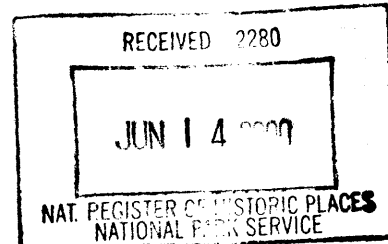


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Wright, A.J., Farm  
other names/site number NA

2. Location

street & number 297 A.J. Wright Road NA  not for publication  
city or town Shady Valley NA  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Johnson code 91 zip code 37688

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Herbert L. Hager 6/14/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other,  
(explain:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 7/14/00

Wright, A.J., Farm  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Tennessee  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
9	0	buildings
3	0	sites
2	0	structures
	0	objects
14	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

AGRICULTURE: agricultural outbuildings, agricultural fields

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

AGRICULTURE: agricultural outbuildings, agricultural fields

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-house

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, CONCRETE block

walls WEATHERBOARD

roof METAL

other WOOD, STONE

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations** N/A

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

**Period of Significance**

1909-1950

**Significant Dates**

NA

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Brown, Arthur

Robbins, George

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

MTSU, Center for Historic Preservation

Wright, A.J., Farm  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Tennessee  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 143 acres Shady Valley 213SW & Doe 214NW

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>416890</u>	<u>4040580</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>416900</u>	<u>4039220</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>417310</u>	<u>4040100</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>416080</u>	<u>4039150</u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

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**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title Dennis E. Testerman/Carroll Van West  
organization NA/MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date January 2000  
street & number 3101 Irish Potato Road telephone 704/782-4105  
city or town Concord state NC zip code 28025-7995

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**Additional Documentation**

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submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

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

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

**Photographs**

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

**Additional items**

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

---

**Property Owner**

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

name See continuation sheet.  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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## DESCRIPTION

The A.J. Wright Farm, comprised of one hundred and forty-three acres, is located at 297 A.J. Wright Road in Shady Valley, in the eighth civil district of Johnson County, Tennessee. The farm lies along Jim Wright Branch, a creek that was named after Allen Jesse (A.J.) Wright's father, James Jones Wright. The A.J. Wright Farm contains buildings, structures, and sites related by historical use, significance, and design. Contributing resources include a farmhouse, two-story cellar/smokehouse, woodshed, spring house, chicken house, barn, granary, combination crib/machine shed and farm fields associated with significant patterns of agricultural production at the farm.

The farm's domestic complex is located at the end of A.J. Wright Road, a quarter-mile long graveled private drive off Sluder Road that passes through a 5-acre tract of old-growth forest of mixed conifer and hardwood trees, with trees as old as 145 years. This driveway is on the bed of a turn-of-the-century standard gauge railroad line spur that was abandoned, and removed, circa 1918. (C, contributing structure) Another linear feature of the farm complex is a ditch running along the contour of a hillside near the site of a former tenant farmstead. This is all that remains of a raceway that carried water from the East Fork of Beaverdam Creek to a gristmill. (C, contributing site)

Shady Valley resident Arthur Brown constructed the Wright farmhouse circa 1909. The frame two-story, I-house rests on a concrete block foundation. The original part of the house contains a central hall with one room to each side on both floors. Circa 1953-1954, a one story shed roof addition was built on the rear elevation, closing off rear access from the center hallway. Wood for the house likely came from trees cut on the farm. One piece of white pine sheathing under the siding measures 21 1/4 inches wide, indicating the size of the trees in the area at the turn of the century. The sills are hand hewn with lapped joints. Three-quarter inch straight-sawed poplar lap siding originally covered the house exterior. The original siding was replaced with bevel-cut white pine in 1998. This new siding replicates the old siding. The dwelling has a gable roof with returns, and its pressed metal shingles replaced wood shingles circa 1930. A one bay pedimented portico is centrally located at the facade.

The original two-over-two double-hung sash windows were placed in site-built frames without balancers. Cut garden stakes were traditionally used to prop the lower sash in the open position, with the upper sash being nailed in place. The current three-over-one double-hung sash windows were put in circa 1952. Each of the four rooms has two windows, one in the center of each exterior wall. Plain butt joint interior window frames surround the second story windows. The exterior of the second story windows are trimmed with plain molding.

The principal feature of the northwest facade of the Wright farmhouse is the symmetrically placed one bay, two story pedimented portico. Circa 1955, a one story portico replaced the original two story portico. The current portico is in the process of being rebuilt to resemble the two story portico seen in historic photographs. In the early 1940s, Shady Valley resident George Robbins laid the front stone steps. Three-over-one double hung sashes flank the portico on both stories. Single leaf entries lead to both the first and second story interiors of the house. A single chimney is visible at the ridge line in the northeast.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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The southwest and northeast elevations are nearly identical. Three-over-one double hung sashes on each story pierce both elevations. The 1953-1955 shed roof addition is visible in these views. Paired three-over-one sashes are found on the utility room on the southwest end of this one story section, along with a single leaf door.

The southeast, or rear elevation, of the Wright farmhouse is dominated by the 1953-1955 addition. There are no window openings in the original section of the house on this elevation. Two double hung sashes, and one paired double hung sash are found on this elevation. The shed roof of the addition is covered with asphalt shingles.

Interior wood doors have four panels and standard box latches with porcelain door knobs. Plain butt joint door frames surround the doors. A finished floor was laid over hand planed, single-layer flooring in both rooms on the first floor. Yellow pine flooring was used in the living room. All the original trim was face-nailed with bright steel common nails. The original linoleum placed on the floors of the lower and upper rooms on the southwest side of the house is still in place. Prior to 1950, sheet rock was added to cover white pine tongue-and-groove paneling on the walls and ceilings in these rooms. This same paneling is still exposed in the second story rooms. The flooring in the second story rooms is face-nailed, one-inch thick hand-planed boards with no subfloor. The central stairway is composed of turned wood balusters and a canted newel post. Circa 1953-1955, the stair was enclosed when the rest of the hallway was remodeled into a bathroom.

The chimney is built on a stone foundation with poured mortar. The fireplace, located in the first floor room now used as a bedroom, has a unique 28" x 5" flue. A small closet with a four-panel door is on the southeast side of the fireplace. The circa 1935 fireplace features a mantle and andirons crafted by Shady Valley blacksmith Tom Mayes. Sawn wood curvilinear trim, tapered pilasters and a simple mantle shelf characterize the fireplace. This room has been used as both a bedroom and a sitting room or parlor, alternating this function with the other room on the first floor. Both rooms on the first floor have paneled doorways that open to the central hall on the front side of the house. The floor framing in the first and second story rooms on the northeast side of the house was box-framed to permit the eventual construction of a second chimney that was never built. The second room, like other rooms in the house, has molded window casings and baseboards.

