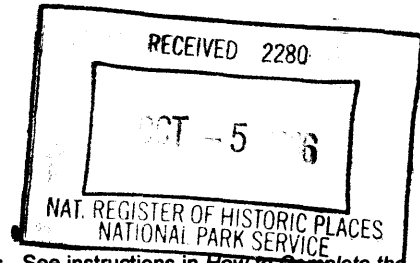


1038

(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 Rocky River Crossing and Road

other names/site number Rainey's Turnpike; Higgenbotham's Turnpike; Old Rocky River Road; 40VB123

2. Location

street & number Rocky River and a continuation of Pleasant Hill Cemetery Road NA  not for publication

city or town Spencer  vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Van Buren code 175 zip code 38585

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.)

Herbert E. Boyce  
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/13/06  
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:)

John W. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

11-15-06  
Date of Action

**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	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**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**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

TRANSPORTATION/road related

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A  
walls N/A

roof N/A  
other earth

**Narrative Description**

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

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Native American
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1838

Significant Dates

1838—Detachments leave southern Tennessee

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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:

Center for Historic Preservation, Middle TN State University

Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Name of Property

Van Buren County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 2 acres Curtistown 328 SE

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>633983</u>	<u>3939797</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>634115</u>	<u>3939553</u>

3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </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. Leslie N. Sharp, Research Professor; Sara Jackson Martin, Research Assistant; Elizabeth Moore, Fieldwork Coordinator  
(contact)

organization Center for Historic Preservation date December 6, 2004

street & number Box 80, Middle Tennessee State University telephone 615-898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37130

### 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 Mantria Group; Attn: Tisa Dixon, Public Relations

street & number 1050 Peachtree Hills Road telephone (828) 835-7853

city or town Murphy state NC zip code 28906

**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.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

**DESCRIPTION**

The Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed are remnants of what was once a major eighteenth-century route connecting the Sequatchie Valley to McMinnville, Tennessee. The one-fifth of a mile segment and river crossing are located in the southwestern corner of what is now Van Buren County. Both the road segment and the river crossing contribute to the nominated property. The property can be accessed by taking Pleasant Hill Cemetery Road off of present-day Rocky River Road. The now-abandoned road segment leads from the Pleasant Hill Cemetery down to the Rocky River. The river crossing traverses the Rocky River at this point. The approximate path is clearly seen on United States Geologic Survey topographical maps as a dotted line (see attached map). This section of road was historically known as Rainey's Turnpike, Higgenbotham's Trace, or The Turnpike Road.

The well-defined historic roadbed is approximately eighteen-feet wide and continues for one-fifth of a mile down toward the river on rough terrain with a steep grade. The road segment is unsurfaced with wooded areas on either side. Helping define the roadbed are eroded banks ranging in height from one to six feet high. Portions of the roadbed contain large rocks. The rockiness increases as the path gets closer to the river. At the crossing of the River, there are many rocks of various sizes. The path across the river is clearly defined as a crossing and is set apart from the roadbed by these rocks that gently slope into the water. The river is approximately twenty-feet wide and less than one-foot deep at the crossing. The area surrounding the road segment is densely wooded and rural.

There are several miles of intact roadbed in this area of the Cumberland Plateau. The nominated portion was chosen because of its integrity as a nineteenth-century road and because of its contiguous connection to the Rocky River Crossing. This route was taken by nine of the thirteen detachments that took the Northern Route of the Trail of Tears in the fall of 1838 (See Tables 1 and 2). Today, the area remains almost untouched and the crossing appears much as it did almost 170 years ago. There is a high integrity of location, setting, materials, and association with the property, even though it was used as a primary transportation route in the county through the middle decades of the twentieth century. The Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed was identified as an intact segment of the Trail within the "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears" Multiple Property Nomination (2003) by Thomason and Associates and in Benjamin Nance's *The Trail of Tears in Tennessee: A Study of the Routes Used During the Cherokee Removal of 1838* (2001) as survey site number 40VB123.

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located in rural Van Buren County, the Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion A for local significance by virtue of its status as one of the most-intact surviving segments of the Northern Route of the Cherokee Removal through Tennessee in 1838. It meets criterion A for its historical significance in the areas of Native American ethnic heritage, politics and government, and transportation for its direct connection and association with the routes taken by the Cherokee detachments. This roadbed and crossing provide a physical link and sense of time and place of the actual Cherokee experience. The property provides an understanding of the difficulties inherent in overland travel in the 1830s and the challenges faced by the Cherokee on a daily basis.

