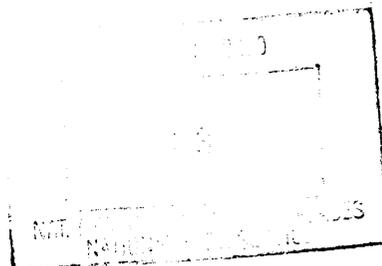


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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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 Abernathy Farm
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 9441 Elkton Pike N/A not for publication
city or town Conway vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Giles code 055 zip code 38477

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 L. Boyer 3/6/01
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 R. Beall 4-19-01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Abernathy Farm

Name of Property

Giles Co., Tennessee

County and State

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	
6	2	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
8	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Family Farms in Middle TN, 1780-1960 MPS

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: single dwelling
- Domestic: secondary structure
- Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field
- Agriculture/Subsistence: storage
- Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility
- Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: single dwelling
- Domestic: secondary structure
- Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural field
- Agriculture/Subsistence: storage
- Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility
- Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival influenced raised cottage

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK and STONE

walls Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other GLASS; WOOD; METAL

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1855-1941

Significant Dates

c. 1855, 1881, 1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C moved from its original location.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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:

Giles County Register of Deeds

Abernathy Farm
Name of Property

Giles Co., Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately 161.2 acres Elkton 66 SW

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>503740</u> Easting	<u>3883760</u> Northing	3	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>503480</u> Easting	<u>3883000</u> Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>504220</u>	<u>3882980</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>503770</u>	<u>3883580</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tammy Allison and Carroll Van West
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date 11/27/2000
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone (615) 898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name Mike and Peggy Widener
street & number 512 West Gardenia Drive telephone 602.395.9532
city or town Phoenix state AZ zip code 85021

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 Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

DESCRIPTION

The Abernathy Farm sits west of U. S. Highway 31 within the rural hamlet of Conway, which is on the old route of the Elkton to Pulaski turnpike (Elkton Pike), north of the town of Elkton in Giles County, Tennessee. The nominated property is centered around the family dwelling, which sits about 100 yards west of the highway, and contains approximately 161 acres of land that encompasses ten related historic buildings, structures, and sites. The farm is situated on rich bottomland watered by a year-round creek, but surrounded to the east and west by rolling hills typical of this section of Giles County. For travelers of the Elkton Pike, the architecturally distinctive dwelling was designed as the focal point of the property, with two rows of oak trees (three are extant today) flanking a drive to the house's Greek Revival-styled portico entrance.

The one and one-half story weatherboard dwelling, circa 1855, has a side gable roof covered with asphalt shingles and sits on a raised basement, which rests on a limestone foundation. In 1881, two identical one-story side gable additions were added to the main block. These additions flank the structure and are set back from the façade. The house is adorned with four ridge brick chimneys, two of which are located on the main block, with the 1881 additions receiving one each.

The facade (east elevation) has three symmetrical bays along the main block, which is highlighted by a central projecting pedimented entrance portico. Two jib windows with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes flank the portico. Below these windows at the raised basement level are single casement windows with six-light wood sashes. Four evenly spaced square wood columns support the portico, which is accessed by eight limestone steps. A wood vertical two-panel door topped with a horizontal four light transom marks the entrance to the house. A classical door surround highlights the main entrance, which reveals an entablature supported by Doric pilasters. Recessed leaded bevel flanking sidelights are capped with slightly projecting entablatures that are supported by fluted consoles with scallop ornamentation. Additionally, recessed panels are located underneath the sidelights. Two electric torch lamps, c. 1990, flank the sidelights. To the left and right of the main block, located on the 1881 additions, are single window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. Located below these windows at the basement level is a single casement window with a six-light wood sash.

The north elevation consists of two symmetrically placed window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes on the first floor at the gable end. At the attic level are two segmental arched window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. Connected at the northwest corner of the main block is a one-room addition built in 1881. The one-story, side gabled roof addition is located slightly behind the first floor window of the original house.

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Section number 7 Page 2 Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

A single casement window with a six- light wood sash is located at the basement level, as well as a modern exterior heating and air unit, circa 1990, located below the first floor windows.

