

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Johnson, Benjamin Franklin, II, Homestead District
Other names/site number: Historic Johnson Farm/Anne W.B. Prichard Farm, WA391
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

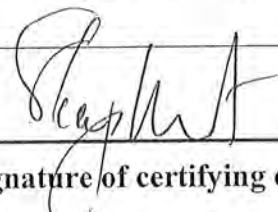
2. Location

Street & number: 3150 West Pear Lane
City or town: Fayetteville State: AR County: Washington
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:

 national statewide local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 A B C D

	<u>3-26-19</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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Washington, Arkansas

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural field, Agricultural
outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS: Bungalow Craftsman

Rustic, Plain Traditional

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Stone

Walls: Wood novelty siding, stone

Roof: Asbestos, metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is located at 3150 West Pear Lane in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The homestead is 0.75 mile west of Interstate 49 and is approximately two miles west of the Fayetteville city boundaries. The district covers 4.21 acres and consists of Benjamin Johnson, II, House, the stone foundation of a toolshed, the foundation of a sorting shed, the Johnson Barn (NR listed June 21, 1990), a chicken house, a stacked rock wall, stone dam, associated landscaping features designed by Benjamin Franklin Johnson, III, and remnant orchards.

The homestead is an intact remnant of the type of rural family farming complexes that were prevalent in Washington County in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The retention of the family home, outbuildings, and associated farmland with remaining fruit trees evokes the historic rural landscape that is quickly becoming replaced with subdivisions and commercial development. The complex is also related to the Johnson family, early 20th century settlers to Washington County, who contributed to the important fruit industry in the area.

The home exhibits Craftsman architecture, as does the chicken house. The Johnson Barn is a Plain/Traditional/Single Crib/Side Drive structure with gabled hayhood. Stone landscape resources exhibit Rustic architecture.

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All buildings, sites and structures in the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District have been well-maintained and exhibit a great degree of integrity. Original undeveloped farmland surrounds the district. Johnson family members retain ownership and have placed the property in its entirety under a Conservation Easement through the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust. Despite its proximity to the explosion of development in Fayetteville and expanding city limits, the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District retains the feel of an early-20th century fruit farm and carries on the legacy of the Johnson family in Washington County. Period of significance for the district spans 1908-1968.

Narrative Description

Contributing Resources

Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House is a two-story frame Craftsman building with full basement on a continuous stone foundation. The house is a contributing building to the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District. The land slopes toward the rear of the home providing for a full basement. The home has a gabled roof with exposed rafter tails and features shed dormers with exposed rafter tails on the front and rear elevations. A brick chimney extends off-center from the hip of the roof.

The western façade of the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House features a three-quarter integral roofed porch supported by three belcast columns atop brick piers with concrete caps. From north to south, first-floor fenestration consists of two six-over-one double-hung windows, a single 18-light door, a single double-hung window and a second 18-light door. At this point a small sun room, known as the "bird box" by the family, at the southwest end of the porch, extends the depth of the porch and is lit by a pair of double-hung windows. The second story of the western façade features a centered shed-roof dormer fenestrated north to south by eight six-light casement windows.

The basement level of the southern elevation features two windows. The southwestern window is four-light, while the southeast window is a single-light replacement. The first floor of the southern elevation is fenestrated from west to east by a pair of windows. Another pair is centered in the elevation, and the southeast corner is fenestrated by two single-light casement windows flanking a single-light door. This area is now a sun room but originally was an open screened porch. The casement windows were added on the sun room in the 1990s. At this point the land slopes east, providing for a stone stoop reached by eight stone steps with iron pipe handrail. The second floor features a centered pair of windows and a small one-light casement window at the southeast corner. Five decorative knee braces with scrolled detail line the overhanging eaves of this elevation.

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The rear, eastern elevation is fenestrated at the stone basement level, south to north by a six-over-six double-hung window, single-leaf door and two evenly spaced six-over-six windows. The first floor is fenestrated south to north by a pair of one-light casement windows, a pair of short six-light windows and a ribbon of three six-over-one double-hung windows. The second floor hip-roof dormer features from south to north, a ribbon of four six-light casement windows.

The northern elevation at the basement level features a wide garage opening that has been infilled with a sliding wood panel and a single-leaf door. A six-light casement window fenestrates the northwest corner of the basement. The first floor is fenestrated east to west by a single six-over-one window and a centered pair of six-over-one windows. A centered pair of six-over-one windows lights the second story and five decorative knee braces are present on this elevation. Under the porch roof the north wall of the "bird box" is fenestrated with a single six-over-one window.

Interior

First Floor

The interior of the 1925 Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House has been minimally altered. When the family moved to the area in 1908, there was a 19th century home on the site. Johnson constructed his new home around the original structure and retained the original floor plan. Built as a working farm home, it features little decorative concession. No ceiling moldings are present, and baseboards and door surrounds are unembellished wood planks. Door hardware is simple brass doorknobs and escutcheons with decorative hinges. Floors are hardwood, and walls and ceilings are original plaster.

Circa 1970, Fayetteville architect Cy Sutherland added floor-to-ceiling bookshelves with cabinets to the east wall of the living room. The south wall features floor-to-ceiling bookcases installed in the 1990s. Double-leaf 18-light doors provide access to the eastern dining room. A single-leaf paneled wood door leads to the parlor on the south of the living room.

The parlor contains a brick Craftsman fireplace surround with wooden mantel. An 18-light single leaf door leads to the "bird box" as it was referred to by the family, on the west wall. Benjamin Johnson, II, used the room to take naps there because it had comfortable cross-ventilation. (In the 21st century it has become the "book nook" as per current owner Anne Prichard.) Circa 1990s Prichard had Nancy Vaughn of Fayetteville build shelves and a desk so she could store her collection of children's books in the room. A paneled door opens in the east wall of the parlor leading to the kitchen.

In the kitchen a historic milk paint paneled door from the original house on the site leads to the basement stairs. Photographs with written descriptions provided by Benjamin, III, identify the door and the door to the sun room as original elements from the first home. Benjamin, III, also stated that two doors on the second floor are original, but there is no existing documentation as to which ones they would be. The sun room features a low beadboard ceiling. The kitchen is the only room that has been significantly altered with 1950s-era wood cabinets and linoleum

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floor. A single-leaf paneled butler's door opens to the dining room on the north wall of the kitchen.

A bedroom leads from the dining room at the northwest corner and a small bathroom with original wall sink, radiator and tub is situated along the north side of the dining room. In the southwest corner of the dining room adjacent to the kitchen door is a single-leaf entrance to the enclosed staircase for the second floor.

Interior

Second Floor

The second floor is accessed by an enclosed staircase from the dining room. The staircase leads directly to the upper hall where a balustrade of slats and a simple square newel post with flat cap marks the second floor entrance to the stairs. The plaster ceilings on the second floor are coved to accommodate the slope of the roof and the hipped roof dormers on the east and west. A bookcase lines the east wall of the central hall at the apex of the stairs. A small bathroom is situated at the south end of the hall. Three bedrooms are situated along the west side of the hall with access to the northern bedroom via the north end of the hall. The Benjamin Johnson, II, House is considered to be a contributing building.

Johnson Barn

The 1933 Johnson Barn was listed on the National Register on June 21, 1990. The barn is a gambrel roofed Plain/Traditional/Single Crib/Side Drive agricultural building with a boxed-gable hayhood. It consists of two stories on a continuous stone foundation and is sheathed in horizontal weatherboard. Stone for the foundation came from sections of the stacked rock wall extending along the drive north from Pear Lane toward Kessler Mountain Road.

The first floor of the southern façade is fenestrated west to east with a sliding wooden door. Two square stationary four-light windows are situated in the center of the façade. A small wooden sliding door with X-bracing provides access on the southeast corner. A third window is adjacent to the door. The upper hayloft area features a boxed-gable hayhood. The loading bay within the hood features a hinged triangular door, which is raised and lowered by a rope and pulley. The pulley could also swing a load of hay into the loft along the roof ridge. Flanking the hayhood are two square, four-light stationary windows.

The western elevation is fenestrated from south to north with eight windows arranged in a grouping of three windows, two evenly spaced windows in the center of the elevation and a second grouping of three at the northwest end. A cylindrical metal tank is located at the northwest corner of the barn. The tank was historically used to collect water from the roof gutters. The water was used in cleaning the stalls and watering cows.

Fenestration on the east elevation mirrors the west elevation.

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The first floor of the rear, north elevation mirrors the south façade with a sliding door on the northwest corner, two centered windows, a single-leaf sliding door with X-bracing, and a window at the northeast corner. A square cross-braced opening providing access to the loft is situated in the center of the elevation above the sliding door. Two four-light stationary windows light the loft.

Interior –Johnson Barn

The arrangement of cribs on the interior of the barn are original. A central crib on the first level has a raised pine floor but the rest of the first floor is dirt. The loft is floored in pine and is reached by a ladder in the southern crib, abutting the south wall of the center crib. In addition, stairs leading to the loft are located at the west wall of the center crib. Interior support posts were built of black walnut from the Cato veneer factory on Cato Springs Road. The barn is considered a contributing building in the district.

Chicken House

A small gabled chicken house on a partial basement featuring open rafter tails is situated to the southeast of the Benjamin Johnson, II, House. It is sheathed in wood drop siding and has a cut stone foundation with partial basement. The west façade features two single-leaf doors. The northwest door displays four panels, while the southwest door features five panels.

The south elevation is fenestrated by two evenly spaced two-light stationary windows. The rear, eastern elevation is fenestrated by a centered two-light window. There is no fenestration on the north elevation. It was constructed by Benjamin Johnson, II, on the site of a previous chicken coop, post 1925.¹

Interior – Chicken House

There is no interior shelving related to the Chicken House remaining in the building today; however, the shelves are currently stored in the Johnson barn. It is used as a storage space for lawn equipment. The Chicken House is considered to be a contributing structure.

Spring House

A small gable-roofed spring house is located to the northeast of the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House. It is to the south of a 1989 pond built by Benjamin Johnson, III. The Spring House is constructed of rectangular cut stone blocks and roofed in corrugated metal. The metal replaced a red terra cotta tile roof. Remnants are scattered in the stream and surrounding area. The small Spring House extends underground to the south. The date of construction is unknown, but it was present when Anne Prichard was a child, so it dates at least to the 1940s. Oral interviews with neighbor Harold Cate, who was 73 in 1986, stated that he could recall when the Spring House was not there.

