

The Historical House at 1470 West Tienken Rd.

**Compiled by
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**Distribution:
Harold and Shirley Kiebusch
Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission
Rochester Hills Museum at VanHoosen Farm**

THE HISTORICAL HOUSE AT 1470 WEST TIENKEN RD.

The present property (at one time part of Premier Farms, then later Fairview Farms; now surrounded by Fairview and Rochester Farms subdivisions) was purchased from the state of Michigan in 1837 at a cost of about \$2/acre. That was an 40 acre parcel. That parcel was bought and sold ten times between 1837 and 1865. An 1847 map of the township (Avon) shows the parcel enlarged to 120 acres with a building on the property in the approximate place where the present house now stands. The property was bought and sold another six times from 1882 to 1936 when it was purchased by William D. McCullough (1886-1940) of Detroit and added to by him, for a total of about 320 acres.

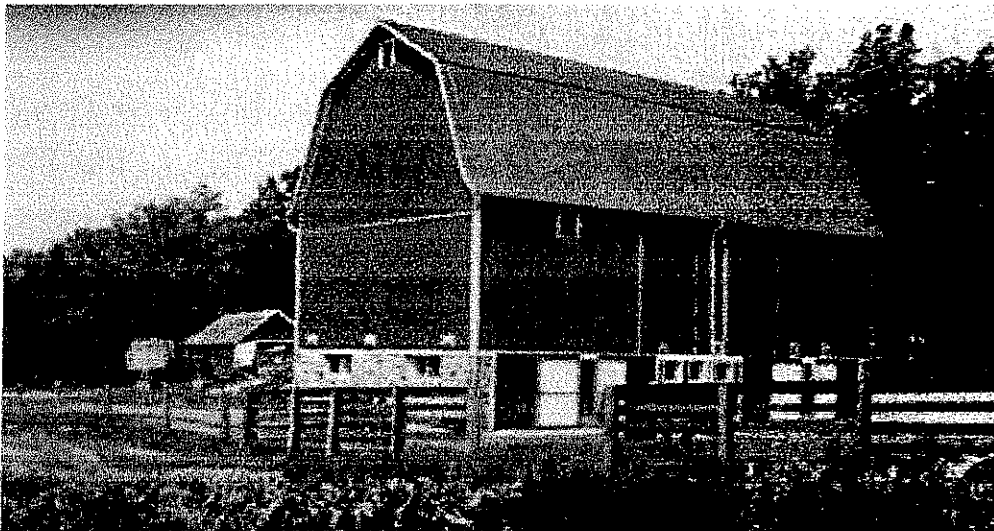
Mr. McCullough was the owner of Premier Cushion Spring Company in Detroit, a company that made parts for the auto industry. He and his family (wife Grace, adopted children, John (Jack) and Virginia) lived on Boston Blvd in Detroit.. He was part of a movement popular at the time in which wealthy Detroiters bought property around Rochester for a country week-end get-away that was also income-producing (cf, John Dodge, Alfred and Matilda Wilson, Charles Fisher, Crowley, Kern, and other Detroit industrialsts of note). He purchased for himself and his family the farmhouse at 1750 W. Tienken, where he kept a stable of jumping horses. (The barn that housed his "jumpers" was torn down in 1976.) He then hired John Kiekbusch, a local farmer, to run a dairy farm, and he put up the Kiekbusch family (and two hired hands) in the house at 1470 W. Tienken.



Farmer Kiekbusch of Premier Farms in his cornfield, 1947.

William McCullough died in the early 1940's, and his son, Jack, took over . William's widow continued to live in or use the house at 1750, and Jack and his new wife moved to a log cabin and swimming pool built earlier by his father as a recreational facility at what is now 1300 Grandview. The log cabin is still standing.

In 1958 John Kiekbusch retired to a brick ranch-style house on 40 acres he had purchased in 1941 at what is now 1364 W. Tienken, just east of the farm. And Jack McCullough hired John's son, Harold, and his young family to take over the running of the dairy farm.



The dairy barn. 1938

The farm was productive and prosperous. A herd of 50 Guernseys gave milk that was sold to Great Oaks Dairy, near the present location of Crittenton Hospital, and owned by Howard MacGregor of Rochester. The herd took many awards at the state fair and at local exhibitions. Chickens were raised (brooder and henhouse), a few horses kept, and crops were raised for the livestock: corn, oats, hay, and a large vegetable garden behind the present garage. Outbuildings included a large, modern cow barn with silo, a large steer barn, a horse barn, corn crib, the brooder and hen house.