The west elevation mainly shows the impact of the 1881 additions, with some modern alterations also affecting this elevation. The setback of the additions altered the western elevation, allowing for the conversion of a rear porch into an enclosed room. The two 1881 side additions are linked through a rear open space that covered the west elevation of the original dwelling. Today, the western elevation has been altered by the modern addition of a sunroom, circa 1980. The window openings originally placed in the 1881 addition are still visible. Another change to the west elevation is a small three-over-three, double-hung, wood window that was added circa 1920 when a modern bathroom was installed in the hallway at the entrance to the north addition. Flanking the sunroom are the 1881 additions that are punctuated with one window opening each containing six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. Below each of these windows is a single casement window with a six-light wood sash located at the basement level.

The fenestration of the south elevation mirrors the north elevation exactly. Two symmetrically placed window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes are located on the first floor. Located at the attic level are two smaller segmental arched window openings with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. The south elevation also has a modern heating and air unit, circa 1990, underneath the first floor windows. As with the air and heating unit on the north elevation, this small unit detracts little from building's historic appearance. A single casement window with a six-light wood sash is located at the basement level. Connected at the northwest corner of the main block is a one-room addition built in 1881. The one-story, side gabled roof addition is located slightly behind the first floor window of the original house.

The interior of the Abernathy house maintains many of its original and historic features. The center hall configuration is easily distinguishable with little of the current restoration overshadowing the historic qualities of the house. The present restoration process is being performed to maintain the historic integrity of the building while removing changes of the past twenty years that did not. For example, vinyl siding has been removed from the exterior, revealing the original weatherboard siding. Also, vinyl flooring has been removed in the north addition, which exposed the original poplar flooring. A consistent ornamental feature found throughout the interior of the house are shouldered architrave door and window trim. The trim is original to the house and in superb condition.

The center hall has the original open string geometrical staircase and banister. The plaster walls are original and have been authentically repaired. A circa 1920 pine floor is in the hall with baseboards measuring approximately 11.5" high. The light fixtures are also circa 1920. A circa 1990 ventilation grill and ventilation system are located along the south wall.

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Section number 7 Page 3 Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

Room 1 (see drawing for room configuration and numbers) has the original poplar floor, with baseboards that are 12" high. The use of poplar flooring and other construction materials exemplifies the use of locally available materials in the construction of the house. Apparently, Giles County had a good source of poplar trees for building.¹ The original jib window opens at the bottom, underneath the sash. This feature made it possible to increase ventilation in the house during the summers. The original hearth and mantel remain in the room.

Room 2 has the original poplar floor, with baseboards that measure 12" high. The original fireplace has a circa 1880 cast iron coal grate still sitting on the hearth. The closet in this room appears to be original, because the door frame height matches the doors that open onto the center hall. Jib windows highlight the room as well.

Room 3 has circa 1920 pine flooring and baseboards. The closet located in this room appears to have been a later addition, perhaps circa 1920, because the door frame is not as large as the original door opening onto the center hall. This room has historic light fixtures, likely dating from the 1920s when electricity was made available to residents along U. S. Highway 31.

Room 4 has a circa 1920 pine floor with 12" baseboards. The light fixtures are also circa 1920. The original hearth and mantel from the 1850s are still in the room (Figure 14). A fifteen-light French door, circa 1980, opens into the modern kitchen.

Room 5 has circa 1920 pine flooring. The baseboards are a modern addition. The original 1881 fireplace and hearth remain in the room.

Room 6 is an 1881 addition that has circa 1920 pine flooring with wood paneling along one wall. This room has original baseboards and historic light fixtures from the 1920s.

Room 7 is the modern, circa 1999, kitchen. However, the windows of the original dwelling have been incorporated into the kitchen, providing an opening into the other rooms. Circa 1999 cabinets have been installed. Modern appliances have also been placed in this room. The flooring is modern parquet flooring. Just off the kitchen, in the hallway to the 1881 addition on the south elevation, is a modern bathroom. This room has modern plumbing fixtures and tile flooring.

Room 8 is the second story attic floor, which is tall enough to stand in. It retains much of its original character. This room is an undivided open space that extends the length of the 1855 section of the house. The ceilings are lower due to the sloping gable roof. The attic walls are covered with original plaster that have yellowed with age and are marred by large cracks.

¹ Parker, *History of Giles County*, 51.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

Unfinished poplar flooring and circa 1980 faux pine paneling, covering one area of the wall, completes the attic features.

