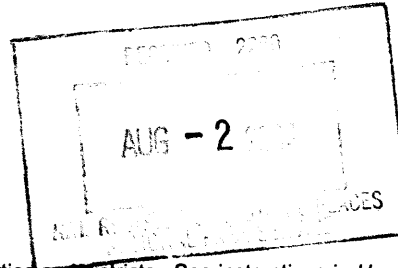


(Oct. 1990)

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 Spence, John C., House

other names/site number Children's Discovery House Museum

2. Location

street & number 503 North Maple Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Murfreesboro

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Rutherford code 149 zip code 37130

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.)

Herbert C. Hays
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/30/04
Date

Deputy 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

for
David J. Whinn
8/23/04

Spence, John C., House
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

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
2		structures
		objects
3		Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: law office

LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Four-Square

QUEEN ANNE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE

walls BRICK, WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD, GLASS, CONCRETE, METAL

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets

Spence, John C., House
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- 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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: historical writing

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1866-1890

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Spence, John Cedric

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University

Spence, John C., House
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.1 acres (Murfreesboro 315 SW)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>554880</u>	<u>3967594</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

See Figure 1, tax map

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Price, D. Lorne McWatters
organization Middle TN State University, Department of History date October 25, 2002
street & number MTSU Box 23 telephone 615-898-5805
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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 Kious and Rodgers, PLLC (John Rodgers)
street & number 152 Heritage Park Drive telephone 615/895-5566
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37129

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.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

VII. Architectural Description

The John C. Spence House is located three blocks north of the downtown square at 503 North Maple Street in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Tennessee. Designed as a four-square vernacular interpretation of Queen Anne-style architecture, the house currently contributes to the aesthetically pleasing streetscape of North Maple Street's Victorian era homes. The Spence House has a center hall plan with a parlor on each side of the hall, dining room and office in the rear, and another office, restrooms, break room/kitchen and back stairs in the 2003 addition. The second floor has two offices on one side of the hall and one on the other. In the 2003 addition there are two offices and restrooms on one side of the hall, a door to the back stair, and one office on the other side of the hall. The house sits on a 1.1-acre level lot. The front yard is separated from the sidewalk and street by an original 1866 fence composed of seventeen stone obelisk-shaped posts connected by plain cast iron rails and balusters (C). The west property line is bounded by an approximately six-foot limestone wall, original to the house (C). This wall separates the back yard from Walnut Street. A driveway leads through this wall into a small parking lot in the back yard. A parking lot abuts the property to the south with a residential lot to the to the north.

The Spence House is two stories in height, of solid brick construction, and rests on a stone foundation. The brick is laid in common bond with headers separated by seven rows of stretchers. The masonry walls are corbelled out on the stone foundation to shed water from the structure. The hipped roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The structure has an irregularly shaped massed floor plan. On the rear (west elevation), there is a 2003 frame addition, which replaced an earlier ca. 1940s frame addition. There are three interior wall chimneys, one located in the center of the brick section of the north elevation and two on the south elevation. Windows on the brick part of the house all have limestone lintels.

A two-story Queen-Anne style porch, which is an integral part of the roof, dominates the façade (east elevation) and appears to be original to the house. The northern portion of this porch abuts a projecting brick ell and is directly over the main entrance. The first story of the porch spans two thirds of the façade and is supported by Tuscan columns. The second story of the porch has shingle-work that sheaths the porch's balustrade and a hipped roof dormer window with paired four-light windows. While the porch does not wrap around the house as a more formal Queen-Anne style porch might, it does give an impression of the popular nineteenth-century style.

On the first story façade (east elevation) of the ell is a large single light window with a decorative leaded glass transom. Over this window on the second-story is a one over one double hung sash

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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

window that is larger than those on the rest of the house but matching in size the opening of the window below. All the windows on the house are one-over-one double hung sash windows with the exception of the façade window with the decorative transom on the ell.

The south elevation contains two sections, the historic brick portion and the new frame addition. The brick section has two one over one double hung sash windows separated by the chimney. All the windows in the brick section have limestone lintels. The 2003 frame addition is two stories in height, though not as high as the original brick section. There are three one-over-one double hung sash windows on the first story and two one over one double hung sash windows on the second story.

A two-story frame addition was added to the rear (west) elevation ca. 1940s. In 2003 this addition was removed and one of similar size was added. The 2003 two-story frame addition is covered with weatherboard, has corner boards as trim, and rests on a concrete foundation. The northern side of this elevation projects out further than the southern portion. In the center, joining these two sections, is a one story L-shaped hipped porch, supported by simple, slender columns similar to those on the façade but not as wide. Under the porch the corner of the projecting section is canted and contains a single light entry. On the projecting (northern) section are two one-over-one double hung windows, one on each story. The recessed (southern) portion contains a pair of one-over-one double hung sash windows on each story. Two brick steps lead to the covered porch. A handicap ramp with simple round pipe handrails runs east to west across the southern portion.

The north elevation is comprised of three bays. The eastern bay has a wall chimney with two wooden double hung sash windows, one on each story to the west of the chimney. The center bay projects from the structure and also contains a wall chimney flanked by one over one wooden double hung sash windows on each story. The western bay contains a masonry one-story section that is enveloped by a two-story frame addition. The second-story 2003 frame addition projects slightly over the masonry section. The first story has a single light entry with a transom and a one-over-one wooden double hung sash window to the west. The second story is all of frame construction and has two one-over-one wooden double hung sash windows spaced over the door and window on the first story and a one over one wooden double hung sash window between the levels. A 2003 wooden deck spans the masonry section of this bay with square balusters supporting a plain board handrail.

