National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



367

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See Instructions 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 Keener - Johnson Farm
other names/site number <u>N/A</u>
2. Location
street & number not for publication N/A
city or town Seymour
state Tennessee code TN county Sevier code 415 zip code 37865
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
Manual meets and meets the procedular and professional requirements set for in so on tyr and out in my opinion, the property meets
🗋 nationally 🔲 statewide 🖾 locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Markers L. Amper 2/10/99
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: Date of Action Date of Action
■ entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet See Cont
determined eligible for the
National Register.
See continuation sheet
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National
Register.
□ other, (explain:)

hip of PropertyCategory of Propertynany boxes as apply)(Check only one box)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count)		
building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing		
	8	1 buildings		
	3	sites		
☐ object	1	2 structures		
·		objects		
	12	3 Total		
Name of related multiple property listing Number of Contributing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) in the National Register		outing resources previously liste gister		
	0			
3)				
DOMESTIC: single dwelling		DOMESTIC: single dwelling		
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage		AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage		
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field		AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field		
ENCE: animal facility	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility			
ENCE: horticultural facility	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: horticultural facility			
ENCE: agricultural	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuildings			
······································	······································			
on	Materials			
	(Enter categories from instructions)			
		NCRETE, METAL, Board-and-		
		NORETE, METAL, DUALU-ANU-		
······································				
	(Check only one box)	(Check only one box) (Do not include previously building(s) Contributing		

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

Record #

Name of Property	County and State		
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.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)		
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	AGRICULTURE		
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 who's components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance 1853 - 1948		
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.			
Criteria ConsiderationsN/A(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)Property is:A owned by a religious institution or used for	Significant Dates 1853, 1902, 1919, 1943		
religious purposes.	Significant Person		
B removed from its original location.	(complete if Criterion B is marked) N/A		
C moved from its original location.			
D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation N/A		
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.			
F a commemorative property	Architect/Builder		
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.			
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets	s.)		
9. Major Bibliographical References			
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on a	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 # 	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		

Seiver County, TN

Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 168 acres

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	252740	3976420
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	252200	_3976080

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carroll Van West		
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation	date	May 22, 1998
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU	telephone	615-898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro	state TN	zip code37132

Additional Documentation

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

name <u>Charles</u> W	V. Johnson, Jr.				
street & number	1112 Boyd's Creek Highway			telephone	423-573-2550
city or town Seymour		state	TN	zip coo	ie <u>37865</u>

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.

Seiver County, TN

253660

253880

Easting

See continuation sheet

3974700

3974760

Northing

County and State

Boyd's Creek, TN 156 NW

16 Zone

16

3

4

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

7. DESCRIPTION

The Keener-Johnson Farm consists of 168 acres and includes a rural historic district of related farm buildings from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. It is located along Boyd's Creek (Tennessee Highway 338) in Sevier County, along one of the oldest areas of settlement in Tennessee. Although circa 1980s and 1990s schools and suburban housing lie adjacent to the farm, it maintains a high degree of integrity in the setting of its various historic buildings and in the integrity and setting of its historic fields, which maintain the size and patterns characteristic of the farm since 1940. The Keener - Johnson House (circa 1853, 1904, 1938, and 1954) directly fronts Boyd's Creek Highway, connecting the farm to the outside world. To the immediate northwest of the historic dwelling is a large farm work complex, with most of the buildings dating between 1920 and 1940. Stretching to the northwest is a series of fields and pasture, well defined by historic fences and tree lines.

 Keener, Adam, House (circa 1853, 1904, 1938, 1954)
 In his 1996 book, *The Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee*, architectural historian Robbie Jones includes a full description of the Keener - Johnson House among the extant doublepile plan dwellings of Sevier County. The following description of the dwelling is taken from page 214 of his work:

This two-story, double-pile dwelling was built for Adam Harvey Keener (1828-1891) in 1853, along the original stagecoach road. Similar to other brick houses in Sevier County, the Keener House was built with a three-bay front facade of Flemish bond while all other facades feature common bond. The house retains three interior-end brick chimneys and stone window lintels. The house originally exhibited a clipped gable roof--unusual in the ante-bellum era. The roof was replaced with the present gable roof after a fire in 1880. The dwelling featured a one-story, wraparound front porch at that time. Like many ante-bellum houses, a transom and sidelights accentuate the front entrance.

Around 1904, Joseph Abraham Keener (1856-1914), a son who inherited the farm in 1891, remodeled the dwelling with elaborate architectural elements common in the Victorian era. These renovations included a highly embellished one-story wraparound front porch that featured a second level promenade. This porch was removed in a 1938 renovation. ...