¹ Amanda Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, October 9, 2018.

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The north facade of the Spring House features a single-leaf wooden door consisting of wide thick-cut vertical slats. The gable is sheathed in corrugated metal. A stone wall follows the curves of the stream bed from this elevation. Four stone steps lead to the door of the Spring House from the bank on the west. Short buttresses of stacked stones extend from the main wall of the Spring House at the northwest and northeast corners.

The west elevation of the Spring House is built into the ground and only about 8-12 inches of the stacked rock is visible on this elevation.

Approximately 10 inches of stacked rock on the rear, south elevation of the springhouse is visible above ground. The corrugated metal pediment of the gable is also visible here.

The east elevation of the Spring House mirrors the west elevation. The Spring House is considered to be a contributing structure.

Dam

A stacked rock dam constructed by one of the former owners before the Johnsons, extends east below the Benjamin Johnson, II, House for approximately 100 feet. It is approximately 15 feet wide. There is no mortar and the rocks are uncut. The Dam is considered to be a contributing structure. It is unknown when it was built; however, it predates the Johnson occupation as Benjamin Johnson, III, wrote that it was on site when the family moved there.²

Landscape Features

There are several landscape features that contribute to the district, some of which were designed by Benjamin Johnson, II, and Benjamin Johnson, III.

Rock wall

A stacked rock wall extends north approximately 813 feet along the west boundary of the district off of West Pear Lane along the driveway to the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House.

The wall continues approximately 110 feet north on the western boundary past the entrance to the house.

According to oral interviews with members of Anne Prichard's family, the wall was built by Henry C. Ucker and family, circa 1895. Henry was the brother of A.C. and W.E. Ucker who traded 80 acres of the current homestead to Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, for the Johnson Cash Store in Everton, Missouri. This rock wall dating from the 19th century is considered to be a contributing site.

² Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, January 24, 2018.

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Cistern

A stone and concrete cylinder to the south of the house by the steps to the sun room held a cistern for rainwater to be funneled from the house gutters to two zinc tubs located on the south wall of the basement. The gutters are no longer attached. This structure dating from the 1930s is considered contributing.

Rock Wall Remnant

A remnant of a mortared rock wall is situated to the west of the chicken house. This object is part of the rockwork designed by Benjamin Johnson, III. This remnant dating from 1931 is considered a contributing site.

Pergola

The rock wall remnant is associated with a stone pergola built in 1931. The Pergola extends north from the chicken house approximately 56 feet. Five square stone piers line the west and east side of the Pergola. Wisteria and grape vines are supported between the piers by large unpeeled tree limbs. Two facing stone benches are situated at the north end of the Pergola where a small stoop leads to three stone steps. An adjoining rock wall extends west approximately 17 feet from the Pergola. This is considered a contributing structure.

Workhouse Foundation

At the end of the rock wall is the stone foundation of a 10X16 workhouse. The circa 1914 shed extended underground and was reached by four stone steps on the east. Stacked thin cut stones formed the walls and floor of the shed below ground. This foundation is considered to be a contributing site.

Rock Retaining Wall

A rock retaining wall designed by Benjamin Johnson, III, extends from the north basement elevation of the house approximately 25 feet. Eight stone steps incorporated into the wall lead to the front yard. This rock landscape feature dating from 1931 is considered a contributing site.

Orchard

A remnant stand of various trees planted circa 1960s encompasses an area of approximately 172 feet by 280 feet just to the west of the Johnson Barn. A second stand, also planted in the 1960s is located north of the driveway. This plot is a square of approximately 410 feet by 182 feet. Anne's brother, Benjamin Johnson, IV, planted the trees in both areas to replace older ones that had died. The fields surrounding the house in all cardinal directions were historically used for pear and apple orchards. Today those fields to the south of the house extending to Pear Lane and the driveway, fields east of the house and fields to the northeast of the house are devoid of orchard trees. This orchard is considered to be a contributing site.

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Non-contributing resources

Pond

A pond was built in 1989, approximately 500 feet to the northeast of the barn by Benjamin Johnson, III, and Anne Dallett Prichard. The Pond is considered a non-contributing site because its construction was outside the period of significance.

Sorting shed foundation

To the north of the house is the foundation of a circa 1914 sorting shed consisting of large square stacked stones and bricks. The building was a two-story structure used to store sweet potatoes and apples. There were no stairs to either of the floors because it was built into a slight hillside so there was exterior access to both levels. Benjamin Johnson, II, his son Wilton, and an unknown local mason constructed the sorting shed. Apples were sorted on the upper level while sweet potatoes were stored on the lower level. The shed was intact until circa 1940s when an attempt by Wilton Johnson to cook a ham in a metal barrel resulted in a fire that destroyed the building and his car. This foundation is considered to be a non-contributing site because it was originally a two-story structure and is now reduced to lower-level walls.

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District consists of 11 contributing resources and two non-contributing resources. One resource, the Johnson Barn, was previously listed on the National Register. All resources are related to the agricultural history of the property and the occupation of the Johnsons.

Integrity

The buildings, structures and sites that are included in the district are all in their original locations. The main buildings, the Benjamin Johnson, II, House and the previously National Register listed Johnson Barn, have been meticulously maintained. The only changes to the house have been on the interior and are primarily concentrated in the kitchen. Otherwise, all fenestration and interior floorplan and details are original. The barn is architecturally intact and displays its historic agricultural purpose. Two former work buildings have been destroyed. One of the foundations is evocative of its original character. The Spring House has a new roof, but the original plan is intact. Therefore, the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District retains integrity of workmanship and design to a high degree.

Former orchards have died off or have been replaced with trees in the 1960s-70s; however, the historic view shed and open fields has been retained. Due to the diligence of the family in preserving the property and the use of a Conservation Easement with the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, the district retains its integrity of feeling, setting, and association to a high degree. In total, the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District continues to evince a compelling sense of the area as a 20th century working farm from 1908-1968.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
-
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Agriculture

Period of Significance

1908-1968

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Builder: Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, III

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is an excellent example of an early 20th century fruit farm in Washington County. The Johnson house is a simple Craftsman design exhibiting ribbons of windows, exposed rafter tails and shed dormers. Designed and built by Benjamin Johnson, II, it is an intact Ozark farmhouse related to the fruit industry, which was a major part of the economy for small farmers of early 20th century Washington County. The district also includes the National Register listed Johnson Barn, designed and constructed by Benjamin Johnson, III, and his brother Arthur Johnson. The barn is unique in 21st century Washington County because of its size and degree of integrity. They studied other agricultural buildings in the county before designing this barn for the purpose of storing livestock, wagons, hay and fruit. There were hundreds of barns in the county from the same era. But few were as large or as distinctive in terms of a form utilizing the best aspects of surrounding agricultural buildings to provide the optimal space for this particular family farm. Therefore, the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C, local significance** for its collection of Rustic, Plain Traditional, and Craftsman structures, sites and buildings that contributed to the farming activities of the Johnson family.

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The Johnson family participated in the expansive Northwest Arkansas fruit industry of the early 20th century. The farmstead is surrounded by woods and former orchards and agricultural fields, which contributes to the character of the district. The farm thus continues to evoke the agricultural character of a typical small-scale orchard despite the proliferation of residential and commercial development in the area. For these reasons, the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A with local significance** for its association with the early 20th century origins of the fruit industry in Northwest Arkansas.

Elaboration

The fruit industry in the Arkansas Ozarks

A federal grant was obtained by Major William Lovely in 1816 for “Lovely’s Purchase,” encompassing the southern area of modern Washington County and part of eastern Oklahoma. Cherokee who had moved to the area of Lovely’s Purchase in the early nineteenth century were given the purchase lands after Lovely’s death in 1817, through a treaty facilitated by Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark and the governor of Missouri Territory. The terms of the treaty provided that there would be no white settlement.³ The U.S. Army upheld the terms of the treaty, but there was continued campaigning by whites to gain entry and settlers made their way in despite prohibition.⁴ In 1827 Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, opened the area to whites, and an act of the legislature created Lovely County. The next year the Cherokee reserve in the area of northwest Arkansas was vacated and the territorial boundary of Arkansas was relocated 40 miles to the east, which conforms to the current boundaries of the state. Lovely County was abolished and Washington County was created from part of the former Lovely lands by an act of the territorial legislature in October, 1828.⁵

The area of the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District was informally known as Rieff’s Chapel Community. There was no post office under that name and letters to the Johnson family were addressed to Fayetteville. The name came from the presence of the John Rieff farm (1838) on what became the Johnson Homestead. An 1860 report from the *Arkansas Geologist* refers to Rieff’s Mountain south of Kessler Mountain. The Rieff family also owned adjacent Kessler Mountain and an area known as Trent Mountain. John Rieff donated one acre of that tract for the Rieff’s Chapel Cemetery (earliest known burial Mrs. Mary Alexander Rieff, D.1845), as well as one additional acre in 1869 to school district #12.⁶

³ C.J. Miller, “Lovely County,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2940>, accessed 09/13/2017.

⁴ Joseph C. Neal, “History of Washington County,” (Springdale, AR: Shiloh Museum, 1989), 86-87.

⁵ Miller, “Lovely County,” accessed 09/13/2017.

⁶ Amelia Miller, “School Days, School Days: The History of Education in Washington County,” 1830-1950,” (Fayetteville, AR: Retired Teachers Association, C. 1980), 158; Jobelle Holcombe, “The Dedication of the Plaque on the Henry Rieff House,” *Flashback* #6 (Nov. 1951), NP; Northwest Arkansas Genealogical Society, “Cemeteries of Washington County, Arkansas,” Vol. V, (Fall 1982), 82; Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 1/09/2018; Amanda Bancroft, “The Historic Johnson Farm: Preserving History & Ecology,” (2018), 8.