The second floor hallway retains original white pine tongue and groove wood siding, as do the two bedrooms. The ceiling in the room on the southeast side of the house has a circa 1953-54 tile covering. The door to the second-story bedroom on the northeast side of the house opens into the hall at the top of the staircase. A small closet with exterior walls of sheet rock was added in a corner of this room during a period of remodeling circa 1953-1954. The second bedroom has a vent in the floor that allowed warmth from the fireplace below to enter this room. The flue also has an opening to accommodate a stove.

Between 1953-1955, the Wright's youngest son, Haynes, undertook a major remodeling of the farmhouse. An attached frame kitchen, probably late nineteenth century, and dining room were replaced by a one story addition containing a kitchen/dining room and utility room. The house, which sat on stone foundation piers,

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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was fully enclosed by underpinning with concrete blocks. As mentioned earlier, the first floor central hall was closed off circa 1955 to create a bathroom, and the open staircase was converted to box stairs in the process. This indoor bathroom replaced the family's use of a circa 1938 Works Progress Administration two-seat privy (gone). Central plumbing was installed circa 1955. In addition to these modernizations, the original two story portico was removed and a new window put where the portico door in the second story had been. In 1998 the historic facade portico was rebuilt and the first floor front door was moved to the second floor. (C)

A walkway of flat creek stones was laid by one of the Wright daughters, Letha, circa 1930. It begins at the northeast yard gate and terminates mid-yard at the former site of the porch, which ran the full length of the kitchen/dining room that was part of the nineteenth century house. From this point, a branch of the walkway also leads to the southeast gate next to the woodshed. (C)

The barn, a large rectangular frame building with vertical wood siding, was built by Arthur Brown, circa 1917. Brown was active as a builder and carpenter of houses and outbuildings in Shady Valley during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In all, Arthur Brown built the farmhouse, barn, granary, crib/machine shed, and cellar/smokehouse on the Wright farmstead. The barn was the first of four outbuildings to be built between the World War I years and the Great Depression. The existing metal gable roof replaced the original wood shingle roof circa 1945. The current barn replaced an earlier log barn that was removed once the replacement structure was completed. The extant barn was primarily used for sheltering stock in stalls on the ground level and for storing hay on the upper level. The upper level was also used to cure tobacco. A secondary use of the barn was to store equipment, such as a two-row corn planter acquired in the early 1920s, a manure spreader purchased in the early 1930s, and the tractors, beginning with a 1950 John Deere and a 1953 Ford Jubilee. The shed roof extension on the southeast side was enclosed with vertical board siding by Haynes Wright, circa 1955, to protect both equipment and curing tobacco from the weather. (C)

The circa 1917 granary was built by Arthur Brown. It is a rectangular frame building with vertical wood siding and a circa 1920 metal gable roof that replaced the original wood shingle roof. The granary has five plank-sided grain bins forming a center aisle. (C)

Arthur Brown also constructed the corn crib/machine shed, in the early 1920s. The combination corn crib and machine shed is a rectangular frame building with a metal gable roof. This building replaced an earlier double drive-through crib that stood in one corner of the yard. Vertical board siding covers the walls of the shed, while the crib walls are made of horizontal wood laths spaced far enough apart to allow optimal air flow for corn drying. (C)

The combination cellar/smokehouse is a two-story building also constructed by Arthur Brown in the early 1920s. Like other outbuildings constructed in the 1920s, the cellar/smokehouse replaced an older farm outbuilding. The extant building contains an above-ground cellar. This area is a rectangular concrete space with dirt floor and a double-layer plank door on the northeast side. The cellar has plank storage bins on three sides. The upper-level smokehouse has double-layer vertical plank siding, and is accessed by

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

poured concrete steps on the southeast side. The concrete walls, with creek-stone filler, were poured in forms of rough-sawn lumber. A metal-covered gable roof replaced the original wood shingle roof on the combination building. A four-pane fixed sash window provides natural lighting in the smokehouse. A smaller window in the southwest wall of the cellar is currently boarded up as a security precaution. A wood flue in the tongue and groove pine-paneled cellar ceiling provides ventilation to the overhead smokehouse. (C)

Southwest of the cellar/smokehouse is a circa 1925 woodshed. It is a rectangular frame building with vertical board siding. A five-channel metal gable roof replaced the original wood shingle roof circa 1945. Farm tenant Lee Stone built this building using recycled hand-hewn sills that probably came from an early nineteenth century structure on the farm. The woodshed gate features a hand-forged iron chain latch. The extant woodshed replaced a nineteenth century log woodshed that stood in the north corner of the yard. (C)

Built by George Robbins, a local builder, circa 1945, the spring house is a rectangular building constructed of uncoursed creek stones. The front gable roof extends out from the facade of the spring house to form a protective canopy. As was typical for this farmstead, the extant building replaced an earlier one with the same function. The existing corrugated-metal gable roof replaced the original wood shingle roof. The spring house served as a water source and cooler for dairy products in the early part of the twentieth century. Following electrification, a pump in the spring house supplied water to the former kitchen (gone). Circa 1955, a gravity-flow waterline from a community spring on the side of nearby Iron Mountain was extended to the house. (C).

The circa 1935 chicken house is a frame rectangular building, with a metal shed roof with exposed rafter tails. Historically, the three window openings on the facade were covered with wire mesh, but they are now open with no covering. A single row of nest boxes lines the southwest wall. Roosting poles made from straight tree limbs are suspended from v-notched brackets on the southeast wall. An inverted v-shaped barnyard chicken shelter is currently stored in this building. The presence of a brick hearth in the center of the floor to accommodate a stove for warmth when eggs were being hatched dates this outbuilding prior to 1941 when electrification reached the farm. An electric heater replaced the stove. The entry to the building features a small sliding door in the bottom for the chickens to enter and exit. This is the last of three chicken houses that existed on the farm during the first half of the twentieth century. (Another chicken house with a shingle roof stood in the edge of the orchard behind the woodshed in the early part of the century. A third poultry house used for both chickens and turkeys stood west of the barn until the 1960s. This house was originally constructed to provide protection for turkeys from predators at night. (C)

The circa 1946-1947 garage is the most recent building. It is a rectangular frame building with horizontal rough-sawn siding on three sides that rests on a poured concrete foundation. The garage has a metal-gable roof and a large single bay entrance on its gable end. The Wright's son Haynes and neighbor Martin Tolliver erected this building to shelter Haynes' 1936 and 1947 Chevrolet automobiles. (C)



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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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The orchard, which predates the house, is a rectangular plot of apple trees. Restoration of the orchard began in 1995 when new trees from grafts of existing heirloom trees were planted. Plans call for heirloom varieties of Black Heart cherry, peach and pear trees, historically grown on the Wright farm, to be restored to this orchard. ( C)

The field patterns and forests of the farm retain their historic twentieth century size and configuration and represent a contributing site within the overall farm landscape. Over the years of farming, the field patterns on the Wright farm changed somewhat as the crops and livestock changed on the farm. Fields - with names like "the Pond Field," "the Coaling Field," and "the Hill Field" - are still defined mostly by woven wire fencing on split-locust posts that replaced split rail fences in the early 1940s. A circa 1935 family photograph shows a woven wire fence around the yard. (See photograph #4.) Two sides of this fence featured a hemlock hedge from the 1930s through the 1970s. The outline of former flower and vegetable garden plots are still evident on the farm. (C)

