

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 07000158

Date of Listing: March 15, 2007

Property Name: Smithson-McCall Farm

County: Williamson

State: Tennessee

Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee, 1780-1960

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Denial J. Van  
Signature of the Keeper

March 15, 2007

Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance

Criterion C is hereby removed.

[These changes were made in consultation with and approved by the National Register staff of the Tennessee SHPO.]

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The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

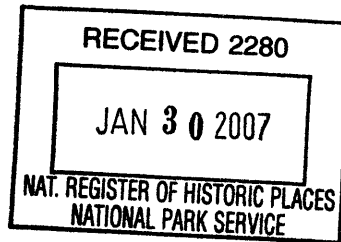
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**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Smithson-McCall Farm  
other names/site number Smithson-Fisher Farm; Happy Hills Farm; Fisher Farm; WM. 1043; Bag End Farm

2. Location

street & number 6779 Comstock Road NA  not for publication  
city or town Bethesda  vicinity  
state TN code TN county Williamson code 187 zip code 37046

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 for 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  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Richard H. [Signature] 1/26/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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] 3/15/07  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Smithson-McCall Farm  
Name of Property

Williamson County, Tennessee  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**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 count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7		buildings
1		sites
6		structures
		objects
14	0	Total

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

Historic Family Farms in Middle Tenn., 1780-1960 MPS

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: processing, storage, agricultural  
outbuilding, agricultural field, animal facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: storage, agricultural field, animal  
facility, agricultural outbuilding

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival influence  
Other: hall and parlor plan

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
walls Weatherboard; vinyl  
roof Asphalt, metal  
other Concrete

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1830-1940

**Criteria Considerations**

NA

(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** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Dates**

c. 1830, c. 1860, c. 1920, c. 1940

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA**

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Tennessee Century Farms Collection, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Smithson-McCall Farm  
Name of Property

Williamson County, Tennessee  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 256.3 acres

Bethesda 63 SE and Rally Hill 64 NE

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>518635</u>	<u>3956095</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>519377</u>	<u>3956095</u>

3	<u>16</u>	<u>518282</u>	<u>3953972</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>16</u>	<u>518556</u>	<u>3954053</u>

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Carroll Van West and Elizabeth H. Moore  
organization Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU date November 16, 2006  
street & number Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro State TN zip code 37132

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Property Owner

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

name Susan McCall Fisher  
street & number 6779 Comstock Road telephone 615-790-6371  
city or town College Grove state TN zip code 37046

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Smithson-McCall Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

## 7. Narrative Description

The 256.3-acre Smithson-McCall Farm is located in rural southeast Williamson County on the west side of Comstock Road in the unincorporated community of Bethesda. Founded in 1848 by the family of the present owner, the farm continued to develop during the second half of the nineteenth through the twentieth century. A particular period of growth occurred from the 1920s through the mid-twentieth century with the transition from traditional crop farming to progressive farming techniques such as dairy, tobacco, and livestock. Currently, the owners raise sheep on the farm. The property is set in the rolling hills of the county and runs along a ridgeline with buildings concentrated at the top of the ridge. The historic farmhouse, possibly built as early as c. 1830, with a major expansion c. 1860 and later c. 1920 additions, is located near the eastern edge of the property and is surrounded by several agricultural resources constructed between c. 1920 and c. 1940.

The entrance to the farm is along Comstock Road in the community of Bethesda. Following the ridgeline from the entrance, the drive leads south past fields, pastures, and woods on either side of the drive. Near the entrance, a man-made pond is set into a hollow in the land on the southeast side of the drive. The drive winds approximately one-half mile to the farmhouse and surrounding agricultural buildings. As it approaches the farmhouse, the drive first reaches the dairy barn, dairy silo, and well house on the west side of the drive. Passing through a gate just south of the dairy complex is the burley barn and water trough on the east. The drive ends at the farmhouse, which faces west at the top of the ridge. To the south of the house are the garage, smokehouse, and chicken coop. A farm road leads from the end of the drive south down the slope of the ridge. It winds around a second man-made pond through fields and woods in the southern portion of the property.

