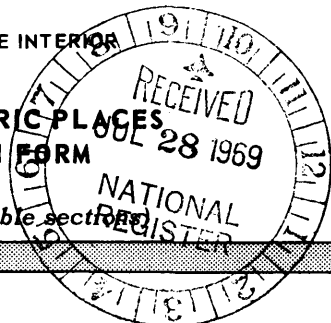


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)



STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Davidson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 69-12-41-0003	DATE 11/30/69

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Belle Meade ~~Mansion~~

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
"Queen of Tennessee Plantations"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Harding Road at Leake Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Nashville *vicinity*

STATE Tennessee	CODE 41	COUNTY: Davidson	CODE 037
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:  
State of Tennessee

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE  
Tennessee 41

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Davidson County Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Public Square

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE  
Nashville Tennessee 41

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

STATE: Tennessee  
COUNTY: Davidson  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER DATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The date of the construction by John Harding ( -1866) of his brick home is not documented. Structural evidence in the present Belle Meade Mansion indicates a date earlier than 1840, in the opinion of Henry Judd (Division of Restorations, National Park Service). Such evidence includes the water table, arrangement of the four main chimneys, Flemish bond brickwork (now covered with stucco except in attic over the nursery), hewn rafters (and floor joints under one room in the kitchen wing), plaster and pane composition.

Speer's Sketches of Prominent Tennesseans, published just after the death of William Giles Harding (1808-1886) contains the statement that he built the house in 1853. This is now considered (for the reasons above) to be either a misprint of the date, or an inaccuracy which should perhaps read "remodeled his father's house." However, William Harding took over the estate in 1839 and is known to have entertained important out-of-town visitors throughout the 1840's (see Nashville City Directory: 1859, Pen and Sword: The Life and Journals of Randal W. McGavock). The date of John Harding's smaller "Belair" mansion, built for a daughter, would seem to indicate that he was already living in something finer than Belair by 1835. The date may be pushed back to the 1820's if we believe the 1950 statement of Henry Green that his father (the Negro head groom at Belle Meade), Bob Green (1824-1906) was town in the same cabin in which William G. Harding had been born in 1808. This would indicate that by 1824 the Hardings were out of the cabin, but not necessarily into the present mansion.

No evidence (structural from contemporary documents) has been found to support the family legend of a fire destroying the home in 1851, nor to support the frequently published claim that William Strickland was the architect for its alleged 1853 reconstruction.

Measurement of the distance between the four existing brick structures in the Belle Meade complex indicates that there was at one time a three-story central block with four chimneys, flanked by two-story wings (one of which is conjectural), each having a central chimney, and behind each wing a somewhat smaller dependency now called the garden house and smokehouse. These buildings were not stuccoed; they were laid in common bond except for the central block in Flemish bond with grapevine jointing. Whether the stone columns were on this block originally, or were added later when the dark gold stucco was applied (1853?) is not known. The earliest known picture of the house is an engraving in Clayton's History of Davidson County in which the house appeared virtually as it does today although from one angle the third story is not shown, through the artist's error. There is documentation that the mansion had gold stucco in 1895 (Fred Russell column, p. 11, Nashville Banner, May 11, 1968); subsequently it has been painted light gray, olive green, and dark gray. It is at present light gray.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. SIGNIFICANCE

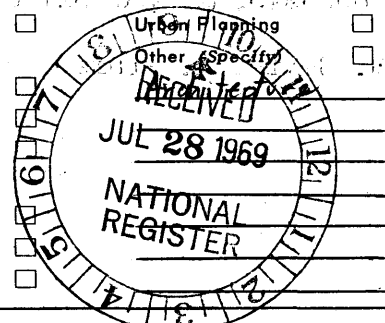
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century   
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |              |                                     |                |                          |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Aboriginal                                      | Education    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>            | Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic <input type="checkbox"/>               | Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | losophy        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Science        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>         | Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Sculpture      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>               | Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social/Human-  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/>         | Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | itarian        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>           | Military     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Theater        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   | Music        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Belle Meade mansion, the plantation house of the several thousand acre plantation that once existed along with the mansion, was owned and built by the Harding family. John Harding founded the plantation in 1807 and gradually added land to what was to become one of the finest farms - especially thoroughbred - in the country. The original deed included one of middle Tennessee's first permanent structures, Dunham's Station. The Harding family occupied the property from 1807 until 1904. General W. G. Harding built the present mansion and his daughter Selene who married William Hicks Jackson, a confederate general, continued to live at Bellemeade. Other families owned the mansion as a private home in the twentieth century, but the farm was soon divided for residential and park use. In 1953, the State of Tennessee bought the mansion and 24 acres for restoration as a state historic site. The Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities has done the restoration since.

