

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Art Stamper Home

other names/site number KT-98

## 2. Location

street & number 864 Stamper Branch Road

<input type="checkbox"/> NA	not for publication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X	vicinity

city or town Hindman

state Kentucky code KY county Knott code 119 zip code 41822

## 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

Signature of certifying official/Title Craig Potts/SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office**  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Hiram and Art Stamper House  
Name of Property

Knott County, Kentucky  
County and State

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		district
1		site
		structure
		object
3	1	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence agricultural field

Agriculture/Subsistence animal facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence agricultural field

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Log Cabin

Other: Saddebag Plan

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Fieldstone /Concrete

walls: Log / Asbestos

\_\_\_\_\_

roof: Shingle

other: Concrete Block

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Narrative Description**

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### **Summary Paragraph**

The Art Stamper House (KT-98) is the home for two important Kentucky Bluegrass musicians, Hiram Stamper, and his son, Art Stamper. The house is located on Stamper Branch Road, about 3½ miles north-northeast of Hindman, seat of Knott County, Kentucky. Stamper Branch Road is remote, and inaccessible in poor weather. The house stands little more than a ½ mile southeast of the junction of Stamper Branch Road (County Road 1302) and State Route 80 (Hal Rodgers Parkway). The area proposed for listing is 85.11 acres, including 2 contributing buildings, a contributing site, and a non-contributing building.

### **Character of Property (Contributing site)**

The property shares boundaries with lands of Ruby Stamper, Bob Stewart, Jerry Whicker, George Stamper, and Clarence Stamper – lands in which a century ago were a part of a much larger farm owned by Jasper Stewart, Stamper's great-grandfather.

According to Charles Stamper, brother of Art Stamper, in the early 1930s, the family was living in the small community, Dwarf, a local crossroad in the era when eastern Kentucky counties began establishing roads for cars. Dwarf stood where the ancient travel route, Troublesome Creek traveling west out of Hindman, veered northwest to join the north fork of the Kentucky River on the way to Jackson, the Breathitt County seat. However, at Dwarf, the newly built road from Hindman, State Route 80 (today SR 550), turned to the southwest, following smaller streams and connected travelers to the Perry County seat of Hazard. While the nominated site might be no more than 9 or 10 straight-line miles from the family's previous residence in Dwarf, this distance probably took the family more than a day to traverse. Such a move required an arduous overland journey.

They settled on an 85.11-acre site. The place has an orchard up on the mountain top. It is crisscrossed by streams at the Middle Fork of Terry Fork of Balls Creek. The main garden, now fenced with cut tree trunks, still exists and a portion of it is planted in crops seasonally.

An old coal bank is located on the property, as well as timber, both of which provided fuel to heat the cabin during the period Stamper resided there. Coal oil and pine knots were used to provide lighting for the home.

The hilltop planting stopped when Stamper reached adulthood, but during Stamper's younger years the hilltop planting was necessary for survival. Stamper often mentioned the farmwork in the garden, hoeing and weeding the corn, working a row of the rocky ledge of a hill where it was rich with top soil washed off the mountain tops. Stamper and family planted the crop by picking up a handful of soil and a kernel of corn and planting it amongst the rocky ledges. There on the hillsides of home Stamper and family worked back and across a row of corn at a time, and then they stopped to get a drink of water and rest while playing the fiddle. Sometimes Stamper would stand on the hillside and play his fiddle while others worked the corn fields, and then another fiddle player (father, brothers, or uncles) would take Stamper's place while he worked. Thus the crop was planted and the old time fiddle tunes passed through the generations. The fiddle tunes vibrated off one side of the hill to

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another thus enabling Stamper while he worked and played to learn thousands of archaic tunes and unique sounds.

In the 1950s, a well was dug near the house. Currently a concrete block well housing stands just off the house's northwest corner. Previous to this time, Stamper and family carried water from a well located in the garden, the site of an extant homestead.

### **Exterior of Stamper House (Contributing Building)**

Charles Stamper (born ca. 1929), says the family came to the nominated property close to the time when Art was born, in 1933. Art's arrival increased the Stamper's number of children from 3 to 4, which might have prompted the family to seek larger quarters than they had in Dwarf. The nominated property had on it an existing log house; Charles' understanding is that the family began erecting a structure, a barn, but liked the building so much that they chose it as their new home, instead, and finished it for that purpose. When they moved in, in either 1933 or 1934, it was a 2-room log house in a saddlebag plan. Perhaps within one or two years of occupying the new residence, Charles' father Hiram dismantled the existing log house on site, using its lumber to add two rooms onto the back side of their residence (Conversation with Charles Stamper).

