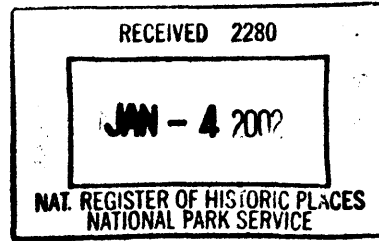


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Mt. Airy
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 10700 Latting Road N/A not for publication
city or town Cordova N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Shelby code 157 zip code 38108

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.)

Michael L. Hays 12/22/01
Signature of certifying official/Title 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:)

Elson Hays 2/14/02
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Mt. Airy
Name of Property

Shelby 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

2

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

2

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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

I-House with Classical Revival detailing

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT
other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1835-1951

Significant Dates

c. 1835
1858
c. 1920

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Crenshaw, Thomas Charles
Feild, Roscoe

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): N/A

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State Agency
 - Federal Agency
 - Local Government
 - University - The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN
 - Other
- Name of repository: Memphis/Shelby County Public Library and Information Center, Shelby County Archives, Collection of Mrs. Doris Latting

Mt. Airy
Name of Property

Shelby County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 19 acres Eads Quad 416 NW

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	253875	3896438	3	16	253750	3896062
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	254500	3896313	4	16	254250	3896000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Shlasko, Assistant Professor and Diane Bundy
organization University of Memphis date October 25, 2000
street & number Dept. of Anthropology, 316 Manning Hall telephone 901-678-1401
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38152

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 Mrs. Doris Latting
street & number 10700 Latting Road telephone 901-754-7639
city or town Cordova state TN zip code 38108

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 Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Mt. Airy
Shelby County, TN

DESCRIPTION

Situated on approximately nineteen acres, Mt. Airy is a two-story I-house with Classical Revival detailing located approximately four miles northeast of the town of Cordova in Shelby County. Most of the property consists of open farmland with some woods and a small pond located northeast of the house. The house itself sits on a fenced lawn dotted with mature trees. There are two outbuildings, a garage built in the 1950s and a workshop built in the 1920s. Both are noncontributing. Sometime in the 20th century, the driveway to the property was moved from the north side to the south side of the house. The new drive approaches from the west and curves around to the south of the house, ending in a circular drive with a brick path to the 1858 veranda. Cordova, Tennessee, where Mt. Airy is located, is in the process of being absorbed into the expanding eastern suburbs of Memphis. There is a buffer zone of undeveloped land surrounding the house, but it is threatened by encroaching development.

The main house consists of an L-shaped, two story, log and frame building clad with weatherboard siding and capped with a side gabled roof covered with asphalt-shingles. Resting on a brick pier foundation, Mt. Airy achieved its form in several stages. The oldest part of the house was built circa 1835. This section is a rectangular, two-story log building, with chimneys on both gable-end walls. In the interior, this part of Mt. Airy is a symmetrical I-house, with a central hall flanked by equal size rooms on both floors. Family history suggests that the oldest part of the house was always plastered and sided and built in a single episode; however, there is no documented evidence that either supports or contradicts this claim. In 1858, a large, rectangular addition was added to the southwest corner of the original structure. This addition is of frame construction with a central chimney and is clad in the same weatherboard as the 1830s structure.

A one-story portico highlights the symmetrical three-bay north façade of Mt. Airy. Consisting of a flat roof supported by four Tuscan columns, the portico replaced an original two-story portico. Evidence for the original portico lies in a historic photograph from 1905 that reveals a two story Greek Revival portico supported by square columns and capped with a pedimented roof. This may have been an original feature of the 1830s house, or it may have been added when the 1858 addition was built. Sometime between 1905 (when the photograph was taken) and 1924 (when the current homeowner moved to Mt. Airy) the old portico was removed and replaced with the current Classical Revival porch. A series of four concrete steps lead up to the main entrance that consists of a centrally located wood door with six-lights in the upper portion and adorned with flanking sidelights and transom, which all contain six-lights. It was probably during the period when the house received its Classical Revival detailing that the sidelights and three-part windows that adorn the façade were added. Directly above on the second story, is a second door opening with a two panel wood door and flanking six-light sidelights. This door once provided access to the second story balcony of the original portico. Flanking the central bay on each floor are three-part windows containing nine-over-nine, double-hung, wood sash with six-pane sidelights.

