NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018
RS10000200

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: Farm No. 266, Johnny Cash Boyhood Home
Other names/site number: Ray and Carrie Cash Home; MS0345
Name of related multiple property listing:
"An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 4791 West County Road 924
City or town: Dyess State: AR County: Mississippi
Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [X]

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 X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A X B X C ___D

April 4, 2018

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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 For — Date of Action: 5·2·2018

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	☐
Public – Local	☐
Public – State	x
Public – Federal	☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	☐
Site	☐
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites

0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Colonial Revival

Other: Front Gable Vernacular Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

Roof: ASPHALT: Shingles

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

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Summary Paragraph

Farm No. 266, also known as the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, is located at 4791 West County Road 924 on the south side of the road near Dyess, Arkansas. The house was built in 1934 and was designed by the Arkansas architect Howard Eichenbaum as part of the development of Resettlement Colony No. 1 by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The house was designed as a standard five-room take on the vernacular architecture of the Delta, with Colonial Revival style elements that were customary in New Deal architecture. The house sits on a foundation of historic concrete piers set on a hidden two-foot wide concrete foundation, and it has a split gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The one story, irregular- shaped building is clad in weatherboard, and has a covered porch over one-third of the main façade which faces north. The house's windows are a mixture of four-over-four double-hung windows.

Narrative Description

The five-room farmhouse for Farm No. 266 is located at 4791 West County Road 924 on the south side of the road near Dyess, Arkansas. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) constructed the house in 1934 using standard plans designed by the Arkansas architect Howard Eichenbaum as part of the development of Resettlement Colony No. 1. The house was designed with two bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room and bathroom. The exterior of the house shows the traditional vernacular architecture of the Delta, with Colonial Revival style elements that were customary in New Deal architecture. The house sits on newly settled ground with a historic concrete piers set on a hidden two-foot wide concrete foundation, and it has a split gable roof covered in asphalt shingles that has two brick chimneys. The one story, irregular-shaped building is clad in weatherboard, and has a covered porch over one-third of the main façade which faces north. The house's windows are a mixture of four-over-four double-hung windows adding to the house's vernacular character. Between 2011 and 2014, the house underwent a massive renovation back to its 1930s-era appearance as part of the development of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home Heritage Site.

Front/North Façade

The front façade of the house at Farm No. 266 is divided into three bays. The easternmost bay of the façade consists of one-story fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window with wooden false shutters with a half moon near the top, and a wooden flower planter beneath the window. The next bay comprises the main portion of the house. It contains the main entrance, a wood panel door that is flanked by two, four-over-four double-hung windows. This bay also has

the one-third size front porch that has a shed roof off the gable roofline. The porch supports and balusters are a collection of geometric diamond shapes and vertical beams that are similar to the Modern Art of the 1930s. The third bay on the main façade is the front gable wing that was added at a right angle to the side gable home. Like the easternmost bay, it is fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window with wooden false shutters with a half-moon near the top, and a wooden flower planter beneath the window. Additionally a triangle gable vent is in the gable. Five of the concrete foundational piers are visible on the main façade.

Side/West Façade

The west façade is also three bays wide with the north and south bays containing two four-over-four double-hung windows, and a single four-over-four single-hung window in the middle bay that serves as the window for the bathroom. The roofline consists of the side portion of the gable roof, and four of the concrete foundational piers are visible on the west façade.

Rear/South Façade

Like the front, the rear of the house is divided into three bays. The westernmost bay of the façade consists of the front gable wing that was added at a right angle to the side gable home. It is fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window, and has a triangular gable vent. The next bay contains two four-over-four double-hung windows. The final bay contains a one-third size screened-in porch that has a shed roof off the gable roofline. The porch supports are non-decorative. Inside the porch is a single four-over-four double hung window and wooden door. Five of the concrete foundational piers are visible on the south façade. The rear also sports non-historic steps and an Americans with Disability Act compliant ramp. Both the steps and the ramp were not painted to aid in identifying them as non-historic elements of the house.

Side/East Façade

The east façade is also three bays wide with the north bay containing two four-over-four double-hung windows, the middle bay having two four-over-four single-hung windows, and the southernmost bay being the wooden-framed screen door entrance to the back porch. Additionally a triangle shaped gable vent is located in the gable on this facade. Five of the concrete foundational piers are visible on the east façade.

Interior

The interior of the farmhouse is divided into two bedrooms and a bathroom on the western side of the house. A living room and dining room is located on the north side of the house, and kitchen across the rear of the house. In the 1970s, a new kitchen was installed in the house and in the 1980s the doors from the kitchen and dining room to the living room were altered. Also during the 1970s the owners altered the windows on the main façade and simulated wood

paneling was placed over the interior walls. During this renovation, the historic wood stove was removed from the center of the living room, and a sliding patio door was added for entry to the rear wood deck.[1] During the renovation from 2011 to 2014, the house was returned to its 1930s-era appearance. This was done with the use of the original plans, historic research into the typical appearance and layout of the houses, as well as input from the Cash family. Based on the historical research conducted by the Arkansas State University Heritage Sites Program, the renovation and decorating of the house have been returned to its 1930s-era appearance when the Cash family occupied the house.

Integrity

Overall, the Farmhouse at Farm No. 266 retains good integrity. The house has been the subject of an extensive renovation, which was done under consultation with the Arkansas SHPO, and the house retains much of its original 1930s vernacular/Colonial Revival design. The property retains the feeling of a farmhouse from the 1930s-era Dyess Colony. The largest change to the property's integrity centers on its setting. The barn, smokehouse, chicken coop, and privy have been demolished, and the University does not own the entire 40 acres that the Cash Family farmed. Furthermore, to aid in protecting the house, a new chain fence was placed around the property, as well as a new ADA compliant ramp placed on the rear façade.

[1]John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, April 2010, 3. p. 17.

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.
- [x] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] 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 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.)

PERFORMING ARTS
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1934-1954

Significant Dates
May 1934
1935

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Architect: Howard Eichenbaum
Builder: Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA)

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.)

Farm No. 266, also known as the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, is a New Deal-era, five-room, farmhouse constructed by Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony in Mississippi County, Arkansas. The house, located at 4791 West County Road 924, was originally the home of the Ray and Carrie Cash family that included American Country music legend, Johnny Cash. Farm No. 266 is located approximately a mile northwest of the colony center in a rural landscape that is currently used for farming. The Farm No. 266 House is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion B**, with **State-wide significance**, under Performing Arts for the property's association with the early life of J.R. "Johnny" Cash and the influence of the area on his later musical career. This property and the surrounding landscape had a profound impact on Johnny Cash's later career as seen in his later music and in his various recounting of his childhood in Dyess. The house is also eligible under **Criterion C**, with **local significance,** as an example of FERA constructed residence in the Dyess Colony. This property is also being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."[2] The house is one of the residences constructed as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony, which was listed on the National Register of the Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976 for its national significance; however, Farm No. 266 was not included in the original NRHP nomination's boundary.[3] The period of significance for the home is 1934 until 1954, the date of its construction until the date the Cash family, an original settlement family, sold it.

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

Elaboration

The restored five-room farmhouse located at Farm No. 266, Dyess Colony, Arkansas, is currently a house museum, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, operated by the Arkansas State University's Heritage Sites Program. The museum tells the story of the New Deal, the Dyess Colony, and Johnny Cash. The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home is associated with many important themes in twentieth century American History, and has a direct connection to the plight of farmers in Arkansas during the Great Depression, New Deal-era efforts by the Federal government to assist those farmers, as well as the early musical influences on Johnny Cash,

[2] Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[3] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Available at: http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/national-register-listings/dyess-colony-center.

winner of numerous music industry awards; a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Memphis Music Hall of Fame, Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, Rockabilly Hall of Fame, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; recipient of the National Medal of Arts; and the Kennedy Center Honors.

Sharecropping in Arkansas

The story of Farm No. 266 is linked to the agricultural history of northeast Arkansas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before the Civil War, large-scale plantation-type farming, prevalent in other parts of the South, had not taken root in the northeast Arkansas Delta because of the swamps. In 1850, Congress passed the Swamp Land Grant Act that would allow for selling of swamplands and using the proceeds to create levees to drain the areas.[4] The 1860 census lists 3,895 inhabitants in Mississippi County, and most were located in several large plantations, near the Mississippi River. [5]

In the areas that were settled, local planters introduced cotton as the cash crop into the region after discovering that the rich Delta soil would produce large quantities of the crop, and those crops could be sold at higher than normal prices. Because of the growth of cotton, the population of the Delta region of Arkansas grew over 100 percent from 1850 to 1860, and the slave population, which was primarily responsible for the work in the fields, grew over 120 percent. However, with the defeat of the southern states in the Civil War, and the emancipation of the enslaved population, landowners began searching for an alternative farm labor source.[6]

In response to no longer being able to utilize slave labor, in 1866, many Arkansas landowners began using wage contracts as the new form of agricultural labor. Historian C. Fred Williams contends that the wage contracts "quickly evolved to tenant and sharecropping contracts that allowed the underclass farm hands and the landowners to meet mutual needs."[7] However, the system was organized so that tenant sharecroppers would soon become economically indebted to the landowner. The sharecroppers were advanced money from the landowner to purchase supplies, tools, and seed to farm the land, and were obligated to pay the landowner back for the "rent" of the land, as well as the supplies. Many times, the crops grown would not pay back the debts, and quickly the sharecropper would become so indebted to the landowner, that they could

[4] Mary Suter, "Swamp Land Act of 1850," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[5] Ruth Hale, "Mississippi County," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[6] C. Fred Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net. For a discussion of pre-Civil War development of agriculture in the Arkansas Delta, see Jeannie M. Whayne, and Willard B. Gatewood Jr., eds. *The Arkansas Delta: Land of Paradox*. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993) and Donald P. McNeilly, *The Old South Frontier: Cotton Plantations and the Formation of Arkansas Society, 1819–1861*. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000).

[7] Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture.*

never leave their employment.[8] Many sharecroppers in Arkansas blamed the commissary system on keeping the farmers poor, and felt that the system kept the farmers so poor they barely could get any profit at the end of the year.[9]

Even before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, farmers in Arkansas were already suffering.[10] From the 1860s to the 1920s, agriculture in Arkansas experienced periods of booms and busts. By 1899, the cotton market in Arkansas had bottomed out when the prices reached as low as six cents a pound because of overproduction, but the need for fabric during World War I, fueled a boom in the cotton market.[11] Many farmers gambled that the market for cotton would continue to grow; however, after the war, agriculture in the nation slid into a recession. The falling prices meant that many farmers lost their land, and had to return to sharecropping or rental farms. In addition, the Flood of 1927 wreaked havoc on the farmers as over 6,000 square miles of farmland in the south was covered with water.

The Mississippi Alluvial Plain dominates Eastern Arkansas, covering one third of the state and affects the Delta's primary economy: farming. There are no less than thirty rivers in eastern Arkansas, which feed into the Mississippi River. In the spring of 1927, these rivers flooded the majority of eastern Arkansas in what was termed the Great Flood of 1927. The effects of this flood devastated the local farming economy and forced families all over eastern Arkansas to flee their homes and seek shelter further on Crowley's Ridge. Crowley's Ridge is a small geological area that consists of a ridge that rises approximately 250 feet above a relatively flat landscape. The soils on the ridge are "relatively fertile, row crops such as soybeans and wheat are limited almost entirely too small floodplains along and near streams that flow out of the region onto the Alluvial Plain."[12] For the farming community, the floodwaters kept many from plowing and sowing fields for the coming season. Farmers could not plant their crops for the year because the floodwaters remained through the spring and summer months. In addition to the worsening financial crisis, in 1930-1932, southern farmers faced a record-setting drought. The extreme drought was the last thing they hoped for or expected. By December 1930, with few crops to harvest, farmers faced food shortages and lacked the money to purchase food for their families. By 1930, approximately two-thirds of Arkansas farmers lost their farms and fell into tenancy

[8] Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; Van Hawkins, "Sharecropping and Tenant Farming," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net. For a through discussion of the sharecropping system in the state, see Jeannie M. Whayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth Century Arkansas*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996).

[9] Jeannie M. Whayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas* (University of Virginia Press, 1996), 55.

[10] See John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1997).

[11] Carl Moneyhon, "Post-Reconstruction through the Gilded Age, 1875 through 1900," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[12] Stroud, Herbert. "Crowley's Ridge," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

with larger plantations.[13] When they tried to turn to banks for assistance, they realized the depth of their plight, as a large number of banks had closed over the last year.[14]

Great Depression (1929-1940)

Historians and economists mark the beginning of the Great Depression with the Stock Market crashes of 1929, which resulted in nationwide economic panic. In Arkansas alone, nearly one hundred banks closed in the few months following the October 29 stock market crash robbing citizens of their savings, and taking away the only place many farmers could get loans.[15]

While many focus on the falling stock market, the falling agricultural prices across the nation through the 1920s and the loss of individual farms were critical causes of the Great Depression. The agricultural production that expanded during World War I was aided by increasing mechanization of the farming process. However, demand for foodstuffs did not keep up with the increase in supply and many farmers took more short-term loans to offset the loss of supplies and equipment, tying agricultural production to stock prices and banks. Excess production also caused prices to fall, exacerbating the financial stresses throughout the south.[16]

After several natural disasters in the 1920s, such as the Mississippi River flood of 1927 and the droughts of 1930-1931, Arkansas farmers were hoping for better luck in the new decade. Facing both the worst financial crisis in history on top of a string of severe natural disasters, many farmers chose to flee the south. Over the 1920s and 1930s, more than two and a half million people fled the south.[17] Arkansas alone lost slightly more than 320,000 people. [18] Most of the people fleeing were young couples with children from rural areas to urban areas with the promise of jobs in factories or other industries.
After Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was elected president in 1932, his New Deal program brought much-needed help to Arkansas residents. The New Deal was Roosevelt's plan of stabilizing the economy through additional regulation of banks, industry, and farming. The plan also called for job creation projects through the "alphabet agencies,"—the numerous agencies created during the Roosevelt administration. Nancy Hendricks argues, "Along with much needed jobs and relief funds, New Deal programs in Arkansas often accomplished a great deal more: they gave the people of a state teetering on the edge of bankruptcy a sense of pride, hope, and

[13] See Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *As Rare as Rain: Federal Relief in the Great Southern Drought of 1930–31* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Ingram, Dale. "The Forgotten Rebellion." *Arkansas Times*. January 19, 2006, pp. 10–13

[14] Gail S. Murray, "Forty Years Ago: The Great Depression Comes to Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1970), 294.

[15] Gail S. Murray, "Forty Years Ago: The Great Depression Comes to Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1970), 291-4.

[16] Giovanni Federico, "Not Guilty? Agriculture in the 1920s and the Great Depression," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 4 (Dec. 2005), 951.

[17] Jack Temple Kirby, "The Southern Exodus, 1910-1960: A Primer for Historians," *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 4 (Nov. 1983), 594.

