources within a historic district. While it may be possible to prepare individual nominations for these resources, a stronger nomination would be the Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District, which consists of the main office building as well as the three bridges. These resources share similar history and significance best documented through this small historic district, or within the larger Sherman Nursery Company

Historic District. Additional information on the individual history and significance of these resources can be found on the associated Iowa Site Inventory forms.

Review and concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, will solidify these determinations of potential eligibility, though only through the formal nomination process does a building, structure, or historic district finally either become approved or denied for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

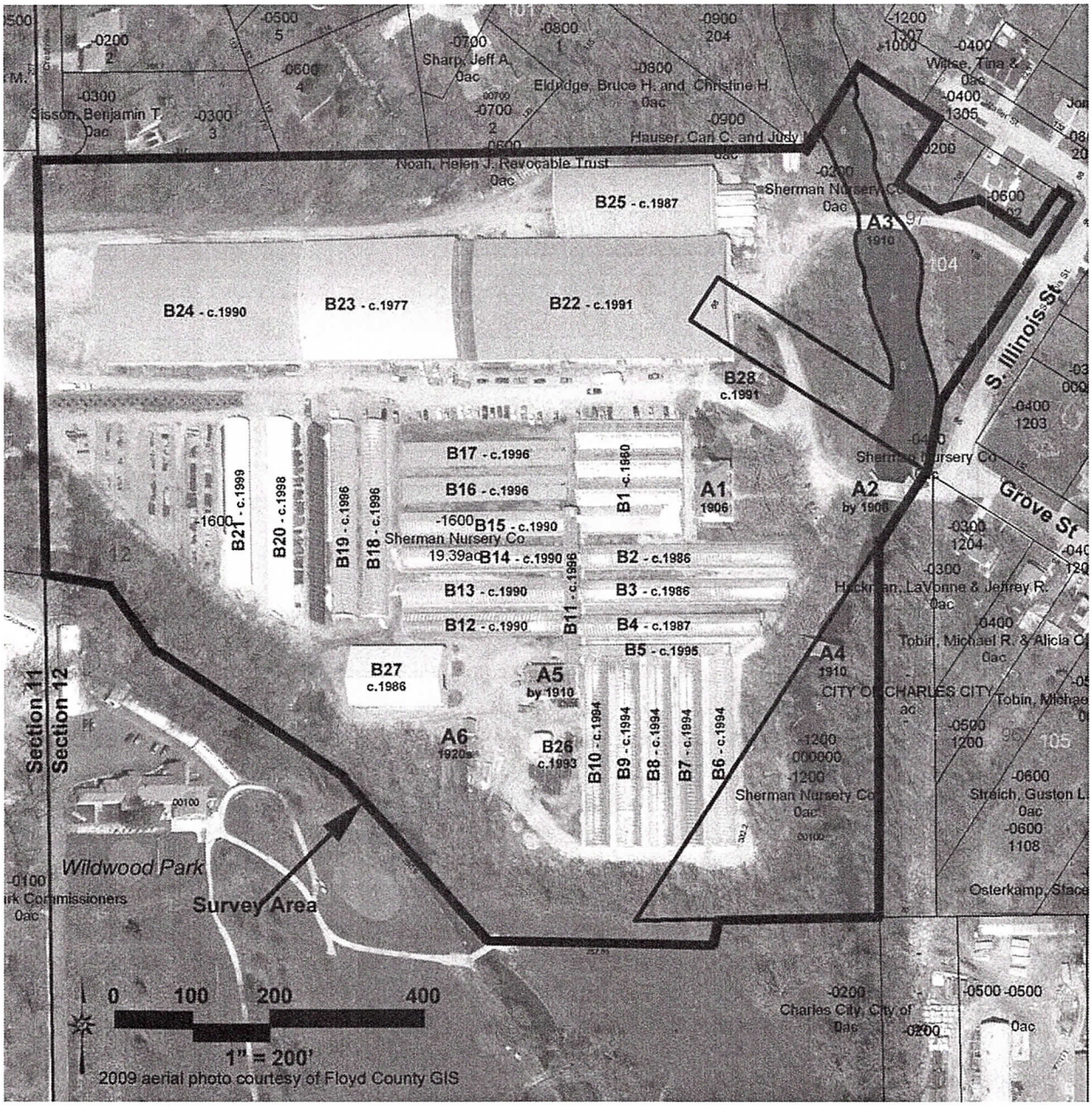


Figure 57. Map of resources within the Sherman Nursery Company survey area (numbers correspond to Table 1).

Table 1. Individual resources included in the survey area.

Building Type Map/Field Site # State Site # (if historic)	**Construction date – materials Architectural/Historical inforamation**	**NRHP evaluation**
Sherman Office State Site #34-00232 Map #A-1	1906 – limestone quarried on property Original decorative wood windows and interior millwork, tile roof replaced by asphalt shingles	District1: yes – C District2: yes – C Individual: yes – A, C
Sherman Arch Bridge State Site #34-00227 Map #A-2	c.1896 – granite from boulder on property Stone arch bridge on main entry road to Sherman Nursery property	District1: yes – C District2: yes – C Individual: yes – C
Sherman North Railroad Bridge State Site #34-00226 Map #A-3	1910 – concrete – flat arch design Concrete bridge built for railroad spur to packing/shipping building	District1: yes – C District2: yes – C Individual: yes – C
Sherman South Railroad Bridge State Site #34-00368 Map #A-4	1910 – concrete – full arch design Concrete bridge built for railroad spur to heating plant and coal bunker	District1: yes – C District2: yes – C Individual: yes – C
Carpenter/blacksmith shop State Site #34-00640 Map #A-5	c.1906 – limestone likely quarried on property Original wood windows, roof structure has been replaced, c.1992 concrete block addition in southwest corner	District1: no District2: yes – C Individual: more research
Tool shed State Site #34-00641 Map #A-6	1910s – frame with wood siding Interior wood beadboard siding	District1: no District2: yes – C Individual: no
Greenhouse Map #B-1	c.1960 – glass/metal walls – concrete foundation – series of four connected greenhouses	District1: no District2: yes – NC Individual: no
Greenhouse Map #B-2	1986 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-3	1986 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-4	1987 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-5	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-6	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-7	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-8	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-9	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-10	1994 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-11	1996 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-12	1990 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-13	1990 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-14	1990 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC

Building Type **Map/Field Site #** **State Site # (if historic)**	**Construction date – materials** **Architectural/Historical inforamation**	**NRHP evaluation**
Greenhouse Map #B-15	1990 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-16	1996 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-17	1996 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-18	1996 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-19	1996 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-20	1998 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Greenhouse Map #B-21	1999 – vinyl sheets on metal frame – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Packing/shipping building Map #B-22	1991 – concrete walls and foundation (replaced original 1906 packing building)	District1: no District2: yes – NC Individual: no
Packing/shipping building Map #B-23	1977 – concrete walls and foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC Individual: no
Packing/shipping building Map #B-24	1990 – concrete walls and foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC Individual: no
Packing/shipping building Map #B-25	1987 – metal walls – concrete foundation	District1: no District2: yes – NC Individual: no
Storage building Map #B-26	1993 – metal building	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Storage building Map #B-27	1986 – metal building	District1: no District2: yes – NC
Electric equipment building Map #B-28	1991 –concrete block building	District1: no District2: yes – NC



Figure 58. View of Sherman Nursery Company property from Grove Street, looking southwest.



Figure 59. View of stone bridge (A2) and office (A1) from Grove Street, looking southwest.



Figure 60. View northwest to north railroad bridge (A3) and packing/shipping building (B22) from Grove Street.



Figure 61. View southwest to south railroad bridge (A4) from east side of creek.



Figure 62. East elevation (façade) of stone office building (A1) completed in 1906.



Figure 63. Stone office building (A1), looking southwest.



Figure 64. View west from north side office building (A1), with B1 at left and B24-B-23-B22 at right.



Figure 65. Greenhouses west of office (B1), looking southwest.



Figure 66. Greenhouses west of office (B1), small greenhouse (B11), and hoophouses (B17-B-16) looking south.



Figure 67. Greenhouses in second row to west of office (B17-B-16-B15-B14-B13-B-12), looking southeast.



Figure 68. Greenhouses at west end of survey area (B18-B19-B20-B-21) with tree stand, looking southwest.



Figure 69. Looking east to office from west end of B17.