Adjacent to the A.J. Wright Farm is a second related family farm, that of Letha Wright Sluder. She has lived on her share of the original 187-acre A.J. Wright Farm since soon after her marriage, to Otis Sluder in 1935. Her son, Kenneth, and grandson, Kenny, also now live on this tract with their respective families. In addition to their three houses, there are two barns, a small sawmill and several outbuildings (including the original Sluder frame house now used for storage) on this property. Because the majority of the farm buildings on this acreage are less than fifty years old and, therefore, noncontributing, this part of the farmstead has been omitted from the nomination.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The A.J. Wright Farm is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with locally significant patterns and events in the agricultural history of Johnson County from 1909 to 1950. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Wright family engaged in diversified farming and utilized many of the concepts of progressive farming promoted by state agencies. Cattle, sheep, tobacco, flax and chickens are only a few of the products of the Wright farm over the years. Important features of the A.J. Wright Farm that are not seen on many National Register listed farms in Tennessee are old-growth forest and orchards. Overall, the farm retains a high degree of integrity.

### Shady Valley

The native vegetation in the region is predominated by northern species. The landscape of Shady Valley at the time of European-American settlement was a mosaic of wetlands and dense forests dominated by conifers. An extensive bog with peat deposits dated to circa 9,500 BC occupied the valley floor prior to drainage projects carried out from the 1920s through the 1960s. A limestone layer under the peat, which contributed to the wet conditions, was mined and burned in the early twentieth century to produce agricultural lime. Cranberries were associated with this bog and scattered smaller bogs. Shady Valley was aptly named by early settler W. R. Blevins (Cole, 2). The shade under the white pines and hemlocks that dominated the valley floor at the time of settlement was reportedly so dense that pioneer women had to light a lantern at midday to be able to see to thread a needle (Barclay, 111).

One commentator on Southern life in the twentieth century may well have characterized life in Shady Valley before A.J. Wright's time with the following words:

Those who castigated the mountaineers for their backwardness missed the role of family and land in organizing mountain life. The plot of land played a sacred role; it was the place of life, the locus for eating, sleeping, earning a living, birth, and death, and it passed from generation to generation, providing continuity and order. Mountain people opted for a way of life outside the mainstream of industrialization and commercial farming (Daniel, 16).

The A.J. Wright Farm is located at 297 A.J. Wright Road in Shady Valley, in the eighth civil district of Johnson County, Tennessee. Shady Valley is located twelve miles northwest of the county seat of Mountain City across Iron Mountain and twenty-two miles southeast of Bristol, Virginia -Tennessee across Holston Mountain. Damascus, Virginia is eight miles to the north through the Beaverdam Creek gorge and Abingdon, Virginia is nine miles further to the northwest through the valley of the South Fork of the Holston River. Shady Valley is two-and-a-half miles wide, seven miles long, and at 2,900 feet has the highest elevation of any cove valley in Tennessee. Johnson County ties in the Unaka Range of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Shady Valley is surrounded on three sides by the Cross, Holston, and Iron Mountains, the ridges of which range from 3,500 feet to 4,175 feet in elevation.

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

The road from Bristol to Mountain City passing through Shady Valley, which preceded the present-day US 421, was built in 1934 (Cole, 47). Prior to this time, the Holston River had to be crossed on a train trestle or forded when traveling to Bristol (Cole, 14). A railroad was extended into Shady Valley beginning in 1909, linking the Valley with Abingdon via Damascus and points beyond. According to one account, "The Beaver Dam Railroad was more than a railroad. It was a life line to a larger economic and social world for many people in the Valley" (Cole, 48). A railroad spur ran through the A.J. Wright Farm on its way to the base of Iron Mountain. The Shady Valley line was abandoned circa 1918. Turn of the century railroads and later farm to market roads to Mountain City, Bristol, and Damascus connected the Wright farm with the world outside the isolated Appalachian mountain valley. The first black top roads were paved in 1949 and remained single lane, with shoulder passing only, until the mid-1950s.

Electricity came to Shady Valley circa 1941 as a result of the efforts of the federal Rural Electrification Administration, some six years after the New Deal agency was created. Wiring for lights and outlets was installed in the Wright farmhouse at this time. "With electricity," writes R. Douglas Hurt in *American Agriculture: A Brief History*, "much of the drudgery and drabness of rural life has been eliminated." He continues,

"It prompted reading, and through radio, contact with the outside world. Rural life also became more comfortable. Electric pumps brought water indoors, and heaters warmed it" (Hurt, 326).

## A.J. Wright Farm

The farm's history begins with A.J. Wright, who was a descendant of the first known European-American settler in Shady Valley, Benjamin Brown. Brown arrived from North Carolina with his wife Susan and daughter Celia in the late 1700s (*History of Johnson County*, 30). Celia married Jesse Cole, a major landowner and prominent figure in the early history of Johnson County. Cole received a land grant along Beaver (later Beaverdam) Creek in exchange for service as an officer in the Revolutionary War. Jesse Cole was the first presiding judge in Johnson County (*History of Johnson County*, 222). Jesse and Celia Brown Cole's daughter, Lydia, or "Liddie" married Moses Wright, the grandfather of A.J. Wright. The land that makes up the A.J. Wright Farm was passed down through seven generations of descendants of Joseph Cole, Sr., the grandfather of Jesse Cole. Thus seven generations have owned the Wright farm since Joseph Cole first purchased land in Shady Valley in 1789.

In 1907, A.J. Wright married Girdie Belle McEwen, from the Doe Valley area of Johnson County, which was on the other side of Cross Mountain from Shady Valley. The population of Shady Valley around this time was 750 residents (Cole, 13). A.J. and Girdie Wright moved in with his father, James (Jim) Jones Wright, and stepmother, Celia Scott Brown. (Jim Wright Branch, a tributary of Beaverdam Creek that runs through the farm, bears his name.) The farmstead to which A.J. Wright brought his bride home was comprised of a wood frame house with an attached kitchen and dining room and an assemblage of log outbuildings. Over the next two and one-half decades, each of these buildings was replaced by a wood frame building, beginning with the nineteenth century farmhouse.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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The I-house on the Wright Farm was built circa 1909, during the local economic boom accompanying the logging of Shady Valley. Food and bedrooms were shared not only with boarders, but also with extended family and frequent visitors who were either directed to the house by storekeepers or personally escorted by store regular A.J. Wright. The Wright house, like the churches, schools and stores in Shady Valley, was a community center in this isolated part of the state. Friends and neighbors gathered at the house to listen to a hand-cranked Victrola record player and, in later years, to a battery-powered radio. Recordings by such country music pioneers as the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers dominated the family's record collection. Some of these recordings were made in Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee, the birthplace of country music. The Carter Family traveled to Shady Valley circa 1929 to perform in the same Shady Flats schoolhouse where all of the Wright children were educated.