[18] Donald Holley, "Leaving the Land of Opportunity: Arkansas and the Great Migration," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005), 247, 250.

self-respect."[19] Through employment opportunities with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC 1933), the Works Progress Administration (WPA 1935), and the enactment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (1933), federal food programs, such as the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FSRC 1933), and the Rural Electrification Act (1936), the New Deal alleviated many of the pressures and strains of the Great Depression in Arkansas. The work of the CCC can be seen best through the buildings associated with Arkansas State Parks. These buildings include Mather Lodge at Petit Jean State Park, the buildings and trails of Mount Nebo State Park, and the building at Crowley's Ridge State Park.[20] The CCC offered many Arkansan's employment both within Arkansas and throughout the United States. Alongside the CCC, the WPA offered construction positions to many Arkansans to build roads and buildings throughout the state. These notable projects are still felt today as many of the WPA roads are still in use.[21] The jobs offered to Arkansas residents through the CCC and WPA brought much needed income to many families. With the high rate of unemployment, especially due to the devastation wrought by the Flood of 1927 and the drought of 1930-1931, many Arkansans sought employment wherever possible. Since the CCC and WPA offered housing, food, and wages, many jumped at the chance to increase their own financial situation and indirectly affected the historical landscape of Arkansas.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) sought to ease the pains caused by floods and droughts by subsidizing many of the cash crops, such as cotton, within Arkansas. A general belief was that by reducing farmers' dependence on the free market more tenant farmers and sharecroppers would be saved from displacement.[22] As an extension of the AAA, FDR created the FSRC to extend aid to more specific areas of the community. The FSRC contributed much needed food supplies to low-income areas and helped establish the first federal lunchroom programs in Arkansas.[23] Arkansas suffered extreme poverty during the Depression, and these three programs, as well as others, attempted to alleviate economic problems suffered by the majority of Arkansas, not just those in the agricultural industry. As chaotic weather patterns forced many

[19] Nancy Hendricks, "New Deal," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[20] These State Parks include Crowley's Ridge State Park, Devil's Den State Park, Lake Catherine State Park, Mount Magazine State Park, Mount Nebo State Park, and Petit Jean State Park. See Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[21] Elliott West, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 1987; U.S. Works Projects Administration. "Final Report and Physical Accomplishments of the Works Projects Administration [in] Arkansas." Dean B. Ellis Library Archives and Special Collections. Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

[22] M. S. Venkataramani, "Norman Thomas, Arkansas Sharecroppers, and the Roosevelt Agricultural Policies, 1933–1937." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1965): 3–28; Keith J. Volanto, "The AAA Cotton Plow-Up Campaign in Arkansas." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 59 (Winter 2000): 388–406.

[23] Floyd W. Hicks and C. Robert Lambert, "Food for the Hungry: Federal Food Programs in Arkansas, 1933-1942," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring, 1978), 23-43; David Rison, "Federal Aid to Arkansas Education, 1933-1936," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1977), 192-200.

tenant farmers and sharecroppers further into poverty, the AAA, FSRC, and the REA increased the entire family's financial stability.

In addition to the active federal programs and acts mentioned above, the New Deal enticed many rural residents to form or join home demonstration clubs. These clubs taught basic skills connected to food preservation to minimize food waste.[24] The skills promoted by the home demonstration clubs expanded throughout Arkansas on a grassroots level. On a similar note, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union formed in 1934 as another grassroots way for Arkansans to combat the effects of the Depression. Sharecroppers and tenant farmers banded together to form their own union to negate the ill effects the Depression had on the Delta's rural farmers.[25] These efforts present a deepening divide between agriculture and its employees.

The highlight of the FDR programs in Arkansas can be found with the establishment of rehabilitation colonies. The first step came in 1933, with the passage of the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA). The FERA of 1933 set aside $500 million to aid state-run relief efforts. Almost every state created a State Emergency Relief Administration using the FERA money, which focused primarily on the distribution of direct aid and established work relief projects. However, farmers' problems during the Great Depression were handled in the FERA by the Rural Rehabilitation Division (RRD).[26] One way the RRD provided relief was through the establishment of relief camps for the millions of migrant farmers flooding west in search of work. In order to help farmers, the RRD partnered with the states to create non-profit rural rehabilitation corporations that established agricultural colonies. Under the rural rehabilitation programs, state or federal agencies would purchase a large plot of land for a new colony or community, and the colonists would use the land. Loans were available for struggling famers from the agency in charge of the colony in order to purchase one of the lots, with payments deferred until after the farm began production.[27]

These colony projects served two main purposes. First, they provided relief to struggling farmers at a time of extreme financial difficulty. The non-profit corporations made land affordable to poor farmers by providing loans and selling land at cost. Second, they had a side benefit of ecological relief. Many farmers were struggling because their land had lost production due to inadequate farming methods. By moving these farmers to a new area and letting them farm new land, much of which had to be cleared of standing forests, the older farmland was given a chance to recover.

[24] Elizabeth Griffin Hill, *A Splendid Piece of Work: 1912 - 2012: One Hundred Years of Arkansas's Home Demonstration and Extension Homemakers Clubs* (Place of publication not identified: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

[25] Donald Grubbs, *Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2000); E. F. Chestnutt, "Rural Electrification in Arkansas, 1935–1940: The Formative Years." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 46 (Fall 1987): 215–260.

[26] Leland Beatty, "A Brief History of America's Rural Rehabilitation Corporations," NARRC website, http://www.ruralrehab.org/briefhistory.html (accessed 19 October 2014).

[27] Ibid.; Westbrook, Lawrence. "The Program of Rural Rehabilitation of the FERA." *Journal of Farm Economics* 17, no. 1 (1935): 89–100. doi:10.2307/1231038.

By 1935, all but three states in the United States had created rural rehabilitation corporations. Four agricultural communities were also established by that time—the first in Dyess, Arkansas, with others in Florida, Georgia, and Alaska. Florida's Cherry Lake Colony took up 18,000 acres and contained a canning plant and a 2,640-acre community farm in addition to the family houses. Pine Mountain Valley in Georgia provided homes for over 200 families. Matanuska Valley Colony, near Palmer, Alaska, housed 203 families from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The success of the first planned colonies led to the creation of further communities across the nation.[28]

Creation of Colony 1 (Dyess, Arkansas)

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration created "Colonization Project No. 1" in southwestern Mississippi County near the current Arkansas Highway 297 in May 1934. The colony would later be renamed "Dyess" after William Reynolds Dyess who served as the Arkansas state administrator of FERA and the WPA in Arkansas. Dyess had been active in obtaining the funding for the rehabilitation colony through FERA, but he intended for the project to serve as a long-term relief project for farm families, many of which were displaced by the Depression.[29]

Originally incorporated as the Arkansas Rural Rehabilitation Corporation, the Dyess Colony consisted of 16,500 acres to provide for homes and farms for around 500 Arkansas families. Similar to the WPA and CCC, the construction of Dyess Colony provided work to some 1,300 local individuals. These laborers worked clearing the land and building houses for the future families of the Dyess Colony, as well as the other support facilities.

By the fall of 1934, the heart of the Dyess colony consisted of veritable town-like commercial buildings. A Greek-Revival administration building, community bank, beauty salon/barbershop, blacksmith shop, canning center, café, commissary/co-op store, cotton gin, community building, feed mill, furniture factory, harness shop, hospital, ice house, library, newspaper, post office, printing shop, school, service station/garage, sorghum mill, and motion picture theater dominated the center of the town. Dyess also provided adult education, child daycare, a school lunch program, and public library. The colony plan consisted of nearly six hundred houses with three, four, and five-room houses designed with standard floor plans with the colony's center planned on a wagon wheel design. By 1936, a progress letter from the Resettlement Administration notes that of the 500 houses available, only 15 were left vacant.[30] This confirms that 500 houses were completed for the colony. All of the houses were wired for electricity, and contained a water well, a barn, chicken coop, and other miscellaneous outbuildings.[31] It is important to note,

[28] Beatty, "Brief History."

[29] Dan W. Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1970): 313–314.

[30] Letters from the Resettlement Administration, Little Rock, Arkansas. April 30, 1936. Everett Henson Collection, Historic Dyess Colony, Dyess, Arkansas.

[31] E.L. Kirkpatrick, "Housing Aspects of Resettlement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 190, Current Developments in Housing (March, 1937), 94-100.

however, that electric service hookups were not available for the farm homes until nearly 10 years after their construction.[32]

Like many New Deal projects, the Dyess Colony utilized local architects to design the buildings. Howard Eichenbaum (1904-1973), a Jewish architect from Little Rock, was tasked with designing the houses for Dyess. Eichenbaum was born in Little Rock, but because of a lack of architectural schools in the state, he received his training at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and returned to Little Rock where he worked for the firm of Mann and Stern. In 1930, Eichenbaum, along with Frank Erhart, formed a partnership that would continue for many years.[33] In 1933, Eichenbaum and Erhart received the contract from FERA to design the building for the Dyess Colony. Eichenbaum personally drew plans for the three to five room houses as well as the more than twenty different floor plans to ensure variation within the community.[34] During World War II, Erhart and Eichenbaum spent most of their time designing buildings for military installations and wartime housing in the region. In 1945, Erhart and Eichenbaum added John A. Rauch as a partner, and it was renamed Erhart, Eichenbaum, and Rauch, Architects. The firm would become one of the largest in the state, and its major post-World War II projects included:

- Veterans Administration Hospital on Roosevelt Road (joint venture)
- Little Rock Baptist Hospital Main Campus
- St. Vincent Infirmary
- Barton Coliseum
- University of Arkansas Medical Center
- Horace Mann High School
- Justice Building, State of Arkansas
- Boy Scouts of America Headquarters
- Metropolitan Bank
- US Federal Building, Capitol Avenue (a joint venture with Brueggeman, Swaim, and Allen and the Cromwell firm)[35]

After World War II Eichenbaum was instrumental in the forming of the first American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapter in Arkansas. Until his death in 1973, Eichenbaum remained active in the AIA on the local and national level, as well as numerous civic and professional boards. He

[32] Van Hawkins, *A New Deal In Dyess: The Depression Era Agricultural Resettlement Colony in Arkansas,* Jonesboro, AR: Writers Bloc, 2015. p. 14.

[33] Charles Witsell, Gordon G. Wittenberg, and Marylyn Jackson Parins, *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950* (University of Arkansas Press, 2014), 97.

[34] Carolyn Gray LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas, 1820s-1990s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 131; Charles Witsell, Gordon G. Wittenberg, and Marylyn Jackson Parins, *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*, 95-96; Hawkings, *A New Deal In Dyess: The Depression Era Agricultural Resettlement Colony in Arkansas,* pp. 14-17.

[35] All of these major projects were completed in Little Rock, Arkansas.

also served as the vice president of the Temple B'Nai Israel in Little Rock.[36] In 2010, Eichenbaum was inducted into the Arkansas Construction Hall of Fame.[37]

Construction on the colony houses for the Dyess Colony began in July 1934 using workers and timber located at the site, thus cutting the cost of the project, and 100 houses were completed by early 1935. Eichenbaum had used the residential architecture of the region as his model for the one-story houses, but he offered a variety of types.[38] By the time the houses were completed, approximately 40 percent used the five-room floor plan; 40 percent used the four-room floor plan; and 20 percent utilized the three-room floor plan. Eichenbaum also created over 20 variations of the three standard floor plans allowing for some individuality in the colony, which was not common in other government or company towns of the time.[39]

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited Dyess colony in June 1936 to greet the first families who had already established new lives in the new colony. By the late 1930s, sixty gravel roads, ninety miles of drainage ditches, and twelve miles of the Frisco Railroad spur had been built into the colony. By 1938, 115 families had earned deeds to their farms and 300 other families completed their first year trial and were recommended as colonists.[40]

Dyess Colony in Relationship to Other Agricultural Communities

In an effort to assist stranded families during the Great Depression, there were 102 resettlement communities created throughout the nation, including three greenbelt cities. These communities were created by three different New Deal federal agencies: The Subsistence Homestead Division of the U. S. Department of the Interior, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and later the Resettlement Administration.

Subsistence Homesteads were intended to settle displaced urban workers, such as coal miners and mill workers, on small plots of land where they could grow enough food to feed their families, while being placed in nearby jobs. The agricultural aspects were limited to family "subsistence," to avoid competing with commercial farming. The first of these homesteads, Arthurdale in West Virginia,[41] was established in 1934, with 32 additional communities initiated by the time the agency was absorbed by the Resettlement Administration in May 1935. These Subsistence Homesteads primarily were classified as "Stranded" or "Industrial" communities.[42]

[36] Witsell, et al., *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*, 95-96; "

[37] "Construction Hall of Fame," available at http://www.agcar.net/content.asp?contentid=175

[38] "Rural-Industrial Community Project, No.2," *The Architectural Record*, January 1935, 13.

[39] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony, " 317-318.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] "City of Arthurdale – Arthurdale WV," https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/city-of-arthurdale-arthurdale-wv/, Accessed 1 February 2018.

[42] Statistics regarding number of communities and types are compiled from U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee of the Committees on Agriculture, Hearings on the Farm Security Administration, 78th Congress., 1st Sess., 1943-1944, pp.1118-1127. Analyzed from listing on the New Deal Preservation Association website, "New Deal Towns," National New Deal Preservation Association,

The second organization, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) focused on agricultural resettlement communities that placed out-of-work farm families on 20- to 40-acre farmsteads with the goal of earning a living from farming, as well as feeding their families. Dyess Colony, initiated in 1934, was the first of these FERA communities. By far the largest,[43] it also served as an early model (both good and bad) for later efforts. Other early FERA agricultural communities included Cherry Lake Farms near Madison, Florida, and Pine Mountain Valley, near Warm Springs, Georgia. Additionally, Palmer Homestead in Matanuska Valley, Alaska, while classified in some reports (possibly erroneously) as an "Industrial Community," was a farm community with many agricultural similarities to Dyess.

When Eleanor Roosevelt visited Dyess in June 1936, she told assembled colonists, "In Washington, we have watched this colony, which is the first of its kind in the country, and we are proud of the success you promise to make of it yourselves and as an example for the country."[44] Others in Washington used Dyess as a case study for research regarding the resettlement programs. In 1938 a sociological study, in which location of colony housing was a significant factor, was conducted in Dyess by two agricultural economists with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The pair went door to door to determine the impact of social relationships on success or failure in the colony, including how the design and placement of colony houses impacted formation of relationships with fellow colonists.[45]

By mid-1935, when most FERA communities also were absorbed into the Resettlement Administration (RA) a total of 30 FERA resettlement projects had been initiated, with 25 of these being classified as "Farm Communities" or "Farm Villages." The only four that remained with FERA (which became the Works Progress Administration) were its original projects at Dyess Colony, Cherry Lake Farms, Pine Mountain Valley, and Palmer Homestead. In a June 12, 1935 memorandum from Rexford Tugwell, RA administrator, and Harry Hopkins, FERA administrator, it was spelled out that these four sites would be retained by FERA in order to complete the large-scale efforts at these sites.[46]

In addition to completing many of the unfinished projects of the Subsistence Homestead Division and FERA, the Resettlement Administration initiated 38 communities of its own, building upon and learning from the successes and failures of some of the previous efforts. These projects featured both urban and rural communities, including three greenbelt cities that were envisioned as models for cooperative living in the future that never materialized.

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www.newdeallegacy.org. http://newdeallegacy.org/~newdeall/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/New-Deal-Towns.pdf, Accessed 1 February 2018.

[43] Paul Conklin, *Tomorrow A New World: The New Deal Community Program*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1959, 137.