On the original 2-room house, each room has a window and a door on the front. At the meeting point between the two pens, on the front, is a third door which opens to a storage room. At the time of Stamper's birth only the two front rooms existed. During Stamper's life, three back rooms were added: a kitchen and extra sleeping room were added behind the original two pens of the log cabin, and in the 1970s, a bathroom behind the kitchen. While the front two rooms are log walled, the back two rooms have wood plank walls, and the bathroom has concrete block walls. Currently, the main 4 rooms of the building are covered with a rolled siding material similar to asphalt sheeting, which was installed in the late 1960s. The entire roof was replaced with shingles in 2012. At that time it was learned the rear portion of the Stamper home was covered with tin only, so plywood was added to support a shingle roof on the rear portion of the home.

The house faces northward and has a front porch held up by 5 square wooden posts. It is not known when the front porch was installed. A simple railing runs at waist-height, and small square spindles run below it. The posts, rails and spindles do not look original. The gable roof slopes down from the ridge, breaking to a shallower slope midway in its run, on both its front and back sides.

The house's east and west sides are under a gable. The east side has a one-over-one double hung window lighting the front room, and a door to the outside exiting the sleeping room. That sleeping room has a window on the south (back) side, the only opening on that side. The east side is similar to the west, with two double-hung one-over-one windows, one for each room. The house's windows appear to have been installed in the last 30 years.

### **House Interior**

Charles Stamper recalls that the interior walls were covered with newspaper, obtained from local politician Carl Perkins, whose office was in Hindman (Conversation with Charles Stamper). The two fireplaces still exist, but the central chimney common to both fireplaces has been capped at the roofline. Stamper was an adult before electricity was available in the home. In the 1970s, indoor plumbing was added, which led to the addition of the concrete block bathroom.

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### **Barn (Contributing Building)**

It is thought that Stamper's father built the extant barn. The barn, in poor condition, has been enlarged through the years and now has a severe lean. It is supported by cut tree trunks. It is currently used for storage and historically was used as a pig pen, chicken coop, shelter for the mule and cow, and storage for corn, a staple.

### **Pole Barn (Non-contributing building)**

The pole barn is rectangular shaped, supported at four corners by cut tree trunks. Three sides are enclosed with wood planking, leaving the front open. The roof is covered. It is recent, created in the last 30 years or so.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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 a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment

Performing Arts

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1934-1963

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1934

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Stamper, Arthur (Art)

Stamper, Hiram

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Stamper, Hiram

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The home is significant as the residence of two master fiddlers, Hiram Stamper and his son Art Stamper. The Period of his significance begins with the year the house was constructed, 1934, and continues to the close of the historic period, 1963. During this time, the house was Hiram Stamper's home; the house was the home of Art Stamper until he left for the military, which was around 1952. The home was the important place in which the significant activity, fiddle playing, was conducted and passed on to family members.

**Criteria Considerations NA**

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph

The Art Stamper Home (KT-98) meets the National Register criterion B and is significant as the home of two master fiddlers, Hiram Stamper (1893-1992) and Art Stamper (1933-2005). Hiram Stamper was a well known fiddler within traditional Old Time Music. Art Stamper learned Old Time fiddling from his father, and contributed greatly to other forms, including Bluegrass Music, and Mountain Music, as evidenced by the increasing popularity of his recordings, as well as from the honors and awards he received during his life, and the many tribute concerts and fiddle-playing contests that grow in popularity as new generations learn of his pioneer style of fiddle playing. Both Stampers' mastery of the fiddle has its roots in their home place, the isolated hollow in Knott County, Kentucky. When outsiders "discovered" Eastern Kentucky and the rest of Appalachia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they came to regard it as a place where an 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century way of life persisted, due to isolation. Certainly this view was applied to the understanding of music produced in this mountainous area. Rather than focusing on how musicians innovated in creating music over time, folklorists who document mountain musicians observe how those players have maintained centuries-old traditions. A large share of both Stampers' significance as fiddle players relates to archaic methods, fiddle tunings and style of play. However, place becomes an important element of this analysis. Both Hiram and Art had exposure to the world beyond Knott County, as both served in the military overseas. However, Hiram remained in his Knott County home after 1934, and his music is noted for its purer connection to Knott County's musical past. Art Stamper, on the other hand, did not return to his home after military service, migrating to a number of Kentucky towns, including Louisville; his musical expressions also had a greater range. Both Stamper fiddlers help us reflect on the way that folk music serves as more than a mere past time. Because traditional music results from, transmits, reinforces, and is symbolic of the culture which produces it, that music can help us know the culture that it carries.