At the time of the Cherokee Removal, this section of the trail was in part of Warren County, now Van Buren County, and known as both Rainey's Turnpike and Higgenbotham's Trace. Warren County was established in 1807 from parts of White County and named for General William Warren, who died at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Van Buren County was formed in 1840 from parts of White, Warren, and Bledsoe counties and named for the then president of the United States Martin Van Buren.

Between August and October of 1838, nine of the thirteen detachments (see Tables 1 and 2), making up almost 10,000 Cherokee, who were forcibly removed from North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, took the "Northern Route" of the Trail of Tears and passed through this area. This Northern Route began in the southern portion of Tennessee near Charleston, Tennessee. The Trail crossed Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and finally into Oklahoma. These nine detachments that followed the Northern Route headed north from camps in the vicinity of the Cherokee Agency, at present-day Charleston, Tennessee, through McMinnville, Murfreesboro, Nashville, and Port Royal before entering Kentucky, just west of the city of Guthrie. Two additional detachments conducted by Richard Taylor and James Brown took the alternate Taylor's route, leaving from camps near Vann's Plantation in present-day Chattanooga and meeting the Northern Route near McMinnville.

From the Cherokee Agency, the nine detachments that passed through the Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed crossed the Tennessee River at Blythe's Ferry (NR 1/5/83) at the confluence of the Tennessee and Hiwassee rivers. From here, the groups moved northwestward roughly following present-day State Route 60 (Blythe Ferry Road) through Dayton and Morgantown in present-day Rhea County. The route then followed State Route 30 up Walden's Ridge to present-day Ogden Road and Marining Road. Taking the historic roadbed of Lloyd Gap Road, the route descended Walden's Ridge and crossed the Sequatchie Valley to Lee's Station in present-day Bledsoe County. From Lee's Station the route ascended the Cumberland Plateau parallel to the present-day Lee's Station Mountain Road.<sup>1</sup>

At the top of the Cumberland Plateau, the Northern Route follows Higgenbotham's Trace into and across Van Buren County. Higgenbotham's Trace, sometimes known as Rainey's Turnpike, was a well-established road prior to the 1838 Cherokee Removal. Little of the historic roadbed within Van Buren County remains intact. Much of the roadbed has been impacted by the county's logging and mining operations and much of it lies on private property. The route crosses State Route 111 and reaches the

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<sup>1</sup> Thomason, E 45-47.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number

8

Page

3Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

Rocky River Crossing near Pleasant Hill Cemetery.<sup>2</sup> The intact roadbed and crossing near the cemetery is one of the few stretches of the route still clearly visible in Van Buren County. Nance's 2001 Tennessee Division of Archaeology study records only two archaeological components of the Trail of Tears in the county, one being the Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed coded as survey site number 40VB123.<sup>3</sup> Its integrity as an intact and almost untouched nineteenth-century roadbed makes this property a particularly significant resource connected to the Trail of Tears in Tennessee.

Bill Jones, Van Buren County historian and a leader of the Tennessee Trail of Tears Association in Tennessee, has extensively researched the Trail of Tears in this area of Tennessee. Appearing in the spring 2004 issue of the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, his article "Tennessee Places: The Legacy of the Trail of Tears in Van Buren County," provides an illustration the removal route between Pikeville and McMinnville and highlighted its significance in relationship to the people who traveled and lived along it. Jones starts the Trail of Tears story in 1834 when Lieutenant C. F. M. Noland traveled the road from McMinnville south to the Cherokee Agency, marking the first Indian Removal official to make this journey. Then in 1837 officer B. B. Cannon led what has become known as the Treaty Party through the area. These 365 Cherokee represented the minority of the Cherokee who supported the passage of the Treaty of New Echota in 1836. Unlike the later detachments whose removal was involuntary, this party requested and received a military escort. Elijah Hicks led the first of the involuntarily detachments that headed westward. He arrived in the area around the tenth of October 1838 and was soon followed by the eight other detachments.<sup>4</sup>