Room 9 is the basement, which extends underneath both the original house and the 1881 additions. This room is an unfinished area that retains many of its historic features. After descending the wood stairs, the original brick floor has been preserved in this first section of the basement. Built into the stone foundation along one wall is a circa 1855 stone cooking hearth. This room appears to have been the kitchen area of the original house. The slaves and servants likely used the room before a modern kitchen was built on the main floor. The area around the cooking hearth is large enough that a food preparation table could easily fit. The stairs lead up into an area that likely served as the dining room, making servant access to family dining easy and discrete. The basement area was also large enough to house slaves or servants. The housing of slaves in the same house as the family was a trend followed by many middle-class southerners who kept only a few slaves on their farms.

Underneath the two additions, the basement flooring shifts to a dirt packed floor. The stone foundation is visible throughout the maze of large rough-cut poles that hold up the upper floors. Underneath the 1881 addition, a stone from the foundation has the letters "W" and "R" carved into it along with the year, 1881. This valuable piece of information helped date the southern and northern additions.

Surrounding the dwelling are several farm buildings, structures, and sites.

Directly behind the dwelling is a board-and batten, box constructed chicken house and garage (circa 1930), covered with a metal gable roof. (C)

Behind the garage is a wood privy with metal shed roof, built approximately 1930. (C)

North of the dwelling is a concrete block well house, with a flat metal roof. It was constructed circa 1940. (C)

A bit further to the north and south of the domestic area lie additional farm outbuildings. West of the dwelling is a frame, metal gable roof hay shed, which has deteriorated substantially in the 1990s. (NC, due to deterioration)

A concrete metal gable roof milk barn (circa 1940) is northwest of the domestic complex. (C)

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

Adjacent to the milk barn is a large concrete circular water feeder and well, built for cattle, circa 1940. This is a contributing structure. (C)

On the south side of the farm are two related farm buildings. West of the privy is a wood machine shed capped with a metal shed roof, constructed circa 1970. (NC, due to date of construction).

Standing approximately one hundred yards southwest of the main dwelling is a large tenant house built in 1902. This frame Cumberland Plan building has a double entrance that lead into two separate rooms, which were occupied by the tenant farmers and their families. The house includes two rooms for two families, hence the reason for the two front entry doors. This dwelling is a very basic house with wood siding and a tin covered saltbox roof. This house demonstrates the need farmers had for their tenant farmers in order to maintain their productive capacity. (C)

Contributing to the integrity of the property is a series of sites that surround the farm. These include three oak trees, which are all that remains to define the original driveway of the property from Elkton Pike. Dated circa 1850, the driveway and trees contribute to the historic landscaping of the property. Furthermore, two peach and one apple tree left from an orchard planted circa 1920 is located directly west of the dwelling's rear door. Lastly, historic fields and fence lines from circa 1940 when the owners switched from row crop and cotton production to a dairy and livestock farm. These historic patterns constitute a contributing site of the property. (C)