The Belle Meade stud was one of the most famous nurseries of Thoroughbred horses. In addition, the farm sold breeding stock of ponies, Alderney cattle, Cotswold sheep, and Cashmere goats. General Harding and his son-in-law, General Jackson were pioneers in the science of animal husbandry. After the death of Gen. Jackson and his son, William Harding Jackson, the mansion, land, and livestock were sold in 1904. At that time Belle Meade was America's oldest and largest Thoroughbred Farm.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. Cochran, Gifford, Grandeur In Tennessee Classical Revival Architecture in a Pioneer State (New York, 1946).
2. Gower, Herschel, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXII (1963), No. 3, pp. 203-222.
3. Smith, J. Frazer, White Pillars (New York, 1941).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		36 ° 06 ' 20 "	86 ° 51 ' 52 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**May Dean Coop**

ORGANIZATION: **Tennessee Historical Commission**      DATE: **6/10/69**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State Library and Archives Bldg.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Nashville**      STATE: **Tennessee**      CODE: **41**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name: Sam B. Smith

Title: Chairman, Tenn. Historical Commission

Date: 7/24/69

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: DEC 30 1969

ATTEST:

William J. Mustang  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 11 1969

16/512 200/3995460  
 OTM BTF-um  
 10-19-72  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

2550 III NW  
(SCOTTSDORO)

86°57'52"

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

NORTH



86°52'30"  
36°07'30"

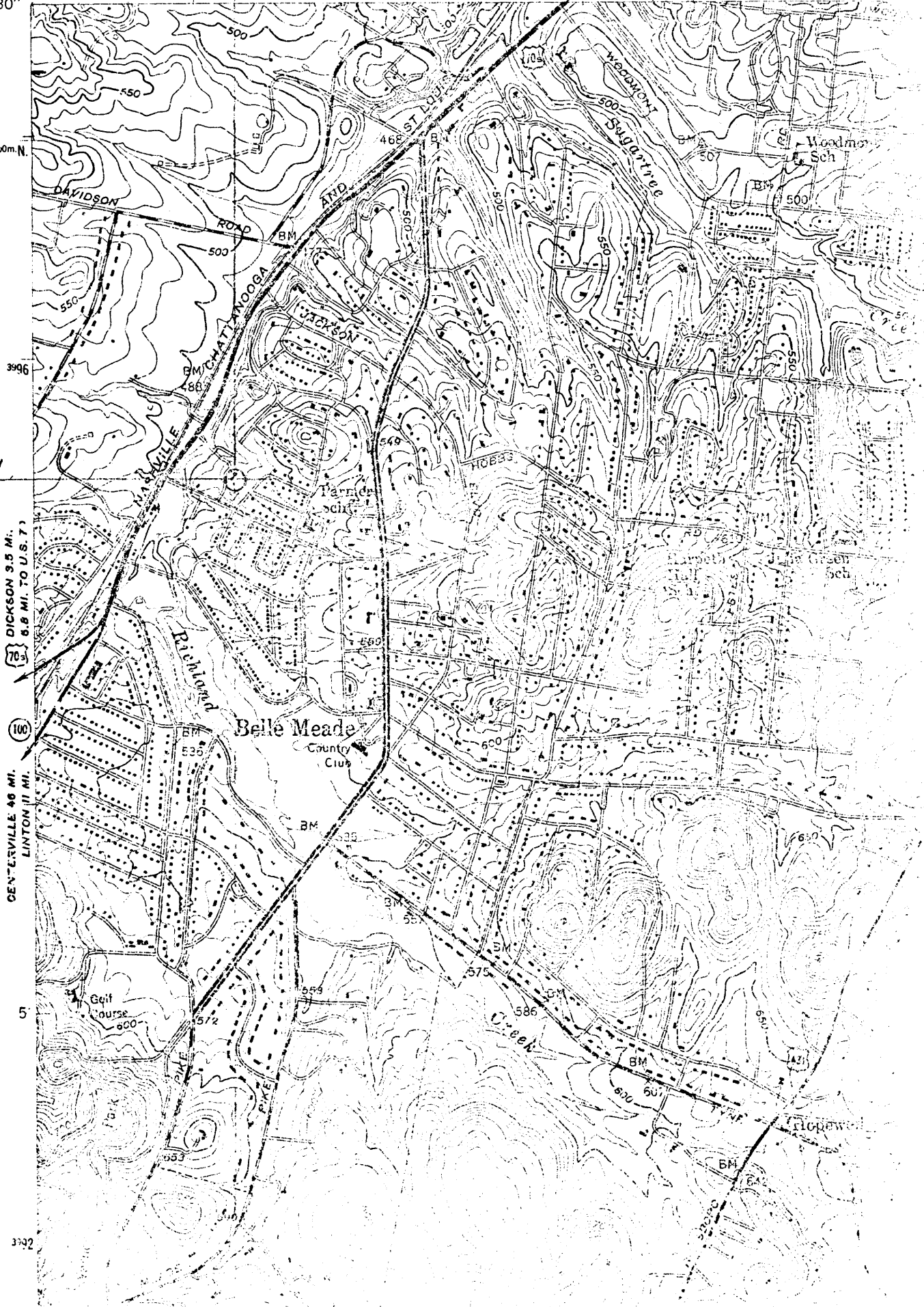
512000E

STATE CAPITOL 4.9 MI.  
513 4.3 MI. TO U.S. 31

514

50'

36°06'20"



DICKSON 3.5 MI.  
6.8 MI. TO U.S. 71

(100)

GEN'LVILLE 46 MI.  
LINTON 11 MI.

5'

3992