

# DATA SHEET

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <div style="text-align: center;">Tennessee</div>
COUNTY: <div style="text-align: center;">Fayette</div>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">APR 4 1975</div>

### 1. NAME

COMMON: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">La Grange Historic District</div>
AND/OR HISTORIC:

### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: <div style="text-align: center;">La Grange</div>		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: <div style="text-align: center;">Sixth</div>	
STATE: <div style="text-align: center;">Tennessee</div>	CODE: <div style="text-align: center;">47</div>	COUNTY: <div style="text-align: center;">Fayette</div>	CODE: <div style="text-align: center;">047</div>

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: <div style="text-align: center;">Multiple Owners</div>		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN: <div style="text-align: center;">La Grange</div>	STATE: <div style="text-align: center;">Tennessee</div>	CODE: <div style="text-align: center;">47</div>

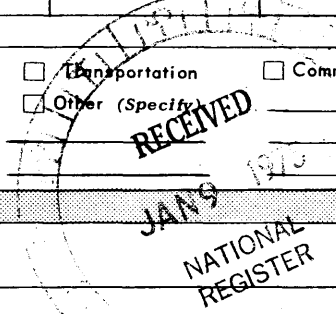
### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: <div style="text-align: center;">Fayette County Register's Office</div>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <div style="text-align: center;">Courthouse</div>		
CITY OR TOWN: <div style="text-align: center;">Somerville</div>	STATE: <div style="text-align: center;">Tennessee</div>	CODE: <div style="text-align: center;">47</div>

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:				
DATE OF SURVEY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> County	<input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:		

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

**7. DESCRIPTION**

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

La Grange, the oldest town in Fayette County, is located fifty miles east of Memphis and sixteen miles southeast of Somerville. By 1824, when Fayette County was organized, with the more centrally located Somerville as the county seat, La Grange was a thriving settlement. It was ideally located on a 300 foot bluff overlooking the Wolf River with a view to the south of some twenty-five miles. The county was named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette, who had recently visited the South, and it was natural that the county's oldest settlement should be named La Grange after Lafayette's ancestral home in France.

Samuel Harper, the county's first sheriff, laid off the land into town lots in 1825, using Philadelphia as a pattern and calling for streets to be lined with locust, elm, and mulberry trees. The community began to grow and prosper. In 1826 George Gray opened the first store and the town was incorporated in early 1828. It quickly developed into a commercial center and for a few short years rivalled Jackson and the better known towns of West Tennessee. It became a thriving cotton market and surpassed Memphis as the dominant town in the southwestern part of the state.

La Grange was soon eclipsed commercially by Memphis, but it is primarily as a center of culture, wealth, and beautiful nineteenth century homes that it is remembered. The La Grange Historic District covers most of the corporate limits of La Grange. Being bisected by State Highway 57, it follows this highway for approximately two and one-fourth miles. The eastern boundary of the district is State Highway 18; the western boundary a north-south line approximately one-half mile west of the center of the business district of La Grange; the southern boundary an east-west line approximately 800 feet south of State Highway 57; and the northern boundary the Southern Railroad north of State Highway 57 with an area extending north of the railroad tracks on both sides of Somerville Road for approximately one-half mile. There are approximately 75 structures within this area, over half of which possess architectural or historical significance. Almost all of these homes are still occupied, frequently by descendants of the families who originally inhabited them. Woodlawn, presently owned by Mr. T. V. Bender of Mobile, still stands in Ionic splendor on the hill east of town. This 1828 vintage house contains nine huge rooms, each with a fireplace and fourteen foot ceilings. The huge Greek Revival porch was added after the main house had already been built. Major Charles Michie, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the builder of the house, selected and marked each piece of timber that went into the house, putting a deep hatchet cut on every inferior piece. Major Michie left the house to his daughter, Mrs. Olive Winston, and she in turn traded it to Dr. John J. Pulliam, the builder of another La Grange mansion, Hancock Hall. In the late 1950's Mrs. Peter Beasley, wife of the grandson of Dr. Pulliam, sold the home to Colonel John Cavender, who sold it to the present owner.

