

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAY 28 1986**

date entered

JUL 10 1986

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

1. Name

historic Knob Creek Historic District

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number on Gray Station Road, Knob Creek Road, and Fair Ridge Road N/A not for publication

city, town Johnson City vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Washington code 179

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple owners - see continuation sheet

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of N/A state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Jonesborough state Tennessee 37659

6. Representation in Existing Surveys See Continuation Sheet

title Washington County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Covering approximately 136.6 acres of gently rolling farmland, the Knob Creek Historic District lies in a valley northwest of Johnson City (pop. 43,526). The valley runs north-east-southwest at the edge of the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, just west of the Great Smoky Mountains. The district lies within a "diamond" formed by parallel ridges and parallel transportation arteries; ridges on the northwest (Indian Ridge) and the southeast (unnamed); the Clinchfield Railroad on the southwest; and State Route 137 on the northeast. Knob Creek, a focal point of the development of the community, first parallels the ridges in the valley, then splits into two main branches. Centered around the creek and between the two branches is the Knob Creek Historic District.

Running through the district are three narrow, winding country roads. The ten buildings and three cemeteries which comprise the principal contributing properties in the district sit just off these roads, but are separated by acres of farmland. Seven of the buildings are residences, each having two or more outbuildings. The others are a mill, a school-house, and a church. Four intrusions, three one-story, brick contractor modern houses and a one-story brick u-shaped apartment building, are also located just off these roads but were not included in the district. Because of their size and the amount of land between them and the contributing properties, they do not significantly affect the integrity of the district's setting. Only one intrusive principal building is included within the boundaries of the district. However, because of their recent construction, some of the outbuildings must be listed as non-contributing even though they are of similar materials, construction, design, and scale and add to the sense of place.

The major historic buildings were constructed over a 140 year span, from ca. 1785 to ca. 1925. Despite this wide age range, they contain many similarities in design and material. Each is a plain, vernacular building. Ornamentation is limited to some decorative bargeboards, bracketing, and board and batten siding. All of the buildings are frame, except for portions of the four earliest buildings which are log. Only two have board and batten siding; most of the major buildings are weatherboarded. Brick chimneys predominate, although there is one stone and one brick and stone chimney remaining. Outbuildings are associated with each of the residences.

The three cemeteries are small, fenced tracts generally associated with the members of one or two families. Each dates from the mid-nineteenth century. Two are rectangular and one is a triangular lot.

Contributing buildings (C) are significant to the historic and architectural development of the district, possess compatible design elements, and maintain the scale, use, and texture of the district. Non-contributing buildings (N) have little or no architectural significance, have been altered, or do not fall within the period of significance of the district. Contributing properties in the Knob Creek Historic District include seven residences, nine outbuildings, three cemeteries, a church, a school and a mill. One residence and the remainder of the outbuildings are listed as non-contributing.

INVENTORY

A. Jacob Krouse House: ca. 1900. One-and-one-half story, frame. Standing seam metal salt-box roof with broken slope. Central brick chimney with limestone block base. Concrete block foundation. Three-bay facade. Full width, one-story portico (C).
Outbuildings: Two-story frame barn with gable roof and vertical board covering (N). One-

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INVENTORY (continued)

story gable-roofed shed with vertical board covering (N). One-story gable-roofed spring-house with paper roll siding in brick pattern (N).

B. Homer Sell House: ca. 1925. Two-story, frame, four-square. Weatherboarded. Asphalt shingle pyramidal roof. Pyramidal-roofed dormer. Two exterior brick chimneys, one is new. Two entrances on principal facade. Full width, one-story portico. Bay window added to side. One-story addition at rear (C).

Outbuildings: Two-story, gable-roofed barn with one-story lean-to garage (N). Long, one-story, shed-roofed open barn (N).

C. Bashor Mill: ca. 1830. (NR 1980) Three-story frame. Metal gable roof. Limestone foundation. Large brick and stone chimney. Weatherboarded with stamped tin sheathing. Original wheel deteriorated ca. 1954. All of mill's machinery remains inside. Split rail fence lines road south of mill (C).