At that time the present stoop, steps, and iron railing were added, in keeping with the Colonial Revival rage for simplicity and symmetry. Then in 1954, a brick and frame hyphen that held a small utility room was added to the north (side) elevation of the dwelling, to which was connected a brick-two car garage. "Through numerous alterations and renovations, the Keener House has retained many original architectural elements, including the six-over-six sash windows, a molded brick cornice, and the front entrance surround." The interior retains an especially striking finely crafted staircase and historic Greek Revival-influenced mantels. (C)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

2. Garage/Chicken Hatchery (circa 1934) Facing the dwelling, on the east side of Boyd's Creek Highway, is a two-story, two-bay frame garage/chicken hatchery, with a tin-covered gable roof, that was built circa 1934. With a concrete basement, the building is situated on a hill so that the gable end of the second story faces the house

3. Tenant dwelling (circa 1935)

A symmetrical four-bay dwelling, with two centered wood paneled doors flanked by single four-light windows, was built with a concrete foundation, concrete block walls, and a tin-covered gable roof. Located directly to the rear of the dwelling, in the center of the farm's domestic complex, the building replaced an earlier two-room log cabin that had gable-end chimneys. The log cabin stood until circa 1935 when it was demolished and replaced with this concrete block building. (C)

and serves as a garage. The bottom floor was a chicken hatchery and is now used for storage. (C)

4. Chicken Coop (circa 1920)

The first chicken coop on the farm was built in the early 1920s. This board-and-batten box construction frame building has a tin-covered shed roof and rests on a limestone pier foundation. (C)

5. Chicken House (circa 1930)

A long rectangular-shaped board-and-batten box construction frame building that rests on a concrete foundation. It has a tin-covered shed roof. Note that the different designations of coop and house follow the historic descriptions of the two buildings by the Extension Service. A small building for chicken production was typically called a coop. A larger building was known as a house. (C)

6. Orchard (circa 1920)

To the northeast of the chicken coop is a small fruit orchard, about fifty feet by twenty feet in size, planted in the early 1920s. (C)

7. Barn (circa 1940, 1956)

This gable front two-story frame barn with concrete foundation has a centrally located single bay entrance. It has a tin-covered gable roof, with a long, narrow, gable-roof ventilator along its peak. In 1956, the north elevation gable roof was extended to create a covered shed for farm machinery and equipment. This attached shed is supported by three round log posts and is enclosed with metal on its north end. (C)

8. Corn Crib/Shed (circa 1930)

Built at approximately the same time as the large stock barn (#9), the corn crib/shed is a gable front frame building with a concrete foundation and tin-covered gable roof. The north elevation of the gable roof was extended to create a shed roof storage shed for machinery and equipment. (C)

9. Stock barn (1929)

The date of this unique building is carved on an interior water trough. It is a large, two-story transverse crib barn with a large loft for the storage of hay. Its gable front faces west, while the rear faces east toward the highway. The original tin-covered gable roof features a large hay hood on the west entrance.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

The foundation is log, supported by poured concrete. (C)

10. Water tank and water system (1929)

The large stock barn received its water from a unique system that comprises a contributing structure to the historic district. A concrete cylinder tank held rainwater supplied water automatically by means of a float system inside and outside the barn to the animals. (C)

11. Machinery Shed (1963)

This shed is a tin-covered gable roof structure with three open bays created by the symmetrical placement of two round log posts. (NC, due to date of construction)

12. Hay Shed (1972)

This tin-covered shed roof frame and metal structure is open on its north and east sides. (NC, due to date of construction)

13. Field Patterns (circa 1904, 1945)

For the last fifty-plus years, the Keener-Johnson Farm has specialized in livestock production and the fields of the farm maintain a high degree of integrity from the early 1940s to the present. The farm rises in elevation to the east and is characterized by large open pastures on rolling terrain, with the fields at the highest elevations having been terraced circa 1940 to prevent soil erosion. There is one section of historic woods on the farm, located in the northeast corner of the property. Johnson Road cuts the fields into two primary tracts, #217 and #215 on the Sevier County tax maps. This road cut follows the historic right-of-way and was built over the original roadbed of the Knoxville, Sevierville, and Eastern Railroad. The field patterns comprise a contributing site to this nomination. (C)

14. Farm Road (circa 1929)

At the time of the construction of the large stock barn, a new farm road was built from the barn that led by the dwelling and exited the farm at Boyd's Creek Highway. This intact and still-in-use road is a contributing site. (C)

15. Owenby House (1995)

The current farm operator's daughter, Sondra Johnson Owenby, and her husband Daniel Owenby built a modern Colonial Revival-influenced home on the south end of the farm, east of the historic Keener -Johnson House in 1995. This five bay brick dwelling has a slightly projecting central section that contains three bays, flanked by symmetrical one-bay wings. Both the central section and the wings have asphalt-shingle gable roofs and each has a centrally located gable-roof dormer. (NC, due to date of construction)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Keener-Johnson Farm on Boyd's Creek Road in Sevier County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its local significance in agriculture. A listed Tennessee bicentennial farm, the Keener-Johnson Farm is the oldest historic family farm yet identified in Sevier County. The farm landscape represents a rural historic district that demonstrates agricultural change and continuity for nearly 150 years. The farm gains additional significance for the contribution its history makes to the understanding of the roles of farm women in the maintenance and perpetuation of historic family farms in Tennessee.

