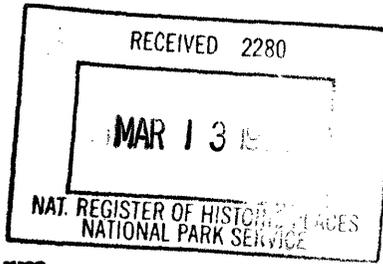


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission     Amended Submission

#### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

ROWAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY WPA STONE VOTING HOUSES

#### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

WPA FEDERAL RELIEF PROGRAMS IN ROWAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY: 1935-1943

#### C. Form Prepared by

name/title Christa Smith, Architectural Historian; Lynn David, Coordinator, Appalachian Heritage  
organization Morehead State University date 7-20-97  
street & number UPO 557 telephone (606) 783-2067  
city or town Morehead state KY zip code 40351

#### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive  
Director of Kentucky Heritage Council

David L. Morgan Signature and title of certifying official    Date 10-1-97  
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper    Date of Action 4-9-98

**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	<b>Page Numbers</b>
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	1-3
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	1-2
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	1
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	1
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	1-2

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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 listings. 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 120 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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**STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

The Rowan County WPA Stone Voting Houses meet National Register criterion A and are significant during the period of 1935-1936 within the historic context of "WPA Federal Relief Programs in Rowan County, KY 1935-1943." The history of the Voting Houses reflects that of the New Deal Era and Federal Relief Programs associated with the Great Depression and Roosevelt Administration in the 1930s and 1940s. The work relief projects undertaken by the New Deal agencies created unprecedented construction activity in the public sector. Due to the nature of the economic disaster that plagued the nation it is unlikely that the majority of the construction projects would have been undertaken, especially in the rural areas, without the influx of federal money.

*New Deal Era Policies in Rowan County, Kentucky*

The Great Depression of 1929 brought massive unemployment and human hardship unparalleled in American history. The relief of personal distress was an urgent necessity in the early 1930s, and a major need until World War II. In the effort to meet the crisis, the Roosevelt administration created several "New Deal" programs. These agencies administered first-aid to the destitute by doctoring the regional economies of the U.S. with injections of Federal money. The American South, which was hit particularly hard during the depression years, benefited tremendously from the infusion of such monies.

Eastern Kentucky afforded some of the bleakest scenes of the depression. People were desperate, hungry and unemployed. Disease and starvation were common (Tindall, 1967). The New Deal programs brought immediate relief to areas in Eastern Kentucky, including Rowan County. Rowan County received money from four agencies: the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civilian Works Administration (CWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (The Morehead News, May 27, 1980). The CCC built 35 miles of hard surface roads, 12 fire reporting telephone stations, 3 fire towers and three bridges. FERA projects completed three locally important roads and CWA monies remodeled the courthouse and built the county jail. Finally, the WPA established a sewing center at the county courthouse and built three public schools, 5 farm to market roads and 17 stone voting houses.

*WPA Federal Relief Programs in Rowan County, KY*

The WPA was established in May 1935. The general idea behind the WPA was "to put as many people to work as possible" and to provide funding for "small useful projects designed to

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**STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS (CONTINUED)**

assure a maximum of employment in all localities” (Brent, 1991). The enterprises the agency undertook were very labor intensive, due to the availability of manpower, and made conscious efforts to cut material costs. As a result, public buildings, schools, municipal or other government structures were often constructed using locally quarried native stone (Brent, 1991). Additionally, all construction projects had to be publicly owned and had to contribute to the overall public good.

On September 5, 1935, County Judge Charles E. Jennings requested over \$400,000 for WPA work. Projects requested included the construction of five farm to market roads, three public schools, and 17 voting houses. The funded road projects required 650 men, the public schools approximately 200 men and each voting house called for the service of 18 men, most of whom came off the relief rolls (The Morehead News, 1980).

