

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received **JUL 13 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic David Rankin House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Snapp's Ferry Road N/A not for publication

city, town Greeneville X vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Greene code 059

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Margaret Hankins Bowman (Mrs. Denver Bowman)

street & number Route 13, Box 600

city, town Greeneville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37743

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Greene County Court House

street & number Main Street

city, town Greeneville state Tennessee 37743

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The David Rankin House was built in the 1790s. It is located on Snapps Ferry Road in Greene County, Tennessee, approximately one mile and one-half east of the city limits of Greeneville, Tennessee. Located in what was once a rural setting, the expansion of the City of Greeneville has moved into the county so that the Rankin House is now in a setting more suburban than rural. The house is located on a 9.5 acre site in a relatively flat to rolling terrain. The house is a two-story rectangular brick structure with a one-story ell or wing extending from the left rear portion of the house. A gable roof frames the two-story portion of the house as well as the rear of the one-story addition. On the front of the house there is a one-story porch, framed with a hipped roof extending up and against the masonry of the main front walls. There also is a rear porch extending along the south side of the one-story ell at the inside corner of the plan. Alterations include the addition of a bathroom at the inside corner of the rear porch, and the addition of some exterior siding that encloses part of the rear porch and bathroom.

The house was built by David Rankin, an early pioneer of East Tennessee. The brick for the two-story house were made on the site and the construction was performed with the aid of slave labor. The brick are laid in standard stretcher bond with a header course every seventh course. The front of the house (west elevation) is symmetrical with eight windows and a central entrance. The windows are unusual divided light windows with twelve panes in the upper sash and eight panes in the lower sash, with wood surrounds. The one-story porch on the front of the house has four square wood columns with slight taper. Trim at the base and capital is simple and restrained. The porch floor is supported by hewn timbers at the front, resting on brick. Since there are no second floor windows over the entrance, the hipped roof slopes up to a point higher than the second floor window sills. The main facade has a heavy, deep brick cornice consisting of six courses of brick. The first, third, and fifth courses have alternate projecting headers, while the second, fourth, and sixth courses are even stretcher courses. The net effect is one of three rows of dentils for the cornice. The cornice brick terminates immediately under the roof sheathing.

The two side elevations of the two-story structure have chimneys projecting a short distance above the ridge of the roof. The chimneys, however, do not project on the exterior of the building walls. The south, or right side elevation, has no windows and no openings except two square openings into the attic near the chimney and close to the ridge. On the north elevation (left elevation) there are two windows on the first floor, flanking the living room fireplace. There are similar windows on the second floor, centered over the first floor windows. The rake cornice on the gable ends consists of a single rectangular board.

The rear wing of the house contains two rooms, the end one being the kitchen. This wing is thought by some to have been added at a later date, but it appears more likely to have been built as the main house was being built. The brick work on the north elevation, where the two-story structure adjoins the one-story structure is in an even plane with no vertical joint at the juncture. The brick is identical in size and color; there is no indication of these two rear rooms being added later. A third room existed at one time, connecting to the kitchen. This room housed the slaves. This area of the house has been removed. There is a partially excavated area under the kitchen that shows the heavy puncheons used to support the main floor system.

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The rear elevation of the two-story structure has the same brick cornice as the front elevation. There are two windows on this elevation, one in the south room, first floor (an apparent later installation) and a window on the second floor in the stairway hall.

The rear elevation of the one-story wing has no windows, but the chimney does project from the main wall of the house, and the chimney extends approximately two feet above the ridge.

The interior of the house has a central hallway with stairway. The two-story section of the house is only one room deep, having one room on each side, on each floor, off of the central hallway. Each room had a fireplace. On the second floor, the chimney and fireplace projections were to the inside. Due to the way the flue from the first floor fireplace was built into the chimney, the second floor fireplace is off-center, giving an unusual appearance to the mantel. The only fireplace that has been sealed is the one in the kitchen.

Some of the interior doors have original hardware. One doorknob is a unique type called "Haymaker latch" named for the blacksmith who made it. One door has a set of long-narrow hinges that extend across most of the door width, similar in style to barn door hinges. The interior doors are primarily three feet wide, but only six feet high. Some of the trim appears to be original. The interior doors are a seven panel type with one wide horizontal panel at the top of the door, then two rows of three vertical panels each below. The panels have normal relief on one side, but essentially no relief on the other side.

