

Rural Mount  
0.5 mile east of Tennessee Route 160  
Morristown vicinity (7.8 miles southeast of Morristown)  
Hamblen County  
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-203

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS  
TENN  
32-MORRISTOWN  
2-

RURAL MOUNT

HABS No. TN-203

Location: 0.5 miles east of Tennessee Route 160, 7.8 miles southeast of Morristown, Hamblen County, Tennessee.

Present Owner: Valleydale Packers, Incorporated, Bristol, Virginia.

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Pox, Valleydale Farms, Morristown, Tennessee.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: Rural Mount was reputedly built in 1799 by Alexander Outlaw for his son-in-law Joseph Hamilton. Both of these men were instrumental in founding the States of Franklin and later of Tennessee. Rural Mount commands an impressive hilltop position overlooking the valleys of the Nolichucky River and its tributaries. Its random ashlar limestone construction is similar to several houses of the period in this vicinity. The interior stair brackets and mantelpieces resemble designs illustrated in late eighteenth century builder's handbooks.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1799.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

The house is situated on 759 acres of land, in the north side of the Nolichucky River, and bordered on the west by Tennessee Route 160 and on the north by the American Enka Corporation.

The following incomplete chain of title is from the Jefferson County Deed References.

Bk. C, p. 141, 7/14/1793

Alexander Outlaw to Joseph and Penelope Hamilton. All of Jefferson County in the territory of the United States south of the Ohio River, "in consideration of the natural love and affection."

Recorded 2/28/1796:

"A parcel of land lying and being in Jefferson County and on the north side of Nolachucky River containing 450 acres."

Bk. R, p. 102, 7/31/26

Grant from the state of Tennessee, Governor William Carroll to Joseph Hamilton. 100 acres "on the west line of the tract on which he lives." Recorded 6/22/1827

Bk. T, p. 5, 2/1/1833

Joseph Hamilton, Sr., to Joseph Hamilton, Jr., for \$5000. "A certain tract of land on which the said Joseph Hamilton Senior now lives "containing 550 acres, and it is "expressly convened and agreed that the said Joseph Hamilton Senior reserves to himself a life estate in all and every part or parcel from the payment of any rent for the use and occupation there of during his natural life." Recorded 3/24/1833.

Bk., Will Book 3, p. 310, 6/18/1834, probated September Session, 1834

County Court Minute Book 9, p. 327. Will of Joseph Hamilton, Senior - "I conveyed by deed of conveyance of bargain and sale to the said Joseph Hamilton, Jr. the land on which I now live containing 550 acres." The household furniture and kitchen furniture went to daughter Jean Hamilton as well as all the stock of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs.

Bk. U, p. 92, 5/23/1837

Alexander Anderson to Joseph Hamilton for \$7000 land purchased from William Anderson, given to William Anderson by father who purchased it from Josiah Jackson. Property adjoins Soldier's Rest, a 250-acre estate. Also 1/2 interest in Soldier's Rest. Conveyed by Alexander Outlaw to daughter Patience Anderson and her son William. William Anderson to Joseph Anderson to Alexander Anderson 276 acres. Patience Anderson continues to live there.

Bk. 3, p. 14, 4/7/1849

Ezekel Inman, Sheriff and Joseph Hamilton to Joseph H. Martin of Knox County for \$2765.94 by decree of Chancery Court December Tennessee 1848. Two tracts of land

approximately 400 acres "where the said Hamilton now lives, and known by said Hamiltons home farm."

Bk. 2, p. 225, Trust Deed 10/26/1849

James Fuller Jr. to Callaway Hodges and William Evans  
2/3/1849 Trust Deed of Joseph Hamilton to James Fuller,  
Jr. for Rural Mount of 550 acres., for \$5,625. Recorded  
10/19/1849.

Bk. 2, p. 565, 3/13/1851

Ezekiel Inman, Sheriff to William Jack of Cocke County and  
Joseph McAlister of Lincoln County, Kentucky, judgment  
creditors of Joseph Hamilton. "The Soldier's Rest and  
William Anderson and 100 acres tracts and one town lot for  
\$3,900.57." Recorded 3/13/1851.

