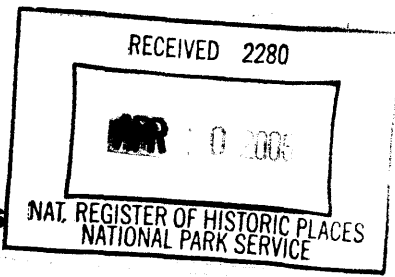


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or 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 Craig Family Farm
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1031 N. Fork Road N/A not for publication
city or town Linden vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Perry code 135 zip code 37096

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.)

Herbert L. Hays 4/5/06
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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:)

for Daniel J. Viana 5/15/06
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	6	buildings
2	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
4	6	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE/storage

AGRICULTURE/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE/storage

AGRICULTURE/animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Minimal Traditional

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls ASBESTOS, WOOD

roof METAL

other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

See 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.

Criteria Considerations

(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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/African American
 SOCIAL HISTORY
 AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1871-1965

Significant Dates

1871, 1954, 1959, 1965

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Horner, R. L., builder; Ledbetter, Ralph, builder;
 Craig, McDonald, builder

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:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Craig Family Farm

Name of Property

Perry County, Tennessee

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 90.5 acres Pine View 32 NW**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>418930</u>	<u>3949884</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>418508</u>	<u>3948838</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>418818</u>	<u>3948858</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>418254</u>	<u>3949884</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 Jaime Woodcock (contact: Leslie Sharp)
 organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date June 28, 2005
 street & number MTSU, Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947
 city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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 locationA **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 Rosetta and McDonald Craig
 street & number Rt. 2, Box 352 telephone 931-589-2051
 city or town Linden state TN zip code 37096

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.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

7. DESCRIPTION

The Craig Family Farm is a historic African American farmstead of 90.5 acres that is located just north of Strickland Road in Perry County, Tennessee.¹ The farm sits at a historic rural transportation junction. The historic Denson Landing Road, which runs north-south through the property and is well defined by embankments on either side, connects to Strickland Road at the farm's southeast boundary. The farm is situated in a narrow valley created by the north fork of Lick Creek. The surrounding topography is hilly and forested with steep ridges, except for areas like portions of the Craig Family Farm where the land has been cleared for row crops. Timber resources are abundant throughout this portion of Perry County, and timber resources clearly characterize this farm: according to county tax records, 73.5 acres of the farm are devoted to timber while 16 acres are used for pasture. The farm contains the current farmhouse, the original home site, a 1954 school bus, and a variety of farm-related buildings and landscape features.

Buildings, structures, and sites are concentrated in two areas of the farm. The landscape of work that surrounds the house sits on an approximately one-acre section of the farm and is surrounded by various outbuildings and barns from the mid- to late-twentieth century. This area is located to the west of the historic Denson Landing Road and the Tapp Craig Branch, which feeds the north fork of Lick Creek. It is approximately two hundred yards north of Strickland Road. Three hundred yards north of the domestic complex and to the west of both the Tapp Craig Branch and Denson Landing Road is the farm's original home site (c. 1871), which is a contributing site. It consists of several depressions in the ground and various remnants of foundation stone that indicate the former presence of a home and multiple outbuildings. The site also includes a spring surrounded by stones and a large beech tree, patches of daffodils, and indentations left by large red gum and beech trees.

A significant natural feature of the Craig Family Farm is the Tapp Craig Branch. This small stream cuts through the eastern side of the farm's narrow valley, passes the historic home site, runs beside the historic Denson Landing Road, then makes a westward shift, where it intersects the domestic complex between the goat barn and large barn. The branch then flows into the nearby north fork of Lick Creek by meandering off of the Craig Family Farm from its southwest corner.

The Craig Family Farm's house gardens lay between the home and Strickland Road and between the home and the Tapp Craig Branch. The farm's outbuildings are arranged around the house and Tapp Craig Branch to create a landscape of work with a variety of fenced-in areas. Through careful cultivation, the Craig Family Farm's resources have retained their natural and historic integrity.

¹ There is a discrepancy about the exact acreage of the Craig Family Farm. Tax records and deeds state that there are either 110 or 90.5 acres. For the purposes of this nomination, the 90.5 acres shown on the current tax map is considered the correct current acreage of the nominated property.

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Section number 7 Page 2

Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

Inventory

1. Rosetta and McDonald Craig House (1959), Contributing Building

Built by local craftsmen R. L. Horner and Ralph Ledbetter in 1959, this Minimal Traditional farmhouse is one-story with a concrete block foundation, frame construction, asbestos shingle siding, and a side-gabled, raised-seam metal roof. There is vertical wood siding in the gable on the west façade. The original front or south façade features a full-width porch with raised-seam metal shed roof and decorative iron posts. The south façade also has a central wooden, multi-light door. The original house portion includes two interior chimneys, three-over-one double-hung sash windows, and a picture window flanked by two multi-paned double-hung sash windows.

Built by McDonald Craig on the east side of the original portion, the c. 1965 addition is perpendicular to the original house and features a concrete-block foundation, asbestos shingle siding, and a raised-seam metal, hipped roof, as well as an additional interior brick chimney. This addition's south façade has a large picture window with sixteen panes. On the addition's east facade, there is an offset wooden door and a three-over-three double-hung sash window. An air conditioning unit has been installed in the door. Also in the mid-1960s, the family enclosed a porch built onto the north or rear façade of the house. This enclosed area has a concrete block foundation, vertical wood siding of mixed grades, a raised-seam metal shed roof, and one-over-one double-hung sash windows.

The original interior of the house features four rooms of similar size. The kitchen is the northwestern quarter of the house, while the two bedrooms make up the northeastern and southwestern quarters. The southeastern quarter is the den, which has a wood stove. The enclosed back porch addition is attached to the kitchen. The large perpendicular wing addition is attached to the den on the eastern side of the house by a full-length, narrow hallway and includes a living room area with a large brick fireplace, an additional small bedroom, and a large bathroom. The majority of the interior also includes wood floors, solid wood doors, and wood window and door surrounds. The den and bathroom have linoleum-over-wood floors, while the bedrooms have carpet-over-wood floors.

2. Original Craig Farmhouse Site (c. 1871-c.1940), Contributing Site

The farm's historic home site is about three hundred yards north of the domestic complex and contains the remnants of a stone foundation, which was once part of the farm's original log building. The log home had a stone and brick exterior chimney and was surrounded by multiple outbuildings, as evidenced by several ground depressions and various piles of stone amid patches of daffodils. One of the home site's original beech trees continues to shade the spring, and stones serve as reminders of the historic spring's location. This contributing site has not been professionally assessed and evaluated for its archaeological significance, but the above surface features appear substantially intact and the site probably retains the potential of yielding

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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

information on the early settlement of Perry County as well as the lives of rural African Americans in the late nineteenth century.

3. School Bus (c. 1954-c.1965), Contributing Object

A contributing object, McDonald Craig's thirty-two-passenger 1954 Chevrolet school bus rests in the central aisle of the Craig Family Farm's largest barn. Due to the absence of an African American high school in the immediate area, McDonald Craig drove African American high school students to a school two counties west of Perry County for ten years in this school bus. The bus has not been driven since the early 1970s.