D. Charles Duncan House: ca. 1785, ca. 1930s. Two-story single log pen (ca. 1785) with two-story frame saddlebag addition (ca. 1930s). Saltbox standing seam metal roof. Brick and stone central chimney. Stone foundation. One-story addition on front. Remainder of front covered by shed-roofed porch. One room additions to side and rear of main block. Log section covered in board and batten. Remainder is weatherboarded or vertical boarded. Enclosed recessed porch in rear (C).

Outbuildings: Two-story frame outbuilding with multiple additions, clapboard siding, gable roof, (ca. 1880s, ca. 1915 additions) (C). Two-story frame barn opens onto hillside (C). Long, one-story, shed-roofed shed (N). Two-story gambrel-roofed frame barn (N). One-story frame, gabled shed (N). One-story concrete block shed with gable roof (N).

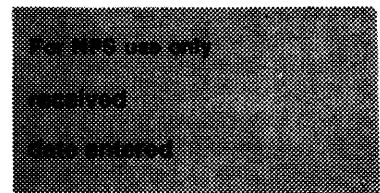
E. Sell House: ca. 1830s, ca. 1890s. Frame, T-shaped plan. Stem appears simple late Federal style. End wall brick chimney has separated shaft. Main block slightly taller with two central brick chimneys. Three bay principal facade with central gable. Parachute door. Shed-roofed portico. Intersecting gable roofs covered in standing seam metal. Decorative bargeboard trim on two gables. Side box window with bracketed cornice. Brick foundation. One-story frame shed attached with gabled breezeway. Two shed-roofed porches (C). Outbuildings: One-story dilapidated frame shed (N).

F. Knob Creek Church of the Brethren: 1904. One-story frame. Weatherboarded. Asphalt shingle gable roof. Entrance on gabled end. Gabled portico. Triangular-arched windows. Brick chimney in opposite gable end. One room addition. Stone foundation (C).

G. Oak Hill School: ca. 1886. One-story, frame, Weatherboarded. Standing seam metal gable roof. Rough stone foundation. Rectangular bellcote with pyramidal roof and decorative bargeboards and brackets. Interior beaded board wall covering. Wide black stripe for black board, chalkrail remain (C).

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INVENTORY (continued)

H. Bowman-Bond House: ca. 1845. Rectangular. One-and-one-half story weatherboarded log ell with saltbox roof (ca. 1845). Two-story frame main block with brick end chimneys. Gable roof. Board-and-batten siding. Three bay facade with one-story portico with turned and bracketed posts. Modern porch floor and foundation. Ca. 1960s addition under saltbox roof (C).

Outbuildings: Weatherboarded, one-story shed with gable roof (C). One-and-one-half-story board-and-batten springhouse (C). One-story weatherboarded gable-roofed shed (C). One-story vertical board gable-roofed shed (N). One-and-one-half story barn with metal gambrel roof (C).

I. Miller House: ca. 1843. Two-story log and frame main block. Stone, end wall exterior chimney with shaft separated from the wall. Gabled standing seam metal roof. Weatherboarded. Modern one-story covered porch. Modern picture window cut in log section. One-story frame rear addition with brick veneer and aluminum siding (1960s) (C).

Outbuildings: One-story frame gabled shed with two shed-roofed additions (C). One-story gabled frame shed (N). One-story frame springhouse with gabled roof (C).

J. Peter Bowman House: ca. 1907. Two-story, frame four-square. Hipped roof of standing seam metal. Two interior brick chimneys. Three bay facade. One-story frame covered porch. One-story frame rear addition (C).

Outbuildings: One-story frame barn with gabled, standing seam metal roof and open shed additions (N). One-story frame barn with standing seam metal gable roof (N). One-story, shed roofed frame tenant house or office (C).

