

Counterfeiting money, making cheese, selling timber, growing market vegetables...these and many other activities in what is now the Cuyahoga Valley National Park have been interpreted by the National Park Service as part of the history of the Brown-Bender Farm. A rediscovery of the importance of woodland management to the farm's economic and ecological history will help inform the Park Service management of the rural landscape in the Cuyahoga Valley.

FORESTS AND FIELDS

RECONSIDERING THE RURAL LANDSCAPE IN CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

People have practiced agriculture in Ohio's Cuyahoga Valley for thousands of years, shaping the landscape and ecology from prehistoric times through the Woodland period of aboriginal occupation to European contact. The very first English accounts of the valley noted the presence of village sites and

of cultivated fields. In 1794 the Moravian missionary John Heckwelder published a map of the mission town of Pilgerruh, established in 1786 on the site of an Ottawa village amid the forested hills and cultivated bottomland, that even included a cornfield.¹ From the beginning, humans relied on forests and fields, together, for sustenance and survival. By reexamining how land use has changed over the past two centuries, the National Park Service can better manage and interpret the Cuyahoga Valley's rural landscapes.

THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

According to the establishing legislation, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park exists to preserve and protect for public use and enjoyment the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga River valley, to maintain the open space necessary for the urban environment, and to provide for the recreational and educational needs of the visiting public. The national park was created as a thirty-three-thousand-acre national recreation

area from former industrial and agricultural lands along twenty-two miles of the Cuyahoga River between the metropolitan areas of Cleveland and Akron in 1974; the recreation area became a national park in 2000. Since then, a principal goal of the National Park Service has been to preserve and protect the park as a place apart from the urban world that surrounds it.

To meet this goal, the Park Service engaged in a long planning process and proposed several alternatives in consultation with federal and state agencies and the public, ultimately selecting the Countryside Initiative alternative. This initiative is an approach to preserving and protecting historic resources, scenic views, and open space through rural landscape management. The rural landscape would be "managed largely by issuing long-term leases to private individuals for the purpose of conducting sustainable agricultural activities and revitalizing a 'sense of place' in the Cuyahoga Valley."² The Park Service initially defined the valley's rural landscape as "lands and structures modified by humans for agricultural use."³ This definition asks us to understand the modification of

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Known as the “Jim” Brown House, the Brown-Bender House was actually built by Dan Brown.

the environment for agricultural uses relative to a host of historical forces, from drought and floods to external markets to the servicing of bank debts. It also places humans in the central role of shaping the environment in the service of agricultural production, fundamentally an economic as well as ecological act.

The conception of the farm program in the Countryside Initiative assumes that “agriculture was the dominant and very prosperous way of life” in the valley.⁴ Unfortunately, over time, the definition of rural landscape began to change from the site of productive labor to a more passive construct: “a large area of land with relatively few structures.” This definition reflects the separation of woodland from field in our collective understanding of what a rural landscape should be,⁵ deemphasizes the forest component of the region’s agriculture, and misrepresents the historical practices of successful farming in the valley.

Indeed, the explicit intent of the Park Service’s rural landscape management was to preserve agricultural activity “or the appearance thereof” in the public space of the park.⁶ The candid emphasis on the visual character of the program was well intended, but it bifurcates farms into field and forest and represents the rural landscape as something separate and apart from the associated woodlands. The maintenance of open space was intended to convey the scenic values of the national park as well as retain the fields for future agricultural uses. Yet scenic values, a subjective category, do not necessarily relate to or convey the historical significance of the valley’s agriculture. Over time, this produced a rural landscape that was not truly representative of all, or even most, of the lands modified by humans for agricultural use in the valley.

