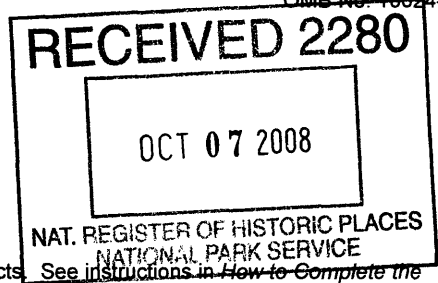


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Home for Aged Masons  
other names/site number Masonic Widows and Orphans Home

2. Location

street & number Ben Allen Lane and R.S. Gass Boulevard N/A  not for publication  
city or town Nashville N/A  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Davidson code 037 zip code 37216

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

E. Patrick McHugh September 30, 2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
  - determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other,  
(explain:)

for  
Edson W. Beall 11.19.08  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: institutional housing  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work In Progress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation Stone  
walls Stone  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Composition  
other Glass, concrete, wood, metal  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1913-1957  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1913-1915  
1941  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Asmus and Norton

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Metropolitan Historical Commission, Nashville

Home for Aged Masons  
Name of Property

Davidson County, TN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 2 acres Nashville East 311 NW

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>523292</u>	<u>4007613</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tara Mitchell Mielnik  
organization Metropolitan Historical Commission date June 15, 2008  
street & number 3000 Granny White Pike telephone 615-862-7970  
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37204

**Additional Documentation**

submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name State of Tennessee Real Property Management, c/o Mike Fitts  
street & number 450 James Robertson Pkwy telephone 615-741-2388  
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37216

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

## Architectural Description:

The Home for Aged Masons is located on a private drive near Ellington Parkway and Hart Lane in the Inglewood area of Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, and is one building on a large parcel containing several institutional buildings. The Home for Aged Masons is the only building on this parcel addressed by this nomination. The building was designed by the Nashville firm of Asmus and Norton, and is an excellent example of institutional Colonial Revival style. Notable features of the building include the two story pedimented portico, solid stone walls, and an impressive fireplace and staircase in the interior. Built in 1913, the building served a variety of functions before being vacated c 1990. The building is currently vacant, but it still retains the majority of its character defining features and has a high degree of integrity.

The building faces north, and is situated in a bend of R.S. Gass Boulevard, which winds through property owned by the State of Tennessee, often called the R.S. Gass Complex. Gass Boulevard and the associated state office buildings were named for noted physician R. S. Gass, who was a tuberculosis specialist. This state-owned land was the site of the Middle Tennessee Tuberculosis Hospital complex in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and now houses several state office buildings. Prior to state ownership, much of this land was owned by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee Free and Accepted Masons and used to house various indigents cared for under the auspices of the Masonic Homes.

The Home for Aged Masons is a large cut-limestone building, rising three and one-half stories, including a full basement, with a monumental central entrance portico rising the full height of the building on the north facade. A dominating pediment with a circular vent opening is supported by four two-story Doric columns. A grand central stair with iron handrails rises from the ground level to the entrance at the main floor of the building. The porch features a wood railing with a sunburst design between the columns. Two Colonial Revival style light fixtures hang from the porch ceiling. The main entrance consists of double doors each consisting of a single pane of plate-glass with wood trim flanked by large plate-glass sidelights. The doors and sidelights are surrounded by a Doric entablature, including engaged columns at either end and columns flanking the doors supporting a central pediment with dentil detailing. The entryway is a grand expression of the tendency of Colonial Revival institutional buildings to retain some Greek Revival features, especially in the South.

The north façade is symmetrical, with the central bays flanked on each side by four bays, which originally had 1/1 double-hung windows with stone lintels and sills. The glass in the majority of these windows has been broken out but renovation plans call for replacement with historically accurate windows. Most window openings are currently boarded up to protect the interior of the building. The plane of the hipped roof is broken by four gabled dormers featuring 1/1 wood double-hung windows. Each dormer has a small pediment above the windows. The original hipped slate roof was replaced with late 20<sup>th</sup> century composition roofing material. A stone belt course wraps around the façade and east and west elevations, running just above the basement windows.

The east and west end elevations are nearly identical. The east elevation has concrete stairs on a limestone foundation rising from the ground to a portico on the main level of the building. The foundation of the portico has a window opening on the north facade and two window openings flanking the stairway on the east elevation. The portico features single-story slender round Doric columns, a sunburst pattern porch balustrade, and beaded board on the ceiling. The flat portico roof provides a balcony for the second story of the building; the second story balustrade is much plainer in design. The balcony is also accessible by a

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

metal fire-escape at the rear, which although added at an unknown later date, does not detract from the integrity of the building and is believed to have been added during the period of significance. At the main level, a centrally-located door opens into the building. The door, now boarded, is plate-glass with glass sidelights and transom. A single 1/1 double-hung window flanks each door on the main level. The second floor features five bays, with a central plate-glass door with sidelights and transom flanked by two 1/1 double-hung wood windows. On the roof is a single dormer with paired 1/1 double-hung windows topped by a pediment.

The west elevation is nearly identical to the east elevation with a few differences. The west porch foundation has a door opening along the north façade along with two window openings on the west elevation and a single window opening on the south elevation. Unlike the east portico, the west portico does not have a concrete stairway, instead access to the portico is via a metal fire escape on the south elevation. The final difference between the west and east elevations is the dormer on the west elevation contains three 1/1 double-hung windows instead of two.

The rear (south) elevation is relatively plain. The rear central portion projects slightly from the main block of the building and has a central chimney. The rear of the building is nine bays across and is symmetrical with the central chimney, which is constructed of cut limestone to match the rest of the building. Two doors open from the ground level into the basement portion of the building east of the chimney. The other eight openings on the ground level are window openings. The main and second floors each have ten windows with stone lintels and sills. Many of these windows are now boarded up, but the remaining windows are 1/1 double-hung sash. The original floor plans indicate that all the windows throughout the building were 1/1 double-hung windows, and renovation plans call for historically accurate replacements where needed. The two center-most openings on the main floor, flanking the chimney, were French doors with an iron railing (as indicated by the original architectural drawings); however, the iron railing is missing and the openings are boarded up. Four gable-roof dormers, identical to those on the façade break the plane of the roof.

The building is rectangular in plan and symmetrical, and is approached by a circular driveway leading to a large paved parking lot in the rear, measuring approximately 40 yards x 40 yards. The front contains a small grassy lot, and the circular drive is surrounded by a larger grassy lot with a few mature trees. R. S. Gass Boulevard curves around the building, and there is a small parking area along the front of the building. The central hall floorplan echoes the Georgian floorplan so common in the Upper South beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a central entry hall with grand staircase, flanked on either side by smaller rooms, with a similar plan repeated on the upper stories. This floorplan regained popularity with the advent of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Colonial Revival architectural style.

The main entry is through the front portico, which leads into an entrance hall that opens into a large "living hall" dominated by an impressive large fireplace and a grand staircase. The fireplace is centrally located on the south wall, flanked by French door openings. Although these door openings have been boarded up, the historic wide wooden trim is evident. The fireplace features a large tile firebox, stone hearth, wooden mantel and surround with panels and paired columns. A large plate glass mirror framed with wooden trim rises from the top of the mantelpiece to underneath the stair landing. The living hall also features wide baseboards and cornices and displays the most decorative woodwork in the building.

The staircase in the living hall features a turned post balustrade that spirals around itself to form a volute in lieu of a traditional newel post. The stairs rise along the east wall to a landing that stretches the entire

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

length of the south wall just above the fireplace. The stairs then rise along the west wall to the second floor. Another staircase is located under the main staircase and leads down to the basement level.

