

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Alvin Cullom York Farm

AND/OR COMMON

Alvin Cullom York Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

On U.S. 127, near Pall Mall and about

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

9 miles north of Jamestown

VICINITY OF

4

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Tennessee

47

Fentress

049

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

__DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

__STRUCTURE

__SITE

__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

__PUBLIC

__PRIVATE

☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

__IN PROCESS

__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

__UNOCCUPIED

__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

__YES: RESTRICTED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒ NO

PRESENT USE

__AGRICULTURE

__COMMERCIAL

__EDUCATIONAL

__ENTERTAINMENT

__GOVERNMENT

__INDUSTRIAL

__MILITARY

__MUSEUM

__PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__RELIGIOUS

__SCIENTIFIC

__TRANSPORTATION

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Alvin York (house, outbuildings, immediate grounds--5.8 acres)
State of Tennessee (circa 10.2 acres)

STREET & NUMBER

U.S. 127

B. R. Allison, Commissioner, Dept. of Conservation
2611 West End Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Pall Mall

Nashville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fentress County Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Fentress County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Jamestown

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places (Sgt. York Historic Area)

DATE

1973

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS National Register

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

106

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

The Alvin Cullom York Farm lies near Pall Mall, Tenn., about 9 miles north of Jamestown, Tenn., on U.S. 127 (sometimes known as Alvin C. York Highway and Tenn. 28) where it crosses Wolf River. There are approximately 16 acres in the designated area, which is flanked on the south by the highway, on the west and north by the river, and on the east by farmland belonging to York's children. The whole is situated in a National Register district--the Sgt. York Historic Area, which encompasses a number of buildings and sites associated with various phases of his and his associates' lives. The 16 acres form part of an approximately 396-acre tract given to York by the State in the early 1920's and reacquired recently from his widow and heirs--with the exception of about 72 acres that the heirs retained. The principal portion of the 16 acres is a 5.8-acre area fronting onto the highway and containing the York family residence and 9 outbuildings. This acreage and these buildings comprise part of the State acquisition but are being held in a life estate by Mrs. York. The remaining 10.2 acres lie to the rear or north of the farm outbuildings and adjoin the river. Just across the river, outside the 16 designated acres and near the foot of Tater Hill, are the historic Wolf River Methodist Church and the cemetery in which York is buried.

Although York disdained the glamorous money-making offers that came his way after World War I, he did accept funds raised by the Nashville Rotary Club and the Nashville Banner for construction of a home on the property given to him by the State. Erected in 1922, the house is a 2½-story, rectangular-shaped, hip-roofed, white-painted frame structure 40.5 feet wide and 31.1 feet deep excluding porches. Two hooded, double-windowed dormers grace the front slope of the roof, and a corbeled, red brick, exterior chimney rises above the roof near the center of the east and west ends of the house. An original, full-height, 7.7-foot-deep, four-bay-wide, square-columned portico crosses the front facade of the dwelling. An extension of the house roof covers the portico but it is not recessed. There are three other porches, but they may not be original. An enclosed, one-story, hip-roofed, 28.9- by 11.5-foot porch extends across the east end, covering the lower portion of the chimney there. In the rear, off the north-west corner, is another enclosed porch. It is single tiered and gable roofed and measures 14.9 by 10.2 feet. Access to it is from the rear via a small 4.6- by 7.1-foot, shed-roofed portico. The house rests on a stone foundation, and there is a partial, dirt-floored basement under the main block.

Window and door placement is somewhat irregular, but basically the house is five bays wide and three deep. Most windows are nine-over-one, double hung sash. Main entry is through a side-lighted single door that consists of three vertical wood panels topped

(continued)

111

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1922-1964

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Alvin C. York

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Men like Alvin Cullom York are a special breed of military hero, according to historian Dixon Wecter, because "Americans have a special affection for the man of peace--like Sergeant York in the World War--who leaves his [civilian] trade only long enough to beat the military at their own game."¹ York indelibly left his mark on the annals of American military valor in the Battle of the Argonne Forest on October 8, 1918, when almost singlehandedly he killed 25 Germans, took 132 prisoners, and knocked out 35 machine guns--a feat that Marshall Ferdinand Foch, Commander of the Allied Armies, labeled as "the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier of all armies of Europe."² York's name became a household word in America. Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and many other decorations and deluged with many opportunities to capitalize financially on his fame, he chose to return to his home in the Tennessee hills, marry and raise a family, and strive to improve the lives of his neighbors. This "modesty and his devotion to his people," says scholar Robert McGaw, "magnified the legend that he became."³