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Section number 7 Page 2 Mt. Airy
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Two window openings that are associated with the 1858 addition are visible from the façade. These include a six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash window on the first floor, and a one-over-one, double-hung sash window on the second floor.

The east elevation reveals the windowless gable end of the 1830s house, which is transected by an exterior brick chimney. A one-story screened-in porch, probably added in the early 20th century, is attached to the south wall of the main block. The wood porch rests on stone piers and is capped with a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. Also visible from this vantage point is the east facade of the 1858 addition. A two-story open veranda, supported by four square wood columns, runs the entire length of the addition. On the ground floor is a six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash window with a door located at the northern end of the addition. Located near the junction with the 1830s structure, the door provides access to the 1858 addition and is currently used as the main entrance to the house. A centrally placed shuttered pass-through is located between the window and door opening. The second story of the veranda contains (from south to north) a window and a door opening, which provides access to the upper story rooms. The window consists of a one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash, while the door opening contains a wood door with a large pane of glass set in its upper portion. Initially, the only access to these rooms was through the exterior staircase found on the west elevation, suggesting the rooms were originally built as slave quarters or storerooms. The north end of the second story veranda is screened in and has been used as a sleeping porch since the early 20th century.

The south elevation of the 1830s section originally mirrored the symmetrical fenestration of the façade; however, with the construction of the 1858 addition and some 20th century changes, the original design has been altered, particularly on the west elevation. On the first floor, two, nine-over-nine, double-hung, sash windows with six pane sidelights flank a central opening consisting of a pair of French doors that lead from the central hall onto a screened in porch. These doors were added during the current homeowner's tenure, replacing the original solid wood doors. The one-story screened-in porch extends from the east wall of the 1858 addition across half of the south facade of the 1830s structure. On the second floor, the central and easternmost window openings follow the same three-part arrangement as the first floor windows; however, the central opening is a modern replacement of the original. Lastly, the original west window opening was replaced by a set of French doors that opens onto the second floor of the 1858 addition. This alteration probably occurred during the 1920s when the house received its Classical Revival modifications.

Piercing the south gable end of the 1858 addition is a pair of six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash windows on the first floor. Centrally located above these windows on the second floor is a window opening containing a one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash. A small portion of the second story veranda on the west elevation of the 1858 addition was enclosed, which resulted in the placement

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of a single four-light, fixed, wood sash on the south elevation. Two sets of concrete steps flank the central bay of the gable end, providing access to the first story verandas located on either side of the 1858 addition. A bulkhead, located directly below the paired windows, provides access to a cellar. This is the only exterior wall to have aluminum siding, which was applied on top of the weatherboards that cover the rest of the house. The visual impact of this change is minimal.

The west gable end of the main block of the 1830s section echoes the east gable end, however, with one difference. Located north of the exterior brick chimney is a door opening shielded by a one-story pedimented portico that is supported by two square wood columns. A two-story open veranda supported by four square wood columns highlights the 1858 addition on the west elevation. The first floor verandah runs the length of the addition and contains an off-centered window opening with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash. Two door openings, with wood panel doors, flank the window. An exterior straight run open string staircase provides access to the second floor verandah. A small portion of the south end of the second floor veranda was enclosed sometime in the 20th century and turned into a bathroom with both exterior and interior access. A balustrade with square balusters adorns the second floor verandah, which also contains a window and door opening that are symmetrically placed. The window opening contains a one-over-one, double-hung, sash, while the door opening contains a paneled wood door.

First Floor Interior Description

Most people enter Mt. Airy today from the east veranda of the 1858 addition directly into the dining room. The 1858 addition consists of two rooms on each floor, with a central chimney. The north room on the ground floor is the dining room. This room retains all of its original 1858 cabinetry, consisting of deep (13.5 inch) closets of various sizes behind painted paneled doors. A fireplace with its original wood surround dominates the south wall of the room. The floor in the dining room is a modern hardwood floor.