Double loaded corridors lead east and west from the living hall to doors on either end of the building that open onto the east and west porticos. The corridors on each floor are separated from the main living hall by doorways containing plain double doors. Each corridor has six doors opening into rooms, three on the north and three on the south. The east corridor has six similarly sized dormitory style rooms, each with one or two closets. The west corridor has five similar dormitory rooms, and a communal bathroom. Each of the dormitory rooms has one or two closets opening along a shared wall. All dormitory rooms are approximately between 12 and 18 feet square.

The second story is accessed from the living hall on the main level via the grand staircase. The second story corridors and rooms are laid out identically to the main story, with an additional dormitory room over the entrance hall. Doors on the east and west ends of the corridor open onto balconies over the side porches. A secondary stair rises to the attic level at the end of the west corridor.

The third story/attic level has eight rooms, similar in size to the rooms on the lower two floors, although their configuration is slightly different due to the dormer windows and slope of the roof. A central corridor leads from the stair on the western end down the hall, with rooms opening to either side. Although these rooms have seen the least modern intrusions and retain their wood floors, wood trim, and plaster walls, they also display the greatest damage from the elements.

The basement level is accessed either through one of the two doors at the rear of the building, through the door in the west porch foundation, or from the main floor via the staircase in the main living hall. The west porch door would have been the primary entrance for the basement, as indicated by the secondary sidewalk leading from the front walk to this entrance. A small entrance hall on the west end leads into a corridor which runs the full length of the building. Entering from the west end, three rooms of similar size to the other dormitory rooms on the above floors are on both the north and south sides of the corridor. Five of these rooms served as dormitory rooms, while the sixth room was the fuel room. This fuel room has a dirt floor. East of the fuel room is a large furnace room, approximately 18 feet by 25 feet. The interior walls of this room were constructed of brick, for fire safety reasons, while the rest of the interior walls throughout the building appear to have originally been plaster over wood lath. Directly across from this room is another room, approximately 14 feet by 16 feet, originally used as storage. Additional storage space located underneath the front portico is accessible through this room as well.

Rooms on the east end of the basement are large, and historically served as the kitchen and dining room for the boarders. The dining room is accessed directly from the east end of the corridor, and is the largest room in the building, measuring approximately 45 feet by 23 feet. The kitchen area is directly south of the dining room and is also a large rectangular room, measuring about 40 feet by 15 feet. Doors on the east wall of both the kitchen and dining room open into a small pantry/storage area underneath the eastern portico. The largest rooms in the basement have been partitioned off with temporary walls that can easily be removed.

Adaptive reuse of the building from its original use as a boarding home for indigents to office use has changed the interior finishes somewhat. Institutional-type carpet and linoleum have covered the original oak and pine floors throughout, with the exception of the attic floor. Walls throughout were originally plaster over wood lath, and some of these walls were covered with paneling c 1960. Although some of the original

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

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interior doors have been replaced, several original doors remain, and are simple single-panel wood doors. The communal bathrooms, located in the west corridors on the main and second floors, have been reconfigured to support both male and female facilities. Ceilings appear to have been dropped with acoustical tile throughout the first and second floors, and a kitchenette was added in one room on the southwestern corridor. Most of these changes appear to have taken place following the state's conversion of the building to office use in the 1970s. These more modern changes are all reversible, and current rehabilitation plans support the reversal of these modern intrusions. Overall, the interior remains largely unchanged, with walls and room configurations still appearing as dormitory-style rooms. Following the building's abandonment in the 1990s a great deal of deterioration has occurred, most notably in the loss of many of the windows of the building, and especially on the attic level, where water and animal damage is apparent.

Despite the modern changes on the interior of the building, and the deferred maintenance, the basic floor plan and most of the character-defining elements of the building remain intact, and the structure retains its overall integrity. The vast majority of the modern changes to the interior are reversible. The building is currently undergoing renovations under the Investment Tax Credit program of the National Park Service; thus all changes will be under the guidance of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.



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National Park Service

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

## Statement of Significance

The Home for Aged Masons is located within the 170-acre R.S. Gass State Complex off Ben Allen Lane in central Davidson County, Tennessee, five miles north of the State Capitol. The Home is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C for its significance in architecture and social history in Davidson County. The building was designed in 1913 by the firm of Asmus and Norton in Nashville, Tennessee, for the Free and Associated Masons for the purposes of providing a home for elderly Masonic members. It is a good example of institutional Colonial Revival architecture. The building itself was constructed between 1913 and 1915. In 1941, the property was sold to the State of Tennessee for use as the Middle Tennessee Tuberculosis Hospital, and eventually offices of the State Department of Public Health, which vacated the Home for Aged Masons building c 1990. Although the building has seen some changes during its various uses, it retains a high degree of historical and architectural integrity, and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Christian Asmus emigrated from Germany to Nashville c 1888, and began practicing architecture in Nashville by 1895, becoming one of Nashville's premier architects at the turn of the century. Asmus was one of the primary architects for many of the temporary structures created for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897. From 1906 to 1918, he practiced in partnership with George Norton in the firm of Asmus and Norton. Little is known about Norton, but he is credited with the c 1910 remodeling of the antebellum Nashville home known as Airdrie (NR 09/15/2005), then owned by his sister. Among other buildings, this firm designed the notable Cathedral of the Incarnation (1910-1914). In the 1920s, Asmus entered into partnership with Richard R. Clark (who served as supervisor for the Home for Aged Masons project), and this firm is credited with some of Nashville's most distinguished architectural landmarks, including the Nashville Trust Building (1925; NR as part of Nashville Financial Historic District 03/20/2002), the Bennie Dillon Building (1925-27; NR 08/16/1984), and the Masonic Grand Lodge on Broadway (1925) as well as buildings for General, St. Thomas, Protestant (now Baptist), and Vanderbilt hospitals.<sup>1</sup> As most of these hospital-related buildings no longer exist, the Home for Aged Masons is one of the only remaining examples of an Asmus-designed hospital/dormitory-style building in the Nashville area.

Asmus and Norton were retained by the Free and Associated Masons of Tennessee in 1913 for the purposes of building an "Old Mason's Home" near the pre-existing Masonic Widows and Orphans Home (non-extant) on Gallatin Road in the Inglewood area. The proposed Home for Aged Masons was an outgrowth of the charitable work of Tennessee Masons, who had provided financial assistance for "widows and orphans" since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and had founded the Widows and Orphans Home in 1886, with the first admissions in 1892.<sup>2</sup> Marcus B. Toney and W. H. Bumpas obtained a Charter of Incorporation from the State of Tennessee for the "Masonic Widow and Orphans Fund and Home" on August 11, 1886. Toney is

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph L. Herndon, "Architects in Tennessee until 1930: A Dictionary," M.S. thesis, Columbia University, 1975, page 7; Laura Stewart Holder and Leslie N. Sharp, "Airdrie," National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 2005; Blythe Semmer, "Nashville Financial Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 2002; Phillip Thomason, "Bennie-Dillon Building," National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 1984; Metropolitan Historical Commission, *Nashville: A Short History and Selected Buildings* (Nashville: MHC, 1974), 71, 163.

