

HOUSE OF ZACHARIAH TALLEY

National Register of Historic Places
Owner of property: Gertrude Horn Beals
Saundersville Road
Hendersonville, TN
Legal description: Sumner County Courthouse
Court Square, Gallatin, TN
Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey
April 1976
Depository for Survey Records:
Tennessee Historical Commission
170 Second Ave. North
Nashville, TN
Courtesy of M. TY Pryor of Hermitage, TN

1790's-present: Builder/Architect: Zachariah Talley

Zachariah "Zack" Talley, according to local tradition, came to Sumner County, TN from VA - - probably Cumberland County - - in the 1790's. Talley built his two-room two-story log house shortly after his arrival. He died in ca. 1832, and although his grave has not been located, was in all likelihood buried in the family plot on the property.

The Talley family occupied the house for several generations; it then passed through several hands until the Beal's acquired the property in 1937. It was necessary to make extensive repairs and modifications to the house before they could live in it. The original fabric, whenever possible, was retained and elements which had deteriorated beyond repair were replaced with hand-crafted, exact copies.

The original log portion of the house is one of the oldest buildings in an area adjacent to acres and acres of tract houses and commercial buildings. The Talley-Beals House and property constitute a nineteenth-century, agricultural island which is encroached upon by the burgeoning modern community of Hendersonville. The present owner has made every effort to retain the historical appearance of the house and will continue to do so.

The Talley-Beals House is a fine example of residential architectural evolution. Families which successively lived there modified the building to suit their needs and in accord with their respective means. Zack Talley erected a simple structure in the 1790's using tools and materials at hand. As Talley prospered he added to the core building and refined the interior and made it more comfortable. In the 1890's the demands of a large family necessitated adding a wing to the house and this was done again in the early twentieth century. The present house is snug and comfortable and has all of the modern conveniences.

Located about two miles northeast of Hendersonville, the Talley-Beals House was built on a slight rise west of Drakes Creek, a tributary of the Cumberland River. A complex

building comprised of wings and additions which span the period from the late eighteenth to the first quarter of the twentieth century, its irregular floor plan roughly forms an unbalanced T if the porches are ignored.

Zachariah Talley, an early Sumner County settler, erected a two-story log house on the site in the 1790's with its long axis oriented east and west. This building which forms the core for the subsequent additions, rests on a coursed, out-stone foundation with a full basement. Hand hewn joists are visible and the present concrete floor covers an earlier brick floor. The type of logs and corner notching technique could not be determined, but the owner recalled that mud and stone were used for the chinking. A massive coursed, cut-stone chimney, reminiscent of those found in western North Carolina and Virginia was attached to the east wall. Small four-over-four, upstairs windows flank the chimney, and a shed-like shelter with a single-leaf door and tiny, one-over-one window provides access to the cellar.

The east room of the 1790's section has wide board floors, and the vertical-plank walls, Adams mantle, chair-rails, and wainscoting (containing twenty-six-inch wide panels) are all walnut. The only windows in the 1790's section, with eight-over-twelve-light patterns are located in the north and south walls of this room. The exposed ceiling joists are beaded and varnished. The west room serves as a hall to provide access to the south porch and north and west wings, and to the second floor of the log section by a narrow, two-run staircase. Vertical walnut boards cover the walls and ceilings. The second-floor room and hall are finished with poplar boards. The roof framework has no ridge pole, and the rafters are pinned.

Early in the nineteenth century, probably in the 1820's, a two story, two-room frame section was added to the west wall of the log house. Another large, coursed, cut-stone chimney dominates the west wall of the 1820's section. The mantle in the down stairs room (parlor) resembles that in the 1790's section (east room); there is a simpler mantle upstairs. Both room have high ceilings; one must take two steps down into the parlor and two steps up to enter the upstairs bedroom. Another feature of this section is that each room has exposed corner posts. Some of the eight-over eight windows have been replaced with more modern sashes. There is a small shed porch attached to the chimney on the west wall. The 1820's section was built on a course, cut-stone foundation without a basement.

Another two-story frame wing was added to the south wall of the 1820's section in the 1890's which was built on stone piers and has Victorian trim. Paired brackets décor the boxed cornice with returns. The window light patterns are one-over-one on the first floor and four-over-four on the second. The wood and marble mantle in the downstairs room is ornamental and the doors to this room have transoms. An ell-shaped, shed porch, with jigsaw balusters and bracketed support posts, connects the 1790's and 1890's sections and is probably contemporaneous to the late nineteenth century improvements.

Early in the twentieth century, probably in the 1920's, a single-story, frame, two-room wing was added to the north wall of the 1820's section, which contains the kitchen and

dining room. Built on a coursed and cut stone foundation it has a boxed cornice with small brackets at the eave tips and a wheel attic vent. About the same time a shed porch was added to join the 1920's and 1790's sections; in 1937 or 1938 the owner enclosed this L-shaped porch and added a bathroom.

The entire house has been sheathed with clapboards and the original roofing material was removed from the various sections and replaced with asphalt shingles. The present owner maintains the house in excellent condition. Whenever a door or window or other element deteriorates, it is replaced with an exact duplicate.

There are four outbuildings on the property. The small, rectangular, frame smokehouse (ca. 1900) stands a few yards northeast of the 1920's section. This building has a diagonally braced overhanging roof on the west side. North of the smokehouse is a modern one-story frame tenant house. The family cemetery is located between the tenant house and smokehouse. Approximately one hundred yards southwest of the 1890's section an early twentieth-century, frame corn crib stands, and two hundred feet south-southwest of the corn crib is a two-story barn of the same vintage. The barn has vertical board siding and a galvanized metal roof. The first floor contains stalls and space for equipment storage and the second floor serves as a hayloft.