1949. Looking North

In June of 1949 the cow barn burned to the ground from a spark thrown by the threshing machine into the hay loft. The barn was completely rebuilt a year later in glazed brick by Frank Rewold, a local contractor.



1950. Looking South toward the house and garage.

By 1965 Jack McCullough had run out of money (and maybe energy), and the farm was sold to a group of GM executives. The focus of the farm was changed from dairy to cattle (beef and veal) and the name was changed to Fairview Farms. The new group of owners bought up another surrounding 320 acres with the purpose of building a golf course. Six years later (1972) the land was acquired by Pulte Homes of Michigan to be made into a subdivision of large tract homes.

Three generations of Kiekbuschs had lived in the house at 1470 W. Tienken from 1936 until 1972. The superintendent of construction for Pulte Homes lived in the house for the next three years, until Pulte Homes sold off the house, garage and brooder with an acre and a half in 1975 to Edward Rice, a psychologist, working at Oakland University, and his family. At the time of this writing (2001) the Rice family still lives in the house.

The year the house at 1470 W. Tienken was built is, so far, speculative. An 1847 map of Avon Twp. shows a building in the same location as the present house. And an 1896 map shows two buildings side-by-side in the same location. The City of Rochester Hills indicates the house was built in 1906, but no data are available that support this assertion.

The original house was two-storeys with gabled roof and of wood-framed, balloon construction, rectangular in shape (25'x35'), with stone foundation and two, equal-size basement rooms, separated by a stone wall. The framing is of unplanned 2"x4" studs and unplanned 2"x 8" basement joices. The roof is of cedar shingles. Renovation in 1998 revealed that river stone was laid in a trench about 3' wide and 2' deep below the level of the basement floor. The floor is about 4' below ground level, and the basement ceiling rises about 2 1/2' above ground level. Two double-paned hinged windows were in each room at ground level. The visible stone in the foundation is mortared, partially-faced boulders. The siding of the house is clapboard. Floorboards in both the first- and second-floor are of planed 5"-wide fir. First-floor ceilings are 8' high. Second-floor ceilings are 7' high. Interior ceilings and walls are plaster-lathe. Each storey had four rooms: two rooms were about 15'x15' and two more rooms were about 10'x 15'. A chimney flue rises through the house from basement to roof - chimney, but no fireplace. Probably a wood- or coal-burning stove was used for heating (more on this later). A pediment-shaped lintel decoration surmounts the window and door openings. The windows are double-hung, "two-over-two".



1938

By 1916 a 10'-wide, 15'-long, one-storey addition had been added to the back of the house, containing a sink and pump which was connected to a cistern located just outside the east side of the house. The side porch was probably added at this time. This addition may have been during the Hollister tenure (1915-1930). During this time this was a farm of probably 120 acres, with dairy cows. In 1992 one of the Hollister children (Kenneth), now well into his 80's, came to visit, and he reported some of his recollections, chief of which was his memory of dressing in the (now) dining room around a wood-burning stove and keeping the (now) living room closed off to conserve heat. He recalled also that the house was without electricity while he lived here. By 1938 a front porch had appeared.



1968

In 1950 John Kiekbusch added a pantry and downstairs bath to the rear of the house. The present owners altered the front porch from a wood into a brick floor, installed the brick patio by the side porch, and made major electrical and plumbing upgrades. In 1987 a second storey bedroom was added over the pantry and downstairs bath. In 1995 a 10'x15' office/ library was added to the northeast corner (back) of the house. and in 1998 a 15'x15' sunroom and wraparound porch was added to the northwest corner of the house, with an 8'-high basement underneath. The last three additions were done by Eric Ketelsen, the primary contractor during the Rice tenure. A forsythia hedge was planted in 1975 and numbers 138 separate plants. At that time the yard consisted of a patch of lawn on the west side of the house from the garage to the birch tree, and from the birch south to the road . . . the rest was pasture, and, to the east of the house, a copse of pin oaks.