4. Barn (c. 1970), Noncontributing Building

The Craig Family Farm's largest barn has a gambrel roof with side sheds, loft, and raised-seam metal roof. Constructed by McDonald Craig beginning in 1969, the barn is framed out of white oak timbers and enclosed by both white oak and yellow poplar boards from the Craig Family Farm. The large barn faces east and is covered by metal siding on both the north and south sides to protect it from weather. The east and west ends are not weather protected. This building marks McDonald Craig's last major investment into the farm's built landscape and was built for the purpose of housing his school bus, also a contributing resource, and livestock.

5. Storage Shed (c. 1970), Noncontributing Building

The shed closest to Strickland Road has mixed-grade vertical wood siding, an asphalt shingle gambrel roof, and small double windows on each end. Built by McDonald Craig.

6. Goat Barn (c. 1970), Noncontributing Building

The goat barn, which sits behind or west the large barn, is constructed of mixed-grade vertical timbers and has a raised-seam metal gable roof with side sheds and a central entrance. Built by McDonald Craig.

7. Auto Shed (c. 1970) Noncontributing Building

Northwest of the house is an asbestos shingle sided outbuilding with sheds to each side and raised-seam metal gable roof. The shed ends feature mixed-grade vertical timbers. The enclosed portion of the outbuilding has a central wooden door entrance. Built by McDonald Craig.

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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

8. Wood Shed (c. 1970), Noncontributing Building

North of the house sits a shed with mixed-grade vertical wood siding, front gable roof with exposed rafter ends, and raised-seam metal roof. The outbuilding has a central wooden door entrance. Built by McDonald Craig.

9. Storage Building (c. 1975), Noncontributing Building

The outbuilding east of the house is constructed of concrete block and features a side gable, raised-seam metal roof with vertical wood siding and one-over-one double-hung sash windows in the gable ends. The western façade has a central multi-light metal door. Built by McDonald Craig. This building is noncontributing due to date of construction.

10. Landscape Features, Contributing Site

The Craig Family Farm contains a variety of landscape features including the forest, fields, garden, and historic roadbed. The forest features several varieties of hardwood and softwood trees that line the ridges of the property. Since Tapp Craig's purchase of the farm in 1871, the same forested area has been timbered using the select-cut method, leaving its integrity intact. For example, realizing the valuable black gum tree has been overworked in the area, McDonald Craig does not harvest this species. Several large hardwood trees, especially white oak and yellow poplar, continue to grow in this forest.

The fields and pastureland that dominate the narrow valley of the Craig Family Farm retain their original integrity. Although the fields and pastureland originally grew various crops and housed cattle, sheep, goats, and horses, these areas now support only hay production and goats. The Craigs have grown hay to feed their animals since moving to the property in the 1950s. Seventy-three-and-a-half acres of the farm are devoted to timber while 16 acres are used for pasture. In front of the house, the garden consists of seasonal row crops, such as tomatoes, squash, beans, and corn, for the family's consumption. Since purchasing the property, the Craigs have planted a garden.

A historic wagon road intersects the Craig Family Farm and runs parallel to the valley, ridges, and more northward to the Tapp Craig Branch. This roadbed leads northwest to the Pine View community and continues to Denson's Landing on the western portion of the Tennessee River. The wagon road was used until the early twentieth century as a transportation route for locals trying to get their agricultural produces, especially timber, tannin bark, and peanuts, to market. Like other farmers, the Craig family used the road to transport their products to market. Now the road is used as a farm road to access the northern portions of the farm. Taken together, the Craig Family Farm's landscape features are a contributing site.

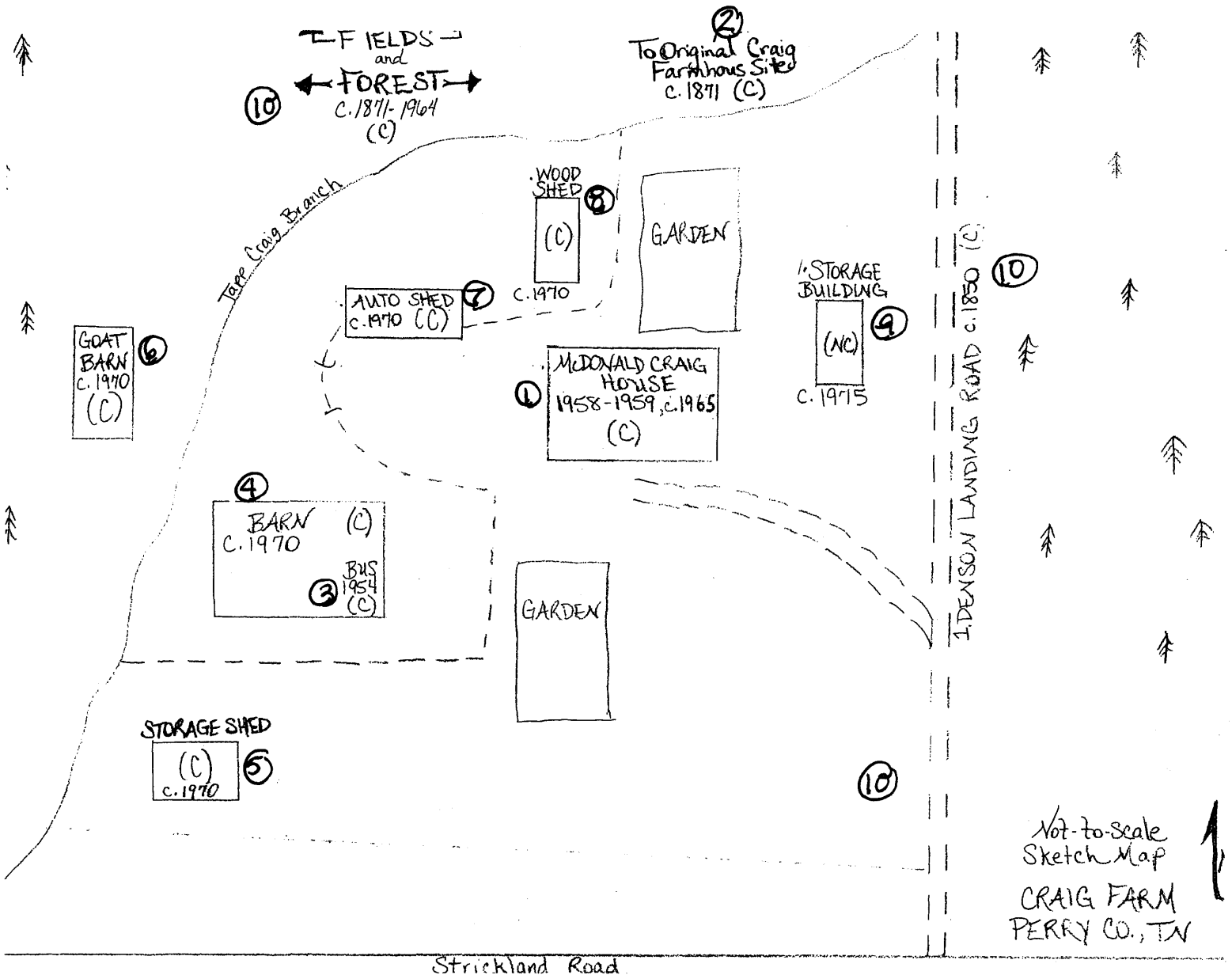
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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