Located south of the dining room is the kitchen. This room also retains original paneling and cabinetry, although this is much less elaborate than the paneling in the dining room. Some modifications have been made to this room in the 20th century, although these are remarkably limited and consist mostly of counters and appliances from the 1950s or 60s.

The 1830s section of the house from the dining room, leads into the parlor. This room, like all of the rooms in the original log portion of the house, is plastered. It retains all of its original moldings, doors, windows, hardware and the original hardwood floor. The original wood fireplace surround was replaced by a brick mantel in the early 20th century. The ceiling in the parlor is not original, although the current homeowner, who has lived in the house since 1924, has no memory of a

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Shelby County, TN

change, indicating that the renovation took place before that date. While plumbing and electricity have been added, Mt. Airy does not have a central heating system and the home is currently heated with a combination of individual gas heaters and wood stoves.

The hall is located between the parlor and the downstairs bedroom. There is a modern bathroom with a toilet and sink located in the northwest corner of the room, under the stairs. The staircase and banister leading to the second floor dates to at least the Civil War.

A downstairs bedroom is located east of the hall. This room has original floors and doors. Closets in this room were added in the mid-20th century. Recently, the homeowner repapered this room. In an effort to smooth the walls in the northeast corner of the room, the contractor removed some of the original plaster, exposing the log construction, handmade plaster of lime and horsehair, and original square nails. As in the parlor, the original fireplace surround was replaced in the early 20th century by brick.

All of the interior doors on the ground floor of the 1830s house are wide (4 feet) and consist of four rectangular panels over two, with through-tendon construction. Except where noted, the ceilings throughout the house are constructed of bead-board planking.

Second Floor Interior Description

At the top of the stairs of the 1830s house is a small hall. This hall has original floors and an exterior door that once provided access to the second-story front porch. In the mid-20th century, Mr. Latting, the husband of the current homeowner, divided the hall to create a bathroom on the south side of the building.

Two bedrooms flank either side of the hall. Both bedrooms have original floors, doors with original hardware, as well as the original wood fireplace mantles. The doors to these rooms are as wide as the downstairs doors, but are built of bead board planking and z-pattern construction. Both bedroom doors retain their original iron box locks. In the mid-20th century, the homeowner added closets in both upstairs bedrooms.

The west bedroom, located over the parlor, has French doors in the south wall that lead up three steps to the second floor veranda on the east facade of the 1858 addition. The steps are necessary because the ceilings in the 1858 addition are higher than the ceilings in the 1830s section of the house.

The two adjoining rooms on the second floor of the 1858 addition have bead-board paneled walls that have been covered by plaster and wallpaper. The floor in the north room is original, while the floor in the south room has been replaced. Although a central chimney rises through these rooms, neither room has a fireplace, nor is there visible evidence of chimney access for a stove pipe.

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As mentioned earlier, a bathroom was installed on the west veranda sometime in the 20th century.

Overall, the house is in good condition. Occupied by a single family throughout its history, the house has been well maintained and cared for. There are original details throughout the house, including cabinetry, doors and hardware, floors, and window sash. Post-1858 changes are minimal. Although the outside has experienced some deterioration due to time and weathering, the house has maintained its historic integrity.

Workshop, c. 1920, located approximately 25 feet south of the house, is a one-story frame structure. The building has wood weatherboard siding and an asphalt shingle roof. (C)