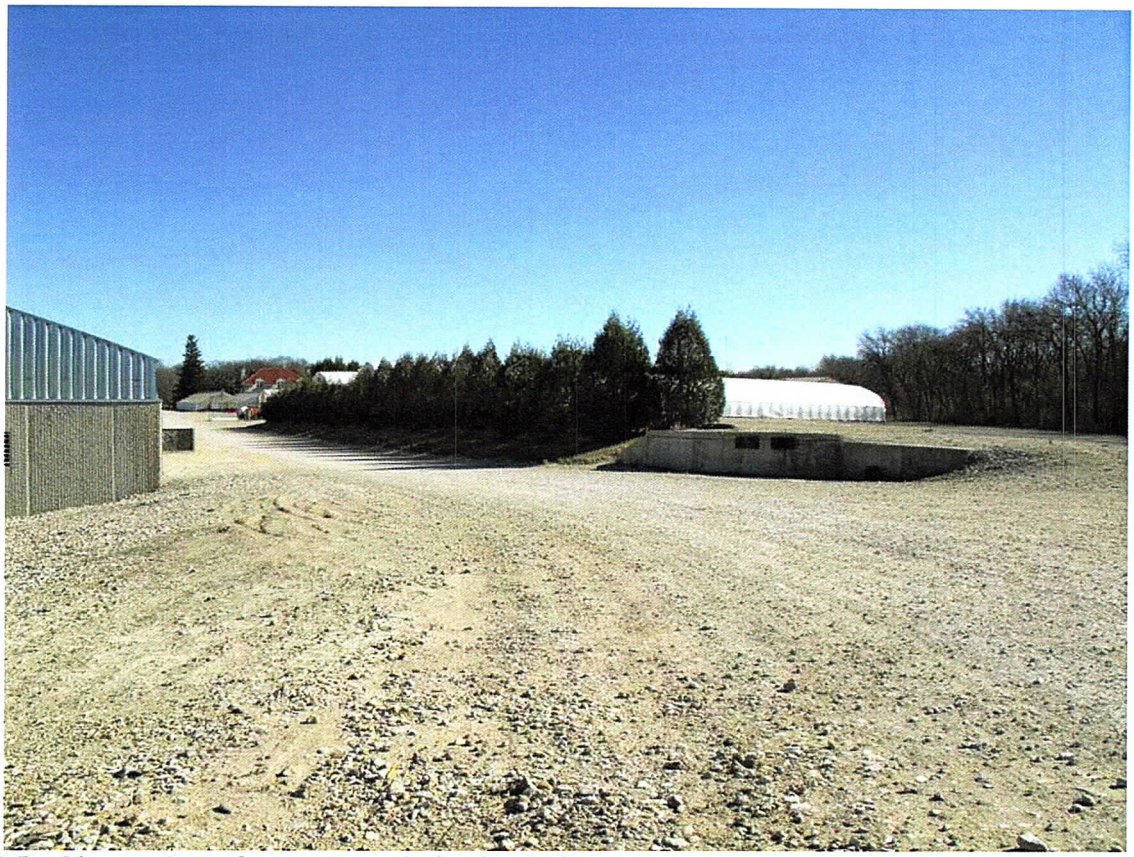


Figure 70. Looking southeast from property in Section 11 (over survey boundary) back into Section 12 towards office.



Figure 71. Gravel lot at west end of survey area looking southeast to B21 and trees along creek.



Figure 72. South ends of B21 and B20, looking northwest (greenhouses in backround at left outside of surey area).

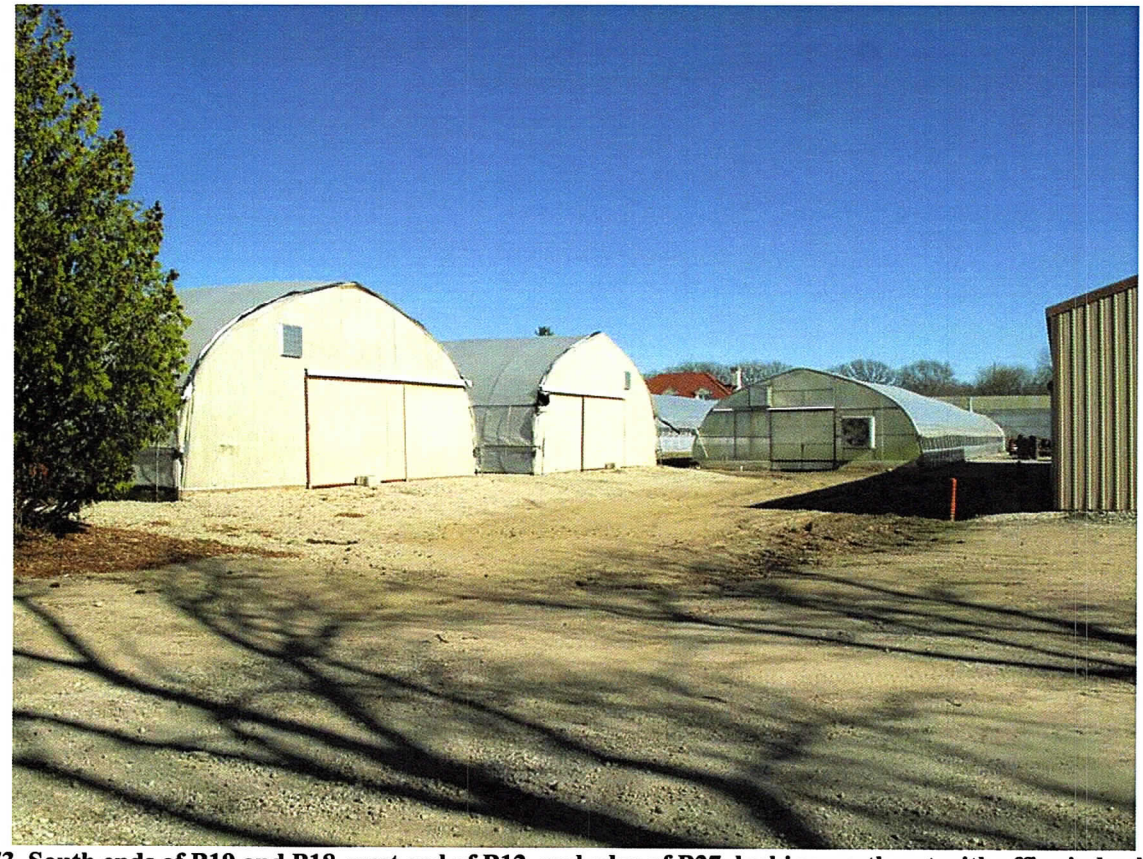


Figure 73. South ends of B19 and B18, west end of B12, and edge of B27, looking northeast with office in background.