Listed as a Tennessee Century Farm under the name of Fisher Farm, the nominated property remains an intact working livestock farm and represents the rural and agricultural character of this section of Williamson County. All structures on the farm are contributing resources and include the farmhouse, burley barn, water trough, dairy barn, dairy silo, well house, chicken coop, smokehouse, and garage. Also contributing are four man-made ponds, two of which are readily visible from the drive or farmhouse, and the agricultural landscape made up of fences, fields, woods, and farm roads. There are no non-contributing resources within the farm district. The following inventory of resources describes each individual component of the farm complex.

### 1. Farmhouse (c. 1830, c. 1860, c. 1920, contributing building)

Oral history from the family dates the construction of the house to c. 1830. There were substantial changes to the farmhouse c. 1860. The original log hall and parlor structure is now encased within a simplified c. 1920, central hall, frame dwelling with a rear ell. The one and-one-half story dwelling has a continuous rough-cut stone and concrete block foundation, weatherboard siding, an exterior end chimney, an interior chimney, and an asphalt shingle roof with a central

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Smithson-McCall Farm  
Williamson Co., TN

gable dormer above the front entrance. Located approximately one-half mile from the entrance of the farm, it faces west at the end of the main drive and is the focal point of the surrounding agricultural landscape.

The west facade of the farmhouse is composed of the three bays of the central hall - a central entrance, and flanking windows. A porch, similar to a c. 1920 porch on the building, was built sometime after 1982.<sup>1</sup> It is a three-quarter-length porch with wood plank floorboards centered on the facade. The shed roof of the porch is supported by four simple square wood posts and has vertical wood boards covering the sides of the slope. A single concrete step approached by a stone walk leads up to the porch. The central entrance contains the c. 1860 main entrance door flanked by single-light sidelights. The door has a single pane of glass and is covered by a screen door with decorative woodwork detailing. A simple wood frame surrounds the door. On each side of the entrance bay is a single, one-over-one, double-hung wood window with a simple wood frame. Centered on this façade is a c. 1940 gable dormer. The dormer contains four vertically oriented, three-light casement windows. Wood shingles cover the gable field while asphalt shingles cover the roof of the dormer. At the southernmost end of this facade is the entrance to the enclosed porch that stretches along the south elevation. The screen door to the porch is reached by a set of concrete steps. The door contains decorative woodwork similar to that of the main entrance and is flanked by single-light sidelights. The shed roof of the enclosed porch extends to create a portico supported by a single square wood post over the entrance.

The north (gable end) elevation of the house contains an end chimney flanked on the upstairs level by single, one-over-one, double-hung wood windows. The bottom portion of the chimney is composed of rough-cut stone and the upper portion of brick; the chimney was rebuilt c. 1920. Metal storm windows cover the windows on this elevation. The rough-cut stone foundation is visible on this elevation. Also visible is the end of the enclosed porch on the east elevation of the house with a horizontal band of screened windows wrapping around the end, installed c. 1940.

The south elevation of the house contains the gable end of the central hall and the rear ell. The gable end of the central hall has a single, one-over-one, double-hung wood window in the upstairs level covered with a metal storm window. An enclosed porch set on a concrete block foundation covers the first story of the gable end and the rear ell. An opening in the foundation below the parlor of the central hall exposes the original log foundation of the c. 1830 portion of the building. On the main level of the porch, a horizontal band of screened windows runs along the westernmost portion. The easternmost end of the porch contains a single, one-over-one, double-hung wood window covered by a metal storm window. Just east of this window is the exterior of a c. 1980 bathroom addition, which has a new window on its east elevation.

<sup>1</sup> Survey photos from 1982 show a similar porch configuration, a cistern at the side of the house, no window on the side of the rear porch extension, and a chimney (now gone). Survey photos also show the bathroom addition projecting from the south elevation; the projecting portion has since been taken off and is now flush with the south porch.

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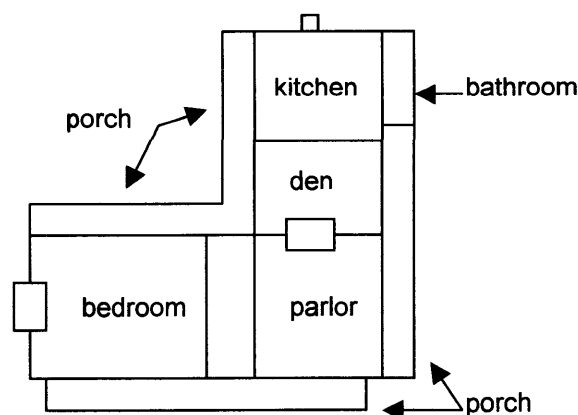
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Smithson-McCall Farm  
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Weatherboard siding, installed post 1982, covers the bathroom addition to the ground level. An interior brick chimney is located near the center of the roof ridge of the rear ell.