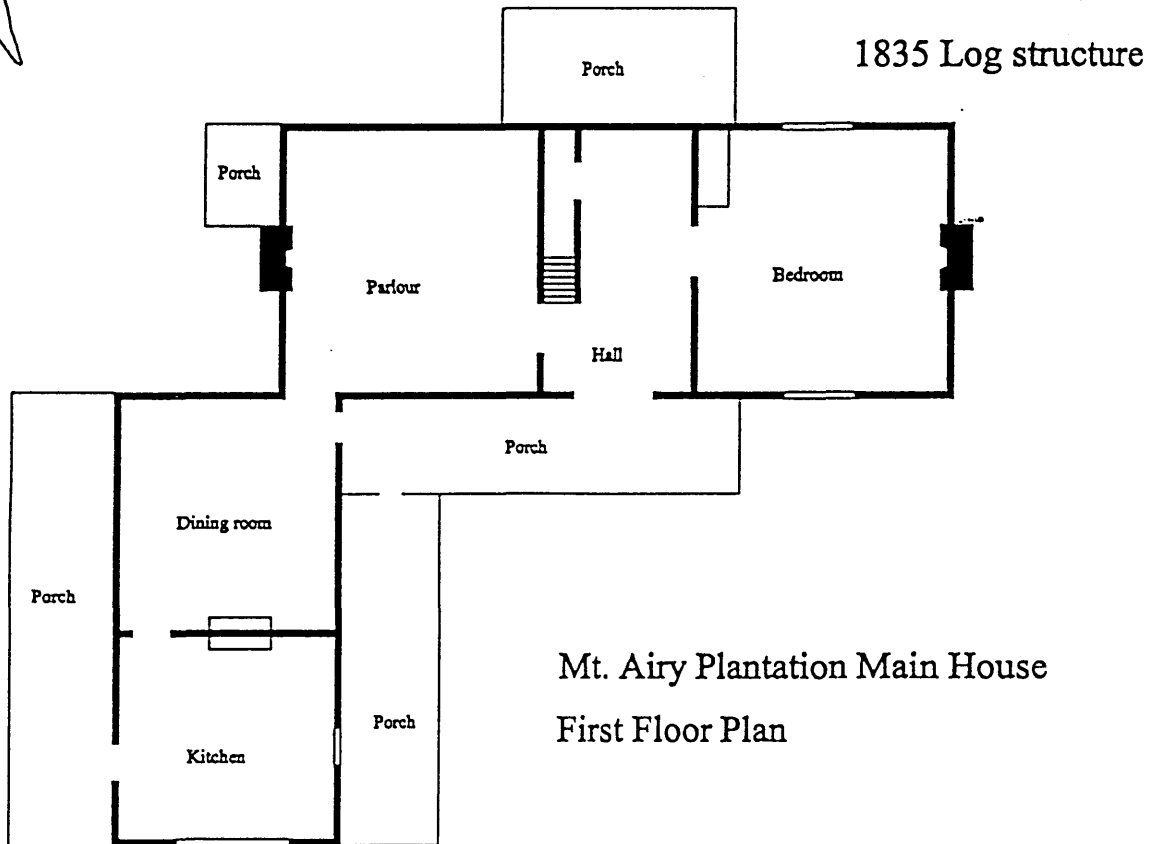
Garage, c. 1990, is a large modern structure with a metal roof and siding. (NC)

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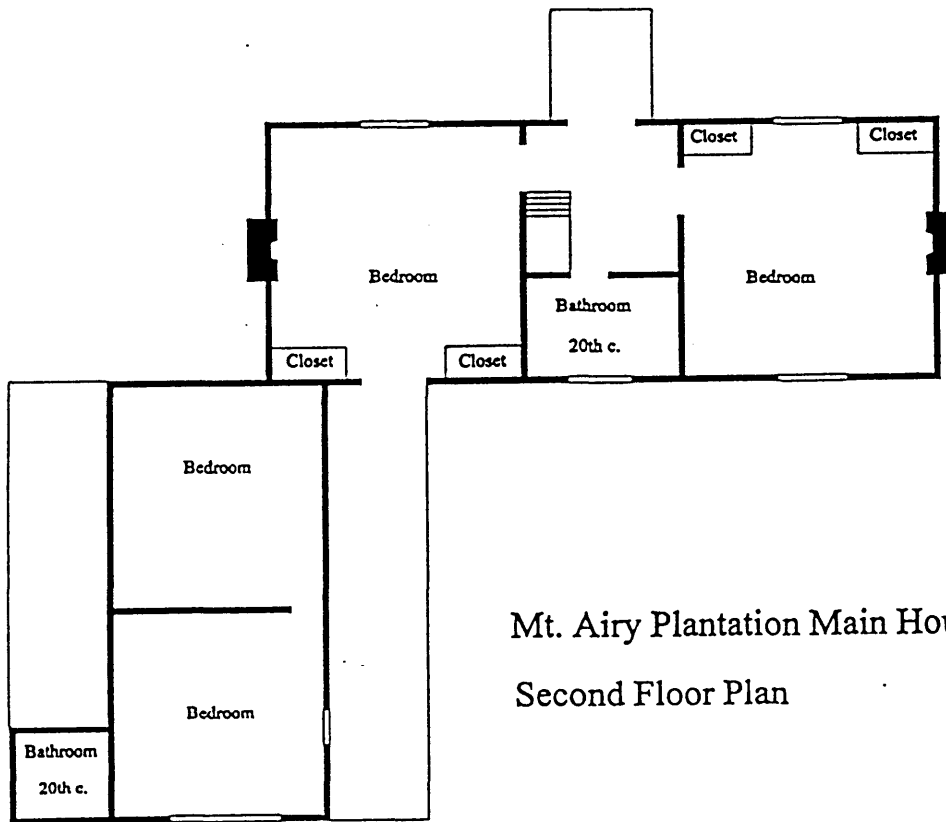