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Nineteenth century settlers to the area described the prairies of grass, hilltops covered in a variety of trees, productive soil and swaths of cane and vines. This was beneficial, but the original draws for families were the hunting and fishing opportunities. Agriculture as an important economic resource for the county evolved a few decades later. Corn was recorded as a primary crop in the county as it provided meal, food for livestock, whiskey, corn cobs and shucks. The 1840 Census of the United States also took note of Washington County oats, potatoes, tobacco and wheat. Hogs, horses, chickens, sheep and cattle raised by settlers led to the county being named as first in the state for value of livestock in the 1850s. The earliest apple trees in the county were produced from seedlings and farmers made tentative steps toward horticultural manipulation of fruit. But it was not until the late nineteenth century that Northwest Arkansas became the "Ozark Fruit Empire" or the "Land of the Big Red Apple."⁷

Out of necessity, early nineteenth century settlers to Arkansas brought few items with them. Among the articles they transported were seeds and plants. Apples were considered a staple that provided apple butter, filling for pies and cobblers, vinegar, cider and alcohol. The most frequent use was for drinking; however, in Arkansas there is no documentation of commercial cider mills. It was conjectured that the good quality of the water, which eliminated the need for alternatives, could be a factor.⁸

The fruit growing region of Northwest Arkansas, which encompasses Benton and Washington counties and extends into southern Missouri, is referred to as the Ozark Fruit Belt or the Ozark Plateau.⁹ Agricultural bulletins and Pomological Society reports of the nineteenth century made particular note of the soil and climate in the Ozarks. The observed productivity of fruit trees in the area was attributed to the porousness of the deep karst subsoil, which fostered good root systems and held water efficiently. Although many descriptions of the weather were embellished for promotional purposes, fruit did respond favorably to the regional altitude, rainfall amounts and temperature. Besides the primary crop of apples, the Ozarks environment was also conducive to strawberries, grapes, peaches, pears and blackberries.¹⁰

Many early 19th century farm families in the Ozarks raised "kitchen orchards" from apple seeds rather than propagated from grafts. Because the harvest of apples needed to be stretched throughout the year, they would grow different types of apples for cooking, cider or storage. A few commercial apple tree nurseries were established in Washington County by the time of early settlement, including that of John Holt in Lincoln (1827) and James B. Russell in Cane Hill

⁷ Neal, 134-135, 152-153; C. Allan Brown, "Horticulture in Early Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (Summer 1984), 108.

⁸ "The Heyday of the Apple Industry," from "Bumper Crop: The Apple Industry in Northwest Arkansas," Shiloh Museum of Arkansas History, Springdale, AR exhibit, December 2010-April 2011.

⁹ "Ozark Orchards," *The Country Gentleman*, (January 18, 1919), 12.

¹⁰ William P. Stark, "Importance of the Fruit Industry in the Ozark Country," *American Fruits*, (April, 1915), 83; H.P. Gould, "Apples and Peaches in the Ozark Region," *Bureau of Plant Industry Bulletin* 275, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 16.

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(1833). Russell propagated the Shannon Pippin apple, which was an extremely popular fruit originating from seed in Evansville, Arkansas (1830).¹¹ Jacob M. J. Smith of Fayetteville was the first recorded nurseryman on the Arkansas census in 1836. Besides ornamental flowers he offered apples and pears. Oren Rieff is recorded in 1840 as owning orchards that produced the Winter Sweet, the Winesap, the Grindstone, the Russet and the Red June. By the time of Arkansas statehood in 1836, adjacent Benton County also saw the establishment of documented nurseries.¹²

Despite the presence of prime agricultural conditions and the success of local apple farmers and nurserymen, a good number of apple shipments were brought into Arkansas from other states up to the 1850s. But soon growers in the Ozarks were utilizing wagons and steamboats to take their regional yield to Central Arkansas or adjacent states. C. Allan Brown wrote in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* that the beginnings of horticultural experiments involving Arkansas apples had occurred around the time of statehood in 1836.¹³ A nursery near Bentonville owned by John E. Davidson in 1836 and a second in the vicinity owned by John Breathwaite (also referred to as *Braithwaite* and *Breathwait* in *Proceedings of the American Pomological Society*, Twenty-ninth Biennial Session, 1905) established in 1843, offered apple seedlings propagated and grafted on site. Evidence of other orchards in the Ozarks was noted in local newspapers like the *Southwest Independent* (Fayetteville) in 1855 and the *Arkansian* (Fayetteville) in 1860.¹⁴

During the Civil War, Washington County was considered to be a strategic stronghold because of its proximity to Missouri. Troops from both sides destroyed and sequestered crops to support the military in the county so the fruit industry suffered as did other yields.¹⁵ Farmers took up where they had left off after the war, replanting apple orchards in the area of Fayetteville. By the war's end more orchardists were conducting trials in propagation. In 1913, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that John Crawford of Rhea, Washington County, had propagated seeds from the Limbertwig and the Black Twig apples to produce the Arkansas (also known as Arkansaw and Mammoth Black Twig) by 1869. A.G. Philpott originated the Ada Red in Springtown through grafting, circa 1890. Commercially propagated apples like the Shannon (also known as Shannon Pippin), the Wilson June, the Arkansas Black (from the Breathwaite farm), the Collins (also known as Collins' Red, Champion Red or Champion), the

¹¹ "Apples Come West," from "Bumper Crop: The Apple Industry in Northwest Arkansas," Shiloh Museum of Ozark History exhibit, Springdale, AR, December 2010-April 2011; "The Railroad Comes Through," from "Bumper Crop," Shiloh Museum of Ozark History; S.H. Nowlin, "Proceedings of the 28th Annual Session of the American Pomological Society," (Lansing MI: Robert Smith Printing Company, 1903-1905), 81-83; Neal, 232.

¹² Brown, 105; "Apple Varieties Originated in Washington County," from "Apples in the Ozark Region, 1913," U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin, *Flashback*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (September 1962), 23; Roy C. Rom, "Arkansas' Apple Roots," transcript of lecture given by Rom, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, December 5, 1991, 2.

¹³ "The First Nurserymen," from "Bumper Crop," Shiloh Museum of Ozark History exhibit; Brown, 104.

¹⁴ Harriet H. Jansma, "The Benton County Horticultural Society: It's Cultural Role," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 45, (Summer 1986), 129-130.

¹⁵ Neal, 175-176.

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Howard Sweet, the King David, the Oliver Red, the Springdale and the Summer Champion were other examples of nineteenth century varieties from Washington County orchards.¹⁶

By the 1880s, fruit crops in Northwest Arkansas had recovered enough to be boosted by the construction of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway (Frisco) through Washington County. Once lines were laid, the prime land in the Ozark Plateau broadened agricultural markets and opportunity as thousands of acres were planted in fruit. Railroads were known for encouraging settlement along their lines through distribution of information on the amenities to be found in those areas. They also used "Boosting lines," one of which promoted North Arkansas fruit. The *Harrison Times* reported in 1911 on the "Arkansas on Wheels" train. Eleven coaches, including four exhibit cars, traveled through adjacent states carrying displays of the state's fruit and mineralogical resources. One car was hung with garlands of Arkansas apples including Arkansas Blacks, Ben Davis and Winesaps, while a plate of the leading Arkansas apple varieties was exhibited on a table.¹⁷

Besides the marketing boost of the railroad, experimental agriculture and horticulture education expanded in the county. The interests of fruit farmers were represented by organizations like the Arkansas State Horticultural Society (Little Rock) formed in 1879, the Arkansas State Horticultural Society (Fort Smith), formed in 1893, and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station (Fayetteville), established in 1888. The two branches of the Arkansas State Horticultural Society were merged in 1900.¹⁸ The Arkansas Industrial University's (now University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) Department of Agriculture and Horticulture was established in 1886. The department set up a laboratory for technical education on the campus and planted an orchard that included apple varieties. County and regional organizations that aided the fruit farmer subsequently increased. In 1887, the Washington County Horticultural Society was formed in Fayetteville. In 1888, a group consisting mostly of Washington County farmers organized the Western Arkansas Fruit Growers' and Shippers' Cooperative Association in Springdale, Benton County. The Ozark Fruit Growers Association formed in 1907 with a membership that included Northwest Arkansas fruit men.¹⁹

By 1890, the apple harvest for the county was recorded as the highest statewide at 211,685 bushels. At the turn of the century the harvest stood at 614,924 bushels. Washington County, in

¹⁶ "Apple Varieties," *Flashback*, 23-26.

¹⁷ Neal, 235; Joseph Neal, "Arkansas on Wheels, Train Receiving Royal Reception," *The Harrison Times*, (October 28, 1911).

¹⁸ Thomas Rothrock, "The Arkansas State Horticultural Society," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, (Autumn 1975), 242, 249-250; UA Division of Agriculture Research and Extension, University of Arkansas, "Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station," online article at <https://aes.uark.edu/about-us/history.aspx>, accessed 12/06/2017.

¹⁹ Rom, "Arkansas' Apple Roots," 4; Neal, "Washington County History," 248; Missouri State Board of Agriculture, "The Missouri Year Book of Agriculture: Forty-eighth Annual Report," (Columbia, MO: Missouri State Board of Agriculture, 1916), 321.