The floor plan of the house is a center hall with rooms on the north and south. The hall runs from the front of the house west through the frame section. The hall narrows as it enters the frame portion. On the first story there are three principal rooms to the north of the hall and one large

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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

principal room to the south. The second story has four principal rooms to the north with two principal rooms on the south separated by a cross hall and two side-by-side bathrooms.

Each room in the masonry section on both stories has a fireplace with a simple mantel composed of pilasters supporting a shelf trimmed in crown molding totaling six in all. All of the mantels are 2003 replacements to the missing originals. The window surrounds are comparable to the mantels with similar simple pilasters framing the windows and a recessed panel below the sill, while the baseboards have molded trim. The woodwork in the frame addition is similar to the masonry portion. The floors in the masonry section are the original pine, which were uncovered and refinished in the 2003 rehabilitation. The floors in the 2003 frame addition are covered with carpet.

An L-shaped stair covered with paneled wainscoting reaches the second story. The square newel post has recessed panels on the base, while the cap has simple molding as trim. Turned balusters support a wooden handrail. Smaller square posts on the landing and second floors separate the balusters. The rail curves at the top and is open to the first story below. There is a second enclosed carpeted stair in the 2003 frame addition.

The building is currently used as law offices and has recently undergone rehabilitation following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The approved rehabilitation included removing a dilapidated addition and replacing it with the current addition, removing modern partition walls, and updating the mechanical systems in the building.

The neighborhood the John C. Spence House is located in contains both residential and commercial properties. The town square is a few blocks south of the house and to the north and east are residential properties which exhibit many Victorian era and early-twentieth century I-houses, Queen-Anne, and bungalow styles. The Spence House has had various uses and appearances during its time on North Maple Street. The 2003 rehabilitation and current use as law offices have allowed the house to be restored to its former beauty. Inevitably there have been changes to the house, but overall, the Spence House retains integrity while exhibiting use over time.

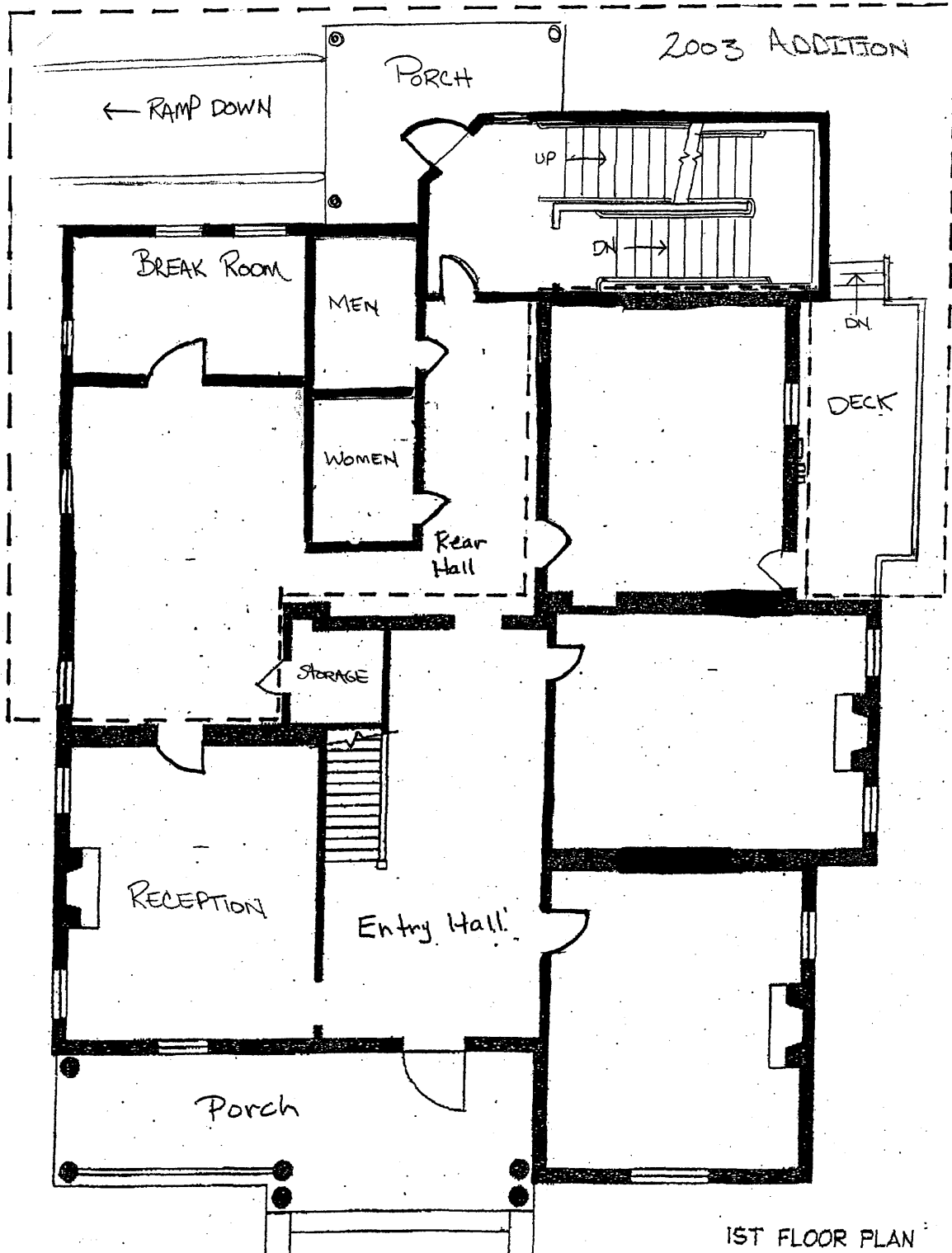
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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