The story of the historical ecology of the Brown-Bender Farm—the best representative of the events, people, and archi-

ture of all the historic agricultural properties in Cuyahoga Valley National Park—demonstrates the centrality of the woodlands to the successful practice of agriculture during the period of agriculture’s dominance in the valley. Building on the groundbreaking work by historian John Henris on farmers, woodlands, and conservation consciousness, I show how the Brown-Bender Farm relied on forest as much as field. Integrated management was no novelty but was in fact fundamental to the successful practice of nineteenth-century agriculture in the Cuyahoga Valley.⁷

THE BROWN-BENDER FARM

The Brown-Bender Farm is one of the most significant and intact historic properties in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. At its center are a large Greek Revival Georgian-style house, constructed in 1845 and representative of the canal-era wealth of the valley, and a barn, erected 40 years later. The 1845–1885 era was the period of agriculture’s economic and ecological dependence on the forest. The extant farm—a greenhouse, orchard, and mere 35 acres of the once 308-acre property—distances the woodland from the farm’s ecology and illustrates how farms, and the perception of farms, contracted between 1885 and the 1930s.

That the Park Service’s property boundary includes the associated fields but excludes much of the associated woodland—replete with haul roads, small quarries, and logging platforms—indicates the visual bias in cultural landscape assessment and the misunderstanding of the central role of woodland management to the economic well-being of the agricultural properties in the park. In fact, far from being peripheral to interpretation of the farm, the story of the woodland reflects how the economic processes affected agriculture during periods of relative

permanence and growth and during times of transience and contraction. Regardless of the economic cycle, woodlands were always crucial to farm economy.

Like other sequentially occupied farms in the valley, this property underwent intensive use extending back for millennia. People occupied the area long before Euro-American settlement or the establishment of the Connecticut Land Company survey. A Prehistoric village was located on the geological terrace where the Brown farmhouse and barn stand today, and a Late Prehistoric farming hamlet or similar site type was located below and south of the barn, west of the road—both testament to the advantages of the riverside site.⁸ However, by the time of survey and Anglo settlement, the area was unoccupied by historic-era aboriginals.

Three years after John Heckwelder published his map, Northampton Township was surveyed in 1797 and then resurveyed into quarter-section lots for its sale.⁹ Although the first effective Euro-American settlement of what was surveyed as Northampton Township coincided with a resurvey in 1802, permanent settlement throughout the township lagged until after the War of 1812, and a settlement nucleation did not emerge in the area until the late 1820s.¹⁰ The woodlands then were native and varied, the slopes and aspects of the valley ravines creating an array of habitats dominated by the beech-maple complex of the uplands—a resource for eastern investors in what was then Connecticut’s Western Reserve on the Ohio frontier.¹¹

Jim Brown, one of Cuyahoga Valley’s most infamous early residents, was in some ways typical of the settlers. Coming from Livingston County in upstate New York, Brown’s family followed the stream of migration into the Western Reserve when he was a child, fleeing the already apparent ecological limits of the settled areas. In adulthood, Brown emerged as a skilled businessman, property owner, and tavern keeper in the nearby Boston, Ohio, area. However, Brown was also a notorious counterfeiter, fraudulently securing the plates for the currency issued by the old Bank of the United States.¹² Brown and his confederates considered themselves *de facto* bankers in an era of no federal banking system, frequent economic recession, and financial uncertainty. Printing and circulating counterfeit money gave the local economy a measure of stability and ensured credit for area firms. Brown was repeatedly arrested, tried, and acquitted while retaining the admiration of his neighbors and business associates as a source of stability in a time of sustained financial uncertainty; so high was their admiration that three times they elected him justice of the peace.¹³

FARMS FROM FORESTS

Jim’s son Dan Brown followed his father into the financial sector, establishing counterfeiting or laundering operations in the cities along the Ohio & Erie Canal trade network, which included New York, Detroit, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and extending from the port of New Orleans to California. The Ohio & Erie Canal ran the length of the Cuyahoga Valley, an extension of the river’s hydrologic system and an agent for landscape change along its course. Dan Brown acquired the wooded tract on the east side of the Cuyahoga River from the estate of John Wells, a Massachusetts investor.¹⁴ However, Wells died on October 13, 1834, before the contract could be fulfilled, and the contract passed through several hands until acquired by N. C. Baldwin, a merchant and future land developer, who afterward conveyed the contract to Dan Brown, although the cost of the contract is unknown.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

