

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 06001199/06001200

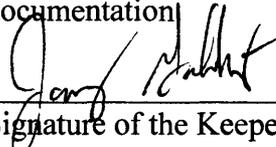
Date Listed: 2/4/09

Property Name: Whitesell, Jesse, Farm (Boundary Increase)

County: Fulton/Obion

State: KY/TN

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation



Signature of the Keeper

2/4/2009

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Applicable National Register Criteria

Criterion D is not indicated as a Criterion. Resource #21, the Brick Manufactory is mentioned as an archeological site; however, there has been no archeological evaluation of it or of the site of the former tenant house and associated tobacco barn.

The nomination is hereby amended to acknowledge the potential for archeological significance at both the Brick manufactory and at the southern portion of the historic farmstead. No additional Criteria are added at this time.

The Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED 2280
DEC 31 2008
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECEIVED 2280
21 10
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECEIVED 2280
MAY 28 2008
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in the *National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Whitesell, Jesse, Farm (name change, boundary increase)
other names/site number Whitesell, Jesse, House (FU-1)

2. Location

street & number KY 116, west of Purchase Parkway NA not for publication
city or town Fulton vicinity
Kentucky KY Fulton 075 42041
state Tennessee code TN county Obion code 131 zip code 38257

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
David L. Morgan Signature of certifying official/Title David L. Morgan, SHPO Date 11-2-06
Kentucky Heritage Council State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (x See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register.
 other,
(explain:)

Signature of Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 2/04/2009

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

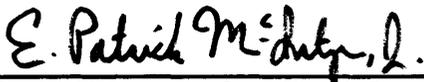
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 1

Whitesell, Jesse Farm (boundary increase, additional documentation, name change) Fulton County KY and Obion County TN

State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination does not meet the National Register criteria. The portion of the property located south of State Line Road should not be included in the National Register.



E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr., State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

Date

The nomination for the Jesse Whitesell Farm contains a good context and good justification for the importance of the farmstead as a representative example of a prosperous farmer in western Kentucky. Our disagreement with the nomination is with the boundary and assessment of integrity of the portion that is in Tennessee. The SHPO's comments of October 10, 2006 are still valid. We concur that there have been no substantive changes to the nomination and agree that it does not need to go back to the Tennessee State Review Board. Additional comments are below. My staff made another site visit before finalizing the current SHPO comments.

Minor point: Section 7, page 8. Brick manufactory. This page suggests that the site is significant under criterion D but only A is checked on the form. It would be appropriate to put a statement that the brick site may be an archaeological site if it is investigated but that there have been no archaeological investigations yet.

Section 7, page 8. There is a statement that a recent survey of farms in Obion County TN and Fulton County KY shows that many have lost integrity. We do not dispute that, but question what it has to do with the *historic* integrity of the entire farm. We feel that the part of the Whitesell farm that is south of State Line Road, has lost integrity and does not contribute to the sense of time and place of the farmstead. Integrity of materials, setting, feeling, and association are lost due to the new owner house being built here. As stated in 2006, if the entire farmstead was in Tennessee, we would not include the portion with the new house.

Section 7, page 9. The nomination states that "The present function of the 1970s house and garage, along with the moved-in tenant house, maintain the historic residential use the farm had in this location. Without the Tennessee farmyard and the intact surrounding acreage, the farm created by Jesse Whitesell and husbanded by his heirs could not be properly understood or appreciated."

We disagree that a 1970s home of the property owner on the site of a historic tenant house adds to our knowledge of the historic farmstead. A tenant farmer's use and occupation of the land is much different than that of a property owner. The current landscaped and fenced in (with a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 2

Whitesell, Jesse Farm (boundary increase, additional documentation, name change) Fulton County KY and Obion County TN

modern synthetic material fence) ranch house presents a different use and appearance than a tenant farmer's house. They are both houses but one shows proprietorship of a family owned farm where a tenant farmer is just a temporary user of the owner's property.

Section 8, page 1. "The farm is a rare surviving example of a mid-to-late-nineteenth-century Jackson Purchase homestead created by a 'middling' income farmer." Surviving does equal eligibility. A property still has to be a good example of a historical event or trend or an architectural style(s).

A quick look at the farms that are listed as Tennessee Century Farms shows that there are twenty-six farms in Obion County that were established from the 1830s on and historically containing roughly anywhere from 50 to 1,600 acres. Historic crops and animals included corn, wheat, cotton, tobacco, soybeans, cattle, honey, hay, chickens, timber, swine, mules, gins, horses, beans. The Jesse Whitesell Farm appears to be a typical example of a farm and does not show any significant agricultural patterns for Tennessee. The portion that is in Tennessee has lost integrity and does not merit listing in the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 1

Whitesell, Jesse, Farm (boundary increase, additional documentation, name change) Fulton County KY and Obion County TN

State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination does not meet the National Register criteria. The portion of the property located south of State Line Road should not be included in the National Register.


Herbert L. Harper, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission 10/3/06
Date

The Jesse Whitesell Farm is located in Fulton County, Kentucky and Obion County, Tennessee. The Jesse Whitesell House and two acres in Kentucky were listed in the National Register in 1977 and the current nomination expands the boundaries into Tennessee. State Line Road, a two-lane highway, separates the Tennessee portion of the farm. It contains two contributing outbuildings, two noncontributing buildings, acreage, and the Purchase Parkway (included as noncontributing). If the farmstead were entirely in Tennessee, we would not include the property south of the State Line Road in a farm nomination. Although the road itself it not a major impediment, the resources south of it do not add to the significance of the property and they do detract from the overall integrity of the property. The 1973 Hunter Whitesell House (NC) and garage (NC), 1950 shed (C), moved tenant house (NC), 1950 chicken coop (C) are physically separated from the farmstead to the north by a modern synthetic fence. This presents a very suburban appearance. They are on a separate 4.52-acre plat. Although the 42-acres around the Hunter Whitesell House are still in agricultural use, the northern portion of the farmstead has farmland that is as good or a better representation of the agricultural use of the property. In addition, 19.5 acres of former farmland is now the Purchase Parkway that separates another 14.5 acres of wooded land from the remainder of the Whitesell Farm.

The property in Tennessee lacks integrity of historic design, workmanship, materials, setting, feeling, and association. On a visit to the site my staff determined that the acreage where the Hunter Whitesell House and outbuildings are located was more suburban in character and did not fit in with the agricultural nature of the farm north of the State Line Road. The forestland to the east of the Purchase Parkway is visually and physically separated from the remainder of the acreage. The larger nomination does not present a cohesive collection of resources that represent a significant area of history as the National Register requires.

At the request of the property owner, we presented the Jesse Whitesell Farm nomination to our State Review Board on September 27, 2006. After much discussion they recommended, with two dissenting votes, to forward the nomination to the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office and ultimately to the Keeper of the National Register. Some board members believed that the land was as important or more important than the resources built on it and the entire farmstead was

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 2

Whitesell, Jesse, Farm (boundary increase, additional documentation, name change) Fulton County KY and Obion County TN

eligible for that reason. There was discussion about whether the landscape was significant or was it merely scenic. There was further discussion about deferring the nomination or "letting the feds" decide. Finally, the board discussed the issue of eligibility vs. future use of the land. Although they were reminded to judge the property based on the National Register criteria, the board noted that they had looked beyond the criteria when reviewing nominations in the past. One of the property owners attended the meeting and stated that he believes that the proposed I-69 corridor will pass through his land. Several board members felt that listing the property might delay or stop this project. A representative from the Tennessee Department of Transportation stated that the road was currently planned to stop south of the Whitesell property.¹ It is our belief that too much of the board's decision was based on the future of the property instead of its current eligibility. The SHPO decision was based on the National Register criteria of eligibility and integrity and concluded that the portion of the proposed Jesse Whitesell Farm that is south of State Line Road is not eligible for listing in the National Register.

¹ Cultural resources staff of TDOT checked on the issue of I-69 and reported to the staff on 9/29/06 that one of the property owners, Hunter Whitesell, met with people from TDOT after the review board meeting. TDOT Region 4 Right-of-Way Division knew of no reason that TDOT would be purchasing ROW from the Whitesell Farm. TDOT's project manager for the I-69 project said that a joint TDOT/KY team met a few weeks ago and nothing has been decided on an interchange at Fulton between the two states. Although plans could change, currently KY does not have this part of I-69 on their horizon plan (3, 10, and 20 years), which means there is no funding for it. TDOT's document completed in 2000 showed that I-69 would stop nearly a mile and a half south of the Whitesell Farm. However, the town of Fulton did not want to be bypassed and wanted to look at a different interchange. But currently, TDOT and KY have made no decisions and would be required to study any new interchange plan other than the ones discussed in our effects assessment. Basically, there are no decisions, no plans, and definitely no right-of-way. Mention was made of stakes in the yard. TDOT contacted the Fulton public works department and they went out to the farm and checked. There were stakes in the Whitesells' yard, but they were from the phone company. The phone company notified the owners in writing before beginning the easement acquisition process and performed a title search.

Jesse Whitesell Farm
Name of Property

Fulton Co, KY and Obion Co, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
4	0	sites
4	3	structures
1	1	objects
10	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

5

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
AGRICULTURE: processing
AGRICULTURE: animal facility
AGRICULTURE: agricultural field
AGRICULTURE: agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, storage
AGRICULTURE: storage
AGRICULTURE: animal facility
AGRICULTURE: agricultural field
AGRICULTURE: agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Italian Villa
OTHER: Agricultural buildings

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, brick piers
walls brick, weatherboard, tin, log
roof tin, asphalt
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1854-1956

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Jesse Whitesell Farm
Name of Property

Fulton Co, KY and Obion Co, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 181 acres (original listing: 2 acres)

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>329 180</u> Easting	<u>4041 950</u> Northing	Crutchfield Quad	2	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>329 800</u> Easting	<u>4041 960</u> Northing
3	<u>16</u>	<u>329 900</u>	<u>4040 700</u>	Harris Quad	4	<u>16</u>	<u>329 400</u>	<u>4040 430</u>
5	<u>16</u>	<u>329 450</u>	<u>4041 140</u>	Crutchfield Quad	6	<u>16</u>	<u>329 220</u>	<u>4041 150</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sharon Poat
organization N/A date July 2006
street & number 2629 Jefferson Street telephone (270) 442-8947
city or town Paducah state KY zip code 42001

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Whitesell Farms Inc., contact Whitesell Law Office (see continuation sheet for additional owners)
street & number P O Box 1048 telephone (270)472-1094
city or town Fulton state KY zip code 42041

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Jesse Whitesell House (FU—1) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The house was nominated as a significant architectural example of an Italian villa. The original nomination does not include a resource count. The acreage of the listed property is 2 acres, with the Verbal Boundary Description reading: “Nominated area includes several outbuildings (two smokehouses a few feet northeast of the main house, a frame storage house, and two original cisterns), house site and frontage.” This current nomination seeks to amend the original nomination in three ways: (1) The boundaries are to be increased so as to set the house within its farm context; (2) the name is to be changed from the “Jesse Whitesell House” to the “Jesse Whitesell Farm” to better describe the property included in the expanded boundaries; and (3) the areas and period of significance are to be increased to show how the development of this farm contributes to our understanding of farming and related pursuits in the far-western reaches of Kentucky and Tennessee. The resource proposed for this listing consists of 181 acres, and includes 14 contributing features and 7 non-contributing features. By type, the counted resources are made up of:

- 4 contributing buildings (3 previously listed)
- 4 contributing structures (1 previously listed)
- 4 contributing sites
- 2 contributing objects
- 5 non-contributing buildings
- 1 non-contributing structure
- 1 non-contributing object.

