

LISTED 09/05/91

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Jim Wright Farmstead Historic Districtother names/site number WH0560

2. Location

street & number State Hwy 258☐ not for publication N/Acity, town Bald Knob☒ vicinitystate Arkansascode ARcounty Whitecode AR 145zip code 72010

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u>6</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u>9</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<u>0</u> objects
	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic and Architectural Resources
of White County, Arkansas

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingAgriculture/Subsistence/Animal Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Wood/Weatherboardroof Asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1890-1939

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wright/Jim

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

B

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

C

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

D

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 5-9-91

street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300 telephone (501) 324-9346

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1Summary

The Jim Wright Farmstead Historic District includes a total of eight standing structures, featuring three separate residential structures. Also included are such site features as a well, a dipping vat, the foundations of a silo, and an assortment of gardens, pastureland and agricultural fields that together comprise a remarkably intact example of an early twentieth century, rural White County farmstead. There are no non-contributing structures.

Elaboration

The Jim Wright Farmstead Historic District is composed of eight standing structures and a variety of assorted site features, all of which are historic and closely associated with the history of the property as a working, early twentieth century farmstead.

Located on State Highway 258 in rural White County, Arkansas, the main residence (#1) is a one-and-one-half story, wood frame building designed in Craftsman style. Its plan is essentially rectangular, though it is augmented with a wrap-around porch on the northern, eastern and southern elevations. Its gable roof is punctuated with by two brick chimneys: one that rises through the ridge toward the northern elevation and another that rises from the center of the eastern slope toward the southern end of the house. The roof also features two flanking gabled dormers placed opposite each other on the eastern and western slopes. Its roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles, its walls are covered with novelty siding, and it rests upon both cast concrete piers and a partial, continuous cast concrete foundation that surrounds the cellar.

The northern or front elevation of the gable roof house features a single story, shed roof porch that wraps around to the east and which is itself ornamented with a projecting gable roof porch that shelters the entrance below. The single-leaf entrance is flanked by two one-over-one wood sash windows. The second story is lighted by a single, central wood sash window. The southern elevation is virtually identical.

The eastern elevation features two single-leaf entrances: one placed toward the southern end and the second placed more centrally, directly behind the short concrete stairway. A pair of one-over-one wood sash windows lights the wall between the entrances, and another identical window in the wall between the central entrance and the northern wall completes the first story. The central, gabled dormer with its central window lights the upper half-story, and a gabled portion of the porch finishes its northern end. The western elevation is lighted by four one-over-one wood sash windows spread evenly across the facade on the first story, and by the central window in the gabled dormer above.

The dominant decoration of the exterior is the single-story, three-sided, wrap-around porch with

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

its colonnade of simple, Doric columns supported by a wood deck on concrete piers. Four columns support the northern elevation, five support the southern elevation, and six support the eastern elevation. The shed roof is ornamented with the exposed rafters typical of the Craftsman style, as are the roofs of the gabled roof dormers. All the gable ends are further ornamented with the simple knee braces also commonly found in such designs. The only other decoration of note is the rhythm lent to wall surface by the narrow profile of the novelty siding. The interior, though intact, is also simple, displaying a preference for stained wood trim around the doors and staircase, and stained wood also in the trimming of the particle board used for the walls.

The two small associated outbuildings located immediately to the south (behind) the house are also of the same general style: the single-story, gable roof, wood frame "Delco" house (#2) and the salt house (#3), which is virtually identical with the sole exception of it being sheathed with board-and-batten instead of weatherboard. To the east is the single-story, gable roof garage or "Car House" (#4). It is simply sheathed with unpainted vertical wood planks. Furthest to the east is the single story, gable roof, double-pen "Camp House" (#5), the tenant and seasonal residence that housed strawberry and cotton pickers when they would hire on during the harvests. Further away, but directly to the south of the main residence, lies the wood frame Chicken House (#6), with its offset, clerestory roof providing light to the horizontal roosts and individual nesting boxes within.