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combination with Benton County, held a total of two million apple trees in 1910, which was recorded as the highest number of trees in all counties nationwide.²⁰

Arkansas exhibited her apples nationally and worldwide and gained numerous awards. The state received First Prize for her apple exhibit at the Centennial Fair in Philadelphia in 1876. In 1884 the state received the highest award for the Shannon at the Cotton Centennial World's Fair in New Orleans, as well as receiving a gold medal and \$200 for exhibiting the largest and best collection of apples. Arkansas also received the Wilder Medal, the highest prize awarded from the American Pomological Society, in 1887. Arkansas obtained first honors at the 1888 meeting of the American Horticultural Society at Riverside, California, and in 1890 Arkansas was the recipient of multiple awards at the American Institute in New York City. The kudos continued into the next century with First Prize for the Arkansas Black in Paris in 1900, wins in all major categories at the 1904 St. Louis Fair and 308 prizes from the San Francisco Pan American Expo in 1915.²¹

Within the decade of the railroad's introduction to the area, industrial development stemming from fruit production began with the construction of canning facilities. Springdale was the site of the first documented canning factory with an adjacent fruit evaporator in 1886. The town of West Fork constructed a cannery with evaporator by the 1890s. Other fruit-related industries that emerged in Washington County included barrel manufacturing, dryers, distilleries, packing sheds, wholesalers, vinegar plants, fruit brokers and ice plants.²²

Despite a small setback in the industry early in the twentieth century as apple trees suffered from the San Jose scale and the Illinois canker, the Northwest Arkansas apple industry rallied by 1915. Production and shipments from the region increased as farmers started raising high-end varieties and embracing spraying, pruning and cultivating. By 1918, the Railroad Administration prohibited cars from sitting more than two days, which impacted marketing for Arkansas farmers. They could no longer sell apples from barrels in railroad cars, so they resorted to bulk shipping, saving the wholesaler and the customer money. In addition, selling was boosted by the formation of fruit growers' exchanges, allowing farmers to command higher prices. The year 1919 was the peak for apple production in Arkansas, with a harvest of over five million bushels.²³

In 1907, Mrs. E.S. Warren wrote that Northwest Arkansas was "...a perfect forest of apple trees," and that "...dollars do grow on every apple tree in this county," (Benton). John M. Parker

²⁰ Rex Nelson, "Fruits of Their Labor," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, (May 13, 2015), 9B; "A Concise History of the Arkansas Apple Industry," from "Bumper Crop," Shiloh Museum of Ozark History exhibit; Matthew Bryan Kirkpatrick, "Washington County," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, updated 10/25/2017, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=813>.

²¹ "Arkansas: Statistics and Information Showing its Agricultural and Mineral Resources," Publicity from the Passenger Department of the Iron Mountain Route, 1900, NP; Rom, "Arkansas' Apple Roots," 13.

²² Neal, "Washington County History," 248-249.

²³ Norman J. Radder, "Ozark Orchards," *The Country Gentleman*, (January 18, 1919), 12-13; Nelson, "Fruits of Their Labor."

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of John Parker & Son Nursery in Benton County editorialized in 1922 that there was still undeveloped land available for fruit orchards. He appealed to “experienced or unexperienced” men and women to make their way to Arkansas and take advantage of the climate, market and soil.²⁴

While these optimistic portraits may have been true at the time, the reality was that several factors would soon combine to displace Arkansas as the fruit mecca of the nation. The inexperienced growers that Parker petitioned had not learned how to control pests and disease, or how to replenish soil nutrients, so regional yields suffered and farmers dropped out. When automobiles became available, truckers that transported apples to other states began competing with each other, which led to price cutting. Apple shippers were negatively impacted by this new development because customers preferred to pay the trucker’s lower prices. The 1906 Wiley Pure Food and Drug Act led to intense inspections of Northwest Arkansas apple evaporator products. In addition, they soon found that they could not ship evaporated apples across the state line because that represented Interstate Commerce, which was against the law. Confiscations of shipments, jail time and penalties as a result of seizure warrants took their toll.²⁵

Apple harvests fell from the 1919 record output to less than two million bushels in 1935, and by the 1960s the yield was less than 250,000 bushels. Other negative impacts on the fruit industry were that the Ben Davis apple variety produced in Arkansas gained a reputation as poor-quality, and insects and disease like the codling moth, San Jose scale, fire blight and fungi delivered blows to the industry. The Great Depression was also a deciding factor. Regional farms devoted to apples during the 1930s and 1940s soon swung to poultry producing. A few fruit growers remained through the 1950s and 1960s. The West Coast replaced Arkansas as the primary apple producers. In the state today, there is a renewed interest in small orchards that promote organic products, which include homegrown apples.²⁶

The Johnsons

Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, and his family were examples of the type of small-scale fruit farmer that proliferated throughout Washington County at the apex of the fruit industry. He and his family were among a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century residents of the current property, which was used for the production of fruit prior to their residency. The concentration of the Johnson family was on pears, peaches and apples and the farm has remained in the family for 110 years.

²⁴ Monte Harris, “The Apple Era of Northwest Arkansas,” *The Benton County Pioneer*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (January-March, 1997), 17; John M. Parker, “Fruit Growing in Northwest Arkansas,” *Fayetteville Democrat*, (June 12, 1922), 5B.

²⁵ W.S. Campbell, “Rise and Fall of the Apple Empire,” *Flashback*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (February, 1961), 30, 31.

²⁶ Roy C. Rom, “Apple Industry,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, online article at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2098>, accessed 03/02/2017; “The Apple’s Revival,” from “Bumper Crop,” Shiloh Museum of Ozark History exhibit.

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The Johnsons that homesteaded at the house on Pear Lane were descendants of Benjamin *Johnston* born in Virginia in 1773. (His last name was changed to Johnson when he executed a power of attorney before moving to Tennessee in the late 1700s). Even though there were four Benjamin Franklin Johnsons in the line prior to the birth of Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, the 20th century family started the lineal designation with the first Benjamin Franklin Johnson, Benjamin the II's uncle, born in 1838.²⁷

The Johnson family has a long history in Arkansas beginning with Benjamin Franklin, son of Benjamin and Theodocia Johnson. Benjamin and his wife Martha moved to Arkansas Territory in 1828, and are listed on the first federal census of 1830. Benjamin's brother, James, and his family, including James' son Benjamin Franklin Johnson, I, moved to Washington County in 1851. There are three previously documented properties associated with the family in the county. The Benjamin Franklin Johnson House (built by Benjamin, I) in the Middle Fork Valley of the White River, Fayetteville vicinity, the Johnson House and Mill, (NR 12/12/1976) and the Johnson Barn (NR 6/21/1990), which is a contributing resource to the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District. The community of Johnson in Washington County was named after the Johnson family due to the post-Civil War reconstruction of a mill in the area by Jacob Queener Johnson, brother of Benjamin, I.²⁸

Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, was born near West Fork, Arkansas, in 1852. His father, Oliver Perry Johnson, was the brother of Benjamin, I. Oliver moved the family to Everton, Missouri, and became a miller. By the early twentieth century Benjamin, II, and his wife Rachel were running a general store in Everton. The Johnsons had a visitor to the store named Ucker from Fayetteville, who noticed the quality of pears at the store that had been produced by Benjamin. The Ucker brothers operated an orchard in Arkansas and offered to negotiate the trade of the property to Johnson. After Benjamin traded the store for 80 acres from Andrew C. Ucker, W.E. Ucker and his wife Mary E. Ucker, he moved his wife and six children in 1908 to the land located off what is now known as Cato Springs Road/ Arkansas Highway 265.²⁹

Soil samples taken from the land in 1859 indicated that farming had occurred on the property since the 1820s, but it did not note who the planters from that time period were. The original land survey included a house and cultivated fields in the area of the Johnson property in 1831. The first owner of the SE ¼ of the property, Thomas Martin, sold that land to John Rieff in 1838. Rieff came to own the entirety of the 80 acres that were eventually owned by the

²⁷ Charles D. Johnson, "Washington Co., AR – Benjamin Franklin Johnson – Bio," online article at <http://files.usgwarchives.net/ar/washington/bios/johnsonbf.txt>, accessed 11/30/2016; Amanda Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 02/01/2018.

²⁸ Johnson, "Washington County, AR - Benjamin Franklin Johnson - Bio"; Mary Ellen Johnson, "Johnson, (Washington County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, (12/19/2016), online article at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1007>, accessed 2/14/2018.

²⁹ Neal, "Washington County History," 1140; (It is not clear from family history which of the four Ucker brothers first contacted the Johnsons in Missouri).

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Johnsons. After the Rieff farm was auctioned off in 1871, it passed through a succession of owners, renters and mortgagees until the Uckers bought the 80 acres in 1905.³⁰

The Johnson family lived in an existing house on the property until the current home was built in circa 1925. The original residence was a one-story, central-hall, gable-roofed frame house with full front porch and central single-leaf entrance. Porch supports featured gingerbread trim at the soffit. Historic photographs and the notes of Benjamin, II's granddaughter, Anne Dallett Prichard, detail two end chimneys. The 1925 Craftsman home was built around the original house using solid black walnut posts from a veneer factory on Cato Springs Road in Fayetteville. While it was under construction, elements of the older home were thrown out the windows. According to Prichard, Rachel and Benjamin Johnson, II, designed the new house taking into consideration how it would fit the site, the direction of the setting and rising sun, and the prevailing winds.³¹

When the Johnsons moved to the property there was a stacked rock wall lining the drive to the west of the house, which today extends approximately 0.24 mile north from Pear Lane toward Kessler Mountain Road. The rock wall lined the east and west sides of what was once known as the Arkansas Road.³² As the Benjamin Johnson, II, House was being constructed the family borrowed from the wall to build the foundation of the house and the foundation of the 1933 Johnson barn. Because of this, the wall currently exhibits intermittent gaps. The rock wall is one of the features in the district that were extant when the Johnsons moved in and was attributed by the Johnsons to the Uckers with the help of "Harold Cate's father."³³

In 1989, the Arkansas Archaeology Survey (AAS) made note of a stacked rock dam of approximately 100 feet in length, extending east to west below the rear of the house. There is no mortar in the uncut rocks, which fill in a slight saddle. A small rock spring house is located northeast of the house. It is not known who built the dam or the spring house with its stone steps and retaining walls, but Prichard recalls the structure being extant when she was a child in the late 1930s. In 1986, she also noted in her diary that Harold Cate, who was 73 at the time, remembered when the spring house had not been built. In Prichard's childhood there was also a rock chimney and stone foundation on the property, which the Johnson family conjectured was built by John Rieff, who purchased land in that section in 1838. The 1989 AAS survey also

³⁰ David Dale Owen, "Second Report of a Geological Reconnaissance (1859 and 1860) of the Middle and Southern Counties of Arkansas," (Philadelphia, PA: C. Sherman and Sons, Printers, 1860), 257; Amanda Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 05/16/2018, (information on owners from Washington County Archives online, Abstract of Title transcription, 1831 land survey and oral interview by Bancroft with Tony Wappel, Fayetteville, research conducted by Amanda Bancroft).

³¹ Interview with Anne Dallett Prichard, Fayetteville, AR, 04/17/2016; (Black walnut posts from the factory were also used on the 1933 barn).