Bk. 3, p. 81, 3/1/1849

Joseph Hamilton via James Fuller, Jr. bargainor to David  
Inman 20 acres for \$100. Recorded 1/7/1852.

Bk. 3, p. 265, 12/6/1852

William Evans and Callaway Hodges (deceased) to R. I.  
Wilson and J. H. Martin 550 acres for \$5,625.

Bk. 3, p. 340, 2/25/1853

Joseph Hamilton to Shadrack Inman, various parcels of land  
"adjoining the rural mount farm now occupied by Joseph  
Hamilton."

Bk. 5, p. 59-60, 8/20/1856

Joseph H. Martin of Knoxville to Joseph Hamilton 450 acres  
for \$3250.00 "all my right title interest claim being the  
one-half of a certain parcel and tract of land...known as  
the Rural Mount farm on which the said Joseph Hamilton now  
lives." Recorded 10/10/1856.

Bk. 5., p. 138-139, 2/3/1859

Mortgage - Joseph Hamilton to Joseph Martin 450 acres for  
\$25,000, the 1/2 of the Rural Mount Farm. Recorded  
2/10/1857.

Bk. 7, p. 13, 1/10/1862

Agreement Joseph H. Martin, Richard I. Wilson, and R. J. McKinney, "R.I. Wilson and J.H. Martin now hold the legal title (by separate conveyances) to the Rural Mount Farm on which Joseph Hamilton now resides..(450 acres).. it is understood that title is thus held only as security for monies due and owing to them severally by said Hamilton." Martin sells interest to Wilson for \$5600. Wilson sells entire interest to McKinney as security for \$5600 loaned. Recorded 4/2/1862.

Bk. 7, p. 15, 4/2/1862

Deed of Trust Joseph Hamilton to R. I. Wilson for Robert J. McKinney. McKinney owns all mortgages and other notes as well on Hamilton, including the following tracts: 100 acres, part of Soldier's Rest tract (182 acres), 13 acres and 75 acres. If Hamilton pays aggregate sum of \$10,000 before 1/1/1864 it reverts.

Bk. 10, p. 232, 1/4/1870

George S. Eckel to William and Temple Harris, 75 acres for \$20,000., including the Rural Mount farm and part of the Soldier's Rest Farm, "except sixty feet by twenty feet including the grave yard at the back of the garden with the privilege of ingress and egress to and from the same and also the privilege of said Hamilton's family or connection in said graveyard with the right to keep the same in repair." Recorded 1/4/1870.

The following are Hamblen County Deed References:

Bk. 35, p. 363, 1/13/1916

Hal S. and C.E. Harris, executors and trustees under will of T. Harris, deceased, of Jefferson County to George W. Parrott of Atlanta, 769 acres for \$10,000 plus \$65,000 in notes. Recorded 2/18/1916.

Bk. 36, p. 546, 4/13/1917

A. C. Parrott, et al, executors and trustees under will of George W. Parrott, deceased, of Atlanta, to Stokely Brothers and Company of Cocke County, 769 acres for \$87,000.

Bk. 51, p. 420-421, 1/19/1927

Stokely Brothers and Company of Tennessee to Stokely Brothers and Company of Delaware for \$1.00. 769 acres. W. B. Stokely, President. Recorded 11/19/1919.

Bk. 74, p. 381, 10/14/1946

Lyle S. Moore, et al, executors of estate of W. B. Stokely Sr., to American Enka Corporation 235.67 acres. (Most of which was the Soldier's Rest Tract; Soldier's Rest home demolished). Recorded 12/1/1972.

Bk. 216, p. 13, 11/14/1972

Sam F. Grigsby, et ux et al, to Valleydale Packers, Incorporated, "commonly known as the Hamilton Farm and originally containing approximately 769 acres." Recorded 12/1/1972.