After crossing the Rocky River in Van Buren County, the trail follows Higgenbotham's Trace into McMinnville where it continued to Murfreesboro, Nashville, and Port Royal prior to reaching Kentucky. In March of 1839, the final detachments reached their destination in the new Indian Territory. Most of the 285 miles over land that the Trail of Tears covered in Tennessee have been covered over with asphalt, widened, and modernized to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of motorized cars. However, portions of the trail do remain as bypassed stretches of larger roads and highways. Some of these remaining segments have been completely abandoned, incorporated into agricultural or logging roads, or used as private drives. This portion of the Trail of Tears at the Rocky River was abandoned in the middle decades of the twentieth century, as other roads were improved and modern engineering allowed for more direct routes over the Cumberland Plateau. However, the roadbed remains visible and easily identifiable as a historic road.

The Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed maintains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, materials, and association. This section of roadbed served almost 10,000 Cherokee between August and October of 1838. The intact river crossing and roadbed remain a significant resource in the Tennessee Trail of Tears.

<sup>2</sup> Thomason, E 45, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Nance, 55.

<sup>4</sup> William S. "Bill" Jones, "Tennessee Places: The Legacy of the Trail of Tears in Van Buren County," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXIII (Spring 2004): 50.

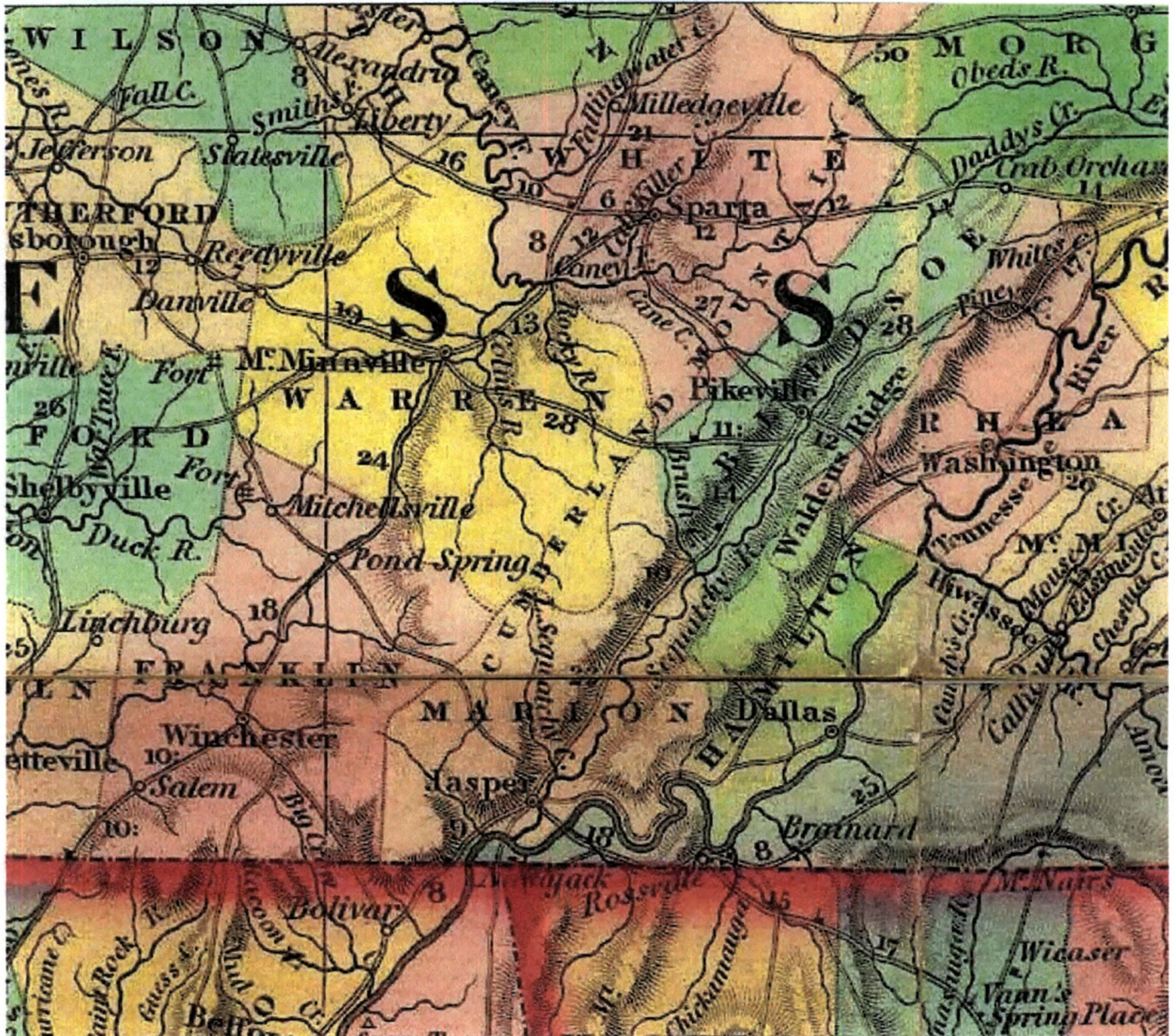
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