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

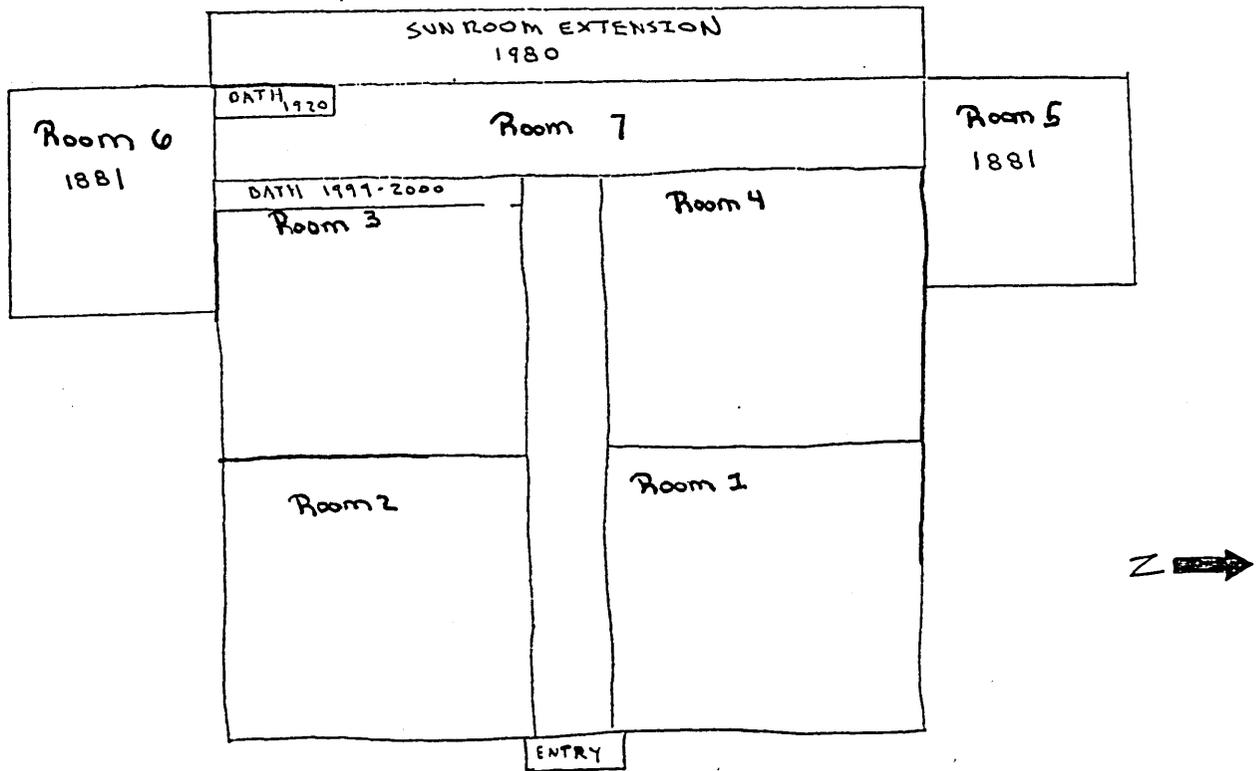


Fig 1: Abernathy Farm house - with 1881 additions
(NOT TO SCALE)

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

2/7/2000

TEWANT HOUSE
c.1902

(C)

HAY SHED
(CNC)

MACHINE SHED
c.1970 (CNC)

PRIVY (C)
c.1930

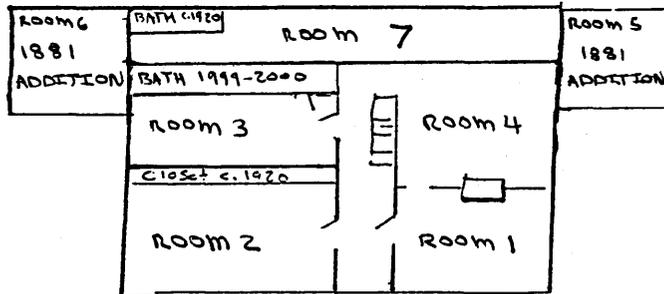
CHEEKEN BARN
GARAGE (C) 1930

Orchard

(C)
MILK BARN
c.1940

WATER FEEDER
c.1940
(C)

WELL
(C)
c.1940



COUNTRY ROAD

DRIVEWAY

N →
NTS 2000

US Highway 31

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Section number 8 Page 8

Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Abernathy Farm, in the Town of Conway, Giles County, TN, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its agricultural significance as an example of a middle-class antebellum farmstead that evolved into a progressive farmscape of the early twentieth century in Giles County. It is also eligible under criterion C as a significant example of a Greek Revival-influenced raised cottage in the lower Tennessee Valley. It meets the registration requirements for a historic family farm in the Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee, 1780-1960 MPS.

Much of the history of rural Tennessee can be found in the farmsteads and buildings that remain as part of the modern landscape. These structures range from architecturally significant plantation mansions to the crudest of slave shacks.² Even with this wide range of structures, most Tennesseans of the nineteenth century lived on smaller farms with less distinctive dwellings. These nineteenth century farms produced crops and animals for sale, as well as, most of the items needed for the family's survival. The centerpiece of these self-reliant farms was the family's house, making these houses much more than an architectural ornament.³

