National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB	No. 1024-0018
Exp.	10-31-84

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

1. Name

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historic	Whitè Sul	phur Springs		
and or common		ings Historic Distric	ct (preferred)	
2. Loca			<u>oo (p. c. c. , c. , </u>	
		attern along the Pupp		
		d Baker Roads and the	e Mineral Springs N	
city, town P	rimm Springs	N/A _ vicinity of		
	ennessee	code 047 county	y Hickman	code 081
3. Clas	sification			
Category X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisition N/A in process being considere	<u> </u>	entertainment government	── museum ── park ─X private residence ── religious ── scientific ── transportation ─X other: vacant
4. Own	er of Prop	erty		
name	SEE CONTINUAT	ION SHEET		
street & number	N/A			
city, town	N/A	N∕A_ vicinity of	state	N/A
5. Loca	ation of Le	egal Descript	ion	•
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Hickman County Co	ourthouse	
street & number		Public Square		
city, town		Centerville	state	Tennessee
6. Rep	resentatio	n in Existing	Surveys	
title N/A		has this p	roperty been determined el	igible? yes _ <u>X</u> no
date N/A		<u>له</u> ۲	N/A federal sta	te county local
	urvey records N/A			
city, town	N/A		state	N/A

7. Description

Condition		OHECK OHE
excellent	<u>X</u> deteriorated	X unaltered
X good	X ruins	altered
X fair	unexposed	

Check one <u>X</u> original site moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Check one

The Primm Springs Historic District is comprised of sixteen historic and architecturally significant structures and a number of ancillary outbuildings which together form the resort of Primm Springs in eastern Hickman County, Tennessee. The spa and its related buildings are located along the Puppy Branch of Dog Creek in a hollow of the Western Highland Rim twenty miles east of the county seat of Centerville. The district is a good collection of vernacular frame structures including a large hotel, another smaller boarding house, six family summer cabins or cottages, a dance hall, two small stores, and two frame residences designed for year round use, as well as a number of outbuildings including springhouses, kitchens, smokehouses, barns, and sheds. Most of the buildings were designed for summer use only. They are well adapted to the environment, featuring open central breezeways or halls and large shuttered windows. Most of the resort buildings are in fair to poor condition, although they retain their structural integrity. The Estes House Hotel, a store, and the two residences are in good condition and well-maintained. None of the buildings have been altered, however, and the entire district retains its architectural integrity.

The springs themselves are located at the northeastern edge of the district; here shale formations along Puppy Branch release chemical waters laden with dissolved minerals. There were said to have been five mineral springs here at one time, but only three remain: sulphur, arsenic, and calomel. The flow has decreased somewhat in recent years, but the springs themselves are otherwise unchanged. A frame springhouse with piped-in water was built over the springs in the late nineteenth century. The small gabled building had latticed walls and was decorated with sawn vergeboards and finials; the building was destroyed by a freshet in 1983 or 1984 and has since been removed.

Just south of the springs is the dance pavilion, a large structure of vertical-board frame construction, erected in the 1920s. The dance hall rests on battered concrete piers above the stream and is topped by a gabled tin roof. Shuttered windows extend across the southeast and northwest walls, and another two are located on the northwest end. The interior is one large open hall, with a raised dais at the northwest end, and benches along the inside walls, and features an interesting exposed roof truss system. A bowling alley, also installed in the 1920s, was located under the dance hall on the north end, but no trace of it remains.

Just down the creek from the dance hall are the ruins of the Cecil Hotel, built by John W. Cecil about 1900. The two-story weatherboarded frame hotel collapsed in the winter of 1984.

In front of the hotel site is a broad stone dam which originally created a small pond, key to the resort's primitive sanitation system. Wastes from all of the buildings in the hollow emptied directly into the creek; to deal with the problem, the small dam was constructed. Every day, a horn was blown, and a sluice gate on the dam was raised, the released flood presumably cleaning out the stream. The sluice gates have been removed and no water is impounded by the dam.

