

**F. L. HAWKINS TENANT FARMSTEAD**  
.65 miles northeast of the intersection of  
Arrowhead and Old Buena Vista Roads  
Waxahachie Vicinity  
Ellis County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3384

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**  
Intermountain Regional Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

# HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## F. L. HAWKINS TENANT FARMSTEAD

HABS NO. TX-3384

For more information about other structures on the F. L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead, see:

HABS No. TX-3384-A F. L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead, Main House

HABS No. TX-3384-B F. L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead, Garage

HABS No. TX-3384-C F. L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead, Barn

HABS No. Tx-3384-D F. L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead, Pole Barn

**Location:** .65 miles northeast of the intersection of Arrowhead and Old Buena Vista Roads  
Waxahachie vicinity, Ellis County, Texas

USGS Boz, Texas Quadrangle, Universal  
Transverse Mercator Coordinates  
14.694380.3582760

**Present Owner:** Texas National Research Laboratory Commission  
(TNRLC)  
1801 N. Hampton Road, Suite 400  
DeSoto, Texas 75115

**Present Occupant:** None

**Present Use:** Vacant

### Statement of

**Significance:** The F.L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead dates to the 1920s when cotton cultivation dominated the local, agriculture-based economy, and it represents the kind of tenant farm that helped Ellis County become a major supplier of cotton in the nation during the early twentieth century. The complex of buildings is on a 3.55-acre parcel in the George Keen Survey in western Ellis County, Texas, that originally was part of a 130-acre tract of land owned by Judge F. Lee Hawkins. A prominent Waxahachie attorney who served on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for almost 30 years, Hawkins initially bought the land for his son. When the son decided to remain in Waxahachie, Hawkins leased the property to tenant farmers. The house, which dates to the 1920s, served as the headquarters for the farm. The house remains a good, local example of a Craftsman bungalow in a rural setting. The barn, silo, granary, barns, well, and

sheds relate to the successful operation of a tenant farm. The Hawkins family retained ownership of the property through 1961. The complex still provides a vivid illustration of an early to mid twentieth century tenant farm in the region.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Physical History**

1. **Date of Erection: ca. 1920**
2. **Architect: None**
3. **Original and Subsequent Owners:**
  - F. Lee Hawkins (1915-1961)**
  - Paul G. Wyche (1961-1968)**
  - Raymond Crouch (1968-1991)**
  - Texas National Research Laboratory Commission (1991-present)**
4. **Builders, Contractors and Suppliers: Unknown**
5. **Original Plans and Construction: No original architectural plans or drawings were located during research investigations. Such drawings probably never existed for the vernacular buildings on the property.**
6. **Alterations and Additions: The house was built ca. 1920, and appears to have been formed from the assembly of one or more pre-1900, existing buildings, a porch addition was constructed ca. 1930, an additional porch was enclosed to form a storage room, the front porch was screened, and the house was re-sided ca. 1960. The outbuildings were added to at unknown times during the twentieth century.**

### **B. Historical Context:**

The F.L. Hawkins Tenant Farmstead is on a 3.55-acre parcel in the George Keen Survey, but originally was part of a farm that encompassed 130 acres. Prior to its acquisition by F. Lee Hawkins in 1915, the property had been owned by a series of individuals including Waxahachie banker and lawyer W.H. Getzendaner. He may have used it as a tenant farm. Subsequent owners were J.J. Robnett (1892) and W.D. Westmoreland (1892-1915) [1].

devoted a substantial amount of his land to the cultivation of cotton.

The local farmers grew cotton during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Ellis County was one of the state's leaders in cotton production. The rail network, fertile soils, adequate supply of labor and increased demand for cotton facilitated the expanding local cotton trade, and cotton-related profits fueled unprecedented growth and prosperity in the county. The cotton boom enabled local farmers to enjoy and sustain a relatively high standard of living. Increased cotton-related profits of the period provided a strong financial incentive for local farmers to plant cotton in even greater quantities. Tenants operated roughly 80 percent of the farms in Ellis County in 1900 and provided most of the county's cotton [3]. Owner-occupied farms, such as the one operated by Westmoreland, also contributed to the cotton boom.

In 1915 F. Lee Hawkins acquired the property for \$10,000 [4]. F. Lee was the son of B.F. Hawkins who was long-time County Clerk of Ellis County and a prominent figure in the early history and development of Waxahachie [5]. F. Lee Hawkins was an attorney who served as judge of the 40th Judicial District of Texas from 1907 to 1921. Governor Pat Neff appointed him to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals where he served until his retirement in 1950 [6]. He lived in a grand 2½-story house at 219 Hawkins Street in Waxahachie that his father built in 1851 and remodeled in 1887. F. Lee Hawkins added a 2-story Classical Revival portico to the front in 1903, and the house remains a prominent architectural and historical landmark in Waxahachie. The Hawkins House is a Contributing property in the West End Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

After buying the 130 acres in the George Keen Survey, Hawkins apparently leased the land to tenant farmers and maintained his residency in nearby Waxahachie. The high purchase price (\$10,000) would have required Hawkins to generate income from his investment. He probably initially leased the property to tenant farmers who principally grew cotton. Ellis County during the 1910s remained a prime source of cotton in the state and nation, and tenant farmers who farmed absentee-owned land were the backbone of the local cotton trade [7]. They typically provided one-quarter of their cotton yields to landlords in exchange for the use of the land [8].

## **PART II. ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT**

### **A. General Statement:**

- 1. Architectural Character:** This is an intact farmstead which features buildings which were occupied from the early to late twentieth century and is located in the vicinity of Waxahachie, in the historic but non-extant community of Boz. The site includes a one-story bungalow with a screen porch, and side porch addition. (See photographic documentation HABS No. TX-3384-1 through HABS No. TX-3384-G-1 and HABS drawings, Sheets 1 and 2). The house survives with a one-story garage, a one-and-a-half story barn, a pole barn and silo, a cistern and a well.
- 2. Condition of the Fabric:** The house and silo are in good condition. The outbuildings are in fair to poor condition.

### **B. Site:**

- 1. General Setting:** The house faces northeast, is oriented parallel to and is located 74.0' northwest of Old Buena Vista Road. The site is open pasture land which slopes gently to the northwest, and house is approached and encircled by a gravel drive.
- 2. Buildings:** The site includes a one-story, triple-pile bungalow, HABS No. TX-3384-A; a one-story garage or carriage house, HABS No. TX-3384-B; a one-story barn, HABS No. TX-3384-C; a one-story pole barn and silo, HABS No. TX-3384-D; and two cisterns.
- 3. Landscaping, Enclosures:** The site includes a small fruit orchard, planted with 2" to 11" caliper plum, apricot, pear and peach trees, along the fence line fronting Old Buena Vista Road to the western edge of the property. Mulberries, ranging in caliper from 4 1/2" to 6" have been planted along a drive from the house to the garage or carriage house. Red oaks are found at the western edge of the site. Hackberry, from 4" and 14" caliper, form a hedgerow, running northeast-southwest and provide shade for the barns.

## **PART III: ENDNOTES**

- 1. Ellis County, Texas, Deed Record 66:147; Ibid., 68:214.**

2. Texas, State Comptrollers Office, Ad Valorem Tax Rolls for Ellis County, 1880. Census of Population, 1900.
3. Killis P. Almond, Jr. and Randall W. Moir, "Historic Structures Management Plan, submitted to TNRLC on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy in Support of the Superconducting Super Collider," 1992, 48.
4. Ellis County, Texas, Deed Record 213:580.
5. Edna Davis Hawkins et al., History of Ellis County Texas (Waco: Texian Press, 1972), 55.
6. Ibid, 271.
7. Almond and Moir, "Historic Structures Management Plan," 48.
8. Stanley Murdock and Yula Glenn Murdock, interview by Terri Myers, written notes, Waxahachie, Texas, 12 June 1992.
9. Almond and Moir, "Historic Structures Management Plan," 238.
10. Stanley Murdock and Yula Glenn Murdock.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ellis County, Texas, Deed Record 481:303.
14. Ellis County, Texas, Deed Record 532:126.
15. Ellis County, Texas, Deed Record 859:371.

#### **PART IV: SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: No original plans or drawings are known to exist.
- B. Early Views: No early photographs have been located.
- C. Interviews:

McGregor, Frances Dunaway. Interviews by Terri Myers. Written notes. Waxahachie, Texas. 20 May 1992 and 12 June 1992.

Murdock, Stanley, and Murdock, Yula Glenn. Interview by Terri Myers. Written notes. Waxahachie, Texas. 12 June 1992.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources

Ellis County, Texas. Office of the County Clerk. Deed Records.

Ellis County, Texas. Office of the County Tax Assessor/Collector. Tax Abstracts of Lands.

Texas. State Comptrollers Office. Ad Valorem Tax Rolls for Ellis County. On file at the Genealogical Collection at the Texas State Library.

2. Secondary and published sources

Almond, Killis P., Jr., and Moir Randall W. "Historic Structures Management Plan, submitted to TNRLC on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy in Support of the Superconducting Super Collider." 1992.

Hardy, Daniel, and Moore, David. "Historic Resources Survey of Ellis County: An Inventory for the U.S. Department of Energy." 1990.

Hawkins, Edna Davis, Ruth Stone, Ida M. Brookshire and Lillie Tolleson. History of Ellis County Texas. Waco: Texian Press, 1972.

**PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION**

This Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) recording project was undertaken by the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission (TNRLC) in conjunction with the Superconducting Super Collider Project in Ellis County. The project was conducted in accordance with TNRLC's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Energy, The Texas Historical Commission and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The MOA stipulates that a record be created of buildings to be demolished in the project area. The field work and measured drawings were prepared by ArchiTexas of Dallas. The recording team consisted of Bruce Fowler, Gary

Garmon, Gilbert Hickox, Larry Irsik, Craig King, Richard Martratt, Craig Melde, Jeanie O'Brien, Ernesto Robles, Edward Sergeant, Gary Skotnicki, Stan Solamillo, and Diane Van Buren. Historical research was conducted under the supervision of David Moore of Hardy, Heck, Moore of Austin. Architectural analysis and descriptions were prepared by Stan Solamillo of Dallas. Archival photography was by Brendan Dunnigan and Doug Hankins of Arlington.