The historic York Farm includes approximately 16 acres of land, nine outbuildings, and the 2½-story, hip-roofed, white-painted frame house that Alvin York built in 1922 with funds raised gratefully by the Nashville Rotary Club and the Nashville Banner. In good condition, the dwelling was York's home until his death in 1964. Except for his general store (now a soon-to-be-moved post office), a nearby house in which he lived for just 2 years (1920-22), and a church that he helped build, this is the only extant structure prominently associated with York.

(continued)

1 Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America (New York, 1941), 12.

2 Robert A. McGaw, "A Likeness of Sergeant York," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXVII (Winter, 1968), 330.

3 Ibid., 337.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coffman, Edward M., The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Cowan, Sam K., Sergeant York and His People (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1922).

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 16 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 618,24,8,0 4,04,610,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1,6 6182,8,3,0 404,61,4,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 16 618,26,8,5 4,04,574,5

D 1,6 6181,4,8,0 4,04,58,1,5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(see last page of description)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE George R. Adams, Managing Editor
Ralph Christian, Assistant Editor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History

December 1975

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue, South

(615) 242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville

Tennessee 37203

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET York Farm ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

by two rows of three glass panes. The AASLH representative was not permitted to enter the house, but appraisal records furnished by the Tennessee Department of Conservation reveal that the first floor includes an entrance foyer, living room, sunroom, dining room, library, kitchen, and one-half bath. The partially covered flooring is hardwood, and most of the walls and ceilings are sheetrock. On the second story there are five bedrooms and a bath. Most of the flooring on this level is pine. Use and condition of the attic are unknown. Furnishings throughout are those of the York family.

The outbuildings, most of which are in poor condition, are randomly situated rear of the York dwelling. Standing almost directly north of and only a few feet from the residence is a one-story, gable-roofed, stone smokehouse that measures about 16 by 24 feet. Adjacent to it is a small frame shed and beyond that a one-story, gable-roofed, frame chickenhouse with vertical siding. East of it is another small shed and a one-story, shed-roofed, stone garage that measures about 31 by 40 feet and has two small attached sheds. Still further east and slightly to the south stands a rectangular-shaped, single-story, gable-roofed, 40-foot-long corncrib. Red-painted, it has vertical siding and appears to be in relatively good condition. Directly behind this structure stands a similarly built 1½-story barn, also red-painted. Immediately behind it are two cylindrical, stone silos. Just across U.S. 127 to the south and outside the 16 designated acres are a soon-to-be-moved, frame post office built by York in 1920 as a general store. Across the river a few hundred yards west of the post office is a gristmill acquired by York in 1943. The State is restoring it for inclusion in a small State park.

Boundary Justification. The boundary includes the York residence, adjacent outbuildings, family garden spot, and all contiguous York farmland north of U.S. 127 either owned by the State or held by Mrs. York in a life estate. The 10.2 acres rear of Mrs. York's 5.8 acres are needed to make both the north and west boundaries contiguous to the river and thus preserve an important original characteristic of the farm. Not included is farmland situated east of the York house and owned by the children of Alvin York.

(continued)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET York Farm ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE two

Boundary. As indicated in red on the accompanying maps, beginning at a point on the east bank of Wolf River precisely where it begins its passage underneath the U.S. 127 bridge presently spanning that stream, a line running northward approximately 840 feet along the east bank of Wolf River to a set stone; thence, eastward about 1,120 feet along the south bank of Wolf River to the western boundary of the property of the York heirs; thence, southward, along a fence line, about 1,250 feet to the north edge of the present right-of-way of U.S. 127; thence, westward about 580 feet along the north edge of said right-of-way to the starting point on the east bank of Wolf River.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET York Farm ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

Biography

Alvin Cullom York was born December 13, 1887, in Pall Mall, Tenn., where he spent all his life except the 18 months he served in the U.S. Army during World War I. Pall Mall, located in Fentress County, was a typical mountain community of the era, largely isolated from the currents of change and offering little in the way of formal education. After completing the equivalent of a third grade education, Alvin went to work as a farm hand and helper in his father's blacksmith shop. In 1911 his father died, and Alvin found himself the sole support of his mother and three younger brothers and sisters. A somewhat dissolute youth who loved drinking and gambling, he soon underwent a religious experience and became one of the leading members of the Church of Christ and Christian Union.