The Jesse Whitesell Farm sits ½ mile west of Fulton, Kentucky, on State Route 116, also known as State Line Road. The 269-acre farm sits astride the Kentucky-Tennessee boundary, with approximately 208 acres in Kentucky and 61 acres in Tennessee. The Tennessee and Kentucky acreages front each other along the eastern two-thirds of the farm; the Kentucky portion then extends further to the west. Most of the farm’s acreage is owned by Whitesell Farms Inc., a family-owned corporation formed in 1972. Each member of the fourth-generation of Whitesells, however, owns a few acres and a homesite on the farm. The total contiguous acreage today is over 250 acres.

History of the Whitesell Farm’s land acquisition

Jesse Whitesell began assembling his farm in 1854 with a purchase of 142 acres in Fulton County, Kentucky (see sketch map of farm). Within six months he purchased 80 acres lying along his parcel’s western border. Less than five years later he sold this 80-acre plot and purchased a 100-acre parcel in Weakley County, Tennessee, lying directly south of his 142-acre parcel in Kentucky. In early 1862, he added a final 13 acres along the northern border of the Fulton County parcel. The area of this farm remained unchanged for almost a hundred years.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

In 1958, a 35.4-acre parcel and, in 1964, a 13.65-acre parcel were added to the east side of the Kentucky farmland. This acreage had once been part of a farm that belonged to Jesse Whitesell's sister and brother-in-law. Its purchase made the eastern boundary of the Kentucky and Tennessee portions of the farm almost even. In 1967, a 10.6-acre tract, and in 1970, another 24 acres were annexed along the western border of the Kentucky farmland, bringing back into Whitesell ownership a portion of the 80-acre tract that Jesse Whitesell had briefly owned.

In this post-World War II period, the farm also lost some land. In 1965, 16.6 acres of woods on the southern edge of the Tennessee land was sold to a private developer, although it remains undeveloped today. A year later, 19.6 acres in Tennessee and 20.33 acres in Kentucky were condemned in connection with the building of the Jackson Purchase Parkway. In Kentucky, the land taken for the parkway lay along the boundary between the original farm and its eastern annex. Six acres of the annexed land and slightly more than 14 acres of the original farm were taken in Kentucky. In Tennessee, the 19.5 acres that were taken separated 14.5 acres of the original farm from the rest of the farm's original ground.

In 1970, after the last alterations to the farm's boundary were made, the property was surveyed, showing the original farm's area to be slightly smaller than what had traditionally been thought, i.e., 100 acres in Tennessee and 155 in Kentucky. According to this survey, 133.67 acres remained in Kentucky of the original approximately 155 acres purchased by Jesse Whitesell, all lying west of the Purchase Parkway. Almost 62 acres remain in Tennessee of the original, three-fourths of them lying west of the Purchase Parkway. This nomination includes the 133.67 acres in Kentucky and the 46.5 acres west of the parkway in Tennessee, a total of approximately 181 acres. An additional 77.4 acres of the Whitesell Farm are not included in this nomination, since they were added to the farm less than fifty years ago.

Character and Use of the Whitesell Farm Land

The 181 acres considered in this nomination are the core of Jesse Whitesell's farm. The farm's layout and land usage today is very much the same as that developed by Jesse Whitesell more than one hundred years ago: There remains a nucleus of house and farm buildings at the center of the farm where the State Line Road divides the farm. Surrounding this nucleus is a series of pastures and fields, gently rolling and subdivided by fencerows. At the periphery of the farm, are woodland acres, timbered over the years but never cleared—except for the so called "secret field," which has been maintained for more than 140 years.

The traditional perimeter of woodland shields the farm from encroaching development. The town of Fulton, whose outskirts once lay two miles to the east of the farm, now lies only one-half mile to the east. A commercial intersection exists only a few tenths of a mile beyond the farm's eastern extent. Beyond the western boundary, brick ranch style houses line the State Line Road and adjoining side road. It is urban sprawl—country style. Driving through the Whitesell Farm, though, on State Line Road, is like driving through a rural oasis—trees, fields, fences, farmyard, fences, fields, trees.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

The farm's fields are divided by traditional fencerows. The fields on the eastern portion of the farm are currently used for pasture land. Cattle graze on the Tennessee side and a flock of sheep, protected by three donkeys, live on the Kentucky side. The continued presence of livestock may account for the continued maintenance of fences that divide sections of the pasture land and even the crop land. The fences themselves are made of modern material, but follow the traditional fencerows. Most are now 6-inch by 8-inch woven wire with wood corner posts and metal t-posts. Some have a strand or two of barbed wire at the top. In her history of Weakley County, Charlotte Vaughan notes that the rising predominance of soybeans as a crop in the 1970s led to a reduction of pastureland and to the removal of intra-farm fences (p. 20). This has not happened on the Jesse Whitesell Farm, although there are crops grown in the fields at the north and west portions of the farm—corn, soybeans, wheat. In the middle of the fields on the Kentucky side of the border, there is a roughly circular patch of woods with a narrow band of trees extending from it to the farm's eastern border. This patch of trees has been allowed to grow up since the 1930s. Within it lies the remains of a brick manufactory, the manufactory where bricks for the farmhouse, the smokehouse, and the foundations of other farm buildings were made.

At the very center of the farm, surrounded by fields, lies the Whitesell Farm farmyard. On the Kentucky side of the State Line Road sits the main farmhouse, its smokehouse and outbuildings, garden, and orchard. On the Whitesell Farm, as was common, the domestic buildings and garden are clustered with barns and other farm buildings beyond, nearest the farm fields. Barns and other farm buildings lie to the northeast and east of the domestic core, and they lay also to the south across the Tennessee border.

As on the Kentucky side, the Tennessee portion of the farmyard is shaded by trees and fenced off from the surrounding fields. A large drainage swale cuts across this yard from the north east to the southwest. A large stock barn once sat on the eastern edge, and a tobacco barn sat further to the west, north of the drainage. On a rise to the south of drainage swale sat a tenant house and a pig finishing area with a low tin shed. Time, fire, and storms have led to changes in the buildings on the Tennessee portion of the farmyard.

The relationship of these farmyard pieces can be seen in the sketches entitled Figures 1 and 2.

Homesite and Farmyard Features

Contributing Features

1. House (1870-1873). Contributing Building, already listed. At the very heart of the farm, literally and figuratively, is the Italian Villa homeplace. Situated on the Kentucky side of State Route 116 is the two-story brick T-plan homeplace (A) with its three-story tower and surrounding wooden porches. The house, listed as being constructed in 1871, is thoroughly described in the original National Register nomination. In the almost thirty years since this original nomination was written, the "modern alterations" then described in the kitchen and bathroom have been further updated. However, the original room-layouts, mouldings, fixtures, and even the marbelized trim and other paintings described have been carefully preserved.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

2. Smokehouse (ca. 1873). Contributing Building, already listed (17' X 29'). The original nomination makes reference to two smokehouses and provides two photos of this building. It should be noted that there is and has been only one two-story smokehouse. This building is a brick building, constructed, as is the house, with bricks manufactured on the farm property. A parging on the bottom three feet of the building mimics a fieldstone foundation. Entry to the smokehouse is through a door at the rear west side. A small room with a small hearth chimney and room for stacking firewood is below. Narrow steep steps lead to a hanging room that occupies the whole second floor. The space is large enough to have housed a small commercial enterprise, and the family still has Jesse's original recipe, but no formal business is known to have existed. The smokehouse was used to cure pork raised and slaughtered on the farm as late as the 1950s, and is still used to cure purchased hams. Two doorways on the front south facade of the building are protected from rain by a wooden cantilevered roof at the level of the second floor flooring. The door on the left goes into a tool shed. The door on the right opens onto a set of steps that lead down into a storage cellar.

3. Uncle Ike's House (ca. 1860-1870). Contributing Building, already listed (37' x22'). Mentioned in the original nomination only as a "frame storage house" the original center part of this lap-sided, two-story building dates to about the same time of construction at the main house and smoke house. Built on piers, the small house features a small window in the east and west walls. The second floor is only accessible by ladder at the front porch and is not as well-finished as the first floor, which has a set of wide boards nailed to the studs. The second floor porch is constructed using the same cantilevered design and slope featured on the smokehouse porch roof. The name given to the structure is the one traditionally used by the Whitesell family: Uncle Ike was a former slaves who lived on the farm as a servant during the opening years of the twentieth century. The original use of the house is not known. But construction as servants' quarters would make sense. There is also some possibility that this house was the original home for Jesse and Sarah Ann Elizabeth Whitesell after their marriage in 1859 until their larger home was built. Great-grandson Hunter B. Whitesell believes that the newlyweds lived on the Tennessee side of the line in a house which would become a tenant house. But census records show the Whitesells residing in Kentucky by 1860. After Jane's death in the 1930s, garages were constructed on each side of the house. The building serves as storage space today.

4. Cisterns (ca. 1870-1873). Contributing Objects, already listed. The two cisterns are in close proximity to the house. As the original nomination says, "one in a typical lattice well house in close proximity to the rear porch and the other behind the smokehouse." Both are brick structures about 2 ½ feet in diameter and 2 feet above the ground, parged on the outside with a limestone cement mixture. One collected rainwater from the house, the other from the smokehouse. The latter is only steps from the front door of Uncle Ike's house, providing a separate water source for whomever lived there.

5. Vegetable Garden. Contributing Site (112' x 112'). On Kentucky side, east of smokehouse. This 1/6 acre plot is completely fenced with 2" x 4" woven wire set on a combination of wooden and metal posts. It lies just to the east of the smokehouse, across an access road that bisects the farmyard. It was originally defined as part of the domestic yard since it was included in the area enclosed by a pre-1900 picket fence. The actual use of this plot as a vegetable garden dates, according to Hunter Whitesell, to early in Jesse and Sarah Ann Elizabeth's tenure on the farm, probably about the time of the house's construction.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Section 7 Page 5

6. Picket Fence and Gate (pre-1900). Contributing Object. Only a gate and small section of a picket fence remain of the construction that once enclosed the farm's domestic yard. The pickets are closely-spaced 2" x 2"s, and the gate is arch-topped. This section once marked the eastern boundary of the domestic yard. This fence can be seen near the road in front of the house in a ca.1895 photo of the widowed Mrs. Whitesell and her sister printed in *Fulton County, Kentucky: A Pictorial History*. Family members who remember the slow loss of this fence during the twentieth century note that it once ran across the front yard near the road to the current yard boundaries on the east and west (now marked by wire fence), then along the fencerow and vegetable garden on the east to its back corner and then left along its northern edge. The fence then continued on the other side of the farm access road, separating what was then the chicken yard from the orchard before joining up with the fencerow along the yard's western boundary. Thus, the heart of the domestic yard was defined, with only one outbuilding--the chicken house--now missing. Just beyond the domestic yard were related agricultural buildings and features.