³² General Land Office Records, Original Survey 11/12/1833, Washington County, 16N-30W; (The Arkansas Road led northwest to Kessler Mountain, owned by the Rieffs. It also led to the Rieff's Chapel Cemetery just to the west of the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District and Rieff's Chapel School also north of the district. A well and the foundation of the school remains near the road bed).

³³ Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 01/18/2018, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

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noted that this could be the case, but the survey did not rule out that it could potentially be attributed to earlier landowners.³⁴

Oral interviews conducted by Prichard in 1986, with her father Benjamin Johnson, III, noted other historic structures on the property, and Benjamin, III's contributions to the landscaping. The original barn stood north of the farmhouse. This was a gable-roofed, single crib form sheathed in vertical siding. A 1915 letter from Rachel Johnson to her son, Frederick Wayne Johnson, notes that an addition to the barn for storing feed was being constructed on the east side in that year. To the northeast of the original barn stood an evaporator shed. Historic family photographs reveal that it was a rectangular plan with gabled roof. Siding was vertical wood boards and the foundation was stone. A brick and metal flue was situated on the west side of the building. This building no longer stands. A wooden fence for containing animals ran from the barn and proceeded east between the barn and the evaporator shed. The sorting shed, located to the south of the barn and evaporator, was a small vertical wood-sided structure with a shallow gabled roof and shed room to the east. This structure burned in the 1940s.³⁵

A stone cellar remains to the east of the house. A circa 1930 photograph shows a small rectangular building with gable roof and vertical wood siding atop the cellar. This was referred to as the workhouse (also referred to by Prichard as the tool shed). Stone steps provided access to the underground area on the east, and a four-light window opened on the southeast corner of the building. These are the only details visible from the photograph. Slightly southeast of the workhouse was a "butchered meat smokehouse." This was also a gabled, vertical board structure, smaller and lower than the workhouse. The north gable end of the smokehouse was the only elevation visible in the historic photograph. This photo reveals that the only fenestration on this side was a shuttered opening in the pediment. There is no information on who built the smokehouse at this point. The workhouse was constructed in circa 1914 by Benjamin, II, and was in existence until 1965 when Benjamin, III, tore it down to improve the view from the back windows of the house. A privy stood to the southeast of the house.³⁶

The smokehouse was destroyed, and in 1931 Benjamin, III, designed a stone pergola for grapes and wisteria directly behind the house in roughly the area of that structure. During that same time he had rock retaining walls and steps built to the north and south of the house, a stone base for a cistern to the south of the house, as well as the existing chicken house to the southeast. In 1933, a heavy snow caused the original barn to collapse. At this point Benjamin, III, had achieved a Master's degree in landscape architecture from Harvard University, so he studied other barns in the area with his brother Arthur to come up with a design that would be efficient for the Johnson's individual farming needs. For one month, Benjamin, III, and Arthur worked with 14 local men to construct the gambrel-roofed barn of horizontal weatherboard. Like the

³⁴ Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 01/24/2018, 01/17/2018, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville; "Annie's Notebook," 11/14/1986, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

³⁵ "Annie's Notebook,"; Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 12/26/2017, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville; Letter from Rachel Divilbiss Johnson to Frederick Wayne Johnson, July 5, 1915, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

³⁶ Bancroft, e-mail to Holly Hope, 01/18/2018, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

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weatherboard. Like the original evaporator building and the house, the foundation was built of stone borrowed from the rock wall that lined the road to the west of the barn. Other outbuildings that have been destroyed included a feed lean-to and a caviary for the breeding of guinea pigs.³⁷

The Uckers had planted fruit trees on the property, but the Johnsons survived from 1908 to 1909 on turnips and their canned goods until the existing orchards were prepared.³⁸ A 1996 map of the farm drawn by Benjamin Johnson, IV, notes the locations of Ucker pear and apple orchards planted in the 1890s. He pinpointed one Ucker orchard to the north of Rieff's Chapel Cemetery northwest of the farmhouse, and two orchards to the south of the house.³⁹ As soon as the Johnsons arrived in Arkansas the family endlessly toiled to create a diverse working farm. A farm map and farm plan was provided to Arthur Johnson (date unknown), and includes an aerial view of the orchards in segments stretching from the west side of the Arkansas Road up to the south boundary of the Reiff's Chapel Cemetery. The orchards then extended east, surrounded the house and barn, and terminated at the west side of Cato Road.⁴⁰

By 1924 the Johnson Farm was referred to as "Peardale." The *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* stated that the orchard was the largest in Northwest Arkansas and was bringing in \$1 a bushel. Varieties included Garber, LeConte and Keifer.⁴¹ Johnson family diaries and letters detail days filled with observations and concerns about the weather, building projects, planting and marketing of crops. The farm was not just an orchard; besides apples and pears, the Johnsons raised strawberries, cantaloupes, watermelon, sweet potatoes, corn, oats, blackberries, peas, and cherries. Benjamin, II, also wrote to his daughter Eva in 1912 that the garden (probably a kitchen garden) yielded onions, lettuce, radishes and new potatoes. Other vegetables raised were spinach, asparagus and green beans. Livestock included chickens for egg production and meat, milk cows, beef cattle, guinea pigs and horses and mules to power the farm machinery. In 1910 Arthur wrote about the quantity of stock on the farm and worried about having enough feed.⁴²

Of course the main agricultural money makers in the 1920s for the Johnsons were their orchards of apples and pears. In addition to income from the crops raised by the Johnsons, they wisely made investments in Oklahoma oilfields by 1912, which offered healthy returns by 1935. Eva Johnson also negotiated a 10-year lease for oil drilling on property in Arkansas, but it is not known if the oil wells were ever constructed. These factors allowed the Johnsons to provide jobs for the community and extend loans. They also opened their home to a thirteen-year old orphan

³⁷ Anne Prichard, oral interview with Holly Hope, 11/18/2015; Oral interview with Anne Prichard to Holly Hope, 04/17/2016; Benjamin Johnson IV letter to Lilie, February 22, 1965, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville; Fayetteville Lumber and Cement Company, Inc. receipt, January 5, 1914, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville; Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 14, 16.

³⁸ Neal, "Washington County History," 1140.

³⁹ Benjamin Johnson IV, Maps of the Johnson family farm, 1994, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

⁴⁰ County Agricultural Conservation Association, "Farm Map and Farm Plan," Farm Serial No. 3557, ND.

⁴¹ "Pears in Carlots Bringing \$1 a Bushel: 65 Cars From Here," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, (October 7, 1924).

⁴² Benjamin Johnson II diary, August 15, 1921, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville, 53; Benjamin Johnson II, Fayetteville, AR, letter to Eva Johnson, Seminole, OK, May 11, 1912; E-mail from Amanda Bancroft, to Holly Hope, 5/9/2018; Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 16.

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named Grace Taylor. Grace became part of the family, but also was put to work on the farm until she moved to Fayetteville and married in the 1920s. Further history on Grace is not available at this time.⁴³

Industry required to plant and maintain the agricultural bounty was mainly performed by the family, including the girls. Johnson's four boys, Wayne, Wilton, Arthur, and Benjamin, III, provided the bulk of the labor on the farm, but family photographs record Eva and Lenora plowing a field with the family mule. In Rachel Johnson's 1914 letter to Wayne, she chronicles that "Papa" (Benjamin, II) put oats in the ground and the boys were attending to the weeds, plowing and hoeing as well as constructing an addition to the barn for feed. Rachel Johnson also stated that "Papa and Wilton have been busy building another cellar also had a stone mason from town last week and Will Dodson has been here doing first one thing and then another for a month." It was known that people around the community helped with the harvesting and other jobs occasionally, but once the Depression hit, many potential workers left the area. In a 1912 letter from Benjamin, II, to Eva, he tells her that it took six days to spray the orchard and they were given the use of Lieutenant Ellis' sprayer. Ellis ran the engine and the family sprayed. Benjamin, II's diary entry from April 19, 1922, notes that Joe Walker assisted Johnson with planting 2 ½ acres of corn with his planter. A 1937 letter from Eva says that two daughters of Dave Cate picked cherries for them. Various workers are also recorded in turn of the century photographs of the Johnson farm picking bushels of apples and transferring them to barrels for cold storage.⁴⁴

When the family moved to the farm, Wilton was in high school and Arthur and Benjamin, III, were attending grade school. Wayne was a teacher in Hogeye, and then worked for the railroad, sorting mail. He joined the Marines in 1917, and was killed in the battle of Chateau-Thierry, France, in 1918. His brother Wilton volunteered for the Marines on the same day, and served as a Gunnery Sergeant U.S.M.C., 5th Regiment 2nd Division. Wilton received a B.A. and a B.S. from Southwest Missouri State Teachers College after his return from France, and in 1928 earned a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Oklahoma, Norman. He and his wife, Martha lived in Oklahoma until his death in 1966. Arthur traveled extensively in his youth, but returned to the area to marry Grace Kelly and raise white-faced Hereford cattle. He also assisted in managing the Johnson farm, seeing to the orchards and crops until he died in 1974.⁴⁵

Benjamin, III, graduated from Southwest Missouri State Teachers College in 1926, and then attended Harvard University, graduating in 1930 with a Masters in Landscape Architecture. By 1933 he was living in New York and working as an assistant landscape architect. He married Lillie Seymour Gordon in 1934, and they had two children, Benjamin Franklin, IV, and Anne. Benjamin, III, subsequently worked in Ohio and Alabama, and in 1937 he moved to Houston, Texas, designing housing developments and grounds planning. In 1943 he was named City

⁴³ Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 21-22, 27, 30.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 33; Prichard, oral interview with Holly Hope, 4/27/2018; Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, diary, 04/19/1922, Johnson Family Papers, Fayetteville.

⁴⁵ Neal, "Washington County History," 1140; Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 36.