A.J. and Girdie Wright had seven children, all born in the farmhouse. They were Kyle, Walter Preston, Retha (Morley McKee), Letha (Sluder), Ruth (Douglas), Ruby (Testerman), and Haynes. All seven of the Wright children attended nearby Shady Flats school through the eighth grade. Around 1914, John B. Brown, a rural school agent, surveyed the state's schools in order to determine what was needed to improve them:

Brown's first published report in 1915 set a precedent for urging consolidation of white schools as the principal tool for uplift in rural Tennessee. Brown charged that "unattractive, uncomfortable, unsanitary" rural schools, with outhouses "such as you might expect to find at a construction camp," produced "physical and mental cripples, and moral perverts." These malignant conditions were typical in the state's one-room schools; the best—perhaps the only—solution was consolidated schools in "more attractive, more comfortable and more sanitary" buildings (Hoffschwelle, 36).

The Shady Flats school, which was a short walk away on the Will Cole farm, was a two-teacher school. It was one of four schools that were replaced by the Shady Valley Consolidated School, erected by the federal Works Project Administration in 1938. A high school was established in Mountain City in 1923, from which three of the children graduated. Walter Preston was the first of the Wright children to attend college. He attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, a land grant university, where he studied agriculture. Later Ruby completed a nursing diploma program and became a registered nurse, and Haynes received a Bachelor's degree in education from East Tennessee State College (now University) in Johnson City. All of this seems to indicate that the Wright family was aware of the importance of education for farmers during a time when the significance of rural education was just beginning to be investigated at the state level.

A.J. Wright, like his father before him, was a longtime magistrate in Johnson County, for which he received some compensation. His judicial responsibilities took him frequently to the county seat of Mountain City, where he was undoubtedly exposed regularly to new trends in agriculture. During the Great Depression, one of A.J. Wright's responsibilities as magistrate was to distribute Red Cross flour to eligible residents. Depression-era government works projects in Shady Valley, including building roads, a school and a drainage network, laid the foundation for significant cultural changes.

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As literate farmers, A.J. Wright and his wife also kept abreast of changes in agriculture by reading the *Progressive Farmer* magazine and newspapers to which they subscribed. Agricultural textbooks were part of the family library, such as *The Production of Field Crops: A Textbook of Agronomy* written in 1929 by professors T. B. Hutcheson and T. K. Wolfe of Virginia Polytechnic Institute (and State University), a land grant university in Blacksburg.

A.J. and Girdie Wright generally followed the tenets of "progressive agriculture" as practiced in Appalachia in the early twentieth century. Although the architectural style of their dwelling was decidedly nineteenth century, they surrounded the house with a wide array of twentieth century agricultural support buildings between 1917 and 1947. These more functional existing structures were built to replace earlier log structures dating to the 1800s.

A.J. Wright was undoubtedly influenced by progressive neighbors, including Will Cole. Cole and Wright's fathers were first cousins, and Will Cole and A.J. Wright's farms were originally part of the farm of Jesse Cole. A circa 1910 photograph taken on Will Cole's farm includes Jim Wright and Will Cole in a group of farmers standing in front of a steam tractor and threshing machine. (See photo #35.) Steam tractors, primarily used to power threshing machines, peaked in popularity in the United States between 1908 and 1915. However, only one farm in twenty owned a steam tractor (Hurt, 242-43). Will Cole's progressive farming practices are documented by his son, William Earle Cole in his memoir, *Tales from a Country Ledger*. William Earle Cole notes:

The store, a house with outbuildings, and the school were on five acres in the middle of my father's farm. His farming activity, being highly visible to people on the store porch, was always a favorite topic of conversation. (45)

Jim Wright and his son, A.J., walked across the Cole farm to this store. The younger Cole, who had a doctorate in rural sociology, noted that his father was one of the first farmers in Johnson County to enroll in a Tennessee Valley Authority test demonstration program for high analysis phosphate and nitrate fertilizers (Cole, 41). Formed by the federal government to counter the poverty in Southern Appalachia in the wake of the Great Depression, the Tennessee Valley Authority played a major role in the "progressive agriculture" movement in East Tennessee (West, 4, 75). A.J. Wright may well have been among the first farmers in Shady Valley to witness the impact of improved soil fertility on crop yields.

Elsewhere in his book, Cole mentions that farmers benefited from a variety of corn developed by the University of Tennessee Agriculture Experiment Station. This strain of corn was adapted to the short growing season in places like Shady Valley (Cole, 14). He also notes that the Cole farm was one of the first farms in Shady Valley to use a manure spreader and a hay fork (Cole, 41, 100). Wright family oral tradition holds that their farm was also one of the first farms in Shady Valley to use a hay fork and manure spreader, again perhaps the result of Will Cole's influence.

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With the purchase of a radio in 1936, A.J. and Girdie Wright had a new source of practical farming information. Decisions about fieldwork could be based on timely weather reports. Likewise, market reports could help determine when to sell farm products. Daily radio programs included agricultural advice (Hurt, 274-5).

Good record keeping is essential to every successful farm. A.J. Wright followed the example of his father in keeping a farm ledger. One of Jim Wright's ledgers dating to the late 1800s is among the family's keepsakes. Ledger entries included records of income from the sale of farm products and expenditures such as wages for day laborers in the form of both cash and/or goods. Although this ledger pre-dates the extant buildings on the farm, it documents how important the farm was as a business, as well as a way of life.

Canning vegetables and fruits became an important initiative that agricultural reformers promoted among farm women during the 1920s and 1930s. Beans in the hull, locally known as "leather britches," were preserved for later use in a drier that consisted of a quilt over an A-frame rack near the fireplace. Despite its name, meat was salt-cured in the smokehouse, not smoked. Drying, cold storage in the circa 1920 cellar and spring house, pickling, and salting were other important food preservation techniques used on the farm.

Another important artifact of the progressive campaign aimed at farm women to improve food production and farm income was the construction of chicken houses in the 1930s. The design of this building on the A.J. Wright Farm is similar to plans developed and distributed by the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension program. Raising chickens and eggs resulted in "extra" funds that could be used to purchase modern household items and appliances. Varieties of chickens on the Wright farm included White Leghorn, Dominick, Plymouth Rock, and Rhode Island Red. Eggs brought as much as twenty-five cents a dozen at the J.W. Broce and Company store in Shady Valley. Once good roads were built, egg buyers traveled into Shady Valley in search of eggs and chickens (Cole, 85). Girdie Wright began raising free-range turkeys in the 1920s, which she sold to a buyer from Virginia to obtain cash to pay taxes on the farm. Income from turkeys was second only to the sales of dairy products and beef at this time (Cole, p. 84). This pattern of production by farm women, such as the Wrights, has been documented:

Between 1914 and 1921, southern home agents generally emphasized productive projects such as canning, poultry, and fruit production for market sales, which increased a woman's cash income. Women's incomes paid for the water systems, appliances, and furnishings deemed essential to the ideal rural dwelling, and often supported the farm family as well. Even as country women continued productive farm work, however, extension policy and rural people's own choices rearranged the gender division of labor on many farms. Rural women moved closer to the urban homemaker ideal, not by substituting housekeeping for productive work but by expanding their roles within the home (Hoffschwelle, 108).