By late 1939, the WPA had spent \$570,000 in Rowan, nearly 38 percent of the total for New Deal agencies in the county. The Morehead Independent put it in human terms by stating that nearly three quarters of all Rowan County men “received subsistence employment under the WPA. Without such aid there would have been starvation” (The Morehead Independent, 1941).

*Rowan County, KY WPA Stone Voting Houses*

Rowan County officials specifically requested money for the construction of 17 voting houses because existing voting facilities were extremely inadequate. Most of the precincts did not have centrally located polling places, which forced many people to travel relatively long distances to vote. Several of the precincts did not even have polling facilities, and voters had to cast their ballots at the courthouse located in Morehead. As a result, uneven voting often occurred in Rowan County. Voter turnout was typically low in precincts that had poorly located polling facilities, and overcrowd in some locations, such as the courthouse, where people from several precincts converged to vote (The Morehead Independent, 1934). Voting facilities throughout the county were typically small, crowded one room school houses, which generally did not provide sufficient spaces for the voting process. As a result, voter privacy was often compromised (Hoge, 1996). The construction of the WPA voting houses and the subsequent voter redistricting alleviated these problems, and helped modernize the voting process in Rowan County.

The construction of 17 stone voting houses, each measuring 12' X 24', were estimated to cost \$13,600 and give employment to 306 men. On November 7, 1935 the Rowan County Fiscal Court met and approved the project (Fiscal Court Book #4, p. 150). On November 25, 1935, the

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**STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS (CONTINUED)**

regional WPA office in Paintsville notified the county that they approved the Rowan County projects. Rowan-Elliott County WPA District Project Engineer, Dixon Shouse, announced that "17 stone voting booths would be placed in every precinct in the county" (Morehead Independent, 1935). Actual construction began on December 12, 1935 with the building of Morehead precinct No 1. and Brushy. Work on two more, Piercy and Pine Grove, began within a few days of this date. The estimated date of completion of all 17 voting houses was set for January 15, 1936, (the Morehead Independent, 1935).

Records of the actual construction or the men employed are not available. Newspaper accounts from that era state that the construction of all voting houses was completed in 1936. Of the seventeen voting houses constructed, only 12 remain. Morehead #1, constructed next to the city jail, was torn down at an unknown date. Piercy has fallen to vandals who used the stones for other buildings; McKinzie was razed when Cave Run Lake was built, and Wagner and #11 Farmers were razed with the building of the roads. Two of the remaining twelve, Haldeman and Hogtown, were refurbished in 1995 for use in the elections. The nine other voting houses have reverted to private ownership or abandoned by the county.

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**ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES**

**Name: WPA Stone Voting House**

**Description**

Function is used as a criterion for defining the property type of the Rowan County, KY WPA Stone Voting Houses. In this historic context, these publicly owned structures were built to fill a need, or function in a given community. We hypothesize that local people thought the voting houses were significant enough to justify the building's construction. This property type includes structures built exclusively for polling places.

The architecture is functional or institutional with little ornamentation, yet the materials used in the construction were deliberately chosen and were an integral part of the project. All of the voting houses were constructed of native or quarried stone, and were built as a rectangular pen with approximately 12' X 24' measurements. Originally all the voting houses had pot belly stoves with central capped yellow brick chimneys. The yellow bricks were manufactured at Haldeman Brick Works, located in Rowan County. The voting houses have three 2' X 2' single lights positioned high to give light and insure privacy to citizens voting in the three booths located under each of the windows.

The centralized locations of the voting houses in the precincts gave every citizen easy access to the polling sites. Each voting house sat on the equivalent of a town lot. The land around the buildings is flat and had ample room for parking wagons or automobiles. The exception was #1 Morehead Voting House which was located behind the old county courthouse and next to the jail (Rowan County News, 1936). This voting house was destroyed at an unknown date. All the voting houses fronted on a county road or city street. Several of the buildings in the county were located at or near a major rural crossroads.

