

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

3992

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pickens, R. A., II, House

Other names/site number: Site #DE0266

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1 Pickens Place

City or town: Pickens State: AR County: Desha

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

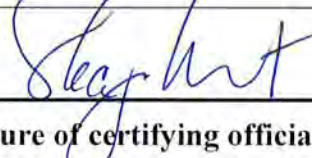
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

	<u>4-3-19</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

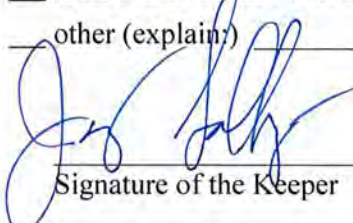
Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) _____


Signature of the Keeper

5-29-2019
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

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, TILE, ASPHALT, STUCCO

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The R. A. Pickens, II, House is located in the town of Pickens in the southeast region of Arkansas in Desha County. The eastern border of Desha County is the Mississippi River. This region is commonly referred to as the Arkansas/Mississippi Delta region known for its agricultural community and cotton-based economy, and it is a rural area of the state. The R. A. Pickens, II, House is part of the Pickens Plantation Community and was built as a single-family dwelling for the Pickens family. The R. A. Pickens, II, House is a two-and-a-half-story brick Colonial Revival-style structure built c. 1940. The approximately 5,000 square foot home has several significant site features including a garage with living quarters, stable, gardens, pergola and water feature. The home itself has the following architectural features: brick front porch with six columns, front door with leaded glass side and fan lights, four eight-over-sixteen double-hung windows on the lower level, five double-hung eight-over-eight windows on the upper level with shutters, metal decorative railings at the front door and center upper window, an entablature with dentil molding, three dormer windows on the gable roof, and flanking brick chimneys.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Narrative Description

ELABORATION

The R. A. Pickens, II, House is a two-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival-style house located in the town of Pickens in the southeast region of Arkansas in Desha County. The R. A. Pickens, II, House is part of the Pickens Plantation Community and was built as a single-family dwelling for the Pickens family c.1940. The Pickens Plantation, including the town of Pickens, is still owned by members of the family today. The approximately 5,000 square foot home has several significant site features including a garage with living quarters, stable, gardens, pergola and water feature. The home itself has the following architectural features: brick front porch with six columns, front door with leaded glass side and fan lights, four eight-over-sixteen double-hung windows on the lower level, five double-hung eight-over-eight windows on the upper level with shutters, metal decorative railings at the front door and center upper window, an entablature with dentil molding, three dormer windows on the gable roof, and flanking brick chimneys. Although the house has been vacant for several years, the property has had very few alterations, and reflects the characteristics of the Colonial Revival style that make it significant.

MAIN HOUSE - Contributing:

West Façade:

The main body of the two story house is white brick and symmetrical in design with two eight-over-sixteen, double-hung windows on each side of the ten panel wood front door on the first floor. A beveled leaded glass arched fan light with decorative keystone embellishment is above the door with coordinating side lights. A wrought-iron handrail is on each side of the three brick entry steps to the front door. The covered herringbone-patterned brick porch is supported by six square wood Doric-style columns. Two square wood pilasters flank the edges of the porch. The central window on the second floor is an eight-over-eight, double-hung window that has a wrought-iron Juliet balcony and is flanked on each side by two eight-over-eight, double-hung windows with black shutters. A central lantern pendant light fixture hangs from the tongue and groove wood ceiling of the porch. The entablature on the front porch is adorned with dentil molding. The roof is pierced with three six-over-six, double-hung dormer windows at the attic level and has composite shingles.

To the right of the main body of the house is a one-story section that is a sun porch with a flat roof. The section is fenestrated on the west side by a pair of twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows. A wrought-iron railing encircles the sun porch's roof. The second floor of the house also has a projection that is recessed from the front façade, and the projection is fenestrated by a single six-over-six, double-hung window.