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Mt. Airy
Shelby County, TN



Mt. Airy Plantation Main House
Second Floor Plan

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mt. Airy, built in 1835, is one of the oldest standing log-constructed homes in Shelby County, Tennessee. The house is a part of the rich history of West Tennessee and Shelby County. Originally, the main house was part of a sizable (1,379 acres) plantation; however, only 19 acres remain. The home is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C for its local significance in the areas of settlement and architecture. Under Criterion A, the house encompasses a wide spectrum of settlement patterns and agricultural trends of West Tennessee, which includes frontier life, plantation life and the transition from slavery to tenant farming as an agricultural practice. Architecturally, the house stands as an excellent example of an evolved 19th century I -house with Classical Revival details. The historic changes to the house, which includes a rear addition and Classical Revival detailing, reflects the growing prosperity and changing architectural tastes of Mt. Airy's owners.

History of Mt. Airy Plantation

Memphis and Shelby County were founded following the finalization of the U.S. treaty with the Chickasaw in 1818, which opened the land between the Tennessee River and the Mississippi River for settlement. During the 1820s and 1830s, settlers from the eastern seaboard migrated into this area (part of the "old southwest") in search of land and opportunity. Most of these settlers were from the Carolinas, although a substantial group came from Virginia. Many immigrants were younger sons whose prospects in the seaboard states were limited by rising populations and limited land (Cashin 1991).

Shelby County in West Tennessee was part of the cotton belt, where fertile alluvial lands were ideally suited for large-scale cotton production. Many settlers in this region had financial support from families back east and were able to purchase substantial tracts of land. Less prosperous immigrants purchased smaller properties outside the cotton belt (Bailey 1998).

Unlike many immigrants, the Crenshaw family migrated from Virginia as a multi-generational family consisting of Asbury Crenshaw, his son Thomas Charles Crenshaw, his daughter-in-law Ellen Feild Crenshaw, and her orphaned younger brother, Roscoe Feild. Asbury Crenshaw's brother, Thomas B. Crenshaw, may also have formed part of the group. Left behind in Virginia were Asbury's wife and younger sons, victims of Asbury's unfounded belief that the boys were not his children (Asbury Crenshaw 1852, Shelby County Archives).

The land that became Mt. Airy was first surveyed in 1823, for the Trustees of Cumberland College (Survey Book A, Page 125). There is no indication in the documents of any improvements made to the property at this time. John Wirt and Nathaniel K. Jones purchased the property from the