A little below the Cecil Hotel ruins is a small cabin, a one-story structure of board and batten construction, topped by a side gable roof. The structure consists of two large rooms arranged around an open central breezeway, with a small shed section at the rear. The shed section, the shed porch at front, and the north wall have all but collapsed, and the remaining parts of the cabin are in fair to poor condition.

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Opposite this small cabin is the site of the old McEwen house, which was moved away from the resort following the closing of the resort. Another road departs from the main path at this point, continuing generally southeast along the east bank of the branch. A number of other cottages or cabins were located along this road, but all have since been moved or have collapsed.

At this point the main road crosses Puppy Branch on a small bridge of large cut stone blocks from a quarry a quarter of a mile above the Cecil Hotel site in a small draw. Just below is a one and one-half-story cottage in fair condition. The board-and-batten structure is laid out on a central passage plan, rests on stone piers, and is topped by a side gable roof of composition shingles. The house features double-lead vertical-batten doors and batten shutters on the unglazed windows. The front porch and a rear shed section have severely deteriorated, but the main block of the house is in reasonably sound condition.

A pile of boards and rotting timbers below this cottage marks the site of one or two other cottages, long since removed or collapsed.

Farther down the creek is another two story central-passage plan house of weatherboard construction, topped by a gabled tin roof. A two-story gallery extends across the front. The main part of the house is in fair condition, but a one-and-one-half story shed addition at the rear has fallen in. Below this house is another two-story structure, identical to the first, except that the rear shed section is replaced by a small gabled cookhouse at the rear. This cottage is in relatively good condition.

The next house down the stream is a two-story side-gabled cottage of board-and-batten construction, again laid out on a central passage plan, with two large rooms on both floors and a rear shed section; the entire structure is in fair condition.

Below this house is the last of the surviving cottages, a two-story structure arranged around an open breezeway. The cottage is covered with board-and-batten siding and is topped by a gabled tin roof; extra space is provided by a rear shed section. Like the other houses and cottages, all windows feature batten shutters but no window sash. Ruins of another small structure are located just below this house.

On flat ground near the base of the hollow stands the large Estes House Hotel, built by Daniel J. Estes in 1874. The large, twenty-one room hotel is a two-story structure of weatherboarded frame construction, and is topped by a gabled tin roof, recently replaced. Rooms on both floors are laid out along a transverse hall which extends the entire length of the structure. Two story porches or galleries extend along three sides of the building. The building is of solid construction, built around a braced frame of heavy timbers, and is in relatively good condition, being the chief focus of ongoing preservation work. However, the one-story kitchen section at the rear, cantilevered over the creek, has recently collapsed.

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Behind the hotel and along the creek is a fine stone springhouse, the only building of masonry construction in the district. The small front gabled structure was built about 1900, when F.R. Estes employed a stone mason to blast rock from the creekbed to build the structure.

Below the hotel and springhouse are the collapsed ruins of the old hotel bathhouse. The frame building, added to the hotel in the early twentieth century, was destroyed by flood waters in recent years.

Across the road from the bathhouse site is another two story frame structure, probably a small hotel used for overflow from the Estes House. A two story gallery extends across the west front of the building, and a one story addition with five boarding rooms extends from the north wall. One of these rooms had a fireplace, and may have been used as a caretaker's residence. The whole structure is in very poor shape.

Below the grounds of the old resort itself are a number of related buildings of varied use. Just outside the gate and across the road is the old Estes Store and Primm Springs Post Office, built about 1870. The three room central passage building rests on stone piers and is topped by a gabled roof in very poor condition, the central ridge breaking under heavy snow in 1984 or early 1985.

Farther down the creek is the old home of Miss Hugh Ella Estes, a one story L-shaped house of frame construction, built about 1900. The weatherboarded cross gable plan house features a bay end at the south topped by an overhanging gable, a raised gallery on the east and south sides, the porch rail supported by plain wooden pickets, vertical batten doors and windows, 4/4 light double hung sash windows, many with the original glass, and an interior brick chimney at the roof ridge joint. The house is supported on raised stone piers, and features a storage room below grade level under the projecting front section. A small smokehouse of board-and-batten construction is located in the back yard.