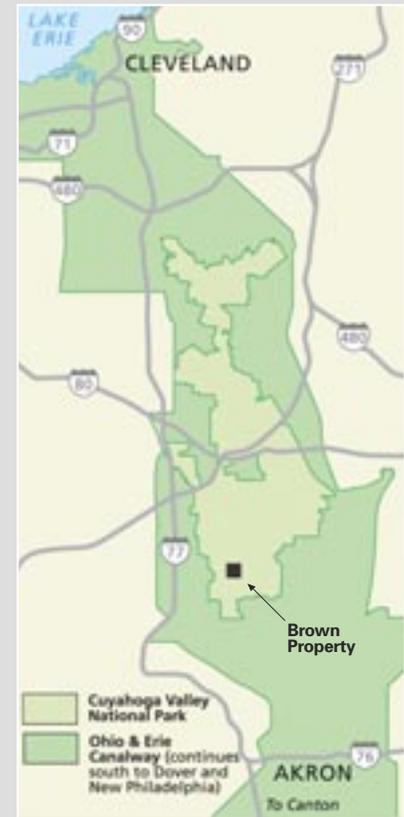
A relic haul road connecting the barnyard to the wooded uplands is still visible.

This illustrates how a formerly abstract commodity—the rights to wooded land in the Western Reserve—circulated and then was materialized as the Brown Farm.

The canal era (1827–1875), the period of the canal’s consequential economic life, engendered a particular type and scale of development oriented to the place and connectivity of the canal. The relationship between Baldwin and Brown may explain the prosperity of the farm in its first decades and point to the relative legitimacy of the Browns’ “wholesale” counterfeiting operations during the long bank crisis of the 1830s and 1840s. Baldwin had emigrated to the Cuyahoga Valley as a teenager and would later go into business first as a merchant and then in the produce commission business. This enterprise grew to include shipping, which combined the produce commission work with a network of packet boats that drew commodities from all along the Ohio & Erie to its warehouses in Cleveland.¹⁵ Brown, in spite of his reputation, acquired from Baldwin the contract for the heavily



Cuyahoga Valley National Park lies within the Ohio and Erie Canalway



The 1874 Summit County atlas (left) shows the James R. Brown property (#83). The house's location is marked by the square just north of the intersection of present-day Ira Road and Akron Peninsula Road. Today the property sits in the southern end of the national park.

wooded, perfectly situated farm tract overlooking the canal, two locks, and two mills—an articulation point for the conversion of produce and timber into tradable commodities.

On October 2, 1845, the sale of 283 acres for the final payment of \$670 was completed and Dan Brown became owner of the lot free and clear.¹⁶ Brown had just married and presumably built the large, elegant, classically inspired mansion as the seat of his new family. The two-story braced-frame house features a five-bay façade with tripartite bilateral symmetry, and it rests on a raised sandstone foundation overlooking the Cuyahoga Valley, visible from the locks and mills along the Ohio & Erie Canal.

The structure illustrates the Georgian ideals of rationality and order, and its classical details, including corner boards, a continuous frieze, pedimented cornice returns, and a central entrance with a three-part entablature, all convey a distinctly high-style taste, rare in this part of the Western Reserve, fashioned from local wood. The farm's location on a high, forested terrace above the Cuyahoga River and its bottomland gave its early owners a particular advantage in a township known for shallow soils and difficult terrain.¹⁷