<sup>2</sup>Bobby J. Demott, "Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Home of Tennessee Fund," unpublished paper, 1994, photocopy in the files of the Metropolitan Historical Commission; Charles Albert Snodgrass, *The History of Freemasonry in Tennessee, 1789-1943* (Nashville: Ambrose Printing, 1944), 147-148.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

perhaps better known in his role as the author of his Civil War experiences in articles and one published book, *The Privations of a Private*, but was also a committed Mason who worked tirelessly with Bumpas in fundraising efforts to build a home for Masonic widows and orphans.<sup>3</sup>

Toney and Bumpas, bolstered by a gift of ten acres of land from railroad entrepreneur Jere Baxter from his "Maplewood" estate, raised approximately \$15,000 in 1887 to begin construction on a building to house needy widows and children of deceased Tennessee Masons.<sup>4</sup> On June 23, 1888, a grand parade was held, beginning in downtown Nashville at the Masonic Hall with a train of twelve coaches. The parade proceeded to Maplewood Station near Baxter's farm, and from there through the fields to the donated site between Gallatin Pike and Dickerson Pike, for the purposes of laying the cornerstone for the Widows' and Orphans' Home. The *Nashville Banner* reported that over 2000 people attended the picnic and laying of the cornerstone, which "has proven to be, as was intended, a great occasion," complete with a barbecue picnic, drilling by the Rock City and Hermitage Guards, the singing of "Nearer My God to Thee" and other music, and orations by Bumpas and Grand Master H. H. Ingersoll.<sup>5</sup> The original building was a four-story brick residential structure, consisting of sixteen rooms for women and their children, along with a dining room, kitchen, and schoolroom designed after the Kentucky Masonic Home in Louisville. Tennessee Masons prided themselves for leading the way in providing a home for needy dependents of Masons; in 1894 it was reported that Masons in only ten states had established or committed to providing such an institution.<sup>6</sup>

The first two families arrived at the Masonic Home in 1892. By 1897, there were over 100 residents of the Home, including 17 women and 82 children, two teachers, a superintendent, and a matron. In 1898, due to the crowded conditions, Bumpas, by then Grand Master, called for voluntary contributions to build a new facility to accommodate additional residents, and the building was completed by January 1899. Having been previously supported entirely from voluntary contributions from individual Masons and local lodges, the Grand Lodge of Tennessee accepted control of the Home from the volunteer association in 1907, and acquired approximately ninety acres of additional property surrounding the Home over the next year. New buildings, including a machine shop, dairy, boys' dormitory, and housing for invalid widows, were added to the Home campus by 1910, some through the support of the women's auxiliary, Order of the Eastern Star.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Marcus Breckenridge Toney, *The Privations of a Private: Campaigning with the First Tennessee, C.S.A., and Life Thereafter* (Nashville: np, 1907; reprint, 2005). The proceeds from the sale of the original publication were used to support the Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Home of Tennessee Fund.

<sup>4</sup>Demott, 3-4; Snodgrass, 148-49; William S. Speer, *Sketches of Prominent Tennesseans* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, reprint, 2003), 571-574.

<sup>5</sup>*Nashville Banner*, 23 June 1888.

<sup>6</sup>Demott, 3-4; Snodgrass, 150; "Report of Masonic Homes of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, June 1894," reprinted in *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Alabama* (Montgomery: Alabama Printing Company, 1894), 119-120. The location of the Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Home is documented on the 1898 Gardner Map of Davidson County. A c 1909 postcard of the Widows' and Orphans' Home is in the files of the Nashville Room at the Nashville Public Library, and is reprinted in Scott Faragher, *Nashville* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Press, 1999), 43. The Kentucky Masonic Widows and Orphans Home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Snodgrass, 153, 159; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons of Canada*, "Communication from the Grand Lodge of Tennessee", 29 January 1908, xcvi. It is interesting to note that Tennessee's African-American Masonic Lodges also operated a Widows' and Orphans' Home during this period. It was located on Lebanon Road near what was then Greenwood Park, a privately-

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

Since the establishment of the Widows' and Orphans' Home in the 1880s, discussions had taken place regarding the construction of a building to provide assistance to elderly men who were Masonic brothers from throughout the state. On February 3, 1913, a Charter of Incorporation for the "Old Masons' Home Association" was obtained from the State of Tennessee, and the Grand Lodge purchased an additional five acres of land adjoining the existing Home property. Grand Master Charles Comstock laid the cornerstone for the Aged Masons' Home on November 27, 1913.<sup>8</sup> The cornerstone on the northeast corner of the building reads:

(EAST ELEVATION)  
HOME FOR AGED MASONS  
ERECTED A.D. 1913  
ASMUS & NORTON ARCHITECTS  
T. H. EVANS & R. R. CLARK SUPERVISORS

(NORTH ELEVATION)  
INCORPORATORS  
W. H. BUMPASS  
H.W. BUTTORFF  
B. W. MONTGOMERY  
J. W. EASTMAN  
JNO. F. HOUSE  
CHAS. COMSTOCK  
GRAND MASTER

The Home for Aged Masons was not completed until 1915; that same year Asmus and Norton also constructed a new boys' dormitory building at the campus through the financial support of Al Menah Shrine Temple. In 1916, the Grand Lodge began admitting residents into the Home for Aged Masons, but also clarified the point that the Grand Lodge reserved the right to take the Aged Masons' building for the use of the Widows' and Orphans' Home if needed.<sup>9</sup> Tennessee Masonic Historian Charles Albert Snodgrass reported that the Home had "grown from one building and ten acres, to a large well-managed institution with over 100 acres of ground, and in addition to the original building, an Old Ladies' Home, a school, a Laundry building, incinerator building, pump and other small structures; an Old Masons' Home underway and an Infirmary nearing completion."<sup>10</sup>

By 1926, the Masonic Home campus was almost complete. In addition to the previously-mentioned buildings, the campus boasted an administration building, dining hall, auditorium/gymnasium, and Bumpass Hall "for grown ups" according to Snodgrass. Two hundred ninety people were residents in the various buildings of the Home, including 102 boys living in a dormitory built for fifty. Due to the overcrowded

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owned park for African-Americans. Noted Nashvillian Preston Taylor, owner/manager of Greenwood Park, was the manager of the African-American Masonic Home for Widows and Orphans. See *Nashville City Directory 1913*.

<sup>8</sup>Demott, 13; Snodgrass, 155-56.

<sup>9</sup>Demott, 15.

<sup>10</sup>Snodgrass, 165-66.

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conditions, the Ways and Means Committee recommended to the Board of Control that the boys be moved into the Old Masons' Home until other arrangements could be made; this was accomplished in 1928.<sup>11</sup>

In the mid 1920s, local Masonic lodges began to provide financial assistance to local needy families while allowing them to remain in their homes, and the Grand Lodge and Board of Control devised an Outside Maintenance Plan that would provide for needy widows and orphans to be cared for in their own town, without relocating these families to the Home. The Outside Maintenance Plan quickly gained favor among Tennessee Masons. It allowed people to remain in their home communities, without being relocated to Nashville from all over the state, and care could be provided at a lower per capita cost. By 1930, less than 200 people lived at the Home, all women and children, while the outside plan provided for over 300, including 42 elderly men, 45 elderly women, 32 mothers and over 200 children. No new residents were admitted at the Home in 1929. Enrollment at the Home continued to decline throughout the 1930s, as more people were provided for through the Outside Maintenance Plan; by 1935, Home residents numbered 91. In addition, through consolidation of services, some buildings were closed, and the original main building of the Home was razed in 1935.<sup>12</sup> All but two of the buildings had closed by 1940, and only 13 residents remained, while the outside plan provided for over 460 needy widows and orphans throughout the state. That year, a Special Committee surveyed the Home and the Outside Maintenance Plan, and in January 1941, concluded that the outside plan was more efficient, recommending the sale of the buildings and property. In April 1941, approximately the 200 acres of land and associated buildings were sold to the State of Tennessee for \$125,000 for use as a tuberculosis hospital campus. The remaining Masonic Home residents were transferred to a leased property on Antioch Pike, and the Widows' and Orphans' Home Fund continues to operate today providing financial assistance to Masonic dependents.<sup>13</sup>

The development of state-run tuberculosis treatment in Tennessee mirrors the development of treatment nationally; in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, most American TB patients were isolated in private sanatoria or in quarantine wards at county hospitals. Early in his first term as Governor of Tennessee, Prentice Cooper began the establishment of a statewide system of tuberculosis hospitals. In 1941, the State of Tennessee purchased the Masonic Home property for the location of the Middle Tennessee Tuberculosis Hospital, adding several buildings for that use through the next decades.<sup>14</sup> The private drive circulating through the property was named R.S. Gass Boulevard, in honor of a well-known and pioneering tuberculosis doctor in Middle Tennessee, and the complex became known as the R.S. Gass State Complex.<sup>15</sup> By the 1950s, Vanderbilt University required their residents in General Surgery to do a "tour of duty" at the hospital, providing some of the leading training in the South in thoracic medicine in the 1950s and 1960s, under Dr.