Surplus farm products were traded for labor and other goods or sold at markets in nearby Mountain City and Bristol. The horse-drawn wagon used to transport farm products to market and to bring back store-bought goods is still on the farm. In addition to poultry products, the Wright family sold milk, beans, and

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herbs. Herbs including boneset, buckvine (partridge berry), and lobelia were gathered, dried, and sold at the local store. Cherry bark, ginseng, and May apple were also sold at the store.

In light of limited cash, many everyday necessities were made on the farm. Soap was made from lye for bathing, cleaning the house, and doing laundry. Molasses for sweetening foods was made from homegrown sorghum and ground in a cane mill on the farm, now gone. Linsey wool clothing was made from flax and wool grown on the farm. The short, cool growing season of the East Tennessee mountains favored growing of flax rather than cotton (West, 4-5,104). Wool from sheep was also carded, spun into yarn on a spinning wheel, and knit into stockings. Remnants of favorite garments were recycled as pieces for quilt tops that still provide warmth and fond memories. Pillows and a feather tick mattress that remain in the house are filled with feathers from geese raised on the farm.

A third feature of the farm associated with progressive agriculture and the roles of farm women was the modernization of the dwelling in 1954-1955. Following ideals for modernizing farm houses, indoor plumbing and a new kitchen/dining room and utility room were added to the house. A Frigidaire refrigerator had already been installed soon after electricity came to the farm in 1941. A telephone was installed in 1956.

Apple orchards for family consumption were a mainstay on most farms in the south from the earliest days of settlement. Apples were a staple in the southern diet all year long. Apple varieties were chosen according to their suitability for cooking, drying, and making cider and vinegar, in addition to eating fresh. But the large orchard of the Wright Farm was for family consumption and market production in times of surplus, an important agricultural trend in Johnson County during the early twentieth century.

Earle Cole maintained that "apples were among our best friends." He describes trips that he took with his father with a wagon load of apples to Bristol where they "peddled" the fruit door to door. A bushel of apples brought between a quarter and fifty cents (Cole, 77- 78). The apple varieties grown on the neighboring Cole farm included Albemarle Pippin, Ben Davis, Greer, June, Rusty Coat, Sheep Nose, Virginia Beauty, Virginia Bundy, Wolf River, and York (Cole, 78-79). An 1874 publication observed that the fruit of Johnson County was superior to all but that from a few sections of the country. This work singled out Johnson County apples for particular praise, noting that revenue from fruit could make the county independent (Killebrew, 548). A commercial orchard of several hundred trees was planted in Shady Valley circa 1917. This orchard produced award-winning apples and provided employment opportunities during the Great Depression (Cole, 78- History of Johnson County, 31). Grandson Michael Testerman bought apples identified as being from Shady Valley in Richmond, Virginia, as recently as 1973. According to Cole, "the magnificent apple gave us food and helped us to keep healthy. Certainly it added to the fun and zest of living" (Cole, 79). The surviving orchard at the Wright Farm was planted in the late 1800s.

According to Southern heirloom apple enthusiast Lee Calhoun, fewer than 200 of an estimated 1,400 varieties of apples that originated in the south still exist (Calhoun, 4). Calhoun notes that "our unique Southern heritage is more than Victorian houses and heart-pine floors ..." According to Calhoun, food crop varieties "are living threads that lead directly back to three hundred years of the southern agrarian past" (Calhoun, 1). The orchard on the A.J. Wright Farm is being restored and currently includes the following

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varieties historically grown on this farm: Ben Davis, Brickelshell, Maiden's Blush, Smokehouse, Virginia Beauty, Wolf River, Yellow Transparent, and York. Two of these varieties, Maiden's Blush and Virginia Beauty, were recommended for Johnson County in the late 1800s, and Ben Davis was given high marks for most Tennessee localities (*Tennessee Agriculture Experiment Station Bulletin*, Vol.V, No.I, 10). Grafting material for new trees has been taken where possible from surviving trees in the turn-of-the-century orchard. The orchard also included black heart cherry trees and pear and peach trees in the earlier part of the twentieth century (yet to be restored). Restoration of a cranberry bog along Jim Wright Branch west of the farmstead where they once grew is also planned.

Other farm buildings outside of the immediate domestic complex document the significant role of the farm in the progressive agricultural movement of the early twentieth century. The historic granary, barn, and corn crib document how the Wright family successfully practiced mixed agriculture, relying on a variety of crops and livestock to produce family items and commodities for market production. Chickens, eggs, turkeys, chestnuts, and tobacco were all sold in order to pay taxes on the land and to purchase necessities from the store. Livestock on the farm included sheep, hogs and cattle. Hereford cattle were raised for beef while Roan and Jersey varieties of dairy cows provided milk for family use. Surplus milk was also sold. Burley tobacco was first grown in the early 1930s. Judy's Pride was the first variety planted on the farm. The introduction of tobacco as a cash crop on the Wright farm follows the pattern of diversified farming recommended by extension agents:

The tide turned in the home agents' favor as agricultural fortunes began to revive in 1922. During the middle years of the decade, at the urging of extension agents, families turned to several new sources of income. Cash crops such as burley tobacco gained in popularity across the state. Production of hay, especially alfalfa, expanded, as farm families turned row-crop fields into pastures for increasing numbers of specially bred cattle. Some new breeds, such as Angus cattle, were designed for beef production; others, such as Jersey cows, were valued for their high yields of milk. Dairies multiplied throughout Tennessee during the 1920s, with trucks hauling the raw milk on such newly complete, hard-surfaced highways as the Dixie Highway, to centrally located milk plants which supplied the state's booming urban centers. Poultry products increased in number, with farmers using extension service plans to build modern chicken coops or larger chicken houses (Hoffschewelle, 116).

Rotting stumps are no longer the familiar site in fields on the farm as they were until the 1930s. However, large piles of rocks on the farm still stand as monuments to the labor required to prepare land for cultivation in the early decades of the twentieth century. Crops produced in cultivated fields included grains such as buckwheat, corn and oats, in addition to green beans and tobacco. Yields improved and competition from briars and weeds decreased with the addition of fertilizer and lime as recommended by the county agent during the 1930s and 1940s. Naturally occurring limestone in Shady Valley was burned in lime kilns, using locally produced charcoal, to produce agricultural-grade lime. Hardwood was converted to charcoal in the field on the farm known as the "the coaling field."