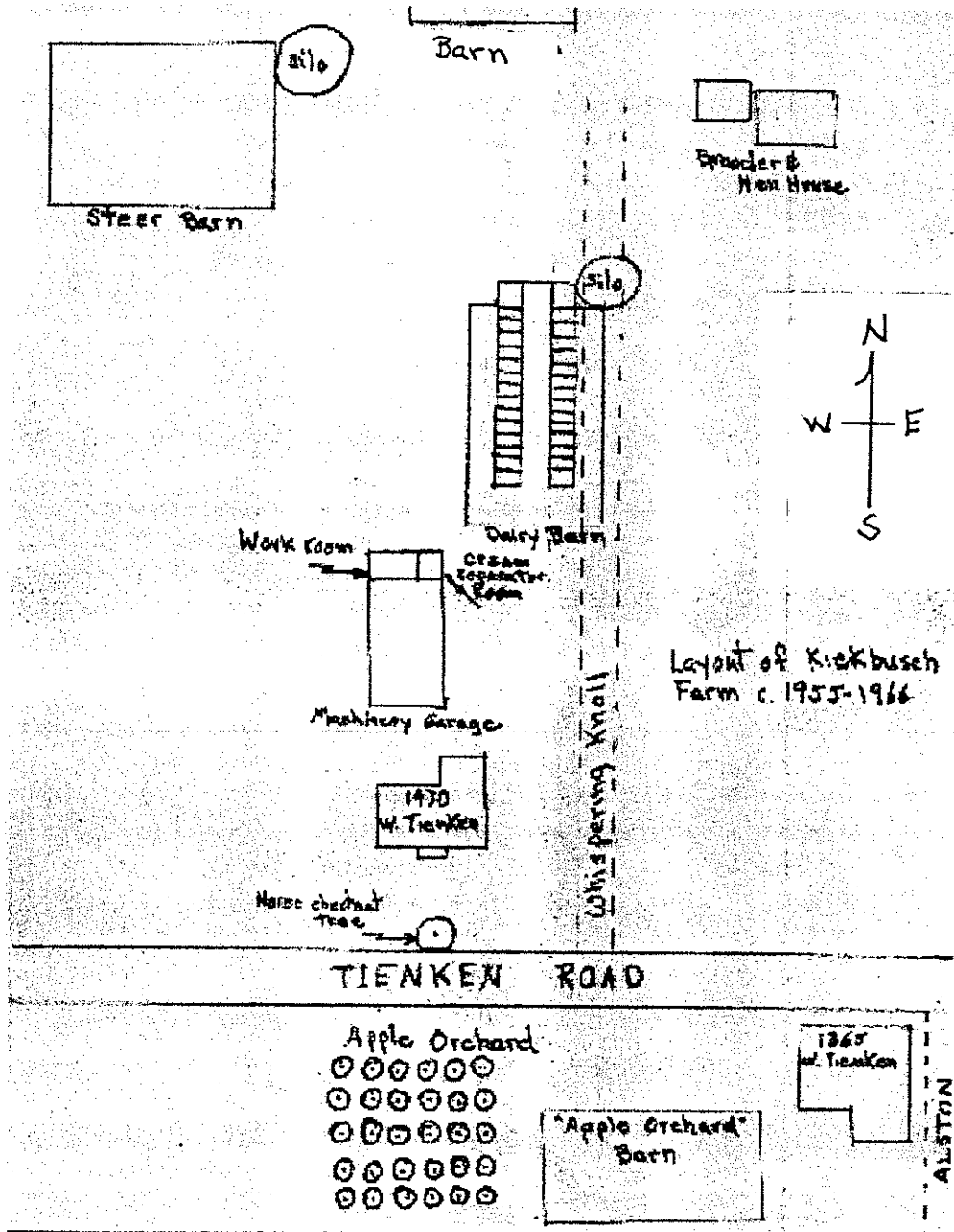


1999

During the early years of the Kiekbusch tenure (1936-40) the Kiekbusch family shared the house with two hired hands. One slept in the northeast bedroom, the other in the room off the living room. Later, Harold's wife, Shirley, sold eggs, leaving orders for customers in the back hall cupboards, with their names on the bags.

Kitty-corner across Tienken Road at 1365 W. Tienken lived the Keenas from 1955-1966, another wood-framed farmhouse on 40 acres with a riding ring and a large wooden "apple

orchard" barn. Their daughter, Virginia, recalled playing with the Kiekbusch children, sliding down the cellar door when young and tobogganing down Tienken Rd across the railroad tracks when older. Her recollections corroborate much of the above description of the Kiekbusch farm at that time.



The garage, in existence by 1936, is of wood construction, 30' x 60', of planed true 2"x4" studs, with exposed rafters and clapboard siding. The foundation is poured concrete. The garage is one storey, with hip roof of cedar shingles. The shingles were replaced in 2000. It has 5 machinery stalls, one heated, a paneled work room, and a small cream separator room. The work room was heated by an oil-burning stove and contains a lavatory and toilet.



Young Mark Kiekbusch in front of garage. Steer Barn in background.

The farm contained two 300' wells as well as a cistern on the east side of the house. The existing well is located in the neighbor's back yard at 1016 Whispering Knoll.