Figure 74. West end of B27, looking southeast.



Figure 75. Trees along creek at south border of property with tool shed (A6) in foreground.



Figure 76. Trees along creek at south border of property with metal building (B26) in foreground.



Figure 77. View northeast from tool shed (A6) to office, with carpenter shop (A5) and greenhouses (B12-B11-B-10).



Figure 78. Carpenter/blacksmith shop (A5) with 1991 concrete corner addition, looking northeast.

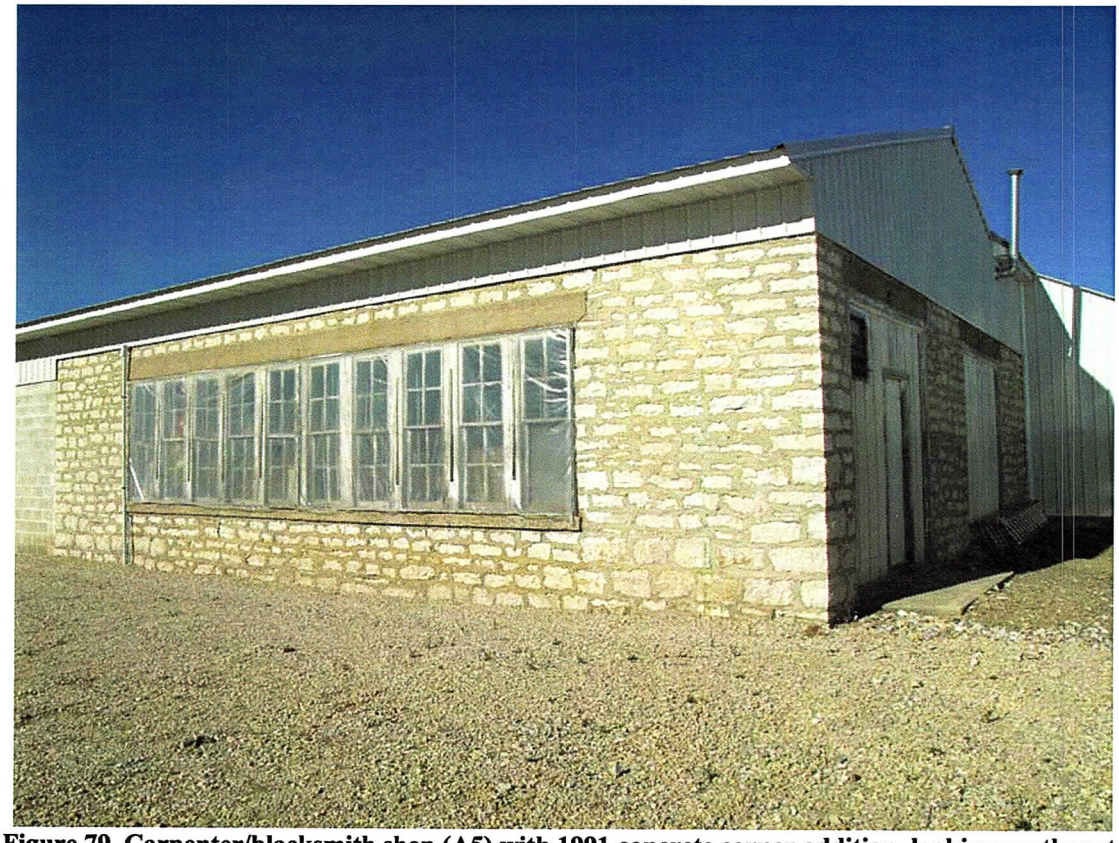


Figure 79. Carpenter/blacksmith shop (A5) with 1991 concrete corner addition, looking northwest.



Figure 80. Greenhouses (B10-B9-B8-B7-B6), looking northeast.



Figure 81. Greenhouses (B6-B5-B4), looking northeast.



Figure 82. Greenhouses (B3-B2), looking northwest from bridge (A4) to office (A1).