For many years, landowner Dan Brown was a fugitive traveling under the alias "Dan West" throughout the Midwest via the lake steamers, warehouses, and packet boats owned by merchants like Baldwin, and later to California with the Gold Rush, always a step ahead of the law and vigilantes.¹⁸ Yet the new farm was well managed in his absence. The 1850 census shows 30-year-old Dan Brown as the owner of the well-situated property that was then

worth \$4,000, but does not give a sense of his actual business or his plight.¹⁹ Ailing from scurvy and fatigue, the fugitive returned to the Northampton farm to settle his affairs. On December 27, 1850, Dan Brown and his wife, Minerva A. Brown, sold the 197 acres in Lot 83 and the 101 acres in north part of lot 74 to his brother, J. R. Brown, for \$3,000 in "good and lawful money of the United States," a line undoubtedly written in the record book with a sense of irony.²⁰

PERMANENCE

Both Jim Brown and son Dan were incarcerated, on the run, or in some form of legal trouble and were away from the area from 1846 to 1850, and in their absence the farm was skillfully managed by Jim's wife, Lucy Mather Brown, and their son, J. R. Brown.²¹ In 1850, the farm was a productive, mixed agricultural operation (livestock, corn, oats, and potatoes) with 100 acres "improved" and the other 198 acres left as valuable woodland.²² That year, the farm produced sixteen hundred bushels of Indian corn, its principal product—more than ten times the township average. The farm at that time also kept livestock valued at nearly twice the township average, including three horses, five milk cows, fourteen other head of cattle, and twelve swine.

On January 21, 1851, Dan Brown died, and that year his mother, Lucy Mather Brown, divorced Jim Brown. After his divorce and Dan's death, Jim Brown left the area, never to see his family again. Twenty-eight-year-old son J. R. Brown worked hard to restore

the family's reputation following his father's and brother's misdeeds by running a successful farming operation with an ethic of permanence and conservation. The farm was established just as the nation's farmers began to embrace mechanization—both a product and a driver of the canal-oriented economy of the valley.

The J. R. Brown farm occupied 298 acres on two tracts, including some upland, the terrace on which the house and barn stand, and the lowlands along the river. The mills and canal locks on the opposite side of the river just south of the property provided an important market and service center, likely with some kind of river crossing at a dam.²³ By 1860, the 37-year-old farmer was in the prime of his life. His real estate was worth \$7,730, well above the value of his neighbor's holdings and complementing his more modest declared personal estate of \$900.²⁴ Brown then lived in the elegant house with his wife, Louisa, four minor children, two tenants (a cooper and a laborer), and a domestic servant.

The Browns continued to improve their land and transform the landscape to accommodate changes in agricultural technologies and markets, the transfer of cheese production from upstate New York being one of the principal trends. Like other Cuyahoga Valley farmers, Brown also drew conservatively from his woodland not only to supply on-farm needs but also to raise and hold capital, serve as woodland pasture, and supply material for small-scale commodity production linked to the agricultural economy, such as cooperage and broom making. In the phrase of environmental historian Steven Stoll, "thinking farmers" like J. R. Brown carefully managed the woodlands as part of their farm operations.²⁵

Above all, like other progressive farmers, Brown was focused on permanence, managing the woodland and fields through rotation and manuring. Specifically, Brown had created an interlocking ecological relationship from his fields, woods, and work yards.²⁶ Yet the decision making involved more than mere dollars and cents; "permanence of society, landscape, home was the paramount value of improvement."²⁷ This is in contrast to the skim-and-scratch ethic of casual cultivators who, having exhausted the soil and denuded their woodlands, left for new lands to the west. As Stoll notes, "maintaining the fertility of the soils and a balance between plow land and woodland served a particular conception of society that would last as long as thinking farmers were alive."²⁸ The ecological balance took on new meaning in the production of a valuable and transportable commodity: cheese.