Law Offices: Harsh, Kelly & Harsh
Gallatin, TN 37066
22 October 1976

Mr. Herbert L. Harper
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Tennessee
Tennessee Historical Commission
170 Second Avenue, North
Nashville, Tennessee 37201

Dear Mr. Harper:

This will acknowledge receipt and thank you for your letter of October 7, 1976, addressed to Mrs. Beals.

In response to the paragraph of our letter requesting that she comment on the significance of the property within a 30-day period, the following comments are respectfully submitted.

1. No Federal or State funds of any type are being requested or sought in connection with the Talley-Beals house.
2. The house is being occupied as a dwelling by the owner and will be so occupied for the indefinite future.

3. The house is located in a sprawling, fast-growing urban community known as Hendersonville, which is possibly the fastest growing community in the entire State of Tennessee in the 1970's.

It is desired, therefore, that this dwelling be listed on the National Register of Historic Places to protect it from immediate encroachments and possible destruction by various future condemnation proceedings for highways and the like. The building has unique architectural significance to the old Southwest and to the Pioneer Period of Middle Tennessee history. Only an increasingly diminishing small number of log dwellings of the early 1800's exist in Middle Tennessee, and this is the single example of all of Middle Tennessee that dates back to the 1790's.

The entire structure, including the 1790's portion, is in an excellent state of preservation and upkeep. The parlor room of the 1790's portion of this log house is paneled entirely in walnut tongue-and-groove panels with the lower portion paneled with walnut wains coating together with a walnut mantleplace, the entirety of which is executed in the finest Federal style, equal in elegance and craftsmanship to the great houses of Tidewater, Virginia, and somewhat superior in excellence and craftsmanship with regard to the walnut paneling and woodwork to that contained in nearby Rock Castle, now a state owned historic site. The uniqueness of this Federal walnut paneling and wainscoating and mantelpiece is heightened by the fact that it is contained in an otherwise humble log frontier dwelling of the 1790's. The house contains at the East end an original stone Virginia chimney. The original ash floors on the first story and the original poplar floors on the second story are in tact. The architectural significance of the house is further heightened by the fact that we find a cellar and a large collar fireplace, the entrance to which is gained from the East end of the dwelling similar to the construction one finds in the very few remaining early brick and stone houses of the 1790's located and still surviving in Middle Tennessee.

This architectural rarity should be protected from any encroachments and possible future demolition by being place on the National Register, the urgency of which is mandated by the rapidly-growing urban community in which it is situated.

Please advise if further commentary or documentation is required.

Sincerely,
Harsh, Kelly & Harsh
By: Nathan Harsh

FIRE DESTROYS HISTORIC HENDERSONVILLE HOME
Lighting hits Talley-Beals House
By: Tammie Smith

HENDERSONVILLE – Smoldering ash and rubble were all that remained yesterday of a nearly 200-year-old log home here destroyed by a fire believed started when lightning struck an air conditioner.

Yesterday, Jim Dale, caretaker of the home known as the Talley-Beals home, said it was not unusual for people who saw the home from the Hendersonville bypass to detour off the road for a closer look at the two-story log building on Stop Thirty Road off New Shackle Island Road.

“Somebody stopped by just about every month and asked if they could buy it or move in,” said Hale, who lives on property adjoining the home.

Hale said the house, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, had been restored by its last occupant, Gertrude Beals, who with her husband bought the home about 1936. Hale said the original owner was Zack Talley, who came to the area about 1795 and built a dugout on the homesite and about 10 years later began to build the two-story home.

Names of Talley kin are engraved in headstones in a family cemetery on the property.

Hale, his wife and two relatives of Gertrude Beals are executors of the estate, which includes about 110 acres divided by the bypass.

“It was one of the oldest houses this side of the mountains,” said Hale.

He said Beals, who died in 1985, collected rare art books and antiques, most of which had remained in the house since her death and were destroyed in the fire.

He said the house was worth an estimated \$200,000, while they could not place a value on the contents which he said were not insurable because no one lived in the home.

Yesterday, as Hale posted “Do Not Enter” signs at the gate leading to the property, the Rev. Gary Ferrell, pastor of the nearby First Assembly of God Church, said Sunday evening services included prayers for the structure’s safety.

“It was a masterpiece to this community,” said Ferrell.

Hale said the home was mostly a victim of its own age, but added that its location on a hilltop at the end of a narrow path also made it difficult for firefighters to get to it to battle the Sunday blaze.

“A house that gets that old is vulnerable,” he said. “The firemen did a wonderful job. These houses, when they are renovated, should have sprinkler systems installed, something to save them from themselves.”

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/TN/Sumner/state.html>

National Register of Historic Places: Sumner Co., TN

Talley-Beals House (added 1990 - **Building** - #77001296)

N of Hendersonville off Saunderville Rd., Hendersonville

Historic Significance: Architecture/Engineering

Architect, builder, or engineer: Talley, Zachariah

Architectural Style: No Style Listed

Area of Significance: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1750-1799, 1800-1824, 1875-1899

Owner: **Private**

Historic Function: Domestic

Historic Sub-function: Single Dwelling

Current Function: Domestic

Current Sub-function: Single Dwelling

Rock Castle ** (added 1970 - **Building** - #70000619)

SE of Hendersonville on Indian Lake Rd., Hendersonville

Historic Significance: Architecture/Engineering, Person

Architect, builder, or engineer: Unknown

Architectural Style: Federal, Greek Revival

Historic Person: Smith, Daniel

Significant Year: 1850, 1784

Area of Significance: Architecture, Politics/Government

Period of Significance: 1750-1799, 1800-1824

Owner: **State**

Historic Function: Agriculture/Subsistence, Domestic

Historic Sub-function: Single Dwelling

Current Function: Recreation And Culture

Current Sub-function: Museum

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