First Floor Plan

Not to Scale



1ST FLOOR PLAN



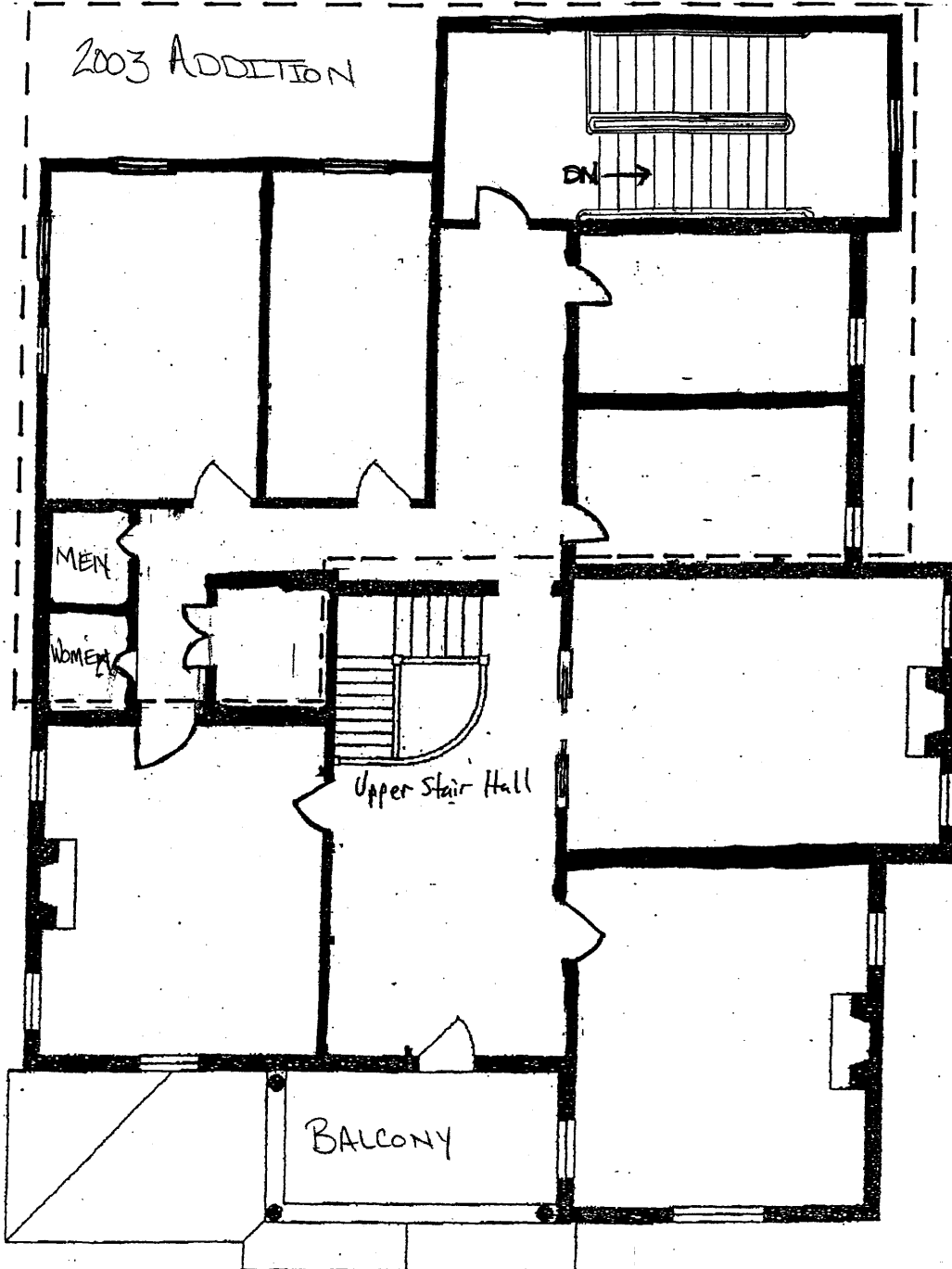
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Spence, John C., House
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Second Floor Plan