7. Stock and Hay Barn (ca. 1890-1900). Contributing Building (55' x 46'). East side of Kentucky farmyard. The main section of this gable-end five-bent barn has a large hay loft, a corn crib, a harness room, eight hay-manger stalls and dirt flooring. The stalls were formerly used for stabling mules and cattle, as well as farrowing sows. They currently accommodate a modest flock of sheep. The shed-roofed aisle on the left (north) side of the main aisle houses another corn crib. These two sections comprise the original barn, which has a mostly-brick foundation, with some interspersed sandstone and poured foundation on the northern side. Both aisles open on the east side directly onto a small pond and grazing area, with more pasture land beyond. The structure is constructed from oak and poplar, with square nail fasteners. Its original siding is a large horizontal lap-siding painted red. This siding has been covered with the same sheet tin that encloses the open-ended, shed-roofed machine storage area on the southern, right site of the main barn.

8. Implement Shed (1955). Contributing Structure (53' x 50'). In Kentucky, north of garden. This post and beam, open-air shed is the newest structure on the farm. It was built to house the tractors, grain trucks, and various farm machinery which became more common and necessary with the progression of the twentieth century. Support beams are telephone poles and 4" x 4" posts; the roof is tin.

9. Seed Shed (ca. 1920). Contributing Structure (31' x 27'). On north edge of Kentucky farmyard. The family name for this building comes from its earliest known use. Hunter Whitesell, grandson of Jesse who returned from WW I to run the farm, operated a seed business in the 1920s. This building is balloon framed. The southern half is semi-open side with a dirt floor. The northern half is a raised about fifteen inches off the ground with a tongue-and-groove floor. A wide-wire mesh separates the raised-floor portion from the more open portion. The raised-floor portion can be entered through a pedestrian-door in either the west or east exterior wall. The walls have vertical plank siding, though are now covered with tin. There is still a seed separator and other miscellaneous parts in the enclosed section. Pressure treated lumber has been used to replace some rotted structural members so that the building is sound.

10. Orchard. Contributing Site (100' x 100'). This small orchard in the northwest corner of the Kentucky farmyard reportedly dates to Jesse Whitesell's time. One pear tree is thought to survive from his time. The other trees, a mix of apple and pear, although newer, are still old and in need of pruning. Original rows are still discernible even where trees have died and not been replaced.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

11. Lean-to Calving Shed (ca. 1950) Contributing Structure (19' x 18'). In Tennessee farmyard. When a windstorm blew down the last of the farm's tobacco barns constructed in the mid-1800s, workers took some of the hand-hewn poplar logs and used them to construct a lean-to shed with a tin roof on the barn's original site. Further damaged by time, the remaining three tiers of logs have been sheathed with tin on the outside. Open on the south side at its tallest point except for welded wire and a gate, the logs are still visible. The shed has been used in recent years to house orphan calves or as winter shelter for herd animals.

12. Chicken Coop (ca. 1950). Contributing Structure (9' x 10'). In Tennessee farmyard. This simple board and batten structure still houses a small flock of chickens.

Non-contributing Features

13. Moved Smokehouse. (ca. 1850). Non-contributing Building (12' x 17'). This smokehouse was moved to its present location near the Stock and Hay Barn on the eastern edge of the Kentucky farmyard within the last fifteen years. It was previously located on another farm owned by the Whitesell family located outside of Rives, TN. The original dogtrot log cabin and other farm buildings there had deteriorated and been demolished, and this early smokehouse was deteriorating there with no one to care for it. It was moved, placed here on a concrete pad, and re-roofed with tin to slow further deterioration. It features notched square logs and a roof that overhangs four feet on all sides. A small window has been cut into the north side.

14. Gazebo (1995). Non-contributing Building. In Kentucky farmyard, west of main house. This 12-sided, wood-framed, screened structure was added as a sitting retreat on the west side of the house in the mid-1990s.

15. Moved Tenant House (ca. 1918). Non-contributing Building (24' x 16'). Northwest section of Tennessee farmyard. Moved to its current site from an African-American neighborhood in Fulton being cleared for development, this two-room frame house with end gables rests on piers and has a huge central chimney. The form is common for tenant houses in the area. The house was moved in the early 1960s to replace the larger, original tenant house on the Whitesell farm which had been destroyed by fire. At the time, the addition of the house to the property spoke to the continuing need for tenant help on the functioning farm.

16. Shed. Non-contributing Structure (8' x 13'). Northwest section of Tennessee farmyard. Sitting less than 15 feet in front of the chicken coop, this open-sided shed is constructed of railroad ties and fence posts. Its flat roof is covered with tin taken from the hog-finishing shed which once stood nearby.

17. Hunter B Whitesell House (1973). Non-contributing Building. On the site of the original tenant house in Tennessee farmyard, Hunter B. Whitesell, great-grandson of Jesse, built a white-painted brick ranch-style home with Colonial Revival style elements.

18. Associated Garage (1973). Non-contributing Building. The garage sits to the east of the Hunter B. Whitesell home. Its door opens to the west. The building is a plain frame structure with a front-gable.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

19. White Three Rail Fence (1985) Non-contributing Object. This vinyl three rail fence runs approximately 300 feet along the front of the Tennessee side of State Line Road in front of the Tennessee farmyard. This decorative fence replaced the more utilitarian wire fences used along the sides of this farmyard and elsewhere on the farm. However, the fence still serves the practical purpose of containing grazing cattle. An additional section of this fence is set just in front of the Hunter B. Whitesell house and garage.

Significant Farm Features Beyond the Yard
Contributing Features

20. The Secret Field (1862). Contributing Site. This two-acre field is hidden within the Whitesell woods and is not visible from the surrounding fields. Family tradition holds that Jesse Whitesell cleared this area for use as a concealed livestock holding pen during the Civil War. With the aid of neighbors, he managed to protect his cattle and hogs from marauding troops for the duration of the war.

21. The Brick Manufactory. Contributing Site. The remnant of a successful brick manufactory run by Jesse Whitesell lie in almost in the middle of the Kentucky parcel. A dusty grass access roadbed runs 400 yards due north from the farmyard to the manufactory site. The most conspicuous manufactory remnant is a doughnut-shaped pit. It is approximately 100 yards in diameter and was originally dug to a depth where suitable clay could be extracted for the brick-making process. An additional ditch dug for the same purpose curves off from the east side of the pit to the eastern boundary of the farm. Time and trees have somewhat obscured the site. But in the summer drought, an island of trees, an area less excavated, emerges in the center of the water-filled pit ring. In addition, brick shards, thick as gravel and just below the ground in a current nearby pasture, pinpoint the spot where bricks were shaped and dried. These bricks were used not only in the construction of the Whitesell house and smokehouse, but also in some of the commercial and residential buildings in the nearby town of Fulton, which was in the 1860s and 1870s just beginning to develop.

Integrity Evaluation

The Jesse Whitesell Farm is here considered according to the terms of Criterion A, with a focus upon its ability to inform us about historic farming patterns in western Kentucky and Tennessee. A judgement of any farming property's integrity involves a consideration of the property's significance, and how much weight to assign to each of the integrity factors. These integrity factors define seven aspects for recognizing how the physical property reveals its significance. However, as farming is a dynamic process over time, a process affected by numerous traditions, technological advances, and economic forces—all of which pressure the farmer to change the landscape to remain successful—the integrity evaluation of a farm must acknowledge that change affects all local farms to some degree. Thus, evaluating the nominated farm's integrity must show some awareness of the overall physical change on farms within the local area.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 8

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

A farm in Fulton County, Kentucky and Obion County, Tennessee must have integrity of location, setting, design, and association to meet the terms of Criterion A and, thus, to be eligible for National Register listing. Further definitions for these integrity factors are specified below, according to National Register guidance.

Information on pages 8 through 12 of the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, offers a detailed approach to applying these integrity factors to the landscape elements of agricultural properties, including this succinct summary:

Patterns of spatial organization, circulation networks, and clusters directly relate to design and strongly influence the cohesiveness of a landscape. Boundary demarcations, small-scale elements, vegetation, and the evidence of responses to the natural environment all add to **location** and **setting** as well as design. Continuing or compatible land uses and activities enhance integrity of feeling and **association**. Buildings and structures, vegetation, small-scale elements, and land uses all reflect materials, workmanship, and **design**. Archeological sites may strengthen integrity by providing physical evidence of activities no longer practiced.

On the Jesse Whitesell Farm, various landscape elements positively influence integrity factors in just the way this summary suggests. Overall, the **design**, **setting**, and **location** of the farm are very intact. While nearby Fulton is slowly growing up around the farm, the farm's surrounding trees protect the property's viewshed. Within the farm, the land's layout and land usage today is very much the same as that developed by Jesse Whitesell more than one hundred years ago: core farmyard, surrounding fields, outer trees.

Clearance patterns and field boundary demarcations remain—down to the secret field. The preservation of these field demarcations is particularly relevant since the rotating of monocrops, prevalent in modern agriculture, favors the aggregating of small fields into larger ones. By preserving the field demarcations which once (and still) allowed for herds to shift their grazing space and for the growing of multiple crops—the typical local nineteenth-century pattern—the Whitesell Farm conveys its identity as a farm laid out in that time.

The ruins of the brick manufactory also point to the farm's prominence as the home and resource of Jesse Whitesell—one of the area's wealthier farmers and a shrewd businessman. At the brick manufactory, trees have been allowed to grow up, somewhat obscuring the remnants; however, as the National Register Bulletin suggests, this archeological site helps confirm the view of Whitesell as a successful local farmer, even though the feature has ceased to function.

An in-field survey of farms through Obion and Fulton Counties shows that most farmsteads have suffered some loss of integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. On some, the original farmhouse has been replaced with a newer dwelling, while few or many outbuildings remain. On others, an original farmhouse may only have one or two surviving outbuildings. On many, newer grain bins and metal buildings attest to a still-vibrant and evolving farm operation. Such losses and changes are to be expected, as farming is not a static enterprise. A farm in this area should be judged to have integrity when we can reasonably state that the property's character and function during its Period of Significance can be recognized, despite the presence of more recent changes. The Whitesell Farm meets this test.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

In spite of some losses and alterations in the buildings that make up the Whitesell Farm farmyards, the key buildings and layout that help set this farm apart as the home of one of the area's middling to upper class farmers retain a great deal of integrity. The integrity of materials, design, and workmanship of the main house and the surrounding cluster of domestic and agricultural buildings in Kentucky are very strong. The layout of these buildings within the farmyard, with its orchard and garden also strengthen the integrity of location, setting, and association.

The farm had two characters, one on either side of the state line. The building complex on the Kentucky side historically served as the family's primary homestead, thus contained the most stylistically prominent buildings. By contrast, the farm on the Tennessee side of the line had a more utilitarian feel, containing the tenant house, along with barns, smaller sheds, and fencerows. The loss of the original tenant house and the two barns to wind and fire, along with the addition of a tenant house and the 1970s residence and garage, does reduce the integrity of design in this southern portion of the farm. These changes were given serious consideration in evaluating the appropriate acreage for nomination. Two aspects of the modern house and garage—they sit some distance from the road and are screened by trees—ameliorate their impact on the historic character of the farm. This portion of the property also retains important landscape features—a drainage swale, fencing that preserves the demarcation of residential and field areas, and additional topographic qualities—all of which reinforce its historic feel and association. The present function of the 1970s house and garage, along with the moved-in tenant house, maintain the historic residential use the farm had in this location. Without the Tennessee farmyard and the intact surrounding Tennessee acreage, the farm created by Jesse Whitesell and husbanded by his heirs could not be properly understood or appreciated.