South Façade:

The south façade is "U" shaped with a courtyard separating the main house from the back wing. The main house has a group of three twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows in the sun porch portion of the façade. The sun porch is topped with a second-floor balcony with wrought-iron railing that extends from the main house. A nine-over-nine wood frame bay window extends

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

from the façade and it is fenestrated with three nine-over-nine, double-hung windows, and the second floor of this section of the house is fenestrated with two six-over-six, double-hung windows. A gravel courtyard separates the two wings of the house with a recessed façade. The recessed portion of the façade is one level and has a white brick façade with a pair of ten-pane, casement windows with a brick sill. The façade of the back wing is a wood-framed screened porch topped by triangular pediment with dentil molding, a four-pane oculus window, and four columns.

East Façade:

The east facade of the main house comprises part of the courtyard described above. The courtyard portion of the two-story façade has two twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows with brick sills, one on each floor at the south end of the façade. To the right of the window on the second floor is a six-over-six, double-hung window, which is followed by the arched full-length leaded-glass window at the interior stair landing. The attic floor of the main part of the house has a shed-roofed dormer in the center that is fenestrated by a pair of eight-pane casement windows.

The north end of the east façade of the main portion of the house is fenestrated on the first floor by a nine-over-nine, double-hung window and it is fenestrated on the second floor by a six-over-six, double-hung window at the north end with an eight-over-eight, double-hung window to its south.

The east façade of the rear wing of the house is asymmetrical and includes the east side of the wood screened porch on the south side of the rear of the house. The screened porch is followed by the exterior façade of the den of the back wing, which is fenestrated by a mass of six, eight-pane casement windows. To the north of the casement windows is a white brick chimney. The rear entry area is on the north side of the back façade under a rear-facing gable roof with one six-over-six, double-hung window flanking the south side of the door. A triangular pediment is above the rear window and entrance.

North Façade:

The north façade of the main part of the house has two sections. The front section of the main part has a central chimney flanked by nine-over-nine, double-hung windows on the ground floor and six-over-six, double-hung windows on the second floor. The rear section of the façade of the main part of the house projects slightly, and also has a central chimney. The chimney is also flanked by nine-over-nine, double-hung windows on the ground floor and six-over-six, double-hung windows on the second floor. Both sections of the façade are capped with triangular pediments.

A one-story rear ell level is located to the east of the main house. Where it joins the main house, it is fenestrated by a single twelve-over-twelve, double-hung window followed by a pair of ten-pane casement windows. To the east is a recessed part of the façade that is sided in wood weatherboard siding and this section of the façade is fenestrated by two one-over-one windows. This section of the façade is connected to the free-standing garage by an open loggia.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Interior:

The house's main living areas are on the ground floor and have had very little alteration. All of the original wallpapers, fabrics, built-ins, finishes, and fixtures are still in the home. The center of the home is dominated by a curved grand stair with a leaded-glass floor-to-ceiling window at the landing. The dining room, kitchen and butler's pantry are on the north side of the grand entryway. The library and office area are on the south side of the entryway. The private areas of the home are all on the second floor and are comprised of five bedrooms and three baths, which still retain most of the original fixtures. A pull down attic stair reveals a floored attic spanning the length of the house.

GARAGE – Contributing:

The stucco three-car garage has an apartment above and three bay door openings on the first floor of the west façade. It is topped by a gable roof covered with clay tiles. The garage doors are wood with two horizontal rows of eight windows. The second floor of the west façade has a shed-roofed dormer that is fenestrated by two pairs of nine-over-one, double-hung windows. The north façade of the garage is fenestrated on the first floor by at least one nine-over-one, double-hung window, and three nine-over-one windows on the second floor. The east façade of the garage is fenestrated by three nine-over-one, double-hung windows on the first floor, and the second floor has a shed-roofed dormer that is fenestrated by two pairs of nine-over-one, double-hung windows. The south façade, on the first floor, has two entrances – the west entrance, which has a wood panel door with a three-pane window in the top half, goes into the garage. The east entrance, which has a modern wood door with three small rectangular windows in a diagonal line, accesses the stairs for the upstairs apartment. The second floor of the south façade is fenestrated by three nine-over-one windows.

STABLE – Contributing:

The stable is a one-story stucco-covered building located to the west of the main house that is topped by a gable roof covered with clay tiles. The west façade of the building has a large pair of wood doors to the right of the façade's center. To the right of the doors is a single nine-over-one window while two three nine-over-one windows are to the right of the doors. The building's south façade is fenestrated by two six-over-one, double-hung windows near the west end and a single long, rectangular six-pane window near the east end. Much of the east façade is obscured by vegetation, but a large pair of wood doors matching those on the front of the building are visible. The building's north façade matches the south façade and is fenestrated by two six-over-one, double-hung windows near the west end and a single long, rectangular six-pane window near the east end.

