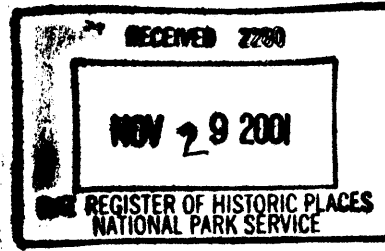


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1449

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 Earnest Farms Historic District  
other names/site number NA

2. Location

street & number South of the Nolichucky River, bounded by Crum farm in West, and Jim Earnest Farmstead in East. NA  not for publication  
city or town Chuckey  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Greene code 059 zip code 37641

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 C. Boyer  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/28/01  
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:)

Edson Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

1.11.02  
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	
34	16	buildings
3	0	sites
6	0	structures
0	0	objects
43	16	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**

Transformation of the Nolichucky MPS

1

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

DOMESTIC: single dwelling; secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural fields;

Agricultural outbuildings; storage

RELIGION: religious facility

FUNERARY: cemetery

TRANSPORTATION: bridge

DOMESTIC: single dwelling; secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural fields;

Agricultural outbuildings; storage

RELIGION: religious facility

FUNERARY: cemetery

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal; bungalow; Italianate influence; I-house

OTHER: Folk Victorian

foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

walls BRICK, WOOD, Vinyl; weatherboard; CONCRETE

roof METAL; ASPHALT shingles; WOOD

other WOOD; STONE

**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**

(Mark "x" in all 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE  
SETTLEMENT  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

Circa 1782- 1951

**Significant Dates**

NA

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown; multiple

**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):** N/A

- 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:

MTSU, Center for Historic Preservation; TDOT

Earnest Farms Historic District  
Name of Property

Greene County, Tennessee  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Approx. 900 acres Chuckey, TN

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>349880</u>	<u>4009000</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>349360</u>	<u>4005720</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>351000</u>	<u>4008140</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>346080</u>	<u>4005840</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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Jen Stoecker and Carroll Van West  
organization Center for Historic Preservation date May 2001  
street & number Post Office Box 80 telephone 615/898-5258  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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**Additional Documentation**

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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

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**Property Owner**

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

name Multiple, see attached  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**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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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Earnest Farms Historic District,  
Greene County, Tennessee

## Description

The Earnest Farms historic district is located in the Nolichucky River Valley, near the town of Chuckey, Greene County, Tennessee. The Mauris-Earnest Fort House (c.1782), Henry and Peter Earnest House (circa 1800), the Earnest/Broyles house (circa 1820), the Jim Earnest House (c. 1880), the Ebenezer Methodist Church (1899) and Cemetery (circa 1800), and the Crum Farm (circa 1920) are outstanding artifacts of agriculture, settlement patterns, and rural communities in Appalachian Tennessee. The Earnest Farms Historic District is approximately 900 acres.

The Nolichucky River forms the northern boundary of the historic district. The resources are linked by the winding river, which emphasizes the importance of the waterway to these farms. The families used its waters for farming operations and transportation. The property lines outline the other boundaries of the district, forming jagged distinctions due to the rolling topography of this area. All areas of this historic district are inextricably connected through a common agricultural or familial legacy.

The district is comprised of a church, cemetery, and farm complexes, which document the progression of settlement, agriculture, and architecture from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The boundaries of the Crum Farm form a portion of the east boundary, along with the historic fields of the Earnest/Broyles farm. The Henry and Peter Earnest farm is in the middle of the district, while the Ebenezer Methodist Church and the Jim Earnest Farm form the southwest corner of the property. Few non-contributing properties are located within the district, and these are mostly one-story ranch style or contemporary style dwellings that do not intrude into the overall rural appearance of the district.

### **1. MAURIS- EARNEST FORT HOUSE, NR 1/30/78 (circa 1782 or 1783)**

The oldest building in the Earnest Farms Historic District, the Mauris-Earnest Fort House is built on the original parcel of land deeded to Henry Earnest in 1782. This two-story structure is located north of the Nolichucky River and is built into the side of a hill. Limestone construction forms the bottom level and V-notched logs form the second and third stories. An exterior stone chimney is placed in the center of the south elevation and extends above the gable roof line. The front elevation contains nine symmetrical openings, which divides into three openings on each story. The three windows on each story mimic each other by repeating a pattern of two small windows flanking a narrow door. (C)

### **2. HENRY AND PETER EARNEST HOUSE (circa 1800, 1820, 1850, 1920)**

The centerpiece of the Henry and Peter Earnest farm complex is the Henry and Peter Earnest House (circa 1800, 1820), a brick two story, I-house, with Federal style influence, that incorporates as an ell a circa 1800 brick, two-story dwelling. The dwelling rests on a brick foundation. Henry Earnest built the original house, at least circa 1800, into the side of a slight hill; currently latticework provides a screen for the brick foundation and the supporting walls of this elevation. His son Peter Earnest built the Federal I-house façade circa 1820, thus incorporating the 1800 house as a rear wing. Resting on a brick foundation, the house is side-gabled with a medium-pitch roof containing a small eave overhang and metal gutters. A pressed metal roof covers both the I-house and the rear ell.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
Greene County, Tennessee

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The front/south façade is symmetrically balanced with a center door with five windows on the second floor and four on the first floor. The windows are two-over-two, double-hung wood sash. Brick lintels accent the outer windows on the first level. Two windows are symmetrically placed on each side of the door. The paneled door has an elliptical fanlight over it. The Colonial Revival styled portico (circa 1920) is one story, supported by four wood posts with square, vernacular Doric capitals. It covers two windows and the door. A wide cornice with recessed panels accents the portico; a similar trim is present on the eave overhang of the flat roof of the porch. Flemish bond brickwork is present on the facade, and molded bricks accent the main roof.

The east elevation forms the rear ell. The area closest to the main building is part of the original Henry Earnest House (circa 1800). This two-story portion has four asymmetrically positioned windows, two each on the first and second stories. Two doors are also present on the first floor. A one-story porch (circa 1850) runs the length of the ell, connecting the rear portion (circa 1850) with the original dwelling. Eight square wood columns support the porch. In the rear portion, the wide eave overhang of the roof extends over the porch. The roof is side-gabled with molded brick below and two brick chimneys. Different brick lines indicate that this portion was added in two sections. The first section contains two windows, one single hung with one-over-one sash. The northernmost window is multi-paned. The final section of the ell contains one wood door and one window covered with wood slats. The windows are positioned asymmetrically. The rear/south elevation of the ell is made of original brick, some with water damage. The end chimney and porch are also visible from this elevation.

The west elevation also provides visual evidence of the four different building phases. Beginning with the I-house building, an exterior chimney is placed between four windows, two on the first floor and two on the second. The windows are double-hung with two panes per sash. South of the I-house is the original Henry Earnest dwelling, which begins the rear ell. Two windows are present on the second level. Underneath these windows is an enclosed side porch. The porch is filled in primarily with bricks, with one nine-over-nine double-hung sash window in the area toward the front of the building. Wood panels also fill in a part of the porch, and this area contains a screened door and three modern sliding windows (circa 1960).

The third and fourth sections of the house are in the rear part of the building. These sections slope down into the side of a hill and contain five asymmetrical openings. The northernmost section contains one double-hung window with two panes per sash. Below this window is a narrow rectangular window with six panes. Distinct brick lines indicate a change in building construction for the rear section of the building. This part contains two bays covered by wood slats. One double-hung window with two panes per sash is found below these bays.

The interior of the Peter Earnest House follows an I-house floor plan with the front door opening up into a central hall and staircase with one room on each side of the hall. Original floor plan, wood floors, and wainscoting are extant (circa 1820). Other notable interior features in the Peter Earnest section include a handcrafted mantel around the fireplace in the east room and original locks on two of the exterior doors. The interior of the original Henry Earnest house contains a built-in pie safe, extending from the floor to ceiling, built into the north wall (circa 1800). A boxed staircase extends upstairs from this room into the

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
Greene County, Tennessee

second floor of the Henry Earnest House. The rear ell also features a smokehouse on the first floor and two slave quarters on the lower level, with a back staircase connecting the two (circa 1820). (C)

The Henry and Peter Earnest Farm has a significant collection of historic outbuildings and structures.