The stairway from the entry hall to the second floor has turned balusters from the first floor to the second, obviously added at a later date. The balusters around the stairwell at the second floor, however, are simple square shaped and may be the original design. Other trim in the stairway is plain.

The fireplace in the end of the one-story wing was apparently used until a recent renovation at which time it was closed off from the room entirely.

There is an out-building that was constructed for a single car garage, probably in the 1920s or 1930s. It has no historical significance.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1790s **Builder/Architect** David Rankin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria B and C

The David Rankin House in Greene County, Tennessee, District 13, is a two-story brick house located about three and one-half miles northeast of the town of Greeneville, Tennessee, on the Snapp's Ferry Road (formerly known as the Greeneville-Blountville Road), and one mile and one half from the city limits of Greeneville. The house is significant because of its association as the home of David Rankin 1745-1802(?), pioneer settler of Washington District, North Carolina, later known as Greene County, Tennessee, who had an outstanding part in the very early history and government of the area and was patriarch of a family which has long been prominent in the affairs of East Tennessee. The house is also significant for its architectural importance to Greene County as an example of an early vernacular interpretation of the Federal style.

David Rankin was born in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania in 1745, son of William Rankin and his wife Mary Huston. At age seven William, who had been born in Feremish, Ireland, County Antrim in 1713, came to America in 1720 with his parents -- Adam Rankin (born in Scotland in 1688; died 1750) and Mary Steele, whom family records invariably describe as being "of the titled landed gentry of Scotland." They landed at Philadelphia and settled in Chester County, Pennsylvania. William later married in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and he died there in 1792.

David Rankin was the youngest of the eight children of William and his wife. He married Ann Campbell (date unknown), daughter of William Campbell. David Rankin and Ann Campbell had seven children.

In 1778 in the great Scotch-Irish migration from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley David Rankin made the trek to Washington District, North Carolina (now Greene County, Tennessee) with his family of small children, his brother William, and some family friends. The Moores, the Galbraiths, and the Rankins all started from Pennsylvania in 1778. On the way, the Rankin children became ill in Virginia in the fall of the year and the Rankins remained in Rockbridge County, Virginia through the winter. In the spring of 1779 the Rankins continued their journey and settled above the Moores "at the head of Moore's Creek (which, after 1793, was called Stories or Moon Creek), near a spring of good water," where his house now stands. All three of these early families became very active in planning for a new community and county government. A baby born to the Anthony Moore family in 1779 was the first white child born in what later became Greene County. At that time, the area in which they settled was "Indian county." Aunt Betsy (Elizabeth) Ross Rankin Gass (1779-1862), a daughter of David and Ann Rankin, told 'Grandma Rankin' -- i.e., Elvira Blackburn Rankin (1810-1910) -- that while she was a little girl the women and children would hide in the knobs while the men were fighting the Indians." David Rankin probably first homesteaded his property, for his name appears on the first tax list of Greene County in 1783, before he received land grants from North Carolina.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9.5 acres

Quadrangle name Greenville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 17 340880 4008300
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is bounded on the west by Snapp Ferry Road and on the north, east, and south by adjoining property lines. The nomination includes only enough property to preserve the historic context of the house.
See Site Plan

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See Continuation Sheet

organization " " " date November 1982

street & number " " " telephone See Continuation Sheet

city or town " " " state " " "

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert I. Hryjen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/30/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Andrews date 8/26/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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In 1780, after he had been in North Carolina for only a year, David Rankin, along with his brother William and their cousin Thomas, fought in the Battle of King's Mountain. Earlier, David had served in the 8th Battalion, Chester County, Pennsylvania Militia.

As a result of this service in the Revolutionary War, he received (in 1787, 1789, 1790, 1792, 1793, and 1794) land grants from North Carolina for extensive holdings in the area, most of them along Moore's Creek (Stories Creek).

David's name was listed in the United States Census as a taxpayer of Washington County, Tennessee (which became Greene County in 1790).

In 1781 David was honored with a seat on the Washington County Court and in 1784 he served on Jury of Greene County.

David Rankin was prominent in the movement to secede from North Carolina and establish the State of Franklin in 1786-1787. He signed a petition of Inhabitants of Western Country South of the Ohio to the General Assembly of North Carolina asking recognition of the State of Franklin in December 1787.

Later, he was a leader in planning the first government of Greene County, Tennessee which was formed November 11, 1790. He was one of the first fifteen persons holding the position of Commissioners of Greene County under the allegiance of North Carolina.