PERGOLA/GARDENS – Contributing:

The property's gardens are in two sections, a section to the north of the house and a section to the west of the house. The rear garden has a wood pergola that is on a raised red-brick patio. It originally had six support beams crowned with several horizontal beams with wisteria vines weaving through the structure. To the west of the pergola is a brick wall with a central water feature. The garden beds in all of the gardens are lined with red-brick walkways.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

GATES – Contributing:

The entry gates are square and built out of brick with slight corbelling at the top of each post. In addition, each post is capped with a concrete pinecone and acanthus leaf finial decoration.

Integrity:

The R. A. Pickens, II, House has excellent integrity from the time of its construction in the 1940s. Changes to the house and the outbuildings have been minor and mainly cosmetic in nature. The house still reflects its original design and still retains the character-defining features that identify it as an example of the Colonial Revival style. The setting around the house also still reflects the setting of the property at the time of its construction. The setting around the Pickens House consists of the center of the Pickens Plantation, all of which is still owned by members of the Pickens family. The buildings that exist around the house, with the exception of the post office on the west side of the railroad line and the house immediately to the north, existed when the house was built. The outstanding integrity of the house and its setting allow it to very easily convey those qualities that make it significant.

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.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c.1940

Significant Dates

c.1940

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The R. A. Pickens, II, House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** for its importance as an outstanding example of the Colonial Revival style in Pickens, Desha County, Arkansas. The design of the R. A. Pickens, II, House is an excellent representation of the Colonial Revival style from the period around World War II. Although the style had its heyday in the early twentieth century, it continued to be popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, partially influenced by the activities at Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s. As McAlester states in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, “These later examples are most often of the side-gabled type, with simple stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.” The Pickens House is a textbook example of a late 1940s Colonial Revival style residence.¹

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Desha County was formed on December 12, 1838, and was named after Captain Ben Desha. Desha, whose brother Joseph Desha was a general in the U.S. Army and governor of Kentucky, was appointed by James Monroe as the receiver of public moneys in the Arkansas Territory in 1822. Although a portion of Desha County was attached to Drew County on January 21, 1861, a part of Chicot County was annexed to Desha County on February 10, 1879, and a portion of Lincoln County was annexed on March 10, 1880.²

¹ *Ibid.*

² *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890, p. 997, and Information on Desha County from www.couchgenweb.com/arkansas/desha.

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Desha County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

In its early days, the development of the county was severely hampered by the Mississippi River, which often inundated the area, destroying property and retarding the growth of crops. It was only after the record 1927 Mississippi River flood that Congress authorized a federal program of river control, which really made large-scale agriculture a safer reality.³

The Pickens area community was established due to the relocation of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad from Pine Bluff (Jefferson County) to Napoleon (Desha County) in 1879. Napoleon was once the county seat of Desha County and was located where the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers converged. A train station was located at Pickens for a time. The train station and post office were originally named Walnut Lake when they were established in 1879, but the post office name was changed to Pickens in 1932 in conjunction with the community name change.⁴

The Pickens family had a major influence on the agriculture and the economy of Desha County. Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., and his brother, William S. Pickens, founded the plantation now known as "R. A. Pickens and Son Company" in 1881. Because the founding of this plantation occurred after the Civil War, the plantation has never been associated with slave labor, a practice that the Pickens family viewed as immoral. At the age of 14, R. A. Pickens and his family gathered a private partnership of individuals to invest in the original purchase of acreage from the Stanley brothers. This initial purchase eventually expanded the plantation to nearly fifteen thousand acres. "R. A. Pickens and Son Company" has perpetually existed as a working plantation for over 130 years. The Pickens family also donated the land for the placement of the Walnut Lake Cemetery, which is one of the largest cemeteries in Desha County. The Walnut Lake Country Club also sits on donated land from the Pickens family.⁵

According to Goodspeed's 1891 history of the area, "the Pickens family owned 400 acres of fertile land with sixty acres under cotton and corn cultivation in 1891; the plantation eventually grew to 14,294 acres. R. A. Pickens established a large mercantile store stocked with merchandise worth \$5,000 to \$8,000 and did an exceptional business."⁶ This store later functioned as a plantation commissary, but it burned around 1948 and was rebuilt. It remains a store and popular restaurant today.⁷

Many acres were later purchased and cleared of their virgin timber, which was shipped via the railroad. The timber industry was at its height in the 1920s in Pickens and all of Desha County with many sawmills operating along the railroad tracks. Before mechanization in the 1950s,

³ West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication, p. 43.