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Planning Engineer for the City of Houston. In 1965, he returned to the Johnson farm in Fayetteville, where he continued the family tradition of pear farming.⁴⁶

The Johnson daughters were as well-educated as the boys in the family. Eva worked in Oklahoma after graduating from the Fayetteville Business College in 1912. Previously she had received her B.A. from Missouri Teacher's School in Springfield. She obtained her M.A. in business from Columbia University in New York in 1924. Lenora received a teacher's certificate at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, a B.A. from Missouri Teacher's College in 1916, a M.A. in education from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1918, and pursued a Ph.D. in education from Columbia University, New York. Lenora worked as a teacher in Virginia and Louisiana. As stated, the sisters were savvy businesswomen. They negotiated real estate investments, oil leases and loans with interest. Eva and Lenora moved back to the farm to take care of their parents. Benjamin, II, died in 1932 and Rachel died in 1938, but the sisters continued to live at the farm until their deaths – Eva in 1962 and Lenora in 1965. It was at this point that Benjamin, III, and Lilie retired to his Arkansas family home.⁴⁷

Upon Lilie's death in 1984, daughter Anne moved from Canada to Fayetteville to care for her father and to ensure that the farm would stay in the family. Benjamin, III, had earlier planted more pear trees to counter declining production. In the 1980s he displayed his prize-winning pears at the Washington County Fair. Benjamin, III, also helped organize the Farmers' Market on the Fayetteville Square in the mid-1970s, where he sold his apples, pears, and cider produced on the family cider press. Benjamin, III, passed away in 1991.⁴⁸

Benjamin, IV, the son of Benjamin, III, and Lilie, served as an Air Evac Medic with the army in Korea and later with the Arkansas National Guard Helicopter Rescue Unit. He earned a B.A. from Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, in 1962. During his time with the National Guard he became aware of the burgeoning sprawl in the area of the farm. There was also a threat from the construction of U.S. Highway 49, which would have traversed the Johnson land. Benjamin, IV, became a member of Ozark Regional Land Trust, and he donated tracts to the organization in order to protect the historic farm. He continued his education at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and subsequently moved to several different towns in Arkansas and Texas; however, his interest in conserving the family farm continued unabated. In 1968, he planted a pear orchard of 14 varieties to the northwest of the Johnson house. His interest in expanding the orchards continued into 1976, when he proposed an "ideal plan" including apple and pear orchards to the south of the farmhouse. By 1984 the historic orchards to the east of the farmhouse and west of Arkansas Highway 265 were cleared. Not all of the new orchards were completed; however, he did plant apples, including Arkansas Black, south of the house.

⁴⁶ Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 39, 42; "Benjamin Franklin Johnson, III: June 12, 1901 - April 24, 1991," obituary.

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Benjamin, IV, died in 2011. The 1968 pear orchard has gone wild, but the trees are still producing fruit.⁴⁹

Anne Prichard and her brother Benjamin, IV, were frequent visitors to the farm in their childhood and as has been mentioned, they both eventually returned. Like her aunts before her, Anne received an extensive education including a B.A. from Mills College and a MLS in Library Science at the University of California, Berkeley. Anne was married to Joseph Dallett in 1966 and they had a son, Timothy, in 1967. The family moved to Canada in 1971. After Benjamin, III, died Anne worked at the Fayetteville Public Library and in Special Collections at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. She was married to Robert Prichard in 1992. After his death in 1995, she moved back to the farmhouse. Anne and her son set up a Conservation Easement with the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust on 168 acres of the historic property. Anne moved to a retirement community in Fayetteville, but her interest in the farm continues. Caretaker Amanda Bancroft and her husband have been living at the Johnson house, 2015-2018. Bancroft organizes the Johnson family papers and photographs and maintains the history of the Johnson family.⁵⁰

Statement of Significance

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is an excellent example of an early 20th century Northwest Arkansas fruit farm, 1908-1968. It is located in an area that is exploding in development and is adjacent to U.S. Highway 49. Despite these intrusions, the farm maintains its historic configuration and view shed, and several resources remain that were utilized by the Johnsons in their commercial fruit business and personal subsistence crops. Under the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust the 4.21 acres being nominated is being managed by a Conservation Easement that ensures that it is protected from real estate development and that the land is being properly conserved as per its historic ecological character.

The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A with local significance** for its role in the prominent fruit industry of Northwest Arkansas. Although the boom years for fruit orchards in the region were over by the 1930s, the Johnson farm was still maintained as a working orchard, producing pears and apples past 1968 by Benjamin Johnson, IV. The Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion C with local significance** for its Craftsman, Rustic and Plain Traditional buildings and structures, which collectively represent an excellent example of an early 20th century Northwest Arkansas homestead.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 36; Benjamin Franklin Johnson, IV, letter to Timothy Dallett, 09/28/1976, Johnson family papers, Fayetteville.

⁵⁰ Bancroft, "The Historic Johnson Farm," 36, 44.

⁵¹ "Historic Johnson Farm Gains Full Protection," Ripples, <http://ripplesblog.org/>, accessed 09/10/2018.

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Justification for Period of Significance

Although the property associated with the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District has been farmed since the early 19th century, the Johnson family began their occupation in 1908. The land that was utilized for orchards by the Johnsons was planted before the year they moved to the farm. These former croplands are still within the boundaries of the district. Although there were a few resources that pre-dated the Johnsons, such as the rock wall and the dam, all extant resources were utilized by the family in the working operations of their farm. The construction date of the rock wall was estimated by Johnson family members to have been built circa 1895.

All buildings, sites and structures were either built by the Johnsons or were essential to their livelihood. With the exception of the 1968 fruit trees planted by Benjamin Johnson, IV, all resources were built during the decades that fruit was the major moneymaker for Northwest Arkansas and Washington County. The year 1968 was chosen as the end-date for the district as that was the last year that new fruit trees were planted by Benjamin Johnson, IV, a direct descendant of Benjamin Johnson, II.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency

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- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.21 acres _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 391139 | Northing: 3986079 |
| B. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 391259 | Northing: 3986398 |
| C. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 391801 | Northing: 3986405 |
| D. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 391875 | Northing: 3986225 |

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E. Zone: 15 S

Easting: 391875 Northing: 3986056

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at the intersection of West Pear Lane and the old Arkansas Road, proceed north approximately 0.22 of a mile, then proceed east approximately 0.35 of a mile to the western edge of Arkansas Highway 265, proceed south approximately 0.23 of a mile along the western edge of Arkansas Highway 265 to the intersection of West Pear Lane, then proceed west approximately 0.46 of a mile to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Holly Hope, Special Projects Historian
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail: holly.hope@arkansas.gov
telephone: 501-324-9148
date: September 10, 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
-

Johnson, Benjamin Franklin II, Homestead
District

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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, Homestead District

City or Vicinity: Fayetteville

County: Washington

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Holly Hope

Date Photographed: March 29, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 0001: Camera Facing East, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House
- 0002: Camera Facing Northwest, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House
- 0003: Camera Facing West, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House
- 0004: Camera Facing South, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House
- 0005: Detail of Porch Light, Facing East, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II House
- 0006: Detail of Stone Sidewalk, Facing East, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II, House
- 0007: Detail of Stone Stoop on South Elevation of Benjamin Franklin Johnson, II House, Camera Facing West
- 0008: Cistern, Camera Facing North
- 0009: Rock Retaining Wall, Camera Facing West
- 0010: Circa 1890s Rock Wall, Camera Facing North
- 0011: Circa 1890s Rock Wall, Camera Facing East
- 0012: Formal Living Room, Camera Facing West
- 0013: Bookshelves, Formal Living Room, Camera Facing East
- 0014: Dining Room, Camera Facing West
- 0015: Kitchen, Camera Facing East
- 0016: Downstairs Bathroom, Camera Facing North

Johnson, Benjamin Franklin II, Homestead
District

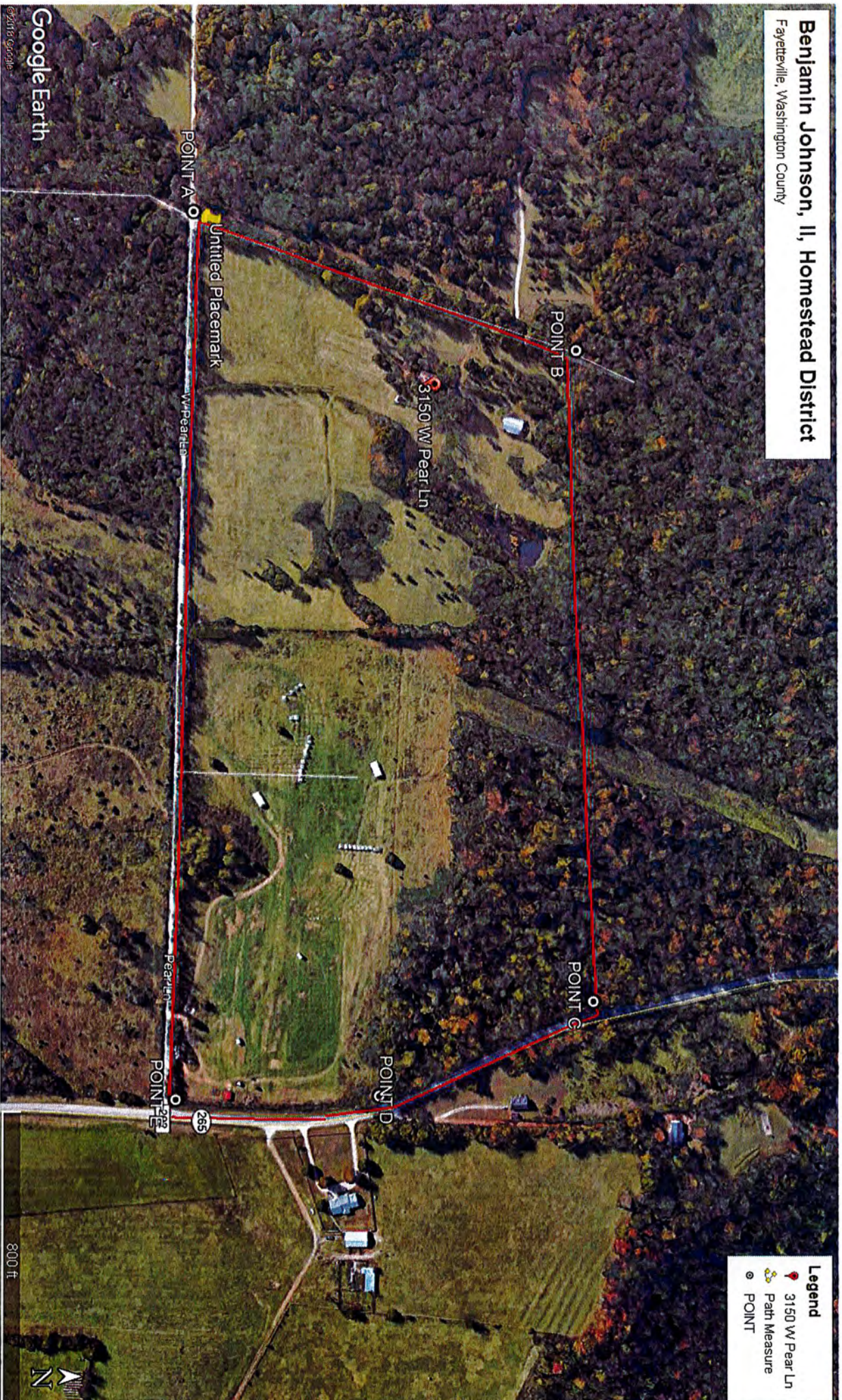
Washington, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