4. Alterations and additions:

- c. 1830 - One-story red brick north wing addition, Flemish bond on all sides.
- c. 1910 - 2x4 wood frame shed and garage addition.
- c. 1920 - Coal burning furnace installed. Present cornice added.
- Post World War II - Upstairs bath, pump house, and asphalt roof added.

B. Historical Context:

The Nonachunkeh or Nolichucky was an area of early settlement in the Tennessee Country. In its fertile bottom lands were dense masses of cane that were later cultivated for rich harvest of wheat and barley. The first deeds for land here were from the Indians and date from 1775. The first settlers established themselves here in 1782, and population grew at a faster rate in the 1790's. Later, corn was grown and harvested in the Cumberland and Nolichucky areas.

Alexander Outlaw and Joseph Hamilton were prime movers in the organization of the States of Franklin and Tennessee. Alexander Outlaw was born in Duplin County, North Carolina in 1738. He practiced law there as a young man but in 1783 he moved to Greene County, North Carolina what was later to become Jefferson County, Tennessee. He, being one of the leaders of the community, became involved in politics immediately. In 1784 he was elected as a deputy of Greene County to meet with delegates of the settlements of

Sullivan, Greene, and Washington Counties in Jonesboro to establish political and protective measures with which to deal with Indian threats. The result of this action was the establishment of the State of Franklin, a functioning political entity which remained unrecognized by the State of North Carolina or by the United States government.

In 1785 Outlaw was appointed a commissioner of the State of Franklin along with Governor Sevier and Daniel Kennedy to make a treaty with the Cherokees. This treaty, which was held at the home of Major Henry near the mouth of Dumplin Creek, set the boundary lines between White and Indian at the watershed of the Little River and the Tennessee River.

In 1792 Alexander Outlaw was admitted to the bar in Knox County. In 1796 he and his son-in-law Joseph Anderson were selected as the Jefferson County delegation to the Statehood Convention. It was he who first introduced the bill that the state legislature should consist of two houses. He and Mr. Anderson also introduced legislation that stated that if Tennessee was not accepted by the United States Congress as a member state that she should continue to exist as an independent state. He also introduced a bill to extend suffrage to "all persons liable by law to do militia duty" rather than merely those who have done duty.

Outlaw was, with Adam Peck, the first representative to the first House of Representative for the State of Tennessee from Jefferson County. He was elected Speaker of the House at the first session of the Third General Assembly and was elected as member to the Senate from Cocke and Jefferson Counties. He was clerk of the Circuit Court of Jefferson County from 1810 to 1825. He was an extensive landowner, and he reputedly gave each of his four daughters and their husbands an estate including a residence. He died in October, 1825.

Joseph Hamilton was born in 1763, and was of Scottish ancestry. Along with his father-in-law Alexander Outlaw, he is known for his role in the founding of the States of Franklin and Tennessee. He attended Liberty Hall, now Washington and Lee University. In 1784 he came to the Tennessee Country, and married the third daughter of Alexander Outlaw. He had practiced law in North Carolina.

When Caswell County was organized in 1786, Hamilton became its first county court clerk. In 1792 he was admitted to practice law in Knox County and in 1793 he was appointed the first clerk of Jefferson County. In 1794, along with Samuel Doak, Gideon Blackburn and others, he was appointed as Trustee of Greenville College, the first state school. Also in 1794 he was appointed as Trustee to Blount College and Washington College (Doak's old Martin College). He was clerk of the Jefferson County Court from 1792 to 1821. He died in 1834 leaving a complete inventory of his property and household goods.