The farm's history begins in 1785 when John McCroskey received a North Carolina land grant of 3,000 acres, most of which was centered along Boyd's Creek in present-day Sevier County. John McCroskey shared the grant with William and Samuel McGauhey, also of North Carolina. In 1806 John Sharp, Jr., received a land grant from the State of Tennessee for part of the original McCroskey grant. Conflicting titles such as this one were not uncommon; in the great majority of cases, the Tennessee title was recognized as legitimate. Certainly part of the controversy ended when Robert Scott McCroskey, the son of John McCroskey, married Mary McChesney Sharp, the daughter of John Sharp, Jr. Robert and Mary Sharp McCroskey began to farm at the present location of the property by circa 1830. Their child, Mary Narcissa McCroskey, inherited 168 acres of the farm and after her marriage to Adam Harvey Keener, they built the present historic dwelling, the Keener House (#1), in 1853. The dwelling, although remodeled throughout the next century, remains largely intact and at its original location. As the farm's oldest surviving building, it is a landmark for travelers along the highway as well as for the subsequent history of the farm. Architectural historian Robbie Jones has described the house as "the best example" of a double-pile dwelling with gabled roofs in Sevier County (p. 214).

Adam Harvey Keener was a miller by trade and during the 1850s he constructed and operated a gristmill and sawmill along Boyd's Creek, east of the dwelling. Similar to other farmers in the county, the Keener's raised small grains, livestock for their own consumption, and corn. After Adam Harvey Keener's death in 1891, his wife Mary M. Keener assumed ownership of the property and managed the farm for the next 11-12 years, dependent on the help of her adult children. After Mary M. Keener's death in 1902, the farm passed to her son Joseph A. Keener and his wife Hannah Clark Keener. It was probably Joseph and Hannah Keener who made the first substantial additions to the family's historic dwelling by adding a Victorian-styled porch.

Joseph A. Keener continued farming and operating the sawmill, but he also became a local postmaster and opened a small post office in the front of the house, by the Boyd's Creek Road. Income from the post office was an important source of cash for the family. (The post office was demolished circa 1960.) Joseph A. Keener died in 1914 and farm management passed to his wife Hannah Clark Keener. Hannah would continue to manage the post office. She lived on the farm for the next thirty years and became an active participant in the property's conversion into a modern progressive farm.

Most of the buildings within the farm date from 1920 to 1940. This modernization began after Hannah Clark Keener gave the farm to her daughter, Georgia Neva Bell Keener, in 1919. Georgia Keener married a

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____8_ Page ___6___

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

returning World War I vet, Charles Wright Johnson, in 1919 and they settled on the farm, living in the historic Keener House with her mother. But the Johnson assumed the everyday management and operation of the property. Like other women across Tennessee interested in and active in Home Demonstration during the 1920s and 1930s, Georgia Keener Johnson became an active breeder and seller of chickens. Her first chicken coop (# 4) of circa 1920, the design of which followed standardized plans drawn by the University of Tennessee Extension Service, was small but turned enough profit that by circa 1930, the family had constructed a much larger rectangular-shaped chicken house (#5). Four years later, when the family decided to build a garage (#2) along the road facing the house, they installed electricity and a hatchery in the basement so more chicks could be produced for market. Tenants played an important role in helping Georgia Kenner maintain her flocks and in circa 1935 the family demolished the old log tenant house that stood behind the dwelling and replaced it with a concrete block tenant house, with electricity (#3). The family also branched out into fruit production and set up a fruit stand along the new state highway (now Tennessee 338) in front of the house. The fruit stand is no longer extant, but the orchard (#6), located behind the chicken coops, is extant. The Johnsons sold apples, pears, cherries, watermelon, cantaloupes, and grapes, all grown on the farm. Another important product of the farm in the mid-twentieth century produced by Georgia Keener Johnson was flowers--she grew a variety of flowers that she sold at the roadside stand as well as at markets in Sevierville.

The transformation of the domestic complex of the farm from 1920 to 1935 was paralleled by changes in the farm's work complex, located to the northwest of the dwelling. The Johnsons built two large barns (#7 and #9) and a corn crib (#8), along with a water tank and water system for their livestock (#10). During these years, the Johnsons raised small grains, corn, tobacco, strawberries, peanuts, and a wide range of livestock, including dairy cows, beef cattle, sheep, hogs, and mules. They also raised a truck garden, some of which was sold at the fruit stand but also sold weekly at the historic Market Square in Knoxville.