### **3. Earnest Bridge Substructure (1869, 1903).**

An 1869 bridge abutment is located immediately north of the Henry and Peter Earnest home across the Nolichucky River. This structure is the location of the original bridge built by Peter Earnest and the Earnestville Bridge Company in 1856. According to the Tennessee Department of Transportation survey, the 1869 abutment was raised five feet in 1903. The 1903 pier was built with stone that had collapsed from the 1869 substructure. (C)

### **4. Transverse Crib Barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1900)**

In the fields northwest of the Henry and Peter Earnest house stands a board and batten transverse crib barn with two stories and a low-pitch tin roof. This building is located near the Nolichucky River on the south side. (C)

### **5. Smokehouse, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1820)**

Immediately west of the farmhouse is a two-story brick smokehouse with a cantilevered shed roof. A tin gable roof covers the building and a small wooden vent decorates the middle of the roof. Two rectangular doorways are present on the east façade, one servicing the bottom level of the structure and the other at the top of concrete stairway on the second floor. The north side contains a small square opening on the bottom floor of the smokehouse. This building was also used for milk storage when the farm began to focus more on dairy production. (C)

### **6. Garage, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

Located south of the smokehouse is a board and batten building with tin gable roof. The main section has an enclosed shed extension attached to the south elevation. Two modern garage doors cover the square openings in the facade. A small wood cupola decorates the middle of the building. (C)

### **7. Landscaping, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1830, 1920)**

Directly south of the main farmhouse, and framing the front yard, is a row of boxwoods. This arrangement reflects a prolific landscaping trend in the South, which defined property lines and driveways with the boxwoods. In addition to the boxwoods, there is a metal and concrete water pump and a concrete walkway (circa 1920) that leads from the front facade of the farmhouse to a concrete stairway, which ultimately leads to the road that is now Tennessee Highway 351. Taken as a group, these elements may be considered a contributing site. (C)

### **8. Storage Shed, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

South of the row of boxwoods is a single crib, one story shed of board and batten construction. A tin metal roof covers the medium-pitch gable. A small rectangular door is located in the south gable. (C)

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
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**9. Tobacco Barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1850, 1960)**

Approximately 200 yards south of the farmhouse is a two story transverse crib barn with two large sloping sheds added on either side, making this into a three portal barn. This 1800s building is enclosed in metal. (NC, due to alterations)

**10. Storage Shed, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

Directly east of the tobacco barn is a small board and batten shed with a flat metal roof. (C)

**11. Machine shed, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1950)**

To the immediate west of the tobacco barn is a one story, gable roof long rectangular frame machine shed, which has been altered with metal siding and additions. (NC, due to alterations)

**12. Dairy barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (1956)**

Southwest of the farmhouse and across Tennessee Highway 351 is a large two story dairy barn. It has a gambrel roof with two open sheds added to either side. The roof is covered with metal and contains three ventilation grills along the roofline. It is currently used as a burley tobacco barn. (NC, due to date of construction)

**13. Milk house, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (1956)**

Adjacent to the dairy barn is the milk house, a rectangular shaped frame one-story building with a steeply pitched gable roof made of metal. (NC, due to date of construction)

**14. Pond, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1940)**

South of the 1956 dairy complex is a man-made pond, which is a contributing structure. (C)

**15. Dairy barn and milk house complex, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1966)**

South of the 1956 dairy complex, on a slight rise facing the Nolichucky River, is the modern dairy complex built in 1966. It includes a combination of rectangular metal animal stalls and concrete milkhouse. Attached to the metal stalls are two concrete silos. (NC, due to date of construction)

**16. Ranch House, Dairy Manager, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1966)**

Facing Tennessee Highway 351, approximately 75 yards southwest of the modern dairy complex, is a brick, one-story ranch house, used as a residence for the manager of the dairy complex (NC, due to date of construction).

**17. Tobacco Barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

Facing Tennessee Highway 351, southwest of the dairy manager's dwelling, is a rectangular shaped board and batten tobacco barn, which is covered by a metal gable roof. (C)



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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
Greene County, Tennessee

## 18. EBENEZER METHODIST CHURCH (1899)

Located on Henry Earnest's original land, about two miles southwest of the Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, is the Ebenezer Methodist Church. Constructed on the same location as the first church building (circa 1792), the extant church building was constructed in 1899. It is a one-story frame church under a gable roof, resting on a concrete block foundation. The roof is pressed metal with a wide eave overhang. The front and rear elevations contain concave cornice molds within each overhang. Vinyl siding covers the exterior of the church, but carefully follows the historic outline of the original weatherboard of the church.

The front or north facade has a single opening in the two-story octagonal shaped and louvered bell tower. The tower has a pyramidal pressed tin roof. A small, circular window with clear glass is symmetrically arranged on the tower. A wood door with a transom light is the principal entry on the north side. A modern metal canopy stands in front of the door. The east elevation has three double-hung four-over-four windows with pedimented window hoods. A small shed-like building, circa 1950, is attached to the building between the second and third windows. This building closely resembles the main part of the church, and includes the gabled roof and door on the front. The rear or south elevation of the church contains a symmetrically placed stained glass window.

The interior of the church features hand-painted grained wood located on the doors, pews, windowsills, and the altar. The interior features the original wood paneling on the top portions and wainscoting on the bottom portions of the walls. There have been few changes of the original integrity, design, and materials of the church's interior. (C)

## 19. Ebenezer Methodist Church Cemetery (circa 1800)

The Ebenezer Methodist Church cemetery is behind the west and south elevations of the church, standing between the church and the Nolichucky River. The cemetery contains at least 153 graves, including those of the first Earnests to settle in the area. Henry (1732-1809) and Mary Stephens Earnest (1742-1838) and Peter (1777-1862) and Ruth Fain Earnest (1784-1853) are some of the early graves. The graves reflect both early nineteenth century design motifs and later Victorian era themes. 1947 is the date of the last interment. (C)

North of Ebenezer Methodist Church, and concealed by a tree line and the curvature of the landscape, are three one-story modern homes.

## 20. RANCH HOUSE (circa 1990)

Directly north of the church is a one-story frame ranch-style home that has three distinctive gabled sections. (NC, due to date of construction)

## 21. CABIN HOUSE (circa 1990)

East of the ranch-style house is a frame one-story cabin, with exterior stone chimney and a metal roof that has solar energy panels. (NC, due to date of construction)

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
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**22. RANCH HOUSE (circa 1960)**

A frame one-story ranch house, with a hipped roof and solar panels, was constructed circa 1960 and is still used as a private residence. (NC, due to date of construction)

**23. JIM EARNEST FARMSTEAD (circa 1880)**

Connected by Ebenezer Church Road and located southwest of Ebenezer Methodist Church, stands the Jim Earnest house. This is a three-story Folk Victorian style building, with Italianate influence. It has weatherboard siding. It is side-gabled and resting on a concrete foundation. The front/west facade faces the Nolichucky River. A central projecting bay, resembling an Italianate tower design, has a gable roof. All the windows on the façade are two-over-two topped by shouldered architrave trim. The front door is wood paneled, with a two-pane transom. A porch runs the length of the first story, the brackets and spindles made of modern wood. The roof is asphalt shingle with two interior chimneys symmetrically piercing the roofline. The front and side elevations contain concave cornice molds within each overhang. The interior of the dwelling was unassessed, but local informants state that the interior has similar decorative painting as that found in the adjacent Ebenezer Methodist Church. (C)

**24. Tobacco barn, Jim Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

Directly northeast of the Jim Earnest house is a one-story frame barn under a metal gable roof. The barn has a small rectangular opening in the west facade and is made of board and batten siding. (C)