### Historic Context: Old Time Fiddle Music in Southeast Kentucky, 1900-1970

In a search for a usable summary of Old Time Fiddle Music, nearly every party consulted pointed to the same source: Jeff Todd Titon's *Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes* (2001). Titon, professor of music at Brown University and the director of Brown's ethnomusicology doctoral program, had the goal of transcribing highly archaic and Kentucky-bound traditional fiddle tunes. His study provides a useful introduction to understand the context which produced Hiram and Art Stamper, which helps us appreciate their significance. Titon's book also includes a lengthy bibliography, for those who wish to explore the academic treatment of this topic in more depth.

Old-Time music is different in almost every way from classical music. Classical music consists of a composer, conductor, fixed musical score, accomplished performers, and even an educated audience, who attend the performance with particular expectations. While some interpretation of a classical piece is acceptable, the measure of performance quality is fidelity to the composer's vision and version. In many ways, old-Time music provides a much more democratic way of making music. The identity of a song's composer is rarely known—in being no one's song, it's everyone's to play. In classical music, innovation and improvisation occur during composition phase, in Old-Time music, innovation and improvisation play a greater part during performance. Titon writes, "Old-time tunes

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live in memory and performance, they pass from one fiddler to the next. There are only the fiddler, the idea of the tune, and the way the fiddler brings it out or sets it" (p. 2).

Titon offers three factors that make Kentucky a worthy place for study of Old-Time music. First, most Kentucky fiddlers were born in the state and, except for unusual events such as military service, did not stray far from the place of their birth. Their stability of location gives their music a quality Titon calls "focus." Fiddlers in one place knew each other, and their work has consistency within the region. Second, Kentucky's fiddling is quite diverse. Qualities found in one region are not always shared in the other 2 regions (see Titon's map). Finally, the music is of very high quality, which people can observe at festivals, fiddling contests, and in the bands where a few fiddlers play (xv).

Tunes were learned the way that many folk processes were learned—face-to-face—often without fixed written instructions. Players learn tunes from family, friends, neighbors. Many fiddlers don't rely on sheet music, and a fair number of them cannot even read it.

The heroes in Titon's account are called "source musicians." Source musicians tend to trace their playing to 19<sup>th</sup> century fiddlers, they cultivate important repertoires of traditional tunes, they have impressive innovative skills and distinctive styles, they play at festival and summer camps and for visitors in each others' homes (5).

During the majority of Kentucky's history, the fiddle occupied an important place. Titon says, "For nearly 150 years the fiddle was the most important musical instrument among the people of Kentucky" (xiii). The places from which many Kentuckians migrated—Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania—all already had strong musical traditions, which themselves were products of imported musical forms from the British Isles, in which the fiddle was a primary instrument to play the songs. Certainly the fiddle's portability encouraged the state's early residents to carry it across the mountains during the settlement era. With Edison's phonograph not commercially available until the 1880s, most Kentuckians during the entire nineteenth century experienced music as a live entertainment form, for which the fiddle was ably suited.

Titon divides the Kentucky's popular musical evolution into 3 eras: 1790s-1920, the period between World Wars, and the post-WWII period (xiii-xiv). World wars certainly could serve as turning points in musical development, as military service exposes the young soldier to new experiences—places, people, and off-duty entertainments—which those who grew up in a culture of Old-Time Music could not help but be influenced by. In peacetime, music-making occurred among people who lived near each other; during war times, a young man (or young woman) was thrust into a place thousands of miles from home, carrying his musical knowledge with him, which filtered his experience of music in the foreign place. Surely many musicians, returning from service around the world, would incorporate what they heard into their repertoires, beginning new phases of innovation.

The solo fiddle and Old-Time music dominated the first era of popular music, until about 1920, in Kentucky. These tunes might consist of "a lonesome cry or propulsive drive" (xiii). During the 1920s through the 1940s, two important things happened. First, access to music ceased to depend upon a performing musician. Commercialized music streamed at Americans in the form of radio, movies (after 1928), in-home record players, and from sheet music stores (5). Second, string bands playing dance music rose in popularity. A fiddle might pair with a guitar, which provided bottom notes and choral accompaniment. A fiddle with banjo were a common couple during the nineteenth century,

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particularly in the bluegrass region of Kentucky, yet became a fixture after World War I for their ability to enliven dances. After World War II, country music bands rose in prominence, with their pedal steel guitar, drum kit, and a new solo instrument, the electric guitar. Fiddles remained in some country bands, but were relegated to a background role and bands no longer played Old-Time tunes (xiii).