Not to Scale



2ND FLOOR PLAN



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National Park Service

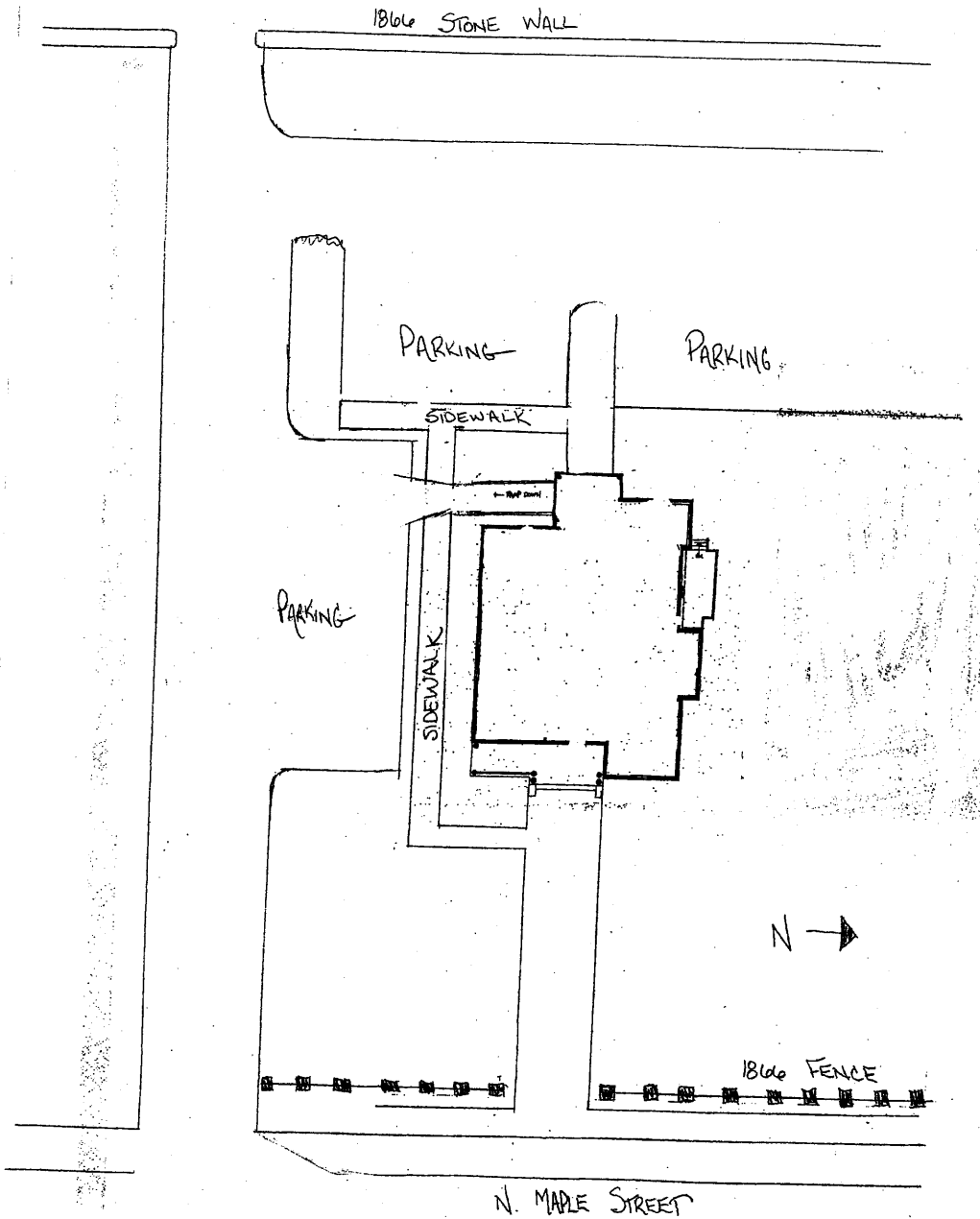
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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

Site Plan

Not to Scale



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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

VIII. Statement of Significance

The John C. Spence House at 503 North Maple Street in Murfreesboro (population approximately 69,000), Rutherford County, Tennessee, is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B. The property meets Criteria B for its association with John Cedric Spence, a prominent nineteenth century Murfreesboro businessman, industrialist, and important chronicler of county history. Spence, while living in the house, wrote his important volume on local history, *Annals of Rutherford County: Volume Two, 1829-1870*. The *Annals* detail the political, social, and economic life of Murfreesboro in the middle of the nineteenth century. Built at an unknown date, the house was moved to Maple Street in 1866 and Spence lived there until his death in 1890. During this time Spence operated a hardware and grocery store on the square in downtown Murfreesboro and built the Cedar Bucket Manufactory, Rutherford County's first mechanized industry. The house is characterized by its massive two-story brick construction decorated by Queen Anne style wood trim and front porch. No other extant buildings in Murfreesboro are associated with Spence.

Moved to 503 North Maple Street from its original location somewhere on nearby College Street in 1866, Spence and his family lived in the house until 1890. The exact date of construction for the house is unknown. The house and its location on what was once a very fashionable street is a reflection of Spence's firm position within Murfreesboro's growing middle-class during the mid-nineteenth century and his ability to take advantage of local business opportunities, even during the lean years of the Reconstruction. Spence operated a successful hardware and grocery store on the downtown square and, aided by the coming of the railroad, eventually financed two of Murfreesboro's earliest mechanized industries in the 1850s. Perhaps his most important legacy, however, is the two-volume set, *Annals of Rutherford County: 1829-1870*, the preeminent source for mid-nineteenth century history in Murfreesboro. This book provides to historians a window into the economic, social, and political history of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County at the time as well as a unique look into the life and personal values of Spence, one of the town's elite businessmen.

The plot of land on which the Spence House is located was originally part of an extensive 4,620-acre land grant that belonged to Revolutionary War veteran Captain William F. Lytle.¹ William inherited the land grant from his brother, Archibald, who had received the land in return for his services as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Revolutionary War. Archibald died before he ever had a

¹ Rutherford County, *Deed Book*, June 5, 1866, pp. 205.

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Spence, John C., House
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chance to see the tract. William Lytle and his family moved to his deceased brother's land ca. 1800 and were some of the county's earliest settlers.² In 1811, Lytle donated the original sixty acres of land on which Murfreesboro was established as the Rutherford County seat.³ No extant buildings are known to be associated with William Lytle's settlement.