**25. Tenant house, Jim Earnest Farm (circa 1900)**

North of the Jim Earnest house is a one-story tenant house with a metal gable roof (c. 1925). The front/west facade is five bays with a central chimney. A small shed roof porch extends from the front facade. Though deteriorating somewhat, this dwelling is still contributing. (C)

**26. Storage Shed, Jim Earnest Farm (circa 1920)**

A rectangular board and batten shed, with a metal flat roof, stands adjacent to the Jim Earnest dwelling. (C)

**27. RANCH HOUSE, Sandbar Road (circa 1970)**

This dwelling occupies a small lot facing Sandbar Road and the Nolichucky River. It is a brick, one-story Ranch style dwelling with a gable roof. (NC, due to date of construction)

**28. Tobacco Barn, Ranch House, Sandbar Road (circa 1970)**

This barn is a two-story frame barn, with a metal gable roof, built for burley tobacco curing. (NC, due to date of construction)

**29. RANCH HOUSE, Sandbar Road (circa 1970)**

This dwelling occupies a small lot facing Sandbar Road and the Nolichucky River. It is a brick, one-story Ranch style dwelling, with a gable roof. (NC, due to date of construction)

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
Greene County, Tennessee

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### 30. Storage Barn, Ranch House, Sandbar Road (circa 1980)

This one-story frame barn has a metal gable roof. (NC, due to date of construction)

### 31. EARNEST /BROYLES HOUSE (circa 1820)

The Earnest/Broyles House is a two story brick I-house, with Federal style influences. Two interior brick chimneys are present on each side of the gabled roof. The front/south facade is five bays. On the first floor there is a one-story Colonial Revival-influenced portico, with a flat roof supported by four square Doric posts. Symmetrically placed above the portico on the second level is another entrance door, which is now boarded. All of the bays on second story and one on the first story are covered with wood to protect the original windows and glass. The uncovered windows on the first floor are nine-over-nine, double-hung, sash.

The east elevation contains one elliptical window centered in the side gable. A nine-over-nine window is asymmetrically placed on the first floor. A covered porch connects the main part of the I-house with the rear ell. This long side porch is supported by fourteen wood posts, painted white. The southernmost part of the rear ell is one story, with an underground cellar. Two windows and one door are present in this section of the ell. The northern section of the ell contains two stories, with two windows on each level. Two interior chimneys mark the ends of both the northern and southern sections of the ell, suggesting that the addition occurred in two different phases. Another indicator of two different building phases is the change in dentil decoration under the roof eaves. The southern section displays molded brick cornice on the I-house, while the northern part contains wood dentils under the eave overhang.

The interior of the Earnest/Broyles House has outstanding Federal -influenced woodwork. Especially notable is the delicate classicism expressed by the parlor mantel, with paired colonettes and sunburst motif medallions. Molded wood door and window trim and chair railing is also found in the house. (C)

The Earnest/Broyles farm contains many outbuildings valuable to understanding the agricultural heritage of the farm. Some structures remain from the nineteenth century, primarily used for tobacco cultivation today. Other resources document the post-World War II dairy industry in this area and date to circa 1950.

### 32. Shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm (circa 1920)

Behind the house is a frame rectangular shed, with a metal gable roof, and an off-center gable front entrance, part is covered with asphalt siding. (C)

### 33. Wash House, Earnest/Broyles Farm (circa 1920)

This rectangular shape, board and batten building, has a centered entrance on the gable end and a metal gable roof. (C)

### 34. Tobacco Barn, Earnest/Broyles Farm (circa 1940)

This two-story, frame, rectangular shaped burley tobacco barn has a metal gable roof with a single level entrance on its gable end. It also contains shed roof extensions. It is very similar in

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Earnest Farms Historic District,  
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appearance to standardized burley tobacco barn designs provided by the University of Tennessee Extension service in the 1940s and 1950s. (C)

**35. Machine Shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1950**

An elongated machine shed runs the northern boundary of the outbuilding cluster. This open sided building is constructed from wood with a metal shed roof. (C)

**36. Water Trough, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1940**

A rectangular shaped concrete water trough was built for livestock use. (C)

**37. Storage Shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1920**

A one story board and batten storage shed, with a low metal gable roof, has entrances on its south gable end and its west wall. (C)

**38. Concrete Silos, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1950**

Directly east of the Earnest/Broyles farm and across a small field stand two concrete silos with dome shaped metal roofs. (2 C)

**39. Stock barn and Tobacco barn, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1920**

The board and batten transverse crib barn, with a long, sloping metal roof to cover the barn extensions, was originally used to house livestock and equipment. This barn is currently used for burley tobacco. (C)

**40. Silo, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1940**

The first silo constructed for the Broyles family's dairy business, this concrete silo no longer has its dome roof. (C)

**41. Stock barn, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1900**

A smaller transverse crib barn lies slightly northwest of the tobacco barn and is covered with board and batten siding and a metal gable roof. This barn contains three bays on the south side and one asymmetrically placed door on the west gable. (C)

**42. Milk House, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1950**

The milk house is a two-part concrete building, with a two-story wing on the north side and a one-story section on the south side. Most recently used as a tenant house, this structure is constructed with concrete and a metal gabled roof and double-hung windows. (C)

**43. Storage Shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1920**

This rectangular shaped board and batten building has a metal gable roof and a central gable entrance on its south facade. (C)

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**44. Milking Stalls, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1950**

The milking stall is a open, wood structure, with a concrete floor, that is covered with a low metal gable roof. Its metal roof shelters both sides of the middle wood bracing. (C)

**45. Machine Shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1960**

Another open machine shed has board and batten on three sides with a metal shed roof. (NC, due to date of construction)

**46. Cattle chute, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1950**

Two roughly constructed board fences stand on either side of a concrete walking chute, which leads directly from the milk house to the pond and fields behind the dairy complex. The chute and adjacent pond constitute a contributing site to the dairy complex. (C)

**47. Tenant house, Earnest/Broyles Farm, circa 1900, 1950**

The tenant house is a two-part dwelling, with the eastern wing built circa 1900 and the western section built circa 1950. The original tenant house was a frame, two-room building, with a central chimney and metal gable roof. A shed roof porch was placed on its north side. Circa 1950, a concrete block section was added, in order to install indoor plumbing and electricity to the dwelling. The concrete block section has an off-center entrance on its south side and a low metal gable roof. (C)

**48. Chicken Coop, Earnest/Broyles House, circa 1930**

A board and batten chicken coop, with a metal shed roof, was constructed for the farm's tenants. It is similar in appearance to chicken coop designs produced by the University of Tennessee Extension Service in the 1920s. (C)

**49. CRUM BUNGALOW, circa 1920**

The Crum Bungalow is a one and a half story dwelling, with a brick foundation and a metal hipped roof. The north façade has three symmetrical bays, comprised of the entrance door flanked by two sets of paired nine-over-one double-hung sash windows. The one story porch is supported by three tapered wood posts that rest on concrete bases that are faced with river rock taken from the Nolichucky River. A gable roof dormer is centered on the metal roof, with paired windows on the facade. The north and south elevations are similar with three symmetrical sets of windows puncturing the walls, a centered gable dormer placed on the roof. (C)

**50. Smokehouse, Crum Farm, circa 1920**

The board and batten smokehouse, with exposed rafters and a metal gable roof, is the nearest outbuilding to the farmhouse. (C)

**51. Chicken Coop, Crum Farm, circa 1930**

The chicken coop is a board and batten building, with a metal gable roof. It is similar in appearance to standardized designs for chicken coops from the University of Tennessee Extension Service in the 1920s. (C)

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**52. Privy, Crum Farm, circa 1940**

Although the New Deal agency that funded the privy is now unknown, being either the Tennessee Emergency Relief Administration or, more likely, the Works Progress Administration, the privy is a one-seat, board and batten building, with a metal shed roof. (C)

**53. Garage, Crum Farm, circa 1940**

The open two-vehicle garage is a rectangular frame building with a low pitch metal gable roof. (C)