K. Bowman Cemetery: Established ca. 1840s. Triangular tract. Plain markers. Fenced (C).

L. Miller Cemetery: Established ca. 1858. Rectangular tract. Fenced. Plain markers (C).

M. Melvin-Caruthers Cemetery: Established ca. 1810s. Rectangular tract. Fenced. Plain markers (C).

N. James and Carolyn Sell House: 1970s. Two-story brick veneer. Two-story "Colonial" portico on principal facade (N).

O. Barn: 1960s. Two-story gable-roofed barn with extended wings. Sits SE of site of George Miller house (built ca. 1840s, demolished 1970s). (N).

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1785-1936 **Builder/Architect** Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Evaluated under National Register criteria A and C, the Knob Creek Historic District is an early settlement in East Tennessee which has evolved into a remarkably intact early twentieth century farming community. This district contains examples of one hundred forty years of rural vernacular architecture, spanning from ca. 1785 to 1925. Representative of the development of a small East Tennessee farming community, it contains resources which relate to all aspects of life: the land, the homes, local industry, religion, education, and funeral practices. It is a self-contained community. Although intrusions border on most of its boundary, the district itself retains its integrity.

Knob Creek was the focus of the original settlements. The earliest farmhouses were all situated on high ground overlooking the creek or on one of its branches or springs. The Duncan House (D) and the Sell House (E) overlook the creek, while the Miller House (I) and the Bowman-Bond House (H) are near springs. Later buildings fill in between these primary locations. Most of the springhouses which remain are less than fifty years old and are probably replacements for the original ones. In nearly all farming communities in Tennessee mills were built on every creek to serve the needs of the farmers. At one time seven or eight mills stood in the valley area.¹ Only the Bashor Mill (C-NR1980) remains from that group. Built ca. 1830, the mill is the second oldest extant mill in Washington County. Other development along the creek included George Miller's machine shop/blacksmith shop and five water wheels, located just north of Fair Ridge Road, and John Bond's electric power plant located near the Bowman-Bond House (H). (All of these resources are non-extant).

Land grants in the area were awarded by the State of North Carolina to Samuel Fain in 1783 and Charles Duncan in 1784.² However, tax records indicate that both men were living in the area in 1778.³ Duncan built his house approximately 5.2 miles northeast of the settlement at Jonesboro.⁴ His one pen, two story log house is today the northern portion of House D.⁵ David Sherfy purchased the Duncan House ca. 1880 and his descendants continue to live there. The location of Fain's house may have been near the Joseph Bowman House (south of the district). In 1817, Fain's heirs sold his land to Joseph Bowman.⁶

The Bowman family figured widely in the settlement of the valley. Joseph Bowman himself came as a young man to nearby Boone's Creek when his family moved here ca. 1799.⁷ With Michael Krouse and Isaac Hammer, he was one of the elders assisting Samuel Garber in the establishment of the Knob Creek Church of the Brethren (G) in 1799. Selected as one of the first two deacons of the church, he was thereafter known as "Deacon Joseph" Bowman.⁸ Church services were often held in his home, built in 1818, which still stands (outside the district).⁹ He and his second wife, Catherine Beahm, had six children.¹⁰ Two sons from that second family had farms in the valley. Of those, only Daniel Bowman's home, the Bowman-Bond House (H) remains.¹¹ Daniel's daughter Minerva married David Andrew Bond and the Bond family owned the house until the 1960s.

When his daughter Elizabeth married Henry Bashor, Deacon Joseph Bowman bought the land where the mill is and gave it to the couple.¹² The Bashor family operated the mill until ca. 1880

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bowman, Charles and Edna Bowman. Johnson City, Tn. Interview, 19 January 1983.
 Johnson City, Tennessee. East Tennessee State University. Appalachian Archives. Bowman Family
 Simmons, Claude and Mary Simmons, Johnson City, Tn. Interview, 18 January 1983. Papers.
 Washington County, Tn. Tax Books 1778-1846, Nashville: Tn. State Library and Archives,
 Microfilm Roll No. 697.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 136.6 acres