Site Plan



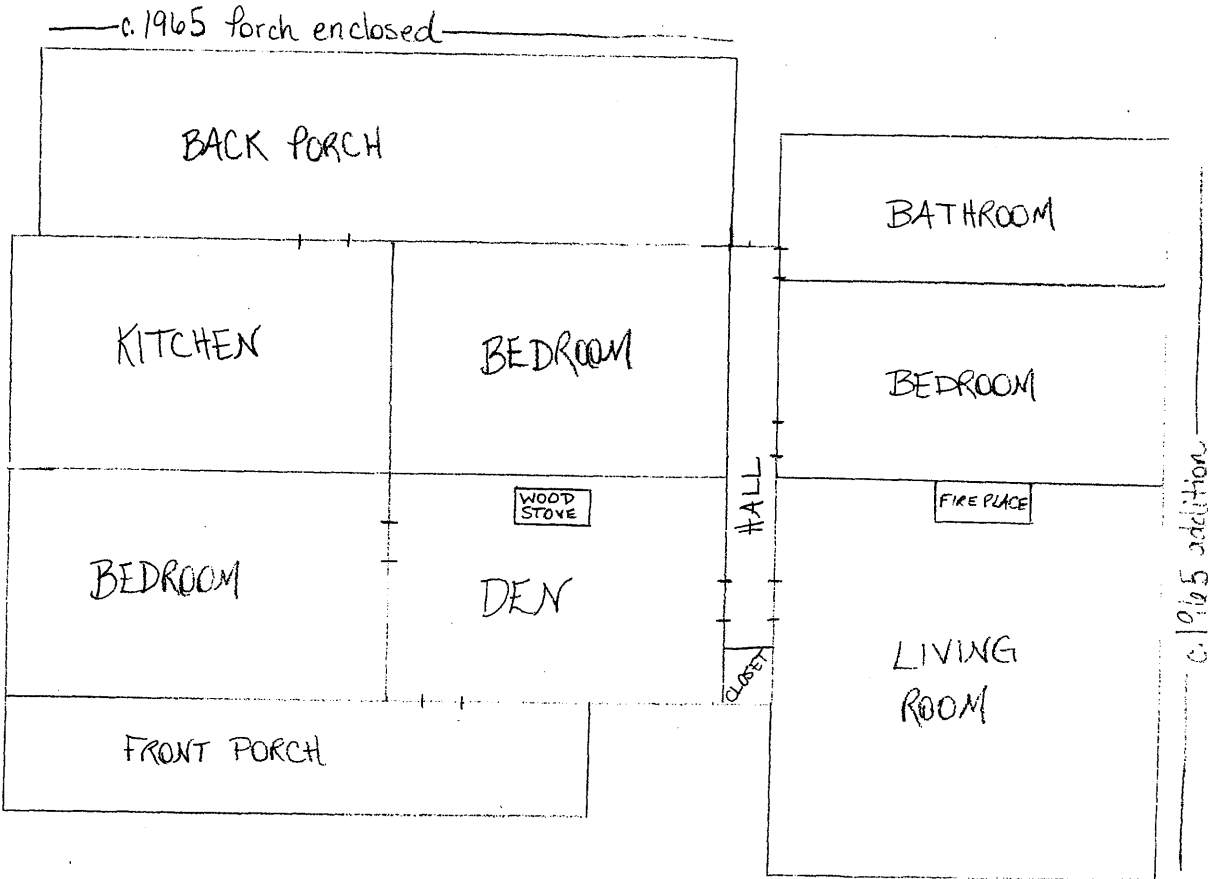
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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

Plan of Craig Farmhouse



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Section number 8 Page 7

Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Craig Family Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its significance to African American ethnic heritage as it relates to agriculture and social history in Perry County, Tennessee. A former slave, Tapp Craig (c. 1829-?) purchased 110 acres in 1871 where he and his family lived, farmed, and timbered the land. The great-grandson of Tapp Craig, McDonald Craig (1931-), currently owns the property with his wife, Rosetta, and continues to live there and timber the land as his ancestors did. The Craig Family Farm is being nominated under the *Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee Multiple Property Nomination* as an excellent, intact, and extremely rare surviving example of a historic African American farm which has remained in the same family and been continuously operated for over 100 years and is representative of the strong agricultural heritage of the state.

Although the majority of the outbuildings on the farm are noncontributing, the McDonald Craig Farm represents the extraordinary uniqueness of historic African American farmsteads in the state and is being nominated under criterion A for its agricultural significance. At this time there is only one other African American farmstead listed in the National Register in Tennessee. The Matt Gardner House in Giles County was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995 with its five outbuildings; however it was not listed for its agricultural significance since only 7 acres remained of the historic farm. (Moved this up from the footnote). It is even more unusual to have the high level of documentation about a black farmstead as the Craig farm has. The original farm site, 1959 farmhouse and farm landscape are the resources that best represent the significance of the farm. The farm outbuildings, although numerous are scattered and relatively insignificant in scale when looked at in context of the 110 acre farm and its distinctive history. The farm reflects the important and rare accomplishments of the Craig Family as noted in the *Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee Multiple Property Nomination* whereby only a handful of African Americans were able to maintain their farm ownership due to well-documented, race-based discrimination toward black farmers in the financial and insurance world, farm ownership and soil conservation government loan programs, agricultural industry, and southern society in general. Today, African Americans own less than one percent of all farms in the U.S.² While Craig lived at this house only since 1959, he farmed or timbered the land when not residing on the property. It is the farmstead most closely associated with him.

This farm also meets Criteria Consideration G due to its exceptional significance to the social history of the area because of McDonald Craig's involvement in assuring equal educational opportunity for the county's African American youth during the decade before integration in Perry County. The 1954 Chevrolet school bus that Mr. Craig drove for a ten years to a neighboring county transporting black students who were not allowed to attend high school in their home

² Carroll Van West, "Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee," *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*. (1995). On file at the Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN; PBS website, <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/homecoming/history7.html>, INTERNET, accessed 29 June 2005.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

county remains on the property and is a contributing object to the nomination. The bus and Craig's use of it to transport students represent a significant local contribution to the Civil Rights movement. The period of significance ends in 1965 when McDonald Craig ceased driving the school bus that has been so important in getting students to the high school. Once schools in the county were integrated, Craig parked the bus on his farm where it has remained.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Established in 1819, Perry County lies on the western slope of Tennessee's Highland Rim in its eastern and central portions and in the valley of the Tennessee River in its western portion. Because they never had a railroad, Perry County citizens relied on waterways and wagon roads for commerce and transportation for many generations. The first settlers of the county were farmers, many of who were slave owners. Andrew D. Craig moved to Perry County's Chestnut Grove area from Williamson County in 1843 and is the first known master of Tapp Craig, the founder of the nominated property.³ Andrew H. Guthrie, who moved to Perry County in 1835, was the master of Tapp Craig's wife, Amy.⁴ Married before the Civil War, Tapp and Amy Craig had five children together, four of whom were born prior to emancipation.⁵