Further to the south lie the remnants of the first residence (#7) and the barn (#8). Only one of the pens remains from the original single-story, gable roof, wood frame dog-trot, though it retains its kitchen ell at the western or rear elevation. It is covered with a metal roof and sheathed with board-and-batten. To its southwest is the large, two-story, gable roof barn with its single, gabled vent punctuating the roof line and the equipment storage shed placed to the west. It is covered with a metal roof and sheathed with vertical boards.

Also included in this nomination are the concrete dipping vat (#9), the foundations of the c. 1920 silo located directly to the south of the barn, and the family garden, pastureland and row crop fields that are still associated with the property. An abundance of historic fencing marks the boundaries between these various agricultural areas. Several historic roads are also included.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary

The Jim Wright Farmstead Historic District is locally significant under Criteria C by virtue of the overall integrity of its buildings and layout that marks it as a remarkably intact example of an early twentieth century rural farmstead. As such it is associated with both the Railroad and Boom and Bust Eras of White County's History (see Section E, 3 and 4).

Elaboration

Jim Wright's parents came to Arkansas from North Carolina in 1860. Jim Wright was born in 1868; in 1889, at the age of twenty-one, he married Lillie Gordon and purchased this land. The first building he constructed here was a single-story, single-pen log residence for himself and his new bride. Naturally, as his family grew, the home was expanded in the usual way, with a frame kitchen ell added to the western or rear elevation of the log pen. As such, this home served Jim Wright and his family for 34 years, until the construction of his new residence (all that remains of the original pen of this building is the chimney fall and the cellar beneath that was original to the log pen; the kitchen ell remains standing, but is only a fragment of the original design).

It is not known what Jim Wright grew on this property when he first purchased it, though it was probably cotton, a crop he is known to have cultivated later. It is known, however, that just before he built his new house in 1924 he was growing, in addition to cotton, strawberries, peas, feed corn and watermelons. This documentation has survived in the form of a series of detailed financial ledgers meticulously maintained by Wright in which he noted even his most insignificant expenditures and receipts. Through this documentation we are able to reconstruct a good deal about Wright and how he ran his farm after 1923, the date from which the earliest journals survive.

The specificity of the ledgers provides a wealth of information about everything from what Wright paid his tenant farmers to how much he paid for the hardware he installed inside his house. However, when considered in conjunction with the contemporaneous standing structures that survive on the farm, they reveal a much larger picture of Jim Wright. For example, it is clear the Wright was an innovator relative to most other rural farmers: he constructed one of the earliest Delco houses in the area (a building that housed a well and Delco batteries, which were wired to electric light bulbs within the house) and maintained a generator to recharge the batteries when necessary. The ledgers reveal that this source of power was problematic, however, as there are frequent entries for "Delco work" (presumably service on his batteries) and coal oil. Wright was also one of the earliest farmers in the region known to have a silo (now demolished) that

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

he constructed in the early 1920's for grain storage. And, by 1940, it is known that he constructed his "car house" to shelter his new automobile.

The ledgers also reveal that Wright did more than just diversify his crops to broaden his sources of income. His construction of the rather elaborate chicken house was intended to provide the best conditions for his hens so that they would be more productive. Wright would take his eggs and his watermelons to Bald Knob and literally sell them out of his truck. The family also sold Irish and sweet potatoes, sorghum, peas and corn. Nevertheless, cotton and strawberries remained the principle cash crops for the family.

Livestock provided yet another avenue for additional income on the farm. Wright recorded the sale of cattle, sheep and hogs. He also recorded the purchase of the seed for the growing of the livestock feed right on the farm: alfalfa, orchard grass and hay. And, of course, the sale of such dairy products as butter, milk and cream brought Wright business from as far away as the Safeway Grocery Store chain in Muskogee, Oklahoma, to which he shipped his produce by refrigerated railroad cars.