The house itself is located in the East half of the Southwest quarter of Section 4 of Avon Twp., purchased from the State of Michigan in 1837 as a 40-acre parcel by J. Curtis. The property was owned by L. Matleson from 1843-1847; by J. Denel from 1847-1852; owned and farmed by Ansel and Esther Nash and their three children from 1858-1865; by Harriet Ashby from 1865-1882; by Henry H. Pennington (born in 1840 in Wyandot, Ohio, a veteran of the Civil War, who "established himself on a farm of 120 acres in Avon Township and was an active member of the community") from 1882-1915; owned and lived on in the present house by the Hollister family from 1916-1934; owned by McCullough (father, then son) from 1936-1965; owned by the G.M. group from 1965-1972; and owned and lived on in the present house by Rice from 1975-present.

Maps of Avon Township from 1847, 1872, 1896, 1906 and 1908 show a house in this location (1470 W. Tienken Rd.), as well as other houses, some still standing, some not.

The above information was taken from the following sources:

Recorder of Deeds, Oakland County Courthouse, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, MI.

Kenneth Hollister (b.1902), Living at 1470 W. Tienken from 1915-1924. Recollections given to Nancy Rice in 1992.

Virginia Keena. (b. 1952). Living at 1365 W. Tienken from 1955-1966. Recollections Given to Edward Rice in 1992.

Harold Kiekbusch; (b. 1923). Living at 1470 W. Tienken from 1936-1947 and from 1958-1972. Recollections given to Edward & Nancy Rice in 2001.

Shirley Kiekbusch. (b. 1928) Living at 1470 W. Tienken from 1958-1972. Recollections given to Edward & Nancy Rice in 2001.

Burton, C.M. *The City of Detroit, Michigan 1701-1922*. v.5 p.128.

Norton, N. "The Social Life & Problems of Rochester, Michigan as a Suburb of Detroit." Unpublished ms. 1930. p.8. Rochester Public Library, Local History Collection.

Atlas of Oakland County, Michigan. F.W. Beers & Co, publisher. Stony Creek Museum. (1847, 1872, 1896, 1906, 1908).

1860 Federal Census, Avon Township.

Portrait & Biographical Album of Oakland County, Michigan. 1891. Chicago, Chapman Bros. (p.635).

THE HOUSE AT 1470 WEST TIENKEN RD: ADDENDA

(Sidwell #: 15-04-377-035)

The house is located in the East Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 4 of Avon Twp.

DATE	OWNER	ACREAGE	VALUE/TAXES
1837 -1843	Govt entry to J. Curtis	40+40	\$320
1843 -1847	L. Matleson		
1847 -1852	J. Denel*		
1852 -1858	C. Adams		
1858 -1865	A. & E. Nash**	120	\$1400
1865 -1882	(Mrs.) H. Ashby	120	\$1520
1882 -1915	H. Pennington	120	
1915	Schoof-Hollister	160	
1916	Hollister-Sexton	160	
1916 -1934	Hollister	160	
1934 -1936	M.B. Hudson	289	
1936 -1965	W.D. McCullough	320	\$48,000
1965 -1972	T.J. Parrent, <i>et al.</i> (G.M. Group)	740	
1972 -1975	Pulte Land Devel.		
1975 - present	F.E. & N.K. Rice	1 1/2	\$3200

*Township map shows a house existing in this location

** Presumed living in the house with their three children.

RANDOM HISTORICAL NOTES ABOUT THE PEOPLE ON
THE WEST TIENKEN ROAD FARMS

(taken from Harold and Shirley Kiekbusch)

W.D. McCullough's chauffeur drove him to work in Detroit from his house at 1750 W. Tienken. He had moved his family from Detroit out to Rochester.

When Jack was in the service during WW2, he lived with his mother in the house at 1750 W. Tienken.. He married after returning from the service.

In 1965 Jack sold out to the G.M. group and moved to Bloomfield Hills. He had made several bad financial investments. He later moved to Algonac, where he died.

Jack's children: Sandy and Bill. Bill lives in Cheboygan.

The house at 1750 was rented by Roy Church after Grace McCullough left. Jack and his wife continued to live in the log cabin.

W.D. McCullough had a ranch in Arizona as well as the farm in Rochester.

Premier Spring & Cushion sold primarily to Chrysler.

The farm west of McCullough belonged to Mr.Haskell, purchasing agent for Chrysler.

The next farm west of Haskell's was Ross Orchards. Mr. Ross donated the land for Ross School at the corner of Tienken and Brewster.

Shirley Kiekbusch lived in the Henry Tienken house as a little girl.

(Howard McGregor owned both sides of Livernois and 750 acres of the Ferry Seed Farm.)