Quadrangle name Jonesboro, TN.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7
3	7
4	1
2	0

4	0
2	3
4	2
0	0

B

1	7
3	7
4	1
2	0

4	0
2	1
7	0
0	0

C

1	7
3	7
2	8
2	0

4	0
2	1
7	2
0	0

D

1	7
3	7
2	8
6	0

4	0
2	3
4	4
0	0

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification As shown on the attached map labeled "Knob Creek Historical District, scale 1" = 800', taken from County property maps #37 and 45. Property lines, fence rows and Knob Creek were used to determine boundaries whenever possible. Boundaries were drawn to include large portions of farmland as well as contributing properties, and to exclude adjacent non-contributing properties. This area is that portion of the valley which retains the integrity of a rural settlement in the early twentieth century.

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janice E. Nolen/Staff Historian

organization Tennessee Department of Transportation date May 1983

street & number 900 James K. Polk Building, 505 Deaderick Street telephone (615) 741-5363

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/23/86

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

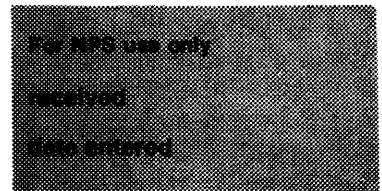
Keeper of the National Register Romy Schlager date 7/10/86

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Bowman descendents continued to settle in the valley; one was Peter Bowman whose house (J) is included in the district.¹³ The Krouse family were early settlers in the Knob Creek area. Jacob Krouse's ca. 1900 house is located in the district and lived in by his descendants.

Religion was very important in the small community. Many of the families were of German descent, including the Krouses and the Bowmans, so they established the Knob Creek Church of the Brethren. Sometimes called German Baptist Church, this was the first congregation of that denomination established in Tennessee. The first services were held in houses but in 1834 the congregation built a log church. Members of the Bowman and Krouse families were active in the church as ministers and elders for many years. In 1904 the present frame structure was built.¹⁴

A log schoolhouse was built in the mid-nineteenth century, but was replaced ca. 1886 by the present building. Oak Hill School closed in 1952,¹⁵ but has been unaltered since its construction. Part of the beaded board paneling installed then was painted with a wide black stripe to create a blackboard. A chalkrail was attached below it. Both of these features remain.

Three cemeteries are included in the district because of their age and place within the cycle of life shown in the community. All three are small, fenced lots, usually associated with a family or church. The Bowman cemetery was apparently established for the church since it is referred to in early documents.¹⁶ The log church reportedly stood nearby.

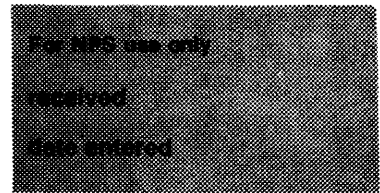
Because of the wide timespan of their construction, this collection of farm houses demonstrates the evolving rural vernacular architecture. The earliest houses were log pens of one or two stories, such as the Duncan and the Miller Houses (D and I). Later, log houses were larger, as those in the ells of the Bowman Bond House and the Sell House (H and E). When these four buildings were enlarged, the smaller log structures expanded through frame additions which extended their principal facade. The Duncan House has the saddlebag arrangement where the addition came to the other side of the chimney, while the Miller House maintained the exterior end wall chimney. The larger log buildings became the rear of new ell-shaped houses.

Influence of the major architectural styles are evident in many of the buildings. The ell on the Sell House shows its origins in the Federal style. On the Bowman-Bond House the predominant style is Greek Revival with its symmetrical facade, although the porch is a Victorian addition. Other picturesque detailing from the Victorian era can be seen on the main block of the Sell House in its gable ends and box window and in the bellcote on the schoolhouse.