The east (gable end) elevation of the rear ell sits on a rough-cut stone foundation. The main level of this elevation contains two one-over-one, double-hung wood windows. The southernmost window is smaller and is covered with a metal storm window. In the foundation level, a door composed of vertical wood boards opens to a basement. A post-1982 concrete block flue is located at the center of this elevation where a cistern was once located. Also visible on this elevation are the ends of the bathroom addition on the south elevation and the enclosed porch of the north façade of the ell. This end of the bathroom addition has a single, post-1982, one-over-one, double-hung wood window covered with a metal storm window. The end of the enclosed porch is recessed from the gable end of the ell. The band of screened windows wraps around from the side elevation of the ell. Weatherboard siding covers both the bathroom addition and the enclosed porch underneath the windows to ground level. Some of this weatherboard is post-1982. An enclosed porch wraps around the inside of the ell with a horizontal band of screened windows running along the entire porch. On the north elevation of the ell near its intersection with the central hall is a wood door with a screened opening in the upper half. A set of wood steps leads up to this door.

The exterior of the main farmhouse remains largely intact from its c. 1920 renovation.



On the interior, the house consists of four rooms and a hall on the first floor and two bedrooms in the upper level. The main entrance opens onto a central hall flanked by a bedroom to the north and a parlor to the south. Two additional rooms are located in the rear ell, a den just east of the parlor and a kitchen at the eastern end of the ell. An enclosed porch wraps around the inside of the ell and along the southern elevation of the house.



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Smithson-McCall Farm  
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The central entrance hall leads from the front entrance to the rear of the central hall portion of the house. It contains a hardwood floor, simple doorframes and moldings, and baseboards that date to the c. 1920 renovation of the dwelling to a central hall residence. At the northeast corner of the hall, a staircase wraps around the corner and has simple wood handrails, newel posts, balusters, and treads. A small storage closet is located underneath the corner of the stair. At the rear of the hall a three-panel wood door with a single pane of glass leads into the enclosed porch on the interior of the ell.

To the north of the central hall is a bedroom with a hardwood floor, baseboards, door frames and moldings, and fireplace that date to the c. 1920 central hall dwelling. A closet has been added along the southern wall of the room. The most notable feature of this room is the classical stone fireplace with fluted pilasters, a simple mantel, and a tile hearth, an architectural embellishment in keeping with the character of the 1920s renovation.

South of the central hall is a parlor that contains c. 1920 hardwood floors, doorframes and moldings, and baseboards. A simple classical brick fireplace, which dates c. 1920, is located along the eastern wall of this room and has simple non-fluted pilasters, a simple mantel, and a stone hearth. Two four-panel wood doors are located along the eastern wall that adjoins the rear ell.

At the center of the c. 1920 ell between the front parlor and the kitchen is a small den with a fireplace identical to the one in the front parlor. The room contains its original hardwood floor, original doors and moldings, and original baseboards. Two wood doors are located on both the western wall into the parlor and the eastern wall into the kitchen.

At the eastern end of the ell is a recently remodeled, c. 2000, kitchen with a linoleum floor and modern cabinets. A small c. 1980 bathroom addition is located along the southern end of the kitchen and is flush with the porch on the exterior.

The interior of the enclosed porches consists of wood floors and beaded board ceilings. The porch walls that adjoin the house are composed of weatherboard and the outside walls have vertical wood boards below the screens.

The central hall staircase leads to a landing and hallway on either side of which are two upstairs bedrooms, installed in what had been attic or storage space between c. 1920 and the installation of the dormer window c. 1940. The bedrooms have hardwood floors, baseboards, doorframes and moldings, and fireplaces that are consistent with a date of c. 1920 to c. 1940.

Aside from the modernizations to the kitchen and adjoining bathroom, few alterations have been made to the interior since its c. 1920 conversion to a central hall residence. The original features

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of the building, including original floors, doorframes and moldings, baseboards, and fireplaces, contribute to the architectural integrity of the house.