1834 Tennessee map showing route across the Cumberland Plateau. Extracted from Henry Schenck  
Tanner's US map. [www.tngenweb.org/maps](http://www.tngenweb.org/maps) (accessed 7/11/06).





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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

**Table 1: Cherokee Detachments Who Took the Northern Route**

Conductor	Assistant	Departure Location	Disbandment Location	Date of Departure	Date of Arrival
Hair Conrad (replaced by Colston prior to departure)	Daniel Colston	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	23 Aug 1838	17 Jan 1839
Elijah Hicks	White Path (died en route- replaced by William Arnold)	Gunstocker Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	1 Sep 1838	4 Jan 1839
Jesse Bushyhead	Roman Nose	Chatata Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	3 Sep 1838	27 Feb 1839
Situwakee	Evan Jones	Savannah Branch, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	7 Sep 1838	2 Feb 1839
Old Field	Stephen Foreman	Candies Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	24 Sep 1838	23 Feb 1839
Moses Daniel	George Still	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	30 Sep 1838	2 Mar 1839
Choowalooka (replaced by Thomas N. Clark at Smith's Ferry)	J.D. Wofford	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	14 Sep 1838	? Mar 1839
George Hicks	Collins McDonald	Mouse Creek, Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Vicinity Indian Territory	7 Sep 1838	14 Mar 1839
Peter Hildebrand	James Hildebrand	Cherokee Agency Area	Woodhall Farm Indian Territory	23 Oct 1838	18 Mar 1839

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

**Table 2: Statistics for Cherokee Detachments Who Took the Northern Route**

Conductor	Depart	Arrive	Births	Deaths	Desertions	Accessions	Wagons & Teams	Riding Horses
Hair Conrad (replaced by Daniel Colston)	729	654	9	57	24	14	36	288
Elijah Hicks	858	744	5	54	---	---	43	344
Jesse Bushyhead	950	898	6	38	148	171	48	334
Situwakee	1250	1033	5	71	---	---	60	480
Old Field	983	921	19	57	10	6	49	392
Moses Daniel	1035	924	6	48	---	---	52	415
Choowalooka (replaced by Thomas N. Clark at Smith's Ferry)	1150	970	---	---	---	---	58	462
George Hicks	1118	1039	---	---	---	---	56	448
Peter Hildebrand	1766	1311	---	55	---	---	88	705
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,839</b>	<b>8494</b>					<b>490</b>	<b>3868</b>

Sources for the Tables 1 and 2:

Thomason and Associates, "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Cherokee Trail of Tears," Multiple Property Submission. Submitted to the National Park Service, 2003.

Jones, William S. "Bill" Jones. "Tennessee Places: The Legacy of the Trail of Tears in Van Buren County." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXIII (Spring 2004): 52.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

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

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 8

Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

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### **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary for the Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed is shown on the accompanying enlarged USGS map. The nominated property is approximately two acres and includes a one-fifth of a mile section of the roadbed and the river crossing. The roadbed extends for one-fifth of a mile from the 1800-foot ridgeline south of the crossing to the bend in the roadbed north of the crossing. The width of the nominated property is 100 feet on each side of a centerline of the roadbed.

