

CHANGED BY TIME: THE OLIVE HILL COMMUNITY IN TENNESSEE

By

Keith P. Schumann

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies at  
Middle Tennessee State University  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in Public History

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Carroll Van West, Thesis Director  
Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle, Reader

Murfreesboro, TN  
May 2013

I dedicate this research to my wife. I love you.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is always hard to properly thank those who have helped you along the way. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle and Dr. Carroll Van West for sharing their advice, knowledge, and professionalism during my undergraduate and graduate career. Thanks are also due to the faculty of the History Department at Middle Tennessee State University. I would also like to thank the entire staff of Stones River National Battlefield. There is not a better group of people to work with in the National Park Service. I have been fortunate to have so many good friends, family, and colleagues in my life that cannot all be listed here. However, you are all very much appreciated. I am very grateful for my mother-in-law Delia Ann Smith, who has been extraordinarily helpful on this project and takes care of me like her own. To my Granny, Elizabeth Ann Smith, my thanks cannot be measured due to her kindness, strength, and the special message she gave me the last time we spoke. My most sincere thanks are due to my mother, Sylvia Jean Meter, who raised me right and has always been there for me when I needed her. I would like to thank my late father, James T. Schumann, for continually asking the question “what are dads for?” and always being there to “help.” He told me I would eventually accomplish this and I sure wish he was here to read it. Lastly, I owe my wife, Jo Ann Schumann, more than I could ever repay for giving me the opportunity to do what makes me happy. Without her love, devotion, courage, knowledge, patience, support, and thoughtfulness I would not be the man I am today.

## ABSTRACT

The following work evaluates the impact that state and federally funded highway projects have had, and are continuing to have, on the small rural community of Olive Hill in West Tennessee. Located in Hardin County, Olive Hill's history spans almost two centuries from 1817 to the present and the changes in the community during that period are inextricably linked to the transportation corridor that crosses through it. The history of Olive Hill is connected to each stage of transportation development in the rural South from dirt roads built for horse and wagon to four-lane divided highways built for modern automobiles. During each phase of transportation improvement Olive Hill was affected in both positive and negative ways. However, improvements in modern transportation have been the most detrimental to the community and a current highway project will destroy the community altogether. To preserve this history, the purpose of this thesis is to document the community and place those transportation developments in a historical context.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR A RURAL COMMUNITY.	1
CHAPTER TWO: CHANGING THE COMMUNITY.....	26
CHAPTER THREE: REMEMBERING THE COMMUNITY.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	72
APPENDICES.....	77
APPENDIX A.....	78
APPENDIX B.....	83
APPENDIX C.....	89
APPENDIX D.....	94
APPENDIX E.....	98
APPENDIX F.....	102
APPENDIX G.....	104
APPENDIX H.....	108
APPENDIX I.....	111

## FIGURES

	PAGE
1.1. Transportation Map of Hardin County.....	1
1.2. The McLaren-Land House.....	13
1.3. The DeFord Mill on Indian Creek.....	14
1.4. Iron Bridge Spanning Indian Creek.....	17
1.5. The Arch Bridge at Olive Hill with Deford Mill in the Background.....	23
2.1. James Benjamin Smith with His Son Robert Oscar in 1931.....	27
2.2. The Olive Hill Blacksmith Shop in the Late 1940s.....	34
2.3. The C.F. Patterson Store.....	35
2.4. The Olive Hill School, c.1941.....	39
2.5. H.O. Smith and Son's Store in 1950.....	43
2.6. Abandoned Section of 1929-30s Era U.S. Highway 64.....	49
2.7. Homes along School House Lane in Olive Hill.....	53
3.1. U.S. Highway 64 Hardin County Project Sections.....	60
3.2. U.S. Post Office in H.O. Smith and Son's Store.....	64

## CHAPTER I: PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR A RURAL COMMUNITY

Olive Hill, Tennessee, is an unincorporated community located on State Route 15/U.S. Highway 64 in Hardin County, which is about fourteen miles east of Savannah and seventeen miles west of Waynesboro (figure 1.1). This quiet rural community is situated in what locals call the “hill country,” so called due to its even rugged terrain typical of a river uplands region.

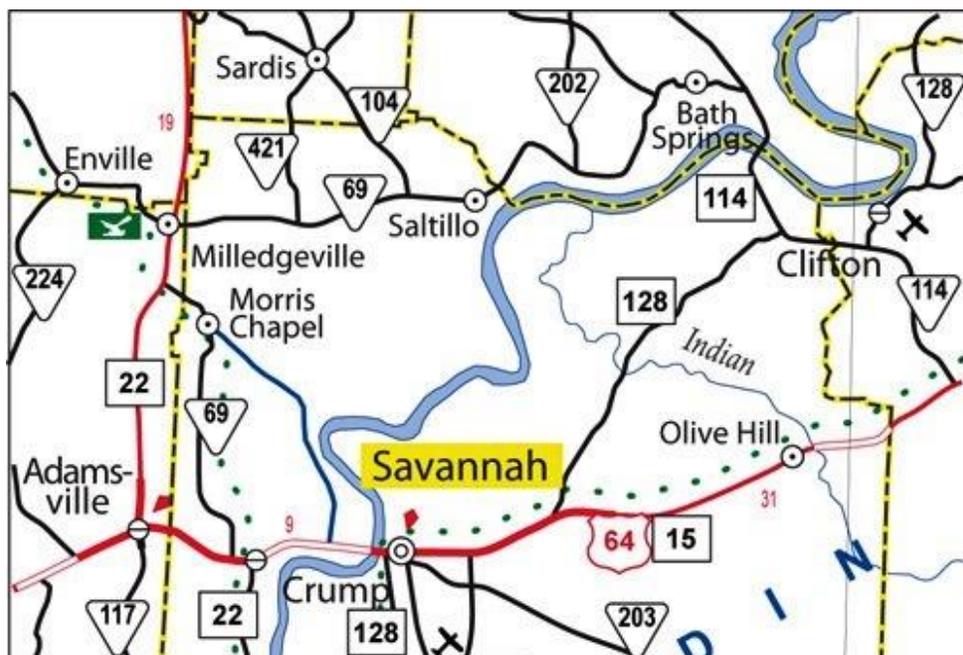


Fig. 1.1. Olive Hill is located in northwest Hardin County where State Route 15/U.S. Highway 64 crosses Indian Creek. (Map courtesy of TDOT, Nashville, Tennessee)

The native people who lived in this region of West Tennessee before the Jackson Purchase used the Tennessee River as a transportation route to move up and down its banks in order to hunt, trade, and communicate with other native groups. Early settlers also realized the role that the river would have as a transportation corridor to further their

economic and social interests. The earliest settlers, many veterans of the Revolutionary War, chose their land grants in 1815 near what is now Savannah and Cerro Gordo and settled in 1816. Both settlements were located along the river's banks, which provided fertile farmland and access to the river. The second large group that moved into the area in 1816 settled further north along the river between the later settlements of Cerro Gordo and Clifton. The settlers that followed chose the areas of fertile land along the many branches that connected with Horse and Indian creeks, which were the two largest north-south creeks providing reasonable access to the Tennessee River.<sup>1</sup>

Due to its location fourteen miles east of the Tennessee River, and no roads having been yet cleared, settlers came slowly to the Olive Hill area in 1817-1820 and the area remained lightly populated for decades afterward. However, the majority of settlers came from the northeast, the exact opposite direction of the early Tennessee River settlements in the western part of Hardin County.<sup>2</sup> Traces of pioneer roads in Tennessee generally followed paths used by native peoples. Historian Leland Johnson observed: "Overland routes into West Tennessee often followed paths opened by the Chickasaws. All of those paths and traces eventually became true roads."<sup>3</sup> This journey was not one to take lightly considering the terrain of thickly forested rocky hills and hollows. James B. McLaren wrote that "When the first settlers arrived in the county the hills were covered

---

<sup>1</sup> McLaren, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>3</sup> Leland R. Johnson, *Memphis to Bristol: A Half Century of Highway Construction, A History of the Tennessee Road Builders Association, 1928-1978* (Nashville: Tennessee Road Builders Association, 1978), 10.

with forests and undergrowth and the bottoms were solid cane-brakes. In the beginning and for a number of subsequent years, the settlers had to cut trails to reach area where they desired to settle.”<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, what would later become the small community of Olive Hill began in the first two decades of the nineteenth century when families began to move into eastern Hardin County. Overland transportation routes were needed to connect the Olive Hill settlement with Savannah to the west and Waynesboro to the east. However, the need for roads could hardly compete with the ease of travel that the river provided. William Kaszynski asserted that “Interest in road building waned as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed. Travel by water remained the cheapest and most common means of transporting men and material to build the new nation.”<sup>5</sup> To this end, the roads in Hardin County would remain crudely built axe-cut trails for a short period of time.

Traveling on these rough early roads in Hardin County proved much more of a problem than building them. The majority of the July 1820 term of the county court was “devoted to appointing commissioners to view and mark out roads.”<sup>6</sup> During this session the newly established court assumed the responsibility to “direct” the cutting of roads through the wilderness.<sup>7</sup> This is significant due to the fact that this action represented the

---

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, 25.

<sup>5</sup> William Kaszynski, *The American Highway: The History and Culture of Roads in the United States* (New York: McFarland and Company Publishing, 2000), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Brazelton, 40.

<sup>7</sup> McLaren, 26.

first local government action that would begin a unified system of locally built and maintained transportation routes in Hardin County.

Samuel Butler constructed one of the first public roads from the Bruler's Ferry crossing at Swift Creek (now Horse Creek) to the Wayne County line. In 1822 another contractor built a road from Hardinsville, which was the county seat at that time, to the Wayne County line. A year later in 1823, Olive Hill was finally connected to Savannah when the road from Rudd's Ferry (Savannah) to Hardinsville was built. That entire stretch of road became part of the Savannah-Waynesboro Stage Road, which was opened before the Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

Once these early Hardin County roads were built, it was essential that they were maintained. Early settlers in North America, often transplanted, used the practice of maintaining a built road that began in England and France. The English royalty realized a need to maintain roads within their land holdings to keep them passable in poor weather and creating what is now known as a road's "right-of-way." A clear right-of-way minimized the threat of bandits – a problem that also existed in early nineteenth century Tennessee.<sup>9</sup>

The French used a somewhat different system called the Corvee, which was a "system of rigidly enforced road labor imposed on the people of France."<sup>10</sup> Some communities used a similar system in Tennessee throughout the nineteenth century. The

---

<sup>8</sup> Brazelton, 43-44; McLaren, 26; P. M. Harbert, "Early History of Hardin County," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 1, (1947): 38-67.

<sup>9</sup> Kaszynski, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, 16.

process started with the county hiring a “road overseer” who received a paltry \$1.00 a year for his services. Each overseer had a specific section of road to maintain and each adult male voter in the county was required to contribute a certain amount of days per year to the development and maintenance of county roads. Those who could afford to pay a road tax were deemed exempt, along with men who could offer draft animals to work in their stead. The county would send out notices and one or two days a year the locals would gather in their section for the annual road making “bee.”<sup>11</sup> A typical “bee” is described as follows:

The workmen, carrying picks, shovels, axes, and hoes, gathered at some preselected point about mid-morning on a day chosen for the yearly road “bee.” There, they discussed the science of road building, horses, politics, women, and other matters of public concern for an hour or so until every neighbor arrived. Eventually they elected some elder as foreman, thereby absolving him from physical labor, and began slushing their shovels into the roadside mud. With all deliberate speed, they removed mud from the roadside ditches and plastered it in the center of the roadway, filling ruts and mud puddles.<sup>12</sup>

As new roads were constructed, economic development in the more remote areas of Hardin County followed closely behind. Largely agrarian, the county mainly established itself with agricultural products such as corn, wheat, hay, and cotton, which were common crops for farmers to plant and harvest in the floodplains and valleys around what would become Olive Hill. Settlers also built grist mills along the banks of many area creeks.

---

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 17.

Between 1819 and 1834, residents put six mills into operation at different times along Indian Creek.<sup>13</sup> In 1822, Harrison Tompkins built a horse-powered cotton gin roughly six miles northwest of the Olive Hill community at the confluence of Indian and Whitlow's Creeks.<sup>14</sup> 18 mills remained important in the area for decades. Olive Hill resident Frankie DeFord Welch remembered, "In the fall, wagons would roll with hay, cotton, and all else harvested in the fall. After the cotton was picked, it was hauled to Savannah to the cotton gin."<sup>15</sup>

Farmers also raised cattle, pigs, sheep, and other livestock for market or consumption. Stock-raising was an exceptionally "profitable occupation in the county" with "horned cattle, horses, mules, and hogs" being the most desired stock.<sup>16</sup> Many of the farmers in the community had hogs and cattle killed every fall to cure in their smokehouses for the winter.<sup>17</sup> Local general stores would buy from those in the community that could spare meat and dairy products and sell to those who were in need. Animal hides were very much in demand and tanneries were a very important part of the community. Three tan yards operated in the county by 1824 and Washington Campbell

---

<sup>13</sup> McLaren, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Brazelton, 45; David Cagle, "A Brief History of the Whitlow Family," Tennessee Genealogy Web Project, [www.tngenweb.org/hardin/.../whit.htm](http://www.tngenweb.org/hardin/.../whit.htm), (accessed April 12, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Perry, "Hardin County, Tennessee: Olive Hill," *Hardin County Historian* 7 (January - June 2011): 23-24.

<sup>16</sup> Brazelton, 100.

<sup>17</sup> McLaren, 21.

operated a later yard in the Indian Creek community until shortly after 1835 when it was abandoned.<sup>18</sup>

Timber harvesting was another significant industry. B.G. Brazelton wrote in 1885 that “The forest of Hardin County has a greater variety, and perhaps more valuable timber, than any county in the state.”<sup>19</sup> In 1947, P.M. Harbert continued to assert the worth of the county’s forests:

About two thirds of the county's area is still in forests; most of the uplands on the east side of the river and that part west of the river along the Mississippi State line, produces large quantities of short leaf pine. This type of pine is of quick growth and of such fiber as is in great demand. Quite a number of people in this area make their living out of this timber. In the valleys and other parts not well suited to growing pine, are different varieties of oak, poplar, hickory, maple, sweet gum, black gum, elm, dogwood and many others. For years the Tennessee River Valley in Hardin and adjoining counties has been regarded as the leading cross tie producing area of the world. This is because of the fine grain found in the timbers, especially the oaks.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Eastin Morris’s *Tennessee Gazetteer* (1834), there were at least five sawmills operating in Hardin County in that year.<sup>21</sup> By 1860, the *Census of Manufactures* shows that six more sawmills were added within the county in just twenty-six years. In the decades of 1870 and 1880 that followed the Civil War, the number of

---

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Perry, “Olive Hill Community: Introduction to History of Olive Hill,” *Hardin County Historian*, 6 (July-December 2010): 9; Michael T. Gavin, *Tennessee Iron Furnace Trail: A Guide to Resources on the Western Highland Rim* (Murfreesboro, TN: MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2006), 41-42.