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The machine shed/crib which dates to the 1920s and the circa 1946-1947 garage further document the impact of modern technology and better roads on the farm landscape. The Wright farm was one of the first farms in Shady Valley to use a horse-drawn two-row corn planter in the 1920s. A decade later a manure spreader was purchased and used to improve soil fertility. One of the first hay forks in Shady Valley was installed in the Wright's barn to lift hay out of wagons into the loft. A.J. Wright bought a Model T Ford car in the early 1920s that was used by his sons for transportation and an occasional farm task. The purchase of a 1950 John Deere tractor and 1953 Ford Jubilee tractor with a 16" disk plow eased the task of cultivation on the farm considerably.

To produce a diversity of agricultural commodities, the Wrights depended on tenants and day laborers, as well as new machinery. The farm provided for the needs of boarders in addition to those of the Wright family. The house was shared on a regular basis with short and long term guests, teachers and travelers. Tenants occupied a house (no longer extant) on the southern part of the farm during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Tenants received housing and food in exchange for their labor. The Wright farm was one of a half dozen farms in Shady Valley where tenants lived and worked in the first part of the twentieth century. They received shares of the corn crop in addition to daily wages (Cole, 55). The last of the Wright farm's tenants, Lee Stone, built the woodshed and tended beehives. Nothing remains of the twentieth century farmstead where the Stone family lived on the southern part of the farm. Lee Stone and his family left in the late 1920s for work in the mines of West Virginia.

A ditch running along the contour of a hillside near the site of this former tenant farmstead is all that remains of a raceway that carried water from the East Fork of Beaverdam Creek to a grist mill. According to Dr. Carroll Van West,

Grist mills were so valuable to the economic well-being of the local community that the mill owner invariably was one of the community's most prominent citizens; in other words, the Century Farmers in East Tennessee who operated mills were among the region's most important farmers (West, 13).

Together, the Wrights and their tenants established a successful progressive farm. In 1944, the State of Tennessee awarded the farm with a Tennessee Home Food Supply Program Certificate of Recognition. In the center of this certificate, under the words "Abundance in Peace; Enough in War," is the letter "V" (for "victory garden"), spilling over like a cornucopia with fruits and vegetables. This certificate reads:

Awarded to Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Wright, Shady Valley, Tennessee. This Certificate of Recognition for meritorious achievement in having grown 75% or more of all the food necessary for the family and livestock, and leadership for better living in the community and State of Tennessee, is awarded by the Governor of the State of Tennessee.

The certificate also notes that the farm met the requirements for this program in 1942 and 1943. In addition to the governor, this certificate is signed by the Director of Agricultural Extension at the University of Tennessee, the Director of Vocational Agricultural Education, the State Director of the Farm Security

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Administration, and the Commissioner of Agriculture. This program was administered at the local level by county extension agents.

Gardens on the farm were a source of beauty as well as sustenance. Flower beds held Girdie Wright's favorite flowers. These included the following flowers: asters, Black-eyed Susans, cosmos, daffodils, dahlias, gladiolas, golden glows, irises, marigolds, nasturtiums, roses, phlox, poppies, primrose, snapdragons, sweet bubbie bush, sweet peas, Sweet Williams, straw flowers, and zinnias. Flowers were gathered from gardens for funerals. In her later years, Girdie Wright also planted irises, peonies, and snow-on-the-mountains.

Girdie Wright had a reputation for being an excellent cook as well as gardener. Homemade jams, jellies, preserves, canned sausage, and salt-cured ham were made on the farm. Before commercially-milled flour became widely available and affordable, baked goods were made from flour ground from wheat grown on a farm in neighboring Sullivan County (with a climate more favorable for wheat production) that A.J. Wright inherited from his father. White grape juice in half-gallon blue-green glass Mason canning jars was always on the cellar shelves as an alternative beverage to fresh milk. Grapevines covered the back wall of the house, the side of the woodshed, and the smokehouse.

Throughout these years of agricultural innovation and production, the family and tenants also worked closely and respectfully with the land, and one of the property's most outstanding features is the extant pattern of cultivated fields, open land, and preserved forests, patterns little changed since circa 1940. The most outstanding landscape feature on the A.J. Wright Farm is forty acres of remnant old-growth forest dominated by white pine and hemlock. Most of the other white pine-hemlock forests that historically dominated the valley floor at the time of settlement were logged at the beginning of the twentieth century as northern industrialists exhausted timber supplies and headed south for new sources of lumber.

Yields of white pine, arguably the most important tree species in the history of the United States, set a species record, at least for the south in excess of 100,000 board feet per acre in Shady Valley (Peattie, 14). A 1902 report by President Roosevelt's administration on the Southern Appalachian forest noted that "some of the finest white-pine timber in the United States is being cut" in Shady Valley (*Message From the President*, 48). East Tennessee State University biologist Dr. Frank Barclay cites this and several additional reports extolling the quality and quantity of these white pines in his 1957 University of Tennessee doctoral dissertation on the natural history of Johnson County (Barclay, 11).

Barclay's dissertation contains an apparent reference to the Wright forest, though the owners were not mentioned by name. Barclay first called the old-growth forest on the A.J. Wright Farm to the attention of state conservation officials in the 1970s. Barclay was but one of a host of naturalists attracted by the plants and animals of Shady Valley since the early days of exploration in this portion of Tennessee.

Some selective thinning and salvage logging were carried out in the Wright forest (especially of chestnut trees following the arrival of the chestnut blight in the 1920s) until recent decades, when scientists and foresters alike began to advise protection and preservation of this forest. The remnant old growth forest on

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the A.J. Wright Farm is believed to be the only forest in Shady Valley that predates extensive logging at the turn of the twentieth century. The staff of the Cherokee National Forest, which surrounds Shady Valley, recognizes the Wright forest as the only white pine-hemlock old-growth reference stand available (in the national forest) for scientific research. Interestingly, the national forest on the mountain slopes surrounding Shady Valley was established early in the twentieth century when the federal government purchased eroded land that had been abused by slash-and-burn cultivation practices.

In 1980, the Wright Old-Growth Forest was placed on the register of natural areas maintained by the Natural Heritage Program in the Department of Environment and Conservation. The Society of American Foresters also recognized the significance of the Wright Old-Growth Forest in 1985 when they included this site on their natural areas register, along with other special sites recommended for protection and research. The staff ecologist with the Tennessee Natural Heritage Program believes this old-growth forest is the sole remnant of an ecosystem type that no longer exists anywhere else in Tennessee (Major, 29 January 1998).

In 1998, the Tennessee Urban Forest Council recognized the significance of this old-growth forest by listing it on the Tennessee Landmark and Historic Tree Register. Letters in support of this registration of the Wright Old-Growth Forest Natural Area were received from the Johnson County Board of Commissioners, the Johnson County Historical Society, and the Forest History Society, in addition to letters from the forestry and scientific communities.