Next door is the old Sargent House, a two story central passage plan residence dating from the late nineteenth century. The three bay weatherboarded frame house features a fine two story porch with verandah extending across the main front, and decorated with a picket frieze and scroll sawn balusters and brackets. The house rests on stone piers, the open space below covered by wooden latticework. Windows are double-hung sash, with 1/1 and 4/4 lights. A stone chimney is located at the north gable end, and shed sections have been added to the south and rear. Another small smokehouse, this one covered with weatherboards, is located behind the house.

Across the road is the old Sargent Store, built before 1920; the long frame building is covered with board-and-batten siding and covered by a front gabled roof broken at the ridge by an interior brick flue. Doors are of diagonal battens, and windows are covered with hinged wooden shutters. A shed porch across the west side has been dismantled, but the building otherwise is in fair condition. Continuation sheet District

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A little farther down is the Estes barn, a small board-and-batten structure topped by a tin gable roof and with a small shed addition at the rear. The barn was the center of the Estes family's dairy operation which supplied milk and cream to the resort. The barn is the last structure in the historic district, located at its lower or southwest edge.

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In addition to the aforementioned buildings, the district contains a number of smaller outbuildings and support structures, including two frame garages, tool sheds, and privies. Landscape details of note include the stone dam, two stone bridges of good construction, numerous stone walls and retaining walls, and a gravity fed water system, still operable, fed from two large wooden tanks adjacent to a hillside spring above the cabins on the west side of the creek.

All of the buildings in the Primm Springs Historic District are listed as contributing. Contributing buildings have retained their integrity. They possess compatible design elements and maintain the scale, size and texture of the district.

INVENTORY

- 1. Dance Pavillion. 1920s. Vernacular. One-story frame, vertical-board construction, seven-bays-by-two, gabled tin roof, set on tapered concrete piers over stream, interior is one large hall with raised dais at northeast end and benches around walls, fair condition.
- 2. Cottage #1. 1870s. Vernacular. One-story frame, board-and-batten construction, three bays arranged around open dogtrot or breezeway, shed section at rear, shed porch front, pier foundation, batten shutters. Porch, rear shed, and north wall collapsed, remainder of structure in poor condition.
- 3. Puppy Branch Dam. 1870s. Small dam of random stone construction, laid across Puppy Branch at its confluence with a small tributary, topped by rough field road. Sluice gates removed and dam is not in service.
- 4. Cottage #2. 1870s. Vernacular. One-and-one-half-story frame, board-and batten siding, stone pier foundation, side-gable composition roof, central-passage plan, double-leaf batten doors, batten shutters. Fair condition, deteriorated rear shed section.
- 5. Cottage #3. 1870s. Vernacular. Two-story frame, central-passage plan, weatherboard siding, two-story porch with balcony extends across front, fair condition, deteriorated rear shed addition.
- 6. Cottage #4. 1870s. Vernacular. Two-story frame, central-passage plan, weatherboarded, tin gabled roof, two-story front gallery, small one-room gabled cookhouse at rear, fair condition.
- 7. Cottage #5. 1870s. Vernacular. Two-story frame, central-passage plan, side-gabled roof, rear shed section, fair condition.

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			Two-story frame, , rear shed sect		nd-batten siding, open r condition.