<sup>11</sup>Demott, 21-23.

<sup>12</sup>Demott, 25-27; Snodgrass, 200-201.

<sup>13</sup>Demott, 28; Snodgrass, 201.

<sup>14</sup>S. Adolphus Knopf, *A History of the National Tuberculosis Association: The Anti-Tuberculosis Movement in the United States* (New York: National Tuberculosis Association, 1922), 130-131; Anne-Leslie Owens, "William Prentice Cooper, Jr.," in C. Van West, ed., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 208. See also Wayne C. Moore, *Messages of the Governors of the State of Tennessee*, Vol. 11 (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1998), 293-431, *passim*.

<sup>15</sup>The Department of Health, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation all retain state offices at the Gass Complex, according to the State Department of General Services. See <http://www.tennessee.gov/generalserv/psm/dr.htm>.

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National Park Service

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

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Robert McCracken and Dr. Rollin Daniel.<sup>16</sup> In the 1970s, with the rate of tuberculosis having declined to the point of eliminating the need for specialized hospitals, the property was turned over to the State Department of Public Health for use as offices, and the Home for Aged Masons received some updating and modernization, including the reworking of the common bathrooms for separate facilities for women and men, the removal of kitchen equipment at the basement level, and the addition of a smaller kitchenette on the main floor. Eventually the more modern buildings were deemed more suitable for the needs of the state, and the remaining historic buildings were vacated and used as storage. Maintenance and renovations at the vacated buildings have been deferred, and the buildings have deteriorated over time.

The Metropolitan (Nashville) Historical Commission surveyed the exterior of the buildings in 1994, and identified three buildings connected with the Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Home, including the c 1913 Home for Aged Masons and c 1915 Boys' School. Another building identified in 1994 has since been demolished. In 2005, discussions began between the State and a private medical non-profit agency looking for facilities, resulting in the interest in rehabilitating the Home for Aged Masons building while maintaining its historic character. Proposed renovations will be undertaken using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and with guidance from the Tennessee Historical Commission to ensure that the building retains its historic integrity.

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<sup>16</sup> Scott, H. William, *History of Surgery at Vanderbilt University* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Medical Center, 1996) 52-55; J. L Farringer, Jr., "A History of Hospitals in Davidson County, Tennessee" *Journal of the Tennessee Medical Association* Vol 67 (April 1974), 295-304.

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National Park Service

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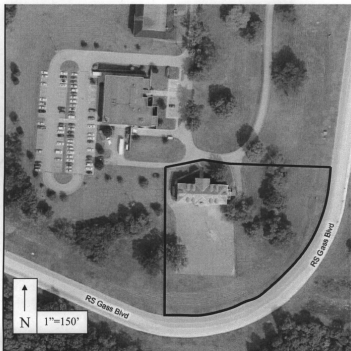
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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

### X. Geographical Data

The nominated property is approximately a two acre portion of parcel 06100003900. The west boundary line is an imaginary line that begins along the western edge of an access drive west of the building and extends south approximately 340 feet to the north edge of R.S Gass Boulevard. The north boundary line follows the edge of the access road north of the building then extends in a straight line approximately 400 feet east to the edge of R.S. Gass Boulevard. The east and south boundary follows the curve of R.S. Gass Boulevard.

The nominated property is on a larger parcel that contains several modern buildings. The boundary is drawn as shown on the map below to include the front lawn, rear parking area, and access to a publicly accessible road.



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National Park Service

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Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Tara Mitchell Mielnik  
Metropolitan Historical Commission  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, TN 37204

Date: April 2008

Digital files: Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Road  
Nashville, TN 37214

- 1/20 Façade, facing south
- 2/20 Façade and porch, facing southeast
- 3/20 Façade and west elevation, facing southeast
- 4/20 West elevation, facing southeast
- 5/20 Rear/South elevation, facing north
- 6/20 East elevation, facing west
- 7/20 East porch entry, facing northwest
- 8/20 Cornerstone, northeast corner, facing southwest
- 9/20 East elevation, porch, facing southwest
- 10/20 Entry and living hall, facing south
- 11/20 Doorway to main floor west corridor, facing west
- 12/20 Main floor east corridor, facing east
- 13/20 1<sup>st</sup> floor room, east corridor
- 14/20 1<sup>st</sup> floor room, west corridor
- 15/20 Staircase, main floor, facing southeast



**United States Department of the Interior**  
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# **National Register of Historic Places**