Reverence for the land might be the best explanation for how the old-growth forest on the Wright farm survived as the surrounding landscape was timbered at the beginning of the twentieth century. William Earle Cole, a neighbor of the Wright family as a child, quotes from *The Holy Earth* by Liberty Hyde Bailey (dean of Agriculture at Cole's alma mater Cornell University) in summarizing Cole's father's beliefs about the land:

If God created the earth, so is the earth hallowed; and if it is hallowed, so must we deal with it devotedly and with care that we do not despoil it, and mindful of our relations to all beings who live on it. We are to consider it religiously: pull off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (Cole, 40)

This attitude of reverence, shared by other valley residents from one generation to the next, was also held by Jim Wright and his daughter-in-law Girdie Wright when it came to the old-growth forest on the farm.

The house is situated on a slight knoll. During a 1998 excavation to repair the water line, a concentration of Native American lithic flakes was found, suggesting that this site may have long been a favored settlement spot. In addition to lithic flakes, other stone artifacts used by Native Americans have been found in fields on the farm. The presence of Native Americans in what is now Johnson County has been documented as far back as 1,000 years ago (*History of Johnson County*, 37-38). Native American artifacts have been found elsewhere on the farm and throughout Shady Valley. Early settlers and their Native American predecessors typically lived near water sources. However, no archaeological surveys have been conducted on the farm.

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Like the forest, the farm continues. A.J. Wright died in the farmhouse in 1964, as his father and stepmother had before him. His wife, Girdie, continued to live on the farm until her death in 1977 at the age of 94. She died during the harvest season--appropriately--carrying produce back to the house. At the time of her death, the estate included 143 acres. The A.J. Wright farm was eventually divided among three of the children. Over time, Haynes and Ruby bought Retha's share of the farm. Haynes subsequently deeded his share of the farm to his wife, Nellie, and son, John. John is the seventh generation descended from Joseph Cole to share ownership of this farm in its more than two centuries of existence. Family members still produce livestock, tobacco, corn, hay, and fruit, with Haynes managing the farm. The farm was registered as a Tennessee Century Farm in 1999.

One other farm complex is listed in the National Register from Johnson County. The Alfred Johnson Farm, in Johnson Hollow near Mountain City, is a complex of twenty buildings situated on approximately 113 acres. Listed in the National Register on 7/1/98, the frame farmhouse was erected circa 1880 and has circa 1915 and 1930 additions. Today, the farmhouse has a Colonial Revival style design. The majority of the outbuildings are similar in age and use to the Wright farmstead. Unlike the Wright outbuildings, most of the outbuildings on the Johnson farmstead are clustered around the main house. The Johnson property was listed as significant in agriculture, settlement patterns and architecture. Seven more farmsteads are found near the Johnson farm. This Johnson Hollow area was once owned by Thomas Johnson, Sr., for whom the county is named. Two additional farm complexes are located in the nearby Wills community, an area settled by the Wills family in the late eighteenth century. The extant buildings are frame turn of the century structures. Both of these areas, possibly rural historic districts, contain good examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century farmhouses and outbuildings. The rural settings and pattern of fields and farmlands are intact. The A.J. Wright Farm, although not significant in the area of architecture like the Johnson property, is similar in agricultural development patterns and use of land and outbuildings when compared to the known historic farmsteads in Johnson County. It is a good representative example of agricultural development in the county.

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### **BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register boundary of the A.J. Wright Farm contains 143 acres. This acreage includes parcels 61.02 (48 acres), 61 (59.5 acres), and 49 (35.5) acres. The nomination includes the most historically intact landscape and buildings associated with the A.J. Wright Farm. It retains a high degree of integrity.

The map for this property has a scale of 1" = 400', which is the only scale, map available for rural areas of Johnson County.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos by: Dennis E. Testerman

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

Date: January 1999 (except as noted for historical photographs)

Front of house, facing southeast

# 1 of 35

Front of house in 1940s, facing southeast

# 2 of 35

North corner of house with woodshed in background, facing south

# 3 of 35

House as it appeared in 1940s, facing south

# 4 of 35

Stone walkway and rear of house, facing southwest

# 5 of 35

South corner of house with barn and granary in background, facing north

# 6 of 35

West corner of house, facing east

# 7 of 35

Hand-laid slate stone front steps with springhouse in background

# 8 of 35

Stone foundation for chimney and stone pillar for sill plate

# 9 of 35

Random width white pine sheathing on southeast side of house including a 21 1/4 wide white pine board

# 10 of 35

Bathroom and box stairs with hand-planed banister and woodwork

# 11 of 35

Fireplace and hand-forged andirons in downstairs bedroom, facing northeast

# 12 of 35



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Living room, facing north  
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Upstairs hall, facing southeast  
# 14 of 35

Upstairs bedroom on southwest side of house, facing southwest  
# 15 of 35

Hand-planed white pine wall boards in closet with four-panel door, downstairs bedroom, facing northeast  
# 16 of 35

Farmstead with orchard in foreground and woodshed, cellar/smokehouse, barn, granary and crib/machine shed in background, facing north  
# 17 of 35

Farmstead with cellar/smokehouse, woodshed, garage and old-growth forest in background, facing southwest  
# 18 of 35

Cellar/smokehouse, facing east  
# 19 of 35

Cellar/smokehouse and woodshed with house, garage, and barn in background, facing north  
#20 of 35

Chicken house, facing southwest  
# 21 of 35

Woodshed, facing southwest  
# 22 of 35

Kitchen (pre-1955, gone) and woodshed, facing south  
# 23 of 35

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National Park Service

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Wright, A.J., Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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Barn granary and corn crib/machine shed, facing north  
# 24 of 35

Barn and corn crib/machine shed as seen from house, photograph circa late 1930s, facing north  
# 25 of 35

Barn, facing west  
# 26 of 35

Corn crib/machine shed, facing east  
# 27 of 35

Granary, facing north  
# 28 of 35

Springhouse, facing west  
# 29 of 35

Garage, facing northwest  
# 30 of 35

Driveway along Jim Wright branch through old growth forest on former railroad track bed, facing southeast  
# 31 of 35

Site of former millrace on tenant farm, facing southeast  
# 32 of 35

Heirloom apple tree orchard, facing east  
# 33 of 35

Old chicken house (gone) with shingle roof in orchard, facing north  
# 34 of 35

Jim Wright (3rd from left) with neighbor Will Cole (11th from left) and friends gathered around thresher and steam powered tractor on Will Cole's farm (note Shady Flats school and the Baptist church in the background of photograph circa 1910)  
# 35 of 35

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

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

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Wright, Allen, Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

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Ruby Wright Testerman  
426 McDonald St.  
Vinton VA 24179-2228  
540-344-9852

Nellie Ray Wright (wife of Haynes)  
21290 Skye Knob Tr.  
Bristol VA 24202-5018  
540-669-8773

John Wright (son of Haynes)  
1212 Ravenel Dr.  
Charleston SC 29407-7814  
843-766-6536