## **2. Dairy Barn (c. 1940, contributing building)**

Located northwest of the farmhouse and facing east, the dairy barn is a one-story, concrete block, side-gable building. It was constructed c. 1940 with the introduction of dairy cattle to the operation of the farm. The gable roof has exposed wood rafter tails and is covered in metal sheets. Two doors composed of simple wood boards and seven window openings are located along the east façade of the building. The south gable end has a large single opening sheltered by a shed roof that opens onto an enclosed yard. The interior is divided into two rooms, a larger room for milking that opens onto the enclosed yard at the south end and a smaller room on the north end for cooling the milk.

## **3. Dairy Silo (c. 1940, contributing structure)**

Constructed c. 1940, the dairy silo is located just southwest of the dairy barn within the enclosed yard. It is a tall, concrete block, circular silo with a rounded metal top and two small, stacked openings that face the dairy barn.

## **4. Well House (c. 1940, contributing building)**

Located between the dairy barn and silo within the enclosed yard of the dairy complex is a c. 1940 well house. It is a gable-front, concrete block structure covered with a wood roof. Constructed simultaneously with the dairy barn and silo, the well house was built for sanitation purposes.

## **5. Burley Tobacco Barn (c. 1930, contributing building)**

Built after the introduction of the air-cured burley tobacco crop to the farm in the 1920s or 1930s, the burley barn is located just north of the house on the east side of the drive. It is a tall, elongated pole barn covered in vertical wood boards. Openings are located in the gable ends on the north and south sides of the structure. The low-pitched gable roof is covered with metal sheeting and has exposed rafter tails. To increase air circulation, a row of small openings runs the length of the building on the east and west sides just below the eaves. The barn is now used to store equipment.

## **6. Water Trough (c. 1940, contributing structure)**

Located just northwest of the burley barn is a simple poured concrete rectangular-shaped water trough that dates c. 1940.

## **7. Garage (c. 1940, contributing building)**

South of the farmhouse at the end of the drive is a gable-front garage constructed c. 1940. It is a frame building covered in barn board that was covered with metal sheeting, installed c. 1990, and has a metal roof. A single opening is located in the north gable end.

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## 8. Smokehouse (c. 1830, contributing building)

The c. 1830 smokehouse dates to the construction of the original log farmhouse and is located to the east of the garage. It is a log, square-notched, gable-front structure set on rough-cut stones with a raised-seam metal roof. A lean-to shed roof supported by two wood posts is attached to the west side of the building. A small entrance door composed of simple vertical boards is located in the north gable end. Horizontal wood boards cover the gables. A modern one-over-one, double-hung window is in the south gable end.

## 9. Chicken Coop (c. 1920, contributing building)

Set behind the garage and the well house is a c. 1920 chicken coop. It is an unadorned square building supported by wood posts and is covered in vertical wood boards. Its raised-seam metal roof slopes toward the rear of the structure. A small opening on the south side opens into a small chicken pen.

## 10. Ponds (c. 1940, 4 contributing structures)

There are four man-made ponds on the Smithson-McCall Farm. Pond No. 1 is located in a hollow in the northeast section of the farm on the east side of the main drive. From the end of the drive, a farm road leads from a gate down a slope to Pond No. 2. These two ponds are easily visible along the main drive or from the farmhouse. Pond No. 3 is located in the west-central section of the farm and Pond No. 4 is toward the south of the property. Pond Nos. 3 and 4 are tucked away into the agricultural landscape of the Smithson-McCall Farm and are not readily visible from the drive or the farmhouse.

## 11. Agricultural Landscape (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century- c.1940, contributing site)

The agricultural landscape of the Smithson-McCall Farm includes the fields, terraced pastures (to prevent soil erosion), tree lines, fences, gates, and farm roads throughout the property. Together with the individual components described above, these elements of the landscape are integral to the operation of a working farm. The fences and gates that enclose the numerous fields and pastures are composed of chain link, chicken wire, barbed wire, and wood and are maintained by the Fisher family. The dirt farm roads providing access to the fields and pastures throughout the property are also maintained by the family for their private use. These larger pieces are contributing elements of the agricultural landscape and the Smithson-McCall Farm.