- 0017: Woodwork Detail, Dining Room, Camera Facing North
- 0018: Basement Door, Sun room, Camera Facing West
- 0019: Light Fixture, Dining Room, Camera Facing West
- 0020: Newel Post, Second Floor, Camera Facing East
- 0021: Dormer Window Detail, Camera Facing West
- 0022: Dormer Window Detail, Camera Facing West
- 0023: Johnson Barn, Camera Facing North
- 0024: Johnson Barn, Camera Facing Northwest
- 0025: Johnson Barn, Camera Facing Southeast
- 0026: Workshed Foundation, Camera Facing West
- 0027: Workshed Foundation, Camera Facing East
- 0028: Pergola, Camera Facing Southeast
- 0029: Pergola, Camera Facing Northwest
- 0030: Pergola, Camera Facing South
- 0031: Pergola, Camera Facing North
- 0032: Sorting Shed Foundation, Camera Facing East
- 0033: Sorting Shed Foundation, Camera Facing Southwest
- 0034: Chicken House, Camera Facing Northeast
- 0035: Chicken House, Camera Facing Southwest
- 0036: Rock Wall Remnant, Camera Facing East
- 0037: Spring House, Camera Facing North
- 0038: Spring House, Camera Facing West
- 0039: Spring House Steps, Camera Facing East
- 0040: Spring House, Camera Facing East
- 0041: Spring House, Camera Facing South
- 0042: Spring House Chute, Camera Facing Southwest
- 0043: Pond, Camera Facing North
- 0044: Dam, Camera Facing South
- 0045: Dam, Camera Facing East
- 0046: Orchard, Camera Facing West
- 0047: Orchard, Camera Facing North
- 0048: Orchard, Camera Facing East
- 0049: East Field, Camera Facing East
- 0050: West Field, Camera Facing West Toward Arkansas Road

Benjamin Johnson, II, Homestead District
Fayetteville, Washington County



Legend

- 3150 W Pear Ln Path Measure
- POINT

800 ft



Google Earth

© 2018 Google

Benjamin Johnson, II, Homestead District
Fayetteville, Washington County



Legend

- 3150 W Pear Ln
- POINT

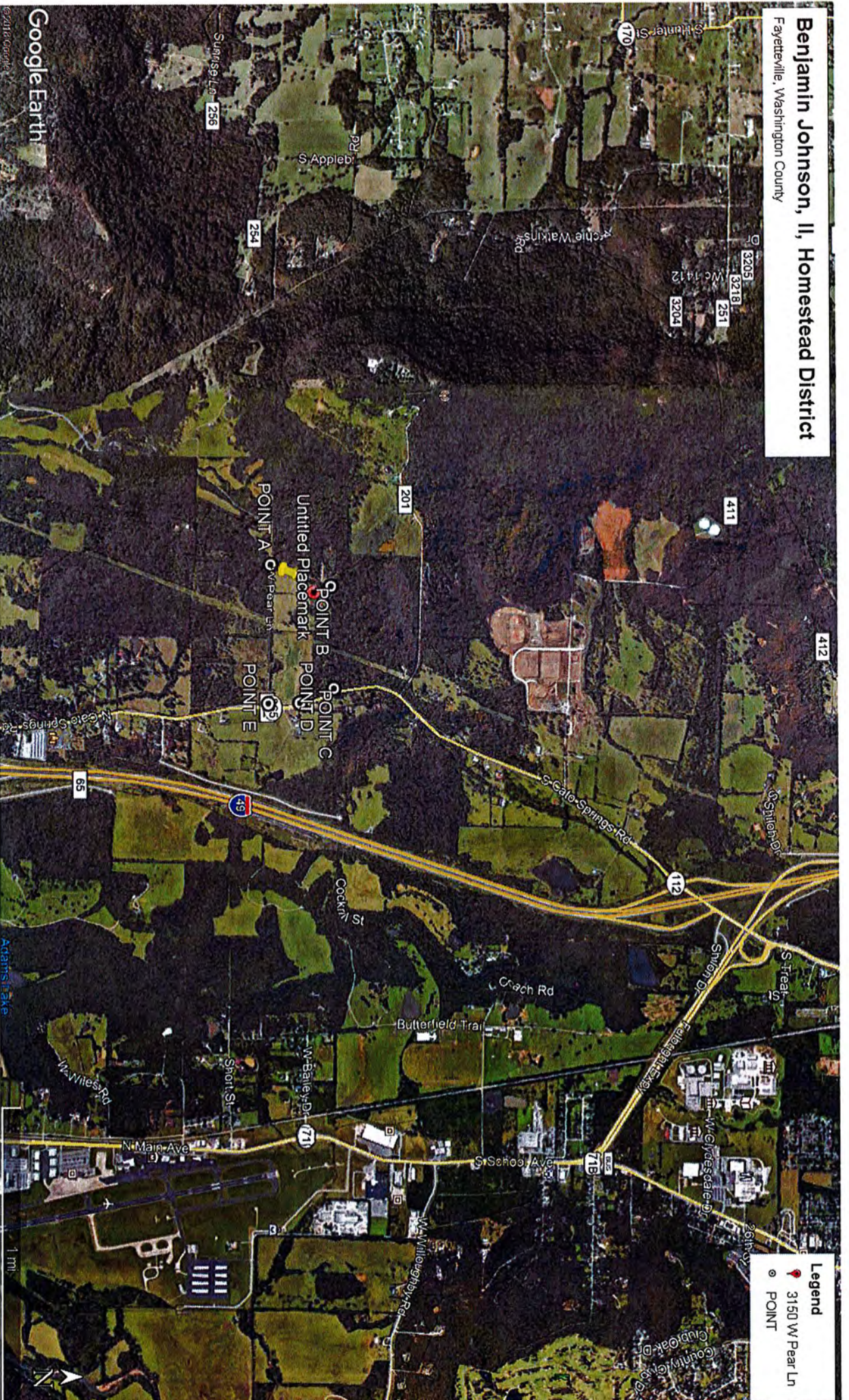
Google Earth

800 ft



Benjamin Johnson, II, Homestead District

Fayetteville, Washington County



Legend

- 3150 W Pear Ln
- POINT



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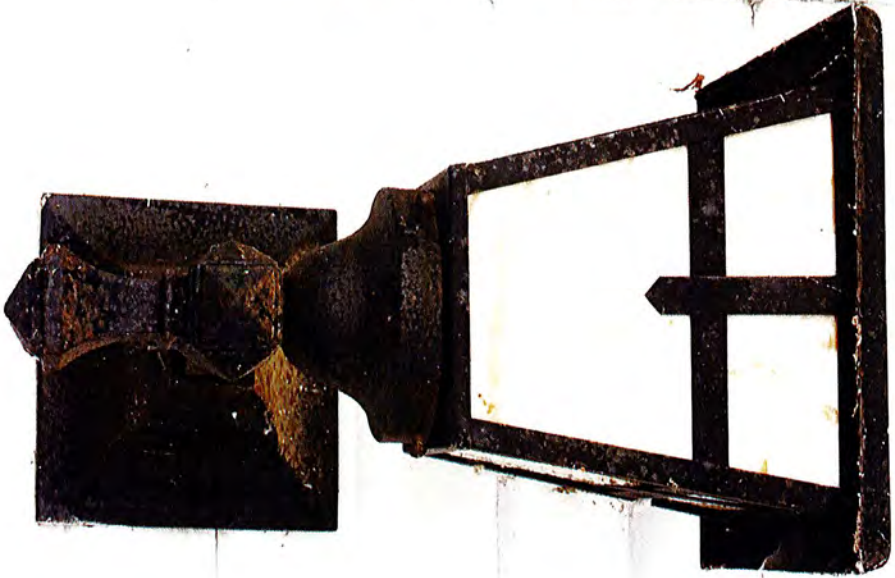
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6000