⁴ Pennington, Helen. "Pickens, (Desha County)." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Central Arkansas Library System, updated July 7, 2018. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=6602>.

⁵ *Desha County Historical Society 1838-2015 Special Edition*. Clarion Publishing Co., Dumas, Arkansas, 71639, 2013.

⁶ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago, IL: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890, p. 1039.

⁷ Lunsford, Roger. Oral history. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Desha County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

many farm laborers/tenant farmers/sharecroppers worked in the area. There were approximately 425 houses on the Pickens Plantation when electrical service was made available by the C&L Rural Electric Cooperative in the late 1940s. The township had steady growth in population as R. A. Pickens added a saw mill, cotton gin, water tower, mercantile commissary and housing for the 700 people that worked on the plantation.⁸

Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., born October 14, 1852, was the son of William Henry Pickens and Susan Stanley Pickens. The family moved from Fayette County, Tennessee, to Selma in Drew County, Arkansas. At 23 years of age, Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., began farming and eventually settled at Walnut Lake, Arkansas, in 1881. Pickens married Susan Potts Pickens on January 3, 1878, in Selma, Arkansas. The couple had three children: Burton Cecil "B. C." Pickens born December 27, 1878; Katie May Pickens, born in 1880; and an infant son, Eddie Stanley Pickens, who was born in 1882 but survived only for seven months. Sue Potts Pickens died on March 8, 1883, after an illness.⁹

Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., and his brother, William S. Pickens, continued to run the growing plantation and became civic leaders in the nearby town of Dumas, Arkansas. Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., was a member of the Methodist church, an active Mason, member of the Dumas Public School Board, and Director of the Merchants & Farmers Bank Board. Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr., married a second time to Lucy Mallory Bickers on September 1, 1887. William S. Pickens died in 1923 followed by Reuben Adolphus Pickens, Sr's., death in 1926.¹⁰

Burton Cecil "B.C." Pickens was the next generation to operate the R. A. Pickens and Son Company. He successfully navigated the plantation through the great Mississippi River flood of 1927 and also through the years of the Great Depression. Burton Cecil "B.C." Pickens married Olye Cox in 1905. The couple had four children: an infant that died shortly after birth in 1913; Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, in 1915; Burton Cecil Pickens, Jr., who died at age nine of appendicitis in 1927; and an adopted daughter Barbara Jean (Stanley) in 1923.¹¹

Burton Cecil "B.C." Pickens was a senior partner in the private company for over six years where he established the "B.C. Pickens Trust" that continues to fund education and children's hospitals. He was also a strong civic leader in Dumas, serving on the Board of Directors of the Merchants & Farmers Bank, being a Mason, serving as a board member of the Dumas School System, and also serving as Desha County Chairman of the Red Cross. Burton Cecil "B.C." Pickens, like his namesake son, died of complications from appendicitis on March 17, 1932.¹²

⁸ *Desha County Historical Society 1838-2015 Special Edition*. Clarion Publishing Co., Dumas, Arkansas, 71639, 2013.

⁹ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹⁰ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹¹ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹² Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas

County and State

The surviving son, Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, at age 15, was a new student at Washington & Lee University. Learning of the news of his father's death, he transferred to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in order to be closer to his mother and the family farm while receiving his education. While a student at the University of Arkansas, Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, met and married Madelyn Smith of Wheatley, Arkansas. The couple returned to the family home to manage the workings of the plantation. They had three children together.¹³

In the mid-1940s, Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, Madelyn Smith Pickens and their three children moved from the original home structure for three years during a major remodel of the property. The original home was disassembled to save architectural elements for re-use during the remodel. The original brick was used on the exterior of the home remodeled into a Colonial Revival style home.¹⁴