As popular tastes gravitated toward music performed by bands playing dance music, and recorded music gave the public wider choices of entertainments, the live solo fiddler playing Old-Time Fiddle music was crowded out of the spotlight. Consequently, the fiddlers who maintained Old Time Fiddle tunes, and fiddling techniques, very important carriers of traditional cultural information. Old-Time music functioned as an archive of dance music of Britain and Ireland, minstrel stage music, marches and military music of the Civil War, and “transformations and influences wrought by African and Native Americans” (xv). But Old-Time music performer did not simply seek to reproduce the piece as a classical player would. Songs were replayed, sometimes innovated, and sometimes synthesized with other forms. There is an aspect of Titon’s explanation that seems as if Old-Time fiddlers played only for themselves, or each other. He frequently points to the music coming alive in informal gatherings, of two or more musicians, rather than on TV or radio, and not in concerts or dances. These songs were played for the pure pleasure of making music, “never for pay, and seldom with an audience” (8).

Playing Old-Time music in jam sessions creates a communal, and sometimes a transcendent experience. “Two or three people meet, and after playing some tunes they know in common, one starts a tune that the others have never heard. After a couple of times through the rest join in, gradually picking up the tune by ear until before long all are playing as if they had always known it...The tune lasts for twenty minutes as the musicians draw closer and the playing becomes more tightly integrated. Sometimes (though not always) it feels like more than just music is going on here (10).

The intimacy of the Old-Time musical experience led players in one area sharing qualities when they played. Fieldwork by Titon and others has resulted in identification of 3 distinct regions of Kentucky defined by different fiddling traditions: South-central, Southeast, and Northeast regions. Art Stamper lived near the center of the Southeast Region, in Knott County.

Songs played in the Northeast part of Kentucky were elaborate melodically, and didn’t lend themselves to play on the banjo. The Bluegrass part of Kentucky is within the Northeast fiddle region, where the African American influences are strong, which did include banjo play. This region shows an impressive mix of styles and influences because riverboat traffic brought a steady parade of fiddlers and music during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Doc Roberts was an important source musician in this region (16).

In the South-Central region, the fiddle and banjo songs, sometimes played by African Americans earlier than the Civil War, were more prominent. Also in the South-Central region’s solo fiddle songs reach back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and continue to the present. Some of the most prominent source musicians are Clyde Davenport, Jim Bowles, Isham Monday, Dick Burnett, and Leonard Rutherford (16).

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When folklorists began to study southeast Kentucky, they remarked upon the preservation of forms of speaking that had long disappeared in the rest of the country outside of the eastern hill country. They also found the music of the ethnic groups who settled the area: Scots-Irish and English. Playing included the “high lonesome sound” (a reference to John Cohen’s 1962 documentary by that name), centuries-old hymns of Old regular Baptists, and influences of military music from the Civil War loom large. In the Southeast fiddler region, Tilton and others have found the most archaic fiddle styles and tunes. Among the source musicians, Tilton lists John Salyer (1882-1952), Shade Slone, Manon Campbell (1890-1987), Owen “Snake” Chapman (1919- ), William H. Stepp (1875-1947), Luther Strong (1892-1963), Effie Pierson (1902-1981), Estill Bingham (1899-1990), and Hiram Stamper (1893-1992). It’s striking how many of these musicians were born during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, yet lived well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, giving them ample time to accumulate a repertoire and to influence younger musicians.

### **History of Hiram and Art Stamper**

Because he was more well travelled, more is written about Art’s than Hiram Stamper’s life. We do know these things: Hiram Stamper was one-time champion fiddle player of Knott County. His father Marion Stamper (1855-1953), was also a noted fiddle player. His grandfather, Joseph Stamper, was the first of the Stamper line to settle in Knott County, arriving from North Carolina. The music and family traveled, via the Cumberland Gap, with Hiram’s grandfather, who learned the old style from his ancestors.

Art Stamper was born on November 1, 1933 to Hiram and Martha Kelley Stamper in a cabin located on the Cumberland Plateau of the Appalachian Mountains in Knott County, Kentucky. Art was one of thirteen children—seven of whom reached adulthood.

The younger Stamper began at an early age playing banjo. At about age nine, he became enthralled with the sound of the fiddle his family members played. Stamper related that his first note was simply beautiful or he perceived it to be. At times he made his own fiddle and strings. The strings consisted of horse tail hair retrieved from an uncle’s horse. Then he would go to the top of the ridge to an old pine tree and use the pine tree oil to rosin the bow.

The music remained pure due to the isolation of Stamper’s home on the Cumberland Plateau of the Appalachian Mountains. Until regular public schools became the rule, a history was told and passed from generation to generation through the Old-Time tunes of the fiddle.

About the age of 19, Art left home to serve in the Korean War, and did not return to Knott County after military service. Upon return from that conflict, he enrolled in barber school, in which he learned a trade that supported him. He was a barber for much of his life, in Louisville. During the latter 40 years of his life, he owned and occupied a farm outside of Shepherdsville, in Bullitt County, south of Louisville.