The Jesse Whitesell Farm conveys its significance as the farm built by one of the area's wealthier farmers in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The house, its domestic outbuildings, and other agricultural buildings reflect a layout made popular by agriculturalists applying scientific techniques to farming practice. The existence of a second utilitarian farmyard with additional agricultural buildings and housing for tenant farmers also reflects the common use tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The fields beyond, in both Kentucky and Tennessee, also still bear the fencerows common in a time when farmers of moderate and large properties commonly grew several crops simultaneously, some for herds of their own livestock.

Taken as a whole, the elements of the Jesse Whitesell Farm create a very strong integrity of feeling. The continued stewardship of the Whitesell family also creates a strong integrity of association. The Jesse Whitesell farm today reflects very strongly the mark of its original owner Jesse Whitesell. It reflects, too, the conservative, caring, and creative interests of successive Whitesell generations.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jesse Whitesell House (FU-1) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 as a significant example of Italian Villa architecture. The listed area originally included 2 acres; the Boundary Description says the acreage includes “two smokehouses [sic] a few feet northeast of the main house, a frame storage house, and two original cisterns, house site and frontage.” This current nomination seeks to amend the original nomination in three ways: (1) the boundaries are to be increased so as to set the house within its farm context; (2) the name is to be changed from the “Jesse Whitesell House” to the “Jesse Whitesell Farm” to better describe the property included in the expanded boundaries; and (3) the Areas and Period of Significance are to be increased to show how the development of this farm contributes to our understanding of farming and related pursuits in the far-western reaches of Kentucky and Tennessee. Thus, the Jesse Whitesell Farm (FU-1) meets National Register Criterion A and is significant within the historic context “Fulton County, Kentucky, and Obion County, Tennessee, Agriculture, 1854-1956,” a framework of evaluation developed for this nomination.

The farm lies astride the Kentucky-Tennessee border with about 2/3 of its acreage just outside of Fulton, Kentucky, and the remainder in Obion County, Tennessee. The farm is a rare surviving example of a mid-to-late-nineteenth-century Jackson Purchase homestead created by a “middling” income farmer. After 150 years, the farm is currently occupied by members of the Whitesell family’s fourth, fifth, and sixth generations. Succeeding generations have cared for the farmstead Jesse Whitesell began to develop in 1854, maintaining carefully and making additions and alterations where natural damage, deterioration, and newer farming methods have necessitated. The farm was among the county’s early successful operations and retains a great deal of integrity today.

“Fulton County, Kentucky, and Obion County, Tennessee, Agriculture, 1854-1956”

Research Sources

Locally-published commemorative history books from the 1980s and 1990s for Fulton County, Kentucky, and Obion and Weakley Counties in Tennessee, along with Battle, Perrin, and Kniffin’s 1885 *Kentucky : A History of the State*; Richard Collins 1874 *History of Kentucky*; and Thomas Clark’s “200 Years of Kentucky Agriculture” in *Kentucky’s Historic Farms* taken together offer a general picture of the development of these far-western Kentucky and Tennessee counties and of the role and nature of agriculture in them.

Figures gleaned from U.S Census returns from 1850 to 1950 further clarify farming products and patterns for Fulton County, Kentucky, and Obion County, Tennessee. These records were all accessed online through the Historical Census Browser maintained by the University of Virginia’s Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. Additional statistics were obtained from the online National Agricultural Statistics Service, a service of the USDA.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

The place of the Jesse Whitesell Farm within this general context can be seen through extant tax records. Fulton County tax records from 1855 through 1875 provide detailed information about crops, livestock, and personal property. These show the development of the Whitesell farm. However, Fulton County tax records for the years between 1876 and the early 1940s are missing. Those records kept from the 1940s and later provide little information useful to this project. In Tennessee, tax records are available in Obion County from 1871, on and in Weakley County prior to that, but information collected was limited to amount of acreage and tax. Additional information about farming practices in the twentieth century comes from interviews with the oldest living Whitesells, whose active memory stretches to the 1930s.

In developing the historic context for 100 years of agriculture in Fulton, Weakley, and Obion counties, this nomination includes a consideration of both farm size and layout and of agricultural productions in those counties.

Fulton, Weakley, and Obion County Farm Size and Layout, 1854-1956

The 100 years under consideration stretch from the end of the settlement period for the Jackson Purchase region through the transitional period for agriculture and life, in general, occasioned by the Civil War to the period in which gasoline engines became common enough to transform farming.

Settlement in Tennessee and Kentucky west of the Tennessee River was much later than other areas of both states. Not until the Jackson Purchase on October 19, 1818, did the federal government acquire rights to these lands and open the way for settlement. In both states, counties were formed, redrawn, and divided as people moved in.

In Kentucky, Hickman County was formed in 1821. Twenty-four years later, in 1845, local political wrangling as much as growing population led to the formation of Fulton County (*Fulton County History* 8-9). Fulton County, with approximately 209 square miles, is the furthest southwestern county in Kentucky. It is bordered on the north and east by Hickman County, on the north and west by the Mississippi River, and on the south by Obion and Weakley Counties in Tennessee.

These two Tennessee counties, roughly square in shape, were laid out in 1821 and established a couple of years later. Obion lay further to the west, along most of Fulton County's southern border. However, the northwest corner of Weakley County bounded the easternmost section of Fulton's southern border. In 1870 this northwestern corner of Weakley County was transferred to Obion County. This transfer was prompted by frequent mid-winter flooding along the Obion River, which made it difficult for residents to make the trip to the centrally-located county seat to pay taxes. Obion County's seat, Union City, was made more accessible by a rail line from Paducah which ran through the area. The Tennessee portion of Jesse Whitesell's farm lies in this transferred area. Therefore, information for both counties related to the early part of this period is given.

Obion and Weakley counties are similar in size, with 545 and 576 square miles respectively. The fact that the Tennessee counties considered here have two-and-a-half times as much area as Fulton County must be remembered and considered in all comparisons.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

In 1850, shortly before Jesse Whitesell bought his first piece of property, Fulton County was, acre for acre, agriculturally more developed and productive than Obion County, but not as much so as Weakley County, which developed earlier. In fact, Jesse Whitesell's father, Peter, had brought his family to Weakley County in 1820 where Jesse was born in 1822 (*Kentucky's Historic Farms* 123).

Between 1850 and 1860 the number of farms in Weakley County actually decreased as owners consolidated smaller parcels and continued to improve them, increasing the improved acreage in the county by 29%. In Fulton County the number of farms held relatively steady, but additional clearing increased the improved acreage on those farms by 50%. Obion County caught up with its neighbors, doubling its number of farms and increasing the number of improved acres by 132%. More than two-thirds of the farms in Fulton and Obion Counties and a full three-quarters of the farms in Weakley County had between 20 and 99 acres.

In 1860, only 16% of the farms in the three counties had more than 100 acres. Of these 464 farms, only 9 had more than 500 acres. These larger acreages, modest when compared with some other regions of the states and of states further south, used slave labor. In the three counties, 428 slaveholders—only 29% of the slaveholders-- had six or more slaves. Of these, only nine had more than forty. To put the value of the chattel assets of these larger farmers into perspective, only 29% of the families in these three counties owned slaves. Of this percentage, 29% owned only one slave and 43% owned either one or two slaves. Most of the farms of less than 50 acres (almost half the farms) in these counties would have operated without the benefit of slave labor.

The Civil War marked a period of major growth and change for agriculture throughout the U.S. In his 1874 *History of Kentucky*, Richard Collins notes, "Fulton county was a sort of dividing line between the combatants during the civil war [sic], and suffered severely—being plundered heavily by both parties" (281). In spite of this difficulty, Fulton County saw almost 5,000 additional acres of "improved" land and an additional 149 farms by 1870. The number of farms in all size categories less than 500 acres increased, although the largest increase was in farms of 20 to 49 acres. In Obion County too there was growth: an additional 900 farms and 15,000 acres of "improved" land. There, too, the median farm size was 20 to 49 acres, but the county also saw an explosion of more than 500 new small farms of 10 to 19 acres.

Census information on farming in these counties shows continued development until the close of the nineteenth century. The continued high rate of new small farms being established can be explained in large part by a major post-war trend in farming: the rise of tenant farming in these three counties. Tenant farming had become such an integral part of post-war agriculture that the 1880 Census began for the first time to delineate between farms cultivated by "owner" and farms cultivated by "fixed money rental" and by "shares of products." These breakdowns show that three-quarters of the farms with 3-9 and 10-19 acres in Obion and Fulton Counties were farmed by tenant farmers, as were more than half of those with 20-49 acres. More than a fifth of farms with 50-99 acres were tenant farmed, and almost a fifth of those with more than 100 acres were too.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

The widespread use of tenant farming may partly explain one of the most striking shifts in farm patterns shown ten years later, in the 1890 census: the explosion of farms larger than 100 acres in Fulton and especially Obion County. Whereas, ten years before, the median farm size in both counties had occurred within the 20 to 49 acre range, the total number of farms this size was smaller for both counties in 1880. The 1890 median farm size fell within the 100 to 499 acre range, as the numbers of farms within this size category also increased from 1880 to 1890—from 97 to 303 in Fulton County and from 125 to 877 in Obion County. Even larger farms became more common in 1890, with an increase from three to 36 farms with 500 to 999 acres in Obion County and with an increase from one to ten farms with more than 1,000 acres in both counties, including four in Fulton County.

Rents and product shares from tenants gave farm owners, especially larger land owners, more cash, some of which was invested in undeveloped land which was ripe for timbering, followed by “improvement” as farm land. Indeed the increase in large farms in the two counties between 1870 and 1880 were part of an additional 572 farms added, with an additional 56,000 acres being improved.

Census records show similar growth, improvement, farm size, and tenancy patterns continuing throughout the end of the nineteenth century and into the opening decades of the twentieth century. Obion County saw continuous growth in total population and the number of farms until 1910. For Fulton County the period of uninterrupted growth continued until 1920.

Colcanis helps to set the agricultural growth figures cited here for these Jackson Purchase counties in context. He cites the “great absolute expansion of the farm sector in the fifty years or so following the Civil War, noting that “the number of farms in the U.S., for example, grew from slightly over two million in 1860 to almost 6.4 million by 1910. Over the same period, total farm acreage more than doubled, while improved acreage—acreage actually in production—quadrupled” (p. 2). Colcanis’ figures (which include initial settlement of large acreages west of the Mississippi) are relatively close to what is seen in Fulton and Obion Counties, especially if the fifty year period is adjusted slightly backward to range from 1850 to 1900, catching the tail end of the initial settlement period in these counties.

During this fifty year period, the actual number of farms in the two counties grew from 1,014 to 4,192, with an additional 800 new farms added by 1910. In the latter part of this period, some new farms were carved, at least partially, from land that had already been claimed in a farm and improved. Others, and many of those developed in the earlier part of the period, were created from undeveloped lands. Clearing the timber for pasture or crop land usually began conveniently near the house/farmyard area and progressed outward. The last and least-likely-to-be-cleared lands were those that lay near neighbors’ boundaries and that lay near ravines, swampy areas or other areas not suitable for fields or pasture.

Some trends in the built environment can be defined, as well. During this period, houses were most commonly frame, constructed from locally milled lumber, with other materials brought in by rail. Size and style were shaped by owner’s means. Houses were generally placed relatively near a road. To their rear were usually constructed a variety of outbuildings. The number, type, and fanciness of these depended on the owner’s means and the types of crops and livestock produced. Chicken coops were common. Minimally, there was typically at least a small barn for housing draft animals, their food, and perhaps equipment, and an incorporated or separate corn crib. A garden space was nearby.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

When existing farms were divided for tenants, housing could be constructed along existing public roads or even the lanes that had divided fields. Tenant houses were typically two room, and outbuildings, other than those provided by the owner for crops or livestock, were uncommon. By the early twentieth century, cultural shifts and the increasing mechanization of agriculture coupled with increased productivity reduced the practice of tenant farming so that most of these humble structures have long since disappeared.