From 1940 to 1950, however, the family began to focus its production strategy on hay and beef cattle. As participants in the local chapter of the Soil Conservation Service, the Johnsons terraced their fields, fenced others with wire fence or permanent tree lines, and built ponds. The field patterns (#14) found today on the farm reflect both the family's reliance on new government land conservation programs but also its shift toward more agricultural specialization, in their case livestock production.

Compared to other known Tennessee Century Farms in Sevier County, the Keener-Johnson Farm has several areas of special significance in agricultural history. First, it is the oldest identified historic family farm in the county. Second, its many surviving buildings from 1920 to 1940 document the transformation of rural life and farm production brought on by the progressive agricultural movement and how that movement impacted the roles of both women and men.

In 1967 Charles W. Johnson, Jr., and his sisters Mary Johnson Bolton, Barbara Johnson Cox, Christine Johnson Posey, and Louise Johnson Posey inherited the farm from their mother Georgia Johnson. Charles W. Johnson, Jr., and his family resided on and work the farm today. Their agricultural commodities are beef cattle, hay, and corn. But the farm is surrounded by recent development and threatened by demands for new houses, new schools, and new roads in Sevier County. The number of family farms in Sevier County

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

continues to dwindle. The commendable efforts by the Johnsons to continue farming and to maintain their link with the county's agricultural past has brought about this effort to document the farm's history and nominate it to the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 8

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

9. **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bolton, Mary Johnson. Interview with Blythe Semmer and Carroll Van West. Keener-Johnson Farm, Sevier Co., TN, March 1998.

"Early Land Grants in Sevier County, NC-TN." Tennessee Ancestors 9(August 1993): 85-87.

- Johnson, Charles W., Jr. Interview with Blythe Semmer and Carroll Van West. Keener-Johnson Farm, Sevier Cp., TN, March 1998.
- Jones, Robbie D. The Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee. Sevierville: Smoky Mountains Historical Society, 1996.
- Keener-Johnson Farm, Sevier Co. Tennessee Century Farms Files, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, Murfreesboro, TN.
- West, Carroll V. Tennessee Agriculture: A Century Farms Perspective. Nashville: Tennessee Department of Agriculture, 1986.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 9

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Keener-Johnson Farm is at 1112 Boyd's Creek Highway in Sevier County, Tennessee, and consists of 168 acres marked as Parcels 215 and 217 on the attached Sevier County Tax Maps 34, 35 and 46.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries contain all of the extant historic property associated with the Keener-Johnson Farm.

The tax map for this nomination originally had the scale of 1" = 400". The Tennessee Board of Equalization prepares this scale tax map for rural areas. This map has been reduced by the county for distribution. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission has used this scale map for nominations and has found that the 1" = 400' adequately meets our office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 10

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Keener-Johnson Farm, Sevier Co., TN Photos by: Carroll Van West MTSU Center for Historic Preservation PO Box 80, MTSU Murfreesboro, TN 37132 Date: March 1998 Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission 2941 Lebanon Road Nashville, TN 37243

East facade and south elevation, Keener - Johnson House, facing northwest 1 of 27

East facade and north elevation, Keener - Johnson House, facing southwest 2 of 27

North elevation, Keener - Johnson House, facing southwest 3 of 27

West elevation, Keener - Johnson House, facing east 4 of 27

Central hall staircase, detail, facing west 5 of 27

Central hall staircase, second floor, facing east 6 of 27

Mantel, north parlor, first floor, facing north 7 of 27

Mantel, south parlor, first floor, facing south 8 of 27

Garage, facing east 9 of 27

Concrete block tenant house, facing southwest 10 of 27

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 11

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

Chicken coops and Owenby House, facing southwest 11 of 27

Chicken house, facing southwest 12 of 27

Barn, facing northwest 13 of 27

Work complex/ barns, facing north 14 of 27

Corn crib and barn, facing southwest 15 of 27

Domestic complex from work complex, facing southeast 16 of 27

Rear of stock barn with water tank, facing northwest 17 of 27

Front of stock barn, facing southeast 18 of 27

Work complex, facing east 19 of 27

Equipment shed, facing west 20 of 27

Hay shed, facing south 21 of 27

Pasture, facing west 22 of 27

Hayfield, facing east 23 of 27

Pasture and woods, facing southwest 24 of 27

Evidence of terracing, facing south

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 12

Keener-Johnson Farm Sevier County, TN

25 of 27 Rear of farm, highest point, facing east 26 of 27

Historic fence/tree lines, facing southwest 27 of 27



Buildings behind Keener - Johnson House ca. 1915. Building on right no longer extant