The transfer of agricultural knowledge from upstate New York and New England into the climatically similar Western Reserve had occurred from the time of first settlement. This practice, soon combined with access to northern and southern markets via the Ohio & Erie and Erie canals, encouraged the establishment of a farm-dairy cheese manufacture in Northampton Township that mirrored larger trends in what became known as Cheesedom.²⁹ At midcentury, Ohio was rivaled only by New York in cheese production on a farm scale. Soon the ongoing transportation revolution and technical innovation gave rise to a new system of production that took hold in the area, engendering new land uses and subsequently new ecologies.³⁰ The cheese factories, as centers of both production and trade, grew slowly during the 1850s and then, spurred by the success of early operations and a change in taste, proliferated rapidly, especially in the eastern portion of the Western Reserve.³¹ Northampton Township was an epicenter of this transformation.

As recorded in the 1870 census, James R. Brown was a forty-eight-year-old farmer with \$10,000 in real estate and a personal

estate worth \$3,700, living at the farm with Louisa, two adult sons, and four minor children.³² The rise in the farm's value is in part attributed to the continued improvements by the Browns, who by then had converted 205 acres of the then 308-acre farm, including much of the upland, to cropland or pasturage through clearing, ditching, and draining. The woodland, dramatically reduced to 100 acres over the past decade, was heavily used for seasonal lumbering, an essential complement of the overall operation. Much of the actual work of creating and maintaining the ecological mix through logging, clearing, and manuring was done by hired labor, shaping a landscape of permanence amid a lifestyle of transience in the labor-rich region.

Many farmers of this period had small sawmills to process the timber cut from woods during the winter months. Another pressure on the woods was intensive woodland grazing, a direct result of the changes in the region's agriculture.³³ Woodland grazing persisted as a practice in the valley well into the modern era, damaging the forest understory and injuring or killing trees. Over time, with the rise of the factory cheese system, the imperative of the market forced the conversion of these diminishing woodlands to pasturage: the "grass culture" of modern Western Reserve husbandry.³⁴

FIELDS FROM FORESTS

The 1870 census data show that James R. Brown shifted his emphasis to dairying and cheese production in addition to some corn and staple crops, investing in more milk cows (eighteen) and producing 4,800 pounds of cheese. This follows the trend for the township, which produced 120,000 pounds of cheese that year,³⁵ but the Brown farm was a leader in cheese production, far exceeding the 287.7-pound average for other township farms. Brown's priorities are reflected in his use of the land. The 1874 county atlas shows that the farm had by then grown to 308 acres, including a small parcel along the river near what was the site of the mill and a proposed railroad crossing,³⁶ and indicates that as he prospered, the woodland continued to contract.

Valley farmers invested in lumbering equipment, such as portable sawmills, in part to clear uplands for supplemental income, but often to fund an upgrade to their dairy operations—specifically the factory cheese system.³⁷ Local farmers reported that the "Browns have also kept up a steam sawmill on their farm for years, which has contributed largely to the convenience of the lumber business."³⁸ Farmers logged their own land, processed timber from neighboring farms, or were paid by contractors who harvested the timber on contract; the income often funded farmers' westward migration or investment in new agricultural technologies at home.

Increasingly, the scale of the cutting was antithetical to the tradition of integrated management of forest and field as practiced by "improving farmers" who sought to stay in place.³⁹ Although farm publications championed integrated management through advocacy of regular cutting, careful stewardship, and productive use of forest commodities, even the most forward-thinking farmer had to adjust to the demands of the market. According to Henris, there was real anxiety among Ohio's permanent farmers about the loss of woodlands, but even the most conservation-oriented farmer would be enticed by the economic opportunity afforded by the emerging regional timber economy.⁴⁰ Many of the park's remaining landmark barns represent both the profit and the product of these enterprises during this era.



Above, at three stories tall, the Brown-Bender barn design was unusual for the Cuyahoga Valley area.

Right, the truss system on the barn's second floor was built to support and store a steam engine and other apparatus.