When Greene County later became a part of the Southwest Territory, David Rankin was appointed in February 1791 by Governor William Blount of the Territory ...South of the River Ohio as one of the first five men to constitute the County Court of Greene County, Tennessee, -- a position he continued to hold until his death. (In the Constitutional Convention of 1796 to prepare a constitution for the state of Tennessee, David's brother William Rankin was a delegate from Greene County and was a member of the small committee that made the first draft of a constitution for the new state of Tennessee.)

David Rankin was a Presbyterian. His brothers, John and Adam, were Presbyterian preachers. Adam was the second Presbyterian minister in Kentucky -- and he served in Lexington, Kentucky for about forty years. David Rankin and his family probably worshipped at Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church, for other Rankin and Moore families worshipped there. Valentine Sevier gave land for the Mt. Bethel Church and cemetery in 1803. From tombstone records it is known that at least four of David Rankin's children are buried at Mt. Bethel cemetery, Greeneville, Tennessee.

The date of David Rankin's death is not known, nor is the site of his grave. However, a copy of David Rankin's will (Will Book #1, Greene County, June 1828 to February 1873, Greene County Court House, Clerk's Office, Greeneville, Tennessee) signed February 27, 1802, indicated that David owned considerable household and personal possessions as well as slaves. His wife must have died before David for there is no mention of her in his will. In a time when illiteracy was common on the frontier, David was an educated man. Books were a scarce article at that time and in that place but his will indicated that David had a substantial library. That he prized these volumes is evidenced by his careful distribution of them in his will among certain ones of his children.

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David Rankin was in every sense of the word a remarkable man. His name is prominent among the early settlers of Tennessee.

All indications are that David Rankin built the brick house at the head of Moore's Creek in the 1790s. It is known that in 1803 David Rankin's daughter Jane (1782-1843) and James Oliphant were married at the home by Reverend James Witherspoon, the first minister of Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church of Greeneville.

David Rankin willed the main portion of his plantation including his homeplace to his son, David, junior (1775-1836) provided he assumed the responsibility of the younger members of the family, which he did. And David, junior continued to live in the homeplace. Shortly before his own death (July 17, 1836) David, junior hired James Patterson to survey the land in 1832. The survey showed that the plantation contained 1179 acres. The survey map shows areas where the land of the Moores and of the Galbraiths joined or bordered the David Rankin, junior land. In his will, signed April 5, 1836 and probated August 1, 1836 (Book of Minutes, Greene County Court, page 225), David, junior willed the homeplace to his son Robert L. S. Rankin (1815-1853). Robert L.S. Rankin later built and moved into another two-story brick house not very far away (still standing today in 1982) on Sinking Creek. Robert L.S. Rankin died in 1853 allegedly as a result of working too hard at wheat threshing time. Before his death he had deeded the land which he had inherited from David, junior to his four children (David Bruce, James Jerome, Mary E., and Addie J.). Louise DeVault Rankin, as widow of Robert L.S. Rankin, received her share of the land including the David Rankin house. She later married Charles Gray Rankin, a nephew of Robert L.S. Rankin. It was he, her second husband, who sold about 1890 the inherited David Rankin homeplace (which had become his when he married Louisa DeVault Rankin) to Sarah R. Hendrix from Carter County. Until that sale the property, including the homeplace, had remained in the Rankin name through the years. In 1892 Sarah R. Hendrix sold the property to J. W. Sweney. The homeplace is today (1982) still owned by a descendant of the Sweney family, Mrs. Margaret Hankins Bowman. Thus, for the entire one hundred and ninety years -- with the exception of two years -- the homeplace has been in the hands of two families.

Architecturally, the house is a very early, little-altered example of a federal period farmhouse. Characteristic of the Federal style, the house has an austere five bay facade, multi-paned windows, brick corbeling on the facade, and gable end chimneys. More vernacular are the unusual absence of a second story central window, the uncommonly heavy rather than restrained corbeling, and the placement of the corbeling directly under the roof, leaving no space for eaves trim and giving the house an unusual shortened appearance. The David Rankin House thus is significant not only for its sturdy architecture but also, perhaps mainly, because of the very active pioneer part David Rankin himself took in the early settlement and in the government of the area. The house today (1982) continues to be used as it was originally intended -- as a private residence.

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- (a) "David Rankin, Pioneer," Manuscript, 1982.
- (b) "David Rankin, Early Pioneer of Tennessee," Manuscript, 1982.
- (c) "The David Rankin House," Manuscript, 1982.

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