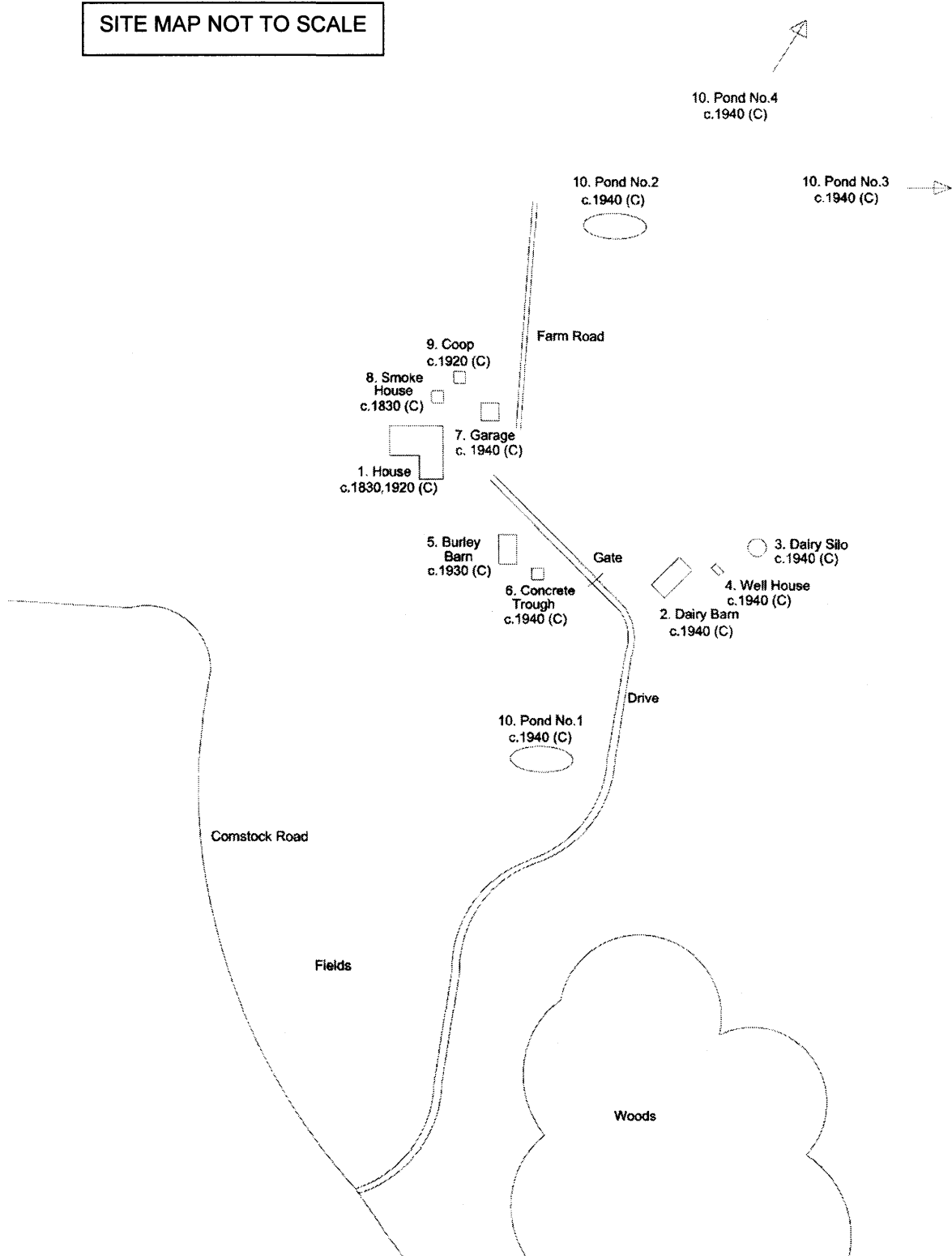
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Smithson-McCall Farm  
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SITE MAP NOT TO SCALE



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## 8. Statement of Significance

The Smithson-McCall Farm in the unincorporated Bethesda community of Williamson County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in agriculture, especially in how the property documents the impact of the progressive agricultural movement of the early twentieth century on the operations and landscape of a middle-class family farm. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an architecturally significant group of buildings and structures, placed within an agricultural landscape of high integrity to the early decades of the twentieth century, that represents a good example of farmstead architecture in Middle Tennessee and that reflects the impact of the Progressive Farm movement of the early twentieth century. The property meets the registration requirements for agricultural and architectural significance for historic family farms in the Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee, 1780-1960 MPS.