[44] *Dyess Colony Herald*, June 12, 1936, 1.

[45] Charles Loomis and Dwight Davidson Jr., "Sociometrics and the Study of New Rural Communities," *Sociometry*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan. 1939), American Sociological Association, 56-76.

[46] Memorandum from Rexford Tugwell and Harry Hopkins, June 12, 1935. National Archives, Record Group 96, Farmers Home Administration.

Today, there are still some of the early FERA agricultural colony houses extant around the country, but most have been razed to make way for larger scale farming operations or have been abandoned to the elements. Because they were so small, those that are still inhabited often have been greatly modernized, altered, or expanded. Of the original FERA agricultural colonies besides Dyess, some houses still exist at Cherry Lake Farms, but the resettlement site has been repurposed as a 4-H Youth Camp. Pine Mountain Valley today is better known as the gateway to the Callaway Gardens, a major tourism attraction near Warm Springs, Georgia. The Palmer Historical Society in Alaska has perhaps been the most active in preserving many of the FERA resettlement structures, including restoring an original home to serve as a museum providing insight into colony life.[47] There are currently nine listings on the National Register related to the colony, including three houses and three farmsteads with houses and various outbuildings intact. One of the FERA farm communities for African American farmers, the Tillery Resettlement Community established in 1935 in Halifax County, North Carolina, also has a remodeled resettlement house that functions as a museum but has had extensive exterior alterations.[48] These appear to be the only FERA housing units listed in the National Register.

Of these early FERA efforts, including the other 22 agricultural communities initiated by FERA and completed by the Resettlement Administration, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home at Dyess stands as the best known example of an authentically restored FERA colony house in the contiguous United States. The house was restored utilizing architect's floor plans, extensive research at the National Archives, and consultation with Johnny Cash's two living siblings who grew up in the colony house. Furnished exactly as it was in the 1930s and 1940s, the house opened to the public in 2014. The architectural scale and simplicity of the house give unprecedented insight into this significant era in rural American history.

During a recent survey of Dyess and the surrounding area, Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Executive Director of the Arkansas State University Heritage Sites program, and her students were able to locate 40 surviving houses, including 14 within the boundaries of the colony center. These 40 houses represent the remains of the 500 houses that were completed as part of the colony during the 1930s. Most of these properties had either been modified beyond recognition or are in advanced states of dilapidation. Today, most of the surviving farmhouses associated with the Dyess colony are lost, abandoned or severely altered. On some surviving examples near the colony center along Main Street in Dyess, the original form of the house is still visible but many have later additions, both large and small. Several homes have been enlarged through the addition of attached garage spaces, such as at the property at 3084 W County Road 940. Some garages have also been created with large roof extensions such as at the property at 4515 Hwy 77. Still others have been altered with the addition of vinyl siding, replacement windows and metal roofs, such as at the property at 102 First Street and 4212 W County Road 956. Another common alteration to surviving original farmhouses in and near Dyess has been the enclosure of porch spaces, an

[47] "Colony House Museum," Palmer Historical Society, http://www.palmerhistoricalsociety.org/colony-house-museum/, Accessed 1 February 2018.

[48] "Tillery Resettlement Community – Tillery NC," https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/tillery-nc/, Accessed 1 February 2018.

example of which is the property at 4506 W County Road 956. One early Dyess Colony house has even been given a second story addition, seen at the property at 311 Second Street, Dyess. Sadly, many of the abandoned farmhouses have collapsed or been demolished. A few still stand in a dilapidated state including one along East Fourth Street in Dyess. The Farm No. 266 farmhouse, after its recent restoration, is the best example of an original farmhouse existing in the Dyess area.

Johnny Cash and His Boyhood Home

In 1935, Ray and Carrie Cash received word that they and their five children—Roy, Louise, Jack, J.R. (Johnny), and Reba—were selected as one of five hundred farming families to move to the newly established Dyess Colony. [49] A hard-working father and World War I veteran, Ray Cash of Kingsland (Cleveland County), Arkansas, was working various jobs to feed his family when the Great Depression struck in 1929. Kingsland was developed and incorporated in 1884 for the benefit of the railroad and timber industries. With its glory days long past by the 1920s, employment opportunities were scarce and often required commutes along the rail lines during the Great Depression. According to Johnny Cash, Ray was "one of the few men in Cleveland County, Arkansas, who could usually find work of some kind. He cut pulpwood, worked at sawmills and on the railroad—any way to make a living—which along with all the food and animals he raised, not only fed us, but some of the more needy neighbors as well."[50] The Cash family endured the Great Depression in Kingsland without going on welfare and survived there until 1935 when the opportunity to move to Dyess arrived. The news of the establishment of a farming community through the New Deal in Dyess, Arkansas, provided the Cash family the opportunity to resettle. In addition to a new start the Cash family expanded with the birth of the last two Cash children, Joanne and Tommy, who were born in Dyess.

The Cash family selected a five-room house that was valued at $1,000. Unlike the smaller houses, the five-room house included an indoor toilet and bath facilities, though it still utilized a well for water and the plumbing fixtures were never operational when the Cash family lived in the house.[51] The house also was pre-wired for electricity that arrived at the colony center in the mid-1930s, but to the houses in 1946.[52] In addition to the farmhouse, the colony's families received twenty to forty acres of farmland, outbuildings, a sixteen by twenty-four foot wooden barn with ten-foot sheds on either side of the barn, smokehouse, privy, and a chicken house. [53]

Eligibility requirements for the Dyess Community required experienced and competent farmers who had lost their farms because of the Great Depression. Additionally, the colony was established as a white-only farming community, with homeowners required to be healthy, under

[49] Johnny Cash, *Man in Black* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 23.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony," 318; informal conversation with Dr. Ruth Hawkins, director of Arkansas State Heritage Sites, 2017.
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony," 318.

fifty-year-old Arkansans.[54] The colonists were assigned housing through the resettlement program based on family size, and the Cash family received the largest house available with five rooms and approximately 1,000 square feet. In an attempt to help economically distressed Arkansas families, the houses in Dyess required no money down with a later option to purchase the farmstead provided.[55]

Johnny Cash, known as J.R. to his family, was born February 26, 1932, in Kingsland (Cleveland County), Arkansas. While Johnny was only three years old when his family relocated to Dyess, the experiences of his parents Ray and Carrie in Kingsland formed the foundation for the life Johnny would have in Dyess. The possibility to move to Dyess and survive the Depression was available to the Cash family because of Ray's determination and willingness to work. These lessons were instilled in Johnny almost immediately upon arrival in Dyess. In his autobiography, *Man in Black*, Cash recalls hard work being the most important lesson his father taught him and explains "…At the age of four I was carrying water to my daddy and older brother Roy and sister Louise as they worked the cotton. At the age of ten I was working in the field."[56] Cotton was the primary crop the Cash family grew, but Johnny also learned how to grow vegetables and care for the animals.

Johnny's experiences in Dyess soon became a substantial influence on his life and his later musical career. The religious convictions of Carrie Cash led the Cash children into church each Sunday. Though she was a Methodist, she played the piano at a variety of churches in Dyess, including the Baptist Church, the Church of God, and others. This reinforcement of the importance of religion in the Cash children would serve as a basis for their later music. Johnny lacked an interest in church in his early childhood years, though the singing and musical performances caught his attention. The Church of God played a vital role in introducing Johnny to a variety of musical instruments, and it soon became "the songs [he] was beginning to feel."[57] Shortly after Johnny realized his fascination with music, Ray Cash brought home a battery-operated radio, which played the same music he heard in church. Through the songs on the radio, Johnny "received a taste of heavenly things."[58] Thus, the church in Dyess sparked two interests in Johnny, which paved the way for his success and inspiration in his career— church and music.

When Johnny was twelve years old, tragedy struck the Cash family. Jack Cash, Johnny's older brother, had received work at the woodshop cutting fence posts on Saturdays for three dollars a day. On May 12, 1944, Jack was pulled into a swinging saw while cutting fence posts, resulting in severe injuries to the abdomen. After suffering for eight days, Jack Cash died May 20, 1944. In his final moments, Jack proclaimed to have seen angels and the beauty of heaven and

[54] Nancy Hendrix, "Dyess (Mississippi County)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Last Updated 8/18/2014.

[55] Nan Snider, "Johnny Cash Memorial and Museum Is Success." *The Town Crier*, July 19, 2006. http://www.thetown-crier.com/story/1328209.html.

[56] Cash, *Man in Black*, 30.

[57] Cash, *Man in Black*, 25.

[58] Cash, *Man in Black*, 26.

appeared to die peacefully.[59] Jack was Johnny's favorite sibling, and his death left a lasting impact on Johnny's life. "Jack was my big brother and my hero: my best friend, my big buddy, my mentor, and my protector. We fit very well, Jack and I; we were very happy together. I loved him."[60] According to Johnny in *Man in Black*; "The memory of Jack's death, his vision of heaven, the effect his life had on the lives of others, and the image of Christ he projected have been more of an inspiration to me…than anything else that has ever come to me through any man."[61]

Jessie Barnhill, the son of local squatters who lived on the outskirts of the Dyess Colony, taught Johnny Cash his first guitar lessons. Cash's mother Carrie had owned and played a guitar during the earliest years that the family was in Dyess, but the guitar soon disappeared, possibly as trade for food during the lean months.[62] Jessie Barnhill was disfigured by polio at his birth, with a withered right arm and leg. However, Jessie, also called Pete Barnhill in later books by Cash, was described by Cash as the "best guitar player in the world. To me he was wonderful, the sound he made purely heavenly."[63] As Johnny grew older, his knowledge of music increased as he moved into musical performance. As the family took to the fields, singing became a regular aspect of their work routine. Johnny's love for music and exposure to songs through the family's radio allowed Johnny to practice singing and his (at the time) high tenor voice resonated throughout the cotton fields for the family to hear.

> We sang in the house, on the porch, everywhere. We sang in the fields. Daddy would be by himself, plowing, and we kids would be with Moma, chopping cotton and singing. I'd start it off with pop songs I'd heard on the radio, and my sister Louise and I would challenge each other: "Bet you don't know this one!" Usually I knew them and I'd join in well before she'd finished. Later in the day we'd all sing together, hillbilly songs and novelty songs, whatever was going around at the time – "I'm My Own Grandpa," "Don't Telephone, Tell a Woman" – and then, as the sun got about halfway down toward the west and our spirits started flagging, we'd switch to gospel; first the rousing, up-tempo songs to keep us going, then as the sun began to set, the slower spirituals. After Jack died, we'd sing all the songs we sang at his funeral. We closed each day in the fields with "Life's Evening Sun Is Sinking Low."[64]

While not tending to the fields, the Cash family radio was frequently tuned to local station WMPS out of Memphis, Tennessee, and Johnny developed a love for radio performance.[65] In

[59] Cash, *Man in Black*, 46.
[60] Johnny Cash and Patrick Carr, *Cash: The Autobiography*, San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1997, p. 23.
[61] Cash, *Man in Black*, 48.
[62] Michael Streissguth, ed., *Ring of Fire: The Johnny Cash Reader*, Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002, p. 223.
[63] Cash, *Cash: The Autobiography*, p. 50.
[64] Cash, *Cash: The Autobiography*, p. 52-53.
[65] Cash, *Man in Black*,56.

early 1947, Johnny's favorite radio program, the "High Noon Roundup" made a special appearance at Dyess High School. After a brief interaction with one of the performers, Johnny was left with "an eager anticipation about [his] future, an exciting expectation of the years coming in which [he] knew [he'd] be on that stage singing those songs [he] loved."[66] The exposure to a radio star motivated him to pursue music and he began writing and developing his own songs. Johnny's voice was no secret to the residents during his time at Dyess High School where he gained stage experience performing at school assemblies. Johnny's true potential and his family's support for his musical talents were not fully developed until after his voice changed. Following the change, Carrie Cash arranged for Johnny to do several gospel shows in 1948 at church. Johnny's exposure to Delta culture through hard work on the farm, and the development of a strong love for radio, music, and performance formed the essential foundation for the man who would leave Dyess after graduating high school in 1950, eventually becoming one the biggest names in country music. Upon graduation, Johnny left Dyess, never to live in the community for the remainder of his life, though he would come back to visit. Cash explored the world with his rural roots firmly in place influencing his life and career.

Johnny Cash was soon a rising star and his humble roots in Dyess are in many ways responsible. The Cash family's farming life in Arkansas gave him "…authenticity as a country star."[67] According to Everett J. Corbin's *Storm Over Nashville: A Case against Modern Country Music*, "Country music is music of the people; songs of the soil; the heartbeat of America--is an expression of life as it is lived by the simple people of this great nation."[68] The fifteen years he spent in Dyess, from the death of his brother to the influence of Delta life, carried with Johnny as he moved beyond Dyess, seen later in several of the songs he created. Also, the blow of his brother's death and the loneliness he experienced afterwards led Cash to a deep interest in books and poetry, finding a love to express himself in words, whether in the form of short stories, poems or song lyrics.[69]

The song, "Five Feet High and Rising," addresses the family's experience during the flood of 1937:

> Well, the rails are washed out north of town
> We gotta head for higher ground
> We can't come back till the water goes down
> Five feet high and risin'[70]

In his autobiography of 1997, Johnny Cash described this song as coming from his own experience:

> There were of course forces against which we were powerless. The Mississippi was foremost in that regard – my song "Five Feet High and Rising"

[66] Cash, *Man in Black*,58.

[67] Jonathan Silverman, *Nine Choices: Johnny Cash and American Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 40.

[68] Everett J. Corbin, *Storm Over Nashville: A Case against Modern Country Music* (Nashville: Ashlar Press, 1980), 34.

[69] Robert Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, New York, NY: Little, Brown, and Co. 2013, p. 40.

[70] Johnny Cash, *The Essential Johnny Cash*, 2002 by Sony Records, 2 compact discs.

came from my own experience, not some storybook – but other acts of nature could and did wipe out a whole year's worth of your work and income.[71]

Additionally, "Pickin' Time" directly relays the economic conditions of families in Dyess - hard times barely able to make ends meet until "pickin' time" when profits were made:

It's hard to see by the coal-oil light
And I turn it off pretty early at night
'Cause a jug of coal-oil costs a dime
But I stay up late come pickin' time
Stay up late come pickin' time[72]

Life after Dyess had a lot in store for Johnny Cash as he made his way to the status of American musical icon. The Country Music Hall of Fame (CMHF) described Cash's career as: "Beginning with his mid-1950s recordings for Sun Records, John R. 'Johnny' Cash has established an international profile as an ambassador of American roots music. He overcame personal demons to reach superstar status in the late 1960s and has continued to hew his own path musically into the twenty-first century."[73] The CMHF also credited Cash with "extend[ing] the scope of country music and help[ing] broaden its audience through his exploration of many themes and types of songs." Johnny Cash's influence on country music, as recognized by the CMHF, is the direct result of his experiences in the Dyess house as the struggles in Dyess guided the direction of his music and his life. Johnny Cash has won nearly twenty Grammy Awards, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960, and inductions into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1977, the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1980, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992.