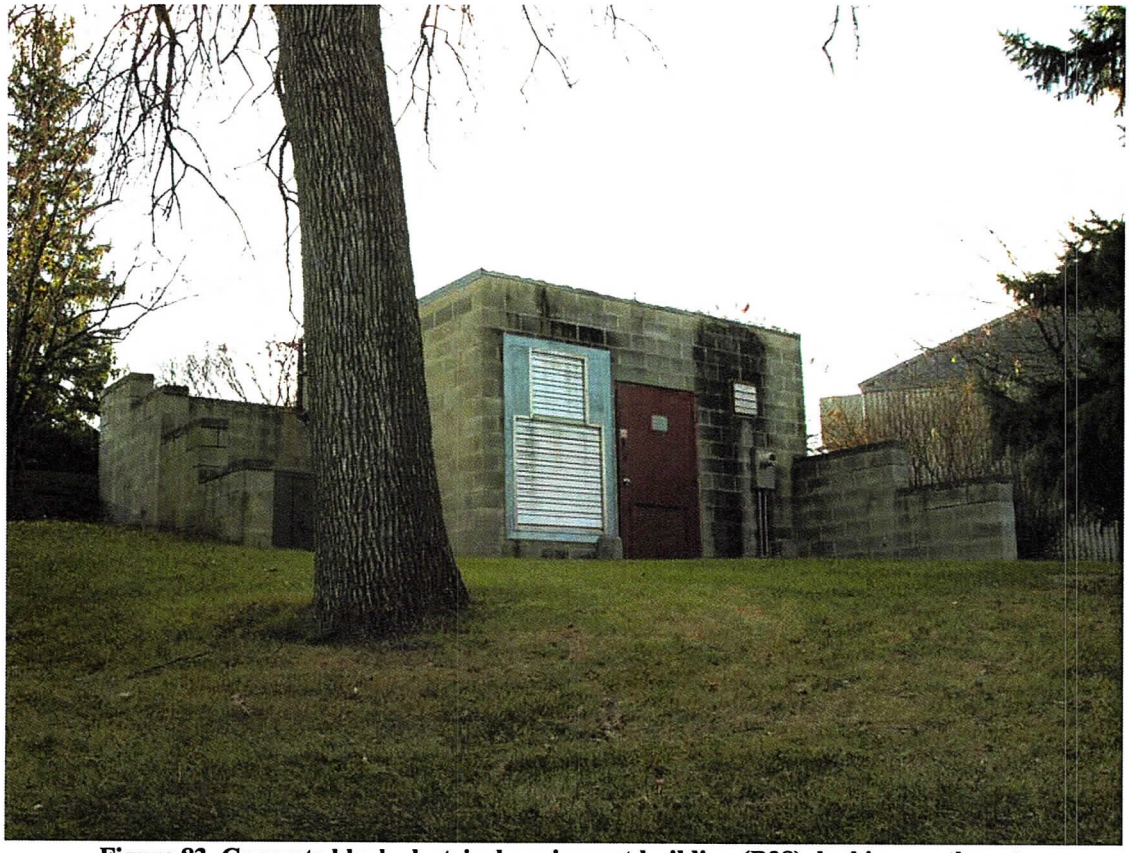


Figure 83. Concrete block electrical equipment building (B28), looking southwest.



Figure 84. Packing/shipping buildings (B22-B25), looking southwest.



Figure 85. Packing/shipping buildings (B24-B23-B22), looking northwest.



Figure 86. Packing/shipping building (B23), looking northwest.



Figure 87. Packing/shipping building (B24), looking northeast.



Figure 88. Trees along north border of property with packing/shipping building (B24) at right, looking east.



Figure 89. Trees along north broder of property with shipping building (B25) at left, looking west.



Figure 90. Looking west from edge of Section 12 and survey area into additional Sherman property in Section 11.



Figure 91. Trees continuing along creek on south border Sherman property in Section 11, looking southwest.



Figure 92. Greenhouses (1997, 1998) on Sherman property on east edge of Section 11, looking southwest.



Figure 93. Nursery stock on Sherman property on east edge of Section 11, looking northwest.



Figure 94. Nursery stock on Sherman property, looking west to windbreak in NW NE quarter of Section 11.



Figure 95. Looking east from east half of NW quarter of NE quarter of Section 11 towards main building complex.



Figure 96. Looking southeast from east half of NW quarter of NE quarter of Section 11 towards trees along creek.



Figure 97. Looking northeast to container stock in west half of NW quarter of NE quarter of Section 11.



Figure 98. Looking southwest from midpoint of NW quarter of NE quarter of Section 11 to additional greenhouses.



Figure 99. Looking west from NW quarter of NE quarter of Section 11 with Sherman property continuing in distance.