A gas pump stands in front of the garage. (NC)

**54. Burley tobacco barn, Crum Farm, circa 1950**

The burley tobacco barn nearest the farmhouse is a rectangular frame structure, with a metal gable roof. Its entrance is at the gable end. It is similar in appearance to standardized burley tobacco barn designs produced by the University of Tennessee Extension Service in the 1950s. (C)

**55. Burley tobacco barn, Crum Farm, circa 1960**

The largest of the burley tobacco barns on the Crum Farm is located away from the domestic complex, on a slight rise overlooking the valley fields and Nolichucky River. This large, two-story building is rectangular shaped, of frame construction and with a gable metal roof with a ventilator. Its entrance is at both gable ends. (NC)

**56. Wood shop, Crum Farm, circa 1920**

The wood shop is a rectangular shaped board and batten building, with a low metal gable roof and a central gable end entrance. (C)

**57. Machine shed, Crum Farm, circa 1950**

The rectangular shaped machine shed has three open bays. It is a frame building with a metal gable roof. (C)

**58. FIELD PATTERNS, circa 1950**

The field patterns of the nominated district possess a high degree of integrity to agricultural practices of the mid-twentieth century, by which time the dairy industry and the production of burley tobacco dominated the agricultural commodities of the region. Fields are well defined by historic fence lines (mid-twentieth century wire fencing predominating), the Nolichucky River, and the insertion of rural historic roads, such as Sandbar Road and Earnest Road. Together these different elements constitute a contributing site (C).

**59. SPLIT LEVEL, Chuckey Pike (circa 1970).**

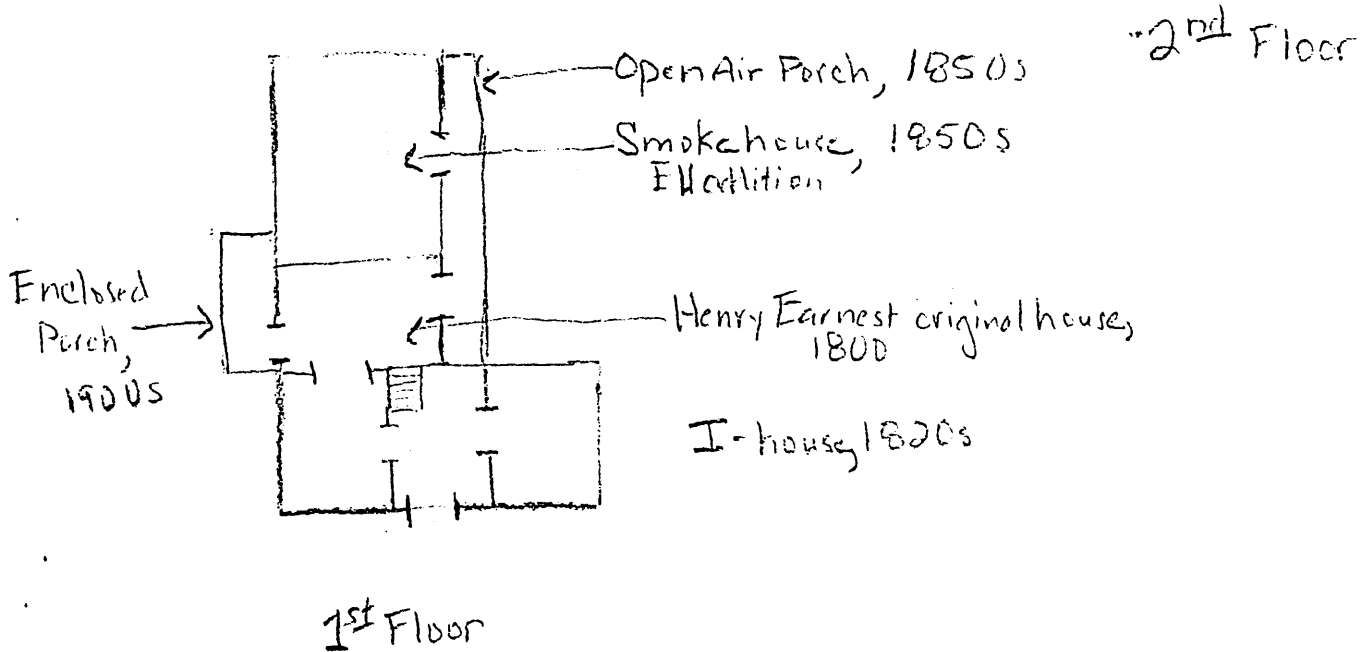
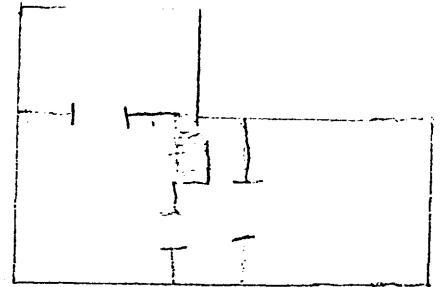
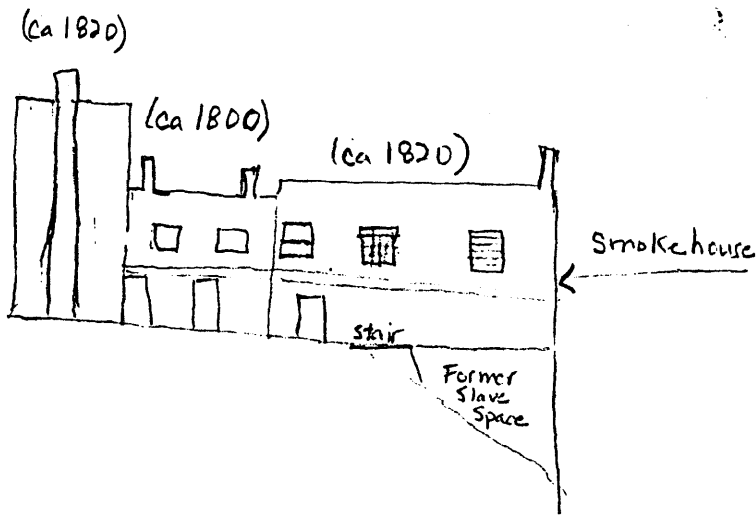
This dwelling occupies a small lot facing Chuckey Pike. It is set far back from the road. The house is a frame, split level type dwelling with a gable roof. (NC, due to date of construction)

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Henry and Peter Earnest House, east elevation and floor plans (not to scale)