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college in April 1839 and sold it to Thomas C. Crenshaw the following July (Deed Book H, Page 322; Deed Book I, Page 436). In that space of time, the property shot up in value from \$640.00 to \$2,853.96. This sudden increase may mark the construction of the house at Mt. Airy. However, family history suggests that the Crenshaws immigrated to Tennessee in 1831 and built and occupied Mt. Airy soon after. It was not unusual in the early 19th century for occupation of a property to predate the official filing of deeds. Confusion as to the exact date is the result of inconsistencies in the documentary and oral sources used to trace the history of the property. Although family history may be accurate, the documentary evidence suggests otherwise. Certainly by the end of the 1830s, the Crenshaw family (consisting of Thomas Charles Crenshaw, his wife Ellen Feild and her brother Roscoe Feild, and his father, Asbury Crenshaw) was living at Mt. Airy. In the following years the Crenshaws continued to add to the property, buying and selling small tracts of land in the neighborhood. The 1840 census (Shelby County, page 231) lists 24 people living at Mt. Airy, including 4 whites and 19 slaves. Thomas B. Crenshaw is listed in the same census as living nearby on a property with 4 whites and 41 slaves. Clearly, the Crenshaws were not impoverished immigrants, but had arrived in Tennessee with substantial resources at their disposal.

The house the Crenshaws built at Mt. Airy reflects their comfortable circumstances. While it is typical of frontier dwellings in the construction technique (solid log building), it is not a rustic frontier dwelling in any other way. With its symmetrical facade, large windows, large size and symmetrically laid out interior, it was a substantial home even during this early period.

Unlike Davies Manor, (NR 1975, a nearby home from approximately the same time period that began as a simple one-room log cabin) the original construction of the 1830s section of Mt. Airy looked essentially the way it appears today. In the area around Mt. Airy, only two homes from the period survive, Davies Manor and Woodlawn, the home of the Ecklin family (Emily Ecklin married Roscoe Feild in 1861), and both have been substantially altered through the years. Family tradition says that the walls of Mt. Airy were always clad on the outside and plastered on the inside and that everything was made on the plantation. This is true of the furnishings inside the house as well, where the family retains a number of pieces they believe were made by slaves belonging to the family.

Sometime during the 1840s, as the result of a conflict between Thomas C. and Asbury, the son and his family moved out of Mt. Airy, leaving the property in the sole possession of Asbury Crenshaw. The property was officially transferred from son to father in 1848 (Deed Book Z, Page 532).

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An 1849 advertisement in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* read:

Asbury Crenshaw is offering the sale of his residence known as Mount Airy, located in Shelby County 23 miles from Memphis. There is a fine house situated on a ridge of ground surrounded by heavy forest and 1378 acres. It has two wells of water and all necessary outbuildings, also several small houses on the plantation. Those interested in buying the place can find Mr. Crenshaw on the premises two miles south of Wash's store on the road leading from Memphis to Somerville (Commercial Appeal 1849, reprinted 1949).

Although he apparently intended to sell the property, Asbury was still living at Mt. Airy at the time of the 1850 census, where he is listed as living on his 600 acres of improved land and 817 acres of unimproved land with 37 slaves. Interestingly, despite the size and location of Mt. Airy, and the presence on the property of a substantial number of slaves, the agricultural census for 1850 lists no cotton production. However, in the inventory of Asbury Crenshaw's estate executed in 1851, there were "sixty or seventy" bales of cotton listed from that year's crop (Inventory of the estate of A. Crenshaw, Shelby County Archives) and an 1848 advertisement in the *Memphis Daily Appeal* offered to sell a property with good dwellings, two stories, four rooms and a passage, finished both inside and out, with a cotton gin-house, stable and other secondary buildings (*Memphis Daily Appeal*, Nov. 10, 1848). In 1852 and 1853, Asbury's cotton brokers in Memphis owed \$3031.58 to his estate for cotton produced at Mt. Airy (Account of Estate of A. Crenshaw, deceased, Shelby County Archives).

The 1851 inventory of Asbury Crenshaw's estate provides an image of Mt. Airy before the building of the large addition. The downstairs consisted of a parlor room, a passage room and a west room containing some card tables. Upstairs were two rooms and a closet. Asbury used one room as a bedroom and the other two upstairs spaces as storerooms for "plantation supplies" (Crenshaw inventory).

Outbuildings in 1851 included a dairy and a smoke house, plus other buildings to house the cattle, hogs, oxen, carriages and other equipment listed in the inventory. The inventory also lists 37 slaves by name and in families.

Asbury Crenshaw died soon after the 1850 census. His estate became entangled in a lawsuit and it was not until 1855 that the property passed to Roscoe Feild. Roscoe purchased property, which included Mt. Airy, from Asbury's sons for \$11,268 (Deed Book 13, Page 425).

