

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 26 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Mount Pleasant, Tennessee

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Phosphate Industry in Mount Pleasant 1895-1939

C. Geographical Data

Corporate limits of Mount Pleasant, Maury County, Tennessee

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR, Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Herbert E. Bryan
Signature of certifying official Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Tennessee Historical Commission

6/22/89
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Amy Schlager
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

8/8/89
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The Phosphate Industry in Mount Pleasant, 1895-1939

Early settlement in the Mount Pleasant area in Maury County, Tennessee started between 1806 and 1810. Further settlement occurred when the construction of the Military Road began in the Mount Pleasant area in 1817 under the supervision of General Andrew Jackson. The road, which led from Nashville to Madisonville, Louisiana, took three years to construct. Commercial development of the area began with the first store, a double pen log cabin, built near what is now the center of Mount Pleasant by Lyman D. Brewster in circa 1819. The name of Mount Pleasant first appears in the written records with a July 1822 advertisement for the sale of 1000 acres of land by a group of Nashville land speculators. By the mid 1800s the town was beginning to show signs of growth as several churches located in the surrounding countryside and businesses began to locate near the town center. In circa 1824 Philip Penn built a tavern and in 1825 Henry Whitman was given permission to run an ordinary in Mount Pleasant. The town of Mount Pleasant was incorporated in 1824. By circa 1840 Mount Pleasant boasted a community that had a saddler, tailor, tanner, hatter, gunsmith, cabinet maker, wagon maker, baker, inn keepers, and a carding mill. The Columbia Turnpike chartered in 1840 to run from Columbia to Clifton ran through the town of Mount Pleasant further assisting in the settlement pattern of the area. The first telegraph lines went through the town in 1847 although no message was received on them until 1849. In 1860 the Tennessee and Alabama Railroad built a branch line into Mount Pleasant. By 1890 the small market town of Mount Pleasant had a population of 466. The discovery of phosphate in 1895 within the town limits had a major impact on the growth and development of the small town. Mount Pleasant grew rapidly and became known as the "Phosphate Capital of the World" and was almost renamed "Phosphate City" in 1896. By 1896 the population of Mount Pleasant had grown to 700 and in 1900 was recorded at 2,007. The discovery of phosphate changed the character of the small agricultural town as it adapted to meet the economic boom brought about by the phosphate mining and processing industry.

Phosphate was first discovered in the western counties of Middle Tennessee in 1893, and in July 1894 the first shipment of phosphate was sent from Hickman County, Tennessee.¹ In December 1895, S. Q. Weatherly, a former judge from Lewis County, discovered an outcropping of phosphorous rock near Mount Pleasant on the Scott Jennings farm. By July of 1896 mining had started within the town limits of Mount Pleasant and on July 20, 1896 the first shipment of phosphate left Mount Pleasant. A short period after the discovery of phosphate in Mount Pleasant, between eight and ten companies were in operation over approximately a twelve square mile area. Around 1898 it was estimated that there were 7,000 acres of workable phosphate in the Mount Pleasant area with an expected average yield of 3,000 tons an

¹Phosphate was discovered at Gholson Hill as early as 1888 by William Shirley. However it was not until the 1895 discovery that large scale mining and processing occurred.

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acre. Within the first year of mining, shipment of phosphate out of Mount Pleasant doubled and over 25,000 long tons a year were shipped.²

The type of phosphate discovered in the Mount Pleasant area was brown rock phosphate. Brown phosphate deposits are a result of the weathering and leaching of Ordovician Limestones by acid ground waters charged with carbon dioxide. Brown phosphate is usually located on gentle slopes or in hillside outcroppings ranging from three feet to fifteen feet in thickness and is easy to mine. To recover the phosphate, the soft rock is carried away in solution, leaving the less soluble calcium phosphate and impurities.³ In addition to the brown phosphate located in Maury County there are also deposits of blue phosphate located primarily in a small area near Hickman Creek. However, brown phosphate is found in a much softer rock than the blue phosphate and therefore cheaper to mine.