<sup>19</sup> Brazelton, 98.

<sup>20</sup> Harbert, 64.

<sup>21</sup> Robert M. McBride and Owen N. Meredith, eds., *Eastin Morris’ Tennessee Gazetteer of 1834 and Matthew Rhea’s Map of the State of Tennessee 1832* (Nashville: Gazetteer Press, 1971), 32.

sawmills in the county had leveled off at eight respectively.<sup>22</sup> Some of the most important early forest products were barrel staves made of white oak, axe handles made from hickory, crossties made from various species, and lumber made from pine and cedar.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to the formation of Olive Hill, early roads had opened the way for market oriented agrarian industry and provided a way for products to be taken to market from rural areas of Hardin County. Lacking a railroad, early roads provided the corridor for which agricultural products could access the river markets at Savannah, travel overland to the wharfs in Clifton, or markets in Waynesboro. However, agricultural interests were not the only interests of the period and were surely not the single reason for the formation of the small community.

The Indian Creek community would later migrate to the west bank of the creek forming Olive Hill. This transition took many years due to the fact that iron hematite was found in the ridges and bluffs east of present day Olive Hill on the opposite side of Indian Creek. In just a short amount of time the small village grew even larger to support an iron furnace and forge that was put into operation around 1826. Although agricultural interests reigned supreme in the county, mining and fire powered industries quickly grew in popularity, as almost all Americans demanded durable iron products. Local historian

---

<sup>22</sup> John N. Lovett Jr. and Loretta Lautzenheiser. "Historic Context Evaluation for Mills in Tennessee: A Study Conducted for the Tennessee Department of Transportation through the University of Tennessee Transport Center." May, 2002, [www.tdot.state.tn.us/.../res-1039.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/.../res-1039.pdf) (accessed June 15, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Brazelton, 98.

Herbert Perry emphasizes that “Iron was instrumental in the great changes occurring through industrialization.”<sup>24</sup>

Historian and preservationist Michael T. Gavin agrees: “Few substances have played a larger role or had more of an impact on the peoples of this planet than iron.”<sup>25</sup>

The noted early settlement leader James Robertson had established the first furnace in the mid-state area in 1797. Iron production and products were needed to fill a very high demand and the Indian creek community was located along the “dividing line” between West and Middle Tennessee where the ore became scarce. Planning to profit from the constant demand, Royal B. Ferguson founded the Indian Creek Forge. Ferguson did so without knowing for certain the amount of ore contained in the hills surrounding the community. The ridges, however, contained many veins of 44 percent iron hematite ore encased in limestone.<sup>26</sup> As an added bonus, the plentiful amount of limestone in the area provided an abundance of raw material for the iron production process.<sup>27</sup>

James Walker, a wealthy businessman with family ties to President James K. Polk, financed the blast furnace that Ferguson built and managed at Indian Creek. By 1835 Royal Ferguson had left the Indian Creek furnace to build a blast furnace and forge that was later called Wayne Furnace.<sup>28</sup> Ferguson died in 1838, and after the elder

---

<sup>24</sup> Perry, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Gavin, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Perry, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>28</sup> Gavin, 41.

Walker's death, his son purchased and operated both the Wayne and Indian Creek furnaces. Walker continued the business under the name James Walker and Son well into the mid-1850s before selling Wayne Furnace and ceasing operations on Indian Creek.<sup>29</sup>

Economic restructuring, consolidation, and financial difficulties meant that only sixteen charcoal iron works operated in 1860. Then came the Civil War where the Union Army occupied or partially demolished most of the works which were further reduced to only twelve by the war's end.<sup>30</sup> Michael Gavin added that the "monumental technological changes that led to the new Age of Steel effectively doomed the charcoal iron industry of the Volunteer State."<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, iron production lasted over three decades in the Indian Creek community adding to the rich history of the early settlement on Indian Creek that preceded Olive Hill.

After the Civil War came to an end in 1865, those who remained in the Indian Creek community faced great hardship to sustain their businesses. The days of slave labor were over and replaced by a free wage earning workforce. Nevertheless, crops had to be planted, tended, and harvested. Timber had to be felled, skinned, sawed, or split. Livestock had to be fed, herded, bought, sold, and butchered. Heavy hides had to be scraped and stirred in the tannery, and grain had to be loaded, crushed, and bagged at the mill.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Gavin, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Perry, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Gavin, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Perry, 11.

In May 1870, the U.S. government designated the first Olive Hill Post Office, and a settlement began to develop. The construction of the community's first post office confirmed the community as Olive Hill. Risen D. Deford's daughter Frankie wrote, "I don't know how the community got the name Olive, but there are plenty of hills."<sup>33</sup> The post office was also very important because not only did the area now receive regular service, it also prompted the need for better postal routes in that area as well.

Schools were scarce in early settlements and often were of secondary importance to other activities such as farming. In the immediate area around Olive Hill, two early schools were in operation. The first was located about three miles west of Olive Hill near Lonesome Pine Tree (now Lonesome Pine). The original Indian Creek School was located on the east side of Indian Creek and it is unknown when it began operation. At some point between 1850 and 1914 the school changed names and became formally known as the Olive Hill School.<sup>34</sup> Frankie Deford Welch remembered her childhood at the Indian Creek School fondly:

Of course there was school at intervals. At school we drank from the same dipper and I never heard of germs. There was fun at school swinging from hickory limbs: we could swing on a grape vine from one hill to another. Somehow in thinking of that time so long ago, it seems I can hear again the old school bell and the scramble and rush of feet, and happy voices.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Perry, 18.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 15; McLaren, 31.

<sup>35</sup> Perry, 25.

Both schools were reportedly very crudely built log structures with large gaps between the logs that were not chinked with a mud and grass mixture. The gaps provided some relief from heat in the summer months, but did nothing to help conserve heat in the winter. Due to these conditions, school sessions were limited to four and often as little as two months per year.<sup>36</sup> This small amount of time for formal education was further cut short by bad roads which left many southerners asking “Of what use are schools and churches in county districts if for five to six months out of the year country roads are so impassable that they cannot be attended?”<sup>37</sup>

In 1886, Captain Risen D. DeFord moved to the area and opened a general store on the hills to the west of the Indian Creek community. Historians have noted this occurrence as the beginning of the transition in which the “Indian Creek Community began the process of moving to Olive Hill.”<sup>38</sup> Early that year, Deford built what is now called the McLaren-Land house and erected a dry goods store just north of the house site (figure 1.2). The beautiful home still stands today and numerous historians of the area claim that it “put Olive Hill on the map.”<sup>39</sup>

Deford was a man of industry and progress and it showed in his many business ventures. Aside from his general store, Deford owned a saw mill on the east side of Indian Creek. In 1886, using stone from an earlier furnace, he constructed a three story

---

<sup>36</sup> McLaren, 31.

<sup>37</sup> Howard L. Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> Perry, 12.

overshot grist mill on the west bank, which was directly opposite of the old community (figure 1.3). In 1887, DeFord expanded his operations further by installing a wool carder at the new mill.<sup>40</sup> at the new mill.<sup>40</sup>



Fig. 1.2. The McLaren-Land House, March 2013. (Courtesy of author)

---

<sup>40</sup> Perry, 12.

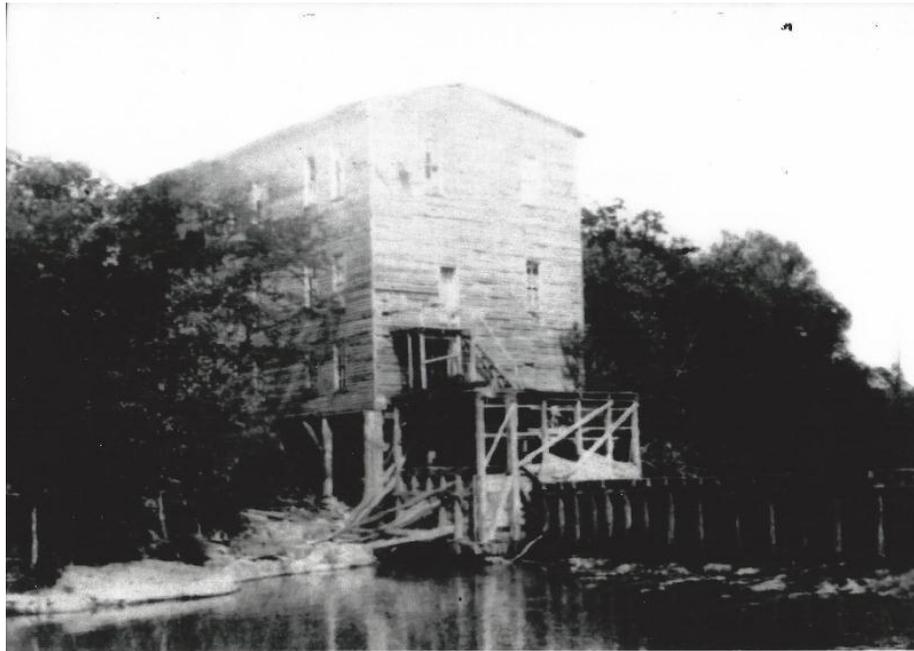


Fig. 1.3. The DeFord Grist Mill. (Photograph courtesy of Ann Smith)

Deford left Olive Hill in 1906 and returned to Hardin County in 1907 but in his short absence the small community of Olive Hill continued to grow. These changes at Olive Hill directly corresponded with the “Good Roads Movement” in the rural South. Farm to market roads were an important part of this movement, which was broadened by the need for passable post roads. It was imperative that farmers’ crops reached their markets and that their mail reached their doorsteps. The two needs had become inextricably linked in the movement with accessibility as the main goal. In *Dirt Roads to Dixie*, Howard L. Preston described just how deplorable rural southern roads were during this period:

Overland travel in the southern United States was difficult during most of the year but next to impossible during rainy winter months. Some communities in mountainous areas of the south were completely isolated from the outside world when rain and snow made the roads impassable, even for a mule. A day of rain could turn a rural road into a quagmire for a

full week; and this affected not only local farmers who needed to transport their crops to market but hapless travelers who found themselves stranded in the middle of nowhere, stuck in the mud.<sup>41</sup>

Howard Preston outlined the goals of the good roads movement: “as a way of halting the decline in rural values, and at the same time, of providing farmers with a way of coping with the isolation and cultural backwardness inherent in their way of life.”<sup>42</sup> Preston also asserted that “Southerners attracted to the progressive benefits of good roads also prescribed improved roads as a cure for the South’s educational woes, as a means of educational enlightenment, as a way of putting an end to the region’s cultural provincialism, and even as a method of increasing church attendance.”<sup>43</sup> This aligns well with Olive Hill’s limited educational opportunities. Although schools were present, they were seasonal, and those seeking higher learning needed a way to travel to larger towns that offered larger schools. Likewise, however insulated residents may have been from the outside world, roads made it possible to travel to other towns, cities, or states to broaden their horizons.

Good Roads Progressives also liked to argue how good roads “kept kids on the farm.” Preston pointed out that “young men and women living on farms were more likely to swap the boring drudgery of farm life for the glitter and excitement of the city. Had they been able to enjoy an occasional respite from life

---

<sup>41</sup> Preston, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

on the farm, the argument went, not all as many would abandon farm life altogether.”<sup>44</sup> Good roads also kept farm women happy at Olive Hill.<sup>45</sup> The two main reasons women chose to leave the community were due to marriage or to receive different types of higher education. Even then, many women returned and lived their entire lives within the community. Instead of good roads motivating rural women to leave the community, it instead gave them a choice and a way to do so if the opportunity presented itself.

For example, Olive Hill offered many different denominations of church services each week that required some sort of travel to attend. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was erected there in 1900 and was followed by the building of the Olive Hill Methodist Church, which ironically held the first services of the Baptist Church in Olive Hill when used for a 1928 revival meeting.<sup>46</sup> Evidence and oral history substantiate the presence of an African American church or meeting house in the Olive Hill community; however, further research is needed to determine its exact location, period, and membership. An argument could easily be made regarding the parallel between lower church attendance and bad roads, even more so for those who often “lost their religion” while traveling on them.

In Hardin County during the first decade of the 1900s, good bridges came before good roads. At that time, Indian Creek to the east of the community was crossable only at

---

<sup>44</sup> Preston, 16.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>46</sup> McLaren, 38-39.

the ford along the route of the Savannah-Waynesboro Stage Road. The Indian Creek crossing regularly flooded and it became the site for one of the new steel bridges (figure 1.4).<sup>47</sup> Yet, even with this much needed improvement at the ford, the stage road was still largely unimproved. Leland Johnson asserted that automobile owners all across the country had a hard time finding a decent road to drive on:

Tennessee motorists at the turn of the century had the same trouble, but still took to the rutted thoroughfares in large numbers. Tennessee required that automobile owners register their vehicles in 1905 and prohibited speeds faster than twenty miles an hour. A few adventuresome souls were attempting cross-country tours by automobile by 1910, and several tried to cross Tennessee. They regretted it. Experiences on Tennessee roads sent motorists flocking into local automobile clubs and the Tennessee Good Roads Association, which supported the construction of all-weather roads.<sup>48</sup>



Fig. 1.4. Iron bridge over Indian Creek at Olive Hill. (Courtesy of Ann Smith)

---

<sup>47</sup> McLaren, 33.

<sup>48</sup> Johnson, 29.

Johnson points out that one reason for the neglect of rural roads in Tennessee in the turn-of-the-century was that automobiles could not yet compete with rail or river transportation.<sup>49</sup> Hardin County had no major railroad within its boundaries. This lack of a rail connection limited the county's economic and social transportation ties to larger towns.<sup>50</sup> Lear Durbin noted that "There were dirt roads leading to them, but in rainy seasons, especially in winter, they were impassable. Very few people tried to get into the county this way, and very few left."<sup>51</sup> The county had worked with many railroad companies in the late 1800s and early 1900s to secure a railhead at Savannah. Unfortunately, all efforts had failed by 1911 and a "movement was begun which was destined to help solve the transportation problem."<sup>52</sup>

This new effort became known as the "Turnpike Movement." The movement had spread regionally with federal, state, and often individual support starting as early as 1840, yet was "abandoned with the advent of railroads" leaving road building "relegated to the background as a purely local affair."<sup>53</sup> However, with the movement's resurgence in the early 1910s, a new company stepped forward with designs to connect Savannah with Corinth, Mississippi via Shiloh, Tennessee. Aptly named, the Corinth, Shiloh, and

---

<sup>49</sup> Johnson, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Lear Pearl Durbin. "Economic and Social Development of Hardin County Since 1865" (Master's thesis, George Peabody College, 1930), 35.

<sup>51</sup> Durbin, 35.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>53</sup> Earl Swift, *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 39.