**Statement of Significance:**

The Rowan County, WPA Stone Voting Houses meet criterion A and are significant physical representations of the New Deal. The history of the Voting Houses reflects that of the New Deal Era and Federal Relief Programs associated with the Great Depression and Roosevelt Administration in the 1930s and 1940s. The projects undertaken by the New Deal agencies generated massive construction activity in the public sector. Given the nature of the economic disaster that gripped the nation, it is unlikely that the majority of the construction projects, especially those in rural areas, would have been undertaken without the influx of federal money.

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**ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES (CONTINUED)**

Prior to the construction of the voting houses, voting facilities were either non-existent or poorly located throughout the county. Existing facilities tended to be small and overcrowded, and did not provide the privacy needed during the voting process. The WPA Stone Voting Houses were built in the most central place to provide a convenient location for voters in each precinct and large enough to provide private space for three voting booths. The construction of these voting houses thus alleviated the previous problems of low voter turnout, overcrowding in some precincts, and overall lack of privacy in the voting process.

**Registration Requirements:**

Any resource that is eligible as an example of this type must have been constructed by the WPA and used exclusively as a voting house during the period of significance. The resources must have integrity of materials, location, setting and association to be eligible. Because there were few of these buildings constructed in any locale, all structures encountered with those integrity factors will be eligible at the local level.

For this property type, integrity of materials is essential because with most New Deal agencies, the procurement of the materials was an integral part of the project. A majority of the original materials of nominated properties must remain intact and visible. Doors and windows are excluded from this requirement. Since the property type is based on function, then integrity of materials requires that a person be able to discern what the original function of the building was, especially if it now serves a function other than that for which it was originally constructed.

The stone voting houses should also have an integrity of setting and location. The centralized locations of the voting houses within the precincts were very important because they gave every citizen easy access to the polling sites. The voting houses were situated along an important transportation artery, such as a major county road or city street. Additionally, the land surrounding the building was typically flat to provide ample room for parking wagons or automobiles.

Integrity of association is absolutely essential. This association exists when a nominated building was constructed or used by one of the New Deal era agencies and if integrity of materials, setting, and location also exists.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Rowan County, KY

**SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

The multiple property listing of WPA Stone Voting Houses in Rowan County, Kentucky is based upon a 1995-1996 architectural resources inventory conducted by Lynn David and Christa Smith under the auspices of Morehead State University in Morehead, KY and the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, KY. The inventory identified 12 WPA stone voting houses. Every passable road, public and private, leading to a known or suspected WPA stone voting house was driven during the inventory. For each recorded property, locations were noted on USGS topographical maps; photographs were taken; computerized inventory forms were completed. Extensive research, including checking of deeds and secondary sources and taking of oral histories, was conducted and narrative architectural and historical descriptions were written. This work was conducted on a part-time basis in 1995-1996 by Lynn David and Christa Smith.

The properties are grouped under the historic context of WPA Federal Relief Programs in Rowan County, KY, 1935-1943. The survey identified several WPA resources in Rowan County, including schools, voting houses and roadways. Integrity requirements were based upon a knowledge of existing properties. A multiple property listing was prepared for the voting houses because they represent an important period in American social and economic history. They are also a visible reminder of federal and local initiatives to combat the tremendous poverty during the Great Depression. Further, the WPA stone voting houses were chosen because field and archival investigation revealed that they are unique to Rowan County. Other counties within the East Kentucky region do not have similar structures. Multiple property listings for other WPA structures in Rowan County were not undertaken due to budgetary and time constraints.

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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Intensive architectural inventory of the Rowan County, KY WPA Stone Voting Houses, conducted in 1995-1996 by Lynn David, coordinator Appalachian Heritage Project, Christa Smith, architectural historian, John Mayes, researcher and Mary Dawson, Specialist I. Files located at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

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Book 4 pp. 148, 150, 221, 224, 249, 277, 300

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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (CONTINUED)**

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