Like many permanent farmers, Brown reinvested in his farm by building a large and elaborate bank barn just as the nearby Valley Railway became operational. His three-story, raised-basement barn features vertical siding and a low-pitched side-gable slate roof pierced with two cupolas. Built from the farm's large, old-growth hardwoods, its unconventional structural system makes it an architectural and technological marvel.⁴¹ Based on its size, form, and unusual three-story design, the Brown barn appears to have been built as a model feeding-barn designed to support manuring and to maintain the soil produc-

tivity of the farm. Most barns of this era have two floors, with a stable on the bottom; the upper floor is where equipment was housed and grain threshed. The massive truss system used by Brown allowed for a middle floor where the family stored the steam engine used for a variety of farm work, from sawmilling to cutting and feeding the silage into the silo.⁴² The uppermost floor was used to store tons of hay and grain, and there were two grain chutes used to deliver feed past the middle floor to the basement stable in a vermin-proof channel.

This state-of-the-art barn was completed just as agriculture in

the valley was again changing: the principal farm commodities of butter and cheese began giving way to general farming, putting new pressure on farmers' woodlands. The pace of on-farm deforestation quickened throughout the dairy region because of the dynamic nature of both industry and agriculture.⁴³ This ecological transformation undercut the ethic of permanence and subverted the ecologies needed to sustain commercial agriculture in the valley.

The Browns' barn had been built into a steep hillside above an intermittent watercourse that drains a small hollow. At some point the drainage was dammed and water was piped, perhaps to remedy the notoriously unsanitary conditions associated with nineteenth-century dairying. Despite this attention to the management of water, when the barn was completed, a pile of excavated earth left by the stone foundation on the west side retained stormwater, flooding the basement. During a severe storm in 1889, Brown dug a drainage trench and apparently as a consequence fell ill that evening. His death, soon after from pneumonia, proved to be an event of great consequence for the farm and the health of what remained of the woodland.⁴⁴

Not long after Brown's death, local historian Samuel Lane wrote, "James R. Brown Esq. was a thoroughly upright, intelligent and courteous gentleman [who] lived upon his large and well cultivated estate," successfully reclaiming the family name through his successful growth of this farm.⁴⁵ Eventually, his youngest son, William A. Brown, and wife, Cyrene, became the formal proprietors of the farm. That they were the owners of a lumber mill to the south again demonstrates the importance of the forest to the Brown family farm.⁴⁶

TRANSIENCE

The rapid urbanization of Cleveland and Akron led to an increase in demand for hardwood; the "timber fever" that gripped the Cuyahoga River and its tributaries during the 1880s "was representative instead of the wholesale reduction of farm woodlands throughout northeastern Ohio."⁴⁷ The pressure on farmers to exchange the foundation of their relative agricultural prosperity for cash eroded even the most committed progressives' ethic of permanence—an ethic that would not survive the valley's second generation of farmers. Economic crises were also ecological crises for the valley farmers, forcing them to make difficult decisions in evolving circumstances.⁴⁸ Economic crises engendered debt, and debt, the need to satisfy it, often through liquefying whatever assets were at the farmer's disposal, including what was left of the woodlands.

William A. Brown operated or leased the farm, managing its transition from dairying to more general mixed agriculture, and making use of its resources—timber, soil, and stone—to raise capital. The farm stayed in the Brown family until its sale in 1900.⁴⁹ William and Cyrene Brown moved to Los Angeles, typifying the cut-and-run ethic that had been anathema to thinking farmers like J. R. Brown. Soon after the turn of the century, investors capitalized on the region's new roads and railroad networks, the advantages of assembly-line production, and timber and water resources to build factories and develop large-scale industry throughout the valley.

In this new era, area farmers and landowners again diversified their economic activities, often combining farming and wage labor. Exploitation of the woodlands continued and was now combined with erosion and soil degradation, challenging farmers with ecological constraints to economic stability. The new owner,

Miner Howe, was a "commercial man," a merchant and flour miller, and the next owner, Fred Ozier, was a cigar merchant.⁵⁰ Not interested in farming, Howe and Ozier presumably reaped some return from the property through the sale of timber, by then common practice in the valley, although much of the land was already denuded.

