

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 9 1975  
DATE ENTERED JUL 8 1975

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Crawford General Store

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Macon Road

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Williston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Fayette

CODE

047

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Vacant

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. Harrison Crawford

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Williston

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fayette County Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Fayette County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

STATE

Tennessee

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Crawford General Store is a fairly simple, two story structure of clapboard painted white. There is a partial false facade rising from the eastern half of the building's front wall, adding architectural interest. There is a very basic portico supported by seven wooden columns. A simple, semi-circular fan window is set into the false front, and the eaves are supported by decorative wooden supports (eight pairs).

The exterior architecture of the store is typical of many pre-Civil War country stores in the South. Of equal importance with the design of the building's exterior, however, is the fact that a great many of the interior furnishings are on the premises, looking much as they would have when the store was in use. There are, for example, the store's original wood counters, which are unpainted and relatively ornate. The shelves, too, some with gingerbread trim, still remain, as do several old chairs and sitting benches. In storage on the premises are doors, windows, and four hand made columns (primitives). Mantels are plain, covering two fireplaces, one upstairs and one down.

There are additionally several sets of books and ledgers representing daily sales from 1894 until 1938. Much of the varied merchandise offered by the store remains, including an assortment of hardware, old plows and farm tools, old shoes, pearl buttons, dress buckles, underwear, antique mousetraps (one is on display in the Memphis Pink Palace Museum), ten pairs of Teddy Roosevelt type eyeglasses, and other small items. A few items have been removed to the residence of the owner, Mr. Harrison Crawford, including wooden candlesticks, pictures, and ceremonial ribbons which were used by the Knights of Honor, dated 1879, 1880, and 1881. (The upstairs of this store was the meeting place of this order). There is one large pot bellied stove and a smaller stove inside.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> _PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> _1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> _1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1850

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The store at Williston, Tennessee, is an unusually good example of a vanishing architectural type--the country general store, specializing in items as varied as dress buckles, butter, mousetraps and medicines. Serving as it did as a sort of clearinghouse for community activities, it represents as well a direct source of clues to the social history of the period.

The country store was the economic heart of many early communities, and the store at Williston was no exception. The store was opened in about 1850 by R. A. Gaither. About 1890 operation by W. C. Crawford began, and the business was operated by him and his son, Knox Crawford until 1972.

A large sign on the front read "General Merchandise," but these words only hinted at the items handled there and the functions served by the store and its owner.

The store handled dry goods, shoes, piece goods, sweaters, coats, overalls, tailored clothing, rubber footwear, hardware, plows, and farming equipment. Mr. Crawford also sold staple and fancy groceries, medicines which did not require prescriptions, and gasoline which was shipped in drums from Memphis. Bread also was shipped from Memphis on Friday nights to be sold on Saturday, the only day that "store bought" bread was available. On Friday afternoon Mr. Crawford also butchered a cow to provide beef for his Saturday customers at the rate of 8½ cents per pound.

The sign on the store front also read "Cash and Barter," and Mr. Crawford bought eggs, poultry, rabbits, and green hides to be made into shoes. Rabbits that were killed by hunters were bought at the store for 10¢ each if the legs were not broken, or for 5¢ each if a leg were broken.

Farmers brought in butter in tin pails, and if the weather was warm and the butter was melted, it was poured (after being weighed) into large wooden candy buckets and placed in a large refrigerator to harden before it was shipped to Memphis.



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Mr. Crawford bought cotton and cotton seed in the fall, and his son recalls that one October he bought 300 bales. He also purchased cattle and rode with them in cattle cars to the market in St. Louis. At one time he bought a carload of wood ashes and shipped them from Williston by rail. At this time a branch line of the Southern Railroad extended from Moscow to Somerville, and the Somerville accomodation made a round trip each day--from Somerville to Memphis at an early morning hour, and back again at night. At Williston, boys would swarm aboard the train to drink ice water, available nowhere else.

Members of train crews were frequent customers at the Crawford store, buying butter and eggs to carry back to the city. For many years, the only telephone in Williston, a pay station phone, was located in the store. Outsiders made contact with Williston residents by calling the store and waiting while a clerk found the person wanted and brought him to the phone. The post office, also, was located in the store.

Mr. Crawford had other interests outside the store. He introduced into Fayette County the Guernsey breed of cattle that became popular there. He owned two of the world's fastest horses and used them for breeding. One of the was Minor Heir, a world champion pacer in his prime, and who, some years before Mr. Crawford acquired him, set a record for the mile at 1:58½.

Both for the architectural significance of the structure and for its vital role in the economy of the community, the Crawford General Store is an important landmark of the area.