#### **Verbal Boundary Justification**

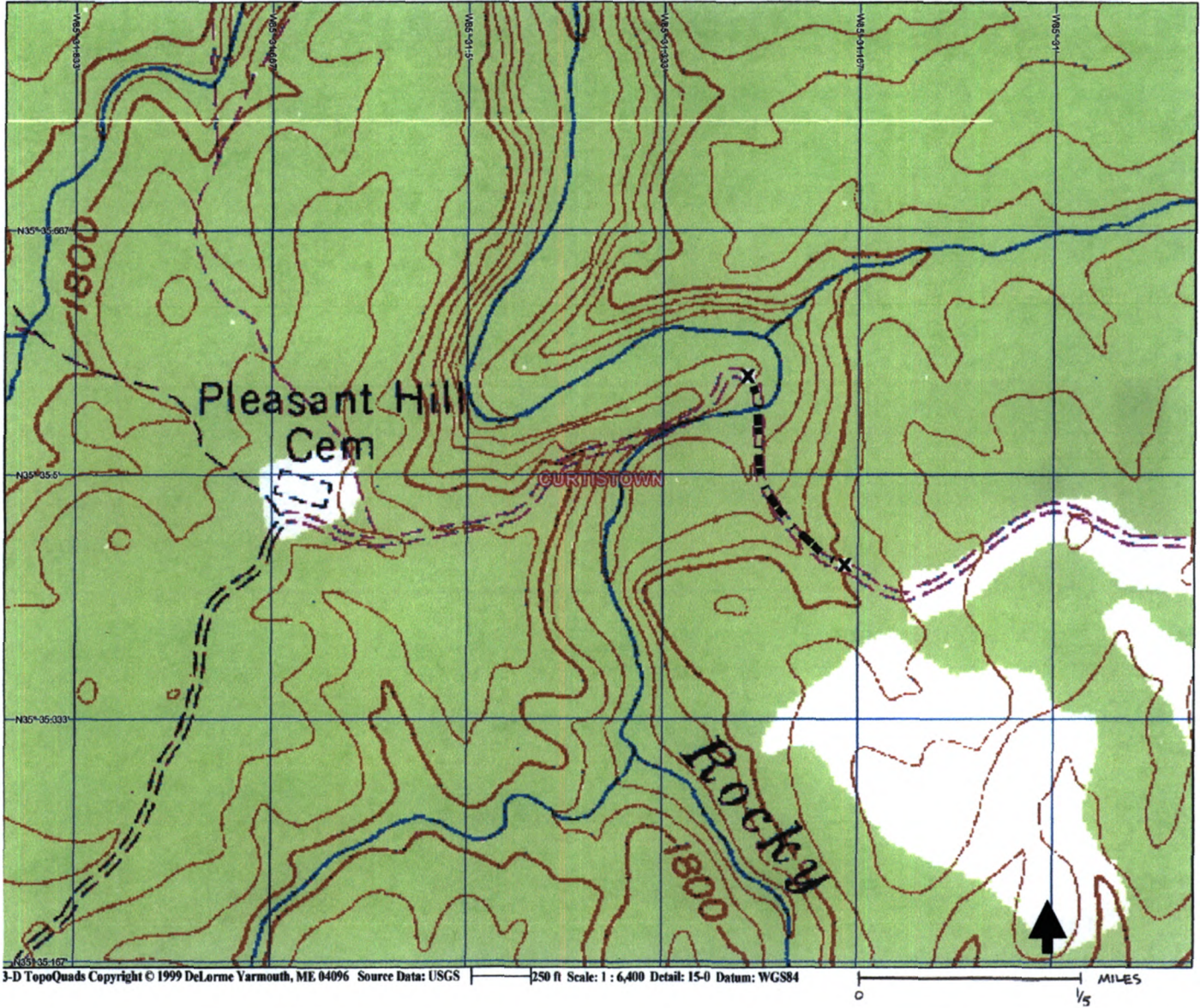
The boundaries of the nominated property are centered on the river crossing and include the most intact portion of the roadbed on the north and south sides of the crossing. At the southern boundary, the roadbed drops down the ridgeline, and at the northern boundary, the road turns toward Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee



**United States Department of the Interior  
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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

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## **PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

Rocky River Crossing and Roadbed  
Van Buren County, Tennessee

Photographs taken by Dr. Carroll Van West

Date: February 2002

Negs: Tennessee Historical Commission

### Photographs:

1 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed south of the Crossing

2 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed south of the Crossing

3 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed south of the Crossing

4 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed south of the Crossing

5 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed south of the Crossing

6 of 9: Rocky River Crossing

7 of 9: Rocky River Crossing

8 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed north of the Crossing

9 of 9: Rocky River Roadbed north of the Crossing