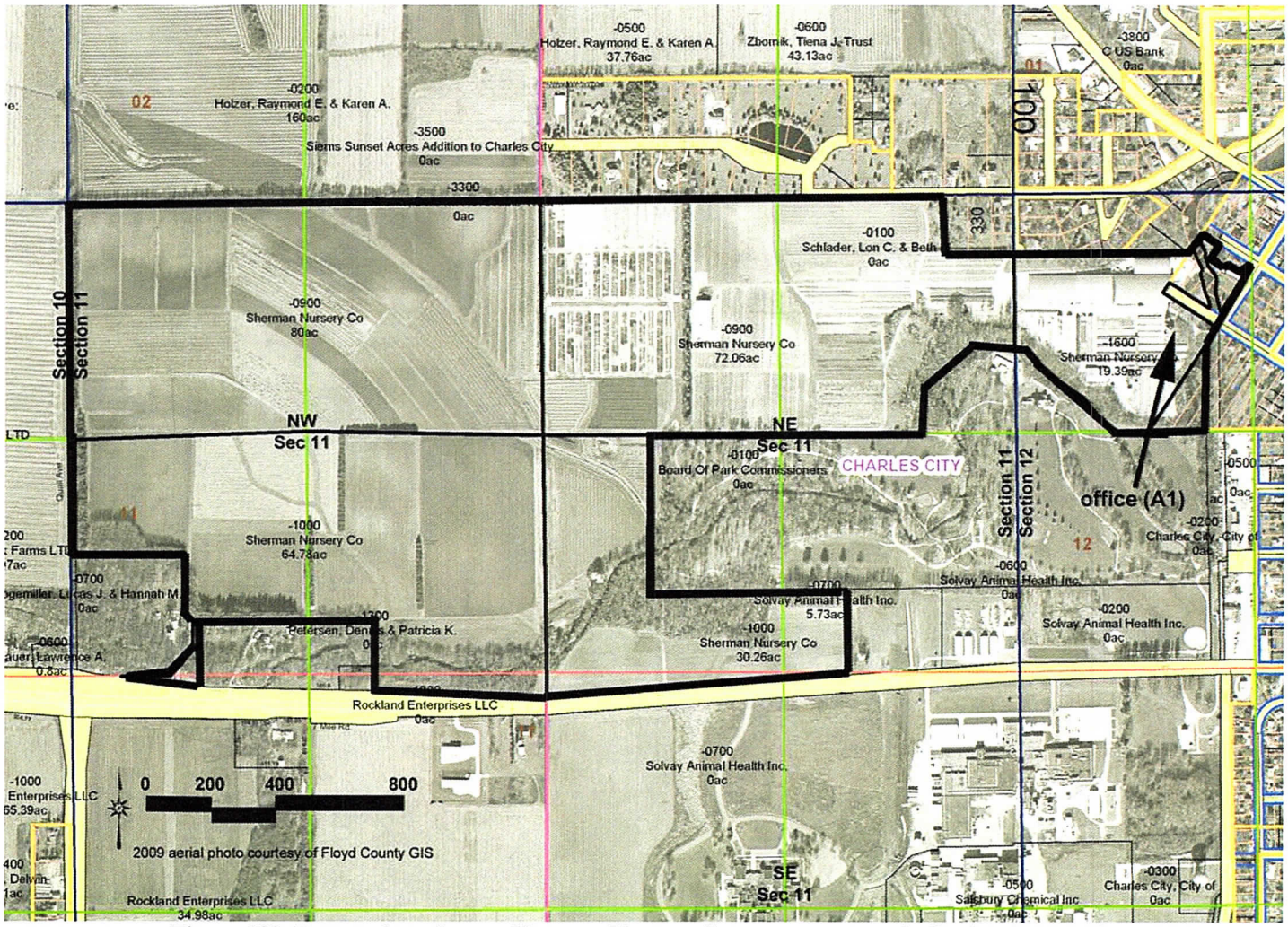


Figure 100. Extent of contiguous Sherman Nursery Company property in Section 11 and 12.

potential "Sherman Nursery Company Historic District" (State #34-00231)