Roscoe Feild led an interesting life. Born in Virginia, around 1825, he was left an orphan at a young age and immigrated with his guardian and older sister to Tennessee at around the age of ten. He graduated from Princeton in 1847 and returned home to Mt. Airy. In 1849, Roscoe joined the California Gold Rush. The results of this adventure are uncertain, although one letter to

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Roscoe in the family collection suggests that he made at least a small profit during his stay in California, although not, perhaps, in the gold fields. He did not stay in California for very long, but returned to Tennessee to take up farming (J.J. Boulais to Roscoe Feild, Jan. 15, 1855, Latting Collection; Durham 1997).

After Roscoe purchased Mt. Airy, he focused on maintaining the property. According to the family, Roscoe undertook a major remodeling of the house in 1858, adding a wing containing the kitchen and dining room and two upstairs rooms. Before the addition of this wing, the house had a separate kitchen, located approximately where the workshop stands today. The family believes that Roscoe expanded the house in anticipation of his marriage to Emily Ecklin, in 1861.

An 1857 account book kept by Roscoe details all of his sales and purchases throughout the year (Roscoe Feild Account Book, Mrs. Doris Latting Collection). Following the pattern established in the 1850 census, the property at Mt. Airy produced wheat and animal products rather than cotton. In 1860, Roscoe owned only nine slaves, although there were four slave houses on the property. The dramatic drop in the slave population at Mt. Airy from 37 in 1851, to 9 in 1860 reflects the change in ownership of the property. In 1851, when the slave population at Mt. Airy was at its peak, Asbury Crenshaw, an older man with a considerable estate, owned the property. In 1860, when Roscoe Field, a much younger man, purchased the property, he probably did not have had the financial resources to purchase and maintain the amount of slaves Crenshaw owned.

In 1862, Roscoe, recently married, joined the Confederate Army. He was away from Mt. Airy throughout most of the war, leaving the management of the estate in the hands of his wife, who was aided by her father, Mr. Ecklin of Woodlawn Plantation. Roscoe was gone until the spring of 1864, when he sustained a serious wound during the Battle of Decatur, Georgia. The house itself suffered no direct impact from the Civil War, although the Battle of Morning Sun (a prominent local Civil War battle) was fought nearby and oral history remembers a field fire started by Union troops that threatened the home. Family lore also mentions that Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest (an acquaintance of the owner) and his troops camped at Mt. Airy during the Civil War.

The 1870 census reflects the changes that the Civil War brought to Mt. Airy. In particular, it appears that Roscoe Feild began to engage in small-scale cotton agriculture using tenant farmers as his labor force. The tenants also produced a variety of other agricultural products, including wool, meat, sorghum, and butter. This pattern remained essentially unchanged throughout the remainder of the 19th century and into the beginning of the 20th century. The current homeowner, who moved to Mt. Airy in 1924, is able to recall many details of this lifestyle during the first half of the 20th century.

After Roscoe Feild's death, the house passed to his daughter, Ellen Feild Latting, then to her son, Alfred Latting, and finally to his widow, the present owner, Mrs. Alfred Latting. The current

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homeowner is, therefore, only one generation removed from one of the original occupants of the house.

Mt. Airy was established in the mid-1830s as a plantation home during the flurry of settlement activity in West Tennessee. Throughout the 19th century and into the mid-20th century it was a working farm with labor provided first by slaves and then by tenant farmers. Thus, the house is associated with general trends of settlement, westward expansion, frontier life, plantation life and the transition from slavery to tenant farming.

Architecturally, Mt. Airy is a distinctive 19th century I-house with Classical Revival details, built on-site, probably by slave labor. In form, it is an L-shaped house constructed in two phases, an 1830s log section and an 1858 frame addition. It has historic wall covering consisting of weatherboard made of hand split yellow poplar applied with square nails. The oldest part of the house is log construction, plastered inside and sided outside. It retains many original interior features such as four original mantels and the main staircase. The "new" addition dates to 1858 and maintains much of its historic character, including handcrafted cabinetry in the dining room, original siding, windows, doors and hardware. In addition to preparing the house for a new family, the need for the addition reflects the growth and prosperity of Roscoe Field's farming enterprise, which focused on small-scale cotton agriculture using tenant farmers.