Savannah Turnpike Company sought to do just that, which in the broad view would provide Olive Hill access to the crossroads rail center in Corinth. Although the turnpike did not affect Olive Hill directly “Now for a reasonable price one could get to a railroad station comfortably at any time of the year, take a trip to any point than and get back home in much less time than he formerly spent on a boat.”<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, local residents did not like paying a toll to use roads that they felt should be “free roads” funded and maintained by the local, state, or federal governments. Conversely, the citizens were not fond of paying road taxes either.<sup>55</sup>

The construction of the turnpike reflected growth in the number of automobiles in Hardin County. By 1913 there were “as of yet very few automobiles in the county” but “trucks began to compete with the boats in carrying freight, and merchants grew to depend less upon the river to bring their merchandise.”<sup>56</sup> The growth in Hardin County came as the Tennessee General Assembly created the Tennessee State Highway Department. The new department absorbed the responsibility of overseeing the ninety-six county and city governments that had built and maintained the state’s roads independently until that time.<sup>57</sup> This consolidation was a monumental first step in turning

---

<sup>54</sup> Durbin, 37.

<sup>55</sup> In 1924, the turnpike became financially unstable and investors sold it the Federal government, where it served as an improved gravel road that connected Corinth to Shiloh bringing visitors to Shiloh National Military Park and beyond. Timothy B. Smith, *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh: History, Memory, and the Establishment of a Civil War National Military Park* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 123.

<sup>56</sup> Durbin, 37.

<sup>57</sup> Johnson, 18.

around the transportation woes of the state, and it promoted cooperation with local governments to begin promoting a good road system.

West Tennessee had notoriously lagged behind the road-building progress of the other two geographic divisions of the state. This pattern began to change with the enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916. This legislation “offered federal matching funds provided the states had highway departments with engineers who could design road projects to meet federal standards.”<sup>58</sup> Hardin County officials jumped at the new money. Funding proceeded in 1916 and “the issuance of one hundred thousand dollars in bonds for the purpose of building highways was voted. The court made an appropriation in 1919 of one hundred fifty thousand dollars for improving the highways of the county on condition that the state would give seventy-five thousand dollars.”<sup>59</sup> This appropriation is the crucial decision that eventually brought State Route 15/U.S. Highway 64 east-west across the county as part of the Memphis to Chattanooga trunk line highway system.<sup>60</sup>

“Road Building Far Behind the Automobile” read an advertisement placed by the National Portland Cement Association in the January 1, 1925 edition of the *Savannah Courier*. Associations that were connected in a beneficial way with new road construction placed ads to stir public fervor for improved roads and hired lobbyists to bend the ears of state politicians, who in turn were trying desperately to please both to

---

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, 31.

<sup>59</sup> Durbin, 37.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

remain in office. In 1923 Governor Austin Peay, who was known as the “Road Building Governor,” named J.G. Creveling as the new state Highway Commissioner in an effort to reorganize the state road building effort. Creveling later compared the job to “taking an ice plunge.”<sup>61</sup>

Creveling had much work in front of him. His first task was to follow the guidelines set by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 which required each state to “plan an integrated highway system comprising seven percent of road mileage in the state on which federal aid matching funds were to be expended.”<sup>62</sup> In 1923 Creveling and his staff gained approval from the Federal Bureau of Public Roads for a 4,600 mile system of primary roads which included State Route 15.<sup>63</sup> Approval, however, did not mean that the new state-federal roads magically appeared; state and local politics shaped which roads came first. Nevertheless, West Tennessee residents were not pleased with the progress of their roads in comparison with the remainder of the state.<sup>64</sup>

Hardin County citizens, for instance, heard of little progress until 1924 when the *Savannah Courier* announced that the state was studying the cost of a bridge across the Tennessee River at Savannah.<sup>65</sup> The new bridge, with an “approximate cost of one

---

<sup>61</sup> Johnson, 35.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> McLaren, 33.

million dollars, replaced a ferry service.”<sup>66</sup> The bridge, however, would not be complete until 1930.<sup>67</sup> In the meanwhile, the state began the time-consuming process of right-of-way acquisition along State Route 15. In February 1924, the *Savannah Courier* announced that “the right of way for the new federal highway from Savannah to Olive Hill” was complete.<sup>68</sup>

Road construction began in 1924, yet infrastructure in the form of bridges was needed to tie it all together. Olive Hill’s most noteworthy landmark came in 1925-1926 when a concrete and reinforced steel Arch Bridge was built to replace the earlier two-span iron bridge. The deteriorating remains of the Deford mill, which the state closed in 1924, stood next to the bridge until the 1930s when it burned down and its dam was later removed. The State Highway Department and Tennessee Historical Commission have designated the Arch Bridge as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an early closed spandrel arch bridge (figure 1.5). In the *Tennessee Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges* Historian Martha Carver described the bridge:

The State Highway Department designed this bridge in 1925. At that time, this road was State Route 15/U.S. 64, an early stage route that had evolved into the main route across southern Tennessee linking Memphis and Chattanooga. The state awarded a state aid contract for it and other bridges on State Route 15 to V. W. Clanton in January 1925. The firm completed these bridges by March 1926 (Tennessee 1943:125). An unusual feature is that old quad maps label this crossing “Arch Bridge.” The bridge is one of the early designs by the state and contains decorative features usually

---

<sup>66</sup> Durbin, 38.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> *Savannah Courier*, February 20, 1924.

omitted on later bridges. The bridge contains one span, a closed spandrel arch 126 feet long. It has a curb-to-curb width of 20.1<sup>69</sup>

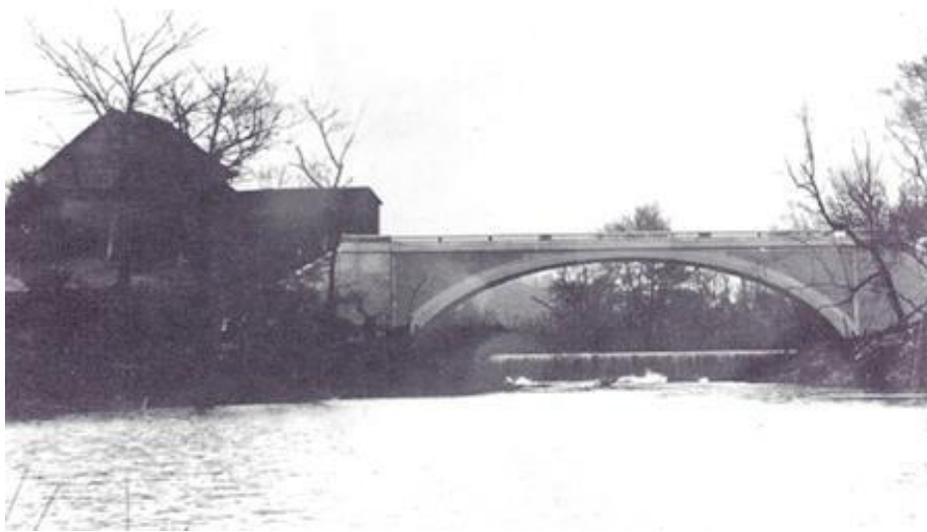


Fig. 1.5. Arch Bridge over Indian Creek at Olive Hill with Deford Mill in the background. (Courtesy of *Savannah Courier*, March 17, 1994)

As with most large-scale highway projects, state officials divided the State Route 15/U.S. Highway 64 project into sections and the State of Tennessee Department of Highways and Public Works in Nashville received bids from contractors on each section. A notice ran in the *Savannah Courier* on January 2, 1925 stating that bids would be accepted until January 23<sup>rd</sup> on “State Aid Project 187-A, Hardin County: Constructing 7.57 miles of gravel road on State Highway 15 between the Wayne County line and

---

<sup>69</sup> Martha Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic for Historic Highway Bridges* (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Transportation, 2008), 512.

Station 399.00. Bids for bridges over 20' span will be received separately.”<sup>70</sup> This section included Olive Hill and the Arch Bridge and was projected to be completed in 175 days during the 1925 work season.<sup>71</sup> On February 6<sup>th</sup> the *Savannah Courier* announced that another road contract had been let:

The contract for the construction of the Highway from Olive Hill to Oldtown in Hardin County was let to a firm at Iuka, Miss. The work will be done this year. The contract for bridges on the same route was bid in by an Arkansas company. The entire amount to be expended on the project will approximate two hundred thousand dollars.<sup>72</sup>

Dr. J. B. McLaren, a local historian and resident of Olive Hill, corroborated the information about the Arkansas company working on the new highway. McLaren stated that “The contractor who built the road in the vicinity of Olive Hill was T.A. Martin. Not much is known about him except that I remember a trip to Arkansas with my father. We stopped in a little town, Tyronza, Arkansas, to visit Mr. Martin.”<sup>73</sup> Coincidentally, the *Savannah Courier* noted that “Joe East of Tyronza, Arkansas was a visitor here last week.”<sup>74</sup> This was intriguing because Tyronza, Arkansas was the town in which the “Southern Tenant Farmers Movement” began in the 1920s.

---

<sup>70</sup> *Savannah Courier*, January 2, 1925.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, February 6, 1925.

<sup>73</sup> McLaren, 34.

<sup>74</sup> *Savannah Courier*, January 30, 1925.

Construction of State Route 15/U.S. 64 continued into the late 1920s. It was a packed gravel, or “macadam” road.<sup>75</sup> The new road did not come without some sacrifice. Frankie DeFord Welch remembered that “Many blackberry bushes have been destroyed to make way for roads, as chestnut trees, hickory nut trees, and walnuts were cut down.”<sup>76</sup> By 1928, State Route 15/U.S. 64 ran from Olive Hill to the Savannah Ferry Crossing. It had become the main highway in the southern part of the state, crossing through sixteen counties. State Route 15/U.S. 64 connected Memphis with Chattanooga and between the two cities it would intersect State Routes 2, 6, and 10 leading north to Nashville. At that time, the construction of the road was “an event of pride for the entire county east of Savannah and especially the residents around Olive Hill.”<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Kaszynski, 14.

<sup>76</sup> Perry, 23.

<sup>77</sup> McLaren, 33-34.

## CHAPTER II: CHANGING THE COMMUNITY

In his 1930 thesis, “Economic and Social Development of Hardin County since 1865,” Lear Durbin asserted that “When the money that is now appropriated is spent, Hardin County will have an excellent system of highways within and will have an east and west, and a north and south outlet.”<sup>1</sup> The new highway was undoubtedly a popular topic of conversation amongst the residents and those who stopped at the roadside stores of Olive Hill.<sup>2</sup> The most important question was what effect would the new road have on the community? With the road bisecting Olive Hill, the residents had a no trouble keeping up with the progress of the construction, while their proximity to the construction offered the ability to see and feel the effects, both positive and negative.

The new highway held promise for the residents of Olive Hill. Besides the obvious improvement in transportation, it was hopeful that the new route would help the community grow economically as well. Positioned centrally between Savannah and Waynesboro, the community was a great mid-point for travelers of every sort to make a brief stop. This advantage was made even more convenient for passers-by due to the fact that the track of State Route 15/U.S. 64 would pass directly in front of the Olive Hill businesses before curving along the sides of the hills to the east and west. However, even with all the benefits that the new highway promised, it would not come without a cost.

There were at least three homes as well as a general store along the route through Olive Hill that had sat alongside of the old stage road. It is unknown if the houses were acquired as part of the right-of-way, razed, or moved to another location. It is known that

---

<sup>1</sup> Durbin, 38.

<sup>2</sup> McLaren, 34.

the general store was relocated. In the years immediately prior to 1929, Henry Oscar Smith and his sons had moved his store from Jower's Ridge a few miles west over to Olive Hill (figure 2.1). He set up his store in a wooden frame building that faced south with the old road passing in front of the store. Currently there is a county waste collection area on the site. The new highway's course took it directly behind the store, literally touching the north side. To this end, and with much hardship, the store was raised, placed on logs, and rolled back until it faced the new highway once again. This move was essential to the store's survival and if not the first, it was one of the businesses that marked what would become the commercial center of Olive Hill.



Fig. 2.1. James Benjamin Smith with his son Robert Oscar in 1931. Both would become owners of H.O. Smith and Son's Store in Olive Hill. (Courtesy of Ann Smith)

In August 1928 the Hardin County Court voted and approved the issuance of three-hundred thousand dollars in bonds towards the continued improvement of roads and the *Savannah Courier* ran articles almost weekly that described the progress.<sup>3</sup> Dr. J. B. McClaren wrote a very descriptive account of the work near Olive Hill:

The original road was built with man and mule power and tended to follow the topography of the immediate area. The construction was tough on both men and mules. Dirt for the considerable fill around Olive Hill was moved on two-wheel dump carts which as I remember had no brakes. The fill dirt and the rock was loaded on the cart by hand with shovels. Other carts, called wheelers, were simple 'road scoops' on wheels. In loading these carts a specially designed 'trip' dropped the front end scoop, which had a blade to facilitate 'scooping' the dirt into the pan as the mules struggled to pull the cart forward. When the cart was loaded another 'trip' raised the pan of the moving cart. When hauling downhill, the speed of the cart was regulated by the mules 'holding back.' Upon arrival at the place to be filled, the cart was backed to the very edge of the fill by the mules and the rear of the pan was opened by trip or manpower and the fill-dirt was dumped over the edge of the fill. This process was both hard on men and mules. If the edge of the fill caved due to the weight of the cart, both men and mules could be tossed down the edge of the fill.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the many hazards, this type of fill was very important to ensure that the newly constructed roadbed could support concrete paving. Whereas the initial roadbed was made of fill and macadam gravel that was sixteen feet wide and eight inches thick, the new final grade would consist of a twenty foot wide ribbon of concrete that was seven inches thick with two feet on each edge thickened to ten inches for durability.<sup>5</sup> Likewise,

---

<sup>3</sup> James Swanson, "An Educational Survey of Hardin County, Tennessee," (Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1933), 32.

<sup>4</sup> McLaren, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Kaszynski, 14.

concrete was chosen because it was the most durable material for a road that would support heavily loaded tractor trailers, buses, and a multitude of other vehicles.

After years of hard work, the concrete paving of State Route 15/U.S. 64 was completed from Waynesboro to the west where it linked with the Arch Bridge at Olive Hill in late August 1929.<sup>6</sup> This section of the highway was just over fifteen miles in length. Shortly afterwards in mid-October, the concrete paving was finished on the roughly fourteen mile section from Savannah to the Arch Bridge and the highway department was almost ready to open its lanes for two-way traffic.<sup>7</sup> Once the highway opened it was observed that “this narrow, crooked road was busy throughout the 24-hour day. Greyhound buses made regular stops and the highway was tortured by the weight of heavy trucks that made their regular runs from Memphis to Chattanooga and points beyond.”<sup>8</sup> Olive Hill finally had a reliable land transportation route that connected the community with the outside world.

In 1930 Lear Durbin concluded: “Just what effect on the county’s economic and social life the good road system alone will have remains for time to tell.”<sup>9</sup> Three years later James M. Swanson reported that “there is a total of approximately 445 miles of roads in the county. Of this number approximately 39 miles are hard surfaced. There are

---

<sup>6</sup> *Savannah Courier*, August 23, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, October 18, 1929.

<sup>8</sup> McLaren, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Durbin, 39.

