

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
AUG 31 1977
DATE ENTERED
JAN 30 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC ~~Mauris-Earnest Fort House~~

AND/OR COMMON
Earnest House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Route 3

CITY, TOWN
Chuckey

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

STATE
Tennessee

CODE
47

COUNTY
Greene

CODE
59

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"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
J. W. Massengill

STREET & NUMBER
Route 3

CITY, TOWN
Chuckey

VICINITY OF

STATE
Tennessee

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Greene County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Greeneville

STATE
Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE
1969
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN
Nashville

STATE
Tennessee

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 DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mauris-Earnest House is located on the Earnest farm, the original land grant in eastern Greene County, south of the Chuckey community, on the north bank of the river road at the Nolichucky River bridge. Facing south toward the river, the Mauris-Earnest House is an impressive, three-story, 20' x 30' rectangular shaped building consisting of semi-coursed rubble stone masonry bearing wall construction for the first floor; squared timber, "V" notch style joined white oak log construction for the upper stories, with an out-standing, massive stone chimney built on the left end, extending above the gable roof line.

Open on the ground level, the first story contains the kitchen, kitchen fireplace and one other room. The original dirt floor has been paved with cement. The masonry walls are built into the hillside on the back. The kitchen entrance is located on the front wall, centered beneath the main entrance at the second story level. Featuring balanced fenestration, the windows and doors follow corresponding alignment on each facade and there is evidence of a former front veranda porch which extended across each of the upper floors. Modern utilities have been added and a slab porch was built at the front, cement steps were built to the second story entrance on the back side.

The second story and third story rooms are connected by a staircase located in the northwest corner of the parlor and parlor chamber. This staircase has a balustrade and two tapered balusters on each of the lower treads, spaced winders for the enclosed corner turn at the top section. A closeted staircase to the basement is located beneath this stair and it features spaced winders at the top. Both of the upper floors feature ten-foot open beam ceilings and unfinished log walls. The floor space on each story is divided into two unequal size rooms by the 1" thick beaded edge, pine tongue-and-groove partition wall extending from front to back. The larger rooms on the west side have seven foot wide chimney breasts fitted with hand-carved pine mantelpieces, one inch thick, 6½' wide and 44" tall. The fireplace opening in the parlor room is three feet wide.

The old window sashes which have been replaced are stored in one of the third floor rooms. The eight panel doors measuring 37" x 77" are hung in the original hand-pegged wood casings on wrought iron H and L hinges, 36" long wrought iron strap hardware. Extremely weathered, the unpainted panel doors feature double-ply construction and are held by wrought iron rivets.

The Mauris-Earnest House has had few alterations for modern use. The two upper floors are vacant and the lower floor where the kitchen was located is being used for an apartment. For its continued preservation, this building is in need of minor repairs.

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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1780-1783

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

John Mauris

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mauris-Earnest Fort House, built ca. 1783, is considered to be one of the finest examples of the few remaining three-story log and stone type pioneer houses in the state of Tennessee. This property is located on an early Cherokee Indian land grant purchased by Henry Earnest, one of the first permanent settlers immigrating to this area in 1777. The Earnest farm has been cited as the earliest land grant farm in Greene County, held in the male line of the Earnest family since 1779. Henry Earnest negotiated through Amos Byrd to buy part of the Cherokee grant from Jacob Brown, a well-known early settler and merchant who came to Tennessee at an early date. Henry Earnest added this land to a land grant he held from the State of North Carolina and he established one of the first plantations in this area, extending over the fertile valley of the Nolichucky River.

According to legend, this house was built by John Mauris, Esq. who operated an early trading post here on the banks of the river opposite the land which the Earnest family farmed. Mauris was appointed a magistrate for the Greene County Court in 1783 and operated the sawmill and grist mill near the falls opposite the house. The early settlement was called Earnestville and it preceded the Chuckey community which was established when the railroad line was built through the area north of the river.

Henry Earnest came to this area from North Carolina in 1777. Emigrating from Germany, the Earnest family arrived in America about 1738. Henry and his sister had become orphans during the journey, and arriving in Norfolk, Virginia, Henry became indentured to a Mr. Stephens of Virginia. He married Mr. Stephens' daughter and moved his family to North Carolina before arriving in Tennessee. When the Earnest family settled in Greene County there was only one other family living on the north side of Unaka Mountain. According to local tradition, early settlers in this area took refuge from hostile Indians in the Fort House.

Henry Earnest was appointed assessor for the third Civil District, established in 1773, the year Greene County was created from Washington County by a legislative act of the State of North Carolina. Henry Earnest had five sons and six daughters. Three of his sons served in the Revolutionary War and were with John Sevier in the Battle of Kings Mountain. Succeeding their father they became prominent farmers, merchants and also served in the military, Indian Wars of 1812-1813, and in the county and state governments.

In Greene County, the Earnest family was considered to be very prominent socially, financially, and in the church congregation. In 1790 the first Methodist Society in the State of Tennessee was organized and established by the Reverend Stephen Brooks in the Earnest neighborhood. Henry Earnest's family constituted four-fifths of the church membership and the new church was called Ebenezer. The first church building was built on Earnest's land grant overlooking the Nolichucky River. In 1795 the Earnest family hosted the annual meeting of the Western Conference of the Methodist Society.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Richard Harrison Doughty, Greeneville, One Hundred Years, 1775-1875, Kingsport Press, 1974.

Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, 1887 (reprint) and History of East Tennessee.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| ZONE | | | | EASTING | | | | NORTHING | | | | | | |

B

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZONE | | | | EASTING | | | | NORTHING | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property being nominated consists of one acre of land. The northeast corner being located at the roadside east of the house, extending along the yard adjacent to the road 225 feet to the southeast corner at the driveway; thence across the front of the property line extending 200 feet to the southwest corner and continuing on a line 225 feet to the northwest corner; thence 200 feet, returning across the back of the property to the northeast corner.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gail E. Hammerquist, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

July 1977

STREET & NUMBER

170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE

(615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Herbert P. Hayes

DATE

8/29/77

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. D. Smith

DATE

1/30/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles W. Smith

DATE

1-24-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

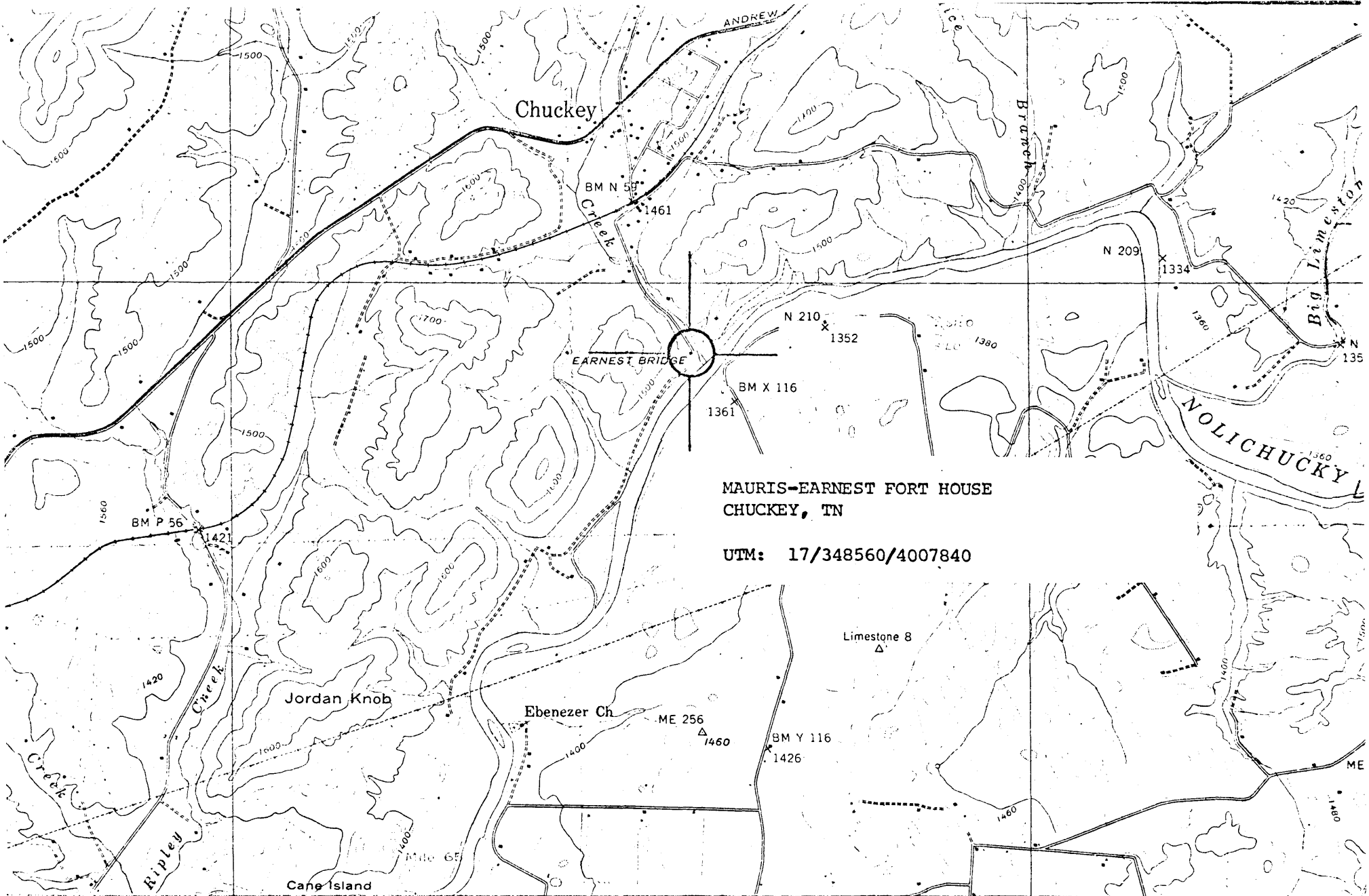
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Through the years the Earnest family has taken great care to preserve this property as part of the old family homestead. The family home built in 1820 is located directly across the river from the Fort House. The property being nominated has remained basically unaltered and is still being lived in. The Greeneville Historic Trust is presently investigating methods for restoring the Old Earnest Fort House to its original form as a county landmark.



MAURIS-EARNEST FORT HOUSE
CHUCKEY, TN

UTM: 17/348560/4007840