On January 10, 1907, the Oziers sold the three-hundred-acre farm to Andrew C. and Ira Bender for \$10,000 and, like the Browns, moved to Los Angeles.⁵¹ With his sons, Andrew Bender practiced general farming on a small scale, initially with a dairy operation supplemented by livestock and staple crops. His wife Ira Bender later served as the proprietor of the farm and was listed in the 1920 census as "manager of the general farm operations" rather than as a farmer.⁵² The farm later passed to Earva Bender, one of the couple's twelve children.

As the area was reshaped by improved roadways, in-migration, and the growth of nearby cities, the Benders, like other valley farmers, shifted away from dairy and commodity crops toward fruits and vegetables, a type of agriculture much less dependent on the slowly reforesting woodlands or on-farm milling. The family began trucking their garden crops for both wholesalers and retail operations in urban markets and transformed the farm landscape by planting apple, cherry, and peach trees in the old pasture, building a greenhouse, and establishing a vineyard. In an urbanizing era, passing motorists viewed this new landscape as emblematic of rural land. The family operated a prosperous roadside farm stand fronting on the modern roadway. By 1930, many of the neighbors worked in industrial or managerial jobs—mail clerk for the railroad, tire builder at a rubber factory, truck driver for a milk company—further blurring the boundary between city and country.⁵³

FORESTS FROM FIELDS

During the Great Depression, transience replaced permanence as the dominant ethic as farmers sold out and left the valley, heading south or west in search of cheaper land, labor, or resources. The agricultural landscape of production—forest and field—began to atrophy. If maintained, houses and barns endured as landmarks in the local geography, and thus preserved the sense of place, but farm fields became further separated from their associated woodlands.

Over time, farms on more productive soils and close to the evolving road network retained much of their value. Farms on marginal soils struggled. Many were abandoned; old-field farmland then slowly reverted to woodland. Other farms were sold to wealthy urbanites as country estates. Some farmers reforested old fields as tree farms or for soil and water conservation, mirroring the large-scale reforestation efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps and local governments. It was the rare valley farmer who promoted careful restoration of the woodlot as an active part of the farm; most, like the Benders, followed the advice of agricultural extension agents and focused on truck farming and high-input field crops for urban markets.⁵⁴

The establishment of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in 1974, in part a legacy of the economic contraction and collapse, stabilized the loss of the rural landscape, and after Earva Bender passed away in 1988 at age 87, the Park Service began purchasing the remaining farm property.⁵⁵ A local landmark, the property was first recorded for the Ohio Historic Inventory in 1976. Originally, only the house and 3.5 acres were nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, and only for the prop-



The newly leased fields on the site of the 1786 cornfield. Under the Countryside Initiative, they will be developed as an orchard.

erty's architectural significance and association with the notorious counterfeiters: the exceptional management of the 305-acre farm as a whole by J. R. Brown, the thinking farmer who lived in his notorious father's and brother's shadow, received little attention.⁵⁶

To address this, in 1993, Park Service historians re-nominated the property with a boundary increase to include the barn, vineyard, orchard, greenhouse, and 35 acres of farmland for their agricultural significance.⁵⁷ The nomination chronicled the conversion of the farm from specialized to mixed agriculture to market truck farming but overlooked both its importance to the local cheese industry and the management and use of the woodland. A quarter century ago, the house and property were considered to be in "excellent" condition but have since deteriorated, suffering from deferred maintenance and vandalism. All the while, however, the wooded portion of the farm has been quietly and steadily reforesting—separate and apart from the managed rural landscape.

CONCLUSION

Considering the historical forces responsible for changes in land management helps us understand the role of woodlands in the story of Cuyahoga Valley's agriculture. The study of historical geography restores the rural farm landscape to its rightful balance: land bearing the material fruits from field and forest.