Although there has not been an exhaustive search for properties associated with Johnny Cash in Arkansas or other states; Johnny Cash, many members of his close family, and a long list of biographers have referred to his time in Dyess and his home at Farm No. 266 as key to his later musical career. In 2007, the lakeside home of Johnny and June Cash in Hendersonville, Tennessee, was destroyed by fire. This house was the home of the Cash family from the late 1960s until their deaths in 2003. Currently, one location associated with Johnny Cash's musical career has been declared a National Historic Landmark, Sun Record Company in Memphis, Tennessee. This recording studio helped to discover and launch the careers of many icons of American music including B. B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Ike Turner, Rufus Thomas, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Charlie Rich, and Roy Orbison. The Sun recording studio was the site of profound changes in American music but Johnny Cash also drew on his early life for inspiration as well as musical style. Michael Streissguth states in his editorial notes for *Ring of Fire: The Johnny Cash Reader* that:

The connection between Cash's music and aspects of his boyhood was undeniable during the Sun years. Early releases such as "Folsom Prison Blues," "Big River," and "Give My Love to Rose" communicated pain far more profound than broken

[71] Cash, *Cash: The Autobiography*, p. 20. For more on Cash's experience during the 1937 flood and its aftermath see Hilburn's *Johnny Cash: The Life*, pages 27-30.

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] http://countrymusichalloffame.org/Inductees/InducteeDetail/johnny-cash

> barroom romances. Cash's was the stuff of unadulterated tragedy brought on by death, disaster, or loss of freedom.[74]

Johnny Cash even noted the importance of his early life in Dyess in various interview and writings about his life and career, noting that "When we grew up… it was second nature that we wouldn't live in Dyess when we were grown. It was the aim of every person to get a better job. But if I hadn't grown up there, I wouldn't be what I am now. It was the foundation for what I became."[75]

Post-Cash family Occupation

After World War II and the end of the Roosevelt administration, Dyess changed from a planned community to a typical rural community. Contrary to the initial ideals of the Dyess Colony that hoped to end the share cropping system, in the early 1950s many of the farm owners began renting their houses and the land to sharecroppers because the owners saw the opportunity to make extra income. In 1954, the Cash family sold Farm No. 266 to Dewey Cox and his family who rented the former Cash farm to sharecroppers for six years. In 1960, Dewey passed away, and Mrs. Cox sold the property to Otto Raymond Rankin. Three years later, the Rankins swapped the farm in Dyess to Earvin and Dorothy Langston for a farmstead near Jonesboro, Arkansas. [76] The Langstons sold the property to William and Mearl Stegall in 1974. During this time, they installed a new kitchen in the house and altered the openings from the kitchen and dining room to the living room. Furthermore, wood paneling was placed over the walls and the square doorways were altered to round-arched ones. Finally, the wood stove that had been the primary source of heat was removed from the center of the living room, and new replacement windows added to the main façade.[77] Over the next 37 years, the Stegall family lived in the house where they raised three children.

Preservation of the House

In the mid-1970s, historians and historic preservationists began to show interest in preserving the Dyess Colony. In 1975, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program prepared a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Dyess Colony, which was extraordinary since the colony was not yet fifty years of age. The nomination argued that Dyess was exceptionally significant because:

> Dyess Colony was a national sociological experiment in rural rehabilitation. The role Dyess played as a model for later resettlement farms made it an important historic site. Though established less than 50 years ago, Dyess Colony Center should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places

[74] Streissguth, *Ring of Fire: The Johnny Cash Reader*, p. 35.

[75] Streissguth, *Ring of Fire: The Johnny Cash Reader*, p. 23.

[76] "Cash Home Restoration Timeline," Historic Dyess Colony. Available at http://dyesscash.astate.edu/johnny-cash-boyhood-home/.

[77] John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, April 2010, 3.17

because of its significance to modern American social and agricultural history.[78] The National Park Service agreed with the nomination, and the colony was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 1, 1976.

In 2005, after Cash's death, Twentieth Century Fox released the Oscar winning film *Walk the Line* chronicling the life of Cash from his rural life in Dyess to fame. The icon Cash has become for American youth and musicians is evident through his increasing presence in popular culture, through clothing, posters, movies, and the reemergence of his music by modern performers. In 2006, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas (HPAA) placed the Johnny Cash Boyhood home on its Most Endangered Historic Places list in Arkansas due to the rapid decline in condition of the house, and because preservationists feared that the house would soon reach a state of deterioration that would result in its demolition without intervention.[79] The HPAA argued that the shifting gumbo soil, often mentioned in Cash's music, had made the house's foundation unlevel and contributed to its further sinking. Furthermore, 70 years of occupation by various owners had resulted in exterior and interior alterations that had changed the historic fabric of the house. Yet, preservationists believed that the house still maintained enough historic materials to be saved and restored. Also, the HPAA felt that restoration of the Cash Boyhood home could be the cornerstone of heritage tourism in the area. The house would remain threatened until recent preservationist efforts that began in 2011.

In 2010, local Dyess civic leaders approached Arkansas State University's Heritage Sites program to see if the university could provide any assistance in restoring the colony administration building. The Heritage Sites had recently been successful in the restoration of the Lakeport Plantation and the Hemingway-Pfeiffer House, so local officials hoped that the university would again help. The former mayor of Dyess, Larry Sims, stated, "Johnny Cash is what's going to bring people to start things growing again."[80] In addition to the administration building, there was interest in preserving the Cash House. In 2010, Arkansas State University purchased the former Cash family house from the Stegall family and immediately began working to stabilize the foundation of the building and protect it from further damage until further restoration could begin.

The Redevelopment Plan described the condition of the house before Arkansas State University purchased it:

> The house is currently in declining condition, in part because of the way many wood elements are exposed to water and other weather-related sources of deterioration. The house has some unpainted wood components, both in places where the paint has failed and in places where the wood was never painted. Like many old houses, it has an imperfect system for roof drainage. The conditions

[78] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Available at: http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/national-register-listings/dyess-colony-center

[79] "Cash Home Restoration Timeline," Historic Dyess Colony. Available at http://dyesscash.astate.edu/johnny-cash-boyhood-home/.

[80] Ana Campoy, "U.S. News: Boyhood Town of Johnny Cash Pegs Revival on Tourism," *Wall Street Journal, Eastern Edition; New York, N.Y.*, July 8, 2013.

> inside and out are less than ideal, but the Stegall family has sought different ways to improve the house at different times with totally different approaches. Like many homeowners, they have done so with limited means…however, if the dwelling is to be restored to its original configuration and appearance, these changes will have to be reversed. Also it is important that any remaining historic materials and architectural features be preserved.[81]

After years of renovation by the University, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home received media coverage and strong support from the community. The involvement of the local university to aid in its preservation and rehabilitation were indicative of strong communal ties to the property, as well as what it represents for not only Dyess, but also the surrounding Delta communities. Johnny's influence on country music is still felt today. While the boyhood home of an American music legend may seem miniscule, this house in Dyess provided Johnny everything he needed to succeed—the values, motivation, dedication, education, and experiences to make his musical career relatable to his audience and carry his image and music long after his death.

Summary

Farm No. 266, also known as the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, is a New Deal-era, five-room, farmhouse constructed by Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony in Mississippi County, Arkansas. The house, located at 4791 West County Road 924, was originally the home of the Ray and Carrie Cash family that included American Country music legend, Johnny Cash. Farm No. 266 is located approximately a mile northwest of the colony center in a rural landscape that is currently used for farming. The Farm No. 266 House is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion B**, with **State-wide significance**, under Performing Arts for the property's association with the early life of J.R. "Johnny" Cash and the influence of the area on his later musical career. This property and the surrounding landscape had a profound impact on Johnny Cash's later career as seen in his later music and in his various recounting of his childhood in Dyess. The house is also eligible under **Criterion C**, with **local significance,** as an example of FERA constructed residence in the Dyess Colony. This property is also being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."[82] The house is one of the residences constructed as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony, which was listed on the National Register of the Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976 for its national significance; however, Farm No. 266 was not included in the original NRHP nomination's boundary.[83] The period of significance for the home is 1934 until 1954, the date of its construction until the date the Cash family, an original settlement family, sold it.

[81] John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, (April 2010), 3.16.

[82] Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[83] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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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:

__X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
__X_ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _Arkansas State University, Heritage Sites Program___

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _ _MS0345 _____

---

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ____less than one acre_(>1)_____ _

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:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[ ] NAD 1927 or [X] NAD 1983

A. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749610.00	Northing: 3942827.00
B. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749564.05	Northing: 3942827.21
C. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749566.91	Northing: 3942762.26
D. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749608.28	Northing: 3942761.45

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

A property within Section 9, Township 11 North, Range 8 East in Mississippi County, Arkansas, with a boundary starting at a point A (Zone 15 S, Easting 749610.00 m, Northing 3942827.00 m) and then west to a point B (Zone 15 S, Easting 749564.05 m, Northing 3942827.21 m), then south to a point C (Zone 15 S, Easting 749566.91 m, Northing 3942762.26 m), then east to a point D (Zone 15 S, Easting 749608.28 m, Northing 3942761.45 m), and then northeast to the beginning point at point A.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Farm No. 266 currently owned by Arkansas State University as of August, 2017.

---

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Edward Salo, PhD; Elizabeth Johnson, Zach Elledge, and Brian McIntruf
organization: Arkansas State University Heritage Sites

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian (Edited By)
organization: Department of Arkansas Heritage, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street

city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201
e-mail callie.williams@arkansas.gov
telephone: 501.324.9789
date: February 8, 2018

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: Farm No. 266

City or Vicinity: Dyess vic.

County: Mississippi State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: September 26, 2017

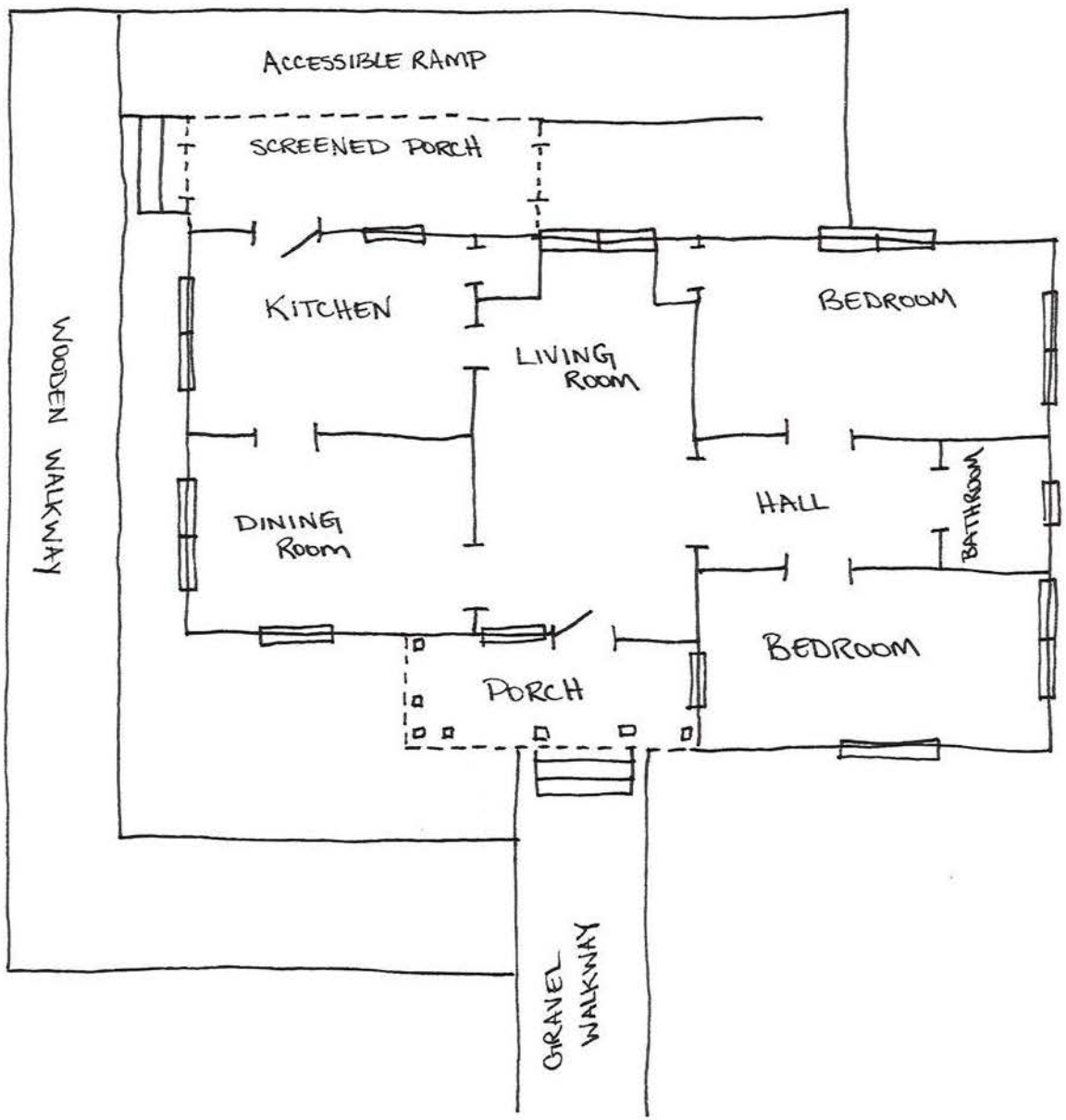
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17: North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0001

2 of 17: East (Side) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0002
3 of 17: East (Side) Façade and South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing northwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0003
4 of 17: South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing north.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0004
5 of 17: West (Side) Façade and South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southeast.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0005
6 of 17: West (Side) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing east.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0006
7 of 17: North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0007
8 of 17: Detail of the foundation piers along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0008
9 of 17: Detail of the porch posts along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0009
10 of 17: Detail of the shutters with decorative crescent moon cut-outs along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0010
11 of 17: Detail of the central living space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0011
12 of 17: Detail of the central living space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0012
13 of 17: Detail of the kitchen and dining space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing east.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0013
14 of 17: Detail of the kitchen, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0014
15 of 17: Detail of the dining room, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southeast.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0015
16 of 17: Detail of a bedroom, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing northwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0016
17 of 17: Detail of the bathroom, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0017

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.