Agriculture dominated the economy of Tennessee in the nineteenth century, putting most residents on a farm at some point during their lifetime. Even with such a high proportion of farmers, studies of Tennessee agriculture often focused on wealthy slaveholders that owned hundreds of acres of land. One of the most overlooked groups has been the middle-class farm families. It is often difficult to study this group because they left fewer written records than large plantation owners. Residents of Giles County, in southern Middle Tennessee, often fell into this Southern middle class grouping. Elizabeth C. Parker, author of "History of Giles County, Tennessee," stated that "a few large plantations were established in Giles County, but the majority of the farmers were small planters owning only a few slaves or more."⁴ Federal census records of 1860 indicate that Abernathy owned ten slaves. According to Frank Owsley, a large group of Southerners fell in between the very rich and the very poor. This group of people mainly "secured their food, clothing, and shelter from some rural pursuits, chiefly farming, and livestock grazing."⁵ Giles County farmers produced many crops that sustained their families and provided the basis on which to build a farm. These crops included a variety of dry land rice, hemp, tobacco, corn, wheat, cattle, hogs, and sheep. Between 1820 and 1860, the

² Blanche Henry Clark, *The Tennessee Yeoman: 1840-1860* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1942), 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Elizabeth C. Parker, "History of Giles County, Tennessee" (Masters thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1953), 50.

⁵ Frank Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 8.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

principle cash crop was cotton, with cattle being the second most valuable cash producing product.⁶

The Abernathy family typified a middle-class antebellum farm family in Giles County, Tennessee. The Abernathy family emigrated from Brunswick County, Virginia, around 1820, as part of a growing trend of migration from the Southern coastal states. This branch of the Abernathy family, led by Burwell Abernathy I, was the first to settle in Giles County, near Elkton.⁷ As the size of the family increased, the children branched out into the county, accumulating landholdings during the county's early settlement period. Thomas Edwards Abernathy, the son of Burwell Abernathy I, moved his family to the outskirts of the Town of Conway. His son, Burwell Abernathy II, was a member of the first generation of the Abernathy family to be born in Tennessee.⁸

Born in 1824, Burwell Abernathy II exemplified the middle-class farmer of the nineteenth century, who prospered during the period of economic growth in the 1840s, 1850s, and early 1860s.⁹ According to the 1850 census, Burwell Abernathy II, at age twenty-six, owned \$6,500 worth of real-estate. He listed his occupation as a farmer.¹⁰ By the time the 1860 census data was collected, Burwell owned \$18,000 worth of real estate, with the value of his personal property equaling \$26,000.¹¹ This rise in monetary value of the estate marked the prosperity a young farmer could have over a ten-year period in the boom of the 1850s. Burwell's first wife died at a young age. He remarried in 1855 in Nashville to Samuella Dewees Tannehill, daughter of a prominent Nashville lawyer. They moved to their home outside Conway on Elkton Pike circa 1855.¹²

Here, in September of 1850, Burwell Abernathy II had purchased a tract of land, running along Elkton Pike, from William L. Brown for \$700. This land bordered land given to Burwell by his father, Thomas Edwards Abernathy.¹³ On his land holdings along Elkton Pike, Burwell built his family's primary residence around 1855. Like many of his Giles County neighbors, he built a house that reflected the prosperity of his farm. According to Elizabeth C. Parker, "The log cabins of the more prosperous settlers were replaced by frame houses built of the yellow poplar which was native to the county."¹⁴ The transition from a log structure to a frame house showed

⁶ Ibid., 49-51.

⁷ Margaret Butler, *Legacy: Early Families of Giles County* (Pulaski, TN: Sein Publications, 1991), 27-28.

⁸ Ibid., 28-29.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Federal Census Records, Conway in Giles County, Tennessee, 1850.

¹¹ Federal Census Records, Conway in Giles County, Tennessee, 1860.

¹² Butler, *Legacy*, 29. And Giles County Chancery Court, Woodruff File S: 1830-1900, Volume V, 8.

¹³ Giles County Deed Book U (Pulaski, Tennessee), 428.

¹⁴ Parker, *History of Giles County, Tennessee*, 51.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

prosperity and achievement. Abernathy invested in the cotton market, not only planting the crop, but operating a gin for his crop and those of his neighbors. Evidence is unclear, however, on whether or not Abernathy actually had a log home before moving into the house he built in 1855.

