

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
1 NAME

HISTORIC William Blount Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

William Blount Mansion

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 200 West Hill Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Knoxville

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

047

COUNTY

Knox

CODE

093

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE MUSEUM COMMERCIAL PARK EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION MILITARY OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Blount Mansion Association

STREET & NUMBER

200 West Hill Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Knoxville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Knox County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Knoxville

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of Historic Assets

DATE

in progress

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED restored	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Blount Mansion and dependencies occupy a rectangular lot at the southwest corner of West Hill Avenue (numbered at 200 West Hill Avenue) and State Street on the southern edge of downtown Knoxville, Tennessee. On the opposite side of State Street (east) stands the Craighead-Jackson House, a brick residence constructed in 1819, which is administered with the landmark property by the Blount Mansion Association. To the north and west of the mansion are parking lots, that on the west maintained by the city of Knoxville for the landmark. At the rear (south) of the Blount property, across an access road from State Street to the western parking lot, the land drops sharply to the north bank of the Tennessee River.

The Blount Mansion is a frame and clapboard building with shingled, gabled roof. Its heavy supporting timbers were probably obtained locally but the finished woodwork, flooring, pine paneling, and exterior weatherboards were shipped by water from North Carolina, the window panes by pack-train from Virginia. The original sections of the house were completed c. 1792. The two-story main block contains a broad, floor-through hall with quarter-turn stair and the original parlor (now furnished as a dining room) on the first floor, two bedrooms on the second; the one-story western wing contains a single paneled bedroom.

The eastern wing of the house, containing a formal entrance and drawing room, was added at an early date. Under it is a daylight basement, reached by a trap-door and winding stair within the house or by an outside door on the rear (south) elevation. Exact use of the single basement room is uncertain, though it may have been used by Blount as a private office or to entertain Indian guests. It now serves as a gift and souvenir shop.

Entrances to the mansion are located at either end of the main hall and on the front (north) elevation of the eastern wing; these consist of paneled doors topped by multi-pane transoms. Windows are 9/6 sash on the first floor, 6/6 on the second, all flanked by louvered blinds. Brick chimneys are located at the eastern end of the main block and at the outer end of each wing.

Blount's office, constructed at the same time as the mansion, stands to the rear of the western wing. It is a one-story, one-room frame and clapboard structure with shingled, gabled roof. The entrance is located on the north elevation, the brick chimney on the south. The side elevations are broken by pairs of 6/6 sash windows flanked by louvered blinds. The interior features include wide-board horizontal paneling and a carved mantel flanked by book shelves on the left (east) and cupboards on the right. Both the mansion and the office have been fully restored (late 1920's and early 30's, and 1955, respectively). Furnishings are not original but are appropriate to the period of Blount's residence.

(Continued)

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT*	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

*Advance of the Frontier

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1792-1800

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Blount

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Blount Mansion was constructed as the residence of William Blount, who served as Governor of the Territory South of the Ohio River (commonly known as the "Southwest Territory") and played a major role in the formation of the State of Tennessee. The two-story main block and one-story western wing of the frame and clapboard house were built c. 1792; the one-story eastern wing was added shortly after. The detached office at the rear (southeast) of the house was, in effect, the capital of Blount's territorial government.

The mansion remained in the Blount family until 1820, and thereafter had several owners. When it became known, in 1926, that the house might be demolished, the Blount Mansion Association was formed to acquire and preserve it. Since that time, the house, its dependencies, and grounds have been fully restored (reconstructed in the case of the kitchen) and furnished with items appropriate to the period of Blount's residence. The complex is open to the public on a regular basis.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

William Blount was born on March 26, 1749, in Bertie County and grew to manhood at Blount Hall in Craven County, both in North Carolina. While little is known of his early years, he was a member of a moderately wealthy family and appears to have received a good education for his day. On February 12, 1778, Blount married Mary Grainger, daughter of Colonel Caleb Grainger of Wilmington, North Carolina.

During the Revolutionary War, Blount served as paymaster of various units of North Carolina troops. From that time until his death, he was almost continually in public office. Between 1780 and 1789, he was four times member and once speaker of North Carolina's House of Commons, and twice a member of the State Senate. In 1782-83 and in 1786-87 he served as a delegate to the Congress of the United States. He was also a member of the Convention of 1787 that framed the Constitution. He signed the Constitution and voted for its ratification in the North Carolina Constitutional Convention.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Folmsbee, Stanley J. and Dillon, Susan Hill. "The Blount Mansion," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, June, 1963.
 Hamer, Philip M. "William Blount," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1929).

(Continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	2 3 7 0 9 0	3 9 8 3 3 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by Horace J. Sheely, Jr., Historian, 9/14/64

ORGANIZATION <u>Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service</u>	DATE <u>December 1975</u>
STREET & NUMBER <u>1100 L Street NW.</u>	TELEPHONE <u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN <u>Washington</u>	STATE <u>D.C. 20240</u>

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *[Signature]*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1/3/78
 DATE

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William Blount Mansion
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Originally a separate frame and clapboard kitchen structure stood at the rear of the eastern wing of the mansion, but it was replaced by a southern kitchen wing, added at an unknown date. In 1958 the foundation of the detached kitchen was located and definite plans for its reconstruction were made. The present kitchen structure, completed in 1960, stands on the foundation of the original and incorporates material from it (the latter had been reused in the wing and was discovered during its demolition). Like the office, it is a one-story, one-room frame and clapboard structure with shingled, gabled roof. The entrance is located on the east elevation, the exterior brick chimney on the south. Windows are 6/6 sash with louvered blinds. Excavation for the reconstruction revealed the location of the cistern, now marked by a circle of stones in the walkway along the eastern elevation of the kitchen.

The lawn in front (north) of the mansion is dotted with mature trees and shrubs. At the rear of the house are formal gardens designed by Alden Hopkins, landscape architect for Colonial Williamsburg, and planted by the Knoxville Garden Club during the early 1960's. Excavation for the terrace and parterre garden between the house and office unearthed a stone-walled crypt with brick-lined pit at its center, which proved to be the remains of a "cool room" for storage of wine and perishable foods. (The central pit was filled with water, which produced a slight cooling effect as it evaporated.) That structure has been restored and covered with a shingled superstructure.

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Blount was ambitious for further political advancement but failed in his attempt to win election to the United States Senate. He then turned to the trans-Allegheny region, with which for some time he had been familiar as a speculator in western lands and as a representative of North Carolina in dealings with the Indians. In 1789 North Carolina ceded to the United States her claims to trans-mountain lands, and in 1790 Congress provided a territorial government for this cession. Blount actively sought the governorship of the territory, and in June, 1790, he secured the appointment from President Washington. With the governorship also went the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department.

Blount "handled the affairs of the dual office with tact and firmness." He was on friendly terms with the leading men of the territory and had much personal popularity with the settlers. At this time the scattered settlements were in danger of Indian attack and the majority of the settlers advocated a preventive war against the Indians. Federal authorities, however, believed in dealing with the Indians on more peaceful terms. In this situation Blount played an important part as conciliator. He successfully negotiated the treaty, signed July 2, 1791, with 41 of the principal Cherokee chiefs. This Treaty of the Holston was agreed to by the Senate and proclaimed by President Washington, who tendered his thanks for Blount's "ability and zeal."

Blount is also recognized as one of the leading personalities in the politics of the early Southwest. He was president of the convention which met in January, 1796, and proclaimed the transformation of the territory into the State of Tennessee and was elected by the first legislature of the new state to the United States Senate.

Blount's service in the Senate was brief. On his own initiative, he entered into a plan to launch an attack, by Indians and frontiersmen in cooperation with a British fleet, on Spanish Florida and Louisiana for the purpose of transferring the control of those provinces to Great Britain. Unfortunately for Blount, a letter he wrote to an interpreter in the Cherokee Nation, speaking in veiled language of the plan and of his desire to have the Indians' aid, came into the hands of President Adams, who sent it on July 3, 1797, to Congress. The letter, wrote Blount, made "a damnable fuss" in Philadelphia, but he hoped the Westerners would "see nothing but good in it, for so (he) intended it." The Senators saw it otherwise and expelled him on July 8 by a vote of twenty-five to one. Impeachment proceedings were begun at once in the House of Representatives but did not come before the Senate until January, 1799, when the case was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. Blount, meanwhile, had returned to Tennessee, where his continuing popularity

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was evidenced by his election, in 1798, to the State Senate and his selection by that body as its speaker. Further preferment might have followed, but Blount died on March 21, 1800.

Though Blount continued to occupy his Knoxville home until his death, he had transferred the title to his younger half-brother, Willie Blount, three years earlier. The house remained in the Blount family until 1820, and thereafter had a number of owners, including two mayors of Knoxville. In 1920, a local real estate dealer acquired the property for rental purposes. When it became known that the Blount Mansion might be demolished to make the site available for business purposes, the Blount Mansion Association was formed to acquire and preserve it. Since that time, the house, dependencies, and grounds have been fully restored and furnished with items appropriate to the period of Blount's residence there. The Blount Mansion is open to the public from 9:30 to 5, Tuesday through Saturday, March through October; 9:30 to 4:30, Tuesday through Saturday, November through February, 2 to 5, Sunday, May through October.

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William Blount Mansion
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Masterson, William H. William Blount (Louisiana State University Press, 1954).

Alderson, William T. and Thomas, Hulan Glyn. Historic Sites in Tennessee
(Tennessee Historical Commission Publication, 1963).