Art Stamper was an innovator in blending Old-Time, Mountain Music, Blues, and Bluegrass music. His first recording was on Rich-R-Tone Records in 1952, the world’s oldest Bluegrass label. In 1956, he recorded with the Osborne Brothers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.artstamper.com/bio/PioneerNews\\_net.htm](http://www.artstamper.com/bio/PioneerNews_net.htm)

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## Art Stamper's Awards and Recognitions

Stamper's last CD, Wake Up Darling Corey was a 2005 International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) nomination for Instrumental Album of the Year.

In 1986, 1987, and 1988 Art was named Fiddler of the Year; Art received the Best Old-Time Fiddler award presented by the Society of the Preservation of Bluegrass Music Association; he received the International Bluegrass Distinguished Achievement Award; and was inducted to the Bluegrass Hall of Fame.

Art explained the concept of Old Time Fiddle as playing the songs the way they were intended to be played, when first established.<sup>ii</sup>

On May 30, 2003, Kentucky State Route 550 from Hindman to Perry County, Kentucky line was named the Arthur "Art" Stamper Highway.

Old Time Fiddler's Convention at Morehead University holds an annual Art Stamper Fiddle Contest. Stamper played with such notable Bluegrass musicians as the Clinch Mountain Boys (1954) Ralph and Carter Stanley (1951), Clinch Mountain Boys, Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys, Larry Sparks, the Goins Brothers (1978), Buster Pack and the Lonesome Pine Boys, Carl Sauceman, Jim McReynolds, the Osborne Brothers, Wayne Lewis, Joe Isaacs, Bill Clifton, Larry Sparks, Vince Combs, Harry Bickel, J. D. Crowe, and others.

Discography: The Osborne Brothers and Red Allen; Classic Bluegrass by Larry Sparks; Run Satan Run, by the Goins Brothers; Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys; Angel Band: The Classic Mercury Recordings, Clinch Mountain Boys; Jimmy Martin Songs for Dinner; Jeff Clair: Old Simon Tackett; Larry Sparks: Silver Reflections; Larry Sparks: Travellin'; Ralph Stanley & Joe Isaacs: A Gospel Gathering; Ralph Stanley: Back to the Cross; Christmastime with Ralph Stanley; The Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys: Complete Mercury Recordings; The Stanley Brothers: The King Years 1961-1965; 25 Years of Strictly Country, etc.<sup>iii</sup> The bibliography of this nomination cites a cross section of his music, available on-line, from Berea College.

Stamper performed in forty-five states and eleven countries during his life, quite an accomplishment for a person born and raised in a modest vernacular building on the Cumberland Plateau of the Appalachian Mountains. Stamper would be the first to say, "Soiee" and give praise to the little cabin in the "holler" as the work of a master that inspired a musical mastery in him.

## Evaluation of the significance of Hiram and Art Stamper in the context of American Old Time Fiddle Music, 1900-Present

Hiram Stamper's importance during this nomination's historic period (1934-1963) comes from his recognized value in maintaining the purity of Old Time music traditions. Art Stamper's importance during this nomination's Period of Significance relates to his growing competence as a source musician. His strong skills developed from birth within a family that contained accomplished musicians. Early in his life, he began learning and playing the Old-Time tunes that are an important

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.artstamper.com/bio/PioneerNews\\_net.htm](http://www.artstamper.com/bio/PioneerNews_net.htm)

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.artstamper.com/discography/index.shtml>

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heritage of the southeast Kentucky region. Before he had reached 30 years, he had recorded with professional musicians of national quality. After the historic period, his accomplishments grew, as he showed the ability to perform and record in a variety of musical styles. Even though he found success in multiple styles, he continued to reverence Old-Time music, the source from which he emerged, and which he helped maintain as an important part of the state's culture.

### **Evaluation of the integrity between the significance of Art Stamper and the current physical condition of his former house**

A building which meets Criterion B in this context will maintain its associations with a significant individual if it has sufficient integrity of location, setting, and materials. The focus of such an assessment should ask how the property helps us understand the important individual, particularly how it helps us to understand how he/she became an accomplished individual.

The key issue of integrity is one of how the physical resource helps us understand and appreciate the significance of the important event, person, design that is proposed for listing. The question at the center of this nomination is how the Stamper House relates to the significance that Hiram and Art Stamper have within the field of Old Time fiddle music. Certainly this house is where both learned the craft, where they identified themselves within a geographical place and a culture. Hiram Stamper certainly is closely identified with this property, as he spent most of his adult years here. Art Stamper, however, spent most of his adult years—his time where his reputation as a fiddler grew—away from this place. If there is a lesson that this property teaches us about both men's lives, it's the power that home place has. Hiram Stamper arrived at this place as a man of about 40 years, with a growing family, and once he arrived, he found a deep attachment to the place. Art, on the other hand, left the place as a very young man, and did not return as a resident. The Old Time music that was played in this house had an effect, as do many traditional activities, of helping Hiram to develop those attachments in a place that his family only had a general connection to. Art Stamper, on the other hand, knew this house as his childhood residence, the place in which he received his musical education. He regularly returned to the house during his adult years through actual visits, and returned to it musically when he played his Old Time tunes. Much of the theme of Old Time music is a longing for the home place, and the nominated property fulfilled that vision for the important two musicians who are the subject of this nomination.