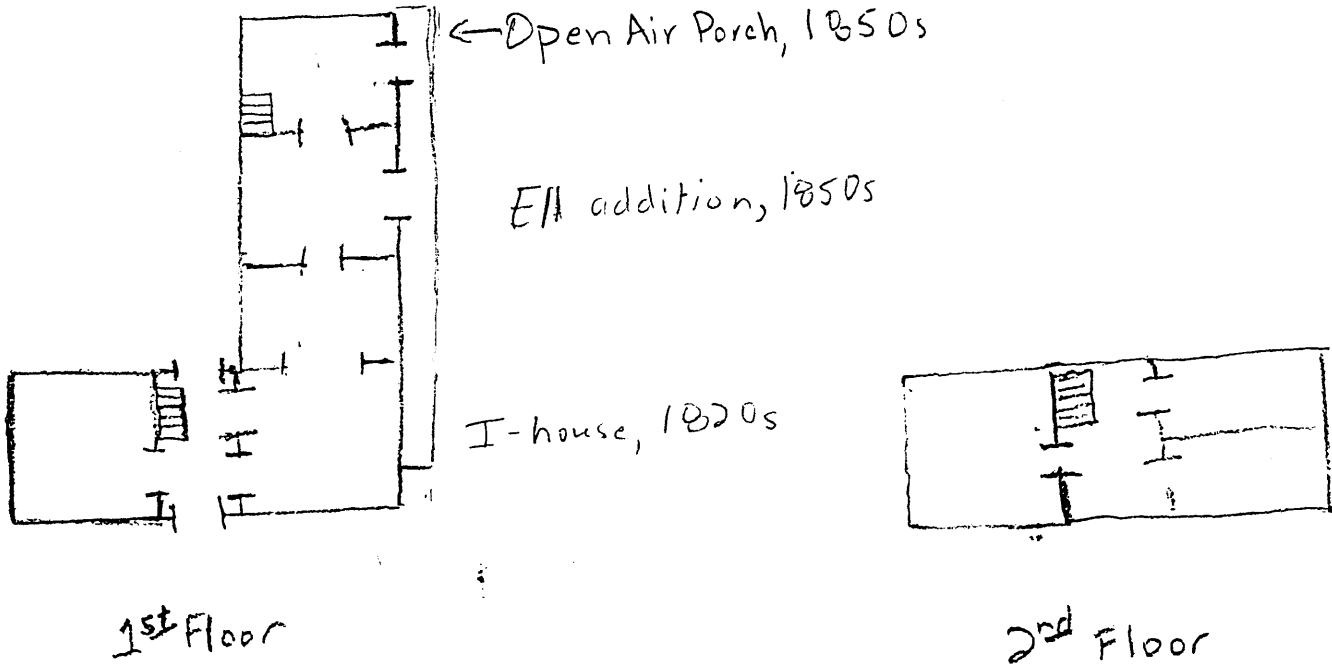


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Earnest/Broyles House, floor plans (not to scale)





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## Statement of Significance

The Earnest Farms Historic District in eastern Greene County, Tennessee is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with early settlement patterns in East Tennessee and its association with significant patterns in the agricultural history of the region, particularly since the district contains the oldest Century Farm in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture recognizes this district as the oldest continuously operating farm in Tennessee, from its beginning in 1777 to the present day. The Earnest Farms Historic District is also an example of the important relationship between agriculture and capitalism, or profit farming rather than subsistence agriculture. The coming of the railroad to Greene County opened up new trade possibilities for the isolated Nolichucky River Valley. The Earnests took advantage of this opportunity by constructing a bridge over the Nolichucky River to transport produce to the railroad depot in the nearby town of Chuckey. The nominated district is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a district that exhibits the range of vernacular dwellings and styles typical of the early settlement era as well as the architectural types of outbuildings associated with the progressive farm movement of the early twentieth century. The nominated district meets the registration requirements of the "The Transformation of the Nolichucky Valley, 1776-1950 Multiple Property Submission."

The Earnest Farms Historic District is located both north and south of the Nolichucky River in Greene County, Tennessee. This location and its fertile soil brought success and added to the longevity of farms within the river valley. Henry Earnest and his wife, Mary Stephens Earnest, represent one of these early valley settlement families. Earnest (originally Heinrich Ernst), a Swiss immigrant, came to Tennessee from Virginia in 1774.<sup>1</sup> A rare, two-story blockhouse, the Mauris-Earnest Fort House (NR 1978), remains from the Earnest's earliest settlement years, and was built on the north side of the Nolichucky River about 1782. The construction of the Mauris-Earnest Fort House evidences the Earnests' rather tenuous relationship with the Native Americans with its limestone basement and location set into a river bluff, providing excellent views of the river and adjacent trails. This property is included in the Earnest Farms Historic District, as it represents the early settlement. The Earnests and other neighboring families engaged in mixed farming, or cultivating a diversity of crops, and in raising different types of livestock. Corn, wheat, hay, hogs, and some tobacco and dairy provided the primary crops for families within the Earnest Farms Historic District throughout their tenure in the Nolichucky River Valley.

After the death of Henry Earnest, Sr., in 1809, the built environment began to change around the Nolichucky River. He was the first known person (although there may have been earlier burials) placed in the Ebenezer Methodist Church cemetery. His death also led to the division of the original family farm into two adjoining properties. Henry and his wife, Mary, had 11 children; five sons and six daughters. The children gradually divided their parents' estate, with son Peter settling on the land south of the Nolichucky River and across from the Mauris-Earnest Fort House. This movement away from the fort and its protective hillside suggest that the Earnests perceived the area around them as safe and ventured out to settle closer to their fields.<sup>2</sup>

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Two brick dwellings as well as a historic cemetery represent the early settlement period of 1777-1820. The Henry and Peter Earnest house combines a circa 1800 German folk style-influenced two-story brick house with a circa 1820 English-derived folk style two-story central hall house, or I-House. The original dwelling had four bays with one central chimney. This building suggests the German-Swiss building tradition of establishing symmetry with the windows on the second story matching those of the first story, its central chimney, and its construction into a hillside, creating a basement.<sup>3</sup>

The second Earnest son dwelling, built by Henry Earnest, Jr., also dated circa 1820, is a more stylish Tennessee Federal dwelling, just up river from the original family home. It possesses ornate carved mantels, and other interior embellishments typical of the Federal style as translated into Tennessee. Fine woodcarving is evident on the mantels in the first floor rooms and rounded arch doorframes. This craftsmanship is also present on the staircase and was reportedly created by an itinerant English craftsman.<sup>4</sup> This fine workmanship reinforces the theory that the Earnests were wealthy farmers, represented in the well-crafted interiors of their brick I-houses. Henry Earnest, Jr. carried on the family tradition of community involvement by representing Greene County as state senator from 1811-1813. He also served as Justice of the Peace for Greene County in 1830 and carried out his position out of an office in his house.

The extant Earnest I-houses are symbols of the migration to the west and are also representative of the most widely distributed form of domestic rural architecture.<sup>5</sup> Their existence also demonstrates the early efforts of the Earnests to become progressive in their approach to farming by participating in a popular national style in the Nolichucky River Valley. The construction of the I-house style in the expensive medium of brick also portrayed the Earnests' agricultural success and gradual accumulation of wealth. Directly south of the main farmhouse, and framing the front yard is a row of boxwoods. This landscaping style becomes yet another example of the Earnests' efforts to participate in the progressive trends of the era. Beginning in the 1800s, it was fashionable to cultivate a row of boxwoods, in many cases to cordon off yards or to line driveways. For example, the owners of "Boxwood Manor", just ten miles away from the Earnests in Greeneville, surrounded their mansion in 1855 with boxwoods that had been "brought over the mountains in oxcarts from Charleston, South Carolina."<sup>6</sup> Other examples of this boxwood landscaping existed across Tennessee. The John Netherland Home in Rogersville lined the main entrance with "boxwoods at regular intervals".<sup>7</sup> The Meux Place in Stanton, Tennessee displayed "borders of magnificent boxwoods" planted soon after house construction in 1836.<sup>8</sup> The tradition of boxwood landscaping continued into the twentieth century as the Garden Study Club of Nashville noted examples of exclusive Tennessee houses incorporating boxwoods into their present land design.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the boxwoods, a concrete walkway leads from the façade of the farmhouse to a concrete stairway that ultimately leads to the road that is now Highway 351. Both the Henry and Peter Earnest and the Earnest/Broyles I-Houses received later stylistic updating, during circa 1920, with one-story Colonial Revival-influenced porticos added to the facades.

Agriculturally, during the first decades of settlement and development, corn, wheat, horses and hogs represented part of the farms' crop production, in addition to small amounts of tobacco, dairy and other items considered "staples" for household consumption. But clearly by 1830 the Earnests were engaging in

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wider market transactions and producing more crops for market sales. Despite some limits in transportation, store account books and ledgers demonstrate that the Earnests regularly engaged in business outside their immediate community. According to the account ledgers of D.B. Barkley, Henry, Jr. and Jacob Earnest traveled to the community of Leesburg/ Bowman to purchase items from his General Store.<sup>10</sup> This community was located roughly seven miles from the Nolichucky Valley and connected by a county road. Records indicate that the Earnest family held accounts with Barkley as early as 1836, and conducted business regularly within the town of Leesburg until 1860.