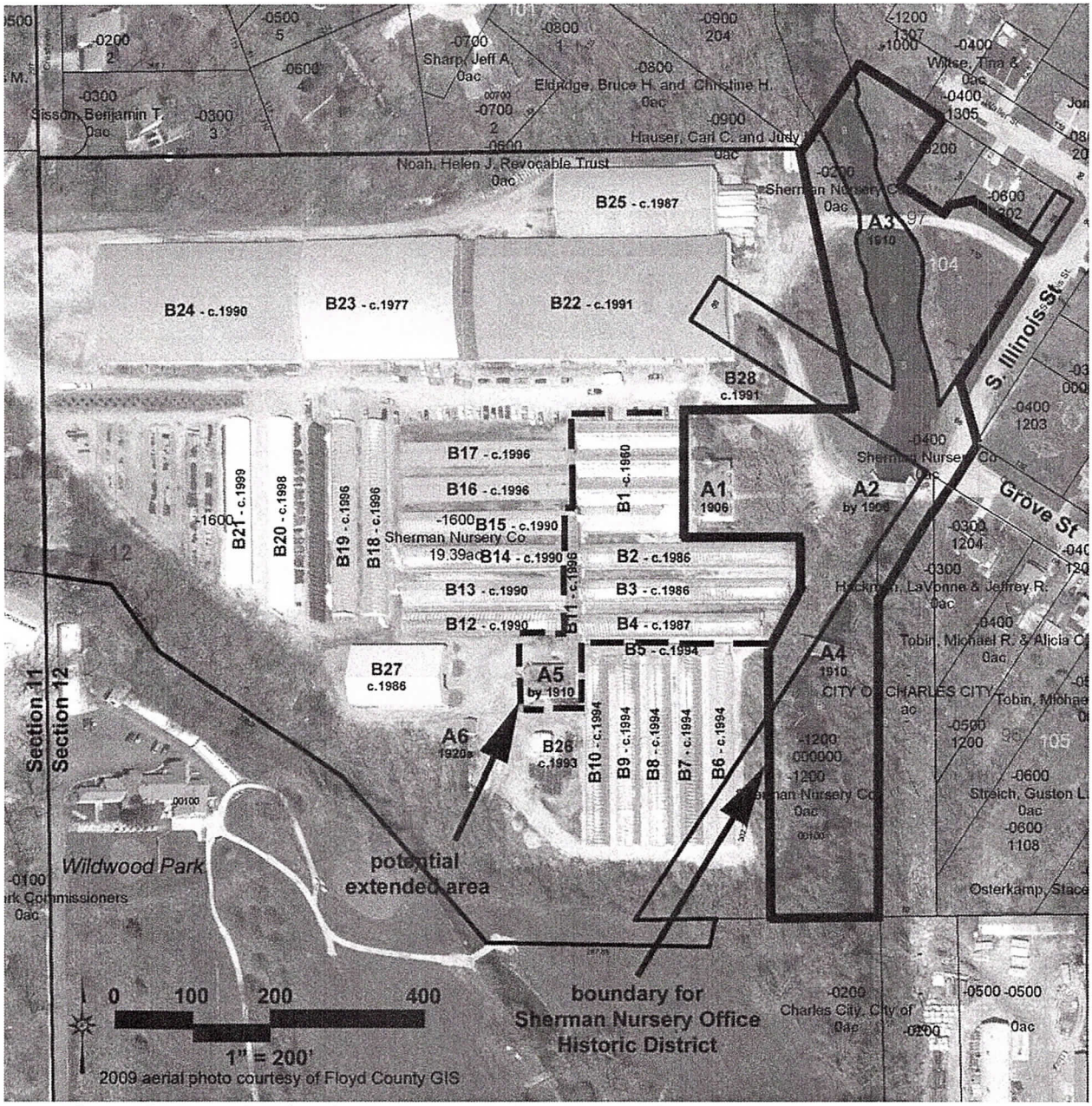


Figure 101. Potential historic district boundaries within the Sherman Nursery Company property.

potential "Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District" (State #34-00642)
Thick solid black line is core historic district area
Dotted line indicates possible described expansion area

VI. Recommendations

The Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Sherman Nursery Company proper in Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa, is part of a phased program to identify, evaluate, register, and protect the cultural resources of Charles City. The purpose of the survey was to complete an intensive level historical and architectural survey of the parcel of approximately 20 acres with the core office/greenhouse/shipping area of the Sherman Nursery Company in Section 12 on the west side of Charles City. The larger property in Section 11 was not included in the intensive survey area. Research was also conducted to develop a historic context relating to this history to evaluate the historic resources surveyed. The primary goal of the project was to evaluate a potential historic district and identify boundaries and contributing buildings. The buildings were evaluated for individual eligibility as well. Resources and districts were evaluated under Criterion A for historic significance, Criterion B for association with a significance person, and Criterion C for architectural significance, as further described in *Section IV: Identification and Evaluation Methods*. Archeological sites were not included within the survey and evaluation. Sites of demolished buildings are depicted on historic maps, and the majority of these buildings were rebuilt with one or two subsequent buildings. Additional research and evaluation may reveal significance of all or part of the property under Criterion D.

As a result of the survey project, six individual historic resources (built by 1960) were surveyed, as well as several later buildings. These resources, as well as the overall property, were researched and evaluated for their historic and architectural significance. Iowa Site Inventory forms were filled out for each historic resource, including name, date, address, narrative description, and a statement of significance. A photograph and map accompanies each form. Through this survey, two potential historic districts were identified and documented on Iowa Site Inventory forms, one including a small acreage (Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District) and one including a significantly larger acreage (Sherman Nursery Company Historic District). The four resources also evaluated as potentially individually eligible fall within both boundaries of these potential historic districts. Nomination of the second larger potential historic district would require additional work to research, document, and evaluate the resources and land patterns through the property in Section 11.

It is thus recommended that the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission pursue nomination of one of these potential historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places. The individually eligible resources will be listed as contributing within either of these historic districts, and the historic district approach will better document their shared history and significance. The smaller Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District would be the more straightforward historic district nomination of the two potential districts. This area exhibits high integrity and strong association with the significance of the Sherman Nursery Company under Criterion A. It would also likely be nominated under Criterion B for significance associated with E.M. Sherman. A narrative description of the district and statement of significance for the district will still need to be developed for this nomination. This nomination will utilize the historic context developed through this project, with additional architectural context developed as appropriate if the historic district is also nominated under Criterion C. The historic context developed for the survey report may be the basis of a historic context for the nomination, but it will need to be edited and abbreviated. Historic photographs, postcards, and maps should be utilized to support the significance and the integrity of the district, as effective. Through the

work to complete this nomination, the boundary may be revised, as needed. Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places through a historic district would not also need to be individually nominated, as they enjoy the full benefits of listing as contributing buildings in a district.