The Hiram and Art Stamper House has integrity of **location**. It hasn't been moved from its original place of construction. Its location in Knott County, near the center of the Southeast Fiddler Region as defined by Tilton, makes its location conspicuous, and an important part of its story of significance. This place helped inform Art Stamper's fiddle skills, as well as those of his ancestors who are associated with the house. Tilton characterizes a fiddler's house as an important place where free-wheeling fiddle play occurred, where musical ideas were traded, and where skills were developed. Thus, this location is an important part of understanding both Stamper's significance.

The property has integrity of **setting**. That setting remains much as it was during the days when Stamper was a youth. One key story is that as a youth Art helped the family cultivate crops, and played fiddle during breaks. That family vegetable plot is still available, to help tell the story of families working and playing together. The hard work of farming often is relieved by chants, verbal

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play, and music. The identity between the land surrounding the home and the “high lonesome sound” is captured by the setting that surrounds the house.

The house’s exterior materials and design have changed over the years. At best, the house has a moderate, yet sufficient, amount of integrity of **materials** and **design**. The usual test for this is a speculation over whether the significant person would recognize the house were he to return. Because Art Stamper died recently (2005), he had the ability to return to the house, to view it in its current form, and could easily recognize it as his unpretentious homeplace. The house’s interior retains much of its materials and design from the Period of Significance. With architecturally significant resources, retention of the original design and materials is usually critically important to convey that architectural significance. In this case, the significance of Mr. Stamper has to do with his manner of playing the fiddle—the way that tunes were replayed, and altered according to the sensibilities of the song’s performer. The Stamper House was created in one traditional house form (a 2-room saddlebag plan), which was expanded and adapted to the family’s needs as time went on. It had acquired two more rooms while Stamper lived there, becoming a 4-room house during the Period of Significance. A fifth room was added in the 1970s, in the rear. As the music that Art Stamper played did not demand that the tune retain its original dimensions, allowing some stylizing according to the player’s desire, the houses built for many such as the Stamper family, were freely customized to accommodate the family’s desires. The basis for Art Stamper’s significance seems consistent with a view that the house has integrity of materials and design even with some variation from the structure’s original form.

A house in the Eastern Kentucky Fiddler region that has integrity of location, setting, materials, and design will also have integrity of **associations**, and thus be eligible for National Register listing.

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**Sheet Music:**

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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  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Morehead State University; Berea College

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_ KT-98 \_\_\_\_\_

Hiram and Art Stamper House  
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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 85.11

### UTM References

**Property spans 2 quad maps: Coordinates 1 and 3 on Handhoe Quad; Coordinate 2 on the Hindman quad**

**Coordinates calculated by ArcGIS Explorer**

**Coordinates according to NAD 83:**

**1: 17/327 181/4138 662**

**2: 17/326 602/4138 026**

**3: 17/325 677/4138 585**

**Coordinates according to NAD 27:**

1 17 327 177 4138 457  
Zone Easting Northing

3 17 325 673 4138 381  
Zone Easting Northing

2 17 326 597 4137 822  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

The area proposed for listing corresponds with the metes and bound description of the property in Knott County (Kentucky) County Clerk's office, Deed Book 238, Page 540. This same area is registered with the Knott County Property Valuation Administrator under account 609-280, and depicted on the PVA's map 47, parcel 33. The survey is shown on Appalachian Surveying Inc., Drawing File name 04011 Master.

Hiram and Art Stamper's home is located 9/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile from Highway 80, Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky. The farm is divided by Stamper Branch Road with portions of the land on both sides of the road. The outer boundaries of the farm have fencing in poor condition and are defined by the top of the ridges in other areas without fencing.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the area that historically was associated with the important persons, Art and Hiram Stamper. The entire property was important in shaping their experience, and had an effect on their importance as fiddlers in the Old Time music idiom. The entire acreage, which was owned by the Stamper family during the Period of Significance, is the proper amount of land to convey the significance of the two important persons.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Carol Moore

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 2, 2013

street & number 5800 Barbell Circle telephone 336-697-1145

city or town McLeansville state NC zip code 27301

e-mail [camcr@aol.com](mailto:camcr@aol.com)

Hiram and Art Stamper House  
Name of Property

Knott County, Kentucky  
County and State

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Art Stamper Home

**City or Vicinity:** Hindman

**County:** Knott **State:** KY

**Photographer:** Carol Moore; Kay Stamper

**Date Photographed:** 2008, 2009; 1988.

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1 of \_8.