By the 1940s when the current Pickens House was built, the house was designed in the favored Colonial Revival style of architecture. The Colonial Revival style began its rise in popularity in the 1870s, and was specifically influenced by two events – the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876 and the widely publicized 1877 New England tour of the popular architects McKim, Mead, White, and Bigelow to study historic Georgian and Adamesque buildings first-hand. However, the early examples of the Colonial Revival style are rarely accurate copies of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century originals. Rather, they take colonial details and interpret them freely.¹⁵

However, by the early twentieth century, buildings built in the Colonial Revival style became more accurate interpretations of the historical precedents. Two publications in the first part of the era greatly influenced the development of the style. The first publication was *The American Architect and Building News*, which in 1898 started a large series titled “The Georgian Period: Being photographs and measured drawings of Colonial Work with text.” The second publication was the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*, which began in 1915, and extensively documented colonial buildings through photographs. These two publications, among others, brought more accurate information on colonial buildings and styles, which allowed a wider audience to have a better understanding of the style. As a result, buildings designed in the Colonial Revival style during the 1915-1935 period tend to more accurately resemble colonial buildings than previous attempts at the style did.¹⁶

Although the style continued to be popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, partially influenced by the activities at Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s, later examples of the style tended to be simpler than the buildings from the early twentieth century. The simplification of

¹³ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹⁴ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹⁵ McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994, p. 326.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Desha County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

the style was influenced by several factors, including the Depression, World War II, and changing fashions after World War II. As McAlester states in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, “These later examples are most often of the side-gabled type, with simple stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.” The Pickens House is a textbook example of a 1940s-era Colonial Revival style residence.¹⁷

Madelyn Smith Pickens succumbed to cancer in 1968 leaving Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, alone in the house. He remarried in 1972 to Carolyn Ruth McCaleb Blackwell who had three children of her own. The family moved into the Pickens Plantation House in 1972. The eldest child of Carolyn Ruth McCaleb Blackwell, Laurie Blackwell, enjoyed living and working in Pickens and maintained a very close relationship with her stepfather who she referred to as “Dad.”¹⁸

Reuben Adolphus Pickens, II, died in the home on April 10, 1991, with Laurie Blackwell at his side. Carolyn Ruth McCaleb Blackwell moved out of the home leaving it vacant for most of the years to follow. Already suffering from natural deterioration, the vacant house had a pipe burst from freezing temperatures flooding the home with freezing water. The devastation went undiscovered for over a week making the home no longer habitable. The water and electricity were disconnected and the home was left abandoned and slated for demolition. However, in 2018, the Pickens Farm Plantation gave Laurie Blackwell a ten-year window to secure the funding to restore the home or face certain demolition.¹⁹

The R. A. Pickens House remains today a great example of the Colonial Revival style. It also remains as a testament to the legacy of R. A. Pickens and his impact on the architecture of the Pickens community during the early and mid-twentieth century.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The design of the R. A. Pickens, II, House is an excellent representation of the Colonial Revival style from the period around World War II. Although the style had its heyday in the early twentieth century, it continued to be popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, partially influenced by the activities at Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s. Most later examples of the style tended to be simpler than the buildings from the early twentieth century, but the Pickens House bucks that trend, being a fairly elaborate example of the style. However, it shows the status of the Pickens Family, and also is indicative of the fact that the Pickens Family would have had a larger budget than most people in the state at the time.

Even so, the Pickens House illustrates many of the characteristics that are described for examples of the period in *A Field Guide to American Houses*. As McAlester states in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, “These later examples are most often of the side-gabled type, with simple

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

¹⁹ Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.” The Pickens House is a textbook example of a 1940s-era Colonial Revival style residence.²⁰ Due to the fact that the R. A. Pickens, II, House is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style in Pickens, it is being nominated to the National Register with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago, IL: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890.

DeArmond-Huskey, Rebecca. *Bartholomew's Song: A Bayou History*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books Inc., 2001.

Blackwell Black, Laurie. Oral history. Step daughter of R. A. Pickens II. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

Desha County Historical Society 1838-2015 Special Edition. Clarion Publishing Co., Dumas, Arkansas, 71639, 2013.