Alternatively, the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission might pursue nomination of the larger Sherman Nursery Company Historic District (approximately 270 acres), if additional work is completed. This approach would require additional documentation and evaluation during the nomination development process. Guidelines for documenting, evaluating, and registering historic rural landscapes and cultural landscapes would need to be applied to the nursery property in Section 11, as well as Section 12. It is recommended that an expert in horticultural and/or historic landscape architecture be utilized for part of this additional documentation and assessment. A person qualified in historic archeology may also be a good addition to a team to assess the larger property and potential contributing sites. A second survey phase may be pursued prior to the potential National Register of Historic Places nomination project to further document and evaluate key features, resources, and sites throughout the full Sherman Nursery Company property in Section 11 and 12. The entire property has a strong association with the significance of the Sherman Nursery Company with land use patterns intact throughout the area, despite construction of later buildings that continue these patterns. Historic aerial photographs, maps, and historic photographs would support this evaluation. The non-historic buildings would need to be addressed as related to the integrity of the property within the nomination.

If it is the desire to nominate the larger property associated with the Sherman Nursery Company, it is recommended that this approach for the Sherman Nursery Company Historic District with the additional work be pursued. If this work reveals that a nomination would not likely be successful for the entire property, the project could easily then be scaled back to only include the resources associated with the smaller Sherman Nursery Company Office Historic District. Alternatively, this smaller area could be nominated initially, with the thought that the larger area may be further documented, researched, and evaluated at a later date with a second National Register of Historic Places nomination that would supersede the smaller district nomination.

For either approach, the level of significance for Sherman Nursery Company should be further considered and researched during the nomination process. The company easily achieves the local level of significance for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The research conducted for this survey may be sufficient to support a statewide level of significance as well. Additional research on other historic nursery properties in Iowa, particularly those identified in *Section IV: Identification and Evaluation Methods*, would support this case. This research should aim to identify other extant buildings historically associated with nurseries in Iowa, as well as integrity of larger nursery holdings. It is suspected that the evolution within physical facilities of the larger Sherman Nursery Company property in the last 50 years would be characteristic of other nurseries in Iowa and that Sherman may retain greater integrity than other properties. Finally, the history of the Sherman Nursery Company as a leader in the field of evergreens from 1884 through 1947, as well as potentially in roses, may rise to the level of national significance for all or a portion of the property. The level and type of research required for this assessment was limited through the scope of this project, and the role and significance of Sherman Nursery Company may be further assessed on a national scale through future research prior to or during the nomination process. The evolution of the company under Richard J.

Cashman through the early 1960s may also be considered at a national level if this type of research is pursued through a future project.

While the evolution, development, and growth of the Sherman Nursery Company under Richard J. Cashman and Dale Siems from 1947 to 2007 primarily falls outside the 50-year cutoff for National Register standards, further research could be pursued to establish if exceptional significance may occur for this more recent history, if this history is desired to be included as significant within a National Register of Historic Places nomination. This evaluation would utilize the guidelines from the National Park Service on evaluating and nominating properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. Extensive work would need to be conducted on the nursery industry across the county through this period, as well as the relationship and significance of Sherman Nursery Company within the history of the industry. If exceptional significance were to be pursued and determined, the later buildings would then be counted as contributing within the period of significance for the property.

When considering future historic preservation projects in Charles City, it is also recommended that the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission review the recommendations of the 1996 *Planning for Preservation* study. An intensive level survey project was recommended for the area west of North Main Street at this time. Additionally, the Central Park-North Main (downtown) Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. As the 50 year period for historic significance has shifted from 1926 to 1961 since this survey and nomination, it is recommended that a survey of the downtown area be undertaken to reevaluate this area. It may be appropriate to extend the existing historic district boundary or create a new historic commercial district with a larger boundary. Likewise, the construction and development following the 1968 tornado will achieve the 50 year mark within the next 10 years, and it may be appropriate to begin to consider survey and evaluation of these areas.

Finally, it is recommended that the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission continue to pursue funding to complete these nomination and survey projects for Charles City. There is local interest in the significance of the Sherman Nursery Company and history of Charles City, as well as interest in redeveloping a number of historic buildings. The Charles City Historic Preservation Commission has had success applying for Certified Local Government (CLG) grants, and these grants should be pursued for future projects, particularly survey projects. These grants are typically due in August, with projects starting in the following April. Additionally, Historic Resource Development Program (HRDP) grants provide funds for survey and nomination projects, as well as building rehabilitation. These grants work well for larger survey projects that require a longer timeframe as well as nomination projects that have a minimal volunteer component. These grants are typically due in May, with projects starting in July. These state grants are the most logical source to pursue for funding for the nomination and survey projects, in conjunction with any local sources that may provide funds.