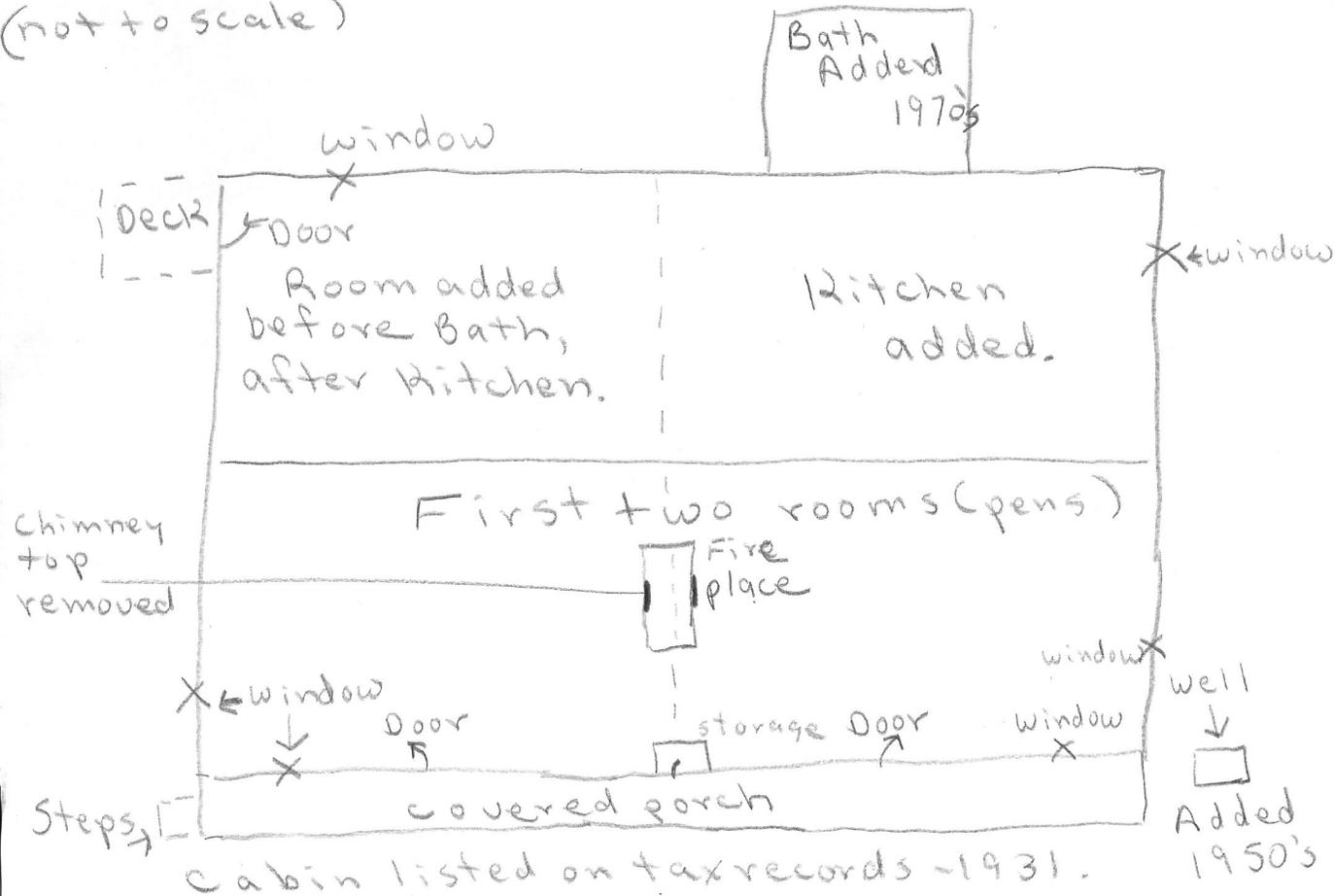
---

**Property Owner:**

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

name Carol Moore / Julianne Stamper Moore  
street & number 5800 Barbell Circle telephone 336-697-1145  
city or town McLeansville state NC zip code 27301

12T 98 sketch 1 3 front doors - middle door - no  
Art Stamper entrance - used for  
Home food storage  
(not to scale)



Hiram and Art  
Stamper House

Knott Co., KY

Zone 17

Coordinates = NAD 27

(Handshoe quad)