CODA

In 2017, as part of its Countryside Initiative, the Park Service leased the site of the cornfield mapped by John Heckwelder in 1786 to farmers who will develop an orchard, small livestock operation, and vegetable farm. The orchard and cropland will be based on an ethic of permanence and ecological balance that would have been very familiar to thinking farmers like J. R. Brown. Yet unlike Brown, these farmers must survive without the benefit of expansive and valuable woodlands: the lease, like the other leases in the initiative, is for the fields and specifically excludes activities in the associated woodlands, in keeping with National Park Service policy.⁵⁸ The lessees are in effect foresting a field that was cleared and cultivated at the time of European contact, an irony that should prompt reconsideration of the approach to rural landscape management. Above all, recognition of the centrality of woodlands to agriculture in the Cuyahoga Valley demonstrates the value of a critical approach to environmental stewardship, as the park and its managers struggle to protect and preserve this valley as a place apart. □

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NOTES

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26. *Ibid.*, 80.
27. *Ibid.*, 20.
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29. L. Durand, "The Migration of Cheese Manufacture in the United States," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 42 (1952): 263–82.
30. *Ibid.*, 271.
31. *Ibid.*, 272.
32. "United States Census, 1870," FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6LY-V4L,James R. Brown, Ohio>.
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34. *Ibid.*
35. K. Mulhauser, and J. Winstel, "NPS Special History Study: U.S. Census Productions of Agricultural Records 1850, 1870, and 1880" (Brecksville, OH: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 1995).
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43. Ohio State Forestry Bureau, Third Annual Report of the Ohio State Forestry Bureau, to the Governor of the State of Ohio (Columbus: State Printers, 1888).
44. National Park Service, "The Big Barn—Webb Brown," transcribed oral history, Hawkins Library (Brecksville, OH: Cuyahoga Valley National Park, n/d).
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47. Henris, "Farmers, Woodland, Conservation Consciousness."
48. Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 41.
49. Summit County Fiscal Office, Recorder Division, Summit County Deed Book 251: 510.
50. "United States Census, 1900," Cuyahoga Falls Township, West Precinct Cuyahoga Falls village, FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6L89-YV3?cc=1325221&wc=9B7D-7M8%3A1030551701%2C1031111401%2C1035988801>.
51. Summit County Fiscal Office, Recorder Division, Summit County Deed Book 350: 66.
52. "United States Census, 1920," FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RJJ-ZX2?cc=1488411&wc=QZJB-M6Y%3A1036474301%2C1038074701%2C1037013901%2C1589335482>. In the census, Ira Bender is listed as "Ida Binder."
53. "United States Census, 1930," FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9R83-QHJ?cc=1810731&wc=QZF4-7C4%3A649446001%2C648843901%2C650283601%2C1589284348>. Ira Bender is listed as "Ida Bender" and as having no occupation. Her sons, Frank, 29 years old and married, is listed as the farm operator, and Earva, age 28 and single, as a laborer on the farm.
54. J. Winstel and M. A. Campbell, "William and Eugene Cranz Farm," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Brecksville: Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 1992), Section 8-8.
55. Melissa Arnold, "Brown-Bender Farm" (Brecksville, OH: Cuyahoga Valley National Park, 2011), <https://www.nps.gov/cuva/learn/historyculture/upload/Brown-Bender-Farm.pdf>.
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57. J. Winstel, P. Cossel, and M. Campbell, "Agricultural Resources of the Cuyahoga Valley," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Brecksville, Ohio, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 1993; and J. Winstel and D. Dickerson, "Brown/Bender Farm," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Brecksville, Ohio, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 1992.
58. Cuyahoga Valley National Park, "Edgar Farm, Village of Valley View, Ohio," Countryside Initiative Program Lease No. CUVA 2016–01 (Brecksville, OH: Cuyahoga Valley National Park, 2016).