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William Blount Mansion

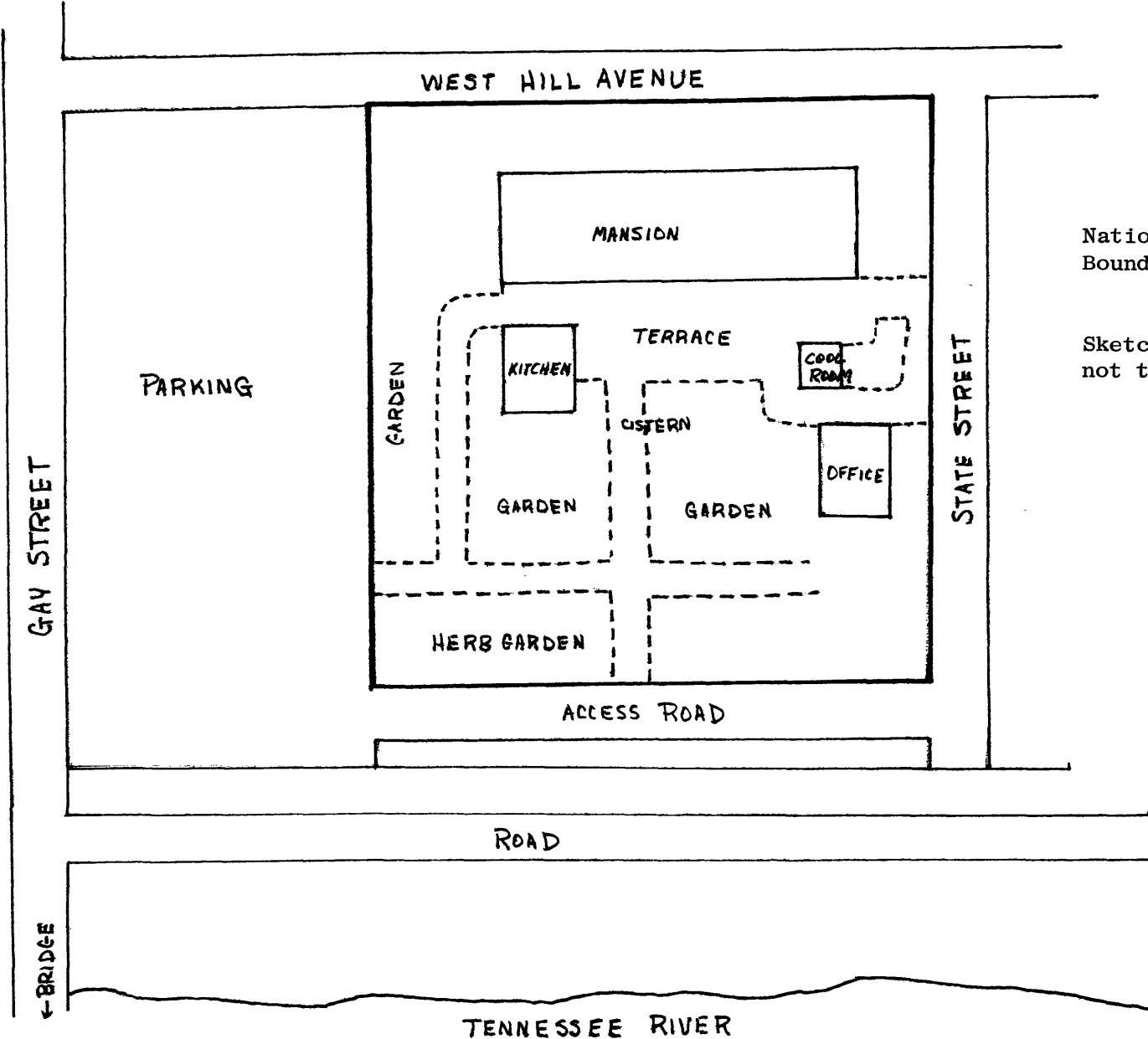
CONTINUATION SHEET

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The boundaries of the national historic landmark designation for the William Blount Mansion, Knoxville, Tennessee, are those of the immediate property occupied by that building and dependencies, as owned by the Blount Mansion Association. Specific lines (shown in red on the accompanying sketch map) are defined as follows: beginning at the intersection of the southern curb-line of West Hill Avenue and the western curblines of State Street; thence, southerly along said western curblines to its intersection with the northern curblines of an access road running west from State Street; thence, westerly along said northern curblines to its intersection with the eastern line of a parking lot maintained by the city of Knoxville for visitors to the Blount Mansion; thence northerly along said eastern line to its intersection with the southern curblines of West Hill Avenue; thence, easterly along said southern curblines to the point of beginning.

WILLIAM BLOUNT MANSION

Knoxville, Tennessee



National Historic Landmark
Boundary _____

Sketch map - 1975
not to scale