### Historical Background

The land's history dates to the early settlement era of Williamson County history. In 1788, Revolutionary war veteran Thomas Gillespie acquired a land grant for 4,000 acres along Flat Creek. Twenty years later, 528 acres of this initial grant was conveyed to his son, David Gillespie. In 1813, Samuel Henderson, Sr., purchased 125 acres from Gillespie's holdings. These 125 acres remain within the farm's boundaries today.<sup>2</sup>

In 1828, Samuel Henderson, Sr., died and conveyed the farm to Dr. Samuel Henderson, Jr., a locally prominent physician and community leader, and Lucy Henderson. Local Williamson County historians and Rick Warick of the Historic Preservation Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County date the core of the nominated farmhouse to c. 1830, although a patient search of the records cannot confirm this date. The section has hand-hewn logs, which gives some physical evidence to confirm the c. 1830 date. The property's smokehouse is also believed to date c. 1830.

The history of the Smithson-McCall family farm began in 1848, when Nancy Pettus Smithson acquired the first 125 acres in a purchase from Dr. Samuel Henderson. Shortly before the Civil War, in 1855, Nancy Smithson conveyed the property to her son Charles Smithson. Charles Smithson, born 1806, is credited with making the first frame additions to farmhouse c. 1860. Until his death in 1890, Smithson continued to farm this acreage, minus 43 acres he sold to his son Charles T. Smithson in 1873. In 1891, Charles T. Smithson inherited his father's land and the farm's original 125 acres was once again under one ownership. During Charles T. Smithson's

<sup>2</sup> Warrant 508 to Thomas Gillespie (1788), Williamson County Archives, Franklin; Deed Book D, p. 38 (1813), Williamson County Archives. "Fisher Farm, Williamson County," Tennessee Century Farms Collection, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

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twenty-five years of operation, the farm more than doubled in size. The present acreage of 256 acres dates to the period of Charles T. Smithson's land purchases.<sup>3</sup>

## Progressive Farming and Expansion, 1915-1950

In 1915, with the death of Charles T. Smithson, 135 acres of the farm, including the domestic complex, passed to his daughter Alice Smithson McCall. Alice and her husband Andrew L. McCall made several improvements to the property, including a c. 1920 major expansion and renovation of the nineteenth century dwelling into a design characterized by a columned front porch. The McCalls in the 1920s established the farm's dairy business and its burley tobacco production. The dairy was called Happy Hills Farm and, in addition to burley tobacco, it specialized in Jersey cattle. Alice Smithson McCall also kept a chicken coop, which yielded eggs and chickens for market. Other agricultural products produced from 1920 to 1950 included beef cattle, sheep, wheat, and hay.

The McCalls transformed the historic farm into a model progressive farming operation in keeping with a significant statewide trend in those decades. Tennessee farms became more diversified than ever before. Beef cattle and dairy cattle, like at the Smithson-McCall Farm, became important contributors to the Middle Tennessee economy. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) built a demonstration dairy farm, emphasizing the production potential of Jersey cattle, outside of Lewisburg in neighboring Marshall County. Dairies flourished at large and small farms throughout the region. Productive dairies, like that of the McCalls, can be identified by the investment in c. 1940 dairy buildings, when new USDA standards forced families to either invest in new equipment to keep milk refrigerated until delivery and to maintain a clean environment for milking or leave the business. One important structure of note is the family's decision to build a concrete silo, which became the preferred way for families to storage large amounts of silage for their larger dairy herds.

Throughout this period of operation, the McCalls, like other progressive farm families, emphasized livestock more than row crops. New types of grass and hay, alfalfa and lespedeza in particular, were promoted by the agricultural experts as additional foodstuffs for livestock. The nominated property's pattern of open pastureland and ponds reflect this switch to an emphasis on livestock production. The ponds also reflect the ethos of New Deal-era soil conservation programs. The United States Soil Conservation Service preached the value of man-made ponds for livestock and for land renewal. Tennessee progressive farmers were measured by their willingness to practice soil conservation and modern farm management as well as their willingness to accept the advice of agricultural experts from the University of Tennessee extension service, the Farm Bureau Federation, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. With their concrete water trough, terraced

<sup>3</sup> Deed Book T (1848), p. 64, Deed Book W (1855), p. 247, Williamson County Archives; "Fisher Farm," Tennessee Century Farms Collection.

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pastures, ponds, and diversified production, the McCall farm is a good representative of how those various ideal farming practices actually translated into an individual farming operation.