340 miles of gravel roads....The remainder, about 75 miles, is unimproved dirt.”<sup>10</sup> State Route 15/U.S. 64 comprised roughly twenty-two and a half miles of the thirty-nine miles of hard surfaced road in the county at that time.

At the time that State Route 15/U.S. Highway 64 was fully open in 1930, what was the Olive Hill Community like? The community “consisted of about twenty-five families, an elementary school, one church, three country stores, one blacksmith shop, and a post office.”<sup>11</sup> Life centered around the Olive Hill School, which was located east of the main settlement along Forge Ridge near the Bigbee Branch. Although the early school may have been quite rustic, a 1907 photograph shows the school to be a moderate sized wooden frame structure with wood four-panel front doors and clapboard siding.<sup>12</sup> The photograph also shows teacher W.F. Bell standing to the right of over forty students, and other sources show a clear record of the teachers who taught there from 1914 through 1929.<sup>13</sup> In 1926, the same year that old State Route 15 was opened to traffic, a school bus route began operation. Parents in Olive Hill paid a small fee to bus their children to school in Savannah.<sup>14</sup> Initially there were sixteen students on the bus route.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Swanson, 26.

<sup>11</sup> McLaren, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Kenny R. Rose, *Hardin County Tennessee: A Pictorial History* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1994), 52.

<sup>13</sup> McLaren, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

Then there were churches. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was built in 1900 on land donated by Riley Patterson.<sup>16</sup> Land directly behind the building was set aside for the church cemetery. The original church was a square wood frame structure with clapboard siding. The west side allowed access through a double door located at the base of a bell tower which loomed over the surrounding area. Glenda Ricketts remembered the church fondly and commented that “The church is like a beacon in the night, as a symbol of the principles of our small community was founded on so many years ago.”<sup>17</sup> The minister of the church in the late 1920s was Reverend J.A. McIlwain who was succeeded by Reverend O.E. White in 1934.<sup>18</sup> The church and its congregation were witnesses to the construction of the original State Route 15, and one member described the highway as “stretching east and west like a crawling thing, winding its way over the hills and merging into the forested horizon.”<sup>19</sup> The original church stood until being consumed by fire in 1940.

Olive Hill also had three general stores. These stores not only took care of the needs of travelers, but the residents of the community as well given that the other closest store was roughly fifteen miles to the east or west. Likewise, the stores functioned as the center of local information. Travelers brought in the latest news from the towns and cities in the area, shared it with the storekeepers, who in turn passed the latest Olive Hill news along to the travelers. At their leisure, the storekeepers then shared the news of the

---

<sup>16</sup> *Savannah Courier*, December 16, 2010; McLaren, 38.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, December 16, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> McLaren, 38.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, December 16, 2010.

surrounding area with their customers, while learning more about the latest local happenings around Olive Hill. This pattern was the rural community's cycle of information, and in many ways those who operated general stores were the most knowledgeable concerning recent and past events of the community and surrounding area.

The H.O. Smith and Son's store sat in the heart of Olive Hill alongside the highway. Henry Oscar Smith operated the store with his two sons William and Benjamin in the original building until the late 1940s. As traffic increased with the new highway, the Smiths installed three gas pumps there in 1937. The price for regular leaded fuel fluctuated between twenty-one and twenty-three cents a gallon in those days, with "high-test" costing twenty-five cents a gallon. "Blue gas," a heating and lighting gas similar to propane, was only nineteen cents a gallon. Customers could purchase almost everything they needed at the store, including vinegar pumped into quart jars and sold by the gallon. But the new highway stop also existed alongside much older businesses for travelers. To the immediate west was the blacksmith shop.

The T.J. Dickson store stood to the west of the blacksmith shop. The three buildings sat alongside each other forming the small "business district" of Olive Hill. The Dickson store began in the 1930s as a "mom and pop gas station/market selling Sinclair gas."<sup>20</sup> The store was a large masonry framed rectangular structure with two large mulled windows on each side of the centered double entry doors. The building was unique in regards to the other stores due to a large drive-thru port-cochere which sheltered

---

<sup>20</sup> *Savannah Courier*, July 30, 2009.

customers using one of the three gas pumps. The Dickson store continued to operate under the management of the family at the same location until 1996 when it was sold and improved.<sup>21</sup>

Separated from the other two stores, the John F. Bigbie store was located along the original track of the 1925 era State Route 15 between the Smith general store and the old steel bridge. J.B. McLaren pinpointed the location as “just east of the Olive Hill Methodist Church lot,” although this account conflicts due to the fact that it also places the site of the church as “located just east of the John Bigbie store.”<sup>22</sup> The Bigbie store was:

Probably the best stocked store that was operated in Olive Hill. He sold almost any item that the residents of the village needed in the 1930s. I remember that with the advent of automobiles in the area, he installed a gasoline pump. When someone wanted to purchase gas, it was manually pumped, using a lever on the side of the pump that was pushed back and forth, into a graduated glass “jar” and measured. Then a hose, similar to those used today, was used to drain the gas into the automobile tank.<sup>23</sup>

The blacksmith shop, located between the Dickson and Smith stores, was a very important part of the community in the early days. With grist mills, cotton gins, tanneries, and sawmills all operating in Olive Hill at the turn of the century, the ability to fix and make parts for the machinery was often necessary. Wagon wheels were mended or replaced along with horse’s shoes. The shop was a wooden frame square structure with an awning that extended twelve feet covering the front entrance. Two large wooden doors

---

<sup>21</sup> State Of Tennessee, Comptroller of the Treasury, “Real Estate Assessment Data, Hardin County, Tennessee, 2013,” [www.assessment.state.tn.ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036](http://www.assessment.state.tn.ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036), (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> McLaren, 39, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

attached to rails opened when the doors were slid away from each other to the right and left. The shop had a dirt floor, a wood burning stove, and a small forge. Undoubtedly because of the heat of the forge and concerns about fire, there was no ceiling, which exposed the frame of the building to the rafters. The need for a blacksmith waned as many of the industries closed, but the shop would come to life once again in the 1940s (figure 2.2 and appendix C).



Fig. 2.2. Blacksmith Shop in use as a store in the late 1940s. (Courtesy of Ann Smith)

During the 1920s and 1930s the U.S. Post Office located an office in the C.F. Patterson store where it would remain until 1955 (figure 2.3).<sup>24</sup> Patterson served as postmaster from 1923 until 1947.<sup>25</sup> The post office building is a long, narrow, rectangular

---

<sup>24</sup> McLaren., 36.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 37.

wood frame structure similar to a shotgun style house. The front of the building faces the old highway with a wooden covered porch and a false front gable-end entrance.<sup>26</sup> Postal officials moved the office closer to the highway in 1955.



Fig. 2.3. C.F. Patterson Store with State Route 15 in the foreground. (Courtesy of Ann Smith)

With the new concrete highway finished in 1930 the residents of Olive Hill were able to experience the benefits of good roads for only a short time before the effects of the Depression gripped the state. Leland Johnson wrote that “The national economic depression hit Tennessee with a bang, not a whimper” and all eyes were on Governor

---

<sup>26</sup> The Old House Web, “False Front: 1860-1905,” [www.oldhouseweb.com](http://www.oldhouseweb.com), (accessed June 23, 2012).

Henry Horton.<sup>27</sup> In 1929 Horton had gained approval for twenty-five million dollars in bond issues, from which he intended to earmark a large part of the proceeds to be used exclusively in West Tennessee.<sup>28</sup> The bonds did well, accumulating over \$6.6 million in proceeds, of which portions were certainly used to help finish State Route 15/U.S. 64. However, in early November 1930 the banks that held the massive deposits of the highway bond proceeds went into bankruptcy.<sup>29</sup> Due to Horton's connections with the banks that failed he narrowly escaped impeachment, lost the public support that he had enjoyed over the last decade, and did not run for reelection.<sup>30</sup>

Despite Tennessee Highway Commissioner Bob Baker's attempt to issue more bonds for roads in the summer of 1931, the Tennessee General Assembly did not approve any highway funding. With no other alternative, only construction that had previously been funded could continue and the Tennessee State Highway Department laid off upwards of five thousand workers.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the highway department could "not escape" the effects of the Depression and by 1932 "there was ample evidence that the

---

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, 80.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, 82; Jeanette Keith, "Henry Horton," *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=654>, (accessed March 17, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, 82.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 83.

Depression was here by the amount of money spent on the Highway System.”<sup>32</sup> During this period the position of the highway department changed from advancement to “retrenchment.”<sup>33</sup> In this time of economic struggle the department adopted a new philosophy regarding road improvements and construction:

It was necessary to dust off the old principle of highway improvement long recognized by highway engineers as desirable but not so popular with those people who demanded roads when and where they wanted them. This revived principle by which the Department was forced to abide was that, no highway should be improved by the expenditure of public funds in excess of its immediate or in special cases, its prospective earning capacity; that is to say, the economic return to the public in the form of needed transportation facilities is the sole measurement of justification for the degree of improvement. This simply means that before a road can be improved in type the amount of traffic must be large enough to make the cost of maintenance and operation so great that the interest on the investment for improving the road, plus the cost of maintaining it, plus the cost of the entire amount of traffic, is less than the cost of maintaining and operating the traffic on the present type.<sup>34</sup>

The department that had spent over thirty-three million dollars on roads in 1930, in 1932 it had just over ten million dollars to spend.<sup>35</sup> The downturn in road construction proved temporary. In President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, road projects took center stage in a program to help guide the nation’s transportation infrastructure. Historian and preservationist Dr. Carroll Van West asserted that “Building new roads and improving existing routes was a major preoccupation of New Deal agencies in

---

<sup>32</sup> Tennessee State Highway Department, Highway Planning Survey Division, *The History of the Tennessee Highway Department* (Nashville: Tennessee State Highway Department, 1959), 42. Hereafter cited as TSHD.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Tennessee.”<sup>36</sup> In 1935, Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The agency provided the manpower of over 27,000 workers for bridge and road projects throughout the state. The contribution of the WPA and other agencies in Tennessee road-building fostered a noticeable transformation in the state. Public improvements were made while also providing jobs that stimulated the state and local economy during the Depression. Spending almost 38 million dollars devoted to bridges, highways, and farm-to-market roads alone, the New Deal had a profound and lasting impact on transportation in the rural South.<sup>37</sup>

The New Deal also reinvigorated rural communities with new schools. In October of 1919, The Hardin County Board of Education had purchased two acres of land on the south side of the 1929-1930s highway located on the high bluff overlooking Indian Creek.<sup>38</sup> Records suggest that the land sat vacant through the Depression until 1941. The Work Projects Administration started a project in Olive Hill to build a school. Workers built the two-story central-hall structure out of wood and stone. Sources indicate that the stone materials used in the construction of the schools exterior were actually taken from a local quarry.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape: A Guidebook* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 217.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>38</sup> State Of Tennessee, Comptroller of the Treasury, “Real Estate Assessment Data, Hardin County, Tennessee, 2013,” [www.assessment.state.tn.ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=061](http://www.assessment.state.tn.ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=061) (accessed June 20, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> *Savannah Courier*, July 30, 2009.

The school, and its later gym, proved to be one of the oldest historic buildings in the direct proximity of the highway that existed into the twenty-first century. The school witnessed the 1964 era highway construction which cut through the ridge within less than a few hundred yards from its location. After closing in the late 1960s, Ben Holbert purchased the school. During Holbert's ownership the building functioned as the Olive Hill Fitness and Racquet Club and as a center for community activities into the mid-1980s. The building fell into disrepair and was razed in the fall of 2011 (figure 2.4).<sup>40</sup>



Fig. 2.4. Olive Hill School, June 2010. (Courtesy of Author)

The next phase of building at Olive Hill came after World War II and can be generally associated with the postwar boom in automobile travel. The first major project came in 1948, with the building of a new Cumberland Presbyterian church, replacing the

---

<sup>40</sup> Rodney Brewington, "Historic School Locations of Hardin County, Tennessee," *Hardin County Historian* 7 (January-June 2012): 16.

one that burned in 1940.<sup>41</sup> Much like the Olive Hill School, the new church was built with stone from the local area in the same location as the original structure.<sup>42</sup> The new church also retained the shape of its predecessor with four windows on each side of the sanctuary with one on each side of the bell tower's double entry doors. However, the bell tower on the new building was almost literally a shadow of its former self, rising above the roof's ridgeline only a few feet (see appendix G).

The new sanctuary was thirty-three feet wide and roughly forty-four feet long. Two small windows are evidence of a partial cellar or storage room on the east side of the structure directly under the pulpit yet its size and use is unknown. The church is very strongly built with the stonework continuing up into the gables with large stone lintels over each window. The roof was constructed of wood materials and is presently covered with metal sheet roofing although asphalt shingles were most likely applied initially. In the 1980s, a thirty foot wide by forty foot long fellowship hall was added to the west side of the building giving the entire structure an L shape.<sup>43</sup> This addition was framed with wood and has white vinyl siding on the exterior with many single windows spaced evenly on three sides. One entry door allows access from the north side of the addition. The roof on the addition is the same metal sheet roofing that is found on the older structure, which suggests that the metal roof was installed when the addition was built.

The second building was much more closely associated with the roadside culture of State Route 15/U.S. 64. H. O. Smith and Son's store was constructed in 1950 with an

---

<sup>41</sup> *Savannah Courier*, December 16, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

eye toward the traveler (see appendix C). The owners poured a concrete slab and built the exterior walls with concrete block faced with brick for both added strength and a more modern look. When completed the exterior walls were sixteen feet eight inches above the finished floor. Strength was important because the structure was over sixty feet long and thirty-four feet wide and it would not have any interior load bearing walls or support posts. Steel I-beams spanned the width of the building to support the weight of the wood framed roof. In addition to the main rectangular structure, two small square shaped spaces were built on each side of the building, their front facades even with the front of the structure. Facing the building from the highway, the right side was a restroom, with the women's entrance on the front of the building and the men's entrance on the back side. The utility space to the left was the "pump room" where the switches for the gas pumps were located along with an air compressor to fill low tires, and a kerosene tank (figure 2.5).

Although the bathroom and utility spaces could not be accessed from within the building, both connected seamlessly with the front of the main building forming quite an impressive early 1950s façade. Large store-front windows were installed on each side of a recessed front door. Adding the final touch to the front façade, blue glass tiles were attached to the brick in horizontal rows and above the door the tiles were painted yellow to read "H. O. Smith and Sons." The large glass tiles were a robin's egg blue in color and cost \$17.00 each in 1950. The rear of the building also had large frame windows on each side of a centered door. The large front and back windows provided much less expensive natural light in the long building with no side windows. A light above the register near

the front door was usually the only light used in the store, unless it was an unusually dark, rainy, or cloudy day.

In the back left corner of the store the owners installed a walk-in cooler from the Jamison Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. On the wall of the cooler facing the front entrance to the store a small door with a window was installed for easy access to small products without having to enter the cooler. This front wall was six feet wide and was nine feet tall from floor to ceiling. On the long ten foot side wall of the cooler near the back of the store, a large door was installed to access the cooler in order to store or retrieve larger items. The cooler was kept at a constant temperature by a refrigeration unit that was mounted on a platform located on the exterior wall of the store directly behind the cooler.