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

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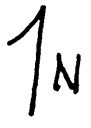
Wright, Allen, Farm  
Johnson County, Tennessee

### Selected Entries from Farm Ledger Kept by Jim Wright

Dec. 23, 1880	apples 1 bushel	\$ .20
April 25, 1885	2 bushels corn	\$1.20
n.d. 1885	1500 shingles	\$3.75
April 25, 1885	half days work	\$ .25
June 14, 1886	bacon, six pounds	\$ .60
July 3, 1886	two days work	\$1.00
July 3, 1886	hauling in hay	\$0.20
Sept. 11, 1886	two bushels meal	\$1.00
Oct. 16, 1886	four days work	\$2.00
Oct. 16, 1889	eggs 1 dozen	\$0.10
"	½ bushel corn	\$ .32 ½
"	kraut 1 ½ gallon	\$ .15
"	1 pair shoes	\$1.00
Dec. 22, 1886	cash paid to Dr. Waddle	\$1.50
June 1, 1886	two days & ½ grubings	\$1.25
April 6, 1887	fruit ½ bushel	\$ .50
April 13, 1887	thirty pounds hay	\$ .15
April 30, 1887	molasses one gallon	\$ .50
"	horse one day	\$ .50
June 14, 1887	two days mowing	\$1.50
"	half days harvesting	\$ .35
Nov. 1, 1887	mare to mill	\$ .20
May 1, 1888	coffee	\$1.00
"	tobacco	\$ .50
"	one sack of salt	\$1.85
June 23, 1888	two pairs of shoes nailed on	\$ .60
"	sharpening plow	\$ .20
June ??, 1888	½ day chopping brush	\$ .25
June ??, 1888	½ day hoeing corn	\$ .25
Oct. 25, 1890	oats ½ bushel	\$ .17
Aug. 4, 1891	butter, 3 ½ lbs	\$ .35
Aug. 6, 1891	hauling saw logs ½ day	\$ .90
Nov. 5, 1890	to Bristol 6 days	\$3.00
Nov. 11, 1890	2/3 day cradling oats	\$ .50

A.J. WRIGHT FARM  
SHADY VALLEY  
TENNESSEE  
(JOHNSON COUNTY)

CROP FIELD



PASTURE  
"COALING FIELD"

CROP FIELD

PASTURE  
"HILL FIELD"

JIM WRIGHT BRANCH

GRANARY  
BARN  
CRIB/  
MACHINE  
SHED

GARAGE

HOUSE

JIM WRIGHT BRANCH

CHICKEN  
HOUSE

STONE  
WALKWAY

CELLAR/SMOKEHOUSE

WOODSHED

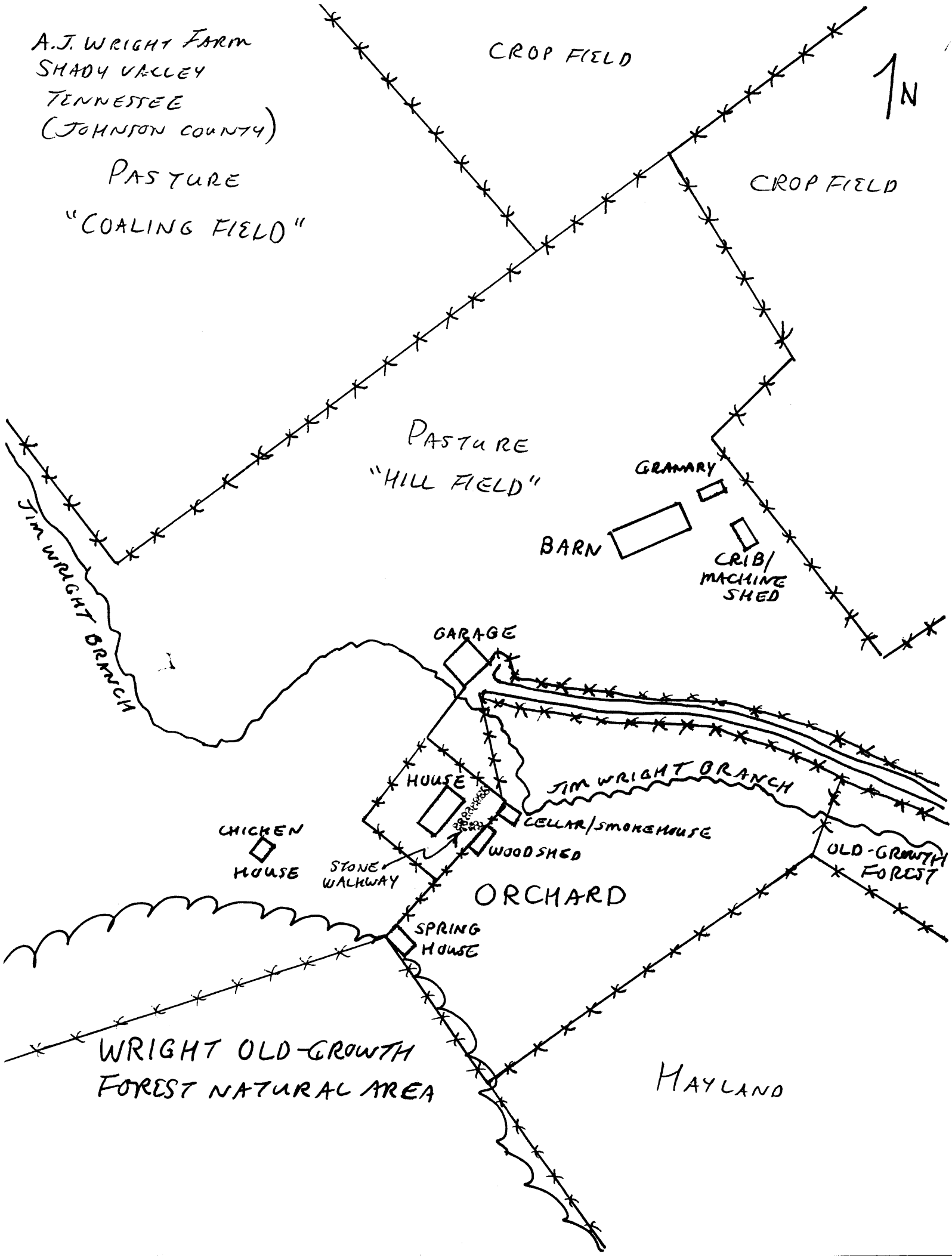
ORCHARD

OLD-GROWTH  
FOREST

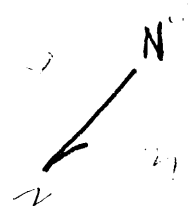
SPRING  
HOUSE

WRIGHT OLD-GROWTH  
FOREST NATURAL AREA

HAYLAND



A.J. WRIGHT FARMHOUSE 2nd Fl. Plan  
 SHADY VALLEY TENNESSEE (JOHNSON CO.)



Door & Window placements measured from outside edges of trim.

