

WILLIAMSON CO FARM JOIN RANKS OF STATE'S CENTURY FARMS PROGRAM

Glenn Acres Recognized for Agricultural Contributions

Glenn Acres, located in **Williamson County**, has been designated as a Tennessee Century Farm, reports Caneta S. Hankins, Director of the Century Farms program at the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP), which is located on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU).

More than a decade before Tennessee became a state in 1796, Thomas Gillespie was issued a land grant of 4000 acres in what was then the western regions of North Carolina. This land, along Flat Creek and the Duck River, would eventually become a part of Williamson County when it was formed in 1799. The Gillespie family's history is very much aligned with that of the county and state. Thomas Gillespie and his wife Naomi were the parents of two sons, Issac and David, and a daughter, Lydia. Lydia and her first husband, Capt. James Knox, had a daughter, Jane. Jane married Samuel Polk and their son, James, Knox Polk, named after her father, became the 11th President of the United States. According to the family, James K. Polk would visit his Uncle Issac and cousins on his travels between Columbia and Murfreesboro.

In 1816, Issac Gillespie acquired the farm. Married to Mary Ann McQuire, they built a house on the property which remains today and raised cattle, hay, and corn. One of Isaac and Mary Ann's sons, William "Bill" Gillespie was the next in the family to own the property. Aside from his father's land, he also inherited a portion of his Uncle David's property in 1866. He and his wife, Elizabeth Reed, had two sons, Samuel and Wallace.

Samuel inherited the land when his father died in 1914. He and his wife Pauline farmed the land for over 30 years. In 1948, the farm was acquired by their relatives, Jackie and Lola Reed Glenn. Their son Calvin Glenn has been the owner of the farm since 1979. He and his wife Sandra work 121 acres where they raise hay, tobacco, corn, soybeans, wheat, and cattle. This family farm is currently the oldest certified Century Farm in Williamson County and joins the ranks of Pioneer Farms, a special designation for those farms founded before or in the year 1796 when Tennessee became a state. Glenn Acres will be among the Century Farms honored at the Williamson County Fair at a special luncheon on August 12.

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. Since 1984, the **Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU** has been a leader in the important work of documenting Tennessee's agricultural heritage and history through the Tennessee Century Farm Program, and continues to administer this program.

The **Tennessee Department of Agriculture** (TDA) began the Tennessee Century Farm Program in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial. Today the TDA provides a metal outdoor sign, noting either 100, 150, or 200 years of "continuous agricultural production" to Century Farm families.

To be considered for eligibility, a farm must be owned by the same family for at least 100 years; must produce \$1000 revenue annually; must have at least 10 acres of the original farm; and one owner must be a resident of Tennessee. There are over 1000 Century Farms across the state and all 95 counties are represented. "The Century Farmers represent all the farm families of Tennessee," says Hankins, "and their contributions to the economy, and to the social, cultural, and agrarian vitality of the state, both past and present, is immeasurable. Each farm is a Tennessee treasure."

For more information about the Century Farms Program, please visit its Web site at <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/histpres>. The Center for Historic Preservation also may be contacted via mail at Box 80, MTSU, Murfreesboro, Tenn., 37132, or by telephone at 615-898-2947.