The McCalls also introduced burley tobacco to the farm in the 1920s. The crop is a significant indicator of progressive agricultural practice from that era. The production of burley tobacco, began to expand in Tennessee after the establishment of the University of Tennessee's (UT) tobacco demonstration farm in Greeneville during the 1920s. The training there was carried to the best practices that local county extension agents made available to individual farmers, and in Middle Tennessee, the messages at the county level were further reinforced by the encouragement of burley tobacco production programs at the Middle Tennessee Experiment Station in nearby Spring Hill. Burley tobacco became the most important cash crop for many Middle Tennessee farms. The extant tobacco barn, in its vented exterior walls, low pitched gable roof, and its height where air circulation would be optimal, is a good example of the standardized designs provided by and encouraged by the UT Extension Service.

Even the renovation of the farmhouse c. 1920 mirrored the McCalls' commitment to progressive agriculture. The redesign of the kitchen, various room expansions, the use of more labor-saving devices, adding wallpaper, and keeping a neat, landscaped house yard, reflected progressive farming ideals. "In keeping with the standard home management project," historian Mary Hoffschwelle found in her study of rural Tennessee during the progressive era, extension "agents recorded new labor-saving devices and the number of kitchens rearranged for convenience."<sup>4</sup>

Alice Smithson McCall died in 1936 and left the farm to her husband and her son, Herbert T. McCall. Both father and son were local community leaders. Andrew McCall served on the county commission as did his son Herbert. The younger McCall also was a teacher and principal at Flat Creek School and established a Boy Scout troop for local youth.

With its many extant buildings and structures from the progressive era of farming, along with the renovated farmhouse of the 1920s, the Smithson-McCall Farm is an excellent example of the progressive farming landscape and documents the appearance of a successful mid-twentieth century middle-class family farm. Agricultural practices at the farm also mirror major trends in twentieth century Tennessee agriculture, from the production of burley tobacco c. 1920, to the dairy industry of c. 1940, and to the more recent return in Middle Tennessee agriculture to a heavy reliance on livestock production (the owners began concentrating on sheep production c. 1990) and maintaining large open fields and pastures. The nominated property, with the number of

<sup>4</sup> Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 123.

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extant structures and its architectural integrity is also significant as a representative example of a Williamson County progressive farm from the mid-twentieth century.

In 2002, the owners conveyed a conservation easement for the farm's 256 acres to the Land Trust of Tennessee.



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## 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The Smithson-McCall Farm is located at 6779 Comstock Road in College Grove, Tennessee, and comprises lots 4.00 and 4.02 of Williamson County Tax Map 172. The nominated 256.3 ± acres contains all of the historic property associated with the Smithson-McCall Farm.

The map scale of 1" = 900' is the only scale map available for this part of the county.