Three early twentieth century styles are also represented. The Knob Creek Church has a traditional temple plan with the entrance on the gable end. Simple, triangular-arched windows lend a Gothic appearance to the building. Peter Bowman's house is a four-square with a hipped roof and interior chimneys balancing the cube-like building. A later building, the Homer Sell House, combines the four-square and the bungalow to form a semi-bungalow house

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Knob Creek Historic District recalls life in a rural Tennessee community during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Small farms are situated on creek banks and rolling hillsides. Plain farmhouses dot the landscape, surrounded by barns, sheds and other outbuildings. Knob Creek has a mill to grind the corn and grain for marketing. The community institutions, the church and schoolhouse, stand nearby. Finally, small family cemeteries complete the cycle of rural farmlife.

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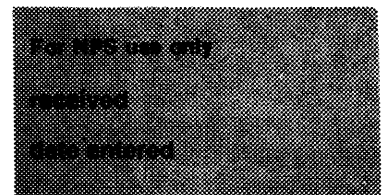
SIGNIFICANCE

Footnotes

1. Interview with Claude and Mary Simmons, 18 January 1983.
2. Washington County, Tennessee. North Carolina. Grant No. 393 to Samuel Fain, North Carolina Grant No. 512 to Charles Duncan, Deed Book 1, pp. 120, 238.
3. Washington County, Tennessee. Tax Books 1778-1846, 1778 rolls, n.p. transcribed, Microfilm Roll No. 639, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
4. A few families were settled where Johnson City is today; however, that town was not established until the mid-nineteenth century. Samuel Cole Williams, History of Johnson City and its Environs. (Johnson City: The Watauga Press, 1940; reprinted, Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1940). pp. 20-24.
5. Interview with Mrs. John Sherfy, Johnson City, Tennessee, 18 January 1983.
6. Washington County, Tennessee. Deed Book 16, pp. 145-146. Microfilm roll No. 174, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
7. D.F. Bowman, "Bowman Family Geneology," April 1914, Bowman Family Collection, Folder 8, Series II, Appalachian Archives, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee.
8. Charles C. Bowman and Edna P. Bowman, "Knob Creek Church of the Brethren," Knob Creek Church of the Brethern, Johnson City, Tennessee (Typewritten).
9. Interview with Charles and Edna Bowman, Johnson City, Tennessee, 19 January 1983.
10. D.F. Bowman, "Bowman Family Geneology."
11. Interview with Charles and Edna Bowman.
12. Washington County, Tennessee, "Will of Joseph Bowman," Will Book 1, August 1779 - February 1857, pp. 397-399, Microfilm roll no. 169, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
13. Interview with Charles and Edna Bowman.
14. Bowman and Bowman, "Knob Creek Church of the Brethren."
15. Washington County (Tennessee). Board of Education, Minutes July 1951 - July 1957, meeting of 13 August 1952 (typewritten).
16. "Will of Joseph Bowman" p. 397.

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OWNERS OF PROPERTY

<u>PROPERTY</u>	<u>OWNER</u>
Jacob Krouse House	Ruth Krouse Route 4 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Homer Sell House Bashor Mill	Donald and Brenda F. Tarr Route 1, P.O. Box 537 Mountain Home, Tennessee 37684
Charles Duncan House	George and Margaret Sherfey Route 4, Box 183 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601-9804
Sell House Barn	Franklin D. and Marion P. Sell, Jr. Route 3 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Oak Hill School	Joan Sell Biddix and Nancy J. Sell Roberts Route 3 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Knob Creek Church of the Brethren	Knob Creek Church of the Brethren Knob Creek Road Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Bowman-Bond House James and Carolyn Sell House	James and Carolyn Sell Route 4 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Miller House	George W. and Carrie Hamilton Route 4 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Peter Bowman House	Danver P. Minga Route 3 Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Miller Cemetery	Miller Cemetery
Bowman Cemetery	Bowman Bond Cemetery
Melvin-Caruthers Cemetery	Melvin-Caruthers Cemetery