NORTH

FARM No. 266
Dyess Vic.
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY
ARKANSAS
(Not to SCALE)

Farm No. 266

Highfill, Benton County
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

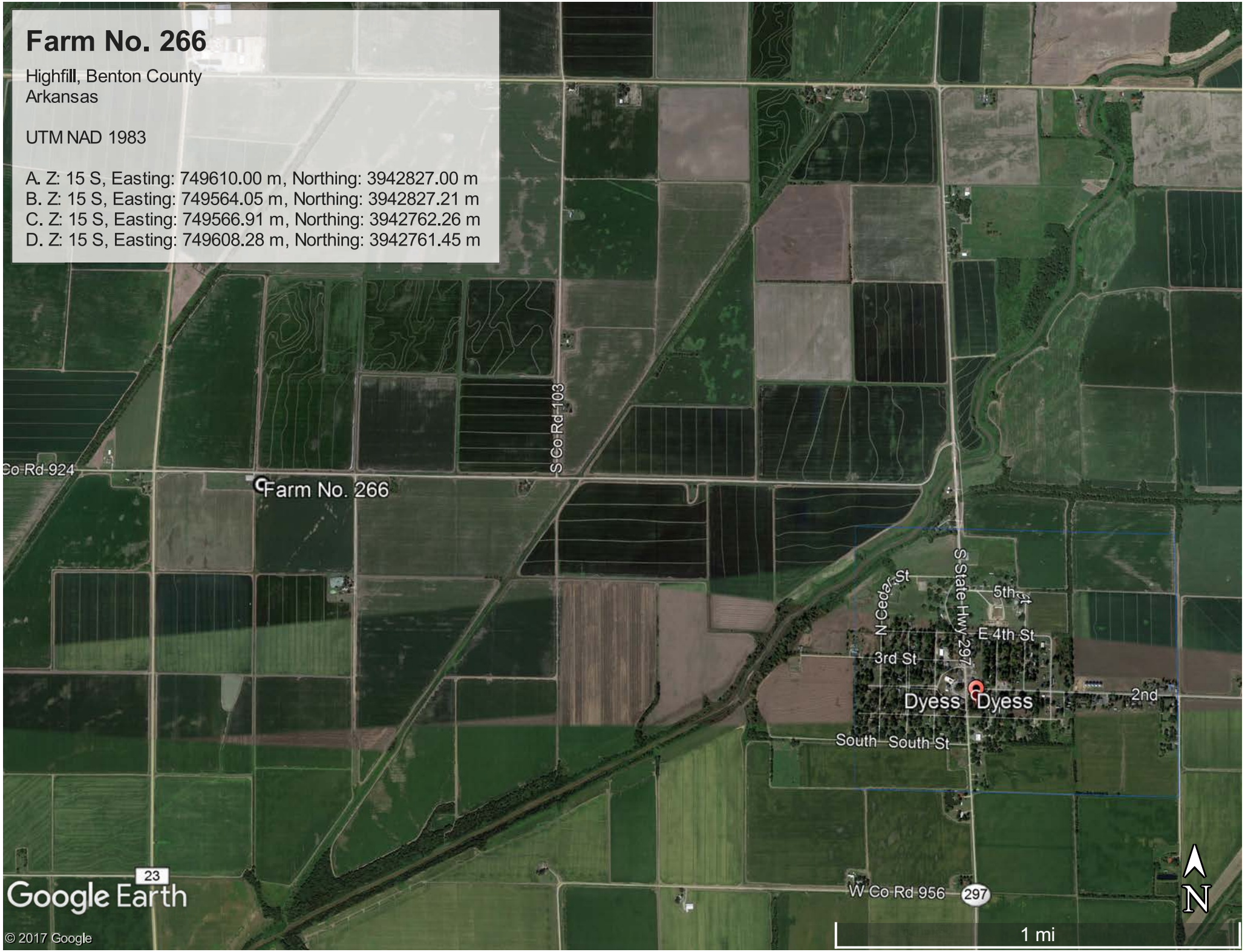
A. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749610.00 m, Northing: 3942827.00 m
B. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749564.05 m, Northing: 3942827.21 m
C. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749566.91 m, Northing: 3942762.26 m
D. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749608.28 m, Northing: 3942761.45 m

Farm No. 266

Highfill, Benton County
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

A. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749610.00 m, Northing: 3942827.00 m
B. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749564.05 m, Northing: 3942827.21 m
C. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749566.91 m, Northing: 3942762.26 m
D. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749608.28 m, Northing: 3942761.45 m


Farm No. 266
Highfill, Benton County
Arkansas
UTM NAD 1983
A. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749610.00 m, Northing: 3942827.00 m
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D. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749608.28 m, Northing: 3942761.45 m
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South St
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Google Earth
© 2017 Google


266


YORK


YORK


266


Re-Use
2012


25
100
ICE
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75


25
ICE
SLOW


Velvet

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.
Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Resubmission
Property Name:	Farm No. 266 - Johnny Cash Boyhood Home
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	ARKANSAS, Mississippi

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
4/10/2018			5/25/2018	

Reference number:	RS100002000
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
X Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __5/2/2018__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	There are two tracks of significance for this property. It meets the registration requirements for the New Deal MPS at the local level, for its association with the Dyess Colony, and FERA demonstration project, and the government-designed dwellings built for the colonists. More importantly, the nomination supports the influence of the home on Johnny Cash, providing inspiration for his career as an artist. Further investigation may support national significance for this association, but as of now it is accepted at the state level.
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / B & 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

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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e-mail:
info@arkansaspreservation.org
website:
www.arkansaspreservation.com

An Equal Opportunity Employer

December 6, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Farm No. 266 – Dyess vic., Mississippi County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for Farm No. 266 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 Callie Williams of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:clw

Enclosure

NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MP-2000

OMB No. 1024-0018

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: Farm No. 266

Other names/site number: Ray and Carrie Cash Home; Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, MS0345

Name of related multiple property listing:

"An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."

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

2. Location

Street & number: 4791 West County Road 924

City or town: Dyess State: AR County: Mississippi

Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [X]

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

Returned

12-6-17

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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:) _____

Returned

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	☐
Public – Local	☐
Public – State	X
Public – Federal	☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	☐
Site	☐
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Farm No. 266 Mississippi County, AR
Name of Property County and State

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Colonial Revival
Other: Front Gable Vernacular Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:
Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: WOOD: Weatherboard
Roof: ASPHALT: Shingles

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

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Summary Paragraph

Farm No. 266 is located at 4791 West County Road 924 on the south side of the road near Dyess, Arkansas. The house was built in 1934 and was designed by the Arkansas architect Howard Eichenbaum as part of the development of Resettlement Colony No. 1 by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The house was designed as a standard five-room take on the vernacular architecture of the Delta, with Colonial Revival style elements that were customary in New Deal architecture. The house sits on a foundation of historic concrete piers set on a hidden two-foot wide concrete foundation, and it has a split gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The one story, irregular- shaped building is clad in weatherboard, and has a covered porch over one-third of the main façade which faces north. The house's windows are a mixture of four-over-four double-hung windows.

Narrative Description

The five-room farmhouse for Farm No. 266 is located at 4791 West County Road 924 on the south side of the road near Dyess, Arkansas. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) constructed the house in 1934 using standard plans designed by the Arkansas architect Howard Eichenbaum as part of the development of Resettlement Colony No. 1. The house was designed with two bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room and bathroom. The exterior of the house shows the traditional vernacular architecture of the Delta, with Colonial Revival style elements that were customary in New Deal architecture. The house sits on newly settled ground with a historic concrete piers set on a hidden two-foot wide concrete foundation, and it has a split gable roof covered in asphalt shingles that has two brick chimneys. The one story, irregular-shaped building is clad in weatherboard, and has a covered porch over one-third of the main façade which faces north. The house's windows are a mixture of four-over-four double-hung windows adding to the house's vernacular character. Between 2011 and 2014, the house

underwent a massive renovation back to its 1930s-era appearance as part of the development of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home Museum.

Front/North Façade

The front façade of the house at Farm No. 266 is divided into three bays. The easternmost bay of the façade consists of one-story fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window with wooden false shutters with a half-moon near the top, and a wooden flower planter beneath the window. The next bay comprises the main portion of the house. It contains the main entrance, a wood panel door that is flanked by two, four-over-four double-hung windows. This bay also has the one-third size front porch that has a shed roof off the gable roofline. The porch supports and balusters are a collection of geometric diamonds shapes and vertical beams that are similar to the Modern Art of the 1930s. The third bay on the main façade is the front gable wing that was added at a right angle to the side gable home. Like the easternmost bay, it is fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window with wooden false shutters with a half-moon near the top, and a wooden flower planter beneath the window. Additionally a triangle gable vent is in the gable. Five of the concrete foundational pillars are visible on the main façade.

Side/West Façade

The west façade is also three bays wide with the north and south bays containing two four-over-four double-hung windows, and a single four-over-four single-hung window in the middle bay that serves as the window for the bathroom. The roofline consists of the side portion of the gable roof, and four of the concrete foundational pillars are visible on the west façade.

Rear/South Façade

Like the front, the rear of the house is divided into three bays. The westernmost bay of the façade consists of the front gable wing that was added at a right angle to the side gable home. It is fenestrated by a four-over-four double-hung window, and has a triangular gable vent. The next bay contains two four-over-four double-hung windows. The final bay contains a one-third size screened-in porch that has a shed roof off the gable roofline. The porch supports are non-decorative. Inside the porch is a single four-over-four double hung window and wooden door. Five of the concrete foundational pillars are visible on the south façade.

Side/East Façade

The east façade is also three bays wide with the north bay containing two four-over-four double-hung windows, the middle bay having two four-over-four single-hung windows, and the

southernmost bay being the wooden-framed screen door entrance to the back porch. The rear also sports non-historic steps and an Americans with Disability Act compliant ramp. Both the steps and the ramp were not painted to aid in identifying them as non-historic elements of the house. Additionally a triangle gable vent is in the gable. Five of the concrete foundational pillars are visible on the main façade.

Interior

The interior of the farmhouse is divided into two bedrooms and a bathroom on the western side of the house. A living room and dining room is located on the north side of the house, and kitchen across the rear of the house. In the 1970s, a new kitchen was installed in the house and in the 1980s the doors from the kitchen and dining room to the living room were altered. Also during the 1970s the owners altered the windows on the main façade and simulated wood paneling was placed over the interior walls. During this renovation, the historic wood stove was removed from the center of the living room, and a sliding patio door was added for entry to the rear wood deck.[1] During the renovation from 2011 to 2014, the house was returned to its 1930s-era appearance. This was done with the use of the original plans, historic research into the typical appearance and layout of the houses, as well as input from the Cash family. Based on the historical research conducted by the Arkansas State University Heritage Sites Program, the renovation and decorating of the house have been returned to its 1930s-era appearance when the Cash family occupied the house.

Integrity

Overall, the Farmhouse at Farm No. 266 retains good integrity. The house has been the subject of an extensive renovation, which was done under consultation with the Arkansas SHPO, and the house retains much of its original 1930s vernacular/Colonial Revival design. The property retains the feeling of a farmhouse from the 1930s-era Dyess Colony. The largest change to the property's integrity centers on its setting. The barn, smokehouse, chicken coop, and privy have been demolished, and the University does not own the entire 40 acres that the Cash Family received. Furthermore, to aid in protecting the house, a new chain fence was placed around the property, as well as a new ADA compliant ramp placed on the rear façade.

[1]John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, April 2010, 3. p. 17.

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.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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 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

Farm No. 266 Mississippi County, AR
Name of Property County and State

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
__ POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT
__ COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
__ ARCHITECTURE_

Period of Significance
___1934-1954_____

Significant Dates
_ May 1934_____
_ 1935_____

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
__Architect: Howard Eichenbaum
__Builder: Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA)_

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.)

Farm No. 266 is a New Deal-era, five-room, farmhouse constructed by Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony in Mississippi County, Arkansas. The house, located at 4791 West County Road 924, was originally the home of the Ray and Carrie Cash family that included American Country music legend, Johnny Cash. Farm No. 266 is located approximately a mile southwest of the colony center in a rural landscape that is currently used for farming. The house is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A**, with **local significance,** for its association with political history and the New Deal, efforts to end the cycle of sharecropping in the South, as well as the early influences on Johnny Cash's songwriting. In rural Arkansas, New Deal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Relief Association and the Works Progress Administration worked to deal with the effects of the Great Depression on farmers of the state. The house is also eligible under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an example of FERA architecture in the Dyess Colony, as well as an example of the work of Howard Eichenbaum, an important Jewish architect of Arkansas. This property is also being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."[2] The house is one of the residences constructed as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony, which was listed on the National Register of the Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976 for its national significance; however, Farm No. 266 was not included in the original NRHP nomination's boundary.[3] The period of significance for the home is 1934 until 1954, the date of its construction until the date the Cash family, an original settlement family, sold it.

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

Elaboration

The restored five-room farmhouse located at Farm No. 266, Dyess Colony, Arkansas, is currently a house museum, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, operated by the Arkansas State University's Heritage Sites Program. The museum tells the story of the New Deal, the Dyess Colony, and Johnny Cash. The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home is associated with many important

[2] Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[3] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR.

themes in twentieth century American History, and has a direct connection to the plight of farmers in Arkansas during the Great Depression, New Deal-era efforts by the Federal government to assist those farmers, as well as the early musical influences on Johnny Cash, winner of numerous music industry awards; a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Memphis Music Hall of Fame, Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, Rockabilly Hall of Fame, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; recipient of the National Medal of Arts; and the Kennedy Center Honors.

Sharecropping in Arkansas

The story of Farm No. 266 is linked to the agricultural history of northeast Arkansas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before the Civil War, large-scale plantation-type farming, prevalent in other parts of the South, had not taken root in the northeast Arkansas Delta because of the swamps. In 1850, Congress passed the Swamp Land Grant Act that would allow for selling of swamplands and using the proceeds to create levees to drain the areas.[4] The 1860 census lists 3,895 inhabitants in Mississippi County, and most were located in several large plantations, near the Mississippi River.[5]

In the areas that were settled, local planters introduced cotton as the cash crop into the region after discovering that the rich Delta soil would produce large quantities of the crop, and those crops could be sold at higher than normal prices. Because of the growth of cotton, the population of the Delta region of Arkansas grew over 100 percent from 1850 to 1860, and the slave population, which was primarily responsible for the work in the fields, grew over 120 percent. However, with the defeat of the southern states in the Civil War, and the emancipation of the enslaved population, landowners began searching for an alternative farm labor source.[6]

In response to no longer being able to utilize slave labor, in 1866, many Arkansas landowners began using wage contracts as the new form of agricultural labor. Historian C. Fred Williams contends that the wage contracts "quickly evolved to tenant and sharecropping contracts that

[4] Mary Suter, "Swamp Land Act of 1850," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[5] Ruth Hale, "Mississippi County," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[6] C. Fred Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net. For a discussion of pre-Civil War development of agriculture in the Arkansas Delta, see Jeannie M. Whayne, and Willard B. Gatewood Jr., eds. *The Arkansas Delta: Land of Paradox*. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993) and Donald P. McNeilly, *The Old South Frontier: Cotton Plantations and the Formation of Arkansas Society, 1819–1861*. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000).

allowed the underclass farm hands and the landowners to meet mutual needs."[7] However, the system was organized so that tenant sharecroppers would soon become economically indebted to the landowner. The sharecroppers were advanced money from the landowner to purchase supplies, tools, and seed to farm the land, and were obligated to pay the landowner back for the "rent" of the land, as well as the supplies. Many times, the crops grown would not pay back the debts, and quickly the sharecropper would become so indebted to the landowner, that they could never leave their employment.[8] Many sharecroppers in Arkansas blamed the commissary system on keeping the farmers poor, and felt that the system kept the farmers so poor they barely could get any profit at the end of the year.[9]

Even before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, farmers in Arkansas were already suffering.[10] From the 1860s to the 1920s, agriculture in Arkansas experienced periods of booms and busts. By 1899, the cotton market in Arkansas had bottomed out when the prices reached as low as six cents a pound because of overproduction, but the need for fabric during World War I, fueled a boom in the cotton market.[11] Many farmers gambled that the market for cotton would continue to grow; however, after the war, agriculture in the nation slid into a recession. The falling prices meant that many farmers lost their land and had to return to sharecropping or rental farms. In addition, the Flood of 1927 wreaked havoc on the farmers as over 6,000 square miles of farmland in the south was covered with water.

