

**TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS**  
**PUTNAM CO., TN**

Local Farm Added to Century List:

**COOKEVILLE** – Another Putnam County farm has been added to the list of century farms, making it the country's ninth to receive the 100-plus year designation.

The Mansell Farm, a 121-year-old farm located about two miles east of Cookeville, was recently named a century farm.

"I cannot take full credit for this endeavor," said Kathy Daugherty, niece of Kenneth Mansell. Daugherty also applied the farm for the program. "It has been a labor of love with many hands, minds and memories filling the gaps and weaving the stories through the years to make this become a reality."

Daugherty said her and her mother's personal interest in the century farm program came out of their donation of a log building workshop to the Putnam County Fairgrounds last year to be used for the program.

"It seemed fitting then that our own family farm should also be highlighted in the building where my father spent so much of his time and talents."

Mansell is thrilled to have his farm named the ninth century farm in the country.

"It's great," Mansell said.

"I've raised tobacco, hay, corn, hogs, sheep, cattle – everything."

Mansell currently has four mules, two mares and a lot of cattle on his farm.

"I'm very proud of it," he said. "You've got to like farming because it's hard work."

It all began in May 1888 when George Washington "G. W." Mansell founded a 95-acre farm about two miles east of Cookeville. Married to Lydia Brown, the couple had 10 children – two died as infants. On the 95-acres, the family raised hay, corn, cattle and poultry. There was a shoe cobbler and a blacksmith also on the farm. They also served the community.

In 1937, the farm was divided between two of the founder's sons; one part to Johnnie Lee Mansell and the other to Harvey Napoleon Mansell.

Johnnie Lee married Ophie May Peek and had two children, Amanda and Elmer Earl. He produced hay, livestock, corn and other row crops for the family's food.

Harvey married twice and fathered 10 children. He and his family raised crops similar to Johnnie Lee, but also raised sugarcane that was used to make molasses. Neighbors came for this seasonal activity. The family reports that after the molasses was made, the family and community would celebrate with a community festival.

Around 1965, in addition to making molasses, Harvey and Ruby began hosting family reunions on the farm. In 1974, as a result of a series of tornadoes, the farmhouse was destroyed and Ruby, who was in the house at the time, died of injuries 21 days later.

In 1975, the grandson of the founders, Kenneth E. Mansell, acquired 41 acres of the farm. Along with his wife Letha, Kenneth and his daughter Susie live on the farm, where they raise hay, pasture, livestock, hogs,

cattle, mules and Llamas. He has been active in 4-H and the Future Farmers of America since he was in high school when he showed calves and pigs.

Currently, Kenneth continues the family tradition of mule-handling that dates back to his grandfather. He uses mules on the farm and to show. Mule-drawn wagon rides are popular with children on the farm and at the annual “Kids Day on a Farm” at Tennessee Tech University.

The Mansell Farm joins other century farms, such as the Boyd Jerseys Farm, the Holloway Farm, the Hunter Cove Farm, the Judd Farm, the Pearson Farm, the Quarles-Phillips Farm, the Rockwell farm and the Shanks Farm in Putnam County.

The century farm program recognizes the contributions of Tennessee residents who have continuously owned and kept in production, family land for at least 100 years. More information can be found online at <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/his-pres>

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[http://www.tncenturyfarms.org/putnam\\_county/](http://www.tncenturyfarms.org/putnam_county/)

Putnam County is located in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee and was named in honor of Revolutionary War General Israel Putnam. Its county seat is Cookeville. The railroad industry has played an important role in the county’s history and the town of Cookeville has a National Register listed Tennessee Central depot that serves as a local museum for the community. The county is also home to Tennessee Technological University and the Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Crafts, which supports the modern practice of traditional crafts. Putnam County has ten Century Farms and the oldest is the Hunter Cove Farm that was established in 1814. For more information regarding Putnam County, please go to the [Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture](#) website.

### **BOYD JERSEYS FARM**

Dibrell M. Boyd

High yields in dairy production comprise the contribution of the Boyd Jerseys Farm to Tennessee agriculture. In 1852, John L. and Sallie Lyda Boyd established the Boyd family farm on 260 acres located five miles southeast of Cookeville. The Boyds and their four sons raised the typical crops of the region—corn, hay, cattle and swine. George Dibrell Boyd acquired 60 acres of the farm in 1903. Operating a dairy, George made enough money to expand his farm to 205 acres of land.

George married Belle Nicholas and they raised seven children. In 1948, their son Dibrell inherited 42 acres of the farm. The farm now consists of 83 acres of land. Dibrell is a dairy farming expert and in 1984, he and his son David managed the “second highest milk producing dairy herd in the United States.”

### **HOLLOWAY FARM**

David M. Judd

Located two miles southeast of Cookeville, the Holloway Farm dates to 1839 when Charles and Elizabeth Lollar Huddleston acquired title to approximately 215 acres of land. The family harvested crops of corn, wheat and rye and managed herds of cattle, swine and horses. Charles also played an active role in establishing the local Salem Church. The founders were the parents of nine children and, between 1852 and 1855, their son Jordan Huddleston acquired 178 acres of the family land. Jordan, his wife Mary Bradford and their five children changed little in the daily patterns of farm operations, growing crops of corn, wheat and rye.

In 1901, Jordan willed 80 acres to his sons, B. M. and Coey Huddleston. Sixty-two years later, the heirs of B. M. Huddleston deeded ten acres to Bobby L. and Carolyn Judd Holloway. Carolyn is the great great granddaughter of the founders. Today, Carolyn's brother David M. Judd owns the land.

### **HUNTER COVE FARM**

Dan Bohannon

Hunter Cove Farm is one of the oldest and most historic farms in Putnam County. Located nine miles southeast of Cookeville, the farm dates to 1814 when William and Sarah Boone Hunter purchased approximately 100 acres of land. Sarah was the niece of Daniel Boone, the famous pioneer. In time, the Hunters managed several thousand acres of land and owned a number of slaves. Their chief products included lumber, corn and oxen. The family also raised swine in the open countryside.

The founders were the parents of two children and in 1848, their son Dudley Hunter inherited an estate of over 5,000 acres. Dudley transformed the farm into a major plantation, with his slaves building a new brick house. To reflect his wealth and status, Dudley bred racehorses and built a track. He also "acquired a farm near Sparta for family residence during winter school months." Early in the Civil War, however, a group of Texas Raiders murdered Hunter on the public square in Sparta when he resisted the seizure of his black stallion. His death left his mother Sarah and his wife Amy Lowery Hunter to manage the farm. For the remainder of the war, life was extremely difficult at Hunter Cove. Amy even found herself leading "ox carts to Louisville by the Old Kentucky Road to exchange barter for supplies."

A founder of the Dry Valley Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Rush was a progressive farmer who invested in breeding mules and improved the farm's water supply. His crops included corn, wheat, oats, millet and peas and he raised mules, cattle, swine and sheep. Married twice and the father of fifteen children, Hunter took an active interest in local education and was an organizer of the community's first "subscription school."

Upon Rush's death, his wife Levenia Watson Hunter inherited the land and operated it in partnership with her son, Arnold W. Hunter. Arnold was the next owner of Hunter Cove Farm and he managed the property until his death in 1979. One of the region's leading farmers, he served on the Farm Bureau and the White County Tobacco Board and was a member of the Tennessee Livestock Association and the Hereford Breeders Association.

His widow, Vallie Huddleston Hunter, became the farm's next owner. She supervised operations that produced winter wheat, soybeans, hay and beef cattle. Three buildings built by Rush Hunter between 1877 and 1878-the farmhouse, smokehouse and barn-remain intact and in use on the farm today. Dan Bohannon owns the farm today.



### ISAAC HUDDLESTON FARM

Hubert M. Huddleston

Mary Jane Huddleston

Neil Thomas Huddleston



Located eight miles southeast of the Cookeville Courthouse, the farm was founded in 1841 by Thomas Robinson of Grayson County, Va., who received a land grant of 100 acres signed by Tennessee Gov. James C. Jones.

Thomas (1787-1882) and wife Susannah Prior, who was born in North Carolina in 1798, and their eight children raised horses, corn, wheat and cattle on their 100-acre farm. They built a house in 1848, along with a smokehouse, log cabin, barn, corncrib and granary.

The eldest son, James S. Robinson, was the second owner of the farm. He and wife Syrena Isom expanded the farm to 300 acres, and with their nine children, raised horses, hay, corn and wheat. According to the family's records, James Robinson raised some of the finest horses in middle Tennessee. During the Civil War, his horses were taken by Union troops and he was taken prisoner to care for them. He was released after a few weeks.

In 1881, James was given 890 acres of land in White County for compensation for the stolen horses during the war, with an additional 57 acres granted in 1887. James and Syrena moved to this farm and left the farm in Putnam County in the care of their daughter, Mary Jane Robinson, and her husband, Asbury R. Bullock.

After Syrena died in 1914, Mary Jane and Asbury acquired the farm. They built a third home on the land on Cherry Creek Road and lived there for the rest of their lives.

In 1919, after Mary Jane and Asbury's death, their daughter, Arrie, and her husband, Ezra Davis, acquired the land. Although they lived in Cookeville, they managed the 300-acre farm through tenant farmers. Ezra Davis was a two-term mayor of Cookeville.

The fifth generation to own the farm was Mary B. Davis and her husband, Isaac Stanton Huddleston. They bought the land at an auction in 1949 when the Davis Estate was settled. On 140 acres, Isaac and Mary, with their four children, raised a variety of cultivated foods—from vegetables to strawberries—along with

The couple's main source of income, however, was tobacco. Aside from farming, Isaac Huddleston served as a Justice of the Peace of the Mount Herman Community and later as Trustee of Putnam County for two terms.

After Isaac's death in 1980, the land was willed to his four children, Hubert "Roe" Monroe, Neil, Ned (now deceased) and Mary Jane. Today, 100 of the farm's 140 acres are the original land of Thomas and Susanna Robinson. Currently, "Roe" and Mary Jane continue to live on the farm, while Neil resides in Galveston, Texas. "Roe" is the farm's manager and operator.

Although he no longer grows tobacco, "Roe" continues to raise hay, cattle and some vegetable produce. Additionally, continuing a progressive farming tradition started by his father, he completed a long-term soil conservation program and has also participated in a pasture contest.

Photo: (left) James Robinson Farmhouse with James, Edway, Ashbury, and Mary Jane Bullock.

Photo: (right) Image of Syrena Robinson.

### **JUDD FARM**

David M. Judd

The Judd Farm, located two miles southeast of Cookeville, is the second Century Farm in Putnam County to evolve from the original farmstead of Charles and Elizabeth Lollar Huddleston. The farm shares a common history with that of the Holloway Farm until 1954. At that time, B. M. Huddleston deeded 70 acres of family land to his daughter Arlie and her husband John W. Judd. Between 1955 and 1968, Arlie and John transferred title to 63.4 acres to their son David M. Judd, who still practices general agriculture on this Putnam County land.



### **MANSELL FARM**

Kenneth E. Mansell

In May of 1888, George Washington (G.W.) Mansell founded a 95 acre farm about two miles east of Cookeville. Married to Lydia Brown, the couple had ten children; however, two died as infants. On 95 acres, the family raised hay, corn, cattle and poultry. On the farm was a shoe cobbler and a blacksmith that served the community.

In 1937, the farm was divided between two of the founder's sons. One part of the farm was acquired by Johnnie Lee Mansell. Married to Ophie May Peek, they were the parents of Amanda and Elmer Earl.

During their ownership, the farm produced hay, livestock, corn and other row crops for the family's food. The second parcel was owned by Harvey Napoleon Mansell. Married twice, he fathered ten children. Harvey and his family raised similar crops and livestock to that of his brother, but also raised sugar cane. The sugar cane was used to make molasses and neighbors came for this seasonal activity. After the molasses was made, the family and community would celebrate with a community festival. In addition to the molasses-making, Harvey and Ruby began hosting family reunions on the farm in 1965. In 1974, as a result of the series of tornadoes, the farm house was destroyed and Ruby, who was in the house at the time, died of injuries 21 days later.

In 1975, the grandson of the founders, Kenneth E. Mansell, acquired 41 acres of the farm. Along with his wife Letha, Kenneth and daughter Susie live on the farm. Kenneth raises hay, pasture, formerly tobacco, livestock, hogs, cattle, mules and llamas. He has been active in 4-H and FFA since he was in high school when he showed calves and pigs. Kenneth continues the family tradition of mule handling that dates back to his grandfather. He uses mules in farming and to show. Mule-drawn wagon rides are popular with children on the farm and at the annual "Kids Day on a Farm" at the Tennessee Tech University.

Photo: (top left) George Washington Mansell with mules, (top center) John and Ophie Mansell with Washington car, (top right) Harvey Mansell, (Bottom left) Mansell Family Reunion 1967, (bottom right) Kenneth Mansell and Mule Wagon.



**PEARSON FARM**

Ronald W. Martin

Prize winning progressive farming has marked the recent history of the Pearson Farm, which is located four miles north of Cookeville. In 1856, Joseph and Tempie Clark Pearson founded the Pearson Farm. They possessed 1,200 acres on which they grew small grains and corn and raised cattle and swine. A local political leader, John served as the first trustee in Putnam County. At the close of the Civil War, in 1865, 180 acres of the farm passed to Francis Pearson Thompson, the daughter of the founders. Francis, who married William Thompson, was the mother of seven children. Together the family produced corn, wheat, cattle and swine.



In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the farm passed through the hands of two additional generations of the Pearson family. In 1937, Oral and Neta Pearson inherited 60 acres from their parents,

Robert N. and Mary Wilmoth Pearson. For almost 50 years, Oral and Neta have operated the farm, specializing in hay and registered Polled Hereford cattle production. Oral has won several agricultural awards, including the "Master Conservation Farmer" award in 1963 and the "Champion Pasture" award in 1965. Today, Ronald W. Martin owns the land.

Photo: Oral Pearson of Putnam County poses with his mules, which were often treated as favored members of the family. In fact, farmers often spent more time with their mules than they did with their family.

### QUARLES-PHILLIPS FARM

Rodger D. Phillips

Freida Nelle Phillips Denny

Roy Harrell Phillips

The Quarles family traces its settlement in the area to William Pennington Quarles, a Revolutionary War veteran who founded the community of White Plains in 1809. A Cookeville chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution is named for this early settler. In 1892, descendent William Braxton Quarles founded a farm of nearly 70 acres in the Algood community. Married to Selia Ann White, the couple was the parents of seven children. Their names were Columbus, Hickman, Belle, Dollie, John, William and James. The family raised corn, hay, vegetables gardens and dairy cattle. In 1916, the children inherited the farm and continued the same type of agricultural operation

The third generation to own the farm was the founder's grandson, Roy C. Phillips. Roy was the son of Dollie Quarles and Henry Phillips and he bought out the remaining heirs in 1974. While the farm acreage remained the same, he expanded the variety of crops by adding tobacco and sorghum cane. In addition, he raised goats, hogs and beef cattle.

When Roy passed away in 2004, his three children, Roy Harrell Phillips, Frieda Nelle Phillips Denny and Rodger David Phillips inherited the property. Today, Rodger and his wife and son live on the farm. Currently, Rodger works the land and raises hay, corn, and beef cattle. The house built by the founder in 1892 still stands as a reminder of the more than 100 years of ownership and farm production on this family farm.



Photo: Tombstone of William Braxton Quarles, founder of the Quarles-Phillips Century Farm.

## **ROCKWELL FARM**

Deloy Rockwell

Dating to the acquisition of 150 acres in 1869, the Rockwell Farm is six miles east of Cookeville. Its founders, Robert and Sarah Buck Rockwell, operated a diversified farm of corn, rye, wheat, barley and livestock. In 1884, the farm was divided between the six remaining children of Robert and Sarah Rockwell and their son, Loyd Rockwell, became its second owner. Although he added no new crops or livestock to his operations, Loyd improved the farm by building new farm structures and aiding in local road construction. He married Rebecca Burnett and they were the parents of ten children.

In 1935, the farm passed to H. Dealer Rockwell, the grandson of the founders. Dealer, his wife Eunica Barnes and their seven children continued to modernize the farm's activities; they introduced new breeds of livestock as well. The family also fertilized its land, which increased crop yields. Deloy M. Rockwell, the farm's present manager, acquired 60 acres from his parents in 1968. Today, his brother J. L. Rockwell harvests the farm's annual hay crop.

## **SHANKS FARM**

Miriam Shanks Gwaltney

In the 11<sup>th</sup> District of Putnam County stands the Shanks Farm, which dates to 1859 when Craven M. and Nancy Henley Shanks acquired title to 165 acres of land. Raising herds of swine, sheep and cattle, the Shanks cultivated corn, dark tobacco and sorghum cane. They also worked a small patch of cotton to provide clothing for the family. During the Civil War, Craven served in the Union army.

Robert F. and Ann Anderson Shanks were the farm's second generation owners. In 1918, their son Luke Shanks obtained approximately 200 acres of farmland. By 1976, Luke and his son George Shanks managed a farm of 574 acres and raised tobacco and beef cattle. Four years later, Miriam Shanks Gwaltney, the great granddaughter of Craven and Nancy Shanks, acquired 164 acres of the original farm. She now supervises 274 acres, which produce tobacco and beef cattle.

[http://www.tncenturyfarms.org/#Click here to view Century Farms of](http://www.tncenturyfarms.org/#Click_here_to_view_Century_Farms_of)