When the store was completed in 1950 it was a very modern addition to Olive Hill. The construction of the new store had cost the Smiths almost \$40,000 dollars to complete and proved to be worth the expense. H.O. Smith's store sold pants, shirts, undergarments, shoes, hardware, grocery items, and Esso gasoline. The store sold to farmers on credit, and one hundred dollars in profits was seen as a very good day. In those days the weary travelers could stop, use the restroom, and refresh themselves with a Double Cola for a nickel apiece. The store's proximity to the new highway, its eye catching façade, and its variety of products made it a favorite stop for locals and travelers alike. Most importantly, the rural southern hospitality and atmosphere within the store kept them coming back (see appendix A).



Fig. 2.5. H.O. Smith and Son's Store in 1950 alongside U.S. Highway 64. (Courtesy of Ann Smith)

Just two years after the new store opened in 1952, its owner Henry Oscar Smith died. His two sons William Oscar and James Benjamin Smith continued to operate the business. Then in 1955, the two brothers welcomed yet another addition to their store. The U.S. Post Office moved into the back right corner of the store on the opposite side from the walk-in cooler.<sup>44</sup> The brothers built a small, yet adequate space for the post office and it began operation. The wall facing the front of the store that held the thirty post office boxes was twelve feet wide. The side wall was ten feet long, had an entry door

---

<sup>44</sup> McLaren, 36.

and walk-up window, and was even with the length of the cooler. William Oscar Smith took on the additional responsibility as postmaster in 1956 and served there until 1962.<sup>45</sup>

In that year the store changed hands within the Smith family once again. William Oscar Smith died on November 26, 1962 and unexpectedly his brother James Benjamin Smith passed away just days later that same week on November 28, 1962. James Benjamin Smith's two sons, Robert Oscar and James Benjamin Jr., took over the business immediately. Their wives Elizabeth Ann and Betty Lou Smith aided the two brothers in the day-to-day operation of the store. The store, "became a gathering place for the community" and "when the crops were laid by, on rainy days, or in the winter... folks would gather around the big wood stove to play cards, checkers, shoot the bull, or just talk."<sup>46</sup> Due to the Smiths' hard work this rural southern general store would continue to operate when other family-owned businesses closed their doors as chain-owned and operated filling stations and grocery stores replaced the "old general store as the social center of town."<sup>47</sup>

By 1950 State Route 15/U.S. 64 was twenty years old. Maintenance on the concrete highway was limited during the Depression due to lack of funding, resources, and manpower. It was further reduced during World War II for the same reasons. But the demand for more and better roads did not ease due to the post-war boom of the automobile industry. In 1946 for example, "537,210 motor vehicles were registered in

---

<sup>45</sup> *Savannah Courier*, October 4, 1990.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, July 30, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Kaszynski, 71.

Tennessee, 69, 634 more than were registered in 1945, and 19, 303 more than in 1941.”<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, by the mid-1950s the focus had shifted away from two-lane highways toward four-lane divided freeways.

In many rural parts of Tennessee two-lane highways were still deemed sufficient for low traffic areas. Although funding for road maintenance had returned, state routes became of secondary importance when Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. This legislation energized what is known as the “greatest public works project in history” which had “officially existed for more than eight years” when Dwight D. Eisenhower became President in 1953.<sup>49</sup> Building on a strong foundation laid by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, Eisenhower secured the final piece needed to complete the interstate highway puzzle in the form of a “twenty-five billion dollar dedicated Highway Trust Fund.”<sup>50</sup> With up to 90 percent of these highway funds earmarked for the new superhighways, State Route 15/U.S. 64 would have to wait another eight years before the interstate buzz subsided and funding for major improvements could be secured.<sup>51</sup>

The new interstate system had both economic and social costs. Historian Tom Lewis has questioned, “Did the American people in 1956 foresee the price that they

---

<sup>48</sup> TSHD, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Earl Swift, *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 157.

<sup>50</sup> Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 122.

<sup>51</sup> TSHD, 51.

would have to pay for their new mobility?”<sup>52</sup> More importantly, did all Americans really want to pay that price by having to relocate their homes, businesses to new highways? Writer and critic Lewis Mumford made a point to warn the traveling public that there was “the possibility that these wonderful roads might forever change, in less than wonderful ways, the very towns that they were engineered to preserve.”<sup>53</sup> Of course, Mumford was writing in the context of interstates and large cities, yet the principle of his words are just as applicable to small rural communities like Olive Hill as they are to major cities like Memphis and Nashville.

Highway historians, however, have largely ignored the affect new highways have had, and are continuing to have, on rural communities. Much more research is available on the “urban highway problem.”<sup>54</sup> Is a new highway worth disrupting or destroying a century old farming operation? Are small towns and communities not as important due to their rural location? Is a rural family’s livelihood less important than their urban counterparts? Is a rural home used by the same family for decades less significant than a new ribbon of pavement and concrete? These are questions that the residents of Olive Hill would ponder and even seek answers for in the mid-1960s and again in the twenty-first century. From the viewpoint of state highway department engineers, in rural areas the “existing development out there was of such low density that few homes and

---

<sup>52</sup> Lewis, 122.

<sup>53</sup> Swift, 212.

<sup>54</sup> For further reference of this argument, see Gutfreund, *Twentieth Century Sprawl*; Lewis, *Divided Highways*; Rae, *The Road and Car in American Life*; Rose, *Interstate*; Swift, *The Big Roads*.

businesses stood in the way” of new construction.<sup>55</sup> The “few” homes and businesses may not have meant more to the engineers than an obstacle to be removed, but volumes could be written about what they meant to those who lived and worked in them.

There is no doubt that the men and women of the Tennessee Highway Department and the county departments that work alongside them are some of the best at what they do. However, engineers in the 1950s and 1960s, regardless of their technical expertise, were missing a very important skill that was not taught in the classroom. In his book *Divided Highways* Tom Lewis asserted that “engineers had little understanding of, nor did they care about, socioeconomic and environmental considerations that should also be factors in the decision of where to place a highway.”<sup>56</sup> Lewis went on to say that road engineers could work out any problem thrown at them to build a designed highway upon the landscape, but they had a hard time understanding and fixing “the very real problem of lives disrupted, neighborhoods destroyed, and livelihoods lost.”<sup>57</sup>

But the shortcomings of public interaction and community participation on the part of engineers are not all to blame for there were other forces at work. The crumbling roads of the 1920s and 1930s were dangerous to drive on by the 1960s. Motor vehicles built in the early days were relatively light and slow and by the mid-1960 they were heavy and fast. The old roads were a narrow twenty feet across and were shared by cars and trucks that had grown ever wider and longer. Most importantly, the old roads tended to follow the existing landscape forming many sharp turns often called “dead man’s

---

<sup>55</sup> Swift, 216.

<sup>56</sup> Lewis, 134.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

curves.”<sup>58</sup> Leland Johnson provided a perfect example when he wrote “Motorists on the old two-lane roads found themselves stuck in a parade behind each truck because passing against oncoming traffic on winding roads was extremely hazardous.”<sup>59</sup> The section of State Route 15/U.S. 64 passing through Olive Hill was no different than described above. With dangerous curves on the east and west sides of the community, the highway needed realignment for safety reasons.

In the 1960s, funding was in place for the rebuilding and realignment of State Route 15/U.S. 64. Approaching Olive Hill from the west, the proposed route of the new highway strayed north from its original course just below Coy Hill roughly a half of a mile before making the ascent into the community. This of course meant that a large section of the old concrete highway was abandoned, although it still exists as of this writing (figure 2.6). However, a current construction project will soon take this abandoned section. This lateral shift to the north before entering the community put the new highway on track to shift to the south heading due east as it passed through.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Kaszynski, 99.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, 123.

<sup>60</sup> McLaren, 35.



Fig. 2.6. Abandoned section of old U.S. Highway 64 west of Olive Hill. (Photograph by author)

While the older highway had passed directly in front of the Olive Hill stores and curved around the side of the hill, the lateral shift to the south placed the highway about one hundred yards south of its original location. The section of the old road running northeast from the stores was abandoned as well and with it the dangerous curve around the hill leading down to the Arch Bridge. The new design called for a cut to be blasted through the rocky hillside to lessen the grade down to the crossing at Indian Creek. The new road was widened to three lanes as it passed through of the community to allow through traffic to continue while giving local traffic room to merge. The new track of the highway and the width of the three lane section prompted the relocation or demolition of multiple homes. This destruction was the first, but not the last time Olive Hill residents would have to face the challenges of highway construction.

From the time of the stage road to the 1930s, homes and businesses were a major determinant in the route of the highway, which wove its way around the built environment and natural terrain features. However, by the 1960s the Tennessee Highway Department took a different approach. The Tennessee Highway Research Program had been formed a decade earlier in conjunction with the University of Tennessee to conduct research for “the purpose of studying problems concerning design, materials and the construction of highways.”<sup>61</sup> The department asserted that the “citizens of Tennessee should pledge their support as the Department constructs and dedicates the highway transportation facilities to a more efficient, safe and economical use.”<sup>62</sup> As Earl Swift noted, the Tennessee Highway Department sought to make “The crooked straight” and the “rough places plain.”<sup>63</sup>

In the context of Olive Hill this new route could not happen without the sacrifice of homes and land. Entering the community from the west the track of the new highway bypassed the Ray Franks property built in 1957 and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to the south and the Dickson 10-19-2 Motor Court, the Dickson store, the blacksmith shop, and the Smith Store to the north. However the new track ran directly into the homes of Joe Dickson, Tone Dickson, and Nena Hailey.<sup>64</sup> To clear the right-of-way officials razed the Joe Dickson house and also leveled the Hailey house. Tone Dickson’s house

---

<sup>61</sup> TSHD, 49.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>63</sup> Swift, 214.

<sup>64</sup> McLaren, 35.

was moved back between the two highways, and sits today between the Hardin County Convenience Center and the Olive Hill Baptist Church.<sup>65</sup> The home, bought by Jimmy Dean Smith, was recently sold and now sits within the right-of-way of a current construction project (see appendix F).

Growing up in Olive Hill, Frankie Deford Welch commented in her later years that, after the construction was complete, “In passing along the highway now to Olive Hill, I would never know that it was the same road, creek, or anything that I knew.”<sup>66</sup> Yet Dr. J.B. McLaren reassuringly wrote that “memories of the old meandering artery still persist among the old residents and are still prevalent among the hills and hollows.”<sup>67</sup> Even in Olive Hill, “with memories of the old road still lingering” in the years after the work was completed, the residents along the highway “began to fantasize about the day that Highway 64 would be a four-lane thoroughfare.”<sup>68</sup>

In 1972 the Tennessee Highway Department was renamed the Tennessee Department of Transportation, which broadened the responsibilities of the department to other types of transportation. Yet regardless of the new classification and responsibility, federal funding for roads decreased in the 1970s. Leland Johnson asserted that “During the Johnson, Nixon, and Ford administrations, the federal government cut back and impounded funding for highway construction to pay for the war in Viet Nam, to finance

---

<sup>65</sup> McLaren, 35.

<sup>66</sup> Perry, 26.

<sup>67</sup> McLaren, 35.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

skyrocketing social welfare programs, and to curb inflation.”<sup>69</sup> The impoundment of highway funding and economic recession once again slowed the progress of highway construction.

With the new road Olive Hill continued to grow as a community both residentially and economically in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The largest economic boost to the community was the Ben Holbert’s establishment of the Olive Hill Lumber Company in 1977. The company specializes in the manufacture of lumber, operates a planing mill, purchases logs and lumber, and also oversees an industrial cut-up operation.<sup>70</sup> Growing to employ thirty workers, the lumber company was a large boost to Olive Hill’s economy. Many of the workers would spend part of their wages buying drinks, lunches, and gas in the local stores, and the store owners showed their gratitude by cashing payroll checks. Holbert’s company is still in operation today after 36 years in Olive Hill.

Although the Olive Hill School that was built by the WPA had been closed in the late 1960s, the road branching off the highway to access it was appropriately named School House Lane. In 1963 Harbour Alexander built two single family homes on his land along the right side of the lane when approaching the school from the west (figure 2.7). Both homes had three bedrooms with red brick and white vinyl exteriors. Initially, Bodie Alexander lived in the house closest to the school and it was later purchased by Robert Oscar Smith in 2007. Mondel Alexander lived in the other house which was

---

<sup>69</sup> Johnson, 187.

<sup>70</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November 5, 1987.

purchased by Elizabeth Holbert in 1996. Directly across the lane from these two homes the Melson family had a small home on a slice of land between the lane and the highway.



Fig. 2.7. The Alexander homes in the right foreground alongside School House Lane with the Olive Hill School in the left background. (Photograph by author)

In 1982, William Robert Smith purchased a lot to the west of the houses overlooking the lane where it intersected with the highway. Smith began construction of his house, which he built himself by hand, and finished in 1984. The house was a comfortable three-bedroom single-family home on a block foundation that was rock panned. White vinyl siding covered the exterior with green asphalt shingles on the roof. A carport was built into the back of the house along with a spacious shop that matched the house exterior. Smith had room to plant a garden beside his shop and Bradford pear trees along both sides of his gravel driveway (See Appendix I). In that same year,

between Smith's house and the Presbyterian Church further to the west, the Trustees for the Olive Hill Fire Department built a fire hall. It was a prime location for the hall that was centrally located in the community and excellent access to the highway. The hall was wood framed with an asphalt shingle roof, had board and batten siding with a roll up door in front and back, and was bluish-gray color in color (see appendix H).

The homes, churches, schools, businesses, and county owned structures that have been described are a part of the nucleus of Olive Hill. Earlier in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the north and east side of the community near the Deford house served as this core. But with the coming of the highways in 1928-1930 a trend began and by 1964 it was plainly evident that the built environment in the mid and late twentieth century had gravitated toward the highway forming a new center of activity. However, the new plans for the highway that materialized in the mid-1980s were destined, to use the words historian Robert H. Wiebe, to make Olive Hill a community "without a core."<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), vii.

### CHAPTER III: REMEMBERING THE COMMUNITY

U.S. Highway 64 stretches across the United States from the eastern corner of Arizona to the east coast of North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The highway falls just short of crossing the entire country at 2,326 miles of blacktop, with 394 miles of that length in Tennessee, and 23.6 miles in Hardin County.<sup>2</sup> The Olive Hill community's frontage on both sides of the highway is scarcely one mile when combined. Yet the amount of frontage along the highway should not decide the importance or value of a place. Instead, that value is determined by the experiences and memories of those who lived and worked there while becoming part of its history themselves. Although many types of values can be given by a passerby looking from the outside in, there is no measurable value for something that is just as priceless in reality as in memory.