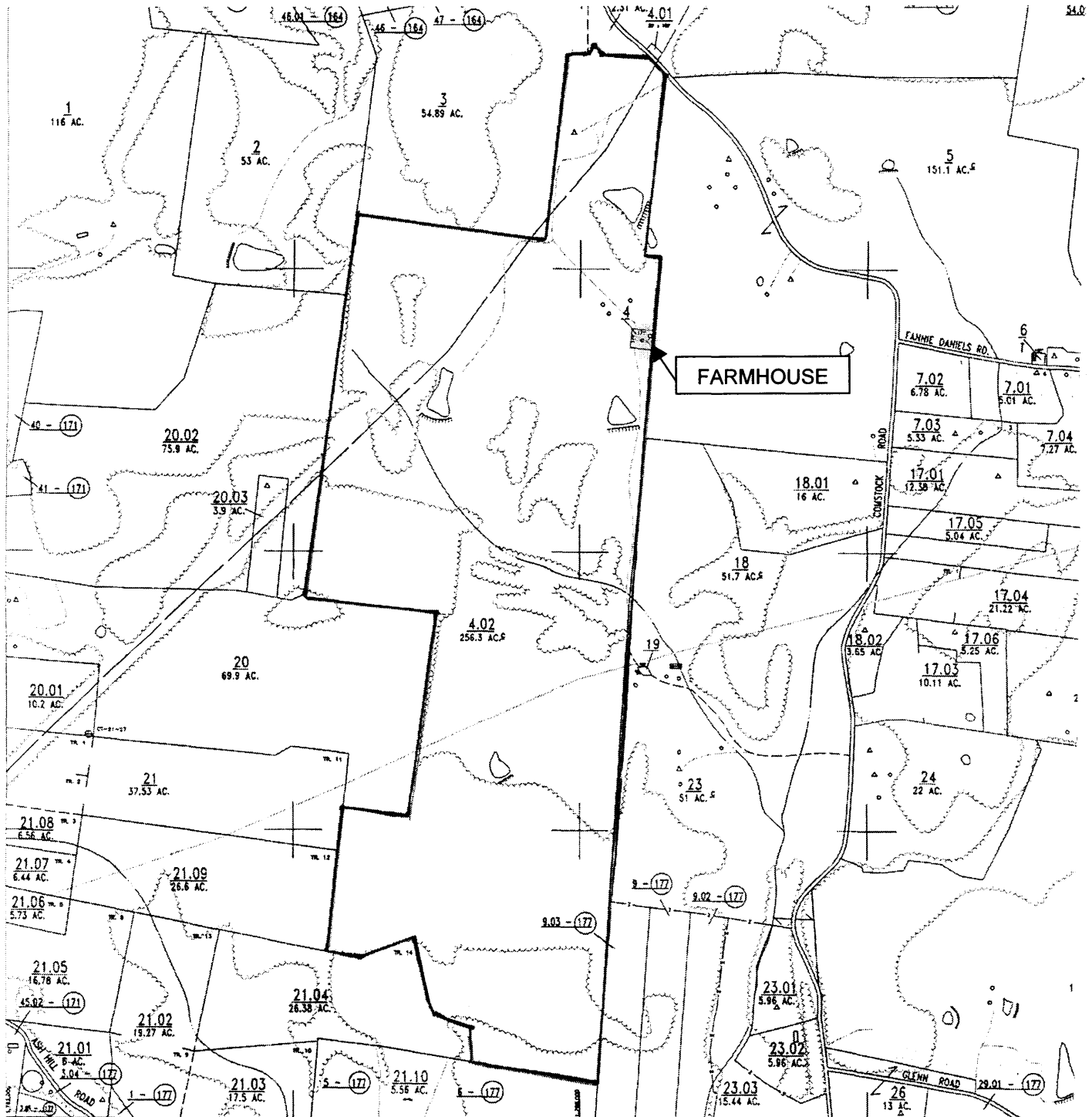
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Tax map      ↑ North      1" = 900'



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## Photographs

Photos by: Carroll Van West  
            MTSU Center for Historic Preservation  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Date: 2005

Farmhouse, west facade, facing southeast  
1 of 37

Farmhouse west facade, facing north-northeast  
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Farmhouse west facade, entrance, facing east  
3 of 37

Farmhouse, east and north elevations, facing southwest  
4 of 37

Farmhouse, south elevation, facing north  
5 of 37

Farmhouse, east elevation, facing west  
6 of 37

Farmhouse, north elevation, facing south  
7 of 37

Detail of log pen taken underneath foundation of house, facing north  
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Central hall, facing west  
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Central hall, facing east  
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Hallway staircase, facing northeast  
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Staircase, from second floor, facing east  
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South Parlor, facing east  
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Den, facing west  
14 of 37

East elevation porch  
15 of 37

North elevation porch  
16 of 37

1<sup>st</sup> floor bedroom  
17 of 37

South elevation porch  
18 of 37

Modern kitchen, facing east  
19 of 37

Bathroom, facing north  
20 of 37

Chicken coop, facing northwest  
21 of 37

Smokehouse, facing southeast  
22 of 37

Garage, facing south  
23 of 37

Smokehouse, facing west  
24 of 37

Garage and roadbed, facing south  
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Dairy barn, well house, and silo, facing northwest  
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Dairy barn, facing northwest  
27 of 37

Concrete water trough, facing west  
28 of 37

Burley tobacco barn, facing northeast  
29 of 37

Road leading to farm complex, facing south  
30 of 37

Field behind burley tobacco barn, facing northeast  
31 of 37

Fields, facing north  
32 of 37

Fields and woods, facing northwest  
33 of 37

Fields and terrace rows, facing west  
34 of 37

Pond, facing north  
35 of 37

Fields towards Comstock Road, facing northeast  
36 of 37

Comstock Road entrance to farm, facing south  
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