Captain William F. Lytle died on September 2, 1851. On December 11, 1865, Lytle's heirs, Ephraim Lytle and John Lytle, sold the land at 503 North Maple Street to William Roulet, John Spence's son-in-law, for six hundred dollars.⁴ The very next year, on June 15, 1866, Roulet sold the plot to his mother-in-law (and John Spence's wife), Elizabeth Spence, for one dollar. To facilitate the transaction, John Spence acted as his wife's "agent. . . with the full power vested in an attorney."⁵ Two local historians, Charles Arnette and Mabel Pittard, maintain that after the Spences acquired the property they moved the house from a lot on West College Street, the exact location of which they did not identify, to their new lot on North Maple Street, "quite a feat for those days."⁶ During the research for this nomination, no documentary evidence was found relating to the original owners of the Spence House or when it was constructed in its original location on College Street.

The oldest primary source that displays the Spence House is the D. G. Beers 1878 map of Murfreesboro, the earliest existing map of the town, where it appeared as a large house located at the northernmost edge of town.⁷ Roughly three blocks north of the downtown business district and on one of the four streets that frame Murfreesboro's downtown square, the house's location was ideal for an entrepreneur like Spence, who likely enjoyed the privacy and status that his home offered. While not the finest or largest Victorian-era house in Murfreesboro at that time, it was representative of the city's emerging middle class businessman's desire to own an elegant and tasteful home situated somewhere between town and country, away from the bustle of downtown, but close enough to allow easy access to his place of business. The house is one of the largest houses on North Maple Street and is similar in style and workmanship to many other Victorian-era

² Mabel Pittard, *Rutherford County*, (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1984), 16, 29.

³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴ Rutherford County, *Deed Book*, December 11, 1865, pp. 205.

⁵ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1866.

⁶ Arnette, *From Mink Slide to Main Street* (n.p.), 177.

⁷ D. G. Beers' map of Murfreesboro, 1878.

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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

homes in Murfreesboro, such as those located in the town's East Main Street Historic District (NR 7/11/1985). The facade of the house retains its original Queen Anne wood trim and shingle work, as well as a partial wraparound porch. Both of these elements, as well as its massive two-story brick construction, evoke the construction and decorative trends of the late nineteenth century residential architecture.

Born in Murfreesboro in 1809, Spence was a successful local businessman in the years leading up to and after the Civil War.⁸ By the time Spence moved into the house at 503 North Maple, he had achieved many of the goals he set as an entrepreneurial businessman in the decades leading up to the Civil War. In 1850, when the census indicates he was 41 years old, he opened a grocery and hardware store, probably located on or in the immediate vicinity of the downtown square. The 1850 census lists Spence's real estate holdings valued at \$1000. No items or values for his personal property were listed.⁹ By 1870, Spence had quadrupled his personal wealth, employed a personal servant for the first time, and bought a fashionable new home that he and his wife had moved to 503 North Maple Street.¹⁰

John C. Spence is best remembered as a successful downtown grocer and hardware store owner in the mid-nineteenth century, the founder of the Cedar Bucket Manufactory in 1854 – Murfreesboro and Rutherford County's first mechanized industry – and as an avid chronicler who penned the *Annals of Rutherford County: Volume Two, 1829-1870*. The *Annals* is a journal-like, year-by-year record of Rutherford County's political, economic, and social affairs during the middle of the nineteenth-century. Although the book presumes to discuss the whole of Rutherford County, most of the book's information is centered on the town of Murfreesboro. The volume is most notable for Spence's unique perspective on, and enthusiasm for, the modernization of Murfreesboro after the Nashville-Chattanooga railroad came to town in 1851, and for his portrayal of town life during and immediately following the tumultuous years of the Civil War.

At a few points in the volume, Spence relates his own business accomplishments, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this nomination, making his book not only a record of happenings in and around Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, but also a journal of his own personal impact on the community. As one of the earliest extant records of Rutherford County history, Spence's

⁸ John C. Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County: Volume Two 1829-1870* (Murfreesboro: The Rutherford County Historical Commission, 1991), v.

⁹ Rutherford County, Tennessee, *1850 Census*, Roll 894, Box 47, p. 692.

¹⁰ Rutherford County, Tennessee, *1870 Census*, Roll 393, Box 80, pp. 80.

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Spence, John C., House
Rutherford County, TN

work established him as an important local historian, one who captured many aspects of county history that would have otherwise vanished forever. The manuscript was found in the attic of a Spence relative in Mississippi who bequeathed it to the Rutherford County Historical Society (RCHS) in 1991. The RCHS subsequently published the work. Spence finished the *Annals* on January 22, 1873, a fact that indicates he lived at 503 North Maple Street for at least the last seven years of its composition.¹¹

With a foothold in the local economy, Spence was ready in 1850 for “The most important business” of the year: Murfreesboro’s “subscription of stock to the rail road.”¹² In addition to inspiring his own business initiatives, “The prospect of a Rail Road, coming to Murfreesboro, causing business men to be looking round for a greater improvement. Changes commenced taking place.”¹³ Throughout his writing about the decade of the 1850s, Spence’s record emphasizes the profound improvements to the economy and general quality of life that the railroad brought to the people of Murfreesboro. As in many parts of the nation, the mid-nineteenth-century development of the railroad in the South provided small, agriculturally based towns like Murfreesboro the opportunity to connect with far away economic markets and urban cultural centers. Farmers and merchants like Spence now had the ability to sell their crops and material goods outside their insular communities and the immediately surrounding countryside. In Spence’s own words, the railroad created a new breed of “bold, enterprising” businessmen, “not hesitating making a ten or twenty thousand dollar trade, more than formerly a one thousand dollar transaction.”¹⁴ Through his *Annals*, Spence provides modern readers with the unique opportunity to place Murfreesboro’s mid-nineteenth century economic changes into the larger context of the history of the railroad and its revolutionary economic effects across America.

While the *Annals* allows one to place Murfreesboro in the context of American railroad history, the book also illustrates how Murfreesboro’s local culture changed during these years. According to Spence, not only was “the general view of business expanding” in the early 1850s, but also “The old rural habits of the people were undergoing a change, such as house raisings, log rolling, corn

¹¹ Spence, *Annals*, ix.

¹² *Ibid.*, 92.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

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Spence, John C., House
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shucking, quilting frolics and dancing parties. These times were ended.”¹⁵ Progress from a backwater farm town to a modern economic and cultural center necessarily entailed education for Rutherford County’s citizens, the significance of which Spence did not miss: “Places where the old school houses standing, now supplied with academies and other institutions of learning, where the arts, sciences, languages and a general knowledge of things are taught.” Spence’s explicit enthusiasm for Murfreesboro’s modernization reflects nineteenth-century Americans’ faith in technology, progress, and civilization: “Thanks to inventive genius, a new era now dawning.”¹⁶ Very few other records exist that so colorfully illustrate Murfreesboro’s history and culture in the middle of the nineteenth century.

With expanding economic markets and the flowering of local culture, Spence introduced Rutherford County’s first mechanized industry in 1854. His Cedar Bucket Manufactory took advantage of one of Rutherford County’s most plentiful, yet under-appreciated, natural resources: cedar timber. Previously, the region’s citizens had used cedar to make shingles, lumber, and house logs, but never as the raw material for a relatively large-scale industrial enterprise. The real value of cedar for use in buckets, according to Spence, was the widespread belief that “cedar will never rot, consequently will make good water vessels.” The industry was “The first of the kind in the county. Having machinery, run by steam. . . In full operation, requiring men and boys, from twelve to fifteen hands, with capacity turning out two hundred cedar buckets per day. . . it was a paying business.”¹⁷ Spence’s products were shipped via rail to cities throughout the southeast.

Just a few years after its establishment, the Cedar Bucket Manufactory was destroyed by Federal troops during the Civil War.¹⁸ During the war years, Spence’s writing is consumed by the war and the Federal occupation of Murfreesboro. The excitement expressed over the rapid expansion of business in the 1850s vanishes as Spence relates that Murfreesboro’s business all but stopped during the war, and only slowly picked up afterwards. He does not indicate that he ever re-established his cedar bucket factory after the war, but he does mention in his chapter on the year 1866 that “Messrs. M.I. Seymour & Co. of Buffalos, N. York, established a manufactory of cedar ware, Tubs and Buckets.” These presumable “carpetbaggers” from New York were successful for a short time

¹⁵ Ibid., 100.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 114.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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Spence, John C., House
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before selling out to the Stones River Utility Works, which continued to expand the business and eventually turned “out from three to four hundred pieces daly [sic], beautifully finished cedar ware.”¹⁹

In the very same chapter on 1866, Spence briefly mentions for the first time a “Foundry and Machine Shop” that was “started and conducted by Jno. C. Spence before the war. At the time that war was going on all the tools and materials belonging to the shop, were destroyed by the Federal soldiers.”²⁰ This short passage is the only mention of Spence’s foundry, which does not appear to have reopened after the war, and illustrates that he attempted more than once to take advantage of the opportunities made available by new technologies and economic markets.

Spence avoided many of the devastating financial effects of the Civil War on the South’s economy. While he appears to have supported his state’s right to secede from the Union, Spence characterized the decision to do so as “hasty,” “unnecessary,” and “odious.”²¹ His own faith in industry and progress, and the fact that he was not a slave-owning planter likely aided him in the massive cultural and economic transition back into the Union after the war. With the “prospects of business brightening” at the beginning of 1866, Spence quickly got back into business as a grocer and hardware “merchant,” but there are no indications that he made any more attempts at industry.²² Census data indicates that Spence remained a storeowner at least through his sixty-first birthday in 1870. No information is available on his activities between 1870-1880. By the time he was a seventy-year old man in 1880, however, Spence had retired from the retail business.²³

During the year after the Civil War, Spence’s wife, Elizabeth, purchased the vacant lot at 503 North Maple Street from their son-in-law, William Roulet. The Spence’s ability in 1866 to buy and move a large, fashionable house to the family’s new property illustrates that, unlike many wealthy southerners, John Spence had maintained his financial success into the years following the war. By 1870, when Spence was 61 years old, his real estate holdings were valued at \$3000 and his personal

¹⁹ Ibid., 255.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 148.

²² Ibid., 254. For Spence’s post-war title as “merchant,” see Rutherford County, Tennessee, *1870 Census*, Roll 393, Box 80, pp. 80.

²³ Rutherford County, Tennessee, *1880 Census*, Roll 1276, Box 116, pp. 63.