Joseph Anderson (1757-1837) was married to Patience Outlaw, daughter of Alexander Outlaw. Judge Anderson built a home which he named "Soldier's Rest", which was an adjoining plantation and a sister to Rural Mount. It was demolished for the present American Enka Plant.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This five-bay, two-story Federal style house of random ashlar, gray limestone construction is the largest and one of the earliest stone houses in East Tennessee. Rural Mount is unusual for its English center hall with open staircase plan, and its details reminiscent of architectural handbook designs, in an area where banked, two-story Germanic houses and more simplified details were the rule.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; some pointing is needed.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The stone house is two stories high (approximately 35 feet to the ridge of the roof), five bays (49 feet, 10 inches) across the front (west) and two bays (24 feet, 18 inches) deep along its side. The single-story brick kitchen addition to the left (north) is two bays (31 feet, 11 inches) across its front and two bays (17 feet, 5 inches) deep; and a small frame shed addition, 9 feet 5 inches wide and equally as deep as the brick addition, further extends the plan of the house to the north.
2. Foundations: The house is built upon large blocks of gray ashlar limestone (approximately 2 feet thick); the brick kitchen addition on a low brick foundation undifferentiated from the wall surface above; and the frame addition on large rocks and concrete chunks which serve as footings.
3. Walls: The stone house is built of ashlar gray limestone with large flush quoins and splayed limestone lintels over all the openings. The brick kitchen addition is of Flemish bond on all sides, while the shed addition is covered with tan imitation brick asphalt siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Stone and brick bearing walls carry the load of the sawn floorbeams and sawn and pegged attic trusses. Circular iron anchorplates and iron ties hold the exterior front and rear stone walls in place at the second story floor level. The shed addition is of 2 x 4 frame construction, nailed together.

5. Porches, bulkheads, etc.: There are two wooden porches, each three bays wide, on the front and rear facades of the house. They are constructed of 2 x 4's and covered with novelty siding for the floor, the sides of the eaves, and under the 2 x 4 balustrade rail. A bulkhead in the northernmost bay of the rear porch, also of wood, provides access to a dirt cellar. Board steps provide access to the frame addition and a narrow set of boards has been set into the ground to provide access to the kitchen cellar, near the northeastern corner of the kitchen addition.
6. Chimneys: There are three chimneys: Two of stone in the center of the gable ends of the house which are stepped at their base and were capped at the top of their flues; and the other of brick, in the end wall of the brick kitchen addition, which has a corbelled cap.
7. Openings: The five bay front is of an A-A-B-A-A scheme, where the window openings are identical, but their spacing differs. More wall area is given to the left and right of the center bay, elongating the plan (widening the stairhall), and accentuating the entrance.
  - a. Doorways and doors: The front (west) entrance is in the third bay of the first story of the stone house. It is a six panel (three tiers of paired molded panels) double door, with a toplight of four rectangular panes. The rear entrance is in the same location on the rear facade, although it has but a single door. It is identically panelled and has a toplight of four smaller panes. The front door of the kitchen addition, no longer in use, is in its right-hand bay. This door is composed of much narrower panels: two large verticals over a smaller horizontal and three small verticals. Two aluminum storm/screen doors, simply framed, provide access to the rear and side of the shed addition. The door to the unwallled dirt cellar is vertical board and horizontal plank batten; that of the brick walled cellar is also wooden, of five horizontal panels.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The wooden double hung sash of the stone house have nine-over-nine lights on the first floor and six-over-nine lights on the second. There are also four four-light single sash which are the gable end-windows, two on each side. Wooden shutters with fixed louvers, painted green, are hung alongside all the first and second story windows of the stone block. In the kitchen addition, wooden double hung sash with six-over-six lights are employed; in the frame addition, fixed wooden four-light sash with wide plain trim. Neither of these have shutters.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: Simple gable roofs cover the house and the kitchen addition. A shed roof covers the frame extension, and all are covered with green asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice and eaves: A two part entablature of wood: a molded cornice (cyma recta, fillet, cyma reversa and sculpted mutules) and a frieze (ovolo, fillet, jig-cut dentil course, ovolo and fillet) may be seen on the front and rear facades of the stone house. The cornice returns slightly at the corners, and does not have a gutter. The cornice of the kitchen addition has been simply and narrowly boxed, with a wide, plain friezeboard below; the eaves of the shed addition have exposed overhanging rafters.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There are two unconnected cellars. A dirt-walled and dirt-floored room, approximately 17 feet, 4 inches wide (N-S), and 15 feet, 6 inches long (E-W), about 6 feet high, has been dug out beneath the northern end of the stone house. Beneath the brick kitchen addition another cellar, having brick walls and a dirt floor, 18 feet (N-S) by 14 feet (E-W), and also about 6 feet high, provides much of the storage space.
  - b. First floor: The first floor entrance, in the center bay, opens into a center stairhall with the stairs beginning next to the wall on the right, just beyond a doorway to the right-hand parlor. To the left is another parlor, now used as the living room although it has been reduced in size owing to the small bathroom which has been built in the corner next to the stairhall. A doorway cut in the north stone wall, to the left of the fireplace leads to the dining room and kitchen, in the addition, and another doorway to the left of the kitchen fireplace, to the shed addition beyond.
  - c. Second floor: Arriving at the head of the stairs on the second floor, a small bedroom lies straight ahead, and to the left and right, there are two large bedrooms of the same size as the original parlors below.
2. Stairways: The stairway in the center hall is an open well, two flight (two run) arrangement, with ornamental scroll and flower-bud brackets beneath the ends of the treads. There are also the original square balusters, molded handrail and turned newel post, and the inside wall surface of the staircase below the treads is panelled to the first floor landing level.