Lunsford, Roger. Oral history. September 22, 2018. Ann Ballard Bryan, interviewer. Transcript location: 202 McAlister Hall, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

Nelson, Rex. "Southern Fried", <http://www.rexnelsonsouthernfried.com/>.

Pennington, Helen. "Pickens, (Desha County)." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Central Arkansas Library System, updated July 7, 2018. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=6602>.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Dumas, Desha County, Arkansas. January, 1928.

United States Federal Census Rolls: 1880-1990.

West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication.

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DE0266

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately three acres.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 640503 | Northing: 3745872 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Parcel #002-00246-001. Lot 4, Block 1 of the Walnut Lake Subdivision.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary contains all of the land historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ann Ballard Bryan, University of Central Arkansas, edited by Ralph S. Wilcox,
National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 1100 North Street

city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201

E-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov

telephone: (501) 324-9787

date: January 9, 2019

Pickens, R. A., II, House
Name of Property

Desha County, Arkansas
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: R. A. Pickens, II, House

City or Vicinity: Pickens

County: Desha County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: October 24, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 28 . View of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, Garage, and Gates, looking southeast.

2 of 28 . View of the west façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.

3 of 28 . View of the north façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Desha County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

- 4 of 28 . View of the north and west façades of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southwest.
- 5 of 28 . View of the east façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northwest.
- 6 of 28 . View of the east and south façades of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northwest.
- 7 of 28 . View of the east part of the south façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northeast.
- 8 of 28 . View of the central part of the south façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northwest.
- 9 of 28 . View of the west part of the south façade of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northeast.
- 10 of 28 . Detail of the main entrance of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.
- 11 of 28 . Doorway between the entrance hall and stair hall of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northeast.
- 12 of 28 . View of the living room of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking south.
- 13 of 28 . View of the family room of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking south.
- 14 of 28 . Detail of the main staircase of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking east.
- 15 of 28 . View of the leaded-glass window along the main staircase of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.
- 16 of 28 . Detail of the leaded-glass sidelight of the main entrance of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northwest.
- 17 of 28 . West façade of the Garage of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.
- 18 of 28 . North façade of the Garage of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.
- 19 of 28 . East façade of the Garage of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southwest.
- 20 of 28 . East façade of the Garage of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northwest.
- 21 of 28 . South façade of the Garage of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking north.

Pickens, R. A., II, House

Desha County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

22 of 28 . North and west façades of the Stable of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southeast.

23 of 28 . North and east façades of the Stable of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking southwest.

24 of 28 . South and west façades of the Stable of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northeast.

25 of 28 . Gardens and Pergola of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking west.

26 of 28 . Fountain detail in the Gardens of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking west.

27 of 28 . Gardens of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking north.

28 of 28 . Detail of the Gates of the R. A. Pickens, II, House, looking northeast.

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



|-----153 feet-----|

R. A. Pickens, II, House
Pickens, Desha County, Arkansas

15 640503E 3745872N



North



|-----1327 feet-----|

R. A. Pickens, II, House
Pickens, Desha County, Arkansas

15 640503E 3745872N



North



|-----169'-----|

R. A. Pickens, II, House

Pickens, Desha County, Arkansas

----- = National Register Boundary



North

























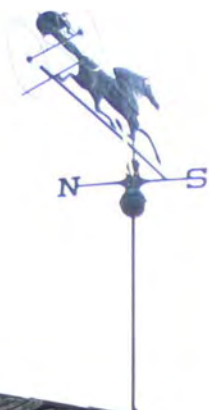
































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Pickens, R.A., II, House

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: ARKANSAS, Desha

Date Received: 4/16/2019 Date of Pending List: 5/2/2019 Date of 16th Day: 5/17/2019 Date of 45th Day: 5/31/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003992

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review: _____

X Accept Return Reject 5/29/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: A really good example of Colonial Revival in a rural setting. Home of one of the owners of a vast plantation acreage, the house bespeaks the wealth and prosperity of the family

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director



April 3, 2019

Joy Beasley, Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington D.C. 20240

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: R. A. Pickens, II, House – Pickens, Desha County, Arkansas

Dear Ms. Beasley:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the R. A. Pickens, II, House to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure



ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



1100 North Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880
fax: (501) 324-9184

info@arkansaspreservation.org
www.arkansaspreservation.com

An Equal Opportunity Employer