Introduced in the early twentieth century, tractors were a high point in a long line of agricultural implements which increased the productivity and efficiency of farmers. Fewer farmers were needed to effectively farm a given number of acres (Colcanis 3). As a result, farms could grow in size, which led to decreases in population and number of farms. After a brief blip up in total population in 1940, the population of both counties sank by 1960 to numbers smaller than those at the turn of the century. In Fulton County the number of farms shrank from a peak of 1,205 in 1920 to 1,022 in 1950. A similar shrinking took place in Obion County, with a decrease from 3,378 farms to 2,806. In both counties during this same time, the number of farms having between 10 and 179 acres shrank and the number of farms having 175-259 acres held steady.

Meanwhile, the number of farms with 260-499 acres in both counties increased, from 158 to 249, the number with 500-999 acres increased from 35 to 55, and the number with more than 1,000 acres increased from 5 to 20. By the middle of the twentieth century, an impulse toward consolidation decreased the number of farms without decreasing the number of acres farmed. Later in the twentieth century, the costs of purchasing and maintaining increasingly sophisticated and efficient equipment led to an increase in a new sort of tenant farming—one driven not by the tenant farmer's need for a home, but by a need for acreage and additional acreage on which the equipment, seldom idle, could be used to pay for itself and generate additional income.

Summary. In the 100-year period under consideration here, the size of the “typical” farm in the Jackson Purchase counties of Fulton and Obion changed. Prior to the Civil War, farms of 29 to 100 acres, homesteaded and slowly cleared of their timber by owners, were most common. In the years immediately after the Civil War, slightly smaller farms of 10 to 49 acres, most run by tenant farmers paying rents or shares of crops for the right to clear and farm land, became most common. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the number of small tenanted farms continued to grow, but not as rapidly as the number of 100 to 499-acre farms, most of which were operated by their owners. Until 1920 the numbers and proportions of various-sized farms were relatively stable. By 1950, however, a new trend in farm size had emerged, with the number of smaller farms decreasing through being subsumed into larger farms. Throughout this period, new farms were developed in generally the same way, with construction of an initial house and stable, with land being cleared. As crops and livestock were raised, more land was cleared. The size, quality, and type of house and outbuildings (1) depended on the means of the farmer, (2) were often replaced or added to, and (3) could vary widely.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Fulton, Weakley, and Obion County Agricultural Productions, 1854-1956

In a letter dated August 15, 1887, Jesse Whitesell, himself, comments on the changes he had seen taking place in Fulton and Obion Counties in his thirty-plus years as a farmer there. This letter was written to Henry Steagall, a former neighbor who had fought in the Civil War and immigrated afterward to Brazil. Whitesell had just received Steagall's address from a relative and was making a first communication. He explains that times have changed wonderfully since Steagall's departure:

Fulton is a town now of 2500 inhabitants, Union City is a town of 4,000 or 5,000 inhabitants and other villages or towns are now standing where there was nothing but wood while you were here. Nearly all extensive woods have been cleared and now magnificent farms are in a high state of cultivation where those woods stood.

Whitesell's comments bring to life the real meaning of the increased numbers of farms and "improved" acres outlined in the section above. They also make more meaningful the questions that this section intends to answer in creating a general picture of Fulton and Obion County agriculture and its evolution during the period of significance of Jesse Whitesell's farm: What crops were being cultivated and what animals were being raised most commonly during this time? What would a look at those farms in "a high state of cultivation" show us?

In discussing general trends in U.S. agriculture between the Civil War and World War I, Peter Colcanis notes that farms were becoming much more commercialized during this period. No longer was subsistence farming necessary or even desirable. Improved transportation, especially the growth of railroads, made regional specialization of crops possible. Colcanis illustrates this concept with the following example: Why should farmers in North Carolina try to grow all the wheat they need when the land there is better suited to tobacco production. More money could be made from a crop of tobacco and extra profits could be used to purchase wheat grown in areas better suited for its production (p. 2).

In this general sense, production reports available through census data and tax records show that farmers in Fulton and Obion Counties did specialize, focusing, over time, on those products that got the best yields and best prices. Certain crops remained important staples over a long time, and other products trended up or down in their importance. But unlike some other regions which became focused on dairying or cotton or wheat, in this part of the Jackson Purchase region no single product became dominant. Furthermore, as of 1875 (the last year that tax record details make this analysis possible) individual farmers were not typically specializing in a single crop in a given year. More typically, yields in two or three crops were recorded. Often, at least one crop, corn or hay, could have been grown, at least partially to feed the farm's own cattle or pigs. The remainder of these crops and other common crops such as tobacco and wheat would have been cash crops.

Richard Collins, in his 1874 sketches of Kentucky counties, provides a concise summary of Fulton County's agricultural benefits and products:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

The county is divided between Mississippi bottoms, subject for 25 miles to inundation, and uplands; lies well, has no mountains, and but a small portion of hill country; soil generally good, a part very productive; timber good—the finest oak, walnut, poplar and cypress; principal productions—corn, tobacco, wheat, stock-raising and lumber (281).

The following crops are reported by Collins to have been most important in the area from before the Civil War into the twentieth century:

- **Corn**—As early as 1840, corn was one of the two largest crops in both Weakley and less-developed Obion Counties (Vaughan 20; *Obion County History* 19). Production increased along with the improvement of acreage in both counties, tripling by 1880 in Weakley County and increasing sixfold in Obion County to 1,501,881 bushels to surpass Weakley’s production. This yield made Obion the second largest corn producing county in the state. Census data show production in Fulton County in 1880 to be comparable to that in Obion County, when county size is allowed for. These yield levels remained constant through 1890 and were at similar levels in 1950.
- **Tobacco**—Tobacco was the other of the two largest crops in Weakley and Obion Counties in 1840. Production of more than 462,000 pounds in Weakley and 234,000 pounds in Obion in 1840 (Vaughan 20; *Obion County History* 19) had grown to more than 3.5 million pounds in the former and 1.5 million pounds in the latter by 1880. With this crop, too, census data show production in Fulton County in 1880 to be comparable to that in Obion County, when county size is allowed for. As late as the 1950s, tobacco production in Obion County had increased by an additional 1 million pounds. In Fulton County, however, production had decreased to one-tenth of the 1880 totals by as early as the 1930s.
- **Wheat**—*Obion County History* states that the 1870s saw “wheat becoming a more important crop than previously” (21). The 1880 census data show 93,795 bushels of wheat produced Fulton County and 230,243 bushels in Obion. By the end of the next decade these numbers had risen dramatically: 244,102 bushels in Fulton County and 465,055 in Obion. Production decreased after the turn of the century to only 36,800 bushels in Fulton County in 1950 and 51,000 in Obion. Only after 1965 would production of wheat pick back up in these counties; it continued to increase through the end of the twentieth century. Virginia Vaughan cites the use of winter wheat as part of a three-way rotation between corn, wheat, and soybeans—a method promoted by the Agricultural Extension Service—as the cause for this recent regrowth.
- **Livestock**—Census records show that the value of livestock, including swine and cattle, in Obion and Fulton Counties increased steadily during the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1890 and through at least 1920, Obion County was one of the top ten livestock producing counties in Tennessee. Its production in 1920, worth more than \$3.5 million, was higher than all but one of Kentucky’s counties. Fulton County’s production was never as high acre for acre. But its respectable \$1,177,350 in livestock value in 1930 came from sales of 4,091 cattle and 7,341 hogs and pigs. In the following years, herds increased in number with numbers of pigs doubling and numbers of cattle, including dairy herds, increasing fourfold between 1965 and 1970 before tapering to negligible numbers.
- **Hay and Forage**—The importance of livestock throughout the late 1800s and well into the 1900s made two other categories of crops important. Census records show the value of hay and forage in Fulton County increasing from \$66,000 in 1910 to \$361,000 ten years later. A \$1 million increase in Obion was even more dramatic. The depression in 1930 brought reduced values in most crop categories, but

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

the figures were still more than double what they'd been in 1910. One of the few crop categories where values actually increased between 1920 and 1930 was in another area influenced by livestock: the value of grains other than wheat and seeds. Value of this crop in both counties increased even more into 1940.

- **Timber**—Not surprisingly, timber peaked as a product before the close of the nineteenth century. The figures in the previous section showing the explosion of improved acreage also indicate the peak years of timbering. With rail lines running through the county to major lumber yards and furniture manufacturers in both Union City, Tennessee, and Paducah, Kentucky, there were ready markets for cleared timber.

Only a couple of other significant products in Fulton and Obion Counties need to be added to Collins' list:

- **Cotton**—Census records do not track cotton production, but *Obion County History* states that production was very low prior to the Civil War. This is partially attributable to Obion County having less slave labor than Weakley County or any other northwestern Tennessee county. After the Civil War, though, cotton production in this Tennessee county doubled and peaked in 1880 before tapering off as a result of poor weather or years of overproduction (p. 19-20). No records detailing cotton production in Fulton County could be located, perhaps because Fulton County is one of the very few Kentucky counties where cotton could be successfully grown. However, the location of two cotton gins in Fulton, the interstate town at the eastern end of the county, in the mid-1880s (Battle, Perrin, and Kniffen 45) suggests that cotton was important in the surrounding area.
- **Garden and orchard products**—The census only records the value of orchard products for 1850, 1860, and 1870. In these years, though, the value of orchard products shot up between 1850 and 1860 so that Obion County was the third highest producing county in Tennessee, with a value of \$19,531 in 1860. The value of the crop there increased further in 1870 to \$35,087. Fulton County's respectable yield, valued at \$10,443 in 1860, had declined, though, ten years later. Meanwhile, the value of the produce of market gardens was much lower, but growing, during these early years. When figures again began to be reported in the early 1900s, the value of produce increased from \$35,335 and \$118,391 in 1910 to a high of \$84,879 and \$225,471 in 1920. Since the late 1800s, Obion County was among one of several northwestern Tennessee counties to be a top producer of sweet potatoes in the nation. By 1930 depressed prices cut the value of produce in Fulton County by half and in Obion County by two-thirds. The value of produce continued to slip by 1950, but the \$23,090 produce crop in Fulton County was still high enough to place that county in the top 25% of market garden produce producers in Kentucky that year.

Farmers in this area timbered the land to clear it and then raised one of several cash crops and food crops which could be used to supplement the diet of their pastured livestock. While those who farmed the smallest acreages may have one grown one crop, owners of acreages of more than twenty acres usually grew two or three crops, and many kept at least a modest number of either cattle or pigs.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

In managing their productions and acreages, most farmers were, even by the beginning of this period, influenced by “scientific agriculture.” Kennedy and Macintire, in *Agricultural and Domestic Outbuildings in Central and Western Kentucky, 1800-1865*, explain that college-educated gentleman farmers, building their farms in the fertile Bluegrass region, “promoted more rational and efficient methods of both farming and arrangement of farmstead complexes. These ideas, whether learned in school or from agricultural improvement journals, were publicized throughout the general populace” (p. 8). Peter Colcanis partially attributes increased efficiency and productivity in late-nineteenth century agriculture to “the dissemination of information about ‘best practices.’” These included “greater employment of fertilizers [and] new and improved varieties and strains of seeds and livestock” (p. 2). The dissemination of information about best practices continued into the twentieth century with a variety of publications and programs, many coordinated and offered through the local County Extension Agency.

