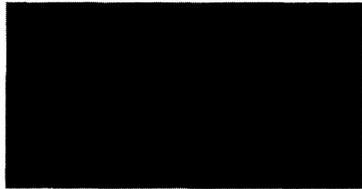


United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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 Etam Homestead

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 1428 Fox Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Eighth

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Marye Elder Mitchell and Mr. Louis Elder

street & number 1428 Fox Street

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Tennessee 38111

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Registrar

street & number 160 North Main Street

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Memphis Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date January 1978 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Memphis Landmarks Commission

city, town Memphis \_\_\_\_\_ state Tennessee

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Elam Homestead, an 1854 two-story log house with rear frame additions, occupies three lots (total dimensions measure 180 feet by 165 feet) on the east side of Fix Street in the Cherokee Subdivision of Memphis; this neighborhood is composed predominantly of single-family residences constructed in the 1950s. Facing northwest on its original site, the house was formerly approached by a drive from Kimball Avenue north of the property; however, a drive from Fox Street to the south end of the house became the only access when the neighborhood was developed. Two madnolia trees at the north end of the property and another tree to the east are all that remain of a large grove which once surrounded the house. Most of these trees were yellow poplar, from which the logs for the house were hewn.

One of a relatively few antebellum buildings in Memphis, the Elam Homestead is one of only two log buildings pre-dating 1900 in the city representative of mid-Nineteenth Century log construction techniques. The origin of the other building is unknown, and it has been covered with weatherboard.

Two-stories in height with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles and corbelled brick exterior end chimneys, the 1854 structure was built of large squared yellow poplar logs with square corner notching. The original chinking has been replaced with cement; also the original foundation and base of the east chimney have been replaced with cement. A section of weatherboard covering above the uppermost log, which is offset, provides evidence that the roof was raised to provide more space in the second story. Log infill below second-story windows suggests that the windows as well as the roof were raised. Weatherboard infill on either side of the main (north) entrance indicates that the house might have originally been a dogtrot.

Three-bays wide, the main (north) elevation features a hand-hewn double leaf plank door with sidelights in the center of the facade. The two first-floor windows--one on either side of the door--and the three second-story windows are casements with wood frames. Casement windows are also used on the first story of the side elevations and the east end of the rear elevation. Small square wood framed windows are found at the top of the second story of both side elevations. A one-story screened porch covers the two bays of the first story. Curved wood brackets decorate the eaves of both the log building and the rear additions.

Several frame additions covered with weatherboard have been constructed on the rear (south) elevation. The earliest, probably added shortly after the Civil War, is a two-story rectangular wing with hip roof set perpendicular to the center of the log house. This wing contains a plank door with sidelights at the north end of the east wall, both casement and double hung sash windows with wood frames, and a central interior brick chimney. A one-story enclosed porch, also frame, was added at the rear of this wing in 1944. Other rear additions, built during a period from the 1930s to the 1960s, are located on the west side of the intersection of the rear wing with the log house. A single room was built first, and an overhanging second story added next; the first story was then extended south, providing a side entrance which now serves as the house's main entrance.

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The log section of the house contains two rooms on each floor separated by a wide hallway. A straight wooden staircase with a square newel post and square balusters is located on the west wall of the first-floor hall. Each of the original rooms features plaster walls and ceilings and plain wide baseboards. Hewn ceiling joists can be seen in the first floor. The living room and both second-story bedrooms have wood mantels decorated with pilasters, while the downstairs bedroom has a brick fireplace with log mantel.

A wide doorway at the rear of the first-floor hall (originally the house's rear entrance) provides access to the rear wing, which contains a sitting-room, a dining room with fireplace, a kitchen (the fireplace has been enclosed), and an enclosed porch on the first floor and a hallway and two bedrooms (both with enclosed fireplaces) on the second floor. The presence of a plank door with transom in the rear wall of the living room of the log house indicates that it probably served as the rear entrance after construction of the first rear addition. This door now leads to a den containing the west side entrance. The rear wing described earlier and this room are connected by a large doorway in the room's east wall. A fifth second-story bedroom and bath are located above the den. Thus the total number of rooms has been expanded to fourteen.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates prior to 1854 Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elam Homestead is significant in several respects. First, it is one of two known surviving nineteenth-century log building in Memphis. Erected circa 1854, the Elam Homestead is also significant as a representative example of log construction techniques in the mid-1800s. Finally, the house is important to an understanding of settlement patterns in the Memphis area.

Two aspects of its construction make this house typical of the era in which it was built. First, the choice of yellow poplar logs was due to a plentiful supply of that wood as well as its strength and durability. Second, the use of the simplest method of notching, square notching, was common in the 1850s due to a lack of craftsmen skilled in the more sophisticated notching techniques.

The house is located on property that has historical interest. It was once a part of a large land grant. In 1791 a 2650-acre land grant was made to John Lynch in consideration of his military service to the State of N. Carolina during the Revolutionary War. (Records of Shelby County, Book 4, p. 24). The land included the area from Prescott to Lamar and from Kimball south to Nonconnor, or Nonconnah Creek.

In 1821 the Lynch heirs transferred the property to John or James Kimble. (Records of Shelby County, Book 4, p. 24). The heir to the property was W.H. Kimble. It is probably from this family that we now have the street named Kimball in this area. Mr. Kimble started selling off part of the property, selling 444-1/4 acres to Edward Simpson Elam in 1849 for the price of \$3620 (Shelby County Records, Book 17, p. 416).

