

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 05 1975

DATE ENTERED

JUN 10 1975

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC *Ellison*
McClain-Smith House
AND/OR COMMON

see letter from SHPO May 13-1975

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Route 2

W of Speedwell on Rte. 2

CITY, TOWN

Speedwell

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Claiborne

CODE

025

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Earl Hobson Smith

STREET & NUMBER
Route 2, Box 169

CITY, TOWN

Speedwell

VICINITY OF

STATE
Tennessee

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register's Office, Claiborne County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Tazewell

STATE
Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McClain-Smith House sits on a secluded dirt road in the Powell Valley. The house faces directly south--away from Powell Mountain and towards the valley's rolling fields.

The house and grounds are in remarkable condition. Made of handcut limestone, said to have been quarried on a nearby site by a single slave, the walls of the house vary from 8' thick to 2' thick. The house is built into a hill thus making the back portion three stories high. Federal style architecture was utilized in the construction of the house.

The smokehouse in back of the house was rebuilt in 1970 and two new logs replaced decayed logs on the bottom. The old logs are made of chestnut and the two new logs of oak. The Smiths have made the smokehouse into a museum containing relics used on the farm. The relics range from saddles to hand made cider presses.

The main house has been altered very little since its construction around 1800. The main alterations have been the front porch added some time before 1900, the study on the eastern side, added 1948, and the kitchen on the back also added in 1948. Originally like other homes of the era, the kitchen and dining area was separate from the house. The separate structure no longer exists, having been taken down when Marshall Ellison owned the house.

With the exception of the two additions, the interior has changed very little over the years. The ceilings, for instance, are still showing their original exposed poplar boards. The house's six fireplaces are usable, although in winter time they are closed off except during the holiday season. All the woodwork is hand crafted as are the built-in cherry cabinets.

The well-kept grounds contain a variety of tall trees. Being on a knoll the house commands a variety of views. The front faces the valley and its farmland while the back faces Powell Mountain and the coal fields beyond.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 circa 1800

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas McClain

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built from 1793-1800, the McClain-Smith House is one of the oldest surviving structures in Tennessee. Its builder, Thomas McClain, was one of the first white men to settle in Powell Valley. Before the house was built, McClain and his wife stayed in a cave directly north of the house. Indians were still very much in the area at the time--particularly the Cherokee--and the belfry was supposedly added to warn surrounding settlers of their approach.

McClain bought four square miles of land from the Henderson Ladd Company. McClain married twice and had 14 children. The original tract was thus divided several times. The children of McClain sold the house and over 400 acres to "Uncle" Doc Rogers in 1875. Rogers died in 1895 and his family sold the farm to Marshall Ellison in 1900. Marshall Ellison farmed the land until his death whereupon his daughter, Myrtle Ellison Smith inherited the farm. Myrtle Smith and her husband, Earl Hobson Smith, currently reside in the home. E. H. Smith is a playwright whose historical frontier plays have been performed throughout the country. Myrtle Smith is also a writer, her most well-known book being The Civil War Cookbook.

McClain, his two wives, "Uncle" Doc Rogers, and Marshall Ellison are all buried in a cemetery southeast of the house. The cemetery can be seen from the front porch.

The McClain-Smith House is a significant structure because it is a fine example of the substantial stone houses built in East Tennessee in the early settlement years. Its connection with the present owners makes it important in the area of literature. It remains as one of the most important buildings in the fertile Powell Valley.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The LaFollette Press, LaFollette, Tennessee, September 9, 1971, "Earl Hobson Smiths have Oldest House in the Valley", p. 4.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9 UTM OK
TL

UTM REFERENCES

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jon Coddington, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

East Tennessee Development District

DATE

6-28-74

STREET & NUMBER

1810 Lake Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Knoxville

STATE

Tennessee

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Lauren C. Henry

4/30/75

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

AK [Signature]

DATE

6/10/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

JUN 9 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER