

PH0691194

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 18 1977  
DATE ENTERED MAY 9 1977

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

HISTORIC  
Eli Rayner House  
AND/OR COMMON  
Rayner House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
1020 Rayner Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Memphis  
STATE  
Tennessee  
VICINITY OF  
Eighth  
COUNTY  
Shelby  
CODE  
47  
CODE  
157  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Nickey Elrod and Stoy Bailey  
STREET & NUMBER  
1700 Vesey Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Memphis  
VICINITY OF

STATE  
Tennessee

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Shelby County Register's Office  
STREET & NUMBER  
160 North Main Street, Room 519  
CITY, TOWN  
Memphis

STATE  
Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey  
DATE  
December 15, 1976  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Tennessee Historical Commission  
CITY, TOWN  
Nashville

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

STATE  
Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                     DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                             RUINS  
 FAIR                              UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Rayner House, of Greek Revival style, was designed with details reminiscent of the 1830 period, which places its architectural style to the early days of Memphis. The house appears to be designed by someone with considerable knowledge of architecture as compared with more frequent examples found in the Mid-south which were commonly designed by the builder and/or owner and lacked the aesthetic awareness seen in the Rayner House.

The imposing main (or west) facade is highlighted by the elegantly proportioned fluted columns capped with lotus leaf Corinthian capitals, supporting the pediment with simple scrolled triglyphs of a design found in late examples of Greek Revival architecture. Behind the four columns on the two-story high portico is a cast iron balcony which appears to be part of the original building or added before 1900. The floor to ceiling windows are accented by movable exterior shutters which were part of the original design of the period. The entrance millwork, complete with leaded stain glass transom and side lights, reflect the elegant proportions of the Greek Revival style. The roof lines have been altered by the additions of dormers on each wing. The gable roof, which was originally covered with wooden shakes, has been replaced with composition shingles. The plain boxed cornice contains an internal gutter system with downspouts at the lower roof. The high central roof has a more elaborate boxed cornice supported by pairs of scrolled triglyphs spaced sixteen inches on center.

The house remains in basically sound condition with the interior retaining a good bit of the original millwork, all very simple and basic to this period. The floor plan consists of a large entry hall with an open stairway of simple proportions leading to the upstairs hall; parlor to the north; living room to the south; and dining room to the east, off the entry hall. A pantry and screen porch are located to the north of the dining room. The living room has been altered into one large room where the original plan had two separate parlors. Upstairs the original bedroom is found on the east side of the hall, with the original fireplace on the east wall.

The original chimney on the east side of the building is constructed of hand-made brick, reportedly fired on the grounds by slave labor. The remaining chimneys were rebuilt in the early 1900s. Originally every room had a fireplace complete with mantle and hearth of the period. The flooring is the original hand-planed pine boards joined with tongue and groove joints. The stair rail consists of one continuous piece of moulded walnut with simple turned balusters.

The original kitchen and bedroom wings on the east side of the building no longer stand. These were removed at the turn of the century, moved to Willett Street, and no longer exist. All other out buildings have been removed or destroyed through the years. The property is well landscaped around the building, with most of the original oak trees still standing.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 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 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Eli Rayner was born in Bertie County, North Carolina, in May 1815. He was a first cousin and playmate of the eloquent and fiery Kenneth Rayner, a North Carolina Congressman from 1839 to 1845. Rayner settled in Fayette County, Tennessee, as a planter where he married Miss May A. Jones, a step-daughter of Col. Marcus B. Reggon, a prominent citizen of Shelby County.

He was a scientific farmer who preserved the fertility of his fields in an age when planters wore out land and moved on. He quickly became a distinguished and respected planter. In January 1851, Rayner sent a bale of cotton to William Mure, British Consul in New Orleans. It was a perfect bale, weighing 500 pounds, and remarkable for its fineness, whiteness, softness, and beauty. In fact, Mr. Mure sent the bale to England for the London Exposition, the first World's Fair.

Rayner moved closer to Memphis in 1856 and bought land on the unfinished Memphis & Charleston Railroad and built the Rayner House. He laid out extensive vegetable and flower gardens and had fresh vegetables the year round. He kept a greenhouse where he grew oranges and lemons.

During the Civil War the grove in front of his house became a Federal camp. The Rayners hid their family jewelry and silver in the greenhouse, but Union soldiers stole them anyway.

In 1870, Irene, one of Rayner's daughters, married Thomas Battle Turley, who became a United States Senator from Tennessee. In 1878 Yellow Fever struck Memphis and again the grove in front of the Rayner House became a camping ground, this time for Memphis refugees.

Before Rayner's death in 1892, he cut Reagon Street, now Willett Street, and sold the land to the west of the house, upon which the present neighborhood was built. The house went through a series of owners, the last of which was Dr. John H. Davis, professor of history at Southwestern at Memphis, who taught with Robert Penn Warren in the early days of Southwestern. The house is now in a declining neighborhood. Citizens of the Rozelle-Annesdale neighborhood are organizing in an effort to bring the area out of decline. It is hoped that the Rayner House will be a symbol and a focal point for the revitalization of the neighborhood. Stoy Bailey, the present owner, and organizer of the Rozelle-Annesdale neighborhood, intends to sell the house to John Spence, the state legislator of that district. The Rayner House will be his residence and office where he will work with his constituents.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pool, Charles E., "The Eli Rayner House" Copies are available from the Memphis Public Library, Memphis Room; written 1949.

The Memphis Daily Appeal, January 7, 1851.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	7	7	2	3	9	0	3	8	9	0	0	7	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

C 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

D 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

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

John W. Spence, Jr.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

December 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1359 Linden Avenue, #42

TELEPHONE

(901) 725-0618

CITY OR TOWN

Memphis

STATE

Tennessee

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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. Hayden*

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

2/15/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Wm. J. ...*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5/9/77

ATTEST:

*Charles ...*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5.8.77