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estate at \$1000, four times the amount listed in his 1850 holdings. As an additional measure of Spence's post-war wealth, the 1870 census indicates that he employed and housed a forty-year-old black female servant, Mary Maney, who also had a seven-year-old son, Stephen.²⁴ By all accounts, Spence never owned any slaves prior to the war, and Mary appears to be Spence's first residential servant. In the decade following the Civil War, Spence likely enjoyed writing the last chapters of his *Annals* as an aging man in the comfort of personal wealth and a large, tasteful home at 503 North Maple Street.

After Elizabeth Spence died in 1884, the house, still in her name, passed to the Spence children, Henry Spence, Florence Spence, and Mary S. Roulet (the wife of William Roulet who originally sold the Spence's the lot at 503 North Maple in 1866). No conclusive evidence exists to be certain, but it is assumed that John Spence continued to live in the house with one or more of his children until his death in 1890. The Spence heirs sold the family house to James A. Moore on January 20, 1891. After James A. Moore died, circa 1930, his son, James C. Moore, bought the house from his sisters and fellow heirs, Kate Moore Overall and Rosa Moore Cannon, for ten dollars "and other consideration not necessary to be named" on July 26, 1932.²⁵ The house stayed in the Moore family until James C. sold the house in 1935 to George and Lucy Brown.²⁶ Very little is known about the Moore family or their tenure at the Spence House. According to John Womack, husband of Lucy Brown's daughter, Katherine, James A. Moore was a brick and concrete contractor and is responsible for the construction of the roughly six-foot tall brick wall that once defined the southern property line.²⁷

On June 6, 1935, the Spence House was bought by George and Lucy Brown from James C. and Elsie W. Moore. Similar to Spence, George Brown co-owned a hardware store on the north side of Murfreesboro's downtown square called Byrn and Brown Hardware.²⁸ Five years after they bought the house in March of 1940, the Browns divorced and George left both the hardware business and

²⁴ Rutherford County, *1870 Census*, Roll 393, Box 80, pp. 80.

²⁵ Rutherford County, *Deed Book*, July 26, 1932, pp. 320.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1935, pp. 276.

²⁷ John Womack, husband of Katherine Brown Womack (Lucy Brown's daughter), interviewed by author, April 25, 2002.

²⁸ Terry Womack, granddaughter of Lucy Brown, interviewed by author, April 15, 2002.

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Murfreesboro. In the divorce settlement, Lucy acquired sole ownership of the house and converted it into an apartment building in order to generate an income for herself.

During the years immediately following the divorce, Brown made a substantial structural change to the rear of the house. The exact dates cannot be determined, but shortly after she acquired the house in 1940, Brown enclosed the two-story “sleeping porch” on the rear of the house, and added a one-bedroom/one-bathroom efficiency apartment directly above the house’s original kitchen. Both additions were rather poorly constructed out of wood frame and sheathed in weatherboard. In 1945, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company mapped Murfreesboro, which included 503 North Maple Street, for the last time. The 1945 map does not include the additions, which creates a discrepancy because family history maintains that Brown completed the additions ca. 1941.²⁹

In the early 1970s, Lucy Brown made an unsuccessful attempt to sell the Spence House. While not able to purchase the property, a fraternity at Middle State Tennessee University, Pi Kappa Alpha, approached Brown about renting the entire house from her to use as their chapter house.³⁰ She agreed, and Pi Kappa Alpha resided in the house from circa 1974 until 1981, when Brown became unhappy with the fraternity’s abusive treatment of the house and evicted the organization. Brown then sold the property to her daughter and son-in-law, Molly and Roger Teague, on June 5, 1981. The Teagues resided in the house until 1985, when a foreclosure put the property back into Lucy Brown’s ownership.

On August 11, 1986, Brown sold the property to the Children’s Discovery House Museum.³¹ The museum made several changes to the interior of the house to make room for children’s activities and exhibits. Most notable among the changes, the fireplaces were sealed and mantles removed throughout the house. The museum also commissioned large murals for several walls in the house that have since been painted over. The current owners of the property, Kious and Rogers, PLLC, bought the house in 2001 and renovated it to house their law firm in 2003. During the renovation, the law firm removed the deteriorating ca. 1941 rear addition and replaced it with a new addition that stretches slightly farther back into the yard than the original. They also uncovered where the mantles should have been and unsealed the fireplaces.

²⁹ Interview with John Womack.

³⁰ Interview with Terry Womack.

³¹ Rutherford County, *Deed Book*, August 11, 1986, pp. 677.

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While the structure has a large frame addition on the rear it retains integrity from the period of when Spence was in residence. On the exterior this is seen in the front porch with sawn cut decorative wooden shingles, the windows, especially the large leaded glass window on the façade. On the interior, the original baseboards and window trim, the pocket doors and the decorative paneled stair in the center hall. The exterior and interior of the masonry main section retains the appearance from when Spence was in residence.

The Spence House is a visually impressive and historically significant landmark in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B. The wealth of information in Spence's *Annals of Rutherford County: Volume Two, 1829-1870* reveals much about Rutherford County's history in the mid-nineteenth century as well as Spence's own personal accomplishments and impressions of the quickly changing world around him. This record is an invaluable primary document that relates a year-by-year development of Murfreesboro during one of the city's, and one of Spence's, most significant periods of growth and development. Spence's volume allows readers the unique opportunity to peer into the modernization of Murfreesboro through the eyes of a successful southern businessman. John C. Spence was a prominent businessman and industrialist during the middle and late nineteenth century when he lived at the house, which is the only known extant property associated with him. Although there have been some changes to the building since Spence resided there, it is still, fundamentally, a building he would recognize as his home.