Reverie was built in 1825 by Major Edmund Winston and is one of the oldest buildings in La Grange. Major Winston's daughter married Dr. Whitson Harris in 1847, and the couple was given Reverie as a wedding gift. In 1856 a portico, summer porch, and four additional rooms were added, the workmen being imported from Ohio to complete the work. The bricks in Reverie were

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(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (cont.) p.2

hand made on the place, and the wood in the house, yellow poplar, chestnut, cypress, and pine, was also cut from woodlands on the plantation. After the Civil War the house was owned by the Myrick family until 1878 when Thomas B. Beasley purchased it. The Beasley family owned the house until 1916 when Joseph Hamer acquired it. Recently, Mr. and Mrs. John Walley purchased and restored the old home. Reverie is a typical Greek Revival structure, of two stories, both the grounds and the structure itself being in excellent condition.

Hillcrest, built in 1840, is unique in that it is one of the earliest examples of Swiss chalet architecture in America. The home was originally built by a Mr. Abbott for his intended bride, but the marriage did not take place and he never lived there. It is presently owned by Mrs. W. E. Franklin, is in excellent condition, and looks surprisingly modern for an 1840 vintage house.

Hancock Hall is one of the grander structures in La Grange, and is perhaps best known for its double portico, one facing west and the other south. This beautiful home was built in 1857, and has been continually lived in since that day. It had been owned by Mrs. Peter Beasley until her recent death, and it now belongs to her children. Hancock Hall supplied the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War. Like Reverie, it is a fine example of the Greek Revival Style.

Tiara is another home of distinction in La Grange. It was built in 1845 by Frank Cossitt, the brother of Major George C. Cossitt, who had moved to La Grange from New York. The Cossitt family gave to the city of Memphis the library which still bears its name. The house is of white clapboard, two stories high, with a simplified portico on the first story, supporting a wooden rail balcony on the second. Unique are the home's teardrop eaves trim and its octagonal cupola, which actually was blown away in a tornado in 1900, to be found intact some ten miles away and replaced in its original setting. Frank Cossitt later moved from La Grange to Illinois where he laid out a town and named it La Grange. The new town was an exact replica of La Grange, Tennessee, with an Episcopal Church named Immanuel. Tiara was later owned by the McNeil family and later by the Huttons. In 1904 the house was purchased by James B. Sims, father of the present owner, Mrs. Winston Jones.

La Grange was the birthplace of Lucy Holcombe Pickens, the "Queen of the Confederacy." The house in which she was born still stands and is presently in the process of being restored. Lucy Holcombe, born in 1832, spent her girlhood in La Grange. While a young woman, she met Francis W. Pickens, a young Congressman from South Carolina. They were married in 1858, shortly before Mr. Pickens accepted the post of United States Minister to Russia. The young couple became close friends of Czar Alexander II, with the Pickens' daughter being born in the royal palace as the godchild of the Czar and Czarina. Later when her husband served as governor of the Confederate state of South Carolina, Lucy Pickens' portrait was put on the Confederate one dollar note.

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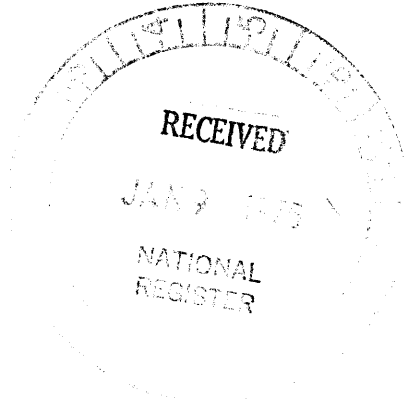
(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (cont.) p.3

Her portrait was also placed on three different \$100 Confederate notes, and was the only woman so honored by the Confederacy. The home is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Allen. Its most outstanding features are the beautiful fan windows over the front door and the upstairs portico balcony. It represents yet another variation of the Greek Revival style, so popular in the South during this period.

Many other houses of architectural significance are to be found in La Grange, and in addition to the many homes built on the grander scale, there remain a number of small cottages occupied by the workers and sharecroppers, still reminiscent of a way of life that is almost gone. Still standing also are the frame countrystore buildings, typical of the small Southern towns.

Included within the district are two important church buildings, La Grange Methodist Church, circa 1832-36, and Immanuel Episcopal Church, circa 1843, a National Register property.



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

La Grange, Tennessee is the oldest town in Fayette County. During the nineteenth century, and especially before the Civil War, it enjoyed the reputation of being a center of culture and education. There were several private schools, including a military academy, but the best known institutions were the La Grange Female College and the La Grange Synodical College for Men. The town became as well the home of the oldest Episcopal Church in West Tennessee, Immanuel Church established in 1832, and the La Grange area itself constituted one of the oldest parishes in the Diocese.