The discovery of brown phosphate in Mount Pleasant had a major effect on phosphate mining around the world. Killebrew in his treatise on phosphate stated that "The effects of this discovery will be of inestimable value to the State of Tennessee and to all the Middle South. . ." The boom town of Maury County provided a much cheaper fertilizer, esp. for wheat crops and was capable of doubling the yield. "[The discovery]⁴ may be reckoned among the most valuable contributions to agriculture. . ." The cost of mining Mount Pleasant phosphate in the late nineteenth century was half the price of mining phosphate in Florida and South Carolina and provided a twenty-five per cent greater yield. The discovery of the readily available and easily mined Mount Pleasant phosphate drove the prices down, and virtually stopped the Hickman County, Tennessee mining operations. Mining of phosphate in Mount Pleasant also proved to be much cheaper than mining phosphate in France. Although the phosphate in France was comparable in composition to Mount Pleasant phosphate, it was possible to ship Mount Pleasant phosphate to France and sell it at competitive prices.

In 1896 the phosphate mining operations in Mount Pleasant employed between 1,000 and 1,500 men with an average expenditure of \$1,200 to \$1,800 a day. An average of three to eight tons of phosphate were mined per day per man

²Killebrew, J.B. Phosphate Deposits of Tennessee. Baltimore, n.d., pp. 2, 8 & 10.

³Born, Kendall E. Summary of the Mineral Resources of Tennessee. Resources of Tennessee (Second Series) 1936. Nashville, State of Tennessee, Division of Geology, 1938.

⁴Killebrew. pp. 13 & 8.

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and the average cost of mining was \$1.25 per ton.⁵ In addition to the large number of men hired to mine the phosphate numerous others were involved in management, the manufacturing division, and the support industries. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century several companies were in business in the area around Mount Pleasant including Columbia Phosphate Company (1898), Blue Grass Phosphate Company (1896), Petrified Bone Mining Company (1898), The Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corporation, The Tennessee Phosphate Company (1894), Federal Chemical Company (1902) and the Century Mine, Globe Phosphate Company (1899), Harlan Mines (1897), Central Phosphate Company (1898), and the American Phosphate Company. Other early companies included the Hoover and Mason Phosphate Company (1909 - once the Standard Phosphate and Chemical Company), International Minerals and Chemical Corporation, Ruhm Phosphate and Chemical Company, Tennessee Products and Chemical Corporation, Victor Chemical Works, International Agricultural Corporation, and Armour Fertilizer Works.

By 1923 most of the lump rock near Mount Pleasant had been mined and new washing methods were devised to extract the phosphate from the remaining lower grade rock. In 1935 TVA established a mining and washing division in Columbia that produced fertilizer by an electric furnace process. In 1936 Monsanto Chemical Company started an elemental phosphorous unit west of Columbia and by 1940 had four electric furnaces in operation. In addition to these companies, the Victor Chemical Company installed a unit in Nashville in 1920 and by 1955 had four electric furnaces in operation in Maury County. In 1955 eight phosphate companies employed 2,400 people in the county. Of the phosphate mined in Maury County in 1955, sixty to seventy percent went into fertilizer and the remainder as elemental phosphate.

Much of the growth in Mount Pleasant occurred soon after the brown and blue rock phosphate deposits were discovered in Maury County and as new

⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

⁶ Turner, William Bruce. History of Maury County, Tennessee. Nashville, The Parthenon Press, 1959. pages 331-338 and Robbins, D. P., editor. Century Review of Maury County, Tennessee: A Condensation of the Most Important Events of the Past One Hundred Years and Descriptive Sketches of the Cities and Villages. Columbia, Tennessee: Board of Mayor and Aldermen, 1905.

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industries arrived to exploit the rich deposits around Mount Pleasant. The commercial, industrial and residential portions of Mount Pleasant changed greatly in character as the town grew to accommodate the influx of new people associated with the phosphate industry. The town reportedly had the reputation of a typical rough boomtown in the early days of phosphate mining. Holes were reportedly dug in backyards and cow pastures as everyone tried to make their fortune in mining. Miners were paid off on a daily bases by mine owners who carted the payroll to the mine in wheelbarrows guarded by assistants with shotguns. Construction of a variety of buildings, both commercial and residential, occurred at a rapid rate. Some, such as several taverns located on Blue Grass Avenue were reportedly of both poor construction and reputation. By 1906 the town of Mount Pleasant had passed the early stages of a boomtown and became a city with paved streets electric lights, a waterworks, telephones and three-story commercial brick block were being constructed downtown. The rough construction on Broadway and Blue Grass Avenues eventually gave way to substantial storerooms.

The residential development of Mount Pleasant developed at a rapid pace as efforts were made to accommodate the influx of new residents into Mount Pleasant. Efforts were made to construct housing for mine and processing workers as well as the managerial class and businessmen.