- Estes House Hotel. 1874. Vernacular. Two-story frame, weatherboard siding, stone 9. pier foundation, gabled tin roof, tranverse hall plan, two-story galleries on north, east, and south sides, interior contains twenty-one rooms and large dining room. Good condition, stabilization work in progress. One-story kitchen addition at rear, originally cantilevered over creek, has collapsed.
- 10. Stone springhouse. 1900s. Vernacular. Small gabled structure constructed from rock blasted from creek, vertical-batten door.
- Small hotel or boarding house. 1890s. Vernacular. Two-story frame, irregular plan, 11. weatherboard siding, two-story gallery across west front, five boarding rooms in onestory extension off north end, interior brick flue in central room, deteriorated condition.
- Estes Store and Primm Springs Post Office. 1860s. Vernacular. One-story frame, 12. side-gable roof, stone foundation, weatherboard siding, 3-bay central- passage plan, shed porch across west front, partially collapsed.
- Miss Hugh Ella Estes House. 1890s. Vernacular. One-story weatherboarded frame 13. construction, cross-gable plan, bay end on south, raised gallery east and south sides, vertical-batten doors and window shutters, 4/4 light sash windows, interior brick chimney, storage room below grade. Occupied and in good condition. Board-and-batten smokehouse at rear.
- Sargent House. 1880s. Vernacular. Two-story; three-bays-by-two; central-passage 14. plan; two-story verandah at front decorated with piecework frieze, scroll-sawn brackets and balusters; stone pier foundation with latticework underpinning; 1/1 and 4/4 sash windows, stone chimney at north gable end, shed sections at south and rear. Small weatherboarded smokehouse at rear.
- Sargent Store. 1920s. Vernacular. One-story frame, board-and-batten siding, shotgun 15. plan, front-gable roof, interior brick flue, diagonal batten doors, windows covered with batten shutters. Original shed porch across east end dismantled, but structure otherwise in good condition.
- 16. Estes Barn. 1870s. Vernacular. Small central-passage barn of board-and-batten frame construction, gabled tin roof, rear shed section, poor condition.

8. Significance

1700–1799 _X 1800–1899	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture X architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement	Iandscape architecture Iaw Iiterature military music philosophy politics/government	 science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	c. 1836-1935	Builder/Architect n	nultiple	Recreation

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Primm Springs Historic District, a popular nineteenth and early twentieth century summer resort in a deep hollow in the Western Highland Rim on the eastern edge is being nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its local significance to Hickman County, Tennessee, in architecture and local history. The spa, established by Primm family in the mid-1830s, was a favorite summer watering spot and resort for Maury Countians and others from the mid-state area. Attention settled around the mineral springs themselves, which developed a reputation for curing powers. The site was developed further in the 1860s by the Daniel J. Estes family, who operated stores and hotels in the hollow. At its peak of operation, the hollow contained more than thirty structures, mostly family summer houses, all of frame construction. The springs closed in 1945, and many of the houses were removed or have since deteriorated or collapsed. The sixteen remaining principal structures still convey much of the atmosphere of the old resort. Although some of the buildings are in severely deteriorated condition, they still retain their structural integrity and are contributing elements in the district. The Primm Springs Historic District also retains its historical and architectural integrity, as a discrete entity.

The first recorded owner of the hollow in which the springs were located was one William Lytle, who acquired the property by a soldier's warrant in 1811. The springs were familiar to hunters, but were largely unknown to the public until John T. Primm, his wife Cecilia, and six other families came to Tennessee from Maryland and settled here in 1830. Primm's brother-in-law Alton Massey entered the land surrounding the springs in 1831 and proceeded to develop them. Upon his death, the land passed to Primm's children, who had begun to promote the curative powers of the springs by 1836. The retreat was opened to the public as "White Sulphur Springs," the name derived from the white deposits left by the sulphur waters. The spot was soon known for the curative properties of the springs.

The Primm family were members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Williamsport, a small Maury County town about ten miles away. Church records show that the services were held at the springs one summer, most of the congregation having moved there.

In the 1860s Daniel J. Estes (1816-1895) of Maury County became ill and was taken to the springs by his wife, Bourbon, who had been reared near the springs and knew of its reputation. Estes spent the summer in an old cabin at the springs. He was so impressed with the springs that upon his return to Maury County in the fall he organized a joint stock company to develop land at the springs. The new Primm Springs Company purchased one hundred acres in the hollow, and each stockholder selected a site for a cottage, Estes retaining rights to build a hotel and operate a store. The Estes property was just below the springs. Evidently, the Primm family continued to own the springs themselves and operated concessions for some time.

