

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only
received JUN 8 1983
date entered

1. Name

historic Ravenswood

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Wilson Pike N/A — not for publication

city, town Brentwood vicinity of

state TN code 047 county Williamson code 187

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input 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 Reese L. Smith, Jr.

street & number Ravenswood Farm, Rt. 5 Wilson Pike

city, town Franklin N/A — vicinity of state Tennessee 37064

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Williamson County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Franklin state TN 37064

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A — federal — state — county — local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Ravenswood, built in 1825, is a two-story ell-shaped brick house located on Wilson Pike in Williamson County, near Brentwood. The house exhibits a combination of Federal and Greek Revival style characteristics. Stepped chimney gables, a plain frieze, low gable roof, three-bay facade, central double-leaf entrance with sidelights and tracery transom, tripart windows with bull's eye stone lintels, stone quoins, and a one-story classical verandah are its most prominent features. The house and its two original brick slave houses, detached brick kitchen, and a log and frame barn are situated on a gentle, long slope of land, midway between the low-lying road in front and a steep hilltop behind. A long gravel driveway, lined with mature shade trees leads up the sloping hillside to an oval-shaped driveway in front of the house. Surrounding the house and its outbuildings are acres of farmland with scattered woods and tree-lined fence rows around sectioned fields. Ravenswood retains a high degree of integrity, both architecturally and in its rural plantation setting.

Ravenswood is two stories in height and ell-shaped; a one-story wing adjoins the rear elevation of the ell. The three-bay facade of the house features contrasting stone quoins at the corners and around the doorway. A stone stringcourse divides the two stories. Asphalt shingles cover the house's low gable roof. The wide tripart windows have 6/6 lights and bull's eye corner block stone lintels. Upper story windows have double louvered shutters. The central double-leaf doorway has tracery side lights and transom. A one-story verandah across the facade has a central pediment, modillioned frieze, square Doric columns, a wood balustrade, and stone foundation. Windows of the side elevations have 6/6 lights and stone lintels with bull's eye corner blocks. A one-story Victorian period porch with spindle frieze, turned posts and balustrade is located on the north side elevation of the ell. The verandah across the inside of the ell has been enclosed with screens; the verandah across the south side of the one-story wing has been enclosed with weatherboard. These enclosures, and a one-story frame room added to the west or rear elevation of the wing ca. 1960s, are the only serious changes made to the house. They however do not greatly affect the integrity of Ravenswood because they are exterior additions that could be removed.

The Federal period interior of Ravenswood remains practically unaltered. Original staircases, doors, moldings, mantels, and floors remain intact and in good condition. The central hall spiral staircase and two marble mantels are extremely fine interior examples of craftsmanship.

Significant outbuildings included within the nominated boundaries are the original detached brick kitchen/servants quarters, two brick slave houses and a log and frame barn. The remarkably unaltered kitchen is two-stories, gable-roofed and has a large gable end brick chimney. The two slave houses, also little-altered, are one and a half story with a gable end chimney, a single-leaf door on the south side and a rectangular window on the north side each. The log and frame barn has a gable roof and is covered with vertical boards. Other outbuildings, non-contributing to the significance of Ravenswood, are a mid-twentieth century carport and two shed-type frame storage buildings.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1825 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Ravenswood (sometimes known as Ravenwood) is nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its historical and architectural significance to Williamson County. The house derives significance from association with its builder, James Hazard Wilson II, a Middle Tennessee baron of big business whose worth was valued at two million dollars in slaves, southern plantations, and Mississippi River steamboats. Architecturally, the house is significant as an outstanding, unique example of Federal period architecture in Williamson County and Middle Tennessee.

James Hazard Wilson (1763-1838) was the son of Thomas and Katie Carson Wilson who settled in the Brentwood area of Williamson County, building substantial log homes in the early 1800s. He was born in County Fermanagh, Ireland and also emigrated to America where he married Ruth Davidson of North Carolina. From their marriage came nine children who became prominent socially and in many phases of public life. Two of their most prominent sons were Samuel D. Wilson (1796-1854), who married Martha Davis and served as one of the first secretaries of the State of Texas, and James Hazard Wilson II (1800-1869) who built Ravenswood.