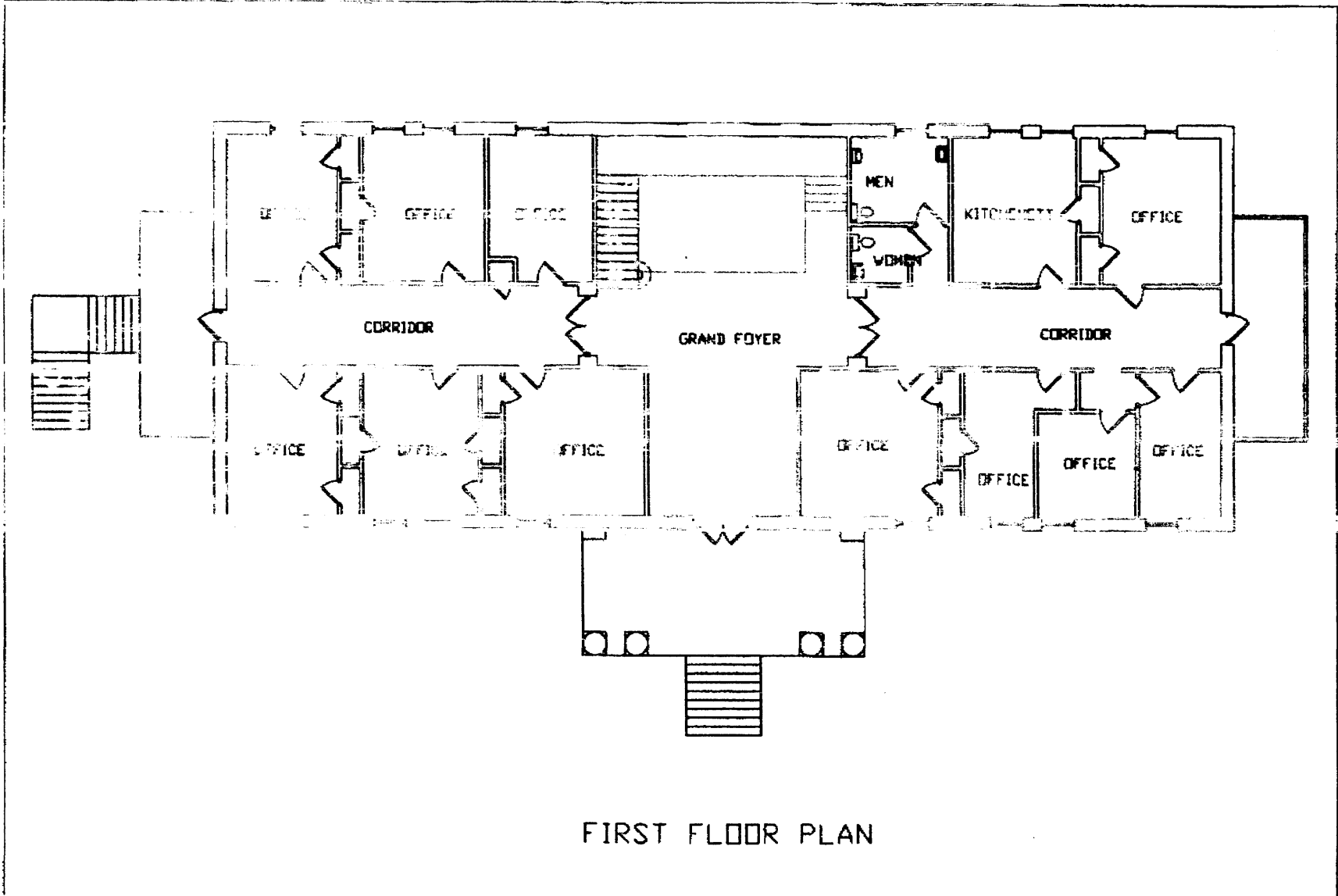
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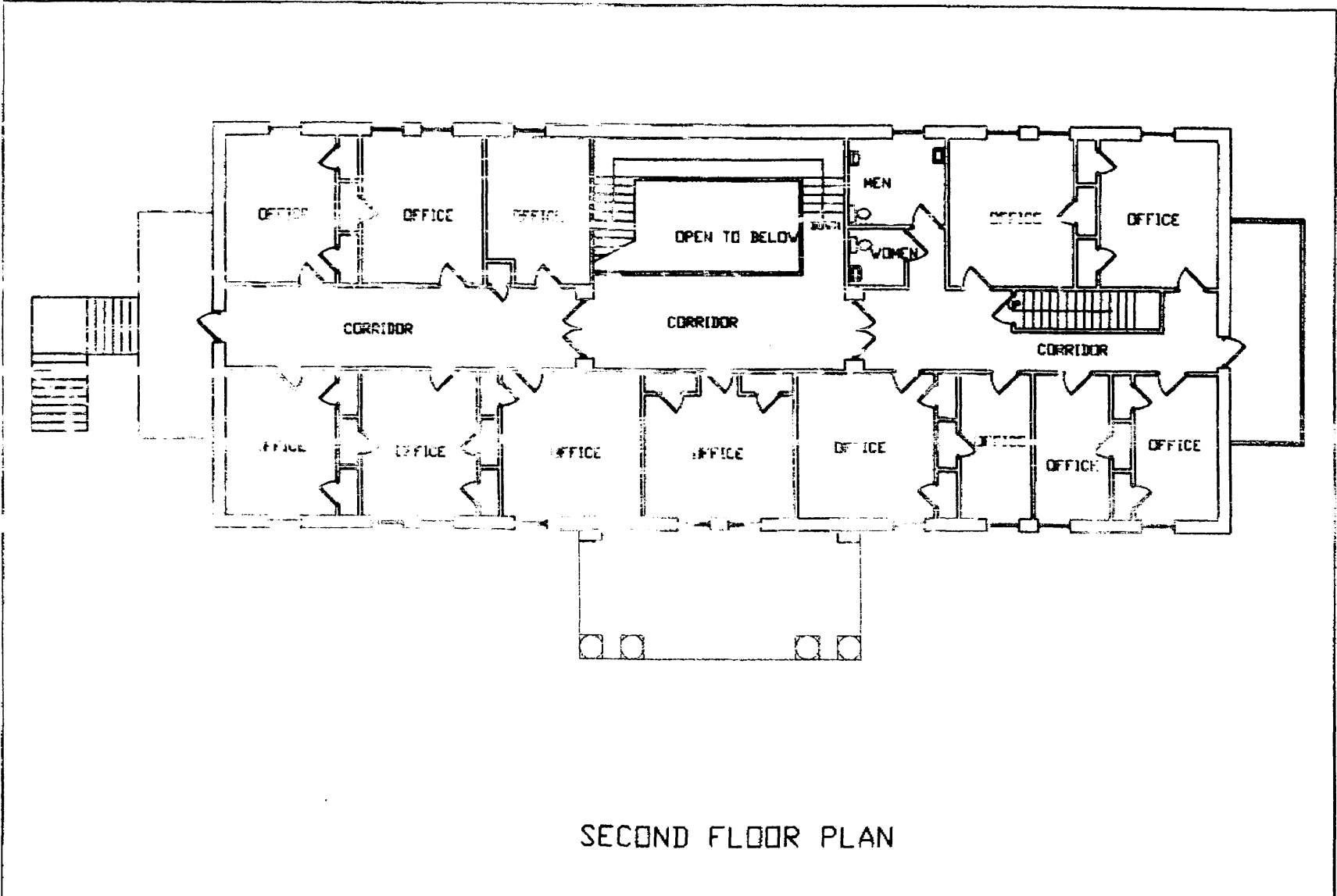
Home for Aged Masons  
Davidson County, TN

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- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 16/20 | Stair detail   |
| 17/20 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor main landing, facing north/northeast     |
| 18/20 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor room, facing north                       |
| 19/20 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor corridor, facing east                    |
| 20/20 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor room, southwest corner, facing southeast |



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE 1" = 10'

ACCESS IN WALL  
FOR POKCH FLOORS  
SCALE 1" = 10'

WORK  
CHECK

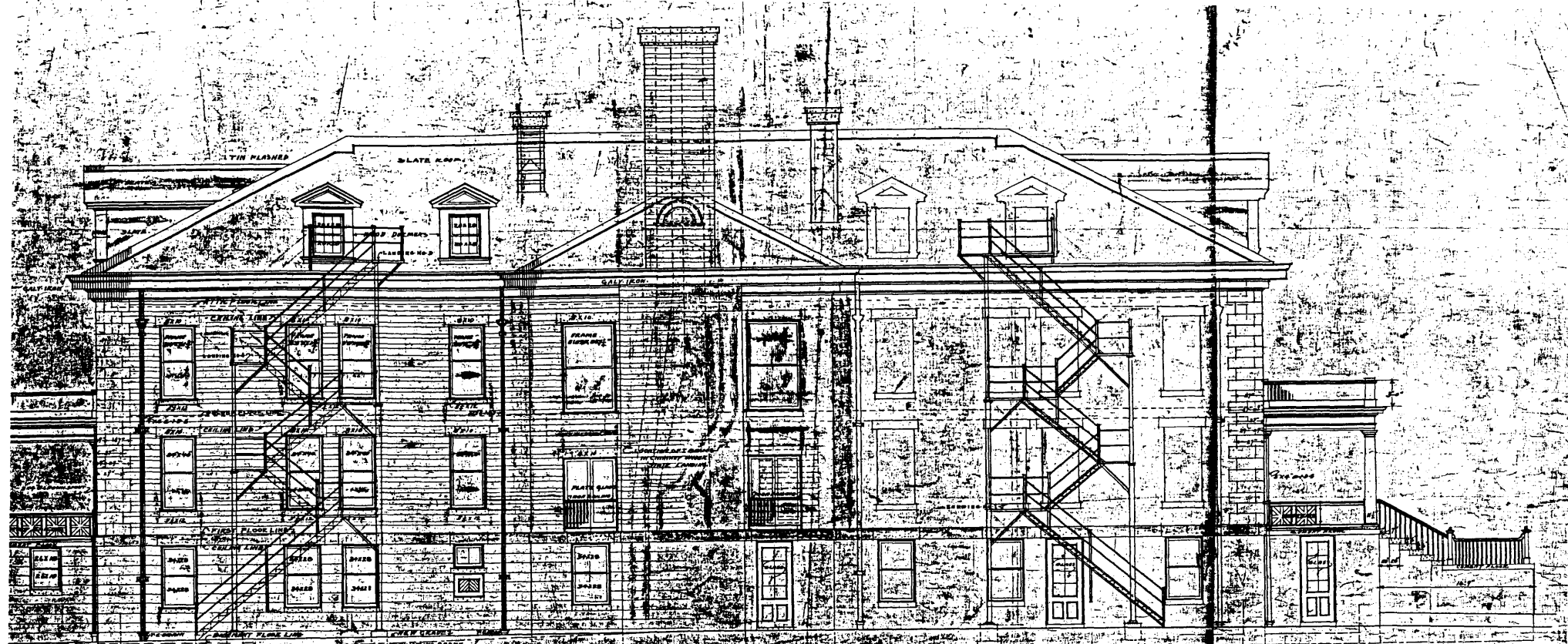
REVISIONS
NO. DATE BY

NOTE: THIS WORK IS THE PROPERTY OF ASMUS & NORTON ARCHT'S. ANY REPRODUCTION WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

