

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 5 1985
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic James L. Fite House
and/or common Fite-Fessenden House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 326 West Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Lebanon N/A vicinity of
state Tennessee code 047 county Wilson code 189

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name History Associates of Wilson County
street & number 326 West Main Street
city, town Lebanon N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37087

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Wilson County
street & number Courthouse, East Main Street
city, town Lebanon state Tennessee 37087

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wilson County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1984 federal state county local
depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 701 Broadway
city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37219-5237

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located two blocks from the Public Square in Lebanon, Tennessee (pop. 12,492), the Fite-Fessenden House is a transitional style residence with Greek Revival and Italianate detailing. Begun ca. 1852 and embellished and expanded after the Civil War, the two story brick residence is distinguished by a Greek Revival style central entry and a bracketed and denticulated frieze. Interior ornamentation is highlighted by four wood fireplace mantles. Two small outbuildings are located on the property and included in the nomination. A fine local example of transitional architecture, the Fite-Fessenden House has undergone few recent alterations and retains much of its architectural integrity.

Originally cruciform shaped in plan, a one story central rear addition and a two story southeast rear addition were built ca. 1891. The low pitched cross gable roof, covered with asphalt shingles and standing seam metal roofing, is delineated by a deep wood frieze with ornamental brackets on all but the south (rear) side. Cornice returns and a dentil molding course are found on the east and west gable ends of the house as well as on the gable end of the north (front) pavilion. The east and west gable ends also have a brick belt course.

Exterior walls are three bricks deep and laid in common bond using a light orange color mortar that was originally pencilled with a thin white joint line. Some of this pencilling remains near the top of the second story where it has been protected by the overhang. Interior end chimneys with corbeled caps are located at the east and west gable ends, while an exterior end chimney is found at the south end of the two story rear pavilion. Fenestration consists of 6/6 or 4/4 sash windows surmounted by wide wood lintel boards on the first story. Second story windows have only a narrow lintel. Shutters, now removed, once flanked most of the windows.

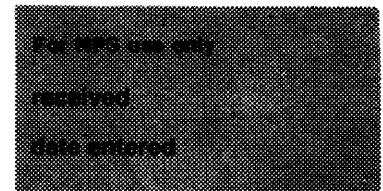
The four bay north (front) facade is a symmetrical design with a two bay central pavilion. An eight panel door, transom window, and paneled sidelights and door surrounds comprise the main entry. Square pilasters separate the door from the sidelights. Windows on the north and south side of the pavilion are 6/6 sash. In addition to the ornamental gable and cornice trim, a circular attic vent is located in the front gable.

The south (rear) pavilion is surmounted by a hip roof and has 6/6 windows on the west side. East of the pavilion is a brick two story shed roof addition that includes a screened sleeping porch on the second story. A one story gable roof brick addition extends from the rear pavilion. This addition replaced the original kitchen ell and today includes a kitchen, heating system room, and a garage, possibly once a carriage house.

Both east and west sides of the house contain only one 6/6 sash window on the south section of the first story. A late nineteenth century screened porch is located on the west side of the rear pavilion. Paneled doors with lintel boards like those on the windows are located on the east and west sides of the rear addition.

The interior plan of the Fite-Fessenden House is defined by the original central hall plan which is carried out on both stories. Two bathrooms and a rear window were added to the

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second story of the house in the twentieth century. Most interior doors, dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are six and eight paneled doors, although two closet doors have only four panels. Interior wood trim consists of pronounced door and window frame moldings on the first story and simpler, less pronounced moldings on the second story and rear addition. Tongue and groove flooring has replaced the original wide plank flooring on all but the upstairs bedrooms. Two wood fireplace mantles on the first story are embellished with pilasters, cornerblocks, and decorative wood paneling, while the fireplace mantles on the second story are simpler in design. The original walnut staircase was replaced by the present one in the 1920s.

Outbuildings located on the property include a one story wood shed with a metal roof and an outhouse of undetermined age. The Fite-Fessenden House and outbuildings are located well back on a one acre lot and surrounded by wisteria, shrubs, and trees.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 1852 - 1920 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fite-Fessenden House is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its significance in history and architecture in Lebanon, Tennessee. The house is a significant representation of transitional architectural design that evinces characteristics of Greek Revival and Italianate styles. Prominent design features include the main entry with sidelights and transom window, a denticulated and bracketed frieze and multi-pane windows with wide lintel boards. Historically, the house is significant for its role as an educational institution between 1891 and 1920. Having undergone few alterations, the Fite-Fessenden House has retained its historical and architectural integrity.

James Leonidas Fite was born in Alexandria, DeKalb County, Tennessee in the 1830s and moved with his family to nearby Lebanon, Tennessee in 1847. Fite began construction of his own house in Lebanon in 1852. In 1862 Fite, now a doctor, was appointed surgeon of the Seventh Tennessee Infantry Regiment in the Confederate Army. The regiment was first organized in May 1861 and reorganized in April 1862. After the war Fite returned to Lebanon, married and practiced medicine.

Dr. Fite's daughter, Margaret Fite Harsh, began a private primary day school for girls in her father's house in 1891, two years before Dr. Fite died. Known first as the Maggie Harsh School and later as the Alberta School, Mrs. Harsh operated the school until 1917 when she moved out of state. Margaret Harsh had attended Maple Hill Seminary, Lebanon College for Young Ladies and George Peabody College. After teaching in Lebanon public school for several years, she began a private school, eventually hiring several other teachers on the staff and teaching as many as forty students. There was also a private boys' school in Lebanon until 1902 but Mrs. Harsh's school was the only private institution for girls. In 1917, Virginia Tomlinson Wooten transferred her preparatory school to the Fite House (still owned by Mrs. Harsh), and taught school here until 1920 when she was named principal of the Cumberland University Preparatory School.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Fessenden purchased the residence in 1921. Fessenden was the owner and operator of the Fessenden Coal Company in Lebanon until his death in the 1950s. The Fessenden family owned the house until 1983 when it was willed to the History Associates of Wilson County. Currently unoccupied, the History Associates of Wilson County have plans to renovate the house and use it for a history museum. Historically significant for its role as an educational institution and architecturally significant as a fine example of transitional architectural design, the Fite-Fessenden House is an asset to the cultural resources of Lebanon, Tennessee.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately one acre

Quadrangle name Lebanon, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	6	3	3	7	0	4	0	0	7	0	7	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 The nominated property, rectangular in shape, is approximately one acre in size and bounded on the north by West Main Street and on the south, east and west by adjoining property lines. It includes enough land to protect the historic setting and architectural integrity of the Fite-Fessenden House.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Mayo

organization History Associates of Wilson County date March 1985

street & number Route 3, Box 242 telephone 615/374-2066

city or town Lebanon state Tennessee 37087

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hoyer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/20/85

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 7-5-85

J. Allore Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Major Bibliographical References:

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The Historian. January, 1984.

The Lebanon Democrat. 5 December 1963.

McBride, Robert M. and Robison, Dan M. Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly 1861-1901. Nashville; Tennessee State Library and Archives and the Tennessee Historical Commission, 1975.

Merritt, Dixon, et. al. The History of Wilson County: Its Land and Its Life. Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1961.

Tennesseans in the Civil War. Nashville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

Wilson County. Federal Census. 1860 and 1880.

Wilson County. Marriage Records. Wilson County Courthouse. Lebanon, Tennessee.