The new U.S. Highway 64 of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries would come in sections, from opposite ends of the state toward the center. The improvement of the corridor began as an initiative during Governor Lamar Alexander's administration in 1980.<sup>3</sup> Just two years earlier in 1978, Alexander had walked 1,022 miles across the state of Tennessee during his campaign and undoubtedly saw the condition of the state's highways firsthand. One day around noon Alexander appeared

---

<sup>1</sup> Eric Stuve, "U.S. Highway 64 Review," <http://www.okhighways.com/us64.html>, (accessed December 15, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> "U.S. Highways in Tennessee," <http://us-highways.com/tn-us.htm> (accessed January 8, 2013); Tennessee Department of Transportation, "General Highway Map of Hardin County, Tennessee," <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/Maps/county/co36.pdf>, (accessed January 8, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> TDOT, "U.S. 64/State Route 15: Brief History," <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/US64/>, (accessed January 10, 2013).

along Highway 64 and walked right into H.O. Smith and Son's store. The residents of Olive Hill had not experienced such excitement since it was rumored that "Jessie James had crossed Indian Creek after he robbed a bank in Corinth, Mississippi."<sup>4</sup> Alexander talked with and listened to the Smiths and other store customers while he ate a pack of peanut butter crackers. Before moving on Alexander used the bathroom at Jim Smith's home.

The vision of making U.S. Highway 64 a four-lane divided highway became clearly focused in 1986 when highway legislation was passed that accounted for the initial funding needs for the proposed improvements.<sup>5</sup> The state used a portion of this funding to conduct studies which "showed a need to provide a four-lane route across southern Tennessee that would stimulate growth and economic development opportunities."<sup>6</sup> To that end, engineers divided the project into 57 individual sections that spanned 266 of the of the highway's 394 total miles beginning at the Mississippi River and ending at the intersection of Interstate 24 in East Tennessee.<sup>7</sup>

In 1986, the average daily traffic (ADT) traveling on the two-lane across station 000031 located immediately west of Indian Creek was 1,400 vehicles per day, peaked at

---

<sup>4</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November 5, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> TDOT, "U.S. 64/State Route 15: Brief History," <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/US64/>, (accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

2,897 in 1998, and fell to 1,915 in 2010.<sup>8</sup> Did this low traffic volume justify a four-lane divided highway? In such a rural area, the majority of this traffic was local, although “Olive Hill was always a favorite gathering place for city folks, who were lured there by the natural beauty of the place, the steep hills, the rock formations, and the pretty waters.”<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, in 1987 the Tennessee General Assembly passed a bill “increasing the state tax on gasoline and diesel fuel to finance various highway projects throughout the state under the 1986 Better Roads Program.”<sup>10</sup> During the next administration, Governor Ned McWherter “pushed for paving four-lane highways from every county seat to the nearest major interstate through conservative funding mechanisms” on a “pay-as-you go” program that has been popular since Governor Austin Peay’s 1923-1927 administration.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of traffic volume in rural areas, at least where improvements on arterial routes were concerned, four-lane divided highways had become the dogma of future transportation. In 2006 alone, Tennessee received \$4,455,000 in Special Federal Aid Funding for the State Route 15/U.S. 64 Improvement Project under Section 112 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of

---

<sup>8</sup> TDOT, “Traffic History,” [www.tdot.state.tn.us/TrafficHistory/](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/TrafficHistory/), (accessed January 11, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November 5, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> TDOT, “Project: State Route 840 North,” [http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut\\_projects/10-31-2003sr840n.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut_projects/10-31-2003sr840n.pdf), (accessed January 9, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, “Moving Forward, Public Transportation in Tennessee, Part 1: Land Use and Transportation Planning,” [http://www.state.tn.us/tacir/PDF\\_FILES/Other\\_Issues/MovingForward.pdf](http://www.state.tn.us/tacir/PDF_FILES/Other_Issues/MovingForward.pdf), (accessed January 10, 2013); Johnson, 41.

Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act of 2006.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, TDOT's County Seat Connector Program, "created after the passage of TCA 54-5-102...Part B" added muscle to the project. It stated that "it is the intent of the general assembly that all county seats should be connected by a four-lane highway to the nearest interstate highway by the shortest route available or an existing state or federal highway."<sup>13</sup> As of May 2007, TDOT listed all of the county seats along State Route 15/U.S. 64 as being in "Some Phase of Development Underway or Funded" or "Connected or Funded for Connection."<sup>14</sup>

Since that time, highway construction has been completed in the western part of Tennessee from Memphis in Shelby County to Somerville in Fayette County. This excludes the current Somerville State Route 460/U.S. 64 Beltway Project, which began in 2008. The remaining route from Somerville to Savannah, which passes through Hardeman, McNairy, and western Hardin County, is complete except for the Bolivar By-pass in Hardeman County. From the east, construction had been completed in Franklin, Lincoln, Giles, and Lawrence counties with only the Lawrenceburg By-pass remaining. The majority of the Wayne County sections have also recently been completed and

---

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Special Federal Aid Funding," <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/pl109115/060322att.cfm>, (accessed January 12, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> TDOT, "Additional Projects: County Seat Connector Program," <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/roadprojects/2007/countyseat.htm>, (accessed January 13, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

construction is underway on the last section from Mill Springs Branch to the Waynesboro By-pass.<sup>15</sup>

Hardin County was divided into six project sections and as of this writing all but one are complete (figure 3.1). In the east, the small section from the Wayne County line to the west of Indian Creek is complete, as are the four sections to the east of Savannah to the point where Firetower Road intersects State Route 15/U.S. 64. The last project section currently remaining to be finished, Section 8, from Firetower Road to the West of Bigbee Branch, includes Olive Hill.<sup>16</sup>

The preliminary activities for this section began in the summer of 1998 with an environmental corridor hearing that was followed by a design hearing in the fall of 2010. The environmental document was finalized in the summer of 2002 and two years later in November of 2004 a public meeting was held in Savannah. In the years that followed, TDOT worked to finalize and distribute the right-of-way plans for the section. Currently, TDOT surveyors are at work on the section and the completion of property appraisals and acquisitions are scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2013. The last step before construction begins, awarding the project's contract, is also scheduled for the spring of 2013.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> TDOT, "U.S. 64/State Route 15: Project Timeline," <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/US64/counties.htm>, (accessed January 13, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

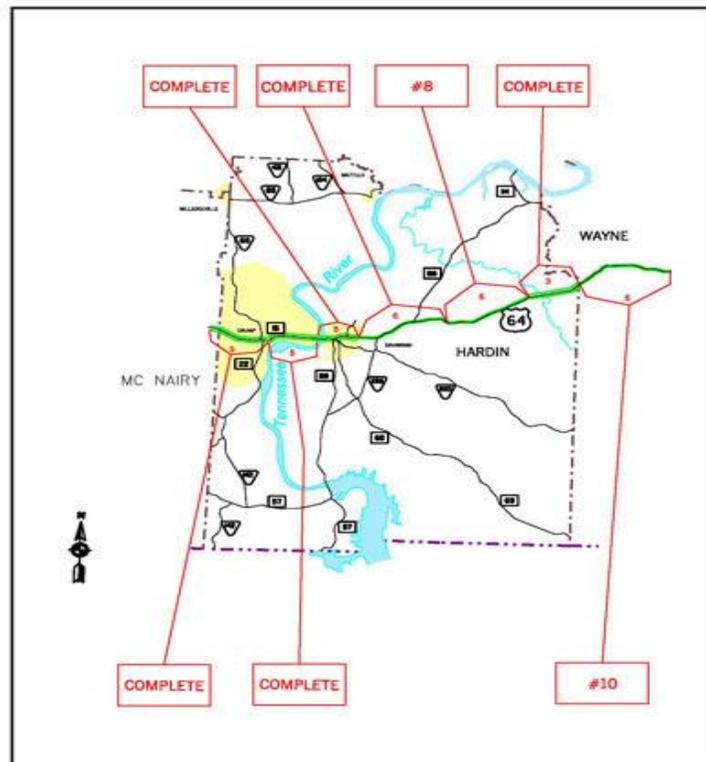


Fig. 3.1. Hardin County Project Sections. (Map courtesy of TDOT, Nashville, Tennessee.)

Local historians have commented that Hardin County residents are anxiously awaiting the completion of the highway and have asked “What fortunes will this improvement in travel mean to the sleepy, serene little village of Olive Hill?”<sup>18</sup> Yet still others have asked “How often does the death of one place bring life to another?”<sup>19</sup> The important question for Olive Hill’s future is how does one remember a place that ceases to exist, that has its landmarks and reference points removed from the built and the natural environment, and relocates the people that grew up knowing that place and its

<sup>18</sup> McLaren, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Perry, 16.

history? The goal of this research has been to provide a contextual framework to answer these three questions.

It is crucial that this process starts with a realization of what will be lost. In total, fourteen structures along the proposed right-of-way are scheduled to be razed or moved. When the Olive Hill section of this project begins in the spring of 2013, it will transform the modern two-lane route into a four-lane divided highway with an interior median and a very large right-of-way. In reality, the construction of the new route will effectively cause the destruction of so much of the community that it will no longer exist. In the past, “travelers heading for Nashville or Memphis probably slowed down when they reached the small hamlet, remarked about its quaintness and beauty, then headed on down the fast lane for the bright lights of the cities.”<sup>20</sup> In the future, the majority of what made Olive Hill a small, yet quaint community will be absent from the landscape.

Likewise, travelers will have no reason to observe, let alone stop, or for that matter have a place to stop, as they speed through the community at sixty to seventy miles an hour. The right-of-way will become a designed landscape of “sameness” filled with highway cuts, sloping grades of rip-rap, concrete drainages, road signage, sod, and asphalt. The character and façade of the rural southern community that once defined Olive Hill as a place will itself be a piece of history. When writing a story for the *Savannah Courier* in 1987, Roberta Cude commented on how progress had changed the community over the years but stated “they’ve still got the creek and the rocky hills and

---

<sup>20</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November 5, 1987.

the churches and stores...Olive Hill is still one of the prettiest places in the county, a quiet little refuge from the fast paced life of the cities.”<sup>21</sup>

It is tellingly ironic that the early roads were built purposefully to connect farmers and other rural citizens with larger cities in order to provide a respite from monotony while simultaneously curbing rural migration to cities.<sup>22</sup> Now the four-lane highways, a fixture of those major cities, have reached the countryside only to force residents to move to more urban areas. Unfortunately, under Tennessee’s eminent domain laws, there are only two choices in the matter for residents and property owners. The first is to make a settlement on the property’s value determined by an appraisal conducted by the state, or secondly, dispute the settlement and have the property condemned and taken before reaching terms on a final settlement.<sup>23</sup> In the context of Olive Hill, regardless of which option was chosen by the property owner, the majority of settlements equaled relocation due to extensive right-of way acquisitions.

Nevertheless, Cude’s descriptions of Olive Hill will remain accurate in only one sense after the construction is complete. Indian Creek and the rocky hills will remain visible; however the businesses, churches, and homes will not fare quite as well. The remaining residents in Olive Hill will have to decide whether or not the new right-of-way is as aesthetically pleasing as the place they once knew. In 2009, Beverly Southerland

---

<sup>21</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November 5, 1987.

<sup>22</sup> Preston, 16.

<sup>23</sup>Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Regulations, “Memorandum to Commission Members: Eminent Domain Legislation,” [http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF\\_FILES/Agenda/Nov12/Tab7\\_EminentDomain.pdf](http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF_FILES/Agenda/Nov12/Tab7_EminentDomain.pdf), (accessed January 14, 2013); Lewis, 61.

wrote of Olive Hill's appealing qualities stating that "There it is easy to catch a glimpse of the tranquility of yesteryear, before life in general escalated to breakneck speeds" and concluded, "Today Olive Hill is a wonderful mix of the old and the new, the antique and the modern, the unique and the ordinary, and the living is good in Olive Hill."<sup>24</sup> The ability of residents and visitors alike to feel an "aura of days gone by" in the community is a testament, however short-lived it may be, to its meaning and worth.<sup>25</sup>

When Governor Lamar Alexander left the H.O. Smith and Son's store to continue his "Walk Across the State" there was no way that he could have realized that thirty-five years later it would be scheduled for demolition. In the fall of 2010 a public meeting was held in Savannah that unveiled TDOT's right-of-way maps for the Olive Hill project section. In May 2011, Robert Oscar Smith received a formal offer from TDOT to acquire the property including the store, blacksmith shop, and the Smith home next to the store. Smith refused the offer but accepted funding to move the family's possessions from the three buildings. Smith became ill shortly thereafter and passed away on September 21, 2011 without having reached a settlement on the property. Smith's wife Elizabeth, daughter Delia Ann, and son William Robert continued to operate the store in his absence until December 31, 2011 when the store officially closed its doors after eighty-four years of service to Olive Hill and the surrounding area.

The closing of the Smith store forced the U.S. Post Office to close its doors as well. After being given notice of the closure the office closed just before the store on Wednesday, December 28, 2011. The impact was immediate due to the fact that the

---

<sup>24</sup> *Savannah Courier*, July 30, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

office, which serves 290 customers in Olive Hill, was moved to Clifton, Tennessee.<sup>26</sup> The postal service had been located in the Smith store since 1955 and had physically operated in the Olive Hill area for 141 straight years when it closed in late 2011 (figure 3.2).<sup>27</sup>

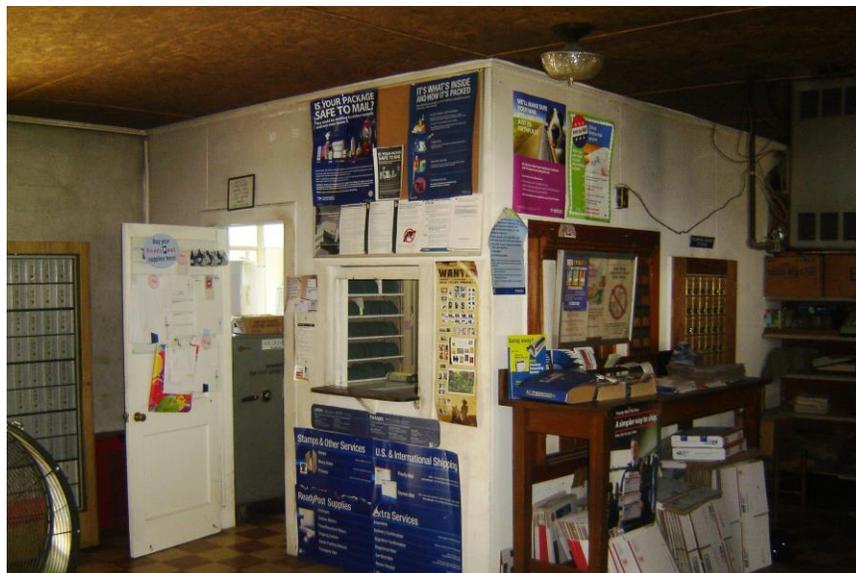


Fig. 3.2. U.S. Post Office in H.O. Smith and Son's store, June 2010. (Courtesy of Author).

Demolition of the old T.J. Dickson Store to the west of the Smith property has already begun. Tennessee property data shows that the present structure was built in 1950.<sup>28</sup> When Dickson passed away in August 1981, his wife Lura Dickson continued to

---

<sup>26</sup> Emily Cassulo, WBBJTV, West Tennessee's News Channel, "Olive Hill Post Office Closed," <http://www.wbbjtv.com/news/local/Olive-Hill-Post-Office-Closed-136346163.html>, (accessed January 15, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> McLaren, 36-37.