The Mississippi Alluvial Plain dominates Eastern Arkansas, covering one third of the state and affects the Delta's primary economy: farming. There are no less than thirty rivers in eastern Arkansas, which feed into the Mississippi River. In the spring of 1927, these rivers flooded the majority of eastern Arkansas in what was termed the Great Flood of 1927. The effects of this flood devastated the local farming economy and forced families all over eastern Arkansas to flee their homes and seek shelter further on Crowley's Ridge. Crowley's Ridge is a small geological area that consists of a ridge that rises approximately 250 feet above a relatively flat landscape.

[7] Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture.*

[8] Williams, "Agriculture," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; Van Hawkins, "Sharecropping and Tenant Farming," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net. For a through discussion of the sharecropping system in the state, see Jeannie M. Whayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth Century Arkansas*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996).

[9] Jeannie M. Whayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas* (University of Virginia Press, 1996), 55.

[10] See John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1997).

[11] Carl Moneyhon, "Post-Reconstruction through the Gilded Age, 1875 through 1900," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

The soils on the ridge are "relatively fertile, row crops such as soybeans and wheat are limited almost entirely too small floodplains along and near streams that flow out of the region onto the Alluvial Plain."[12] For the farming community, the floodwaters kept many from plowing and sowing fields for the coming season. Farmers could not plant their crops for the year because the floodwaters remained through the spring and summer months. In addition to the worsening financial crisis, in 1930-1932, southern farmers faced a record-setting drought. The extreme drought was the last thing they hoped for or expected. By December 1930, with few crops to harvest, farmers faced food shortages and lacked the money to purchase food for their families. By 1930, approximately two-thirds of Arkansas farmers lost their farms and fell into tenancy with larger plantations.[13] When they tried to turn to banks for assistance, they realized the depth of their plight, as a large number of banks had closed over the last year.[14]

Great Depression (1929-1940)

Historians and economists mark the beginning of the Great Depression with the Stock Market crashes of 1929, which resulted in nationwide economic panic. In Arkansas alone, nearly one hundred banks closed in the few months following the October 29 stock market crash robbing citizens of their savings, and taking away the only place many farmers could get loans.[15]

While many focus on the falling stock market the falling agricultural prices across the nation through the 1920s and the loss of individual farms were critical causes of the Great Depression. The agricultural production that expanded during World War I was aided by increasing mechanization of the farming process. However, demand for foodstuffs did not keep up with the increase in supply and many farmers took more short-term loans to offset the loss of supplies and equipment, tying agricultural production to stock prices and banks. Excess production also caused prices to fall, exacerbating the financial stresses throughout the south.[16]

After several natural disasters in the 1920s, such as the Mississippi River flood of 1927 and the droughts of 1930-1931, Arkansas farmers were hoping for better luck in the new decade. Facing

[12] Stroud, Herbert. "Crowley's Ridge," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[13] See Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *As Rare as Rain: Federal Relief in the Great Southern Drought of 1930–31* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Ingram, Dale. "The Forgotten Rebellion." *Arkansas Times*. January 19, 2006, pp. 10–13

[14] Gail S. Murray, "Forty Years Ago: The Great Depression Comes to Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1970), 294.

[15] Gail S. Murray, "Forty Years Ago: The Great Depression Comes to Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1970), 291-4.

[16] Giovanni Federico, "Not Guilty? Agriculture in the 1920s and the Great Depression," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 4 (Dec. 2005), 951.

both the worst financial crisis in history on top of a string of severe natural disasters, many farmers chose to flee the south. Over the 1920s and 1930s, more than two and a half million people fled the south.[17] Arkansas alone lost slightly more than 320,000 people. [18] Most of the people fleeing were young couples with children from rural areas to urban areas with the promise of jobs in factories or other industries.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was elected president in 1932, his New Deal program brought much-needed help to Arkansas residents. The New Deal was Roosevelt's plan of stabilizing the economy through additional regulation of banks, industry, and farming. The plan also called for job creation projects through the "alphabet agencies,"—the numerous agencies created during the Roosevelt administration. Nancy Hendricks argues, "Along with much needed jobs and relief funds, New Deal programs in Arkansas often accomplished a great deal more: they gave the people of a state teetering on the edge of bankruptcy a sense of pride, hope, and self-respect."[19] Through employment opportunities with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC 1933), the Works Progress Administration (WPA 1935), and the enactment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (1933), federal food programs, such as the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation (FSRC 1933), and the Rural Electrification Act (1936), the New Deal alleviated many of the pressures and strains of the Great Depression in Arkansas. The work of the CCC can be seen best through the buildings associated with Arkansas State Parks. These buildings include Mather Lodge at Petit Jean State Park, the buildings and trails of Mount Nebo State Park, and the building at Crowley's Ridge State Park.[20] The CCC offered many Arkansan's employment both within Arkansas and throughout the United States. Alongside the CCC, the WPA offered construction positions to many Arkansans to build roads and buildings throughout the state. These notable projects are still felt today as many of the WPA roads are still in use.[21] The jobs offered to Arkansas residents through the CCC and WPA brought much needed income to many families. With the high rate of unemployment, especially due to the devastation wrought by the Flood of 1927 and the drought of 1930-1931, many Arkansans sought employment wherever possible. Since the CCC and WPA offered housing, food, and wages, many jumped at the

[17] Jack Temple Kirby, "The Southern Exodus, 1910-1960: A Primer for Historians," *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 4 (Nov. 1983), 594.

[18] Donald Holley, "Leaving the Land of Opportunity: Arkansas and the Great Migration," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005), 247, 250.

[19] Nancy Hendricks, "New Deal," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Central Arkansas Library System, Accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

[20] These State Parks include Crowley's Ridge State Park, Devil's Den State Park, Lake Catherine State Park, Mount Magazine State Park, Mount Nebo State Park, and Petit Jean State Park. See Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[21] Elliott West, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 1987; U.S. Works Projects Administration. "Final Report and Physical Accomplishments of the Works Projects Administration [in] Arkansas." Dean B. Ellis Library Archives and Special Collections. Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

chance to increase their own financial situation and indirectly affected the historical landscape of Arkansas.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) sought to ease the pains caused by floods and droughts by subsidizing many of the cash crops, such as cotton, within Arkansas. A general belief was that by reducing farmers' dependence on the free market more tenant farmers and sharecroppers would be saved from displacement.[22] As an extension of the AAA, FDR created the FSRC to extend aid to more specific areas of the community. The FSRC contributed much needed food supplies to low-income areas and helped establish the first federal lunchroom programs in Arkansas.[23] Arkansas suffered extreme poverty during the Depression, and these three programs, as well as others, attempted to alleviate economic problems suffered by the majority of Arkansas, not just those in the agricultural industry. As chaotic weather patterns forced many tenant farmers and sharecroppers further into poverty, the AAA, FSRC, and the REA increased the entire family's financial stability.

In addition to the active federal programs and acts mentioned above, the New Deal enticed many rural residents to form or join home demonstration clubs. These clubs taught basic skills connected to food preservation to minimize food waste.[24] The skills promoted by the home demonstration clubs expanded throughout Arkansas on a grassroots level. On a similar note, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union formed in 1934 as another grassroots way for Arkansans to combat the effects of the Depression. Sharecroppers and tenant farmers banded together to form their own union to negate the ill effects the Depression had on the Delta's rural farmers.[25] These efforts present a deepening divide between agriculture and its employees.

The highlight of the FDR programs in Arkansas can be found with the establishment of rehabilitation colonies. The first step came in 1933, with the passage of the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA). The FERA of 1933 set aside $500 million to aid state-run relief efforts.

[22] M. S. Venkataramani, "Norman Thomas, Arkansas Sharecroppers, and the Roosevelt Agricultural Policies, 1933–1937." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1965): 3–28; Keith J. Volanto, "The AAA Cotton Plow-Up Campaign in Arkansas." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 59 (Winter 2000): 388–406.

[23] Floyd W. Hicks and C. Robert Lambert, "Food for the Hungry: Federal Food Programs in Arkansas, 1933-1942," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring, 1978), 23-43; David Rison, "Federal Aid to Arkansas Education, 1933-1936," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1977), 192-200.

[24] Elizabeth Griffin Hill, *A Splendid Piece of Work: 1912 - 2012: One Hundred Years of Arkansas's Home Demonstration and Extension Homemakers Clubs* (Place of publication not identified: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

[25] Donald Grubbs, *Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2000); E. F. Chestnutt, "Rural Electrification in Arkansas, 1935–1940: The Formative Years." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 46 (Fall 1987): 215–260.

Almost every state created a State Emergency Relief Administration using the FERA money, which focused primarily on the distribution of direct aid and established work relief projects. However, farmers' problems during the Great Depression were handled in the FERA by the Rural Rehabilitation Division (RRD).[26] One way the RRD provided relief was through the establishment of relief camps for the millions of migrant farmers flooding west in search of work. In order to help farmers, the RRD partnered with the states to create non-profit rural rehabilitation corporations that established agricultural colonies. Under the rural rehabilitation programs, state or federal agencies would purchase a large plot of land for a new colony or community, and the colonists would use the land. Loans were available for struggling famers from the agency in charge of the colony in order to purchase one of the lots, with payments deferred until after the farm began production.[27]

These colony projects served two main purposes. First, they provided relief to struggling farmers at a time of extreme financial difficulty. The non-profit corporations made land affordable to poor farmers by providing loans and selling land at cost. Second, they had a side benefit of ecological relief. Many farmers were struggling because their land had lost production due to inadequate farming methods. By moving these farmers to a new area and letting them farm new land, much of which had to be cleared of standing forests, the older farmland was given a chance to recover.

By 1935, all but three states in the United States had created rural rehabilitation corporations. Four agricultural communities were also established by that time—the first in Dyess, Arkansas, with others in Florida, Georgia, and Alaska. Florida's Cherry Lake Colony took up 18,000 acres and contained a canning plant and a 2,640-acre community farm in addition to the family houses. Dyess provided adult education, child daycare, a school lunch program, and public library. Pine Mountain Valley in Georgia provided homes for over 200 families. Matanuska Valley Colony, near Palmer, Alaska, housed 203 families from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The success of the first planned colonies led to the creation of further communities across the nation.[28]

Creation of Colony 1 (Dyess, Arkansas)

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration created "Colonization Project No. 1" in southwestern Mississippi County near the current Arkansas Highway 297 in May 1934. The

[26] Leland Beatty, "A Brief History of America's Rural Rehabilitation Corporations," NARRC website, http://www.ruralrehab.org/briefhistory.html (accessed 19 October 2014).

[27] Ibid.; Westbrook, Lawrence. "The Program of Rural Rehabilitation of the FERA." *Journal of Farm Economics* 17, no. 1 (1935): 89–100. doi:10.2307/1231038.

[28] Beatty, "Brief History."

colony would later be renamed "Dyess" after William Reynolds Dyess who served as the Arkansas state administrator of FERA and the WPA in Arkansas. Dyess had been active in obtaining the funding for the rehabilitation colony through FERA, but he intended for the project to serve as a long-term relief project for farm families, many of which were displaced by the Depression.[29]

Originally incorporated as the Arkansas Rural Rehabilitation Corporation, the Dyess Colony consisted of 16,500 acres to provide for homes and farms for around 500 Arkansas families. Similar to the WPA and CCC, the construction of Dyess Colony provided work to some 1,300 local individuals. These laborers worked clearing the land and building houses for the future families of the Dyess Colony, as well as the other support facilities.

By the fall of 1934, the heart of the Dyess colony consisted of veritable town-like commercial buildings. A Greek-Revival administration building, community bank, beauty salon/barbershop, blacksmith shop, canning center, café, commissary/co-op store, cotton gin, community building, feed mill, furniture factory, harness shop, hospital, ice house, library, newspaper, post office, printing shop, school, service station/garage, sorghum mill, and motion picture theater dominated the center of the town. The colony consisted of five hundred houses with three, four, and five-room houses designed with standard floor plans on a wagon wheel design, though only 347 houses were finished.[30] All of the houses were wired for electricity, and contained a water well, a barn, chicken coop, and other miscellaneous outbuildings.[31] It is important to note, however, that electric service hookups were not available for the farm homes until nearly 10 years after their construction.[32]

Like many New Deal projects, the Dyess Colony utilized local architects to design the buildings. Howard Eichenbaum (1904-1973), a Jewish architect from Little Rock, was tasked with designing the houses for Dyess. Eichenbaum was born in Little Rock, but because of a lack of architectural schools in the state, he received his training at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and returned to Little Rock were he worked for the firm of Mann and Stern. In 1930, Eichenbaum, along with Frank Erhart, formed a partnership that would continue for many years.[33] In 1933, Eichenbaum and Erhart received the contract from FERA to design the building

[29] Dan W. Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1970): 313–314.

[30] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony," 319.

[31] E.L. Kirkpatrick, "Housing Aspects of Resettlement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 190, Current Developments in Housing (March, 1937), 94-100.

[32] Van Hawkins, *A New Deal In Dyess: The Depression Era Agricultural Resettlement Colony in Arkansas*, Jonesboro, AR: Writers Bloc, 2015. p. 14.

[33] Charles Witsell, Gordon G. Wittenberg, and Marylyn Jackson Parins, *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950* (University of Arkansas Press, 2014), 97.

for the Dyess Colony. Eichenbaum personally drew plans for the three to five room houses as well as the more than twenty different floor plans to ensure variation within the community.[34] During World War II, Erhart and Eichenbaum spent most of their time designing buildings for military installations and wartime housing in the region. In 1945, Erhart and Eichenbaum added John A. Rauch as a partner, and it was renamed Erhart, Eichenbaum, and Rauch, Architects. The firm would become one of the largest in the state, and its major post-World War II projects included:

- Veterans Administration Hospital on Roosevelt Road (joint venture)
- Little Rock Baptist Hospital Main Campus
- St. Vincent Infirmary
- Barton Coliseum
- University of Arkansas Medical Center
- Horace Mann High School
- Justice Building, State of Arkansas
- Boy Scouts of America Headquarters
- Metropolitan Bank
- US Federal Building, Capitol Avenue (a joint venture with Brueggeman, Swaim, and Allen and the Cromwell firm)[35]

After World War II Eichenbaum was instrumental in the forming of the first American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapter in Arkansas. Until his death in 1973, Eichenbaum remained active in the AIA on the local and national level, as well as numerous civic and professional boards. He also served as the vice president of the Temple B'Nai Israel in Little Rock.[36] In 2010, Eichenbaum was inducted into the Arkansas Construction Hall of Fame.[37]

Construction on the colony houses for the Dyess Colony began in July 1934 using workers and timber located at the site, thus cutting the cost of the project, and 100 houses were completed by early 1935. Eichenbaum had used the residential architecture of the region as his model for the one-story houses, but he offered a variety of types.[38] By the time the houses were completed, approximately 40 percent used the five-room floor plan; 40 percent used the four-room floor plan; and 20 percent utilized the three-room floor plan. Eichenbaum also created over 20

[34] Carolyn Gray LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas, 1820s-1990s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 131; Charles Witsell, Gordon G. Wittenberg, and Marylyn Jackson Parins, *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950,* 95-96; Hawkings, *A New Deal In Dyess: The Depression Era Agricultural Resettlement Colony in Arkansas,* pp. 14-17.