1: 327177/4138457

3: 325673/4138381

(Hindman quad)  
(CARRIE)  
4381 SE

2: 326597/4137822

coordinates =  
NAD 83

1) 327181/413862

2) 326602/4138026

3) 325677/4138585



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
in cooperation with Kentucky Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1952. Field checked 1954. Revised from aerial photographs  
taken 1988. Field checked 1990. Map edited 1992

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Kentucky coordinate  
system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)

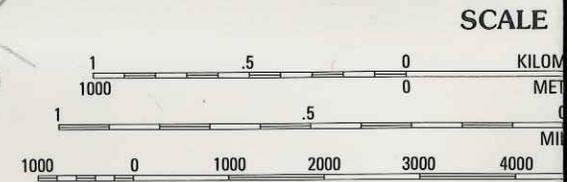
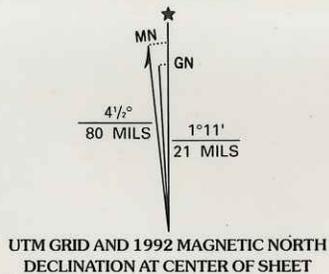
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17

1927 North American Datum

The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North  
American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections

is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by  
dashed corner ticks

Unlabeled wells are gas wells



CONTOUR INTERVAL  
NATIONAL GEODETIC SYSTEM

COMPLIES WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER  
KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
AND KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Hiram and Art Stamper House  
Knott Co., KY Hindman quad

(2) NAD 27: 17/326597/4137822  
(2) NAD 83: 17/326602/4138026

STATE OF  
KENTUCKY  
UNIVERSITY



(WEST)  
83°00'  
37°22'30"  
4138000m.N

324000m.E.

57'30"

MOUSIE 6.4 MI.  
SOFT SHELL 2.1 MI.

KT 98 005  
←---North

South --->

Farm outlined in  
black, yellow.

Disregard this - a right-of-way didn't happen.

1686  
Stamper Farm land within the  
yellow/black outline.  
crossing Stamper Branch Road

All of section 1686

Stamper Branch  
Rd

House, trailer,  
barn, garden.

Stamper Farm, section 1673, shown.

1673



aerial KT 98 006

1. Art Stamper (1933-2005), on the left, and Hiram Stamper (1893-1992) his father, taken by Art's wife, Kay Stamper in 1988 at the Art Stamper home on Stamper Branch Road, Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky. The location of negative is unknown.

2. Picture 2 of 8: Picture of Art Stamper home, taken by Carol Moore in 2012, view is slightly south-west. Stamper was born in one of the two front rooms, the only two rooms existing at his birth. Front portion is the main entrance under the covered porch with two doors; the side door, shown, is a later addition.

3. Picture taken by Carol Moore in 2008 showing west facing side of the home with the well that was added in the 1950's. The roof at that time is front – roll roofing, back –tin. The porch, shown, was a meeting place for Stamper, family and many musicians during Stamper's life.

4. Picture taken in 2009 by Carol Moore. It is the west side of the house, showing the well (added 1950's), electricity (added 1950's), the small window is the kitchen area (added unknown) and the block building behind the house is the bathroom (added 1970's).

5. This picture taken by Carol Moore in 2009, shows the north side of the barn and its log style. The barn is endangered and risks failure as it is currently propped up by tree trunks. Stamper stored corn, sopped the pig, and did various farm chores in this barn.

6. Picture taken by Carol Moore, original in her possession, date taken –unknown. This scene is facing mostly east. It shows the well that the Stamper visited to obtain water for his home previous to the creation of a well near his home in the 1950's. This is one of several gardens on the land which was cultivated for the survival of the Stamper family. This scene helps explain Stamper's recollections of working a row in the garden and resting, playing the fiddle and starting again on another row of the garden. At times, Stamper would climb a ridge and play his fiddle while other family members worked; other times, he worked while brothers, uncles, or his dad played.

7. Shown is a garden picture taken by Carol Moore, some time previous to 1994, orientation unknown, original in Moore's possession. Shown is Martha Kelley Stamper (1909-1994), mother of Art Stamper, showing a mature garden. Stamper's family adhered to Native American methods of planting crops. Shown are green beans growing on corn stalks. Melon vines are in the foreground. Not a weed to be seen and Stamper, once the crop was planted, took his fiddle to the garden – played awhile, weeded awhile, and then took turns with his fellow family fiddlers playing the fiddle and weeding the

8 Picture taken by Carol Moore in 2008, view is easterly, taken at Stewart-Stamper Family Cemetery, Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky. At the end of Stamper's life he chose to be buried as close to home as possible, just 9/10 of a mile from the cabin of his birth at the mouth of Stamper Branch Road.







/29 04:14



2009/08/29 04:15





# STAMPER

Old Time-Bluegrass Music



TOGETHER  
FOREVER



ARTHUR  
NOV. 1, 1933  
JAN. 23, 2005