In the six years between the end of the Civil War and 1871, Tapp Craig, of African American, Anglo, and American Indian ancestry, and his wife, Amy, also of mixed ancestry, continued to work on the Guthrie Farm and traded a yoke of oxen for the \$150 down payment to purchase the 110-acre tract of land from Samuel Young on 25 December 1871.⁶ The total cost of the Craig Family Farm was four hundred dollars, which was paid in full over the following two years.⁷ The Craig Family Farm is reportedly the first African American-owned farm in Perry County. As the property was settled by an African American family during the years following Emancipation, the Craig Family Farm is significant as an excellent example of the settlement patterns of farms throughout the South during Reconstruction as identified in the *Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee MPN* when newly freed people of color expressed their freedom through property ownership, a right that had been denied to them under the institution of slavery.

Between 1865 and the mid-twentieth century, most rural African Americans, newly freed from slavery, lived and worked as tenant farmers or sharecroppers on large, white-owned farms. Those rural African American families that did not work under this exploitative agricultural system often moved to towns and cities in search of work, independence, and a new way of life. In the South, where sharecropping and tenant farming were the standard for rural African Americans, the Craig

³ The Goodspeed Histories of Lawrence, Wayne, Perry, Hickman, and Lewis Counties, Tennessee (1886; reprint, Columbia, TN: Woodward and Stinson Printing Co., 1975), 892; and Helen Craig Smith, "Helen Craig," *History and Families, 1820-1995, Perry County, Tennessee* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1994), 110.

⁴ The Goodspeed Histories, 896; and Smith, 110.

⁵ Smith, 110.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Perry County Deed Book N, 25 December 1871, Perry County, Tennessee, 326.

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Section number 8 Page 9

Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

Family Farm represents a family's successful transition from slavery to independence. According to historian Robert Tracy McKenzie, "32 percent of these unusual freedmen [those who owned farms by 1870] lost title to their farms within the next ten years; black landowners who persisted through 1880 were three times more likely to lose their land than persisting white owners."⁸

Between 1900 and 1930, several factors continued to impede African American farm ownership. Values of farmland, machinery, tools, buildings, and other farm necessities rose drastically, and the percentage of black tenant farmers continued to grow as well. By 1930, black tenancy had risen to 77 percent of African American farmers.⁹ The trend of black farm tenancy or abandonment continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Those African Americans who were able to retain ownership of their farmland through trying times often faced discrimination or harassment from white community members and the government via the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Black farmers found that the USDA took longer to process their loan applications and denied a higher percentage of their loans than their white counterparts, forcing them to sell their land. Local banking and insurance institutions as well as other government programs such as farm subsidies, soil conservation, and social services also discriminated against blacks. Based on decades of inequalities such as these, in 1982, the United States Civil Rights Commission predicted that black farmers would be extinct by 2000.¹⁰ Even after this active and ongoing bigotry was analyzed in the report, the Civil Rights Office of the USDA was closed in 1982 and the 1.3 billion loaned to farmers in 1986 for the purchase of land went to only 209 black farmers out of the 16,000 farmers who received money. According to *Pigford v. Veneman*, a class action lawsuit filed in 1997 against the USDA by over 25,000 black farmers, the court decided in 1999 that the USDA did, in fact, treat African American farmers unfairly.¹¹ Despite these severe obstacles, the Craig family not only retained ownership of their land through the Reconstruction period, Jim Crow period, and Civil Rights Movement, but into the twenty-first century as well. This farm serves as an extremely significant and unique example of African American ethnic heritage, settlement patterns, and agricultural history in Middle Tennessee. Thus, the family's continued investment into the property up through early 1970s is made even more noteworthy given the financial and social challenges they faced as African Americans.

The Craig Family Farm is also significant in terms of agriculture because of its association with the reorganization of Tennessee agriculture from 1865 to 1880 and attempts to solve the perceived "labor problem" in southern agriculture during the post-Civil War era.¹² During the two decades

⁸ Robert Tracy McKenzie, "Freedmen and the Soil in the Upper South: The Reorganization of Tennessee Agriculture, 1865-1880," *Journal of Southern History* 59 (February 1993): 80.

⁹ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 6.

¹⁰ Carol Estes, "Second Chance for Black Farmers," *Yes! Magazine*, Online Edition, Summer 2001. Available: <http://www.yesmagazine.com/18Commons/estes.htm> [17 June 2004].

¹¹ Brian Oliver Sheppard, "Black Farmers and Institutionalized Racism," *The Black Business Journal*, Online Edition. Available: <http://www.bbjonline.com/black-farmers-racism.html> [17 June 2004].

¹² Carroll Van West, "Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee: A Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places," (1995).

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

following the Civil War, the agricultural landscape of Middle Tennessee was altered as many large farms split into new, smaller farms. According to the records of the Tennessee Century Farm program, over 100 were established in Middle Tennessee between 1865 and 1880.¹³ While both African Americans and whites formed new family farms during this period, the founding of successful African American farms took place much more infrequently “due to structural racism, economic inequality, violence, and the imposition of Jim Crow segregation late in the century.”¹⁴ The Craig Family Farm and family overcame these barriers and contributed to the new African American settlement patterns that prevailed after emancipation. Also important, the Craig family was able to avoid the dominant theme in southern agriculture for both African Americans and whites—tenancy and sharecropping—because of their success. Today, evidence of the early history of the farm is seen in the remains of the original Craig house site, the historic Denson Landing Road through the farm that the Craigs used to take their goods to market, the existing forest that the Craig family has relied upon throughout their century of ownership, and the historic fields that the family has sown and harvested.

Adding to the Craig Family Farm’s agricultural significance is its early owners’ participation in the thriving timber and peanut industries of the county. According to J. B. Killebrew’s *Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee*, in 1874, Perry County had a large and rapidly growing lumber trade due to its heavily timbered slopes and bottoms.¹⁵ Although the deed for the Craig Family Farm reserved the right to harvest the highly valuable chestnut oak for Samuel Young alone,¹⁶ Perry County also had large stands of valuable black gum, white oak, hickory, and yellow poplar.¹⁷ The Craig family harvested these trees on their farm using the select-cut method—only cutting the best specimens, leaving the others to grow—and hewed the timber into railroad ties, staves, and other wood products in high demand. Killebrew noted, “The making of white oak staves for European markets has grown to be quite an important industry. The number annually shipped from the lower Tennessee River, and made in Hardin, Wayne, Perry, Humphreys and Stewart is ascertained to be 1,635,000.”¹⁸ Also, because Perry County was “somewhat noted for its tanneries,” the Craig family stripped the trees of their bark and transported it to Robert Housel’s tannin company at Mouse Tail Landing on the Tennessee River, now a Tennessee State Park.¹⁹ Tannin, found especially in the bark of oak trees, was important to the leather industry since it transforms certain proteins of animal tissue into compounds that resist decomposition. The Craig family shipped much of their timber products along the historic wagon road to Denson’s Landing on the Tennessee River,

¹³ Ibid; The Tennessee Century Farm program recognizes farms that have been continuously operating by the same family for over 100 years. The Century Farm program is administered by the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, where its records are held.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ J. B. Killebrew, *Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee* (Nashville: Tavel, Eastman, and Howell, 1874; reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1974), 876-877 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁶ Perry County Deed Book N, 326.

