

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only	
received	FEB 28 1985
date entered	MAR 28 1985

1. Name

historic Blackburn, Ambrose, Farmstead
and/or common John Sharp House

2. Location

street & number Gordonsburg Road N/A— not for publication
city, town Gordonsburg X— vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~
state Tennessee code 047 county Lewis code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Margaret S. York
street & number 508 Thomas Street
city, town Hohenwald N/A— vicinity of state Tennessee 38462

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lewis County Courthouse
street & number Public Square
city, town Hohenwald state Tennessee 38462

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date N/A N/A federal state county local
depository for survey records N/A
city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the old Gordonsburg Road near Swan Creek, one mile east of Gordonsburg and nine miles east of the Lewis County seat of Hohenwald, the Ambrose Blackburn house is an excellent example of the early pioneer farmsteads of southern Middle Tennessee. The log farmhouse, later covered in weatherboards, is one of the larger log buildings in the small and sparsely populated county on the western highland rim. Although a service ell was later added to the rear and a shed porch added to the front in Victorian times, the farmhouse retains its integrity of plan and scale. The house is surrounded by a number of outbuildings, including a smokehouse, a log corncrib, a well house, a privy, and two small barns. All of them are included in the nomination. The farm is located at the end of a long valley some one hundred yards northwest of Swan Creek, off a small dead end chert road. The new Columbia-Hohenwald Highway passes approximately five hundred yards behind and to the south of the house. The farm is surrounded by meadows and tobacco fields and steep hills covered with native hardwoods. Both the house and outbuildings have retained their architectural and historical integrity.

The one-and-one-half story house is constructed of cedar and white oak logs, dressed on four sides and roughly twelve to fourteen inches each in diameter. The log pen on the east end may have been the first constructed; it features a massive chimney of large rough fieldstone blocks. A second log pen, a foot or so lower in height, is located at the west end. This section, which features a gable end brick chimney on a limestone base, was probably originally connected to the other by an open breezeway or dogtrot. This front part of the house is covered with a side-gable roof, originally of wooden shakes and now of standing-seam metal, and rests on limestone piers. The log section was covered with weatherboard siding, possibly in the period between 1850 and 1870, the same time a low shed porch supported by turned posts was added to the front.

The north (front) elevation, three bays wide and arranged around a central chimney, faces toward the chert road. The door dates from the early Victorian period, and is decorated with dappled and incised trim. Double-hung sash windows with 4/4 lights are located to either side of the door, and a small four-light lookout window is centered over the door. A low one-story shed porch, supported by lathe-turned porch posts and scroll-sawn brackets, extends across most of the front. The porch's floor, which rests on stone piers is not original and is in very poor condition.

The east and west sides are plain weatherboarded gable ends with one 4/4 sash window each and exterior gable-end chimneys. The chimney on the east side is of rough fieldstone construction, while the chimney on the west is constructed of brick and rests on a limestone base.

The rear of the main section features a two-paneled wooden door at the back of the central hall and a 4/4 sash window at the rear of the west end. A small two-room service ell, probably constructed in the early part of the twentieth century, extends from the southeast corner. This frame section is topped by a metal gabled roof and features 4/4 double-hung sash windows, four-panel wooden doors, and an interior brick flue.

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The main story interior walls of the house are covered with plaster. The house contains two large rooms arranged around a central hall, which apparently was an open dogtrot or breezeway later enclosed. The room on the east end served as a parlor. Here the floors are constructed of pine boards, possibly replacing an earlier floor, and the ceiling is constructed of four-inch wide wooden boards of random length. A mantel supported by paneled pilasters and featuring a molded cornice is centered on the east wall. The room opposite (west end) served as a bedroom. It contains a paneled wooden mantel similar to that in the east room but here the fireplace is closed off to accommodate a wood stove. The room, whose floor is roughly one foot lower than the rest of the house, has a wooden board ceiling and floors of pine, partially covered by linoleum.

The upstairs consists of two rooms arranged around a central passage. The walls have not been plastered and still show the original logs as high as the roof sills. The gable end walls above this height are of weatherboard construction, and feature small four-light lookout windows on either side of the chimneys. The exposed roof rafters are 4" x 4" beams, lapped at the ridge and joined with pegs. The rafters are covered with wide roof boards, still pierced by many nails by which the wooden shakes were once attached. The rooms contain no fireplaces or other features, and are in a deteriorated condition.