The exact date of the origin of the log house is unknown. Since most houses were just built by hands on the property, it wasn't necessary to have mortgages and records. The earliest written records are those relating to the birth of Laura Cooper Elam, Edward's youngest daughter, in 1854. This was information in the family Bible of Mrs. B.R. Sharpe, Jr., and from an untitled, undated newspaper obituary, also belonging to Mrs. Sharpe. On April 10, 1854, there was also a Chancery Court decision and the land was transferred into Elam's wife's name, Sarah G. Elam (Records of Shelby County, Book 17, p. 416). So the house may be older, but certainly by 1854 it was lived in by the Elams.

The house remained within the Elam family for many years. When Sarah Elam died the property was divided among the four daughters, Emma S. Hildebrand being given the title to Lot 1, on which the house stood, containing 38.75 acres. (Shelby County records, Book 172, p. 533). In 1902 the youngest daughter, Laura Cooper Elam Sharpe (Mrs. B.R. Sharpe), purchased the land and house from her sister's heirs, Lena Hildebrand Bynum and her husband (Shelby County Records, Book 327, p. 81).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Cherokee--A History of Change, Peggy Jemison.  
Family Bible, property of Mrs. F.R. Sharpe, Jr., Memphis, Tennessee.  
Map prepared for General Sherman-copy attached.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .68

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Southeast Memphis

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 1 6 2 3 0 9 3 0 3 8 8 7 1 1 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 and justification

See attached map.

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 Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association and Kay Benton

organization Memphis Landmarks Commission date April 1980

street & number 22 N. Front Street, Suite 901 telephone 901/528-2834

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Herbert L. Hays*

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/2/80

For HCERS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Carol D. Stuel* date 9-18-80  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Kristin T. O'Connell* date 7/8/80  
Chief of Registration

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Edward and his brother, John Woolridge Elam, were some of the first settlers in this area. They came to West Tennessee from Midlothian, Virginia. John obtained his 2000 acres in the Whitehaven area through negotiations with the Chickasaw Indians. Edward's property in the Cherokee neighborhood of today was north of John's property. In remarking about the properties Edward R. Sharpe, a great grandson of Edwards, said that John's side of the family was the rich side because the home place was built in the classical Greek style. "However my great grandfather's place was a log cabin!" (interview with Mr. Sharpe, October 18, 1977). Of his nine children only four lived--all girls. The Elams we hear of today are most usually descendants of John Elam, who also had nine children--of which five were sons who did live to adulthood.

More recent history has shown two changes of ownership. In 1924 Mrs. B.R. Sharpe sold the house and its acreage to Tom Watkins. Mr. Watkins was the president of the Old Memphis Chicks baseball team.

In 1943 this home and property were purchased by Mr. and Mrs. T.H. Elder for approximately \$20,000 at a foreclosure sale. (Interview with Mary Mitchell, September 29, 1977).

Attached to this form is a copy of a portion of a map that was prepared for General Sherman. Although the map is not dated, the map was assumed to have been made in 1862. A house is noted as belonging to the Ellum (sic) family.

The boundaries of this nomination were drawn to the dimensions of the lot occupied by the Elam Homestead.

# CHURCH

City of Memphis and Shelby  
County Tax Assessment Map  
Scale 1" = 100'  
1428 Fox  
Elam Homestead

259.77'

125' 9	134.77' 2
+ 497	506 +
	134.36'
125' 8	133.95'
+ 496	507 +
	133.5'
125' 7	133.5'
+ 495	508 +
	133.5'
120.71' 6	113.1 (28.735) 3127
+ 494	509 +

95

# HENDRICKS AVE.

120.71' 1	(28.275) 112.44
○ 479	480 +
	132'
125' 28	131.6'
○ 478	481 ○
	131.1'
125' 27	130.7'
○ 477	482 ○
	130.3'
125' 26	129.9'
○ 476	483 ○
	129.5'
125' 25	129.1'
○ 475	484 ○
	128.7'
125' 24	128.3'
○ 474	485 ○
	128.3'
125' 23	
○ 473	486 ○
125' 22	
○ 472	487 ○
125' 21	
○ 471	488 ○
125' 20	
○ 470	489 ○

97

SI.

FOX

N

FOX ST.

72' ○	510	164.4'	55	72' ○
60' ○	511	165'	54	60' ○
60' ○	512	165'	53	60' ○
60' ○	513	165'	52	60' ○
60' ○	514	165'	51	60' ○
60' ○	515	165'	50	60' ○
60' ○	516	165'	49	60' ○
60' ○	517	165'	48	60' ○
60' ○	518	165'	47	60' ○
60' ○	519	165'	46	60' ○
60' ○	520	165'	45	60' ○
60' ○	521	165'	44	60' ○
60' ○	522	165'	43	60' ○
60' ○	523	165'	42	60' ○
60' ○	524	165'	41	60' ○
60' ○	525	165'	40	60' ○
60' ○		165'	39	60' ○
60' ○		165'	38	60' ○

(PL. 16-77)

96

(PL. 15-49)

#1474

PT. LOT 1 ELAM SQ.

RD.

ON

60'   45' / 45'	150.6'
72' ○	1
60' ○	2
60' ○	3
60' ○	4
60' ○	5
60' ○	6
60' ○	7
60' ○	8
60' ○	9
60' ○	10
60' ○	11
60' ○	12
60' ○	14
60' ○	15
60' ○	16
60' ○	17
60' ○	18
60' ○	19