¹⁷ Killebrew, 78-79, 82-84, 86-88.

¹⁸ Ibid., 83.

¹⁹ *The Goodspeed Histories*, 780-781.

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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

where it would then be sent to cities like St. Louis and New Orleans. From the farm's establishment to today, its forest has been actively harvested as a means of work and income.

Also important to the Craig Family Farm's early success was its involvement in the booming peanut business of Perry County. Owing to the "mellowness" or light sandy nature of its soil, peanuts were easily grown in Perry County and served as its principal staple for many years. Because the Craig family grew and marketed large quantities of peanuts at the rate of sixty cents to \$2.25 per bushel during the mid-1870s,²⁰ they secured enough income to maintain ownership of their land through difficult times. As noted by Killebrew in 1874, "It is said that the farmers who habitually grow peanuts are in a highly prosperous condition, nearly all of them being free of debt, with money to lend."²¹ Although the peanut business lost its prominence during the late nineteenth century, the timber industry persists to today in Perry County. Today, the pasture land covers the area where the Craigs once grew peanuts. During this early period the Craigs also grew hay, corn, and row crops and raised sheep and cattle.

Tapp and Amy Craig's only surviving son, William, accumulated enough money by 1889 to purchase his own farm of nearly three hundred acres just two miles up the road from the original Craig Family Farm. William and his wife, Elizabeth, had fifteen children, only twelve of whom survived. This second Craig house and farm are still extant. As the Craig family continued to grow and prosper over the next decades, they purchased additional and more fertile land on the Tennessee River in 1914. The original 110-acre farm served as a springboard to success for the Craig family and facilitated a dense settlement of African American farmers in the area surrounding the north fork of Lick Creek in Perry County.

As Tapp and Amy Craig grew old and their children and grandchildren spread out across the area during the first decade of the twentieth century, their youngest daughter, Mary Jane Craig Randle took care of them. Mary Jane married Alec Randle, a carpenter, and they moved Tapp and Amy Craig along with them to Illinois in the search for more carpentry work. Mary Jane gained ownership of the original Craig Family Farm on 16 September 1912 after the death of both Tapp and Amy Craig.²² Common to other farm families around the South during this period, William Craig rented the Craig Family Farm's old home site to various people, such as local sawmill operator, Oliver Deere.²³ However, this portion was still considered the Craig Family Farm and its rich forest continued to be managed and selectively timbered by the family. The tenants also sowed the land throughout the period in which it was leased. McDonald Craig, William's grandson, acquired the original Craig Family Farm from Mary Jane's daughter, Ida E. Randle Toran on 15 September 1958 and continues to own and manage the property with its fields and forest.²⁴

²⁰ Killebrew, 108.

²¹ Ibid., 877.

²² Perry County Deed Book C-3, 16 September 1912, Perry County, Tennessee, 391.

²³ McDonald Craig, interview by author, 19 April 2004, Craig Farm, Perry County, Tennessee, notes.

²⁴ Perry County Deed Book Y-25, 15 September 1958, Perry County, Tennessee, 563.

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Perry County, Tennessee

In addition to the notable agricultural history of the property, the Craig Family Farm also meets criteria consideration G of achieving significance within the last 50 years because of the exceptional importance of McDonald Craig's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. During the more than two centuries of slavery in the United States, most slave owners denied African Americans the privilege of education, fearing knowledge would empower the enslaved. After the Civil War and emancipation, many newly freed slaves sought education, or at least the ability to read and write, believing that education was essential to freedom. Their desire for instruction was often so strong that black children and adults frequently walked great distances in harsh weather conditions to grossly inadequate school facilities in order to learn. Even though Tennessee's Public School Law of 1867 mandated that common schools be established for both black and white students using state property taxes, few schools for blacks were ever actually developed outside major cities.²⁵ Just two years later, the Tennessee legislature revoked the Public School Law and shifted the responsibility for common schools to the counties.²⁶ Like most rural counties in Tennessee, Perry County gave little to no support for black education during the decades following the Civil War. Killebrew observed in 1874 that, even though Perry County offered "some fine inducements for an industrious population, but few immigrants come to it."²⁷ He concluded:

This is doubtless owing to a want of railroad facilities and of school advantages. The want of the latter has caused many good citizens to leave the county and seek other locations where their children can enjoy the privilege of attending good schools. Schools, without which in this age there can be no permanent progress, meet with but little favor. No additional tax was ever levied to supplement the scanty pittance received from the State.²⁸

So, if Perry County citizens gave little support to white schools, support for African American public education was nonexistent. From emancipation to well into the twentieth century, African Americans in Perry County had to rely on themselves in order to secure an education.

After decades of educational discrimination following the 1896 separate but equal ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, exemplified through separate and unequal school facilities and opportunities for black and white students, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of desegregation in its 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Despite this ruling, "only about 9 percent of the more than three million Negro children of school age in the southern and border states attend[ed] integrated schools" in the decade following the decision.²⁹ While the number of African Americans in Perry County peaked in the 1890 Census at 670, the African American population of Perry County fell

²⁵ Paul David Philips, "Education of Blacks in Tennessee During Reconstruction," in *Trial and Triumph: Essays in Tennessee's African American History*, ed. Carroll Van West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 156.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

²⁷ Killebrew, 882.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Hubert H. Humphrey, ed., *Integration Vs. Segregation* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), 2.

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dramatically during the first half of the twentieth century. There were only two hundred African Americans in Perry County by 1950, just four years before *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled against segregation.³⁰ The small number of African Americans in Perry County, in addition to the county's overall reputation for giving little attention to education in general, perpetuated the absence of educational opportunity for African American children.

A 1957 study of public education in Tennessee noted that the state gave local county and city school systems control over their operations.³¹ Although the study cited that "public schools are to be free to all persons above six years of age," it later made exceptions "for mental and physical defects, for persons residing in areas removed from bus routes and the like."³² Maps outlining bus routes for Perry County during the 1935-1936 school year show most African American students clearly within prescribed bus routes,³³ yet high school-age African Americans in Perry County were not allowed to ride white buses and attend the white high school in the county seat of Linden until 1965, even after desegregation was made national law in 1954.

