

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Maury	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.7.41.00.15	DATE 7/8/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
St. John's Episcopal Church

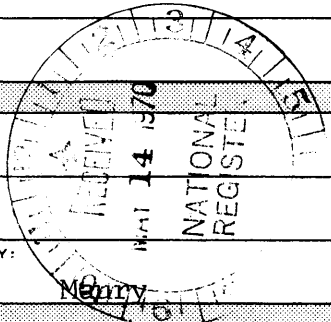
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mt. Pleasant Pike (U. S. 43)

CITY OR TOWN:
Columbia (Ashwood Community) *vicinity*

STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41 COUNTY: Maury CODE: 119



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input 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 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:
Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

STREET AND NUMBER:
c/o St. Peter's Episcopal Church

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Maury County Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court House

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Tennessee

COUNTY: Maury

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ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Stately old St. John's Episcopal Church stands upon a six-acre tract enclosed by a stone fence. It is approached by a driveway which forks at the front steps and encircles the building to reach the historic burial ground located in a magnificent grove of magnolias at the rear.

Considered as possibly the last of the plantation churches in Tennessee, St. John's is a result of a labor of love of the Polk family, prominent early settlers of the area. Although several brothers contributed financially and materially to the building of the church, it was Leonidas, who was to later reach fame as a Confederate general, who had the dream, gave the land, drew the plans and supervised construction. All the work appears to have been done by Polk hands. The site was cleared by Polk slaves; the foundation stones were quarried nearby and hauled by Polk teams; the heavy timbers for beams and rafters were hewn from trees on the plantation; the master brickmason was a Polk slave; the bricks were made on the place; and the nails were forged by a Polk blacksmith. Inside, the balcony, altar, communion rail, and reredos were made from a large wild cherry tree which had stood on the site of the church.

Begun in the summer of 1839, the exterior was finished by the fall of 1840, but the interior was not completed until the summer of 1842. The bell was purchased and placed in the tower in 1849. Of simple Gothic architecture, the building has a seating capacity of about five hundred, including a small end gallery. The church measures sixty-five by forty-one feet, with a sixteen-foot vestry room in the rear, and a fifty-foot tower at the front. The sixteen-inch thick exterior brick walls are supported by four buttresses on each side. Pointed arches were used over the doorway and the mullioned windows.

The church today is little changed from the day it was consecrated. The interior is very simple with white plastered walls. The pew arrangement is unusual, as there are only two side aisles and no center aisle in the nave. The chancel is small and plain, and the reredos is ornamented only with carved oak leaves.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1839-1842

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of St. John's Church is two-fold. Not only was it of importance militarily during the Civil War, it is an outstanding example of the plantation churches of Tennessee and the South during the pre-Civil War days when provisions were made by landowners for the religious welfare of their slaves as well as their own families.

William Polk, a Revolutionary War soldier from North Carolina, accumulated vast amounts of land in Tennessee until in 1819 he was one of the largest land owners in Tennessee with 100,000 acres, including a choice tract of over 5,000 acres in Maury County. Several of his sons settled there. Leonidas Polk was primarily responsible for the erection of St. John's. A graduate of West Point who entered the Episcopal ministry, he had held services in his home, but he wanted a church for the Polk families, their slaves and their neighbors. At the consecration service, many slaves participated in the services, singing louder and with more fervor than the whites. Colored people were numbered among communicants along with white people. In the cemetery, graves of the masters and those of the slaves many times are side-by-side, emphasizing the relationship of affection and responsibility on one side and service and faithfulness on the other.

In 1889 St. John's ceased to function as an active parish. On Whitsunday each year the Diocese of Tennessee sponsors a pilgrimage to the church, with services being conducted. Interested groups are permitted to tour the building upon application to the St. John's Memorial Association.

During the Civil War, services were discontinued, and on one occasion, troops under Brig.-Gen. Don Carlos Buell forced entry into the church, vandalizing and causing heavy damage. Fighting occurred around St. John's in November, 1864, and it was converted into a temporary hospital. En route to the impending battle of Franklin, Confederate Maj.-Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne of Hood's army paused at St. John's. He declared it to be the most beautiful spot he had ever seen, and expressed the wish that if he were to be killed in the battle that he be buried there. He was killed in battle at Franklin on November 30, 1864, and after being buried a few days at Rose Hill Cemetery in Columbia, his body, along with

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Buck, Irving A., Cleburne and His Command (Jackson, 1958)
2. Garrett, Jill K. "St. John's Church, Ashwood," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXIX (1970) No. 1, p.3-ff.
3. Parks, Joseph H., General Leonidas Polk C.S.A., The Fighting Bishop (Kingsport, 1962)
4. Turner, William B., History of Maury County, Tennessee (Nashville, 1955)
5. Yeatman, Trezevant P. Jr., "St. John's --A Plantation Church of the Old South," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol.X (1951) No. 4, pp. 334-343.

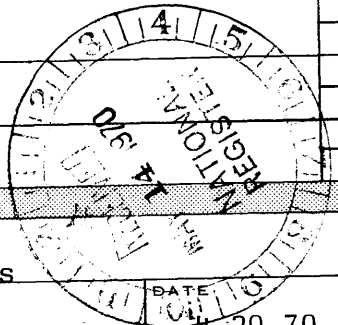
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	34	27
NE	° ' "	° ' "		87	08	20
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than 10**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Herbert L. Harper, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION:
Tennessee Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
403, 7th Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN:
Nashville

STATE:
Tennessee

DATE:
4-20-70

CODE:
41

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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: Stephen S. Lawrence
Executive Director
Title: Tennessee Historical Commission

Date: 4-20-70

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

Ernest Allen Cismaly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: JUL 8 1970

ATTEST:

William J. Burdette
Keeper of The National Register

Date: MAY 27 1970

75
MAY 27 1970

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Tennessee	
COUNTY Maury	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

those of Generals Strahl and Granbury, was reburied at St. John's. General Leonidas Polk himself was killed on Pine Mountain in Georgia on June 14, 1864, and had been buried in Augusta. Despite his desire to be buried at St. John's, as expressed in his will written in 1847, the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana claimed his body in 1945, and he was reburied in New Orleans.

During the post-war period, the Confederate generals who were buried at St. John's were removed to other locations, but their grave-sites have never been used again.