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0011



0012



0013



0014

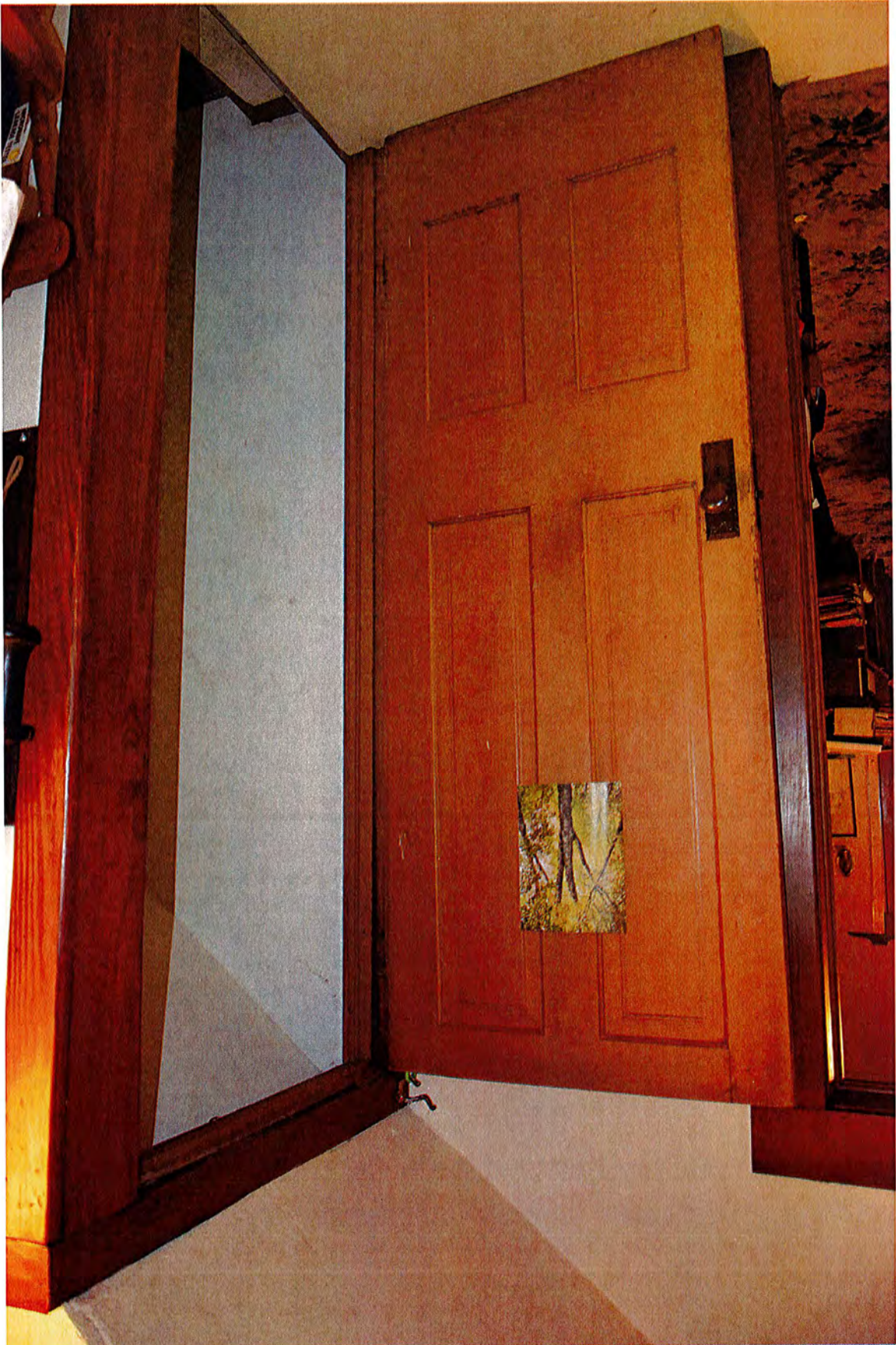


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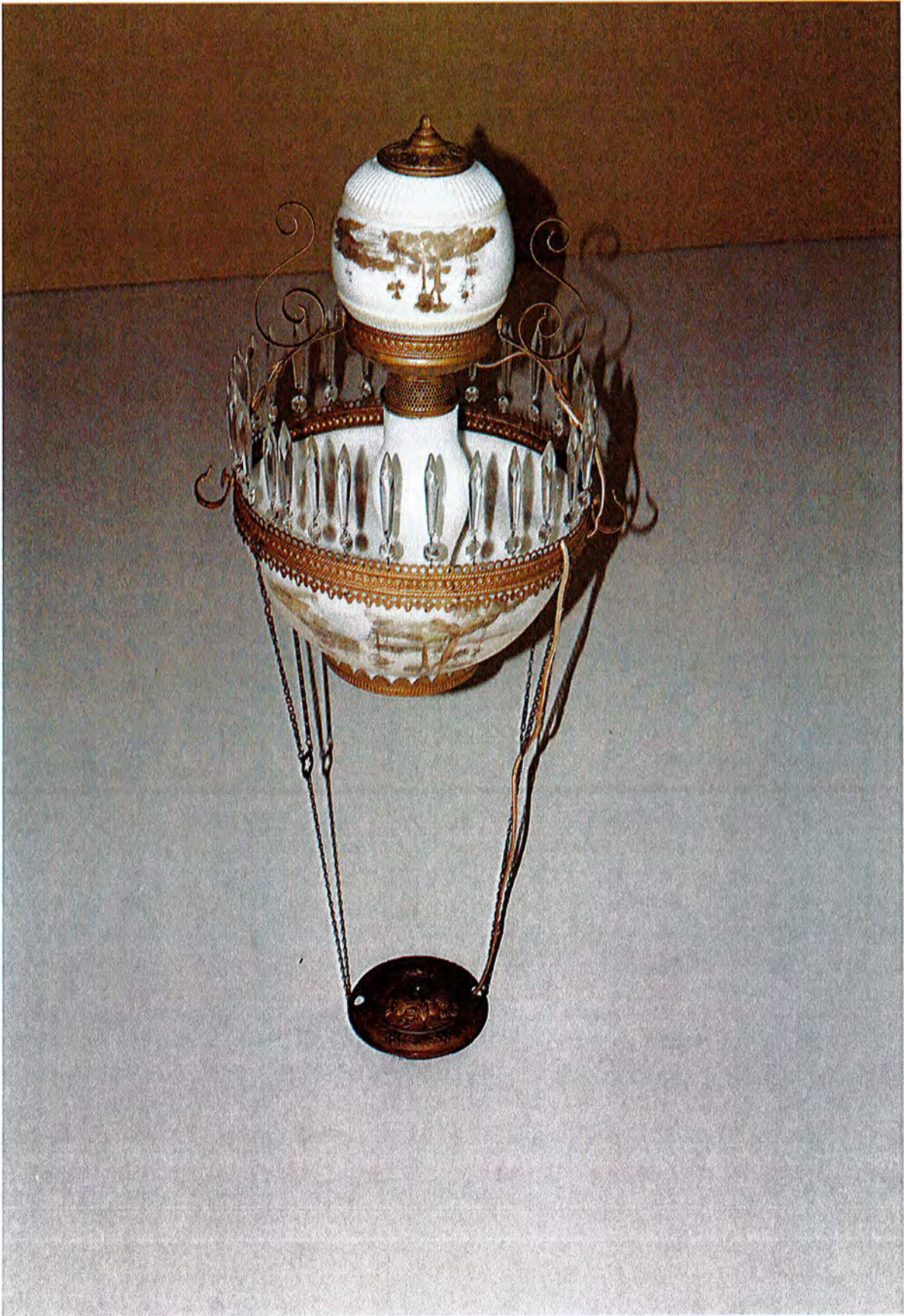


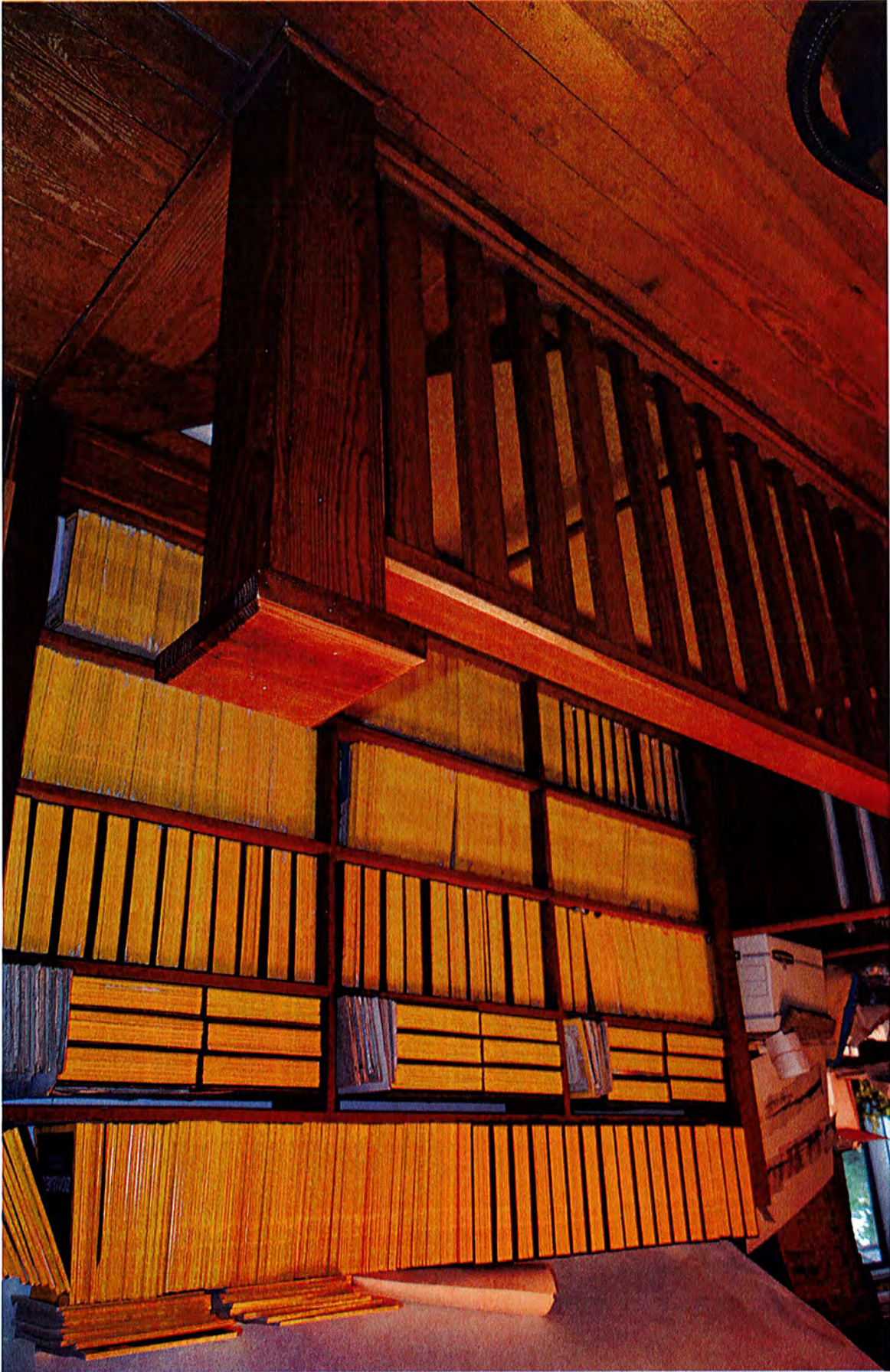


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0019







0021



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0038





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0043



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0047



0048



0049



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