<sup>28</sup> State of Tennessee, "Property Data, Parcel Detail," <http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036>, (accessed January 15, 2013).

operate the store until her death in 1989. Roberta Cude described Lura as an “attractive woman, always impeccably dressed” and added, “She enjoys the camaraderie the store offers, and especially enjoys associating with young people.”<sup>29</sup> In 1996 Rita and Larry Sipes bought the 1950s era Dickson Store and the 10-19-2 Motor Court property and began improvements.<sup>30</sup> A 1997 *Savannah Courier* article claimed that:

Once again, travelers will have a chance to stay overnight in Olive Hill. Rita and Larry Sipes bought the motel and Dickson’s Store and are currently remodeling the motel. They run a canoe rental business, which thrives almost all year long. Their businesses are called the Village Store and Village Motel.<sup>31</sup>

Mark Franks purchased the store and motel in 2008 and also made substantial improvement to both properties. He renamed the Village Store as the “Olive Hill Store” and added new paint, windows, doors, vinyl siding and trim, an architectural asphalt shingle roof, and new signage. The motel, which had been heavily renovated by the previous owners, was comprised of three structures. The largest structure, the main motel building, was comprised of four rooms and was razed in 2011. Two small motor cabins stood to the west of the main building and closest one was torn down with the motel. The second cabin was renovated and remained as a storage building for the Olive Hill Store. In 2012 owners sold both properties to the State of Tennessee and the Olive Hill Store’s final day of business was July 17, 2012 (see appendices D and E).

---

<sup>29</sup> *Savannah Courier*, November, 5 1987.

<sup>30</sup> State of Tennessee, “Property Data, Parcel Detail,” <http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036>, (accessed January 15, 2013; Perry, 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Savannah Courier*, September 4, 1997.

In August 1982 Jimmy Dean Smith purchased the Tone Dickson home.<sup>32</sup> The house today sits between the 1929 highway to the north and the 1964 era highway to the south. To the west of the property is a county waste collection site and to the east is the Olive Hill Baptist Church, which will not be affected by the project. Jimmy Dean Smith improved the property and sold the land and house to the State of Tennessee in October 2011 and moved with his family to Savannah.<sup>33</sup> Due to its location in the direct path of the new highway, the house will most likely be razed or moved for a second time when construction begins in 2013.

On the south side of the highway along the proposed right-of-way new construction will impact five buildings: the Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Hardin County Fire Department District Nine fire hall, William Robert Smith's home and shop, and Elizabeth Holbert's home. The present Presbyterian Church, built in 1948, closed its doors in 2009 after serving the residents of the Olive Hill community for 61 years. Yet, when combined with the service of the original structure built in 1900, the church has been a landmark of the community for 113 years as of this writing.<sup>34</sup> Church members have already taken the bell from its tower in preparation for the structure's demolition. In a 2010 article on the church, Linda Folkerts expressed the feelings of many in the Olive Hill community towards the impending construction when she wrote

---

<sup>32</sup> State of Tennessee, "Property Data, Parcel Detail," <http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?G=Y&C=036>, (accessed January 15, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.; *Savannah Courier*, December 16, 2010.

“Sitting in one of the local stores here still brings a surreal notion of a tranquility of yesteryear, while just a mile or so to either side of Olive Hill, the four-laned highway is nearing completion....One wonders how the road expansion will affect, not only the church congregation, but the Olive Hill Community?”<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately at the present that question has been answered, as the congregation closed the doors and now meets for services elsewhere. Folkert quoted a passage from church member Catherine Wall’s writing about Olive Hill while attending Vanderbilt University in 1925. It is truly amazing how after so many years Wall’s writing continues to capture the sentiment and condition of the community:

Like an aging lady rocking peacefully before the window, Olive Hill sits placidly on the periphery of the passing parade of humanity, raising a friendly hand in greeting. One wonders how long it, too, will live, and those who love it grieve to see it go. Or perhaps there will always be an Olive Hill. At least, it will live on and on in the hearts of those who call it home.<sup>36</sup>

The Olive Hill fire hall is much closer to the proposed highway construction than the church, and is also slated for demolition. The effects from losing this structure are minimal, when compared to losing the church which has been a landmark in the community for generations of Hardin County’s residents and visitors. A new metal building was constructed for the Olive Hill Fire Department on a lot just behind the site of the 1940s era Olive Hill School. This new structure makes the older building obsolete and all of the contents have long been moved from the old to the new. However, the fire

---

<sup>35</sup> *Savannah Courier*, December 16, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

hall is a part of the familiar built environment that residents of Olive Hill will not soon forget.

William Robert Smith's home is also a memorable part of the community due to its location on a little rise facing the highway to the west. TDOT officials approached Smith with a settlement that offered much less than what it would cost him to move and buy a house elsewhere. With little faith in the TDOT official's ability to provide a better settlement, Smith found a new home in Savannah and soon moved despite his disappointment with TDOT. However, as of this writing Smith has not taken a settlement on his property. The proposed right-of-way bisects Smith's home, which is slated to be razed or moved along with its detached garage. It is a shame to see citizens work so hard for something only to have it taken away without the promise of comparable funding to replace what was being taken from them.

The project also impacts the Elizabeth Holbert home and the Joda Melson home. Holbert's home is located just east of William Robert Smith's along School House Lane. The TDOT right-of-way cuts right through the front of the Holbert's house. To that end, Holbert decided to hire a house-moving company to move her house back from the right-of-way. Currently, the process is still underway with the house raised from its foundation and placed on support beams for the short move to a new foundation. Similarly, the Joda Melson property is located across the lane from Holbert's. There are two structures present on the Melson property. A small home is located in the center with a small outbuilding of some type behind. The property sits in the direct line of the proposed east bound lane and will undoubtedly be moved or razed in the near future.

Former Tennessee Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely counted among his achievements that TDOT would give “increased attention to reserving the historic, scenic and cultural assets of a community where a highway is built, from the very beginning, in order to achieve excellence in design and maintain harmony in that community.”<sup>37</sup> Commissioner Nicely planned to accomplish this through a process devised in the mid-2000s by TDOT officials. The process, named “Context Sensitive Design,” is an “engineering plan that takes thinking ‘beyond the pavement’ to put a greater emphasis on preserving the historic, scenic and cultural assets of a community. The goal is to involve all stakeholders in the planning process to achieve excellence in design and help maintain harmony in a community. Nicely remarked, “We are working intently at TDOT to improve our communications with the public on all of our projects statewide, to ensure that the end result best fits the needs of those who use or are affected by our roadways.”<sup>38</sup>

The new approach obviously came too late for Olive Hill. The current TDOT plans do not preserve the historic cultural landscape along the frontage in Olive Hill. The planned right-of-way does not protect a scenic view. Most importantly, losing its core will not only change the cultural aspects of the community but bring about the end of an era in the community’s history. As Tom Lewis has observed, “the highways affect the

---

<sup>37</sup> Associated Press, “A Hotbed of Emotion,” <http://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/Commish-Cancels-Modifies-More-Than-1B-in-TN-Road-Jobs/3913/>, (accessed January 16, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> TDOT, “Project Review, U.S. 321 Gatlinburg,” [http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut\\_projects/10-22-2003gatlinburg.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut_projects/10-22-2003gatlinburg.pdf), (accessed January 16, 2013).

lives and businesses of thousands, the natural environment, the architecture and the landscape, as well as the social fabric of all the neighborhoods they cross.”<sup>39</sup> In Olive Hill, Lewis’s assertion will soon be put into motion and will become a reality. Using Olive Hill as a case study example, it is obvious what the end result will be for this rural southern community and it is sad. Evidently, the current TDOT administration is no better at communicating with those in the path of highway renovations than they are at preserving the history, scenery, and cultural identity of a place with such a rich background.

However progressive the new highways might seem, and while the residents are getting a safer, wider, smoother, faster, and straighter highway, the experience of Olive Hill raises questions about the costs of contemporary transportation improvements for small rural communities. Tom Lewis has argued that yes, “It was ‘one of the unfortunate, but unavoidable consequences of a modern highway program in a progressive nation’ to displace a ‘small percentage of the population for the common good.’”<sup>40</sup> This improvement in travel however, means the end of the sleepy, serene little village of Olive Hill.<sup>41</sup> Will its death bring life to another? In the context of Olive Hill, it is truly unclear at this point if demolishing part of the “old” community will foster a modern addition to grow within the footprint of the old. Regardless of what happens, the community will never be the same Olive Hill that many residents grew to love and remember. Sadly, that

---

<sup>39</sup> Lewis, 191-192.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>41</sup> McLaren, 35.

is the fortune that Olive Hill has been dealt, and it is now the responsibility of those who know the history of Olive Hill to make sure that its memory never fades away like the buildings upon its landscape. The friendly and generous residents of Olive Hill will meet this challenge as they have all of the others that have shaped and changed their community in the past.

But how will the residents of Olive Hill remember the portion of their community that ceases to exist? How will they remember its landmarks and reference points that have been removed from the built and the natural environment? Will the families that were forced to relocate remember to pass on the history of that place and its people to others? An argument could be made that they will remember, and share that history each in their own way. However, a more convincing argument can be made that the residents of Olive Hill will never forget losing their homes, churches, businesses and livelihoods, everything that made the small rural community great, just for a new highway. Olive Hill residents have experienced firsthand that “The only thing that lasts longer than a highway battle is the bitterness of the individuals caught in the struggle. Usually they take that to the grave.”<sup>42</sup> Many residents in Olive Hill already have, and others will continue to do so for decades.

---

<sup>42</sup> Lewis, 192.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

#### Newspapers

*Savannah Courier*, Savannah, TN, 1886-2010.

#### Government Documents

State of Tennessee, Comptroller of the Treasury. "Tennessee Property Data, Parcel Detail." <http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036> (accessed January 15, 2013).

State of Tennessee, Comptroller of the Treasury. "Real Estate Assessment Data, Hardin County, Tennessee, 2013." [www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036](http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ParcelDetailIMPACT.asp?C=036) (accessed May 25, 2012).

Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. "Memorandum to Commission Members: Eminent Domain Legislation." [http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF\\_FILES/Agenda/Nov12/Tab7\\_EminentDomain.pdf](http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF_FILES/Agenda/Nov12/Tab7_EminentDomain.pdf) (accessed January 14, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Moving Forward, Public Transportation in Tennessee, Part 1: Land Use and Transportation Planning." [http://www.state.tn.us/tacir/PDF\\_FILES/Other\\_Issues/MovingForward.pdf](http://www.state.tn.us/tacir/PDF_FILES/Other_Issues/MovingForward.pdf) (accessed January 10, 2013).

Tennessee Department of Transportation. "Additional Projects: County Seat Connector Program." <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/roadprojects/2007/countyseat.htm> (accessed January 13, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_. "General Highway Map of Hardin County, Tennessee." <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/Maps/county/co36.pdf> (accessed January 8, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Project Review: U.S. 321 Gatlinburg." [http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut\\_projects/10-22-2003gatlinburg.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut_projects/10-22-2003gatlinburg.pdf) (accessed January 16, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Project: State Route 840 North." [http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut\\_projects/10-31-2003sr840n.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2003/ut_projects/10-31-2003sr840n.pdf) (accessed January 9, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_ “Traffic History.” <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/TrafficHistory/> (accessed January 11, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_ “U.S. 64/State Route 15: Brief History.” <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/US64/> (accessed January 10, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_ “U.S. 64/State Route 15: Project Timeline.” <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/US64/counties.htm> (accessed January 13, 2013).

Tennessee State Planning Office. *Transportation Plan: Savannah, Tennessee*. Nashville: The Office, 1976.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. “Special Federal Aid Funding.” <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/pl109115/060322att.cfm> (accessed January 12, 2013).

## Secondary Sources

### Periodicals

Brewington, Rodney. “Historic School Locations of Hardin County, Tennessee.” *Hardin County Historian* 7 (January-June 2012): 14-16.

Harbert, P. M. “Early History of Hardin County.” *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 1 (1947): 38-67.

McLaren, James B. “The History of Olive Hill, Tennessee.” *Hardin County Historian* 6 (July-December 2010): 23-66.

Perry, Herbert. “Olive Hill Community: Introduction to History of Olive Hill.” *Hardin County Historian* 6 (July-December 2010): 1-16.

### Books

Brazelton, B. G. *A History of Hardin County, Tennessee*. Nashville: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House, 1885.

Carver, Martha. *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*. Nashville: Ambrose Printing Company, 2008.

Flink, James J. *The Car Culture*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1975.

- Goodspeed, Westin, ed. *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present: Together with an Historical and a Biographical sketch of Fayette and Hardeman Counties, Besides a Valuable Fund of Notes, Original Observations, Reminiscences, etc.* Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1979 - (1887).
- Gutfreund, Owen D. *Twentieth Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Hanna, James H. *Geographical Research Maps of Hardin County, Tennessee.* Savannah, TN: Rapid Print, 1991.
- Johnson, Leland R. *Memphis to Bristol: A Half Century of Highway Construction, A History of the Tennessee Road Builders Association, 1928-1978.* Nashville: Tennessee Road Builders Association, 1978.
- Kaszynski, William. *The American Highway: The History and Culture of Roads in the United States.* New York: McFarland and Company Publishing, 2000.
- Labatut, Jean and Wheaton Lane. eds. *Highways in Our National Life: A Symposium.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.
- Lewis, Tom. *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life.* New York: Penguin, 1997.
- McBride, Robert M. and Owen N. Meredith. eds. *Eastin Morris' Tennessee Gazetteer of 1834 and Matthew Rhea's Map of the State of Tennessee 1832.* Nashville: Gazetteer Press, 1971.
- Pika, Joseph A. and John A. Maltese. *The Politics of the Presidency, Sixth Edition.* Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2006.
- Preston, Howard L. *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.
- Rae, John B. *The Road and the Car in American Life.* Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1971.
- Rose, Kenny R. and Trevor W. Grantham. *Hardin County, Tennessee: A Pictorial History.* Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1995.
- Rose, Mark H. *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979-1990.

- Smith, Timothy B. *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh: History, Memory, and the Establishment of a Civil War National Military Park*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004.
- Stayer, Claudette and Martha Carver. *Looking Beyond the Highway: Dixie Roads and Culture*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006.
- Stilgoe, John. *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Swift, Earl. *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.
- Thomas, Don F. *Cumberlands on the Hill: A History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*. Collierville, TN: CommAve Biblio, 2008.
- Walker, Melissa. *Southern Farmers and Their Stories: Memory and Meaning in Oral History*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009.
- Watson, Judge A. A. *Bits of Hardin County History*. Collierville, TN: InstantPublisher.com, 2004.
- Gavin, Michael T. *Tennessee Iron Furnace Trail: A Guide to Resources on the Western Highland Rim*. Murfreesboro, TN: MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2006.
- Tennessee State Highway Department. *History of the Tennessee Highway Department*. Compiled by the Tennessee State Highway Dept., Highway Planning Survey Division in cooperation with the U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads. Nashville: 1959.
- West, Carroll Van. *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape: A Guidebook*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001.
- Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order: 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.