Significance of the Jesse Whitesell Farm

Jesse Whitesell’s farm is significant as a strong example of a mid-nineteenth-century farm developed by a middling-to-upper-income farmer in Fulton and Obion County. Kennedy and Macintire use the phrase “middling to upper income farmer” to describe “those who owned over 100 acres of land, a substantial masonry or frame house, and a few slaves” (p. 1). On three factors—acreage, slave ownership, and home type—the Jesse Whitesell Farm met this definition.

Kennedy and Macintire go on to emphasize “‘middling’ does not mean average; the majority of Kentucky farmers were probably living in one-to-two room houses, owned under 50 acres of land and no slaves” (1). While Kennedy and Macintire’s publication focuses on regions to the east of the Jackson Purchase, their comments hold equally true for the counties under consideration here. The median farm size here prior to the Civil War was only 20 to 49 acres. Whitesell’s 255-acre farm—assembled in three parcels between 1854 and 1862—made him one of 229 farmers with more than 100 acres in Obion and Fulton Counties in 1860. This figure places him well within the top 20% of landholders in the two counties.

In slave ownership, too, Whitesell was above average—in the top 25%, in fact, with a total of six slaves. With only two of them over the age of eighteen, Whitesell was building workforce capacity that would have matured with his farm. These slaves were, in fact, important in his ability to clear land and harvest crops in the farm’s earliest years.

Detailed tax records allow us to make some educated inferences about how Whitesell built his farm from 1856 to 1875. In 1856 he began with one slave over the age of 16, two horses, and one mule. Still unmarried, his earliest work was undoubtedly in clearing land and creating a living space. In 1857 he added another slave—under 16 years of age—and two cattle. By 1859, the year he got married, he had five slaves—two older than 16, one horse, two mules, 5 cattle, and 3 hogs. He reported no gold and silver, no carriages, and no crops. The process of clearing land to plant was laborious and slow, but in 1860 he reported 500 bushels of corn and the addition of a sixth slave.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

In 1861 he grew 9,000 pounds of tobacco and 300 bushels of corn. He had 24 hogs and two cattle. In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, he had nine mules and grew 1,000 pounds of tobacco, 750 bushels of corn, and 150 bushels of wheat. He did this through the work of 6 enslaved farm hands. He also had 20 hogs and 20 cattle which he sought to protect from raiders by clearing a "secret field" in the middle of the woods on his property's western border. In 1864 he still had three cattle and 20 hogs, and he grew 3,000 pounds of tobacco, 400 bushels of corn, and 100 bushels of wheat.

For the following two years, however, Whitesell grew no crops and raised no hogs. The reasons for this cut-back lies not in the difficulties of the Civil War but in Whitesell's plans for the future. Family tradition and tax records for the last half of the decade of the 1860s together suggest that Whitesell was making preparations to build his family home, as family history holds that the house was constructed at the close of the Civil War, from bricks manufactured on the property.

According to family tradition, this building campaign included the main house, the brick smokehouse, and the accompanying cisterns. It probably also included the frame servant's house behind the main house which shares the same kind of cantilevered porch projection as the smokehouse. The overall layout of Jesse Whitesell's farmyard survives today along with these buildings. The layout Whitesell chose reflected beautifully the principles of "scientific agriculture" outlined by Kennedy and Macintire.

In their Kentucky Heritage Council publication, *Agricultural and Domestic Outbuildings in Central and Western Kentucky, 1800-1865*, Kennedy and Macintire explain a key tenet of scientific agriculture: that where finances permitted, outbuildings should be constructed for particular purposes, thereby leading to "a rational use of space and, thus, savings in time and money" (8). A line drawing in this same publication, taken from *An Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, Kentucky (1876)*, is captioned:

In this unusual view, the back of the dwelling house is surrounded by subsidiary buildings, including a kitchen in the back wing, a smokehouse or meathouse behind the kitchen, and other buildings. This bustling domestic yard is surrounded by a pale fence. The building in the yard behind the house is a stable. Other buildings for crop and stock are spread out in the fields beyond the domestic yard. (7)

This caption could as easily describe Whitesell's farmyard 130 years ago, or even currently. His stylish brick Italianate home was "substantial," and his outbuildings, which would eventually include several tobacco barns and hay and livestock barns, were rationally arranged. Beyond the buildings lay fields and pastures. In these, he grew multiple crops and the same crops as his neighbors, and he grew them in fields fenced into smaller areas to facilitate the movement of stock, just as they did.

In 1867 he was taxed for the first time for a "pleasure carriage" for his growing family. And in 1869 he had taxable property worth \$1,450 above the \$1,050 value for land and farm animals. This increase suggests completion of some improvements on the Kentucky portion of the farm. Over the next three years, substantial additional improvements were made: in 1870 and 1871 he was taxed on \$4,500 worth of improvements above the \$2,075 value of his land and animals. In 1873 there was another jump, with Whitesell paying taxes on \$7,080 worth of improvements above the \$2,400 he owed for land and animals. And in 1875, he was assessed at \$8,200 above the \$3,140 for land and animals.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

An analysis of the tax records of Fulton County for 1875 confirm Whitesell's place as one of the middling and upper income farmers in Fulton County. Of 1,792 taxpayers in the county that year, Whitesell was only one of twenty to pay tax on more than \$10,000 worth of property. Of the twenty, eight owned solely or primarily stores. An eighth owned only town lots. A ninth, the county's largest taxpayer, owned both town lots and 590 acres, but he listed no crops and limited livestock. He and three other landowners who produced no crops themselves probably rented their acreage to tenant farmers. Others had significant livestock or crop productions (and several also owned town lots), but the records for some suggest that they held additional acreages which were farmed by sharecroppers. Whitesell's 850-bushel production of wheat, 7 hogs (and one town lot) was relatively modest for those who actually farmed. But the fact that one-third of his home farm acreage lay in another taxing district, in Tennessee, skews his production numbers downward, as he held assets not included in the Fulton County numbers.

These 1875 tax figures suggest that the wealthiest individuals in Fulton County did not depend necessarily or solely on their personal labors on the farm. For Whitesell, this was certainly true. After constructing his own buildings, Whitesell continued to use several acres of his farm for brick production for several years. Several of the buildings in nearby Fulton were constructed of brick he manufactured. He also started the first cotton gin in Fulton in 1872 with a partner and neighbor, Alonzo Collins. A biographical sketch of Collins in Perrin, Battle, and Kniffins' 1885 *Kentucky: A History of the State*, describes Jesse Whitesell as "a wealthy farmer and trader" (14). Although he only kept an interest in the cotton gin business for a couple of years, he continued to buy and sell town lots and farm acreage in Fulton, Weakley, and Obion counties throughout the 1880s. Given the prevalence of tenant farming at the time, he may well have had tenant relationships with those living on some of these acreages. Tenants may even have farmed some of the Obion County acreage of his home farm. Family lore suggests early tenancy although no records could be found to substantiate this.

A portion of Jesse Whitesell's obituary from *The Hickman Courier* on May 27, 1892, is telling:

He was ever industrious, economical and exemplary in his habits, and thereby amassed a considerable fortune. He was at all times ready to aid worthy charity, but condemned the sluggard and profligate as unworthy. At his elegant country home he was a most generous host and no effort spared to make his guests feel comfortable and at home. (3)

From early on, Jesse Whitesell's choices in building his farm suggest the sort of shrewdness and awareness that would have allowed him to use his farm as a home base in "amass[ing] a considerable fortune." In 1854 he began purchasing acreage only a mile from Fulton, which had been selected as a train stop in 1850, putting his farm's products in easy proximity to other markets. His purchase of young slaves, decision to have land cleared, and early production of cash crops, all were solid first steps in wealth-building. The overall layout of his homestead and farm reflect well-established ideas about efficiency and productivity in farming. His continued addition of barns throughout his life suggests his hands-on husbandry of the crops, products, and needs of his home farm, even as his broader real estate and business deals show that he was not dependent solely on these.

It is Jesse Whitesell's establishment of one of the area's most stylish and well-run farms that makes his homeplace most significant. Changes made to the farm after Jesse Whitesell's death reflect some trends of early-twentieth century without obliterating the farm's essential and original layout.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

After Jesse Whitesell's death, his widow continued to live on the farm until her death in August 1918. The Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, shows that she lived on the farm with Ike Gra??, 78-year-old, widowed former slave from Virginia as her "servant." The small frame house behind the main house is known as "Uncle Ike's house" by the family today. However, by 1910, the farm was being watched over, perhaps even tenanted by Mose and Jane (Davis) Jones and her children. During this twenty-five year period, the farm was managed by Robert Whitesell, Jesse Whitesell's son. A lawyer and banker in Union City, Tennessee, Robert Whitesell oversaw the management of his family's homeplace along with a 2,000 acre farm in Missouri inherited by his wife, and other miscellaneous farm property in Obion County. During the period of his management, the Whitesell farm was one of the many in the area farmed by tenants. At least part of the acreage was rented to tenant farmers who lived in a tenant house on the Tennessee portion of the farmyard.

After the widow Whitesell's death in 1918, Robert Whitesell deeded the 255-acre farm to his son Hunter Whitesell, who had recently returned from service in World War I. The 1920 Census records indicate that Hunter was not yet living at "the homeplace," as it came to be known within the family. However, Mose and Jane Jones were still living on the Kentucky side of the farm, taking care of things. By the mid-1920s, Hunter Whitesell and his wife Bell moved there. They would raise their three children there and actively manage the Jesse Whitesell Farm and eventually the other family properties.

Since the original Jesse Whitesell Farm was only one of several family's holdings, the success of this now-average-sized farm was not dependent solely on its productivity. However, Hunter Whitesell actively farmed the homeplace, even as he managed other properties. The homeplace was the site of labor intensive products and of various agri-business ventures.

The Whitesell farm played an active part in the upward trend in the production of market garden produce in the first half of the twentieth century. The fourth generation Whitesells, who grew up on the farm in the 1930s and '40s, remember acres of green beans and sweet potatoes. These market garden products were, however, only a small part of the farm's products in the early-twentieth century. They remember, too, mules for farm work, chickens and turkeys, sheep, pigs, and cattle, cotton, peanuts, lespedeza, wheat, corn, and hay. Tobacco is conspicuously absent from this list, and cessation of its production—part of a larger downward trend in Fulton County—made the nineteenth-century tobacco barns superfluous. As they were damaged by storms, they were not repaired, although the hand-hewn logs of one were re-used in construction of a more-relevant calving shed.

The increased local importance cattle and of hay and forage crops seen by 1920 undoubtedly influenced Hunter Whitesell in a business venture selling lespedeza seed for hay. The seed shed constructed in the late 1920s and located in the outer perimeter of the farmyard still houses a seed separator.

This experiment in farm manufactures was only one of several undertaken by Hunter Whitesell. He raised sorghum and had labels printed up for molasses. He attended a two-week University of Kentucky-sponsored workshop and built a chicken house, which has since been torn down. His participation in this program suggests the growing influence of the county extension agent and educational programs for farmers in the twentieth century. Erosion control methods, typical of those suggested by county extension agents, slowly became a part of general farming wisdom, leading to a permanent conversion, in the 1950s, of a good portion of the more-rolling topography of the Tennessee portion of the farm from crop land to pasture.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Section 8 Page 13

The end of World War II accelerated two more trends in local agriculture which impacted the farm. Tractors and larger heavier implements began to supplant mules on the farm. Acquisition of this machinery led to the construction of an open tractor shed in the farmyard. The barn could not be pressed into service for machinery storage on the Whitesell farm since cattle and sheep still used it.