HOME FOR THE AGED MASON  
- MAPLEWOOD -  
- NASHVILLE - TENNESSEE -

ASMUS & NORTON ARCHT'S  
- 505-07-08 COLE BLDG -  
- NASHVILLE - TENNESSEE -

DRAWN  
DATE



PLAN OF UPPER FLIGHT  
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

REAR ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



PLAN OF LOWER FLIGHT  
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

WORK NO. 22  
CHECKED BY

NOTE:  
STONE WORK LAYED WITH THE STONES  
BY THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR

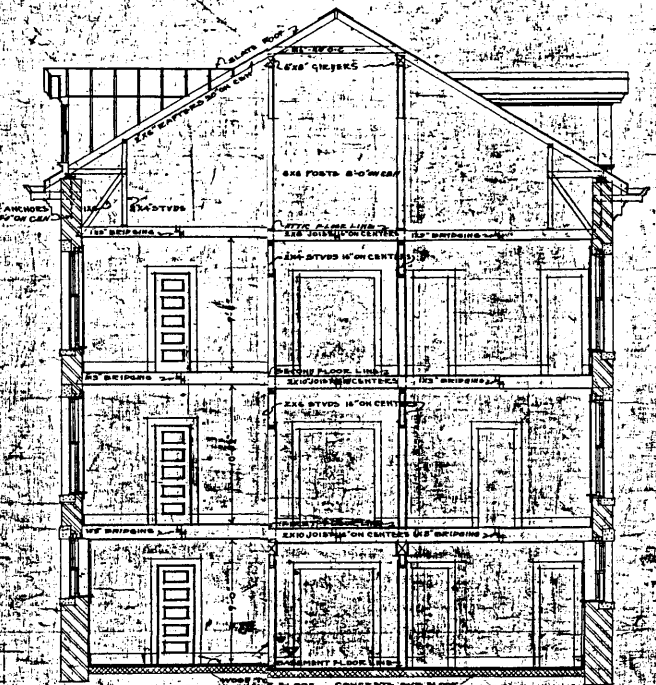
HOME FOR THE AGED MANSIONS  
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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

SMUS & NORTON ARCHT'S  
505-07-08 COLE BLDG  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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EAST ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



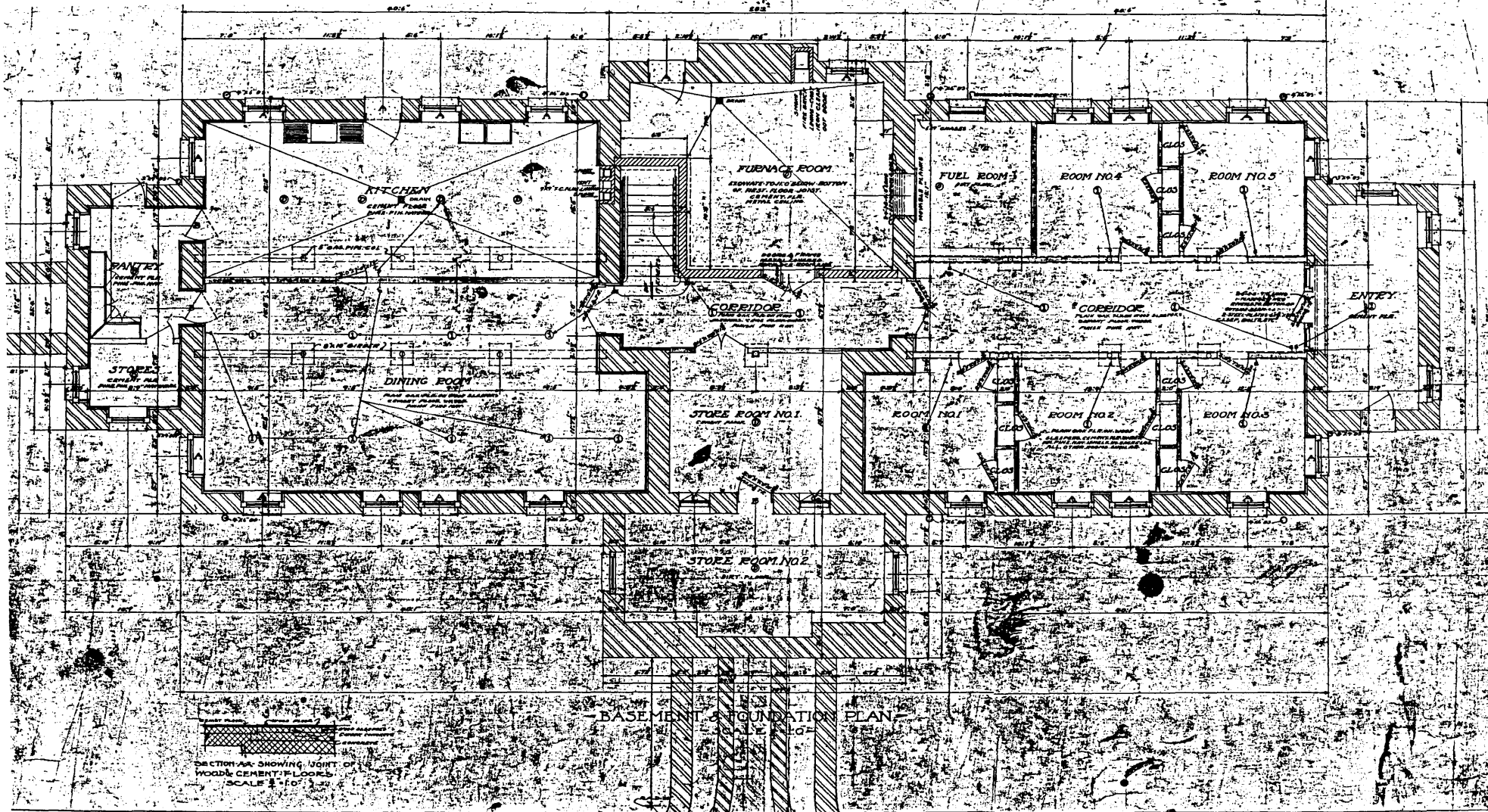
CROSS SECTION  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

SCALE
DESCRIPTION
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DATE
BY
FOR

HOME FOR THE AGED MASON'S  
- MAPLEWOOD -  
- NASHVILLE TENNESSEE -

ASMUS & NORTON ARCHTS.  
- 305-07-08 COLE BLVD. -  
- NASHVILLE TENNESSEE -

DRAW  
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SECTION A-A SHOWING JOINT OF WOOD & CEMENT FLOORS  
SCALE 1" = 4'-0"