Primm Springs reached its peak of popularity in the late nineteenth century, At times four or five hundred people occupied cottages here or camped on the hillside around the springs or along the Puppy Branch of Dog Creek below. Estes built three hotels here; his third,

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

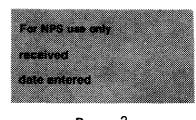
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property <u>Approximately</u> 8 acres Quadrangle name <u>Primm Springs</u> , TN Quadrangle	le scale 1:24,000
UT M References	
A 1 6 3 7 7 4 0 0 3 9 6 4 1 8 0 Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Label{eq:started} Δ and Label{eq:started} B Label{eq:started} Constraints and Con	Northing
$ \begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $	
Verbal boundary description and justification	
SEE CONTINUATION SHEET	
List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries	
state N/A county N/A	code N/A
state N/A county N/A	code N/A
11. Form Prepared By	
3	
name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner	
organization South Central Tennessee Development Distate Marc	ch 1985
street & number P.O. Box 1346 telephone 615	-381-2040
city or town Columbia Ten	nessee 38401
12. State Historic Preservation Officer C	ertification
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 Ac 665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it ha according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature	t of 1966 (Public Law 89– as been evaluated
title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date	5/22/85
For NPS use only	/
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	7 5-85
Keeper of the National Register	/-5 05
Attest: date date	

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of Daniel Estes in 1895, the resort was operated by his son F.R. Estes and son-in-law
John W. Cecil. Estes eventually bought out Cecil, who built another small hotel farther

up the creek.

The spa was strictly a summer resort, as the twenty or so cabins and cottages had no fireplaces or window glass. Visitors usually brought along help to cook or to carry water from one of the springhouses.

A dance hall and bowling alley were added in the 1920s. By this time, much of the fame of the resort was attributed to the good cooking of the Estes House, which boasted of "Chicken Three Ways Three Times a Day," and served the best of ham to guests. (The chickens were obtained daily from the Baker family, who lived at "Bakertown" farther up the hollow.) Large numbers of people made reservations for summer visits by mail. Sunday dinners brought people from near and far, and when they arrived, they were greeted by high-spirited bands.

The resort was a booming place in the midst of Prohibition, and local moonshiners found a ready market in the resort guests. At this time Miss Hugh Ella Estes, granddaughter of Daniel d. Estes, was the proprietress of the resort. Miss Estes would not allow electricity on the property even in later years, and insisted that the meals be cooked on wood stoves and oil lamps used to light the hotel.

The resort declined during the Depression and World War II and closed in 1945. Miss Hugh Ella Estes and her sister, Miss Fannie Estes, reopened the hotel for Sunday dinners in 1947. After Miss Fannie's death, Miss Hugh Ella continued the Sunday dinners until 1965; she died in 1972.

The resort was abandoned for several years and much has deteriorated or been destroyed. Some of the cottages, of which there were twenty or so at one time, were removed by their owners; many others have decayed or collapsed. The chemical springs themselves do not appear to have changed, although the old frame springhouse no longer stands. Today, most of the properties in the district are unused.

Architecturally, the buildings in the Primm Springs Historic District present an important collection of vernacular resort architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Hickman County. The district is also a historically significant representation of the resort/recreation industry which was the principal factor in the growth and develop-ment of Primm Springs.

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Item number

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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OMB No. 1024-0018

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

NPS Form 10-900-a

The Primm Springs Historic District is irregular in shape and approximately eight acres in size. It includes all of the properties located along the Puppy Branch of Dog Creek between the intersection of House and Baker Roads and the Mineral Springs. It includes enough land to protect the historical setting and architectural integrity of the Primm Springs Historic District.

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OWNER

Howard Cake Route 1, Box 177 Williamsport, Tennessee 38487

J.R. Neal General Delivery Primm Springs, Tennessee 38476

PROPERTY

All structures within the Primm Springs Historic District except Estes House.

Hugh Ella Estes House Baker Road Primm Springs, Tennessee