[35] All of these major projects were completed in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[36] Witsell, et al., *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950,* 95-96; "

[37] "Construction Hall of Fame," available at http://www.agcar.net/content.asp?contentid=175

[38] "Rural-Industrial Community Project, No.2," *The Architectural Record,* January 1935, 13.

variations of the three standard floor plans allowing for some individuality in the colony, which was not common in other government or company towns of the time.[39]

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited Dyess colony in June 1936 to greet the first families who had already established new lives in the new colony. By the late 1930s, sixty gravel roads, ninety miles of drainage ditches, and twelve miles of the Frisco Railroad spur had been built into the colony. By 1938, 115 families had earned deeds to their farms and 300 other families completed their first year trial and were recommended as colonists.[40]

Johnny Cash and His Boyhood Home

In 1935, Ray and Carrie Cash received word that they and their five children—Roy, Louise, Jack, J.R. (Johnny), and Reba—were selected as one of five hundred farming families to move to the newly established Dyess Colony. [41] A hard-working father and World War I veteran, Ray Cash of Kingsland (Cleveland County), Arkansas, was working various jobs to feed his family when the Great Depression struck in 1929. Kingsland was developed and incorporated in 1884 for the benefit of the railroad and timber industries. With its glory days long past by the 1920s, employment opportunities were scarce and often required commutes along the rail lines during the Great Depression. According to Johnny Cash, Ray was "one of the few men in Cleveland County, Arkansas, who could usually find work of some kind. He cut pulpwood, worked at sawmills and on the railroad—any way to make a living—which along with all the food and animals he raised, not only fed us, but some of the more needy neighbors as well."[42] The Cash family endured the Great Depression in Kingsland without going on welfare and survived there until 1935 when the opportunity to move to Dyess arrived. The news of the establishment of a farming community through the New Deal in Dyess, Arkansas, provided the Cash family the opportunity to resettle. In addition to a new start the Cash family expanded with the birth of the last two Cash children, Joanne and Tommy, who were born in Dyess.

The Cash family selected a five-room house that was valued at $1,000. Unlike the smaller houses, the five-room house included an indoor toilet and bath facilities, though it still utilized a well for water and the plumbing fixtures were never operational when the Cash family lived in the house.[43] The house also was pre-wired for electricity that arrived at the colony center in the mid-1930s, but to the houses in 1946.[44] In addition to the farmhouse, the colony's families

[39] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony, " 317-318.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Johnny Cash, *Man in Black* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 23.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony," 318; informal conversation with Dr. Ruth Hawkins, director of Arkansas State Heritage Sites, 2017.
[44] *Ibid.*

received twenty to forty acres of farmland, outbuildings, a sixteen by twenty-four foot wooden barn with ten-foot sheds on either side of the barn, smokehouse, privy, and a chicken house. [45]

Eligibility requirements for the Dyess Community required experienced and competent farmers who had lost their farms because of the Great Depression. Additionally, the colony was established as a white-only farming community, with homeowners required to be healthy, under fifty-year-old Arkansans.[46] The colonists were assigned housing through the resettlement program based on family size, and the Cash family received the largest house available with five rooms and approximately 1,000 square feet. In an attempt to help economically distressed Arkansas families, the houses in Dyess required no money down with a later option to purchase the farmstead provided.[47]

Johnny Cash, known as J.R. to his family, was born February 26, 1932, in Kingsland (Cleveland County), Arkansas. While Johnny was only three years old when his family relocated to Dyess, the experiences of his parents Ray and Carrie in Kingsland formed the foundation for the life Johnny would have in Dyess. The possibility to move to Dyess and survive the Depression was available to the Cash family because of Ray's determination and willingness to work. These lessons were instilled in Johnny almost immediately upon arrival in Dyess. In his autobiography, *Man in Black,* Cash recalls hard work being the most important lesson his father taught him and explains "…At the age of four I was carrying water to my daddy and older brother Roy and sister Louise as they worked the cotton. At the age of ten I was working in the field."[48] Cotton was the primary crop the Cash family grew, but Johnny also learned how to grow vegetables and care for the animals.

Johnny's experiences in Dyess soon became a substantial influence on his life and his later musical career. The religious convictions of Carrie Cash led the Cash children into church each Sunday. Though she was a Methodist, she played the piano at a variety of churches in Dyess, including the Baptist Church, the Church of God, and others. This reinforcement of the importance of religion in the Cash children would serve as a basis for their later music. Johnny lacked an interest in church in his early childhood years, though the singing and musical performances caught his attention. The Church of God played a vital role in introducing Johnny to a variety of musical instruments, and it soon became "the songs [he] was beginning to feel."[49] Shortly after Johnny realized his fascination with music, Ray Cash brought home a battery-

[45] Pittman, "The Founding of Dyess Colony," 318.

[46] Nancy Hendrix, "Dyess (Mississippi County)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Last Updated 8/18/2014.

[47] Nan Snider, "Johnny Cash Memorial and Museum Is Success." *The Town Crier*, July 19, 2006. http://www.thetown-crier.com/story/1328209.html.

[48] Cash, *Man in Black,* 30.

[49] Cash, *Man in Black,* 25.

operated radio, which played the same music he heard in church. Through the songs on the radio, Johnny "received a taste of heavenly things."[50] Thus, the church in Dyess sparked two interests in Johnny, which paved the way for his success and inspiration in his career— church and music.

When Johnny was twelve years old, tragedy struck the Cash family. Jack Cash, Johnny's older brother, had received work at the woodshop cutting fence posts on Saturdays for three dollars a day. Johnny devoted his efforts to acquiring food for his family and chose to fish. On May 12, 1944, Jack was pulled into a swinging saw while cutting fence posts, resulting in severe injuries to the abdomen. After suffering for eight days, Jack Cash died May 20, 1944. In his final moments, Jack proclaimed to have seen angels and the beauty of heaven and appeared to die peacefully.[51] Jack was Johnny's favorite sibling, and his death left a lasting impact on Johnny's life. According to Johnny, "The memory of Jack's death, his vision of heaven, the effect his life had on the lives of others, and the image of Christ he projected have been more of an inspiration to me…than anything else that has ever come to me through any man."[52]

Following his brother's death, Carrie Cash introduced Johnny to the guitar, and Johnny's knowledge of music increased as he moved into musical performance. As the family took to the fields, singing became a regular aspect of their work routine. Johnny's love for music and exposure to songs through the family's radio allowed Johnny to practice singing and his (at the time) high tenor voice resonated throughout the cotton fields for the family to hear. While tending to the fields, the Cash family radio was frequently tuned to local station WMPS out of Memphis, Tennessee, and Johnny developed a love for radio performance.[53] In early 1947, Johnny's favorite radio program, the "High Noon Roundup" made a special appearance at Dyess High School. After a brief interaction with one of the performers, Johnny was left with "an eager anticipation about [his] future, an exciting expectation of the years coming in which [he] knew [he'd] be on that stage singing those songs [he] loved."[54] The exposure to a radio star motivated him to pursue music and he began writing and developing his own songs. Johnny's voice was no secret to the residents during his time at Dyess High School where he gained stage experience performing at school assemblies. Johnny's true potential and his family's support for his musical talents were not fully developed until after his voice changed. Following the change, Carrie Cash arranged for Johnny to do several gospel shows in 1948 at church. Johnny's exposure to Delta culture through hard work on the farm, and the development of a strong love for radio, music, and performance formed the essential foundation for the man who would leave Dyess

[50] Cash, *Man in Black,* 26.
[51] Cash, *Man in Black,* 46.
[52] Cash, *Man in Black*, 48.
[53] Cash, *Man in Black,*56.
[54] Cash, *Man in Black,*58.

after graduating high school in 1950, eventually becoming one the biggest names in country music. Upon graduation, Johnny left Dyess, never to live in the community for the remainder of his life, though he would come back to visit. Cash explored the world with his rural roots firmly in place influencing his life and career.

Johnny Cash was soon a rising star and his humble roots in Dyess are in many ways responsible. The Cash family's farming life in Arkansas gave him "…authenticity as a country star."[55] According to Everett J. Corbin's *Storm Over Nashville: A Case against Modern Country Music*, "Country music is music of the people; songs of the soil; the heartbeat of America--is an expression of life as it is lived by the simple people of this great nation."[56] The fifteen years he spent in Dyess, from the death of his brother to the influence of Delta life, carried with Johnny as he moved beyond Dyess, seen later in several of the songs he created. The song, "Five Feet High and Rising," addresses the family's experience during the flood of 1937:

> Well, the rails are washed out north of town
> We gotta head for higher ground
> We can't come back till the water goes down
> Five feet high and risin'[57]

Additionally, "Pickin' Time" directly relays the economic conditions of families in Dyess - hard times barely able to make ends meet until "pickin' time" when profits were made:

> It's hard to see by the coal-oil light
> And I turn it off pretty early at night
> 'Cause a jug of coal-oil costs a dime
> But I stay up late come pickin' time
> Stay up late come pickin' time[58]

Life after Dyess had a lot in store for Johnny Cash as he made his way to the status of American musical icon. The Country Music Hall of Fame (CMHF) described Cash's career as: "Beginning with his mid-1950s recordings for Sun Records, John R. 'Johnny' Cash has established an international profile as an ambassador of American roots music. He overcame personal demons to reach superstar status in the late 1960s and has continued to hew his own path musically into the twenty-first century."[59] The CMHF also credited Cash with "extend[ing] the scope of

[55] Jonathan Silverman, *Nine Choices: Johnny Cash and American Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 40.

[56] Everett J. Corbin, *Storm Over Nashville: A Case against Modern Country Music* (Nashville: Ashlar Press, 1980), 34.

[57] Johnny Cash, *The Essential Johnny Cash*, 2002 by Sony Records, 2 compact discs.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] http://countrymusichalloffame.org/Inductees/InducteeDetail/johnny-cash

country music and help[ing] broaden its audience through his exploration of many themes and types of songs." Johnny Cash's influence on country music, as recognized by the CMHF, is the direct result of his experiences in the Dyess house as the struggles in Dyess guided the direction of his music and his life. Johnny Cash has won nearly twenty Grammy Awards, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960, and inductions into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1977, the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1980, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992.

Post-Cash family Occupation

After World War II and the end of the Roosevelt administration, Dyess changed from a planned community to a typical rural community. Contrary to the initial ideals of the Dyess Colony that hoped to end the share cropping system, in the early 1950s many of the farm owners began renting their houses and the land to sharecroppers because the owners saw the opportunity to make extra income. In 1954, the Cash family sold Farm No. 266 to Dewey Cox and his family who rented the former Cash farm to sharecroppers for six years. In 1960, Dewey passed away, and Mrs. Cox sold the property to Otto Raymond Rankin. Three years later, the Rankins swapped the farm in Dyess to Earvin and Dorothy Langston for a farmstead near Jonesboro, Arkansas. [60] The Langstons sold the property to William and Mearl Stegall in 1974. During this time, they installed a new kitchen in the house and altered the openings from the kitchen and dining room to the living room. Furthermore, wood paneling was placed over the walls and the square doorways were altered to round-arched ones. Finally, the wood stove that had been the primary source of heat was removed from the center of the living room, and new replacement windows added to the main façade.[61] Over the next 37 years, the Stegall family lived in the house where they raised three children.

Preservation of the House

In the mid-1970s, historians and historic preservationists began to show interest in preserving the Dyess Colony. In 1975, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program prepared a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Dyess Colony, which was extraordinary since the colony was not yet fifty years of age. The nomination argued that Dyess was exceptionally significant because:

> Dyess Colony was a national sociological experiment in rural rehabilitation. The role Dyess played as a model for later resettlement farms made

[60] "Cash Home Restoration Timeline," Historic Dyess Colony. Available at http://dyesscash.astate.edu/johnny-cash-boyhood-home/.

[61] John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, April 2010, 3.17

> it an important historic site. Though established less than 50 years ago, Dyess Colony Center should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its significance to modern American social and agricultural history.[62]

The National Park Service agreed with the nomination, and the colony was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 1, 1976.

In 2005, after Cash's death, Twentieth Century Fox released the Oscar winning film *Walk the Line* chronicling the life of Cash from his rural life in Dyess to fame. The icon Cash has become for American youth and musicians is evident through his increasing presence in popular culture, through clothing, posters, movies, and the reemergence of his music by modern performers. In 2006, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas (HPAA) placed the Johnny Cash Boyhood home on its Most Endangered Historic Places list in Arkansas due to the rapid decline in condition of the house, and because preservationists feared that the house would soon reach a state of deterioration that would result in its demolition without intervention.[63] The HPAA argued that the shifting gumbo soil, often mentioned in Cash's music, had made the house's foundation unlevel and contributed to its further sinking. Furthermore, 70 years of occupation by various owners had resulted in exterior and interior alterations that had changed the historic fabric of the house. Yet, preservationists believed that the house still maintained enough historic materials to be saved and restored. Also, the HPAA felt that restoration of the Cash Boyhood home could be the cornerstone of heritage tourism in the area. The house would remain threatened until recent preservationist efforts that began in 2011.

In 2010, local Dyess civic leaders approached Arkansas State University's Heritage Sites program to see if the university could provide any assistance in restoring the colony administration building. The Heritage Sites had recently been successful in the restoration of the Lakeport Plantation and the Hemingway-Pfeiffer House, so local officials hoped that the university would again help. The former mayor of Dyess, Larry Sims, stated, "Johnny Cash is what's going to bring people to start things growing again."[64] In addition to the administration building, there was interest in preserving the Cash House. In 2010, Arkansas State University purchased the former Cash family house from the Stegall family and immediately began working to stabilize the foundation of the building and protect it from further damage until further restoration could begin.

[62] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Available at: http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/national-register-listings/dyess-colony-center

[63] "Cash Home Restoration Timeline," Historic Dyess Colony. Available at http://dyesscash.astate.edu/johnny-cash-boyhood-home/.

[64] Ana Campoy, "U.S. News: Boyhood Town of Johnny Cash Pegs Revival on Tourism," *Wall Street Journal, Eastern Edition; New York, N.Y.*, July 8, 2013.

The Redevelopment Plan described the condition of the house before Arkansas State University purchased it:

> The house is currently in declining condition, in part because of the way many wood elements are exposed to water and other weather-related sources of deterioration. The house has some unpainted wood components, both in places where the paint has failed and in places where the wood was never painted. Like many old houses, it has an imperfect system for roof drainage. The conditions inside and out are less than ideal, but the Stegall family has sought different ways to improve the house at different times with totally different approaches. Like many homeowners, they have done so with limited means…however, if the dwelling is to be restored to its original configuration and appearance, these changes will have to be reversed. Also it is important that any remaining historic materials and architectural features be preserved.[65]

After years of renovation by the University, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home received media coverage and strong support from the community. The involvement of the local university to aid in its preservation and rehabilitation was indicative of strong communal ties to the property, as well as what it represents for not only Dyess, but also the surrounding Delta communities. Johnny's influence on country music is still felt today. While the boyhood home of an American music legend may seem miniscule, this house in Dyess provided Johnny everything he needed to succeed—the values, motivation, dedication, education, and experiences to make his musical career relatable to his audience and carry his image and music long after his death.