During this period of early settlement, the Earnests helped to pioneer what is recognized as the first Methodist church in Tennessee. In the 1790s the Earnests formed a Methodist society with other families in the area. Bishop Francis Asbury, an influential leader in American Methodist history, met with the Earnest group during his extensive travels in 1793. He wrote "...road to Nolachucky and attended a meeting at Squire Earnest's, where I had about 200 hearers. We have formed a society in this place of about 31 members, most of them new."<sup>11</sup> By 1795 Henry, Sr., and his son Felix Earnest donated a parcel of land on the south bank of the Nolichucky River to build a structure for the "Methodist society".<sup>12</sup> Bishop Asbury dedicated the building on April 27, 1795. Asbury wrote of the dedication "Our brethren have built a meeting house and I must needs preach the first sermon. Exodus 20:24. Notwithstanding, it was a time of great scarcity, we were treated well and most kindly entertained."<sup>13</sup>

This service was the beginning of the Ebenezer Methodist Church. The current church building stands in the same location of the original meetinghouse built in 1795. It is reportedly the third Ebenezer Methodist Church building, and its construction began in 1897 and concluded in 1899.<sup>14</sup> Hand-painted grained wood is located on the pews, windowsills and the altar. The interior features the original wood paneling on the top portions and wainscoting on the bottom portions of the walls. A year after the building's construction, Ebenezer Methodist Church purchased a bell from the Cincinnati Bell Foundry and a group of ten men met to install the bell in the tower. Church records indicate that the only Earnest present for the bell installation was Frank Earnest, and the designation "(colored)" appears beside his name.<sup>15</sup>

The Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery began in 1809 with the death of Henry Earnest, Sr. Most of the graves are of Henry's descendants.<sup>16</sup> Some of the other family names represented in the Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery are Miller, Mitchell, Thompson, Ge'fellers, and Broyles. The most recent interment present in the cemetery is Liza B. Doggett Earnest who died in 1947. Two small stones are cordoned off in a section for slaves. These stones are marked "Zona" and "Corby", with no other markings.<sup>17</sup> Many of the graves in the cemetery remain unmarked, and their occupants could have been enslaved or free. The cemetery is located immediately south of Ebenezer Methodist Church on a slightly sloping bluff that leads to the Nolichucky River.

The presence of the slave graves underscores the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century the Earnests were among the most prosperous farmers in the region. The Henry and Peter Earnest house indicates the presence of slave space in the bottom story of the rear ell. The location and manner in which the slave quarters and staircase exist suggest that those who lived in the bottom level worked in the house, particularly within the smokehouse or the kitchen. However, as census records note, Peter Earnest owned 17 slaves in 1850 and 15 in 1860.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that in addition to the slaves that worked within the Earnest

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household, many also worked in the fields completing various agricultural tasks. Also, the two rooms within the Earnest home, though large, could not have sheltered 15-17 slaves, which suggests that other housing separate from the farmhouse, existed for those slaves that did not work within the house. No individual slave cabins remain today on any of the nominated farms. Slave quarters do exist in the rear ell of the Henry Earnest, Jr., house, though they are present on the top story rather than in the bottom level.

The ownership of slaves, the presence of two large stately homes, and the political influence of being a magistrate are all signs of the Earnests' prominence along the Nolichucky Valley in the early nineteenth century. But the two brothers were more than farmers; they were also among the commercial and manufacturing elite of this region. The earliest evidence of Henry and Peter Earnest's business activity is recorded as 1819, but their involvement in commerce might have occurred earlier. Another brother, Jacob Earnest, was a merchant too. Estate records also mentioned claims against "Jacob Earnest & Sons" or "Peter Earnest & Sons" in 1839. Peter Earnest also operated a ferry and mill at his farm. The mill was located on the north side of the Nolichucky River, next to the bridge and across the street from the Mauris-Earnest Fort House.<sup>19</sup> The mill reportedly remained in operation until the 1940s, and was demolished in 1967 to make way for a new bridge across the Nolichucky River. In the 1887 Goodspeed's *History of Tennessee*, Peter Earnest and Henry Earnest are listed as merchants.<sup>20</sup> Goodspeed's report further implies the success of Greeneville merchants; "...the merchants were quite prosperous and many acquired a large amount of wealth, hence a sort of aristocracy sprang up." An aristocratic image possibly aided Henry Earnest, Jr. in becoming one of the charter board members of Tusculum College in 1818, also making it possible for his nephew, Benjamin Franklin Earnest, to attend that college. Benjamin was the youngest son and heir to part of the Earnest property upon Peter's death. (Tusculum College Historic District, NR 11/25/80)

Perhaps Peter Earnest's involvement in local commerce through the "Earnest and Sons" company helped him to see the potential for market expansion brought by the railroad to Greene County. Once the tracks of the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad passed near his farm, creating the town of Chuckey, Earnest moved to connect his farming and milling operations with the new transportation link. (Chuckey Depot, NR 12/19/79) In 1856, Peter Earnest organized another enterprise, the "Earnestville Bridge Company", and sold stock at \$25 per share, the proceeds going to the construction of a toll bridge across the Nolichucky River. This bridge gave the farmers access to the railroad depot in Chuckey, on the north side of the river. The railroad connected present-day Bristol in the east to Knoxville, opening the markets along the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to farmers in the Nolichucky Valley.<sup>21</sup> Peter Earnest followed the example set by many wealthy farmers in East Tennessee by taking advantage of the new money that the railroad ushered in. Appalachian Historian W. Todd Groce wrote that these businessmen still considered themselves "farmers," though they attained considerable amount money through the second income provided by other enterprises.<sup>22</sup> Earnest's efforts in securing construction of the bridge demonstrate his understanding of the importance of the railroad and its potential for expanding local markets. His ability to supply the initial capital for bridge construction and to secure investors infers Earnest's elite status in the community.

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Representing this important period of agricultural market expansion brought about by the railroad is the extant 1869 bridge abutment that is located immediately north of the Peter Earnest Farm in the Nolichucky River. This abutment stands in the location of the original bridge built by Peter Earnest and the Earnestville Bridge Company in 1856. The existing bridge abutment was constructed from the stone of the 1869 structure in 1903, when it was also raised five feet.<sup>23</sup>

With the railroad link came more market farming for the Earnests. Agriculture census records indicate Peter Earnest's heavy involvement in wheat cultivation as 1,545 bushels in 1860, representing a sizeable investment in the crop.<sup>24</sup> The other crops and livestock entered in the Peter Earnest's agricultural census record reflect a diversity of crops, with wheat representing the third largest crop yield after Indian corn and oats. Though involved in the wheat boom, Peter Earnest also continued raising a variety of livestock and crops.

Upon Peter's death in 1862, his son Benjamin Franklin Earnest inherited the original family farmstead. Oral tradition supports the claim that Benjamin F. Earnest provided flour from his mill for "Civil War Troops," but the nature of this military trade is unknown.<sup>25</sup>

The Earnest agricultural assets survived remarkably intact from the 1860 to the 1870 census as Benjamin Earnests' farm demonstrated only a decline in livestock numbers, the crop yields approximately the same as produced by his father ten years earlier.<sup>26</sup> This quick regain of wealth is notable, as both Union and Confederate soldiers repeatedly robbed Upper East Tennessee farms leaving a largely destitute region in 1864. But it is also comparable to what historian Robert Tracy McKenzie has found for agricultural elites statewide—they certainly endured significant property losses during the war but they maintained their overall position as an agricultural elite, holding a similar percentage of the region's wealth in 1870 as they did in 1860.<sup>27</sup>

After the Civil War, Benjamin F. Earnest did not follow his neighbors' lead into the tobacco industry on a commercial scale. Even with the largest burley tobacco markets in the state a little more than ten miles away, the Earnest farm produced tobacco for household consumption and only a small surplus for trade. Benjamin Earnest's farm continued the family's 100-year tradition of diversifying crops and livestock.