### Thesis

- Durbin, Lear P. "Economic & Social Development of Hardin County, TN Since 1865." Master Thesis, George Peabody College, 1930.
- Swanson, James. "An Educational Survey of Hardin County, Tennessee." Master Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1933.

### Websites

Associated Press, "Commish Cancels, Modifies More Than \$1 Billion in TN Road Jobs: A Hotbed of Emotion." <http://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/Commish-Cancels-Modifies-More-Than-1B-in-TN-Road-Jobs/3913/> (accessed January 16, 2013).

Cagle, David. "A Brief History of the Whitlow Family." Tennessee Genealogy Web Project. [www.tngenweb.org/hardin/.../whit.htm](http://www.tngenweb.org/hardin/.../whit.htm) (accessed April 12, 2011).

Cassulo, Emily "Olive Hill Post Office Closed." WBBJ-TV, Jackson, TN. <http://www.wbbjtv.com/news/local/Olive-Hill-Post-Office-Closed-136346163.html> (accessed January 15, 2013).

Droz, Robert V. "Tennessee's U.S. Highways: U.S. 64." <http://us-highways.com/tn-us.htm> (accessed January 8, 2013).

Keith, Jeanette. "Henry Horton." The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture. <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=654> (accessed March 17, 2013).

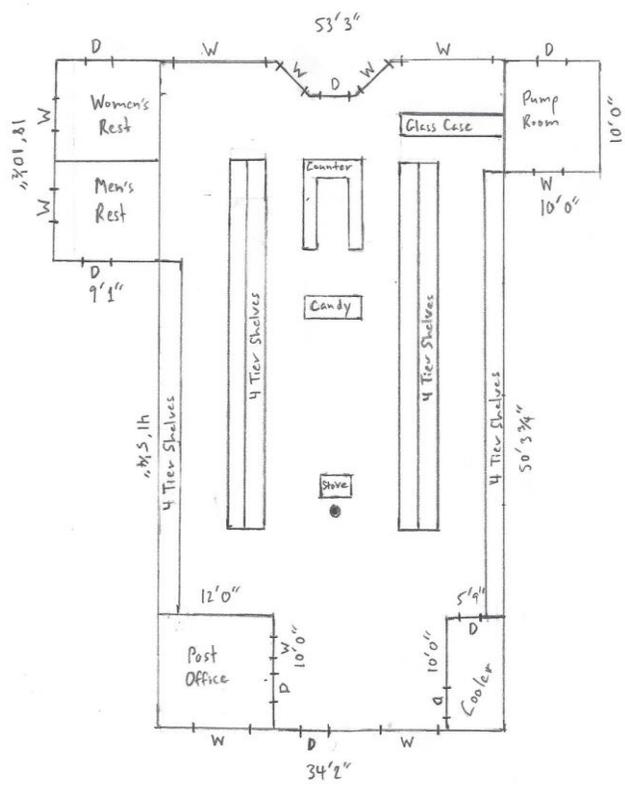
Lovett, John N. Jr., and Loretta Lautzenheiser. "Historic Context Evaluation for Mills in Tennessee: A Study Conducted for the Tennessee Department of Transportation through the University of Tennessee Transport Center." [www.tdot.state.tn.us/.../res-1039.pdf](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/.../res-1039.pdf) (accessed June 15, 2011).

Stuve, Eric. "U.S. Highway 64 Review." <http://www.okhighways.com/us64.html> (accessed December 15, 2012).

The Old House Web. "False Front: 1860-1905." [www.oldhouseweb.com](http://www.oldhouseweb.com) (accessed June 23, 2012).

## APPENDICES

Appendix A



H. O. Smith and Son's Store  
U.S. Post Office  
Olive Hill, Tennessee  
Structure Faces 155 SE  
35 16' 27" N - 88 1' 56" W



H.O. Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 - South Elevation



H.O Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – South Elevation



H.O Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – East Elevation



H.O Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – East Elevation



H.O. Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – West Elevation

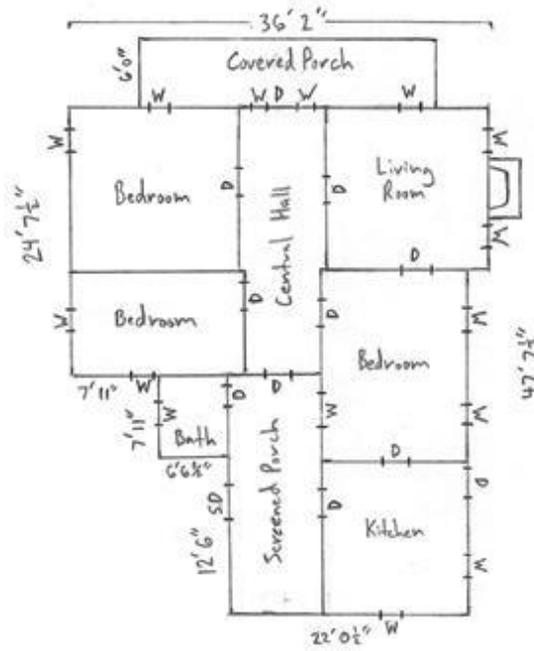


H.O. Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – West Elevation



H.O. Smith and Son's Store, June 2010 – North Elevation

## APPENDIX B



Robert Oscar Smith Home

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 110 E

35 19' 23" N - 88 1' 9" W



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – East Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – East Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – South Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – South Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – North Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – North Elevation



Robert Oscar Smith Home, June 2010 – North Elevation

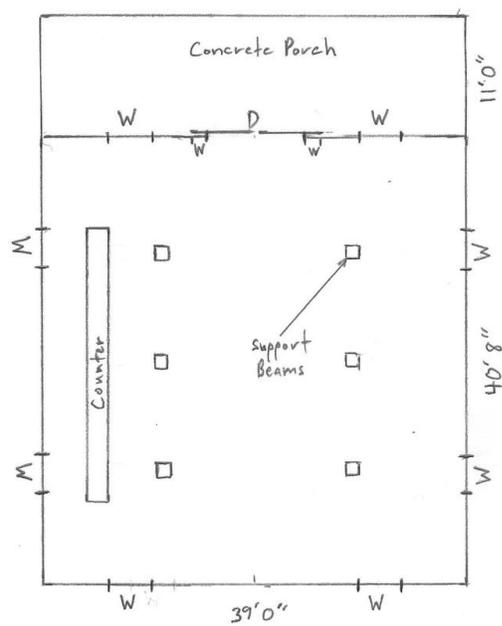


View to the southeast from Robert Oscar Smith Home. Jimmy Dean Smith's home is in the right foreground with William Robert Smith's home in the center distance.



View looking toward the southwest of Robert Oscar Smith's home in the foreground to the right, with 1925 era State Route 15 to the immediate left.

## APPENDIX C



Blacksmith Shop

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 150 SE

35 15' 59" N - 88 1' 34" W



Blacksmith Shop, November 2010 – South Elevation



Blacksmith Shop, June 2010 – South and East Elevation



Blacksmith Shop, November 2010 – East Elevation



Blacksmith Shop, June 2010 – East Elevation



Blacksmith Shop, November 2010 – North Elevation

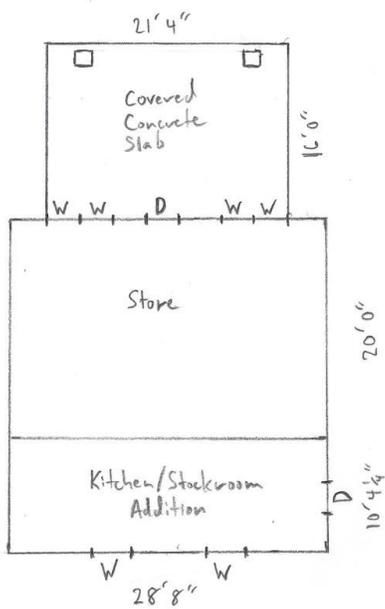


Blacksmith Shop, June 2010 – North Elevation



Blacksmith Shop, November 2010 – West Elevation

### APPENDIX D



T.J. Dickerson / Mark Franks Store

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 151 SE

35 12' 17" N - 87 58" 40" W



Olive Hill Store, November 2010 - South Elevation



Olive Hill Store, January 2013 - South Elevation



Olive Hill Store, November 2010 - West Elevation



Olive Hill Store, November 2010. The view looking north toward the Olive Hill Store in the center distance, with the old 10-19-2 Motor Court to the far left.

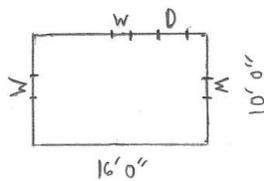


Signage from the T.J. Dickson Store repainted by Rita and Larry Sipes for the Village Market, January 2013.



Olive Hill Store and Motel Cabin, January 2013 – North Elevation

## APPENDIX E



T.J. Dickson / Mark Franks

10-19-2 Motor Court Cabin

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 151 SE

35 12' 17" N - 87 58' 39" W



T.J. Dickson's 10-19-2 Motor Court/Rita and Larry Sipes Village Motel, November 2010  
- South Elevation



Motor Court Cabin reused as a storage building for the Olive Hill Store, January 2013 -  
South Elevation



Motor Court Cabin, January 2013 – East Elevation



Motor Court Cabin, January 2013 – West Elevation



Motor Court Cabin, January 2013 – North Elevation

APPENDIX F



Jimmy Dean Smith Home, November 2012 – South Elevation  
Structure Faces 203 SW - 35 16' 26" N – 88 1' 56" W



Jimmy Dean Smith Home, November 2012 – North Elevation

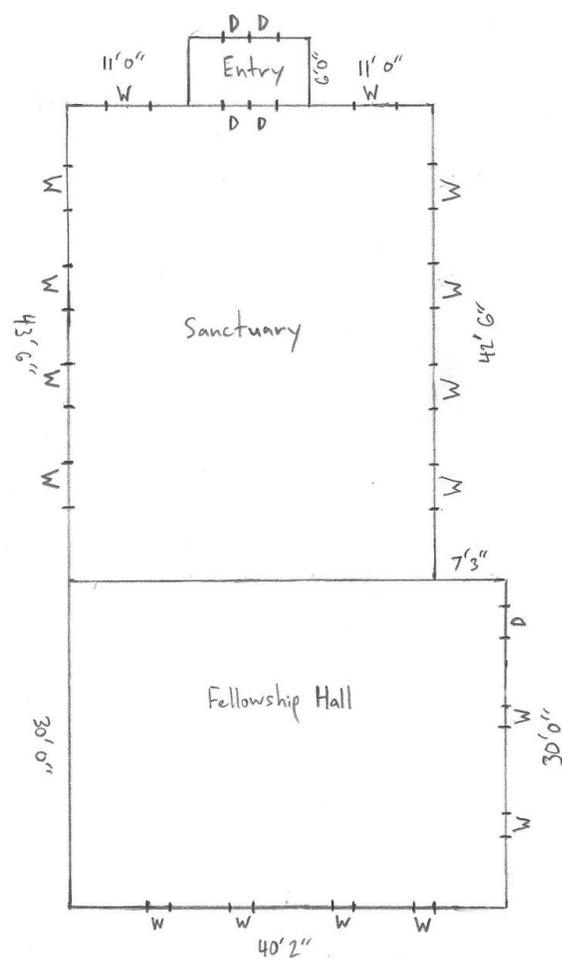


Jimmy Dean Smith Home, November 2012 – West Elevation



Jimmy Dean Smith Home, November 2012 – East Elevation

## Appendix G



Cumberland Presbyterian Church

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 332 NW

35 12' 17" N - 87 58' 40" W



Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, November 2010 – West Elevation



Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, November 2012 – West Elevation



Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, June 2010 – North and West Elevations



Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, November 2010 – North Elevation

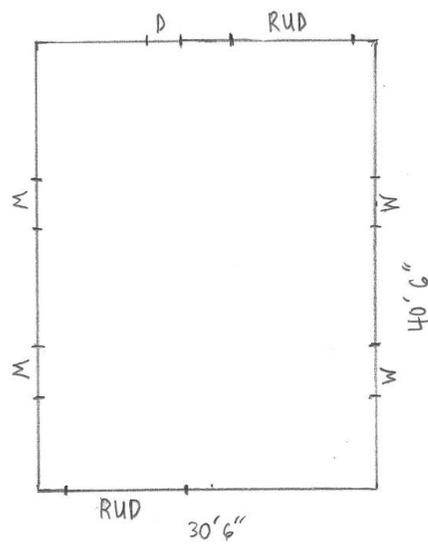


Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, November 2010 – South Elevation



Olive Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church, November 2010 – East Elevation

## APPENDIX H



Hardin County Fire Department

District 9 Fire Hall

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 333 NW

35 12' 17" N - 87 58' 40" W



Hardin County District 9 Fire Hall, November 2010 – Northwest Elevation



Hardin County District 9 Fire Hall, November 2010 – Northeast Elevation

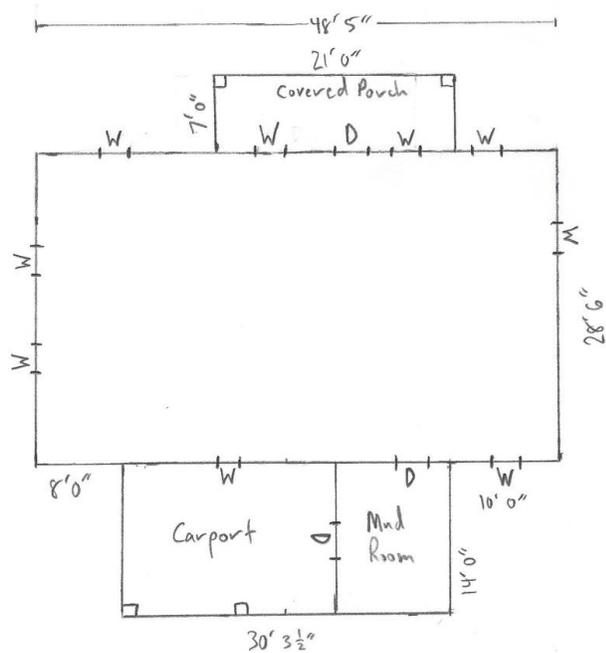


Hardin County District 9 Fire Hall, November 2010 – Southwest Elevation



Hardin County District 9 Fire Hall, November 2010 – Southeast Elevation

## APPENDIX I



William Robert Smith Home

Olive Hill, Tennessee

Structure Faces 276 W

35 19' 2" N - 88 0' 59" W



William Robert Smith Home, November 2010 – West Elevation



William Robert Smith Home, November 2010 – West Elevation



William Robert Smith Home, November 2010 – North Elevation



William Robert Smith Home, November 2010 – East Elevation



William Robert Smith Home, November 2010 – South Elevation



William Robert Smith Detached Garage, November 2010 – North Elevation