After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, states and communities chose different ways to address desegregation, and very few states decided to integrate immediately. While *Brown v. Board of Education* only forbade publicly enforced segregation and did not force schools in Perry County to integrate in 1954, local school board officials and African American students and parents did decide that transportation was needed to bus high school-age students to the nearest African American high school. The Craig family's educational experience exemplified that of other blacks around the South in that the Craig children attended the nearby rural Lick Creek School but were unable to attend high school since there had never been an African American or integrated high school in Perry County. This would change following the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and Perry County's decision to cover the costs associated with transporting African American children to a high school outside the county. McDonald Craig would become an important part of Perry County history as he stepped up to fulfill the important role of bus driver, insuring that the county's African American children received a right long denied them within the oppressive Jim Crow system.

After serving in the Korean War, McDonald Craig returned from his training and service in Kansas, Okinawa, and Korea to Perry County where he became an integral participant in the busing of African American students to Montgomery High School in Lexington, Tennessee, which is in

³⁰ University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *United States Historical Census Data Browser*, ONLINE, 1998. University of Virginia. Available: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/>. [13 April 2004].

³¹ Tennessee Legislative Council, Education Survey Subcommittee, *Public Education in Tennessee: Grades 1 through 12*, study directed by James E. Gibbs, submitted 18 November 1957, 261.

³² *Ibid.*, 67-68.

³³ U. S. Office of Education, *State of Tennessee: County Educational Maps, 1935-1936/prepared by United States Office of Education in Cooperation with State Department of Education in Connection with Study of Local School Units* (Nashville: Tennessee State Department of Education, 193-). The set of maps for Perry County clearly show the existing bus routes, the black and white schools, the grades, race, and number of teachers and pupils that each of the schools served. See copies of maps in appendix.

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Henderson County to the west of Perry County. In 1954, Perry County announced that it would pay someone who had a bus to drive the African American students to Montgomery High School. As quoted in the Spring 2005 issue of *Tennessee Home and Farm*, McDonald recalled:

I wanted to further my education because I didn't have any. When they [Perry County] started talking about a bus, I told my mom and dad that I wanted that job... The superintendent told me to go get a bus, so I went to the local Chevrolet dealer. His people had owned my mother's daddy and his parents, so it was a little like doing business with the family.³⁴

Thus, McDonald Craig purchased the 1954 Chevrolet school bus and became an employee of the Perry County school system receiving 300 dollars per month for his salary and maintenance of his bus. He then hauled an average of fifteen students to high school for ten years. Eager to continue their education beyond eighth grade, African American teenagers waited weekday mornings for McDonald Craig to pick them up in his full-sized school bus from black enclaves like Hill Street in Linden, Cypress Creek, Lick Creek, and Spring Creek. During the first four years of driving the bus, McDonald Craig attended high school classes himself, and he earned his own high school diploma in 1958.³⁵

McDonald Craig acquired the family farm in 1958, the year of his high school graduation, and was married to his classmate, Rosetta Smith (1939-), in the same year. He earned money by busing students, working a part-time job at Bailey's Sawmill in Lexington while the students were in class, and working the timber of the Craig Family Farm. Before the Craigs built their current home in 1959, McDonald and, later, Rosetta Craig lived at the second Craig Farm two miles up Strickland Road. Shortly after the construction of their house, McDonald and Rosetta Craig had two sons, Reginald (1959-) and Ervin (1961-).

The 1964 Civil Rights Act tipped the scales of power in favor of the federal government over the local status quo of segregation, and Perry County schools were integrated in the fall of 1965. Until 1964, southern African American communities had little economic or political power to overcome "organized state and local harassment and delay."³⁶ To combat continued segregation in the post-*Brown v. Board of Education* decade, African American citizens in Perry County took a grassroots approach, with McDonald Craig and his 1954 Chevrolet school bus at its core. His involvement in securing the educational opportunities of over 100 students in Perry County is very significant. After receiving their high school education, many young African Americans from Perry County moved to large towns and cities across the country to pursue further education and greater financial potential, options they were denied for nearly a century. As a veteran, McDonald Craig's

³⁴ Laura Hill, "On McDonald's Farm," *Tennessee Home and Farm* (Spring 2005), 10.

³⁵ McDonald Craig, telephone interview by author, 28 June 2004, Center for Historic Preservation, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Hill, 10.

³⁶ Gary Orfield, *The Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1969), 2.

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participation in the Civil Rights Movement follows the pattern of African American resistance to segregation and inequality by those who served the United States abroad and expected equal opportunities upon their return. This historical pattern has been widely documented by World War II historians.³⁷ McDonald Craig's veteran status also gave him credibility among the white majority of Perry County and helped him gain the position of driving African American students to high school. In the fall of 1965, Perry County schools and buses were integrated and McDonald stopped driving his bus.

After ten years of driving students and either attending high school himself or working part-time at Bailey's Sawmill, McDonald Craig parked his school bus and focused on his farm. In 1969, he began using timbers from his own forest to build a barn with dimensions large enough to house his school bus and livestock. It was at this time that McDonald realized that the social climate had indeed changed and his days of driving a segregated bus were in the past. Keeping the bus in mind, he constructed the new and largest barn on the property that marked the end of McDonald Craig's involvement in securing equal educational opportunity in Perry County. The barn was also the last large investment in the Craig Family Farm and signified, along with other smaller outbuildings built about that time, the completion of the landscape of work that surrounds the McDonald Craig home today and the continuum of the Craig family agricultural tradition and commitment to the land.

In addition to his notability regarding his Civil Rights efforts in Perry County, McDonald Craig is a distinguished old-time country musician and yodeler. As a child, McDonald Craig joined family musicians in song and later learned to play the guitar and imitate Jimmie Rodgers, his favorite country musician. In 1978, McDonald Craig won top honors at the Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Festival Talent Contest in Meridian, Mississippi, and has been involved in educational programs sponsored by the Country Music Hall of Fame Museum in Nashville. In 1996, the National Traditional Country Music Association inducted him into the Mid-American Country Music Hall of

³⁷ See, for example, Phillip McGuire, *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II*, with a foreword by Benjamin Quarles (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1983); Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U. S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Lou Potter, William Miles, and Nina Rosenblum *Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992).

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Fame in Walnut, Iowa. He has been featured in television, journals, and newspapers for his unique and outstanding musical talents. McDonald also serves on the board of the Buffalo-Duck River RC&D council.³⁸

³⁸McDonald Craig has been featured in media such as *Tennessee's Wild Side: An Outdoor Adventure Show* and *The Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Craig Family Farm nomination encompasses 90.5 acres and is illustrated on the accompanying Perry County tax map 52 as parcel number 10. The best available tax map for this nomination has the scale 1" = 500'. This land includes the house and all outbuildings, sites, structures, and objects described in the nomination and is in the ownership of the Craig family.

Boundary Justification


While the 1958 deed describes the Craig Family Farm as "one hundred ten acres more or less," current tax records show the property to be 90.5 acres. The boundary of the nominated property is based on current tax records and includes all the historic property associated with the Craig Family Farm under single-family ownership.