Mechanization was among those factors leading to the mid-century increase in local farm sizes cited earlier. In the 1950s and '60s, this impulse toward consolidation led the Whitesells to purchase additional tracts, adding a total of 73 acres to the original 255-acre farm. While these more-recently-purchased acres are outside the Period of Significance, and so, not included in the present nomination, they do reflect an important mid-twentieth-century farming trend which may in the future be considered the significant mode of farming, and so can be re-evaluated once their association with the farm reaches 50 years of duration.

Summary. The significance of the Jesse Whitesell Farm grows primarily from its shaping as the thoughtfully laid out farm of a middle- and upper-class farmer in Fulton and Obion Counties. The exceptional style and quality of the house and outbuildings show more clearly Whitesell's affluence. The house's high Italianate style would be a lovely and locally significant architectural example even if it were set in Hickman, Fulton, or Union City. But its setting on a farm and as an original part of a nineteenth-century homestead makes it an absolutely unique signpost of success in these rural Jackson Purchase counties. Meanwhile, the overall layout of the farm—which includes central fields, pastures, and fencerows—shows more clearly the typical patterns of good husbandry found on any well-run nineteenth-century farm of moderate size in the area. Late-twentieth-century alterations to this farm are modest, and indicate shifts in local agricultural patterns.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Bibliography

Battle, J. H., W. H. Perrin, and G. C. Kniffin. 1885. *Kentucky: A History of the State*. First Edition. Chicago: F. A. Battey Publishing.

Colcanis, Peter. "Changes in American Agriculture in the Late Nineteenth Century and the Early Twentieth Century." Retrieved 17 August 2007 from the North Carolinz School of Science and Mathematics: www.dlt.ncssm.edu/lmtm/docs/amag/script.doc.

Collins, Richard. 1874. *History of Kentucky*, revised. Vol 2. Covington, KY: Collins and Co.
1983. *Fulton County History: Hickman, Kentucky*, Vol 1. Paducah, KY: Fulton County Historical Society and Turner and Associates.

Fulton County Deed Books.

December 2004. "Fulton County, Kentucky: Agricultural Statistics, 1909-2004." Retrieved 17 August 2007 from the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service: www.nass.usda.gov/ky.

Fulton County Tax Assessment Books. 1855-1875. McCracken County Public Library. Microfilm.

1892. *The Hickman Courier*. 27 May.

Historical Census Browser. Retrieved 9 June; 10 June; 11 June; and 12 July 2006 from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center:
<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

Kennedy, Rachel and William Macintire. 1999. *Agricultural and Domestic Outbuildings in Central and Western Kentucky, 1800-1865*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Heritage Council.

1994. *Kentucky's Historic Farms: 200 years of Kentucky Agriculture*. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing.

Obion County Deed Books.

1981. *Obion County History: Union City, Tennessee*. Vol 1. Paducah, KY: Obion County Historical Society and Turner and Associates.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1860. *Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, Schedule 2, Slave Inhabitants*. Fulton County, Kentucky. Sheet 3. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1900. *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Schedule 1, Population*. Fulton County, Kentucky. Magisterial District 1. Sheet 6. Washington, D.C.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 2

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1910. *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Schedule 1, Population*. Fulton County, Kentucky. Magisterial District 1. Sheet 7. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1920. *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Schedule 1, Population*. Fulton County, Kentucky. Magisterial District 1. Sheet 8. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1920. *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Schedule 1, Population*. Obion County, Tennessee. District 13. Sheet 3. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1930. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Schedule 1, Population*. Fulton County, Kentucky. Magisterial District 1. Sheet 10B. Washington, D.C.

U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes. Retrieved 8 April 2006 from http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb30/nrb_12.htm.

Vaughan, Virginia. 1999. *Weakley County, Tennessee: History and Families*. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing.

Weakley County Deed Books.

Whitesell, Hunter B. Personal Interview. 19 April 2006.

Whitesell, Hunter B, II. Personal Interview. 19 April 2006.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Verbal Boundary Description

The Jesse Whitesell Farm lies astride the Kentucky-Tennessee state line in Fulton County, KY, and Obion County, TN. The portion of the farm proposed for listing on the National Register includes a total of approximately 181 acres--133.67 in Kentucky and 47.2 in Tennessee.

The Kentucky portion is designated as Parcel 4 and Parcel 5 on the Fulton County Property Valuation Assessor Map 58. The area proposed for National Register listing includes all of Parcel 5 and all of Parcel 4 except 35 acres on the western border acquired by the family less than 50 years ago. These 35 acres are those which lie west of the line that would extend due south from the western border at the property's northern edge. The proposed 133.67 acre tract is described more particularly as Tract 1 in the Deed recorded in Deed Book 94, page 568, at the Fulton County, KY, Clerk's office.

The Tennessee portion proposed for listing is designated as Parcel 19 and Parcel 19.01 on the Obion County Property Valuation Assessor Map 7. This area is also described as Tract Number 1, Parcel 2, in the Deed recorded in Deed Book 16-R, page 307, at the Obion County, TN, County Clerk's office.

Boundary Justification

The acres proposed for inclusion on the National Register by the current nomination include almost 181 of the 195.5 family-owned acres remaining of the original farm assembled by Jesse Whitesell between 1854 and 1862. Approximately 14.5 acres of the original farm were cut off from the rest of the farm by the construction of the Jackson Purchase Parkway. That section is not included as part of this nomination. Additional acreage on the eastern and western borders of the farm in Kentucky, purchased by the family in the late 1950s and 1960s, is also not included in this nomination. Page 7-2 of the Descriptive Narrative details more fully alterations to the farm's boundaries. This nominated core of the farm retains buildings, sites, fencerows, boundary demarcations, and land use patterns which, taken in combination, offer a relatively intact picture of a successful late-nineteenth century farm of this area, with modest changes and improvements which reflect the needs and notions of early twentieth-century farming.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph Identification Page

Jesse Whitesell Farm (Name Change, Boundary Increase)
name of property
Fulton County Kentucky; Obion County, Tennessee
counties and States

Photographs

This nomination includes twenty-one (21) photographs of the Jesse Whitesell Farm. The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property Name: Jesse Whitesell Farm

Location: Fulton County, KY and Obion County, TN

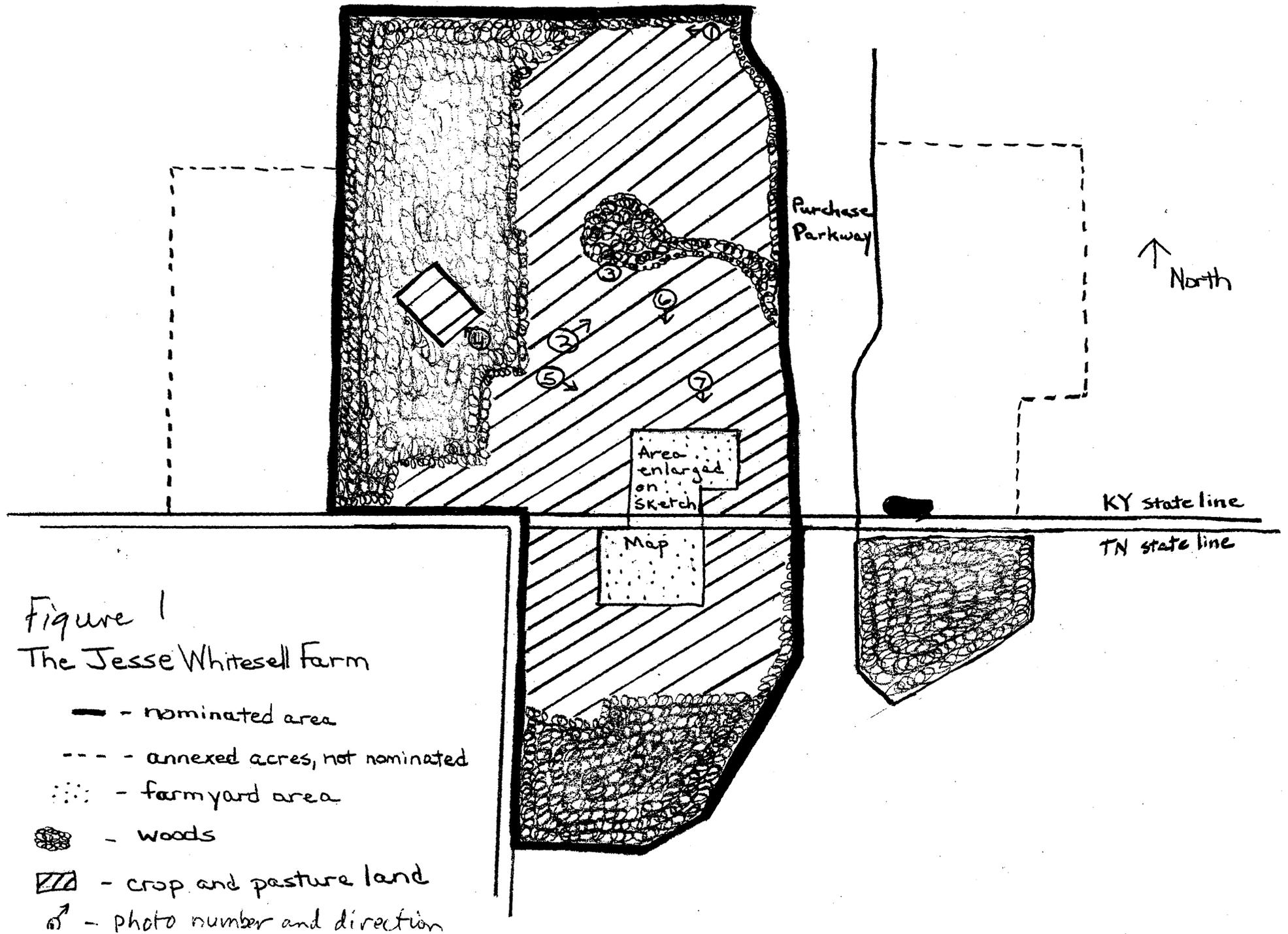
Date of photograph: April 11 and April 19, 2006

Photographer: Sharon Poat.