Summary

Farm No. 266 is a New Deal-era, five-room, farmhouse constructed by Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony in Mississippi County, Arkansas. The house, located at 4791 West County Road 924, was originally the home of the Ray and Carrie Cash family that included American Country music legend, Johnny Cash. Farm No. 266 is located approximately a mile southwest of the colony center in a rural landscape that is currently used for farming. The house is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A**, with **local significance,** for its association with political history and the New Deal, efforts to end the cycle of sharecropping in the South, as well as the early influences on Johnny Cash's songwriting. In rural Arkansas, New Deal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Relief Association and the Works Progress Administration worked to deal with the effects of the Great Depression on farmers of the state. The house is also eligible under **Criterion C**, with **local significance,** as an example of FERA architecture in the Dyess Colony,

[65] John Milner and Associates, *Dyess Colony Redevelopment Master Plan Dyess, Arkansas*, (April 2010), 3.16.

as well as an example of the work of Howard Eichenbaum, an important Jewish architect of Arkansas. This property is also being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple-property listing "An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943."[66] The house is one of the residences constructed as part of the Dyess Resettlement Colony, which was listed on the National Register of the Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976 for its national significance; however, Farm No. 266 was not included in the original NRHP nomination's boundary.[67] The period of significance for the home is 1934 until 1954, the date of its construction until the date the Cash family, an original settlement family, sold it.

[66] Holly Hope, *An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2006).

[67] Dianne Kirk, "Dyess Colony Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination packet, 1975. Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR.

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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:

__X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
__X_ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _Arkansas State University, Heritage Sites Program___

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __MS0345 _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ____less than one acre (>1)_____ _

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:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[ ] NAD 1927 or [X] NAD 1983

A. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749610.00	Northing: 3942827.00
B. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749564.05	Northing: 3942827.21
C. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749566.91	Northing: 3942762.26
D. Zone: 15 S	Easting: 749608.28	Northing: 3942761.45

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

A property within Section 9, Township 11 North, Range 8 East in Mississippi County, Arkansas, with a boundary starting at a point A (Zone 15 S, Easting 749610.00 m, Northing 3942827.00 m) and then west to a point B (Zone 15 S, Easting 749564.05 m, Northing 3942827.21 m), then south to a point C (Zone 15 S, Easting 749566.91 m, Northing 3942762.26 m), then east to a point D (Zone 15 S, Easting 749608.28 m, Northing 3942761.45 m), and then northeast to the beginning point at point A.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Farm No. 266 currently owned by Arkansas State University as of August, 2017.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _Edward Salo, PhD; Elizabeth Johnson, Zach Elledge, and Brian McIntruf _
organization: Arkansas State University Heritage Sites

name/title: __ Callie Williams, National Register Historian (Edited By)_____
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street & number: __1100 North Street_____
city or town: Little Rock_____ state: _Arkansas___ zip code: _72201___
e-mail__callie.williams@arkansas.gov_____
telephone:_501.324.9789____
date:____October 1, 2017_____

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: Farm No. 266

City or Vicinity: Dyess vic.

County: Mississippi State: Arkansas

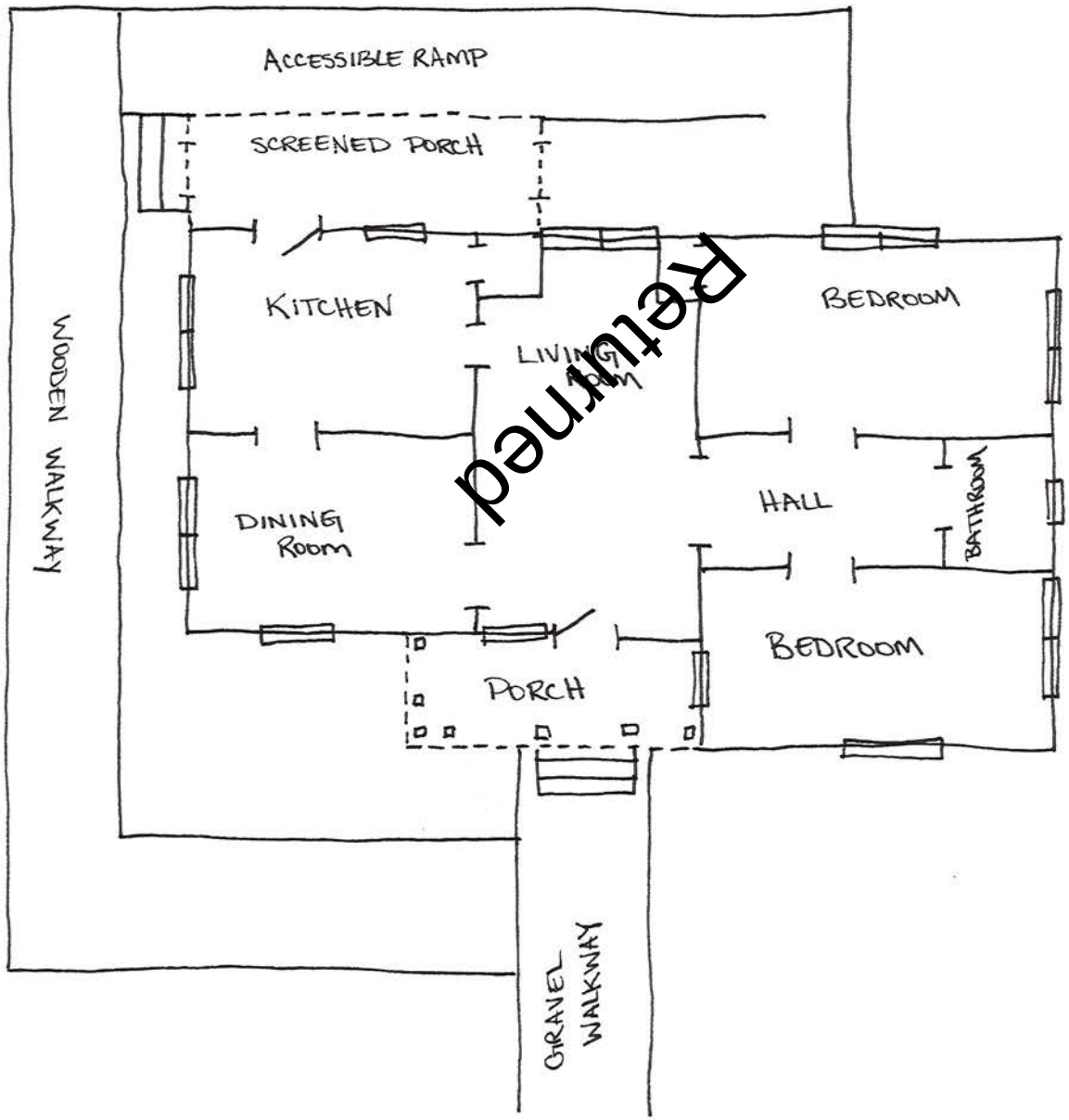
Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: September 26, 2017

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

1 of 17: North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0001
2 of 17: East (Side) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0002
3 of 17: East (Side) Façade and South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing northwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0003
4 of 17: South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing north.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0004
5 of 17: West (Side) Façade and South (Rear) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southeast.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0005
6 of 17: West (Side) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing east.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0006
7 of 17: North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0007

8 of 17: Detail of the foundation piers along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0008
9 of 17: Detail of the porch posts along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0009
10 of 17: Detail of the shutters with decorative crescent moon cut-outs along the North (Front) Façade of the Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0010
11 of 17: Detail of the central living space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing south.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0011
12 of 17: Detail of the central living space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0012
13 of 17: Detail of the kitchen and dining space, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing east.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0013
14 of 17: Detail of the kitchen, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0014
15 of 17: Detail of the dining room, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing southeast.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0015
16 of 17: Detail of a bedroom, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing northwest.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0016
17 of 17: Detail of the bathroom, interior of Farm No. 266 House, camera facing west.
AR_MississippiCounty_FarmNo266_0017



NORTH

FARM No. 266
Dyess Vic.
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY
ARKANSAS
(Not to SCALE)

Farm No. 266

Highfill, Benton County
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

A. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749610.00 m, Northing: 3942827.00 m
B. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749564.05 m, Northing: 3942827.21 m
C. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749566.91 m, Northing: 3942762.26 m
D. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749608.28 m, Northing: 3942761.45 m

Farm No. 266

Highfill, Benton County
Arkansas

UTM NAD 1983

A. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749610.00 m, Northing: 3942827.00 m
B. Z: 15 S, Easting: 749564.05 m, Northing: 3942827.21 m
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Farm No. 266

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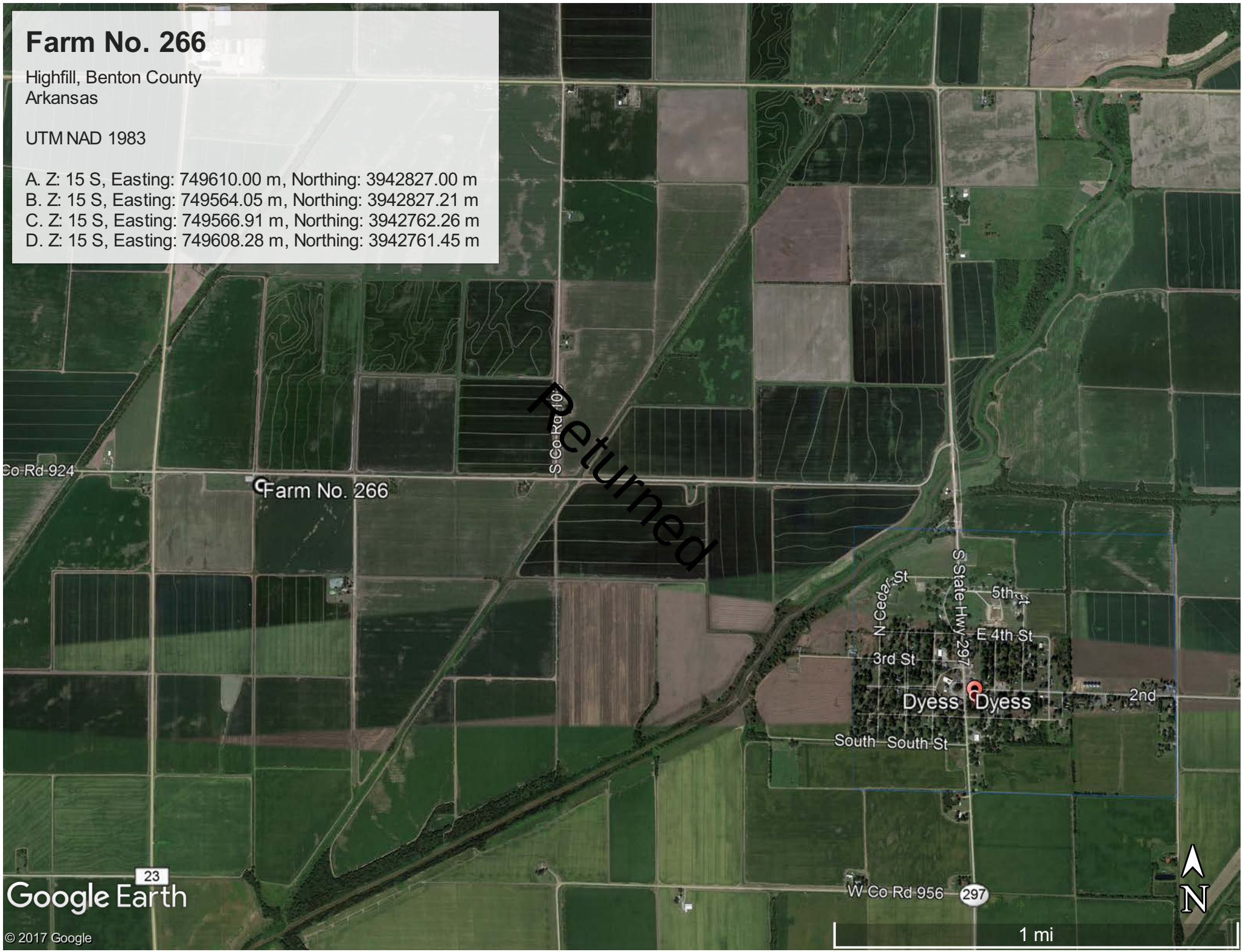

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Farm No. 266
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	ARKANSAS, Mississippi

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
12/12/2017			1/26/2018	

Reference number:	MP100002000
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

_____ Accept ___X___ Return _____ Reject ___1/2/2018___ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	See attached comments
Recommendation/ Criteria	Return

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date 1-2-2018

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : **Yes** 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.

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Farm No. 266 (Johnny Cash Boyhood Home), Mississippi County, AR (New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas MPS)

Reference Number: 100002000

Reason for Return

Farm No. 266 appears to be eligible for the National Register, but the nomination is being returned for substantive revision. The claim of architectural significance under Criterion C is not supported in the nomination. The statement of significance notes that it is "an example of FERA architecture in the Dyess Colony" as well as being "an example of the work of Howard Eichenbaum" but provides no justification why either of these claims equates to significance under Criterion C. There is no explanation of what "FERA architecture" is, why it is important, and why this particular example is individually important. There is no comparative context, even within the Dyess Colony. There is no indication that Eichenbaum is considered a master, or why this particular house would be significant within the body of his work. Please provide an expanded comparative context that supports significance under Criterion C, or delete "C" and "Architecture" altogether.

The summary statement of significance notes that the period of significance is 1934-1954, the dates associated with the Cash family's occupancy, and that the property has significance under "A" for "the early influences on Johnny Cash's songwriting." However, neither Criterion B nor an appropriate area of significance is claimed for Cash's association. The narrative presents a strong case to support the importance of Cash's experience on his career, and if you wish, you could resubmit the nomination under Criterion B, with Performing Arts as the area of significance for this association. Currently, there are no properties associated with Cash himself listed in the National Register, although Sun Recording Studio in Memphis is listed (Cash recorded there in his early days). While the National Register generally lists properties under B for their association with the productive period of a person's life, an exception can be made if there are either no extant places left to associate with the person, or if you can demonstrate that the place has had a profound impact on the person's formative years. In the case of the Cash boyhood home, I think that this has been adequately demonstrated.

You will need to acknowledge that an exhaustive search for other properties has not occurred, but that numerous sources including Cash himself have noted the importance of his family's experiences in Dyess in shaping his spiritual and creative philosophy. I think that by adding a little emphasis about this aspect we can accept this nomination under B. If you do resubmit under B, please add "Johnny Cash Boyhood Home" as a parenthetical to the historic name.

One technical correction: In the first paragraph of Section 7, the nomination states that the farmstead is located approximately a mile southwest of the colony center. It is actually northwest.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <James_Gabbert@nps.gov>.

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
1/2/2018

THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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website:
www.arkansaspreservation.com

An Equal Opportunity Employer

April 4, 2018

J. Paul Loether, Deputy 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

RE: Farm No. 266, Johnny Cash Boyhood Home – Dyess vic., Mississippi County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination as a resubmittal **(Reference Number: 100002000).** The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Farm No. 266, Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, 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 Callie Williams of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:clw

Enclosure