3. **Flooring:** The original wide wooden planks remain exposed in the stone house. The kitchen addition has the same kind of flooring, now covered with linoleum tile. The frame shed addition has a wood, strip tongue-and-groove floor, also overlaid with linoleum tile.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Painted plaster over wooden lath covers the walls and ceilings of all the first floor rooms, with the exception of the frame addition which has no interior wall covering, and the bathroom in the left-hand parlor, which has walls of painted drywall (plasterboard). All of the rooms in the second story have painted plasterboard walls.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doors and doorways:** The wooden six panel doors in the parlors, providing access from the stairhall are probably original. The wooden two panel doors which are hung in the doorways leading to the bedrooms upstairs and under the staircase, may also be original; all are framed in an architrave trim. The first floor bathroom in a section of the left-hand parlor has two modern hollow core doors with plain trim.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** The wooden mantelpiece of the left-hand parlor is particularly well preserved: a rectangular opening framed by a panelled frieze and projecting cornice, with panelled pilasters either side.
7. **Hardware:** The original pintel-hinges for the shutters remain, as do the boxlocks on the inside of the principal exterior doors.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating:** A coal furnace with electric fan blower in the earthen cellar provide forced air heating.
  - b. **Lighting:** Electric lighting fixtures. Wiring is unconcealed.
  - c. **Plumbing:** Modern fixtures.

D. **Site:**

1. **General setting and orientation:** Rural Mount is in the country; it is at the end of a long straight drive, flanked intermittently by old maple trees. Facing west, the house sits amid an even larger group of various trees, in a yard enclosed by a board fence, painted white. To the rear, at the bottom of a long slope, is the broad valley of the Nolichucky River. The land surrounding

the house has, unfortunately, been stripped of much of its green cover, as it is presently used as a feedlot for cattle. The cemetery and the outbuildings are nearby.

2. **Outbuildings:** There is a single story frame pigsty in the yard to the north of the house; a frame pumphouse at the edge of the yard on the south, and a frame garage on the northwest side, to the right of the end of the drive.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Jefferson County Will Books, County Court Clerk's Office, Dandridge, Tennessee.

Jefferson County Deed Books, Registry of Deeds Office, Dandridge, Tennessee.

Hamblen County Deed Books, Registry of Deeds Office, Morristown, Tennessee.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the Summer of 1974 at the HABS field office, School of Architecture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, by Michael A. Tomlan (Columbia University), Project Supervisor; Joseph L. Herndon (Columbia University), Project Historian; William W. Howell (University of Tennessee), and Thomas Gordon Smith (University of California at Berkeley), architects; and Marc Stewart Levoy (Cornell University), student assistant architect.

Susan McCown, a HABS historian in the HABS/HAER Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1985 for transmittal to the Library of Congress.

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