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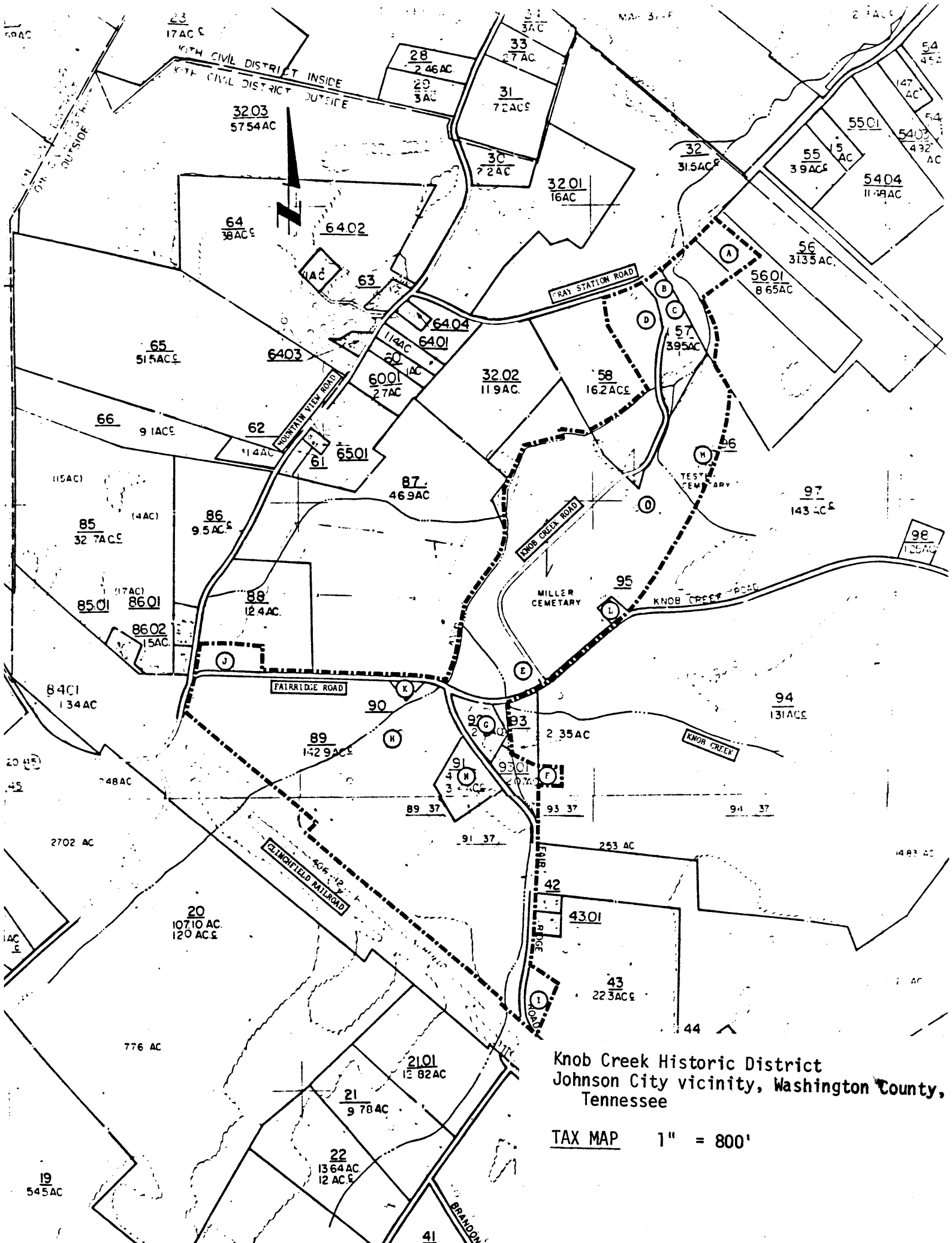
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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

DOT/FHWA requested a determination of eligibility on the Knob Creek Historic District in May 1983. The property was determined eligible by the Keeper of the National Register on May 24, 1983.



Knob Creek Historic District
Johnson City vicinity, Washington County,
Tennessee

TAX MAP 1" = 800'