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, Alvin was swinging a sledgehammer on a highway construction project for \$1.65 a day. When drafted, he considered becoming a conscientious objector because his church opposed war and killing, but after wrestling with his conscience, he decided to accept induction. Entering the Army on November 4, 1917, he took his basic training at Camp Gordon, Ga. Probably because of his crack marksmanship, he was assigned to the 82nd or "All America" Division, composed of men from all States of the Union and descendants of all the nationalities making up the Allies. On May 1, 1918, he sailed with his comrades for France, and soon after his arrival he was promoted to corporal.

Alvin York left his imprint on the annals of American military valor on October 8, 1918, in the Battle of the Argonne Forest. He was part of a 17-man detail which was sent to knock out German machine guns. When ~~his~~ unit came under enemy fire, nine of York's companions were either killed or wounded, including the sergeant in charge. Cpl. York assumed command and fought virtually a one-man battle against the enemy. He picked off eight Germans with eight rifle shots and wiped out a seven-man patrol with his automatic pistol. Biographer Sam K. Cowan paraphrased York's description of the scene: "When I seed a German, I jus' tetcht him off," said York.⁴ When the Germans surrendered to York, it was discovered

(continued)

⁴ Sam K. Cowan, Sergeant York and His People (New York, 1922), 251.

108

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET York Farm ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

he had killed 25 enemy soldiers. In addition he took 132 prisoners and captured 35 machine guns. Although York's feat had no great impact on the eventual American victory in the Argonne Forest, his individual effort was unequaled, and the recognition that he received was unparalleled for an enlisted man. When York died in 1964, the New York Times described him as a "latter-day descendant of the American frontier, a plain-talking, no nonsense sharpshooter" and "for an America fighting its first war on foreign soil ... the perfect hero."⁵ On November 1, only 10 days before the war ended, he was promoted to sergeant, and on April 11, 1919, York received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Eventually, he was the recipient of nearly 50 decorations both at home and abroad.

When Sgt. York returned to the United States in May 1919, he received a hero's welcome and was showered with gifts and proposals of marriage. In New York City the members of the Stock Exchange carried him about on their shoulders, and in Washington he received treatment usually reserved for foreign dignitaries. On May 19, 1919, he was discharged at Fort Ogelthorpe, Ga. Although he received many offers--including \$75,000 for a movie of his life to be filmed in part in the Argonne Forest--to capitalize financially on his exploits, he turned them down on the "simple reasoning," says Robert McGaw, "that he had served his country as his duty, not for money, and the uniform was not for sale."⁶ After his return to Pall Mall, York married his sweetheart Gracie Williams in a ceremony performed by Tennessee Governor A. H. Roberts before 2,000 people. Eventually, he accepted a 396-acre farm near Pall Mall from the people of Tennessee and there raised seven children.

In the years that followed, York devoted much of his time to raising money for better schools in his Cumberland Mountain region. He also helped get a new highway to replace the mountain trail that passed through Pall Mall. In 1936 he was offered the Prohibition Party's Vice Presidential nomination, but he turned it down. In 1940 he signed a contract for a movie based on his life. Released

(continued)

⁵ New York Times, September 3, 1964, 1, 26.

⁶ McGaw, "Likeness of Sergeant York," 337.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET York Farm ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

in 1941, it was immensely successful, winning its star, Gary Cooper, his first Academy Award. Despite his earlier opposition to the draft, York during World War II served as Chairman of the Fentress County Draft Board. In 1942 he was made a major by act of Congress and placed on the retired list. After a stroke in 1949, his health progressively deteriorated. On September 2, 1964, Sergeant York died at the Veterans Hospital in Nashville, Tenn.

Continuation Sheet York Farm Item Number 9 Page one

McGaw, Robert A., "A Likeness of Sergeant York," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXVII (Winter, 1968), 329-40.

New York Times, September 3, 1964, 1, 26.

Wecter, Dixon, The Hero in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941).