The rear ell addition contains a small dining room and a kitchen, both of early twentieth century construction with little architectural significance. Although of more recent construction, this section is in relatively poor condition when compared to the original log section of the house.

Outbuildings are all one or two stories tall, constructed of vertical board or log, and in a deteriorated condition.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1806-1810 **Builder/Architect** Ambrose Blackburn

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ambrose Blackburn Farmstead is nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its significance to Lewis County in architecture and local history. The log farmstead, one mile east of Natchez Trace near Gordonsburg, was constructed ca. 1806-1810 and is significant as the site of the first meeting of the Lewis County Court following the county's creation in 1844. The weatherboarded log structure is one of the oldest buildings in rural Lewis County and is one of the best surviving log structures in the region. The house and its outbuildings present an excellent example of a Middle Tennessee farmstead, set amidst the rolling meadows of the picturesque Big Swan Creek valley.

The house was constructed between 1806 and 1810 by Ambrose Blackburn, a native of Ireland who settled in Georgia and later moved to the Middle Tennessee area. He served as a captain in the militia during the American Revolution, and is the only documented veteran of the war known to have settled in Lewis County. He died in 1820, and is buried just behind the house in a small cemetery. In 1820, census records shows his son, John Blackburn, and a family of five living in the house.

The Tennessee General Assembly created Lewis County out of parts of Maury, Lawrence, Wayne, and Hickman counties on December 23, 1843. Under direction of the General Assembly, the first meeting of the County Court was held at the home of John Blackburn on Swan Creek in March 1844. The first Circuit Court met in the farmstead's "shucking barn" or corncrib on March 25, with Edward Dillahunty presiding. (Maury and Lawrence Counties continued to provide for Lewis County in their Chancery Courts until 1874.) The first post office in the county was also located at the house.

A small log courthouse was soon constructed on a knoll near the Blackburn farmstead, and the place was named Gordon, for Powhatan Gordon whose company encamped there while en route to Florida for the Seminole War. A store was built near the courthouse but the settlement never flourished and a new county seat, "New-burg," was established four miles to the west in 1848. Newburg, now abandoned, was incorporated for a brief time around 1852, and served as the county seat until the court again moved to Hohenwald, the present location. The old log courthouse from Gordon was moved to Newburg in 1857, but no trace of it remains today.

The present village of Gordonsburg, one mile to the west does not date from this early period but was established after the discovery of phosphate here in the early twentieth century, leaving the corncrib and home of Blackburn the only extant buildings associated with the civic development of the area.

In 1904 the property became the home of the John Sharp family, and is still known locally as the old Sharp place. Mr. John Sharp, who died in 1982 at the age of 94, was the last person to occupy the house. The property is still owned by his family, and the farm itself remains in production.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property nine acres

Quadrangle name Gordonsburg, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	4	6	3	8	8	0	3	9	3	5	7	0	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

Zone	Easting			Northing										

D

Zone	Easting			Northing										

E

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H

Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification The property nominated is an irregular nine-acre lot, bounded on the south by Tennessee Highway 99, on the west by fence lines, and on the north and east by the old Gordonsburg-Hampshire Road. All lands historically associated with the property are included in the nomination.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Regional Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central TN Development District date October 31, 1984

street & number P. O. Box 1346 telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38402-1346

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Inge

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/13/85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

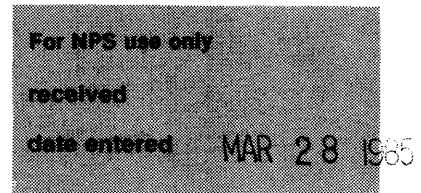
J. Wilbur
Keeper of the National Register date 3-26-85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Farmstead

The old Blackburn house is one of the largest and most interesting log houses in the region. The old dogtrot structure was weatherboarded years ago and the open central passage enclosed, but the house retains its original plan and most of its original interior elements. Several of the outbuildings survive, including the original log "shuck barn" where the first circuit court met, a smokehouse, well house, two small barns, and a privy. The small Blackburn family cemetery is located in the middle of the property. The house and outbuildings have retained their architectural and historical integrity.