According to Giles County historian Margaret Butler, author of *Legacy: Early Families of Giles County*, the Abernathy house is a Greek Revival house that Burwell built circa 1855 for his new wife, Samuella.¹⁷ Abernathy built a center hall house that extended two rooms deep on each side of the center hall. The house also had a raised foundation, with rooms underneath the house that served as both a workspace and dwelling space for house slaves. It is possible that Abernathy designed his house based on two earlier Greek Revival-influenced raised cottages built in the 1840s. Located a few miles northwest of the Abernathy Farm, the George W. Tillery House (NR 1985) and the Newton White House (NR 1987) are remarkably similar to the Abernathy residence. As with the Abernathy House, these two structures consist of a side gabled frame house with a raised brick basement and projecting pedimented portico. Additionally, all three buildings have similar main entrance door surrounds that include sidelights that flank a pair of paneled doors and an entablature that is supported by classical pilasters. Although a survey of raised cottages in the state has yet to be completed, the Newton and Tillery Houses attest to the popularity of the style in the area. The origin of the raised cottages that dot Giles County more than likely evolved from a similar style found in Alabama.

According to Robert Gamble, author of *Historic Architecture in Alabama: A Primer of Styles and Types, 1810-1920*, this raised foundation house was found predominately in Alabama, and is associated with its cotton-producing regions. He called this house type, the Tidewater Cottage. The Tidewater Cottage first appeared in Alabama during the 1820s and 1830s with settlers from the southern states along the Atlantic seaboard. These houses became most prominent in north Alabama's Tennessee Valley, of which Giles County, Tennessee, may be considered a northern extension.¹⁵ According to Robert Gamble's description of a raised, or Tidewater, cottage, the Abernathy dwelling has all of the significant characteristics of the architectural type. Its strict symmetry was common in the "most academic examples" of the Tidewater Cottage. Like most Tidewater cottages, the Abernathy house has a side gable roof. Gamble found that the side gable roof was "usually pitched between 30 and 45 degrees,"¹⁶ which is the case in this property. Another typical trait is the inclusion of jib windows. On the Abernathy House, the jib windows flank the front door and contain six-over-six, double hung, wood sashes, below which are hinged panels that can be opened to allow air to circulate throughout the house. Other common traits are that the front door has flanking sidelights and a glass transom. The front door opens onto the porch

¹⁷ Butler, *Legacy*, 29.

¹⁵ Gamble, *Historic Architecture in Alabama*, 33.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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Section number 8 Page 11 Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

that has four square wood columns supporting the porch roof. Thus, the Abernathy house is an important Tennessee example of this largely Deep South vernacular form.

The house remained as Abernathy originally built it until 1881, when two small additions were built on each side of the center hall plan. These additions created two rooms on each end that are markedly smaller than the four original rooms, altering the center hall plan very little.

The farmstead on which the house currently stands was part of a much larger operating farm. Burwell accumulated considerable wealth throughout the 1850s and early 1860s, but like many others, the war years of 1861-1865 turned this prosperity inside out. Indeed, the Abernathy Farm is an important example of how invading armies passing by a farm could affect its history for decades as if a battle took place on the property. In a letter written in 1866, Burwell Abernathy II described the farm's losses and gave insight into the crops and animals maintained on his farm before and during the war. "Located as it was on the Elkton Pike, an important north-south route in this section of Middle Tennessee, troops from both the North and South took crops and animals from the farm. They burned all the cotton I made from 1860 to 1863, took all my stock, I had mules, cattle, horses, hogs, and sheep, and they took all the corn, wheat, oats, and fodder, burned my cotton gin, and indeed, it was with the greatest difficulty that we lived at all for about three years."¹⁸ Burwell did not live long after the Civil War ended. He died in 1869, leaving behind his wife, Samuella, and four children who still lived at home.

The 1870 census listed Samuella Abernathy as the head of the household with her occupation being "keeps house." Samuella Abernathy had some wealth after her husband died. Her real estate was valued at \$9,000 in 1870, but in 1860, her husband's estate was valued at \$26,000. In other words, the family's property value had declined by almost two-thirds in one decade. An indication of their diminished status is that in addition to her four children and one servant, Samuella Abernathy had two boarders living in her home.¹⁹

The land along Elkton Pike passed to Martha W. Abernathy in 1869, beginning a process of frequent changes in ownership over the next sixty years. Her son, James W. Rivers, received the land after her death. It is believed that he made the small additions to the house in 1881. Rivers sold the land to Guy Lee Zuccarillo in March of 1898 with the provision that Zuccarillo would not occupy the house until December 25, 1898.²⁰ In 1902, Zuccarillo sold the land to Samuel W. Gladdish for \$6,000.²¹ The tenant house on the property dates to the era when Gladdish farmed the land. After Gladdish's death, his heirs sold the land in 1918 to T.S. Hardy. When Hardy

¹⁸ A letter from Burwell Abernathy to Thomas James Pain in 1866, quoted in Butler, *Legacy*, 29.