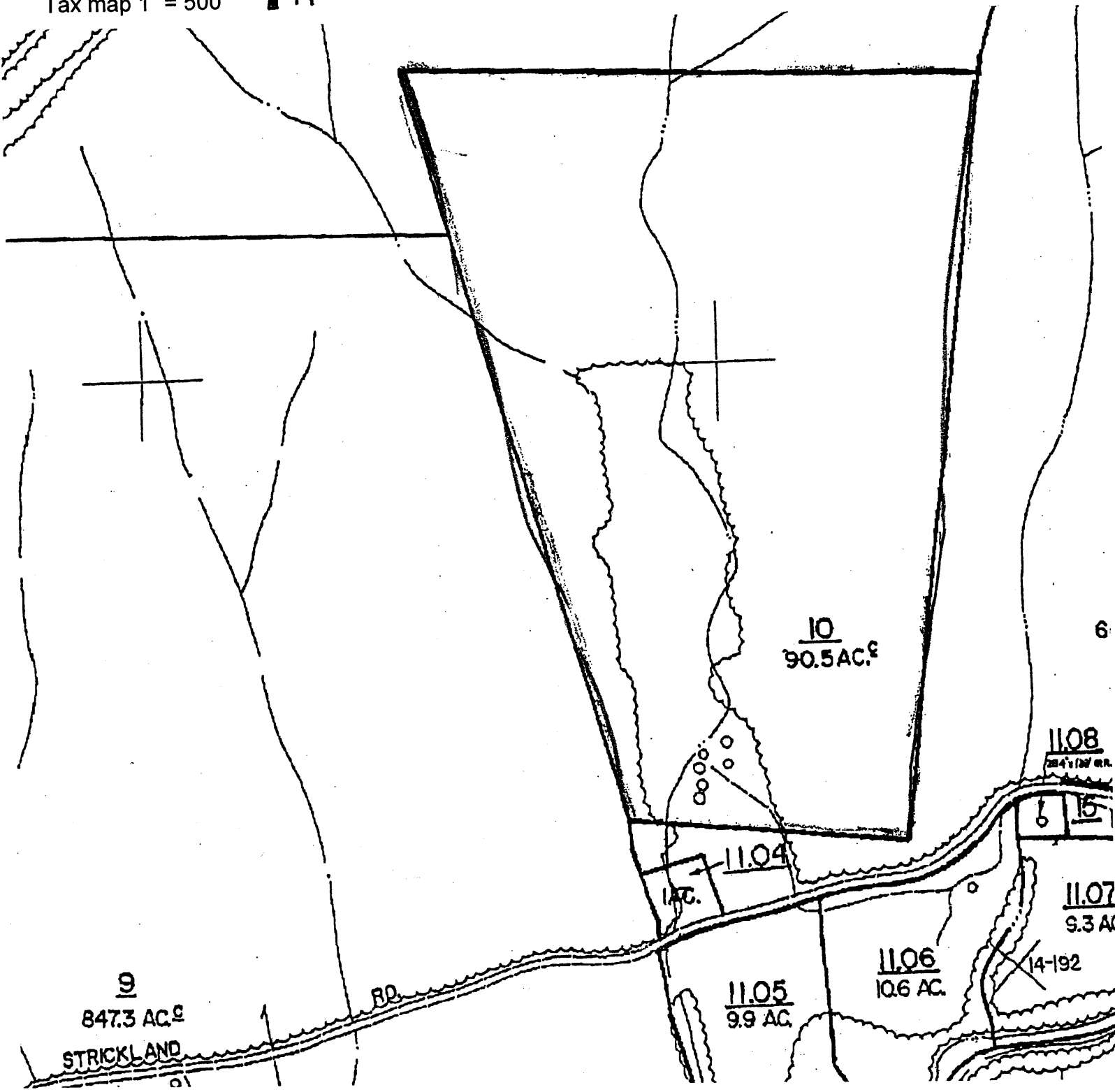
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Tax map 1" = 500' 



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PHOTOGRAPHS

Craig Family Farm, Perry County, Tennessee

Photos by: Caneta Hankins, Michael Gavin, and Carroll Van West
 MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: February and April 2004
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 Nashville, TN

1. Farm entrance and forest, facing west
2. Farm entrance and forest, facing south
3. Domestic complex, facing north
4. Domestic complex, facing east
5. Tapp Craig Branch and domestic complex, facing south
6. Tapp Craig Branch and forest, facing southwest
7. Denson Landing Road, facing north
8. Denson Landing Road, facing north
9. McDonald Craig House, facing north
10. McDonald Craig House, facing northwest
11. Den, facing northeast
12. Kitchen, facing west
13. Southwestern quarter bedroom, facing northeast
14. Northeastern quarter bedroom, facing east
15. Living room, facing east

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16. Living room fireplace, facing north
17. Original Craig Farmhouse Site, daffodil patches, facing west
18. Original Craig Farmhouse Site, stone pile, facing east
19. Original Craig Farmhouse Site, ground indentations, facing east
20. Original Craig Farmhouse Site, spring and beech tree, facing northeast
21. Original Craig Farmhouse Site, spring and beech tree, facing northwest
22. Forest and Field Patterns, facing north
23. Forest and Field Patterns, facing south
24. Barn and bus, facing southwest
25. Barn and bus, facing northwest
26. Barn and fencerows, facing south
27. Goat Barn and Tapp Craig Branch, facing west
28. Auto Shed, facing north
29. Wood Shed, facing northeast
30. Storage Building, facing northeast