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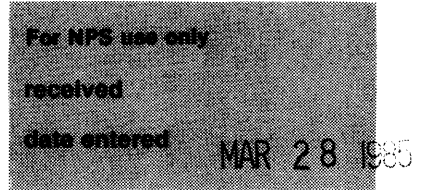
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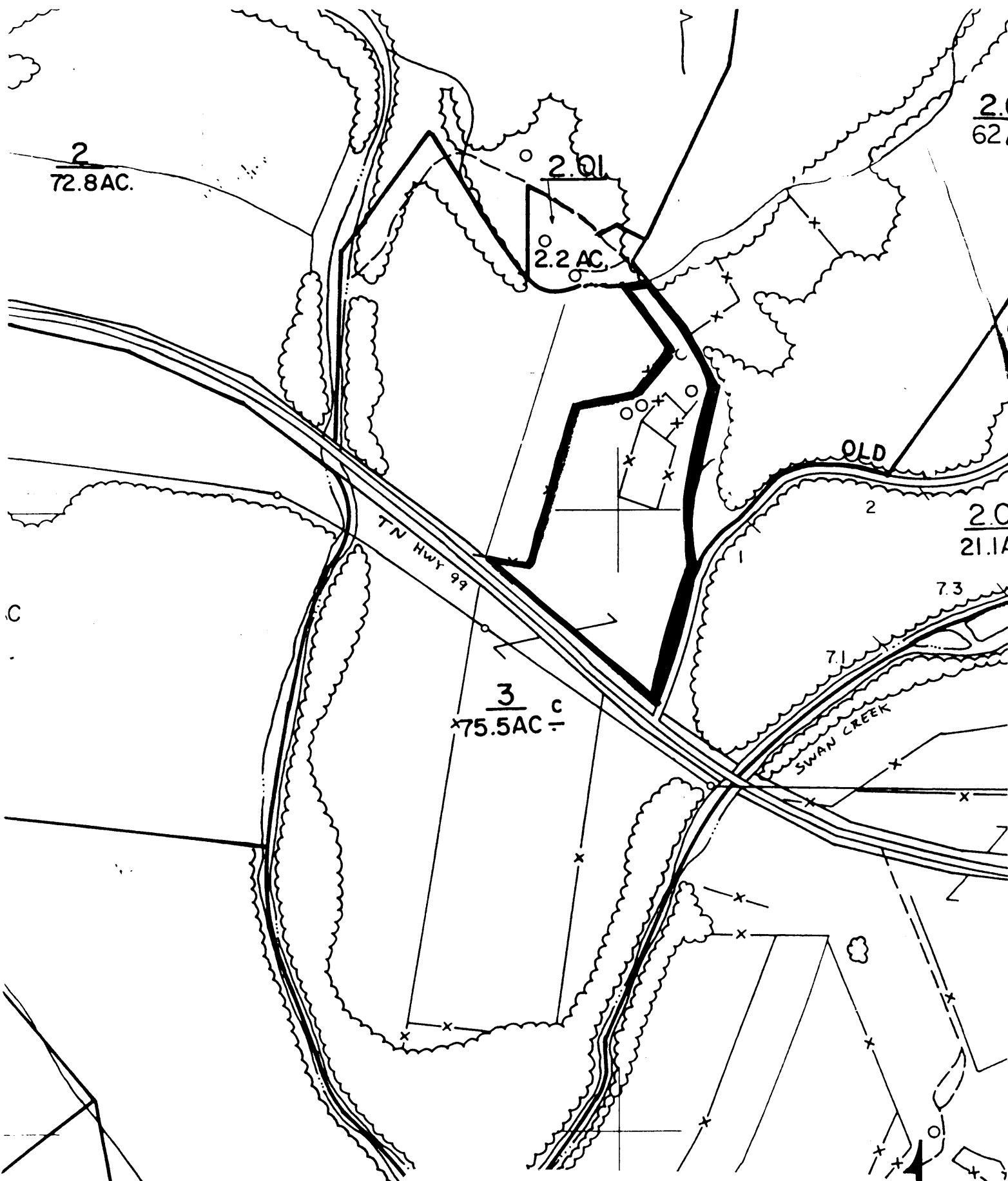
Garrett, Jill. "Gordonsburg Is Historic Site in Lewis County." (Columbia, Tennessee)
Daily Herald. 7 October, 1978, 4-5.

Goodspeed Histories of Lawrence, Wayne, Perry, Hickman and Lewis Counties, Tennessee 1886;
reprint edition, Columbia: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1975.

Graves, Marjorie. Personal Interview. Spring 1984.

Maury County, Federal Census Records. 1820, 1830.

York, Wilma Personal Interview. Spring 1984.



Blackburn, Ambrose, Farmstead
 Old Gordonsburg Road
 Gordonsburg vicinity, Lewis County,
 Tennessee

Tax Map 1" = 400'