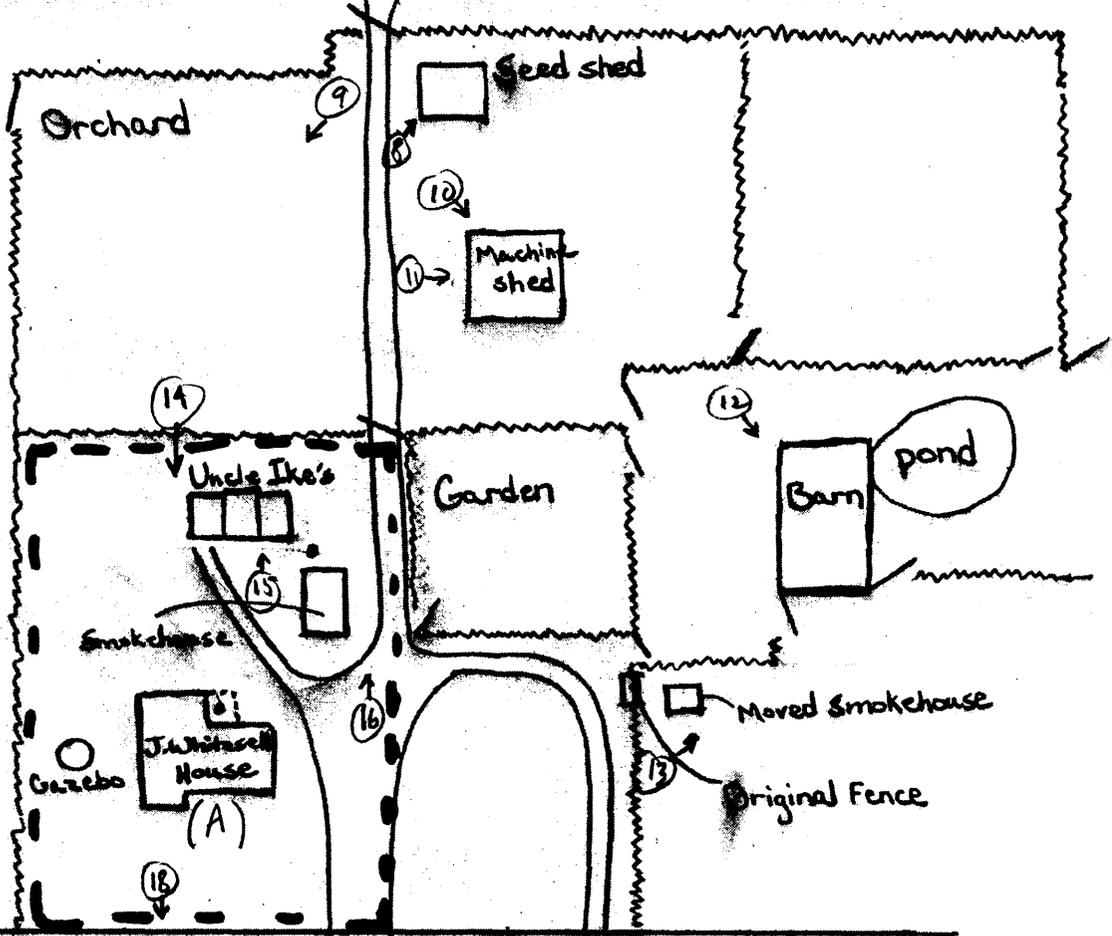
Location of negatives: Hunter B. Whitesell, 1403 West State Line Road, South Fulton, TN 38257.

Information specific to each photograph:

- No 1 Shot along northern boundary of farm. Camera facing west.
- No 2 Kentucky agricultural field. Trees in distance at brick manufactory site. Camera facing northeast.
- No 3 Spring rains fill the donut-shaped pit at the brick manufactory site. Camera facing north.
- No 4 Entrance to the secret field at its southernmost point. Camera facing north.
- No 5 Kentucky agricultural field. Rear, northern edge of farmyard in distance. Camera facing southeast.
- No 6 Fencerow dividing pasture and crop land. Farmyard in distance. Camera facing south.
- No 7 Rear view of Kentucky farmyard. Left to right: front of barn, machinery shed, seed shed in foreground, house and domestic buildings. Camera facing south.
- No 8 Seed shed. Camera facing northeast.
- No 9 Orchard. Camera facing southwest.
- No 10 Machinery shed and barn. Camera facing southeast.
- No 11 Close-up of machinery shed. Camera facing east.
- No 12 Barn. Purchase Parkway beyond trees in distance. Camera facing southeast.
- No 13 Barn with section of nineteenth-century fence and moved smokehouse in foreground. Camera facing north east.
- No 14 Rear of domestic complex. Camera facing south.
- No 15 Uncle Ike's house. Camera facing north.
- No 16 Left to right: original smokehouse, access road through farmyard, and garden plot. Camera facing north.
- No 17 Front of Jesse Whitesell house seen from Tennessee portion of farm. Camera facing north.
- No 18 Tennessee portion of farmyard seen from the front yard of the Jesse Whitesell house. Camera facing south.
- No 19 Left to right: tenant house, shed, chicken coop, and roof of calving shed on Tennessee portion of farmyard. Camera facing south east.
- No 20 Rear of calving shed and rolling topography of Tennessee farmyard. Camera facing south.
- No 21 Hunter Whitesell house and garage in Tennessee farmyard. Camera facing southeast.



North ↑



KY

KY 116

TN

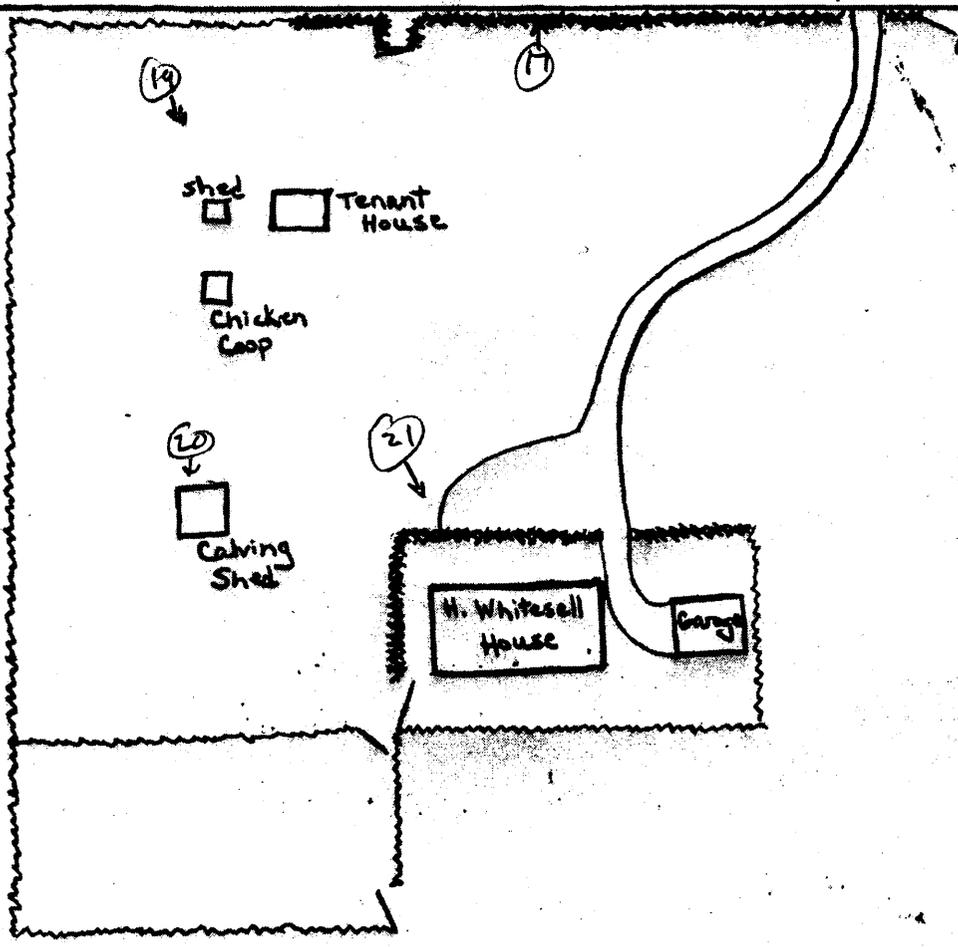
Figure 2
Sketch Map of
Jesse Whitesell Farmyard

— Approximately 100'

--- Fences

① → Photo Number and Direction

--- Area Originally listed



pond

Jesse Whitesell Farm
 Fulton Co KY

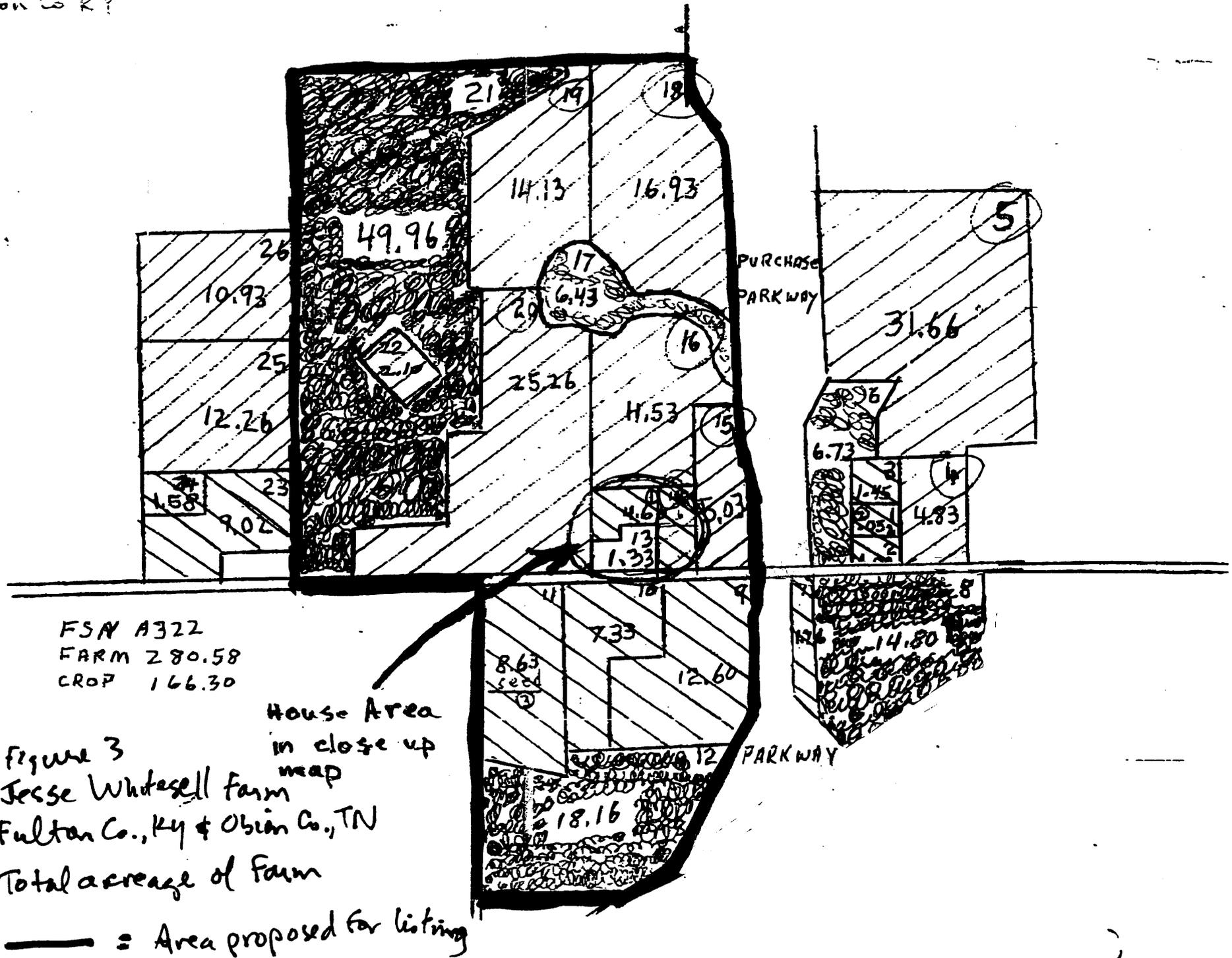


Figure 3
 Jesse Whitesell Farm
 Fulton Co., KY & Obion Co., TN
 Total acreage of Farm