- BASEMENT & FOUNDATION PLAN -

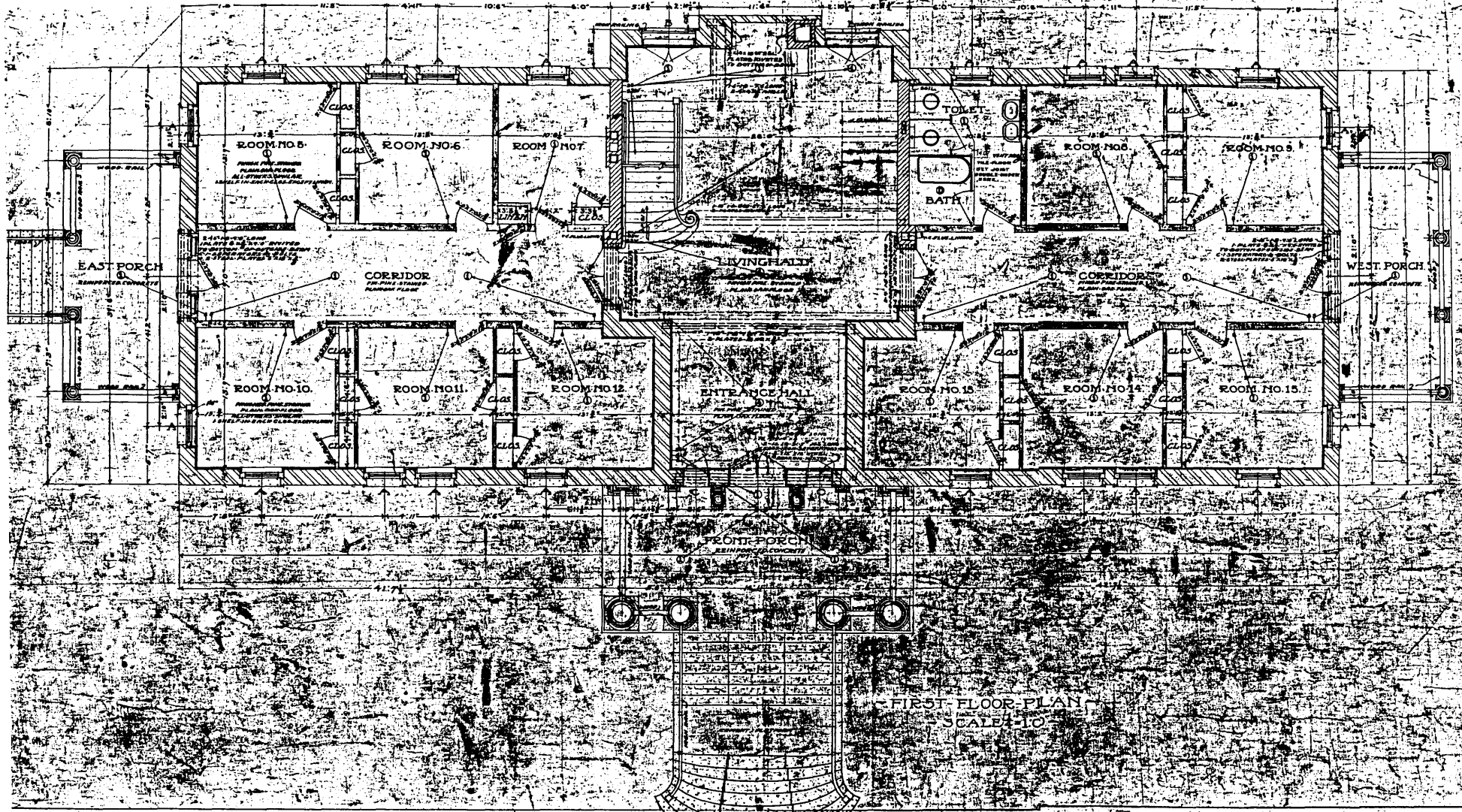
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- HOME FOR THE AGED MASON -  
- MAPLEWOOD -  
- NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE -

ASMUS & NORTON ARCHTS  
- 505-07-08 COLE BLDG -  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

DRAW  
DATE

NOTE: ALL DIMENSIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED TO BE IN FEET AND INCHES.  
ALL DIMENSIONS TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.  
ALL DIMENSIONS TO CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.  
ALL DIMENSIONS TO CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.



WORK  
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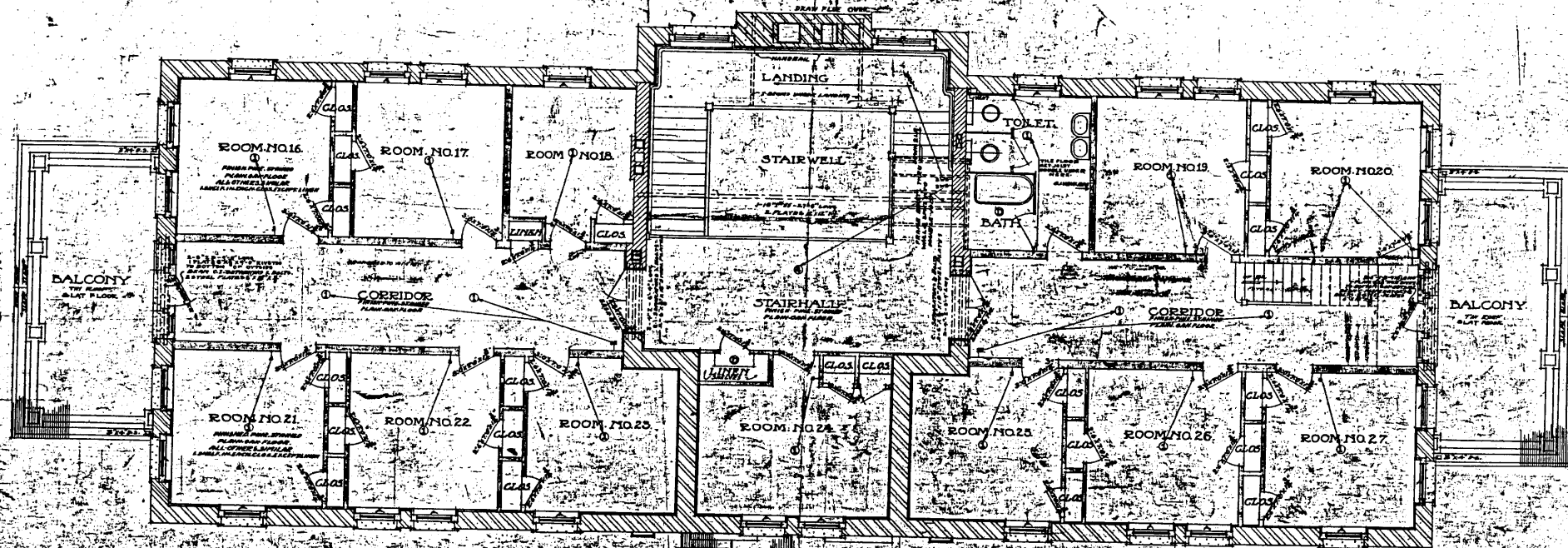
NOTE: ALL OPENINGS MARKED WITH THESE FIGS.  
 1-6" LANS. 2-4" SPACINGS  
 ALL OPENINGS MARKED WITH THESE FIGS.  
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 1-6" LANS. 2-4" SPACINGS

HOME FOR THE AGED MASON  
 MAPLEWOOD  
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

