

PH0676098

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 28 1979  
MAY 8 1979  
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

Leath, Porter, Children's Center

HISTORIC

Porter Leath Home-

AND/OR COMMON

Porter Leath Children's Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

850 N. Manassas St.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Memphis

VICINITY OF

Eighth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Tennessee

47

Shelby

157

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

X OTHER Social Sys. Center

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Board of Trustees

STREET & NUMBER

850 North Manassas

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Memphis

VICINITY OF

Tennessee 38107

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Shelby County

STREET & NUMBER

160 N. Main

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Memphis

Tennessee 38103

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Memphis Landmarks Commission Preliminary Survey

DATE

January, 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Memphis Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Memphis

Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Six structures, four of them connecting but constructed at different times, make up the property contained in the Porter Leath Home. The northernmost building, built in 1923, is of red brick, has a gable roof, and rectangular double hung windows. To the south of the 1923 structure is the original building built in 1856. It is a brick, two-story building with a hip roof. Rectangular double hung windows are topped by cast iron caps. A brick chimney is at the rear of the building.

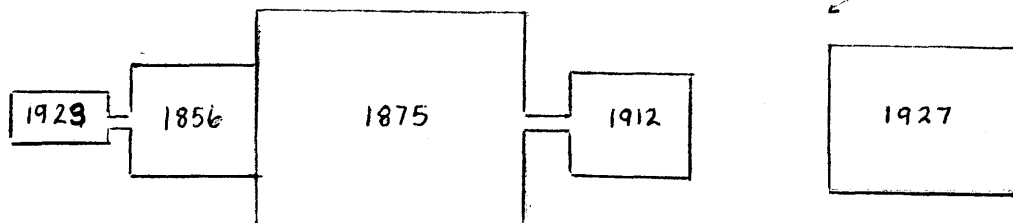
The largest building, which is a three-story brick, was built in 1875. The architect was E. C. Jones. Segmental arched windows are centered with keystone arches. A porte cochere at the main entry extends over the drive, supported by rectangular wooden columns. A three-story bay window, located at the front of the building, has a carved stone at the second story cornice bearing the legend "Leath Orphanage, Erected I.O.O.F., 1875". There are six brick chimneys, three centrally located and two at the rear of the structure. A projecting cornice just below the roofline of the building is supported by exposed cornice brackets. The termination of each of the three stories is marked by brick cornice work with elaborate brick piers.

To the south of the three-story building, connected by a walkway, is a two-story rectangular brick structure built in 1912. Brick quoins appear at each corner of the building and rectangular double-hung windows are topped by cornice work with a centered keystone.

The southernmost building in the complex is the Gould Cottage, built in 1927 with funds provided by Edwin Gould of New York. The Gould Cottage is a two-story building of white stucco with a tiled roof, and other elements of the Spanish Mission style. The centered entry is recessed and is marked by a brick and limestone enclosed archway with an elaborate motif of limestone. The hip roof of the structure is matched by a projecting roof overhang at the top of the first floor. A gable appears on the second story to the right of the entry.

The remaining building in the complex is a one-story brick building with a flat roof, rectangular windows, and an overhanging porch supported by rectangular wooden posts. This structure is not currently in use.

(For map depicting age of structures, see ~~attached sketch map.~~ <sup>BELOW</sup>)



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1856, 1875, 1912, 1927 & 1929 BUILDER/ARCHITECT E. C. Jones (1875 building)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Porter Leath Children's Center was originally chartered in 1850 as the Protestant Widows' and Orphans' Asylum, the oldest institution of its kind in Memphis. The asylum was incorporated in 1852. The present location of the institution was first utilized in 1854, when Mrs. Sarah H. Leath donated nine acres of land for the use of the institution. At that time, public subscriptions were accepted for the construction of the first building (architect unknown), which was completed in 1856 and is still standing. Mrs. Leath's gift resulted in a name change for the institution to the Leath Orphan Asylum.

In 1875, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of Memphis provided funds for the erection of a three-story brick building, still standing to the south of the original 1856 building. The architect of this Italianate structure was Edward Culliat Jones, who began his career in 1848 in Charleston, South Carolina, where he gained a statewide reputation. Although his early work was done in the Greek Revival style, he began to employ the Italian Villa style in 1852 in conjunction with his partner Francis D. Lee. By 1866 Jones had arrived in Memphis, where he was one of three architects in the mid and late nineteenth century who designed the major public, private and commercial buildings in the city. Among the buildings that he designed were the Avalanche office, the residences of Napoleon Hill, J. C. Neely, R. A. Parker, John S. Toof and S. T. Carnes, the Appeal building, the Lauderdale Street Prebyterian Church, First Street Baptist Church, Mammoth Cotton Shed at the Navy Yard and many public schools.

The architectural distinction of the building that Jones designed symbolizes the commitment of those who financed construction to translate a growing social conscience into social action. That building activity of this sort was a priority of the community indicates the thrust of contemporary values.

A gift in memory of Dr. David Tinsley Porter of Memphis in 1904 prompted a name change to the Porter Home and Leath Orphanage. In 1951, the name was again changed to the Porter Leath Home.

An addition in 1912 resulted in a south wing being added to the 1875 structure. A further addition was made to the north of the first structure in 1923. The last physical addition to the complex was begun in 1927 with the proceeds of a gift from Edwin Gould of New York, related to the railroad king Jay Gould. This addition is called the Gould Cottage and was originally used as a home for older girls. The architects for these structures are not known.

Throughout its history, the Porter Leath Children's Center has changed its

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Porter Leath Children's Center History," Porter Leath Board of Trustees, 1976.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9

QUADRANGLE NAME Northwest Memphis, TN-AR

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	7	7	0	3	8	0	3	8	9	5	1	9	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

C 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

D 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

E 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

F 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

G 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

H 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A nine acre tract located at the southeast corner of Manassas and Chelsea. See Shelby County Deed Book 19, page 512 for boundaries.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann K. Bennett, Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Memphis Landmarks Commission

June 7, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

22 N. Front St., Suite 901

(901) 528-2834

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Memphis

Tennessee

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Herbert L. Haynes*

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

3/20/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Charles A. [Signature]*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
*Duke [Signature]*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

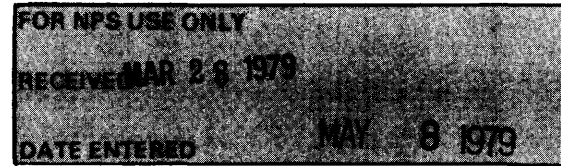
5-8-79

DATE

5/3/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

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direction in providing social services to the children of Memphis. Its importance in the role of aiding children in the Memphis community has continued since its establishment. It is significant for its architecture as well as its community service.

The boundaries of this property were drawn to include the buildings and property presently owned by the Porter Leath Children's Center.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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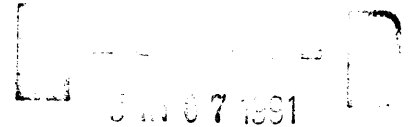
Leath, Porter, Children's Center

Shelby County, TENNESSEE

Name Change Approval  
to Porter Leath Home

for Keeper *Andrew Byers* 1/15/91

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Section number     N/A     Page     N/A    

Porter Leath Home

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This property was listed in the National Register on May 8, 1979 as the "Leath, Porter Children's Center." However, the historic name on the nomination form is given as the "Porter Leath Home." This name reflects the last names of two important benefactors to the institution, and it is also the current, preferred name.

*Herbert L. Hoyer*  
*1/2/91*