James Hazard Wilson II was a business magnate of the South whose holdings included a fortune in lands, stocks, servants, cash, large houses and plantations, and a lucrative steamboat line on the Mississippi. He married his young cousin Emeline (1808-1860), the daughter of Samuel and Martha Davidson Wilson. Sam Houston was best man at the wedding ceremony on March 21, 1821. When they built Ravenswood in 1825 they named their home after Houston, his friend whom the Indians called Co-lon-neh, the Raven.

Although Ravenswood was one of many houses in the deep South owned by Wilson, it was the house he built for raising his family of nine children. The house witnessed a series of tragedies that eventually resulted in a broken spirit of Wilson and downfall of his great fortune. Of the nine children, five died in as many years. Samuel, his favorite by his own admission, suddenly passed away in 1851 at the age of 28. Their only daughter, Emeline, died in 1852. Jason died at Ravenswood in 1854 and George Washington three months later at the Bon Air Spa in White County, Tennessee. In 1856, fourteen year old Walter, deaf and dumb since infancy from scarlet fever, was killed when a gun accidentally discharged. The crowning blow came in 1860 when his wife Emeline died.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Wilson spent \$10,000 outfitting an entire company and otherwise aiding the Confederate cause. When his son, James H. Wilson III left home for the army, Wilson invited his son's wife, five sisters, and daughter to stay at Ravenswood while he was away at his more southern plantations. The War and Reconstruction had a devastating effect on Wilson's vast holdings. Broken in health and spirit, he died in 1869 at Century Oak, the home of a son named Frank. Even after his great losses, Wilson left a considerable estate to his three surviving sons, Robert, Hazard, and Richard.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bowman, Virginia McDaniel. Historic Williamson County Old Homes and Sites, Nashville: Blue and Gray Press, 1971.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 52

Quadrangle name Franklin, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	2	1	0	4	0	3	9	7	7	9	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	6	5	2	1	0	0	0	3	9	7	7	6	1	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	6	5	2	0	4	6	0	3	9	7	7	5	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	6	5	2	0	3	2	0	3	9	7	7	8	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Page

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shain T. Dennison, Architectural Historian

organization Tennessee Historical Commission date 1-17-83

street & number 701 Broadway telephone 615/742-6716

city or town Nashville state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Harger

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/26/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Delous Byer Entered in the National Register date 7/7/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Ravenswood

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Ravenswood passed from the Wilson family to a Dr. Robertson, then to the Tullos Family, next to Louis West, and then to John D. Lewis. Lewis owned the property for about 20 years. Mr. and Mrs. Reese Smith, the current owners, purchased the house and accompanying 480 acres of land 18 years ago from Lewis.

Architecturally, Ravenswood is an outstanding and unique example of Federal period architecture in Williamson County and Middle Tennessee. The large two-story brick house is constructed with extremely fine craftsmanship and is unusual for a Federal period house in that it features stone quoins on the facade corners and around the central entranceway and combines features that usually characterize the Federal or the Greek Revival styles in Tennessee. Typically Federal are the three-bay symmetrical facade, stepped chimney gables, and plain frieze under the low gable roof of the facade. More common to Greek Revival style houses are the central entrance with side lights and transom and the tripart windows with bull's eye stone lintels. In addition to the house's architectural significance, Ravenswood still retains two original brick slave houses, the original detached brick kitchen, a log and frame barn, and its rural plantation setting to nearly completely demonstrate the character of a mid-nineteenth century plantation in Middle Tennessee.