During the 1880s, two of Rev. Felix Earnest's sons, James Oliphant and William McKendrie Earnest farmed part of their father's land near the Ebenezer Methodist Church. A large, two-story home and tenant house on the south bank of the Nolichucky River remain from this farming operation. Upon the deaths of James and William in 1902, the farm passed to William's son, Jim Harvey Earnest. Earnest managed the farm, which cultivated tobacco until the 1930s, when it was sold out of the Earnest family. This house represents the Folk Victorian style and becomes the third primary Earnest dwelling within the district.

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Upon Benjamin Earnest's death in 1887, the original Henry and Peter Earnest Farm passed to Nicholas Peter Earnest, another son of Benjamin Earnest. The Henry Earnest, Jr., farm was sold out of the family to the Broyles family in 1903 (Earnest/Broyles Farm in nomination). Nicholas P. Earnest's tenure running the family farm represents the family's leadership in the progressive farming movement of the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to operating his family's farm, Nicholas Earnest became heavily involved in community affairs, including the East Tennessee chapter of the Farm Bureau and the Greene County Bank.

The production of burley tobacco, especially after the establishment of the University of Tennessee's tobacco demonstration farm circa 1932 Greeneville, became the leading money crop in Greene County during the twentieth century. The Crum Farm, developed circa 1920, is an excellent example of a small, yet productive burley tobacco farm from that era. Two extant tobacco barns still exist while the Bungalow styled farmhouse shows the family's embrace of the progressive agricultural ideas of the time.

While many of their neighbors concentrated on burley tobacco, both the Broyles and the Earnest families became leaders in the dairy farm revolution then reshaping the East Tennessee landscape. Agricultural reformers and local businessmen urged farmers to turn to dairy production, due to the improved highways of the region (the Andrew Johnson Highway was completed through Chuckey in the 1920s) and the region's urban growth, especially in Johnson City and the new urban center of Kingsport. This campaign gathered momentum upon the announcement of the Pet Milk Company's intent to build a milk condensing plant in Greeneville. The Greene County Extension Agent's report pointed to efforts by both the extension office and the chamber to "hold numerous meetings in rural communities" to encourage interest in dairy farming.<sup>28</sup> The banking community took an active role in recruiting cattle and farmers for the Pet Milk Company. Four Greeneville banks ordered six carloads of dairy cattle by railroad and sold them to farmers at cost.<sup>29</sup> The banks furthered their participation in the dairy promotion campaign by holding public meetings to explain different employment options associated with dairying. They also funded trips for three men to attend the National Dairy Exposition in Memphis and published a pamphlet for 4-H members entitled "The Dairy Cow, the Mother of Prosperity."<sup>30</sup> Though effective in convincing some Greene County farmers, Nicholas P. Earnest, the President of the Greene County Bank, continued to farm a variety of crops. The Broyles devoted their farm almost exclusively to dairy products and built a large dairy complex between 1920 and 1950.

Nicholas P. Earnest's involvement in agricultural reform was not limited to the local level. Beginning in 1921, Nicholas Earnest represented Upper East Tennessee on the Board of Trustees for the State Fair.<sup>31</sup> His involvement with the Agriculture Department suggests an interest in the efforts of agricultural education in the state. Earnest's involvement also implies that he supported the state message of progressive farming, including the heavy encouragement of dairying in the early 1920s. Through his involvement with the fairs, Earnest associated with state leaders who promoted the dairy industry, and though he might have been influenced by its reported benefits, his own mixed farming practices suggested otherwise.

Nicholas Earnest continued his participation in state agricultural efforts through the County Extension office. The 1930 Extension report for the town of Chuckey listed Earnest as both a "demonstrator" and "leader." Earnest became a charter officer in the Greene County chapter of the Farm Bureau in 1935. Records indicate that Earnest served initially as secretary and then director in the Greene County chapter.<sup>32</sup>

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Despite his major involvement with the promotion of commercial dairy farming in both state and local farming agencies and the financial sector, Nicholas Earnest did not incorporate large-scale dairying into his own farm. He remained faithful to his family's tradition of mixed farming even though a successful condensed milk plant existed about ten miles away from his farm. Under Earnest's management of the farm (1887-1956), the major crops cultivated remained corn, wheat, oats, hogs, and tobacco. His small level of dairy production resulted primarily in cream shipped as "express freight" from the Southern Railroad depot in Chuckey to either Bristol or Knoxville.<sup>33</sup>

Earnest's specialized production of cream, a highly profitable enterprise, suggests that Earnest had the resources to focus on the high-end areas of dairying, although the business he conducted with the Pet Milk condensery was limited. It was not until 1956 that the new management of the farm invested heavily in the dairy industry, thus ending the Earnest family tradition of diversified farming.

Upon the death of Nicholas Earnest in 1956, his six children inherited the farm. His daughter, Katherine Earnest Clemmer, and her husband Claudius bought the other five shares of the farm and focused solely on developing a registered Holstein herd for dairy farming. During the 1950s and 1960s, several dairy complexes were added to the farm site, which presently exist within the district.<sup>34</sup> Poor management and stricter dairy regulations forced the Clemmers' to sell the herd; the land is currently used to cultivate burley tobacco. The Broyles Farm also produces burley tobacco today, with the dairy operation closed. The Crum Farm is another active burley producer, while the Jim Earnest House is presently unoccupied.

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## Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The Earnest Farms Historic District is focused on the original farms of Henry Earnest Sr., Peter Earnest, and Henry Earnest, Jr. The Nolichucky River links the contiguous 20<sup>th</sup> Century property lines of the Earnests, Broyles, and Crum families, and forms the northern boundary of this district, with the exception of the Mauris- Earnest Fort House- the only property located on the opposite side of the Nolichucky River. The Crum Farm forms the eastern boundary and the Jim Earnest House forms the western boundary of the district. The boundary includes an intact collection of houses and outbuildings that represent the agricultural, architectural and settlement history of the Nolichucky Valley. The district retains a high degree of architectural and historic integrity.

The map for this district has a scale of 1" = 1,000' and that is the only map scale readily available for this rural part of the state.

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Earnest Farms Historic District  
Greene County, Tennessee

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## Photograph Log

Earnest Farms Historic District, Greene County, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation  
Taken: November 2000  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville TN

Overview of Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing southwest  
1 of 63

Overview of Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing southeast  
2 of 63

Overview of Earnest Farms Historic District, facing southeast  
3 of 63

Overview of Earnest Farms Historic District, facing southwest  
4 of 63

Bridge abutment and Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing south  
5 of 63

South facade of Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing east  
6 of 63

South facade of Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing west  
7 of 63

Northeast elevation of Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing southwest  
8 of 63

South facade of Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing north  
9 of 63

South elevation of garage, Henry and Peter Earnest farm, facing northeast  
10 of 63

South elevation of smokehouse, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing northeast  
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East elevation of transverse crib barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing west  
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South elevation of storage shed, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing northeast  
13 of 63

Northeast elevation of machine shed, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing southwest  
14 of 63

North elevation of tobacco barn, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing south  
15 of 63

Northeast elevation of tobacco barn and dairy barn across Tennessee Highway 351, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing southwest.  
16 of 63

Northeast elevation of dairy barn and milk house, Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing southwest  
17 of 63

Earnest agricultural fields to the west of the Henry and Peter Earnest Farm, facing west  
18 of 63

Southwest facade of Ebenezer Methodist church and cemetery, facing northeast  
19 of 63

West elevation of Ebenezer Methodist Church and cemetery, facing east  
20 of 63

Northwest elevation of Ebenezer Methodist Church and cemetery, facing southeast  
21 of 63

Southwest facade of Ebenezer Methodist Church and cemetery, facing northeast  
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Ebenezer Methodist Church Cemetery, facing northwest  
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Southwest elevation of ranch house, facing north  
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South elevation of storage shed, facing north  
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South elevation of cabin house, facing north  
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Southeast facade of ranch house, facing northwest  
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Southern view of Ebenezer Methodist Church from the Jim Earnest House, facing north  
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West façade of Jim Earnest House, facing east.  
29 of 63

West facade of tenant house, Jim Earnest Farm, facing east  
30 of 63

West elevation of storage building located north of tenant house, Jim Earnest Farm, facing east  
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Overview of Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing southeast  
32 of 63

South facade of Earnest/Broyles House, facing northwest  
33 of 63

Southeast elevation of Earnest/Broyles House, facing northeast  
34 of 63

East elevation of Earnest/Broyles House, facing southwest  
35 of 63

Parlor of Earnest/Broyles Farm, interior alcove  
36 of 63

West elevation of shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east  
37 of 63

West elevation of shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east  
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West elevation of wash house, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east  
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South elevation of machine shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing north  
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Southern elevation of tobacco barn and machine shed with water trough in foreground, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing north  
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West elevations of the stock and tobacco barn, concrete silos, and storage shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east.  
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Western overview of the stock and tobacco barn, concrete silos, and storage shed with field in foreground, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east.  
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South elevation of concrete silo, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing north  
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North elevation of milk house and tobacco barn, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing south  
45 of 63

West elevation of storage shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east  
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North elevation of machine shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing southwest  
47 of 63

Southeast elevation of machine shed, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing north  
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Cattle chute, Earnest/Broyles Farm, facing east  
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West elevation of tenant house, facing east  
50 of 63

East elevation of tenant house, shed, barn, and field in foreground, facing west  
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East elevation of Crum Bungalow, facing northwest  
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South elevation of Crum Bungalow, facing north  
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Smokehouse, chicken coop and privy, Crum Farm, facing north  
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East elevation of garage, Crum Farm, facing west  
55 of 63

East elevation of burley tobacco farm, Crum Farm, facing west  
56 of 63

Southeast elevations of wood shop, machine shed, and burley tobacco barn, facing northwest.  
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Split tree swing, made and sold by Mr. Crum, Crum Farm  
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North elevation of tenant house, facing south  
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Field patterns, Earnest Farms Historic District, facing east  
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Field patterns with the Nolichucky River at the foot of the hills, Earnest Farms Historic District, facing north  
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Field patterns with wire fencing, Earnest Farms Historic District, facing north  
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Field patterns with historic fence lines, Earnest Farms Historic District, facing north  
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**Mauris – Earnest Fort House**

W. Massengill and C.G. Clemmer Family Partnership  
1900 Chuckey Pike  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**Henry and Peter Earnest House and Farm**

Martha Backman, W. Massengill and C.G. Clemmer Family Partnership  
1900 Chuckey Pike  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**Bridge Sub-structure**

Greene County  
C/o Green County Executive

**Ebenezer Methodist Church and Cemetery**

C/o Beatrice Ricker  
70 Algonquin Circle  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**House at 1715 Earnest Road**

Don Gieser  
1715 Earnest Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**House 1875 Earnest Road**

Julie Hensley  
1875 Earnest Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**House at 1835 Earnest Road**

Ted Hensley  
1835 Earnest Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**Jim Earnest House and Farm**

Johnson Estate  
C/o Marie Shelton  
495 Ebenezer Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

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**House at 250 Sandbar Road**

David Fowler  
250 Sandbar Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**House at 320 Sandbar Road**

Herbert Dean Walker  
320 Sandbar Road  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**Earnest/Broyles House and Farm**

Bobby Broyles  
1320 Chuckey Pike  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**Crum House and Farm**

Shirley Whitburn  
185 Crum Lane  
Chuckey, TN 37641

**House at 2620 Chuckey Pike**

A.J. and Jean Medsker  
2620 Chuckey Pike  
Chuckey, TN 37641

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<sup>1</sup> James E. Warren. *The Earnest Family in Switzerland and America*, (Athens, Georgia: Ivan Allen Company, 1961), 4. At this time, Greene County was part of Washington County, North Carolina. Greene County became a part of Tennessee in 1796, upon Tennessee's admission to the Union.

<sup>2</sup> James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 17. Patrick has found evidence to suggest that there were "brickmakers, bricklayers, and oil makers in the Holston settlements..." by 1795. In *Small Things Forgotten*, James Deetz remarks that it is sometimes necessary to "carefully analyze the various builds exhibited by a house" to locate its core structure, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> People who emigrated from Switzerland, Germany, Alsace, and the Low Countries are generally grouped together as "Rhinelanders", sharing a similar cultural heritage. For more information about how the Rhinelanders shaped the Virginia frontier, see Kenneth W. Keller's article in *Diversity and Accommodation; Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997) 99.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Doughty, *Greeneville, One-Hundred Year Portrait 1775-1875* (Greeneville, Tennessee: Doughty, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," *Common Places Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Roberta Seawall Brandau, *History of Homes and Gardens in Tennessee* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936), 49.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 57

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 330. The "Modern Homes" section of this 1936 book notes the Kincaid home in Clinton as having boxwoods that were "...neatly trimmed like an English box."

<sup>10</sup> Brabson Family Papers, Center for Appalachian Studies, 1833-1850, P. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts and Jacob S. Patton, eds. *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*. (London: Epworth Press and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 754, Vol.1 Bishop Francis Asbury has been compared to John Wesley in the spread of Methodism in the United States, according to Marvin Kincheloe and Robert L. Hilten's *Bishop Asbury Comes to Holston*, 1984.

<sup>12</sup> Elmer T. Clark, p. 48, Vol. II. Community accounts differ about the date of construction, some implying that the log building constructed in 1785 was actually the second church building to stand there, the first being built in 1792.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Ebenezer Methodist Church, "Brief History about Ebenezer United Methodist Church: Gatherings at the River, 1795-1973," Pamphlet, assembled 1973.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Soderberg, Gertrude and Mildred S. Archer, "Ebenezer – A Greene County, Tennessee Cemetery," Pamphlet, assembled 1973.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> National Records and Archives, Slave Census for 1850 and 1860.

<sup>19</sup> *Greeneville Sun*, Saturday January 26, 1991.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 437, 225.

<sup>21</sup> [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov). For further information about route of the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad, search the map database for "East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad", 1882 Rand McNally map of this railroad and its connection with others in the Southwest portion of the United States.

<sup>22</sup> W. Todd Groce, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Architectural Assessment for the Proposed Bridge Replacement, Earnest Bridge Spanning the Nolichucky River at Chuckey, Greene County, Tennessee, Tennessee Department of Transportation (Carver, 1991).

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<sup>24</sup> National Archives, *Non-Population Schedules for Tennessee, 1850-1880*, Greene County, 1860 (Washington, D. C.: National Archives) 63.

<sup>25</sup> Clemmer, Katherine Earnest. "Elmwood Farms- Century Farm Application Addendum" (Murfreesboro, Center for Historic Preservation, 1986, photocopied), 1986.

<sup>26</sup> National Archives, *Non-Population Census Schedule for 1870, Greene County, Tennessee* (Washington D.C.: National Archives), 17

<sup>27</sup> Robert Tracy McKenzie, "'Oh! Ours is a Deplorable Condition'; The Economic Impact of the Civil War in Upper East Tennessee," in *The Civil War in Appalachia, Collected Essays*, eds. Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 206.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Agriculture, "Extension Service Annual Reports, Greene County, 1927" (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives), 4. This effort continued in 1928 as the county extension report notes 47 "general dairy promotion" meetings with an attendance of 3,997 people. The county extension included targeted topics as well, the "pure bred aire campaign" held 34 meetings with 1300 in attendance

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Agriculture, "Extension Service Annual Reports, Greene County, 1928" (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives), 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Tennessee Agriculture* (Nashville) September 1921.

<sup>32</sup> Director of Communications Tennessee Farm Bureau, Pettis Reed, phone interview by author, 23 February 2001, notes in the author's possession.

<sup>33</sup> Claudius Clemmer. phone interview by author, 25 February 2001, notes in the author's possession.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Ernest Farms Historic District  
Greene County TN

1" = 1000'