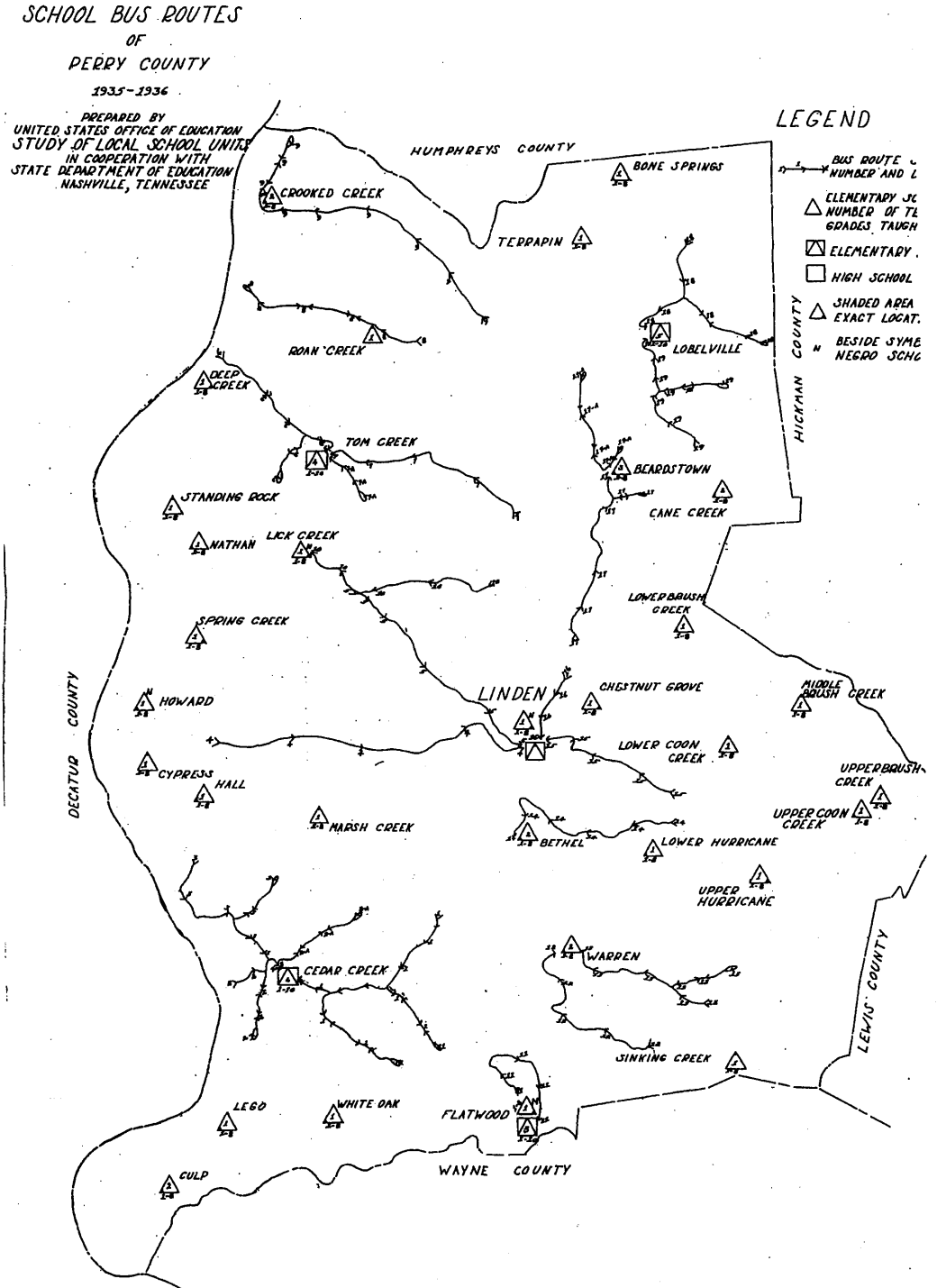
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School bus routes of Perry County



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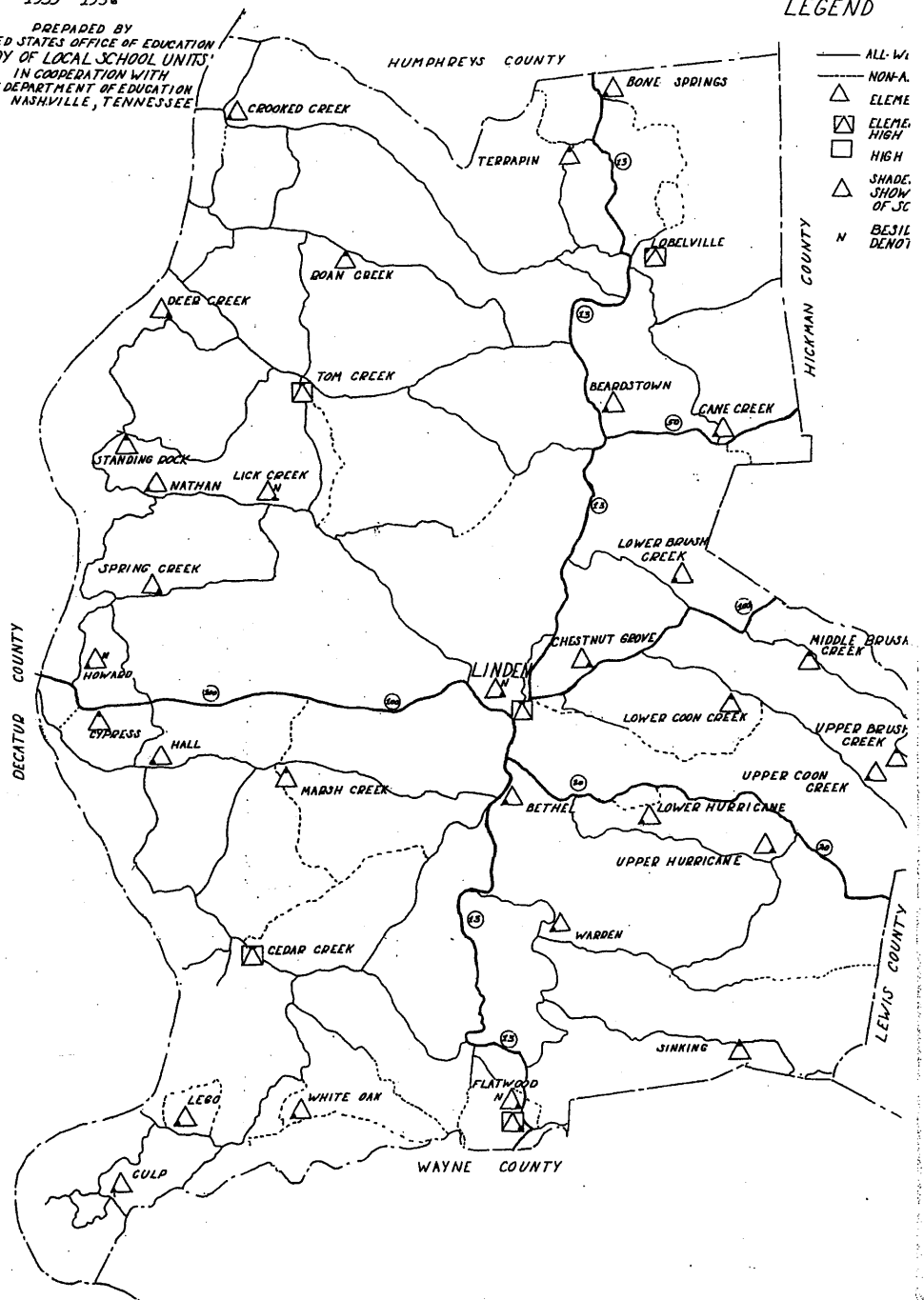
Road conditions of Perry County

ROAD CONDITIONS
OF
PERRY COUNTY
1935 - 1936

PREPARED BY
UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION
STUDY OF LOCAL SCHOOL UNITS
IN COOPERATION WITH
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

LEGEND

- ALL-WE
- - - - - NON-A.
- △ ELEM.
- ▣ ELEM. HIGH
- HIGH
- △ SHADE, SHOW OF JC
- N BESIL DENOT



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Craig Family Farm
Perry County, Tennessee

Pupil distribution in Perry County

PUPIL DISTRIBUTION
OF
PERRY COUNTY
1935 - 1936

PREPARED BY
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STUDY OF LOCAL SCHOOL UNITS
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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

- LEGEND
- WHITE ELEMENTARY PUPIL
 - × WHITE HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL
 - ◐ NEGRO ELEMENTARY PUPIL
 - ◑ NEGRO HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL
 - △ REFERENCE NUMBER OF SCHOOL NAME
 - ◐ SHADED AREA OF SYMBOL SHOWS EXACT LOCATION OF SCHOOL
 - N BESIDE SYMBOL DENOTES NEGRO SCHOOL