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X. Geographical Description

Verbal Boundary Description

The Spence House is located at 503 North Maple Street in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Tennessee. It sits on an approximately 1.1 acre lot, three blocks north of the downtown square on parcel D5, Rutherford County tax map 91-K.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the nominated property include the entire 1.1-acre lot historically associated with the Spence House at 503 North Maple Street.

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Spence, John C., House
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Date of photos: September 23, 2003

503 North Maple Street
Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Tennessee

Photos by: Louis M. Jackson
 Tennessee Historical Commission
 2941 Lebanon Road
 Nashville, Tennessee 29407

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 2941 Lebanon Road
 Nashville, TN 29407

Façade, east elevation, facing west
1 of 18

Façade, east elevation, facing west
2 of 18

Façade and south elevation, facing northwest
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South elevation, facing north
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West elevation and south elevation, facing northeast
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Rear, west elevation, facing east
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North and west elevations, facing northwest
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North and east elevations, facing southwest
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Rear stone wall, facing west
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Interior, first floor, center hall, main staircase, facing southwest
10 of 18

Interior, detail, pocket doors, facing north
11 of 18

Interior northeast room, facing northwest
12 of 18

Interior, center room west side, facing northwest
13 of 18

Interior, southeast room, facing south east
14 of 18

Interior, frame addition, southwest room, facing south west
15 of 18

Interior, second floor, center hall, facing west
16 of 18

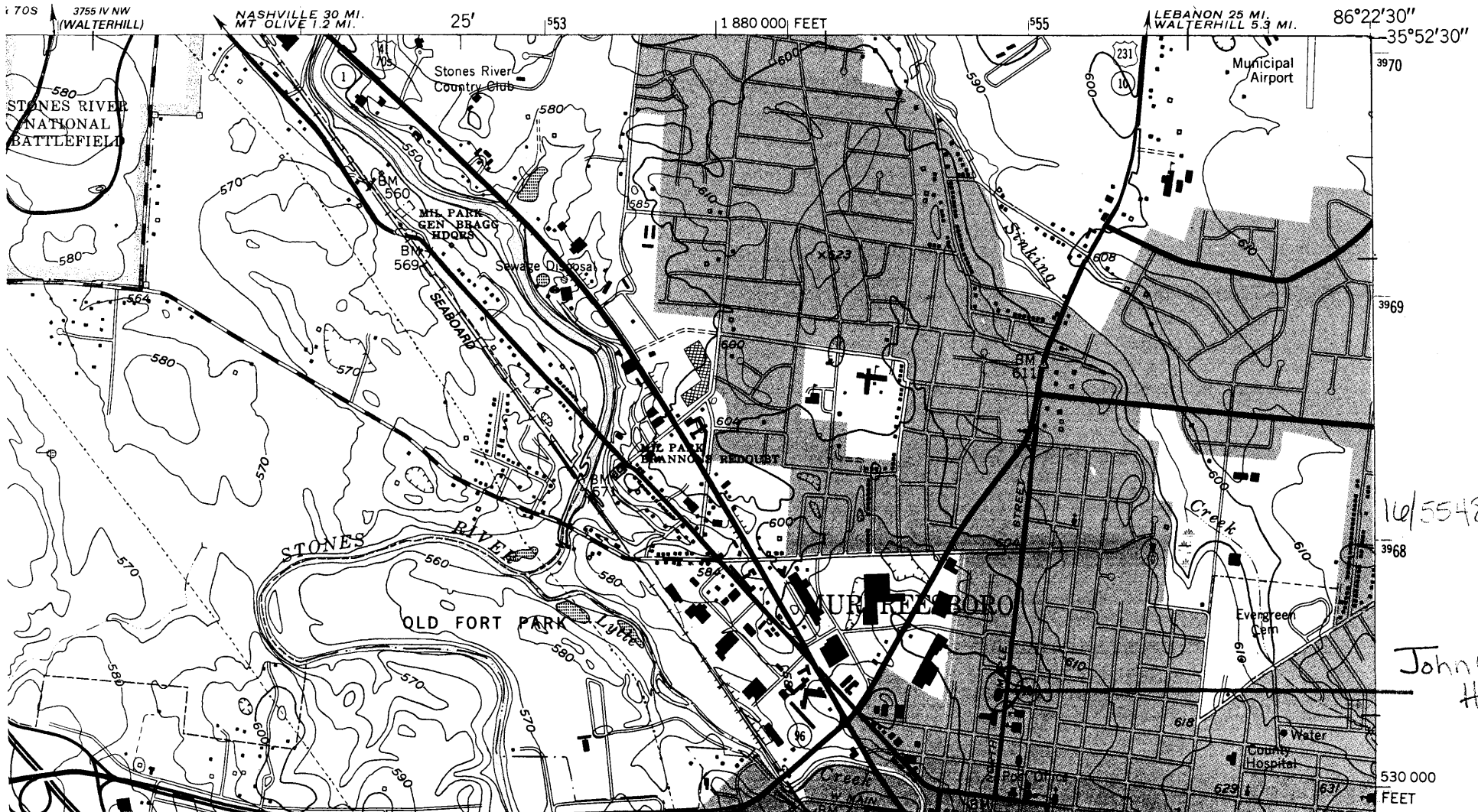
Interior, second floor, center hall, facing east
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Interior, second floor, northeast room, facing northeast
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