An unusual form of entertainment during the antebellum period, and one that seems uniquely Southern in the Sir Walter Scott tradition, was the medieval tournament. The young men of the community dressed as knights, sans armour, and rode bespangled horses in a great circle attempting to spear as many rings as possible from rods placed at intervals along the way.

In addition to its importance as a center of culture and education, La Grange was an important commercial center during its early years. A census taken at the time of incorporation in 1828, showed that the town had 60 houses, 240 inhabitants, four stores, two taverns, and twelve mechanics. It quickly developed into a commercial center and cotton market, surpassing Memphis as the most important town in that area of the state.

The impact of the Civil War upon La Grange was substantial. On June 13, 1862, less than a week after the fall of Memphis, a large body of Federal troops moved into the town and occupied it from that day until the end of the war. It was a natural military outpost, well connected by rail and situated on the high bluff looking for miles into Confederate Mississippi. Most of the men of the village were away fighting when the Union forces arrived. The spacious homes, schools and public buildings served as ideal quarters for Union soldiers. Woodlawn, the home of Major Michie, became the West Tennessee headquarters for General William T. Sherman and for several months served as an emergency hospital. Hancock Hall, the home of Dr. Pulliam, just completed in 1857, was also occupied. General U. S. Grant stayed at Hancock Hall when he was in La Grange. Immanuel Church was used for a time as a hospital and barracks. The pews were used to make coffins for the dead Union soldiers. Later, the church was used as an ordnance storage facility.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Brown, D. Alexander, Grierson's Raid (Urbana, 1962).  
 DeBerry, John H., "LaGrange, La Belle Village," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXX, No. 2, 1971.  
 Grant, U. S., Personal Memoirs (New York, 1885).  
 Phelan, James, History of Tennessee (Boston, 1889).  
 Interviews with Mrs. Peter Beasley and Mrs. John Walley.

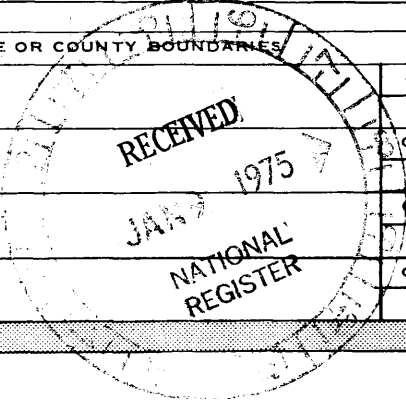
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	35°	03'	39"	89°	15'	23"				
NE	35°	02'	57"	89°	12'	27"				
SE	35°	02'	42"	89°	12'	31"				
SW	35°	02'	25"	89°	15'	23"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.700

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



NO  
W/M  
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Carolyn M. Rhodes

ORGANIZATION: Tennessee Historical Commission DATE: 9/24/74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
170 2nd Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 47

**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 Lauren [Signature]

Title Executive Director  
Tennessee Historical Commission

Date 1/2/75

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

[Signature]  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/4/75

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
 Keeper of the National Register

Date APR 3 1975

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Tennessee	
COUNTY	
Fayette	
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8. SIGNIFICANCE (cont.) p.2

There was little actual fighting in La Grange, although there were several skirmishes in the area. Nevertheless, the last years of the war wrought havoc with La Grange and the surrounding countryside. Residents today claim that no less than forty fine homes were destroyed in La Grange during the conflict, illustrating the significant part which La Grange played in the Civil War.

La Grange was the birthplace of Lucy Holcombe Pickens, the "Queen of the Confederacy." Lucy Holcombe, born in 1832 in a house which still stands, spent her girlhood in La Grange. While a young woman, she met Francis Pickens, a young Congressman from South Carolina. They were married in 1858, shortly before Mr. Pickens accepted the post of United States Minister to Russia. Later, when her husband was serving as governor of the Confederate State of South Carolina, Lucy Pickens' portrait was put on the Confederate \$1 note on June 2, 1861. She was the only woman so honored by the Confederacy. Other notables from La Grange include John L. T. Sneed, later Supreme Court Justice of Tennessee, and William Milliken, author and compiler of the Code of Tennessee Laws.

La Grange is remembered today as a center of culture, wealth, and beautiful nineteenth century homes. Perhaps nowhere else in the state of Tennessee, and in very few places in the country at large can there be found such a rich concentration of gracious and beautifully preserved homes in such a small area.

Citizens of La Grange are tremendously proud of their heritage, and are determined to protect the remaining significant structures. Historic zoning has been enacted, and pilgrimages and publicity to make local citizens aware of the great assets which the town possesses have been successful in helping to preserve the original atmosphere of the community.