The 20th century marked further changes to Mt. Airy, which reflected the country's interest in Classical architecture. Spurred by the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the Pan-American Exposition of 1901, construction of buildings that imitated the Classical orders soared between 1900 and the 1920s. Sometime around 1920 the original Greek Revival two-story portico was removed in favor of a modest, Colonial Revival influenced flat roof porch that is supported with round columns. According to the owner, the portico was removed because it had fallen into disrepair and proved cost prohibitive to maintain.

Mt. Airy is one of only three known 19th century log-constructed homes still standing in Shelby County. This form of frontier architecture was once common, but very few examples have survived the years. The other two log buildings are Davies Manor Plantation and the Elam Homestead, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Davies Manor was listed in 1975 and the Elam Homestead in 1980. Of the three, Mt. Airy is probably the oldest, the least altered, and it is situated on the most intact landscape. Mt. Airy represents the development of rural architecture in the rich cotton belt of the Mississippi Delta. In its first incarnation, as a log-built, but fully finished home, the construction of Mt. Airy made use of readily available timber and simple building techniques. However, even in this form it was a genteel planter's home, perhaps reflecting the immigrant owners' vision of future success in the new territory. The remodeling in the late 1850s incorporated more skilled, finished carpentry and nearly doubled the size of the house, but subtly transformed the building into a less formal, asymmetrical structure.

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The house reflects changing architectural traditions in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As a Century Farm. (one that has been owned and farmed by the same family for over a hundred years) it has retained much of its historic character and integrity. The house reflects a century and a half of West Tennessee's development, from a wild frontier, through the struggles of the Civil War and Reconstruction, to the changing character of rural Tennessee in the late 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. For these reasons Mt. Airy qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for Mt. Airy is delineated on the accompanying tax map for Cordova in Shelby County, Tennessee, which is identified as parcel 149 (1" = 500'). The nominated boundary includes roughly 19 acres containing the main house and related outbuildings that are historically associated with Mt. Airy from 1836 to 1951.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is bounded to the west by Latting Road. The southern boundary starts just south of the junction of the driveway, Latting Road, and Latting Lane and follows the curving drive up and past the house. This southern boundary is marked by a wire fence, which separates Mt. Airy from a neighboring pasture. At the southeast corner of the property, the fence makes a 90° turn to the north. The fence line then continues north until it intersects Latting Lane, where the property line turns west. From here, it follows Latting Lane back to the start at the intersection of Latting Road and Latting Lane.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Mt. Airy
Shelby County, Tennessee

Photos By: Ellen Shlasko, Robert Dye, and Michele Achelpohl
The University of Memphis
Memphis, TN 38152

Date: January 2001

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, TN 37243

- #1: Façade of house, facing south
- #2: Detail of 1830s window, facing southwest
- #3: North and east elevation, facing southwest
- #4: East elevation, facing west
- #5: East and south elevations, facing northwest
- #6: South elevation of 1830s structure and east elevation of 1858 addition, facing northwest
- #7: Junction of 1830s structure and 1858 addition, facing northwest
- #8: West elevation, facing east
- #9: Junction of 1830s structure and 1858 addition, facing southeast
- #10: Detail of dining room door used as main entrance, facing east
- #11: 1858 fireplace in dining room, facing southeast
- #12: Kitchen, facing east/northeast
- #13: Dining room, facing north
- #14: Detail of dining room door to west veranda, facing west

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- #15: Detail of door between dining room and parlor, facing west
- #16: Parlor, facing southwest
- #17: Downstairs bedroom, facing southwest
- #18: Downstairs hall, facing southwest
- #19: Upstairs east bedroom, facing southeast
- #20: Upstairs west bedroom, facing southwest
- #21: Detail of fireplace surround, upstairs west bedroom, facing west
- #22: Upstairs south bedroom, facing northwest
- #23: Workshop, facing south

MT. AIRY PLANTATION

17 APRIL 1999

NRHP SURVEY