In 1899, Herman D. Ruhm, a civil engineer, organized the Mount Pleasant Land and Improvement Company and drew up plans for a new addition to the residential portion of the community. Ruhm, also associated with the phosphate industry, opened up forty acres for residential development southwest of Hay Long Avenue. The new addition was divided by streets running parallel with Hay Long (Washington and Adams Streets) and cross streets (College, Cherry, and Summer Streets). The parcel was divided into 100 one-acre lots, and was considered to be a desirable section for residential building, as restrictions were placed on the type of houses to be built and the streets were well-graded. Construction began almost immediately, and, by 1915, more than twenty new houses had been built in the addition.

The subdivision provided needed residential property for the influx of new residents brought to Mount Pleasant by the industrial development of the phosphate mining. The houses built in the subdivision platted by Ruhm were primarily houses for company owners and managers and for businessmen in the community. Few, if any, of the actual phosphate workers lived in the area; company housing was commonly located on mine and factory sites, and more workers lived in other parts of town or in ramshackle tenement areas like "Abe Town" and "Red Row," south of town. Ruhm also platted the L. L.

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Frierson addition on the southeast of his first addition and the Mrs. M. G. Frierson addition to the southwest. Although construction of residences in many of the subdivisions occurred primarily during the boom years, houses continued to be built in the neighborhoods throughout the 1930s as the towns economy stayed strong.

Additional research and survey data may indicate that along with residential historic districts in Mount Pleasant there may also be individual or commercial districts and industrial sites associated with the phosphate industry.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Residential Historic Districts

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II. Description

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III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

An architectural survey of Maury County was conducted for the Tennessee Historical Commission by the South Central Tennessee Development District from 1981 to 1986. Although not all of the surveyed areas of Mount Pleasant have been assessed as potential districts or individual sites, enough information is available on Mount Pleasant to indicate that development of the area after 1895 was due largely to the discovery of phosphate. Two of the districts were identified and field work completed in November 1987 by Richard Quin of the South Central Tennessee Development District staff. Maury County Historian, Polly C. Warren, conducted additional historical research in conjunction with the survey. These materials were used to determine the boundaries and significance of the districts and set the parameters for potential districts.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

- Born, Kendall E. Summary of the Mineral Resources of Tennessee. Resources of Tennessee (Second Series) 1936. Nashville, State of Tennessee, Division of Geology, 1938.
- Garrett, Jill K. Hither and Yon. Columbia, Tennessee. Homecoming '86 Committee. 1987
- Killebrew, J.B. Phosphate Deposits of Tennessee. Baltimore, n.d.
- Robbins, D. P., editor. Century Review of Maury County, Tennessee: A Condensation of the Most Important Events of the Past One Hundred Years and Descriptive Sketches of the Cities and Villages. Columbia, Tennessee: Board of Mayor and Aldermen, 1905

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: _____

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F-II Description - Residential Historic Districts

Mount Pleasant's development was fairly slow and typical of small agricultural villages in middle Tennessee between the early settlement period and the discovery of phosphate in the area. After the discovery of phosphate, the former market town's population soared with the establishment of mining and chemical works and new housing was erected in rapid fashion to meet the growing town's needs. The majority of the town's current appearance reflects this economic boom. Dwellings constructed in Mount Pleasant include a wide variety of architectural styles including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Bungalows, and Colonial Revival with their vernacular interpretations.

Vernacular style houses located in Mount Pleasant include Folk Victorian, Cottage Revival and Pyramid Vernacular style houses. Folk Victorian houses are those which have Victorian period decorative detailing on simple folk house forms, and are less elaborate than the styles that they mimic. Details are usually of Italianate, Eastlake, or Queen Anne influence. Porches are often supported by turned or chamfered posts and have decorative spandrels, brackets, and friezes. Window surrounds are simple with either plain architraves or hooded or pedimented lintels. Cottage Revival houses are early twentieth century houses that are most often of brick or brick-veneer construction and are characterized by mock Tudor decorations. Houses sometimes feature stucco wall finished, ornamental applied half-timbering, stone trim and weatherings and large elaborate chimneys. Chimneys are usually located in prominent locations on the front of and sides of the house. Such houses in this area usually feature sharply pitched irregular gable roofs, overlapping gables with eaves lines of differing heights, casement windows, quions and arched entries and integral corner porches. The Pyramid Vernacular style consists primarily of a rectangular plan house with steep pyramidal roofs, integral porches, and paired chimneys.

Vernacular residences also include a large number of simple cross-gable plan cottages, several larger Foursquare plan houses, and Worker Cottages which are small frame dwellings with either gable front, gable with wing, or hall and parlor plans. These cottages are usually devoid of most overt decorative features and were often built by the factories or as speculative rental housing for workers.

Residential Historic Districts are generally composed of a cohesive collection of houses that include a variety of architectural styles and periods and reflect the evolution of neighborhoods. Houses constructed in Mount Pleasant after the discovery of phosphate include large residences

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built for the owners of the industry as well as small Worker Cottages for the miners and industrial plant workers. The majority of extant houses built in Mount Pleasant appear to have been built for those in the middle income range: managers, secretaries, businessmen, and support personnel. The houses in Mount Pleasant are generally one to two stories of frame construction. Although the majority of houses are of frame construction, there are also some masonry constructed buildings. The houses are sheathed in a variety of materials including weatherboarding, brick, and concrete block. Houses constructed of concrete block are often the work of a local contractor, J. R. Shackelford, who ran a concrete block factory on First Street. Shackelford supplied the concrete blocks for many of the buildings in the Mount Pleasant area. Shackelford's decorative molded stone finish blocks can be identified by his signature, the imprint of his shoe in the blocks.

Residential Historic districts are cohesive collections of residential structures that possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structure, or objects united either historically or aesthetically by plan of physical development. Residential Historic Districts may consist of a planned, formalized subdivision. However, a district does not necessarily need to follow the original boundaries of the subdivision, it may include either a smaller or larger area. Residential Historic Districts are composed primarily of dwellings and their support structures. Although Residential Historic Districts are primarily residential in nature, they may contain some commercial or public use buildings.

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F-III Significance - Residential Historic Districts

Residential Historic Districts may be eligible under criterion A or criterion C for their significance to the town's development during the phosphate industry boom or for architecture. Residential Historic Districts are significant under criterion A for their role in the broad pattern of economic development in Mount Pleasant during the phosphate boom. Although some houses do exist in districts that were built prior to the discovery of phosphate, the overall character of the town is reflected by the residential growth that occurred after the discovery of phosphate. Houses built prior to the discovery of phosphate reflect the evolution of neighborhoods from a small market town to a growing industrial community. Districts that are eligible under criterion A for their contribution to the growth and development of Mount Pleasant can include areas that housed workers in small worker cottages or that housed the managers, secretaries, owners, businessmen and support workers in larger more stylistically designed houses.

Historic Districts are eligible under criterion C for architecture as representative examples of a cohesive collection of architectural styles built during the early settlement of the town or during the phosphate boom and industrialization of the town. Houses can include examples of specific architectural styles including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Bungalows, and Colonial Revival along with vernacular interpretations.

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F-IV Registration Requirements - Residential Historic Districts

Residential Historic Districts in Mount Pleasant are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places if they possess a cohesive collection of residential properties that reflect the growth of Mount Pleasant during the phosphate years or if they are architecturally significant. Districts must possess a high degree of integrity and reflect the period of development and growth of the phosphate industry between 1895 to 1939. Residences constructed before the 1895 phosphate boom can be considered as contributing resources in Residential Historic Districts even though they fall outside of the main period of significance since they help to define the evolution of the neighborhood.

Districts are eligible under criterion A if they reflect the association of the phosphate industry either by containing residences that are associated with phosphate workers, or if the residences were constructed by phosphate companies to house workers. These districts must retain integrity of association. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship may be compromised but not enough to significantly change the historic appearance of the district. Individual residence and their support buildings will be considered contributing to the district if they retain integrity of association, design, materials, workmanship, setting and feeling.

Under criterion C, districts must be good examples of architectural styles or type or period of construction. The district should depict the type of housing erected during the early settlement of the town or during the phosphate boom and industrialization. As in districts eligible under criterion A, integrity of design, materials, and workmanship may be compromised but not enough to significantly change the overall historic appearance of the district.

Individual residences will be considered contributing resources (C) in the district if they are significant to the historic and architectural development of the district, possess compatible design elements, and maintain the scale, use, and texture of the district. Individual residences will be considered as non-contributing resources (NC) to the district if they fall outside the period of significance or if they do not retain integrity of association, design, materials, workmanship, setting or feeling.