ASMUS & NORTON ARCHTS.  
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 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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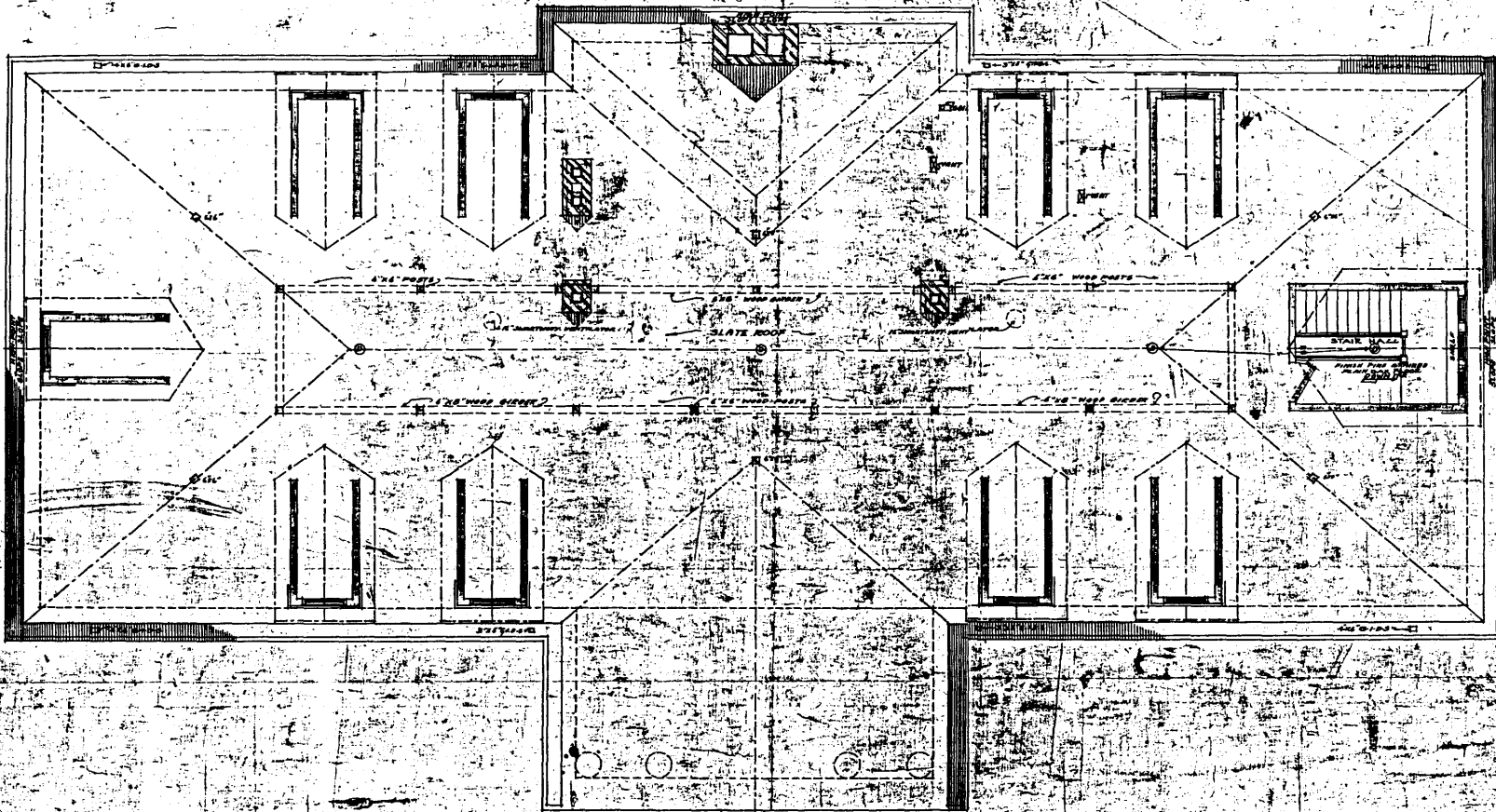
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1/10

NOTE  
 ALL OPENINGS IN WALLS 4" MINIMUM 2" x 4" MINIMUM  
 2. SEPARATORS  
 ALL OPENINGS IN PARTIAL BRICKWORK  
 2" x 4" MINIMUM 2" x 4" MINIMUM

HOME FOR THE AGED MASON  
 MAPLEWOOD  
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

ASMUS & NORTON ARCHT'S  
 505-07-08 COLE BLDG  
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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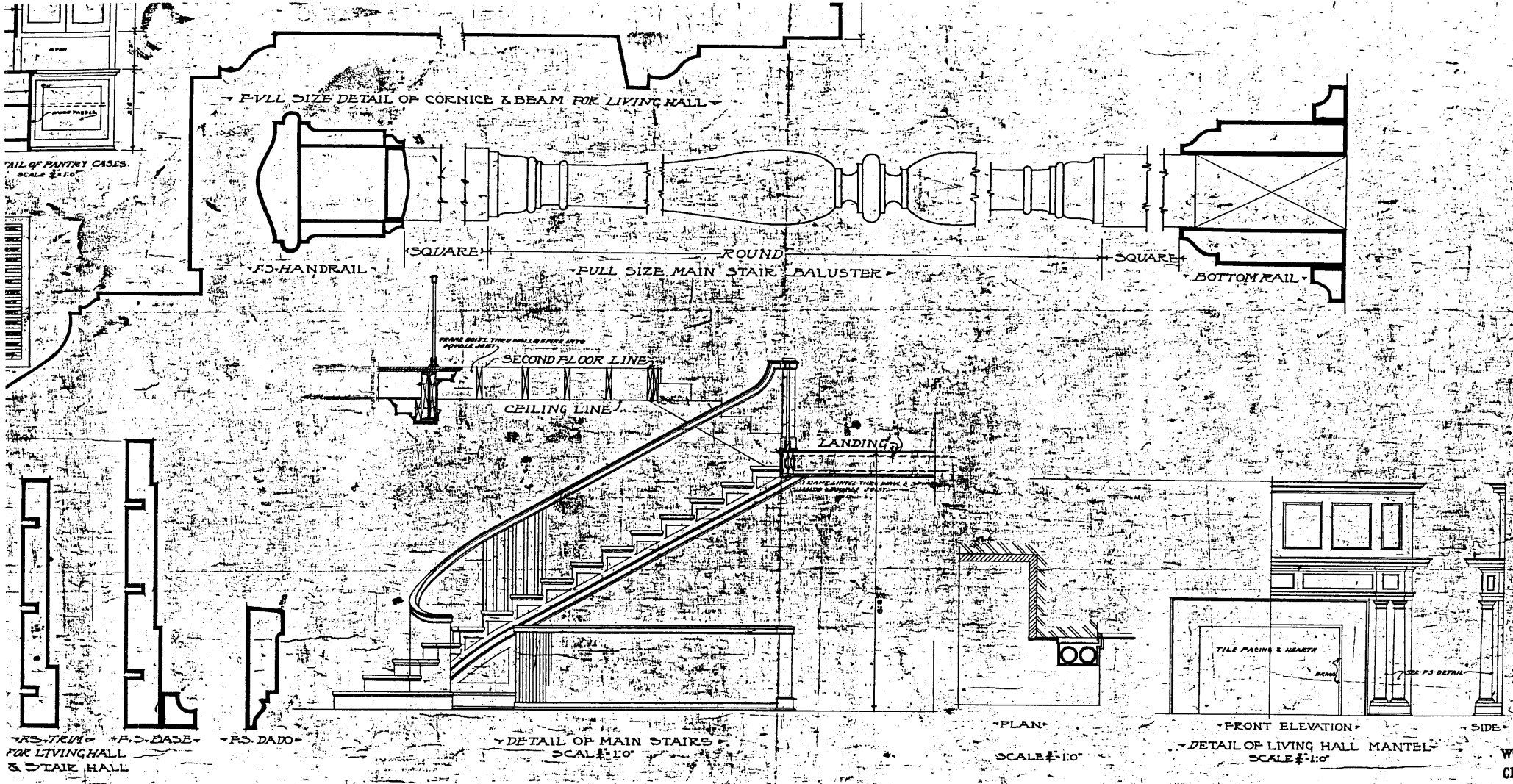
ATTIC & ROOF PLAN  
SCALE 1/10

- HOME FOR THE AGED MASONS -  
- MAPLEWOOD -  
- NASHVILLE - TENNESSEE -

- ASMUS & NORTON ARCHTS -  
- 505-07-08 COLE BLDG -  
NASHVILLE TENNESSEE

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- HOME FOR THE AGED MASONS -  
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