¹⁹ Giles County Chancery Court Records, 8; and Federal Census Records, Conway in Giles County, Tennessee, 1870.

²⁰ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1898.

²¹ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1898.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

purchased the land, it also had a gin house, gin machinery, a shed, and wagon scales included in the price.²²

In 1931, C.M. Harmon, a trustee for T.S. Hardy, conveyed the land to National Life and Accident Insurance Company to pay off Hardy's debts.²³ The insurance company sold the land in 1941 to Bisco Fairbetter for \$3,500.²⁴ Most of the remaining outbuildings on the property date to Fairbetter's improvements of the early 1940s when he began to use the farm for a dairy operation. The dairy industry became important in the county during the late 1920s when Frank Mars of Chicago established Milky Way Farms (NR 1984), also on U. S. Highway 31 in northern Giles County, as a model demonstration dairy farm. Mars' success at Milky Way spurred other Giles County farmers to switch from their old reliance on cotton cultivation and move into more progressive agricultural production of dairy and beef products. Thus, the field patterns at the farm document the open pastures and fence lines of circa 1940, when row cropping and cotton fields no longer dominated the agrarian landscape of Giles County.

The house and land were conveyed to James A. Merritt in 1967 for \$32,000.²⁵ The current owners purchased the land and house in 1998.²⁶

The Abernathy Farm has endured through significant destruction from both Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War, changes in the agricultural economy, and a succession of owners. Its origins as a productive nineteenth century cotton farm, its losses during the Civil War, and its transformation into a progressive dairy farm in the mid-twentieth century mirror significant patterns in the agricultural history of Giles County and Middle Tennessee. Its architecture significance lies in its raised cottage form. This rare Tennessee example of a Greek Revival influenced raised cottage from the 1850s remains largely unchanged and is currently undergoing a sensitive restoration.

²² Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1918.

²³ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1931.

²⁴ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1941.

²⁵ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1967.

²⁶ Giles County Deed Book (Pulaski, Tennessee), 1998.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The Abernathy Farm is at 9441 Elkton Pike, Giles County, Tennessee, as marked as Parcel 28 in the attached Giles County Tax Map 136 with a scale of 1" = 400'. The nominated boundaries contain all of the extant significant historic resources associated with the Abernathy Farm.

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos by: Carroll Van West
Middle Tennessee State University
Date: February 2000
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, TN 37243

East facade and south elevation, facing northwest
1 of 31

East facade, facing west
2 of 31

Portico entrance, east facade, facing west
3 of 31

Entrance door, east facade, facing west
4 of 31

East facade and north elevation, facing southwest
5 of 31

North elevation, facing south
6 of 31

North elevation and west elevation, facing southeast
7 of 31

West elevation, facing northeast
8 of 31

South elevation, facing north
9 of 31

Center hall, facing west
10 of 31

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

Room 1, facing west
11 of 31

Room 1, facing east
12 of 31

Room 2, facing southwest
13 of 31

Room 3, facing southwest
14 of 31

Bathroom, first floor, off of Room 3, facing south
15 of 31

Room 4, facing southeast
16 of 31

Room 5, facing northeast
17 of 31

Room 6, facing southeast
18 of 31

Room 6, facing north
19 of 31

Room 7, kitchen, facing north
20 of 31

Sun room addition, facing northwest
21 of 31

Stairs to attic, facing west
22 of 31

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Abernathy Farm
Giles County, Tennessee