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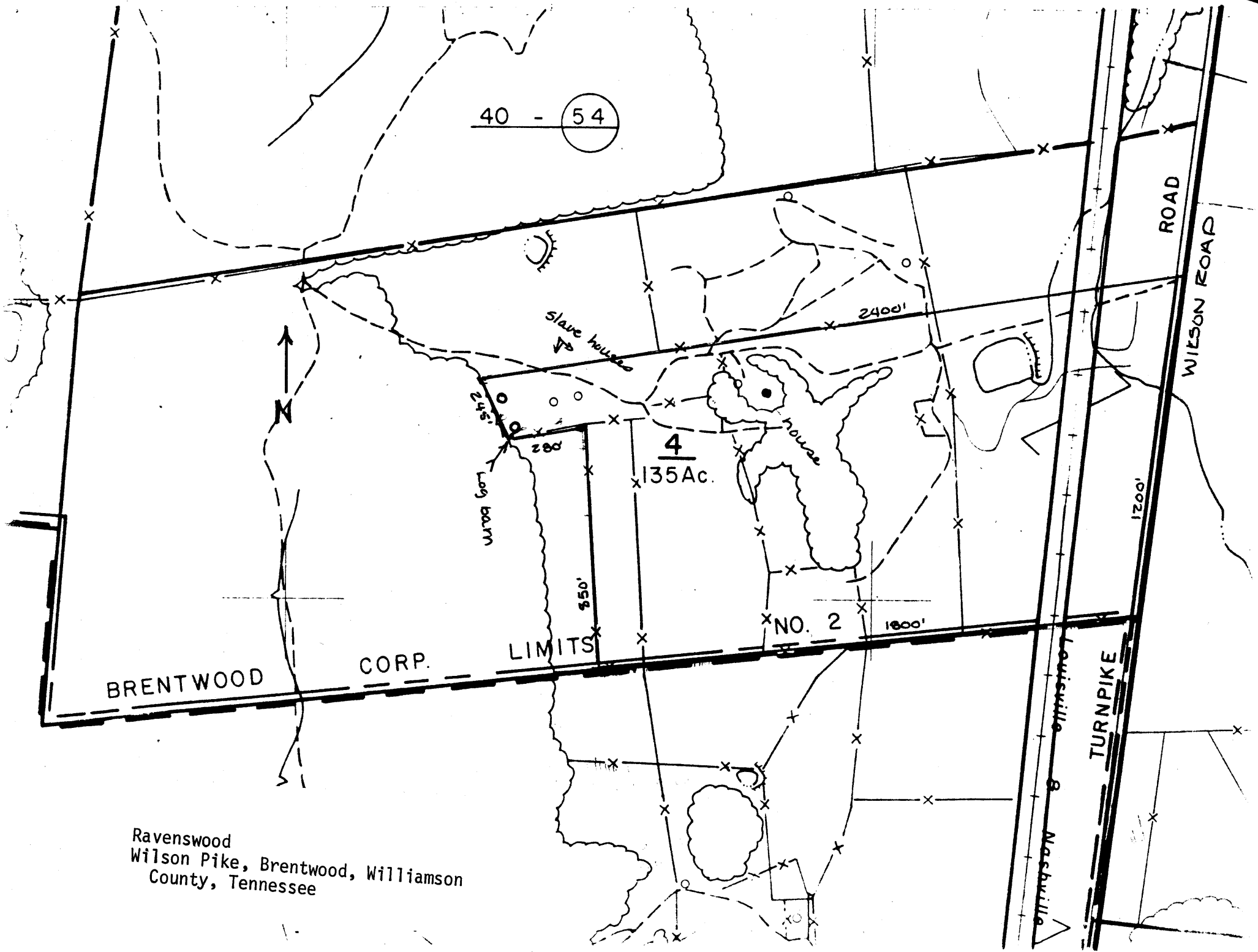
Continuation sheet

Ravenswood

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The boundaries of Ravenswood are outlined in red on the accompanying Williamson County property assessment map #61 drawn at a scale of 400' to the inch. The boundaries begin at a point 550' north of the entrance driveway at the east property line which fronts on Wilson Pike. From this point the boundary extends west 2400', following the line of an existing fence to form the northern boundary. Here, the boundary line turns southeasterly afor 245' along the edge of a tree line. It then turns east and extends along a fence line for 280'. From there the line runs south along a fence row for 850'. From there the boundary line follows the south fence row which defines the south property line of Ravenswood, for 1800' to form the south boundary. These boundaries were selected to include the house, significant outbuildings, and enough land to maintain the historic plantation setting of Ravenswood.



40 - 54

slave house

2400'

Log barn

4
135 Ac.

NO. 2

1800'

LIMITS

CORP.

BRENTWOOD

1200'

Louisville & Nashville

TURNPIKE

ROAD

WILSON ROAD

Ravenswood
Wilson Pike, Brentwood, Williamson
County, Tennessee