The requirements for the domestic operation of the house were typical, though, once again, innovations were welcomed. In addition to baking soda, flour, salt, lard and Karo Syrup throughout the year, and lemons, sugar and ice in the summer months, such cleaners as Oxydol, Clorox and Harrows Tooth Powder were also purchased. Records of seed purchases for the family's subsistence garden reveal the variety of vegetables consumed by the family: beans, turnips, cucumbers, cantaloupes, onions, cabbage and tomatoes.

Finally, Wright does not seem to have traveled far from his farm with any regularity. His travels to Newport (approximately 30 miles away) were made only for services he could not obtain locally, such as medical care for his eyes. Apparently, most of his and his family's needs could be purchased in Bald Knob.

This collection of intact, early twentieth century farm buildings, dating from 1924 to 1940, remains the finest group of such structures from this period that remains in the county. Their significance and cultural value is further underscored by the extensive daily documentation of the operation of this self-sufficient family farmstead. Thus, the Jim Wright Farmstead Historic District is clearly eligible under Criterion C. However, what is not as well documented is the operation of the farm from 1890 to 1923, prior to Wright's maintenance of his ledgers. The deed records clearly indicate his purchase of this property as of that year, and the marriage records note his nuptials the previous year. However, though we know that he was living on the property during this period, we know little else about how he operated the farm during these seminal years.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

of his settlement of the land; nor do we know anything about the family's domestic activities, broader social and commercial contacts, or other, possibly unsuccessful attempts to wrest a living from the land. Among the site features that survive from this period are the cellar that was constructed beneath the original log pen of the 1890 structure, the adjacent chimney fall, the stone well located just to west of the 1890 house, the early roads that ran to and around the house, and the original pastureland and gardens surrounding the 1890 house, which continues to be fenced and subdivided in the same historic pattern. Though further work remains to be done on both the site survey and the evaluation of the available data, the surrounding archeological site may reveal further information about the earliest period of the Wright family's settlement of the land.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Arkansas Census Records, 1850-1900, Harrison Township, White County.

Carfagno, Jacalyn, "Farm Yields Bushels of History," *Arkansas Democrat Magazine*, September 20, 1987, pp. 8-11.

Conrad, David Eugene, *The Forgotten Farmers: The Story of the Sharecroppers in the New Deal*, (Urbana, Illinois: 1965).

Daniel, Pete, *The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South, 1901-1969*, (Urbana, Illinois: 1972).

Financial Ledgers of James S. Wright, 1923-1946, Personal Collection of Gerald Baker, Bald Knob, Arkansas.

Grubbs, Donald H., *Cry From the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal*, (Chapel Hill: 1971).

Interview with Gerald Baker, October, 1986.

Mitchell, H.L., "The Founding and Early History of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, vol. 32, pp. 342-369.

Stewart-Abernathy, Leslie C., "Urban Farmsteads: Household Responsibilities in the City," *Historical Archeology*, vol. 20, pp. 5-15.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Acreage of property: Approximately ten

UTM References:

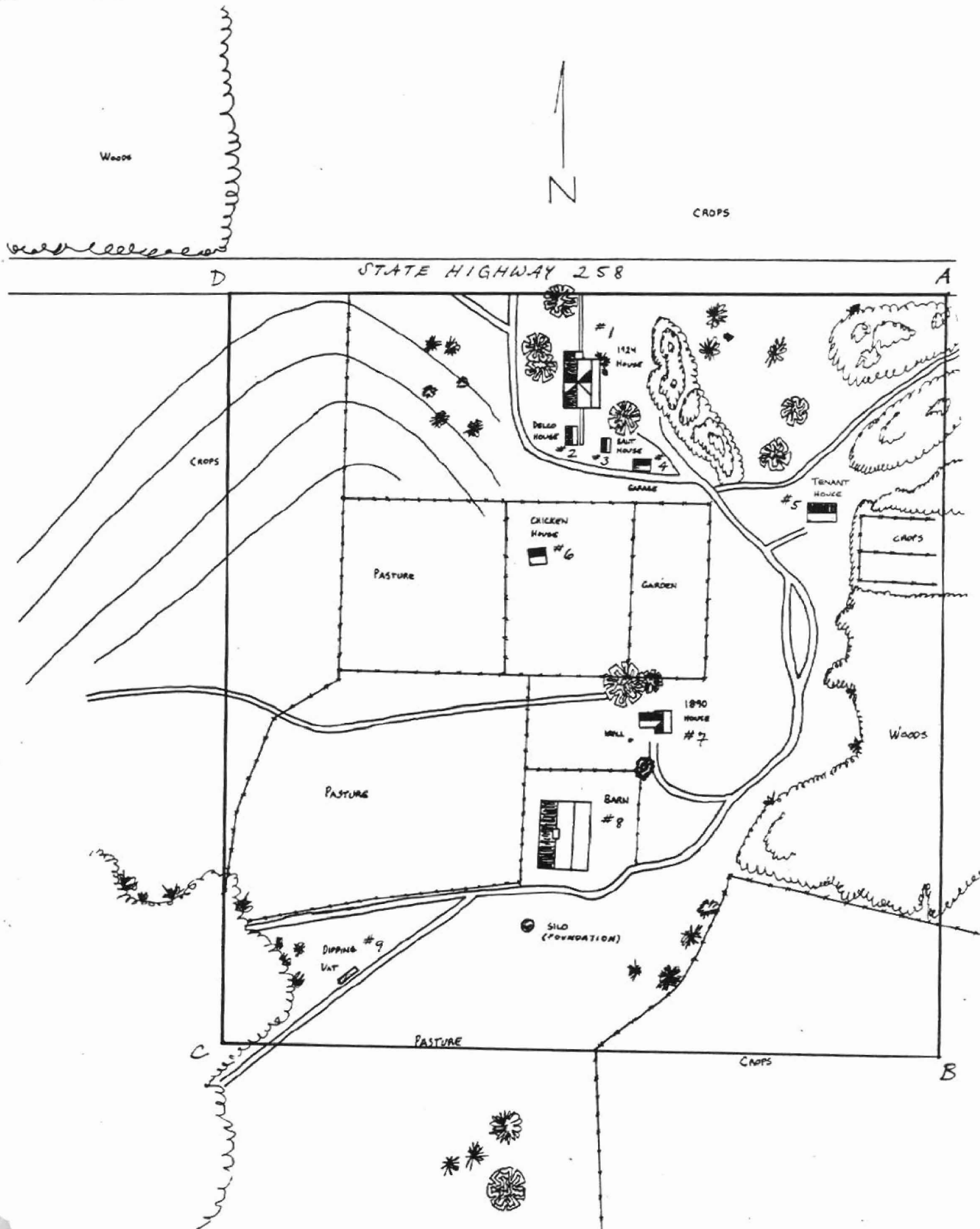
A	15/625540/3913070	B	15/625540/3912860
C	15/625340/3912860	D	15/625340/3913070

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the southern edge of State Highway 258 with a perpendicular line located 450 feet east of the eastern edge of the driveway, proceed southerly along said line for a distance of 800 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to State Highway 258; thence proceed westerly along said line for a distance of 750 feet to its intersection with a perpendicular line running parallel to the opposite boundary; thence proceed northerly along said line for a distance of 800 feet to its intersection with the southern edge of State Highway 258; thence proceed easterly along said line for a distance of 300 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.



JIM WRIGHT FARMSTEAD
HISTORIC DISTRICT
BALD KNOB, ARKANSAS

SCALE
1" = 133'
— = BOUNDARY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

91°37'30"
22'30"

1915000m N

626000m E

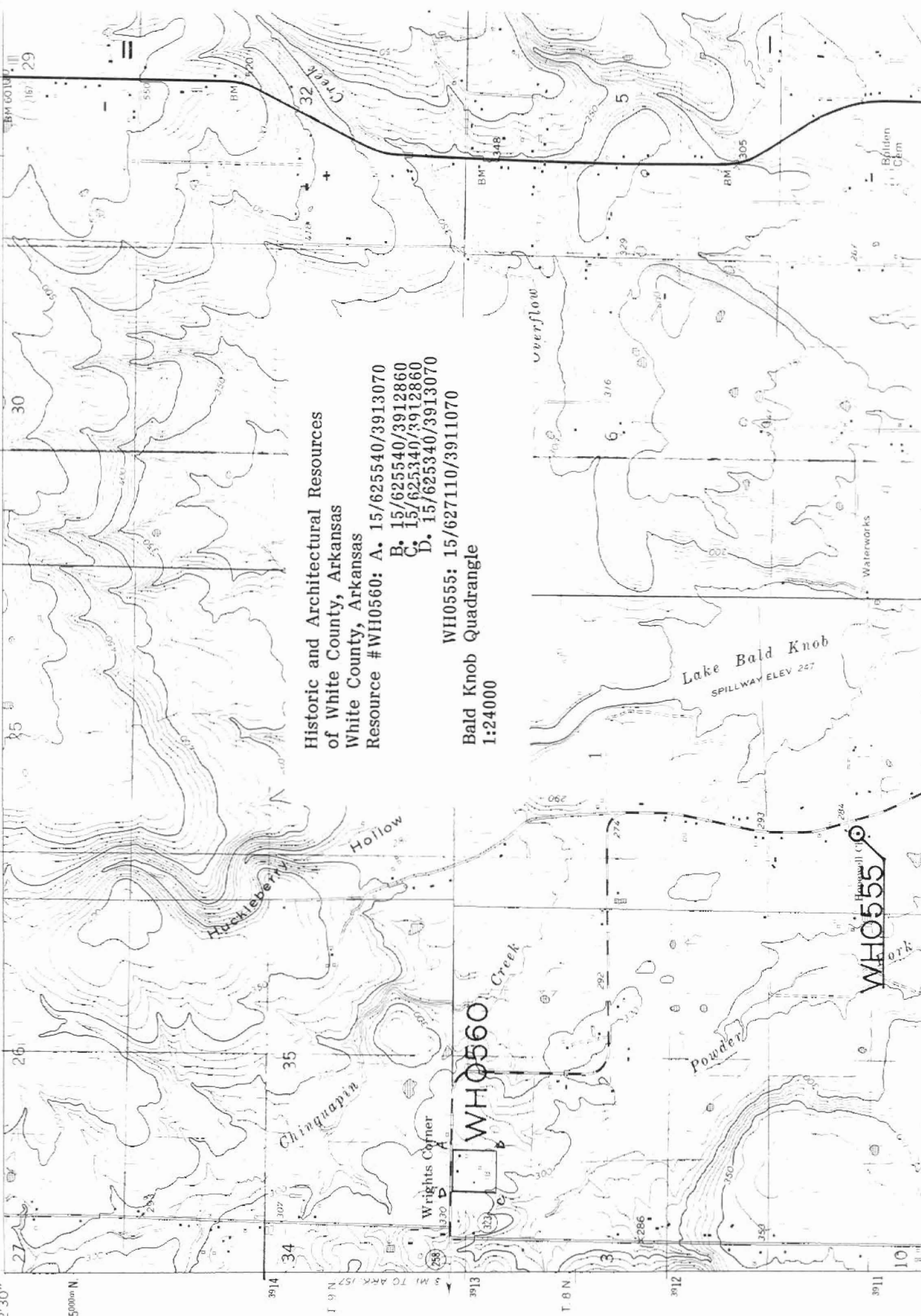
627

R 6 W

35° 0' 0" N

630

7054' NE
(VELVET RIDGE) VELVET



Historic and Architectural Resources
of White County, Arkansas
White County, Arkansas
Resource #WH0560: A. 15/625540/3913070
B. 15/625540/3912860
C. 15/625340/3912860
D. 15/625340/3913070
WH0555: 15/627110/3911070
Bald Knob Quadrangle
1:24000

WH0560

WH0555