Attic, facing southeast
23 of 31

Attic, facing north
24 of 31

Orchard, facing west
25 of 31

Well house, facing northeast
26 of 31

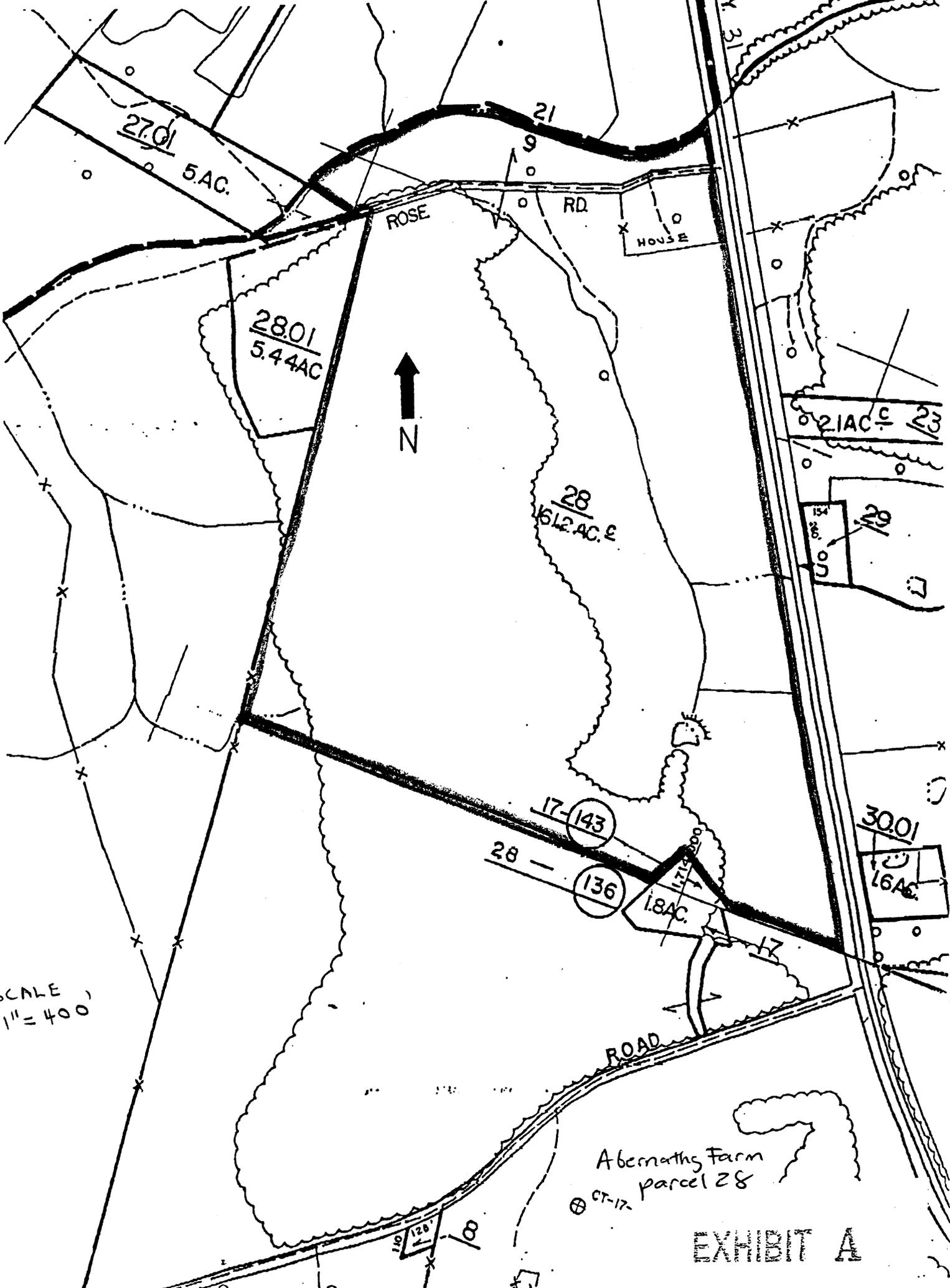
Machine shed, facing west
27 of 31

Milk house, facing northwest
28 of 31

Well and water trough at milk house, facing southeast
29 of 31

Hay shed, facing southeast
30 of 31

Tenant dwelling, facing southwest
31 of 31



27.01
5 AC.

28.01
5.44 AC.

ROSE



21

RD.

HOUSE

21 AC. E

28
16.2 AC. E

17-143

136

18 AC.

30.01

16 AC.

ROAD

SCALE
1" = 400

Abernathy Farm
parcel 28

EXHIBIT A