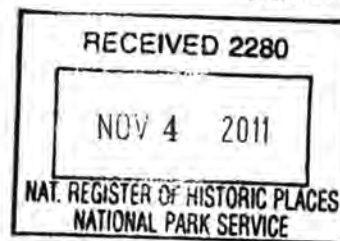


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Memphis Landing
other names/site number Memphis Cobblestone Landing

2. Location

street & number East side of Wolf River harbor between Court and Beale Streets NA ☐ not for publication
city or town Memphis NA ☐ vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Shelby code 157 zip code 38103

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.)

E. Patrick McHugh
Signature of certifying official/Title

October 25, 2011
Date

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:)

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

11/25/2011
Date of Action

Memphis Landing
Name of Property

Shelby County Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☐ district
☒ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

_____	buildings	
_____	sites	
_____	structures	
_____	objects	
0	0	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

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

TRANSPORTATION: water related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls NA

roof NA

other Earth, stone, iron

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee**Summary Paragraph**

The Memphis Landing (Landing) is a nationally significant inland river wharf constructed primarily for the purpose of receiving and distributing cotton. First used around 1838, the ante-bellum Landing was later improved by paving with cobblestones in several phases beginning in 1859. Currently, the Landing is about 11 acres in size and extends approximately 1900 feet in length from Jefferson Davis Park (Court Avenue) to 50 feet north of Beale Street, and from the base of the Riverside Drive berm to the eastern edge of the Wolf River Harbor. The width of the Landing varies according water levels, the 0 base water level being 183' on the west to the embankment along Riverside Drive. Throughout, it still features the diverse types of paving stones laid down in the 19th century, steamboat mooring rings, drainages, culverts and a historic river gauge once used to track the Mississippi River water level for cotton shippers. The disconnected site was earlier listed as a contributing resource as part of the National-Register-listed Cotton Row Historic District (NR 08/01/1979).

Narrative Description

Originally a series of braided streams remaining after the retreat of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet during the last ice age, the Mississippi River today snakes seaward down the North American continent in a continual series of S-curves. At Memphis, located about 400 river miles below St. Louis and 600 river miles above New Orleans, the river abuts the Pleistocene loess escarpment known as the Memphis or Fourth Chickasaw Bluff. Here it curves into a five-and-a-half mile long, eastward facing S-curve. Nestled on the easternmost point of the shoreline is the Landing.

The Landing began as a naturally-formed sandbar that was gradually improved over time. The stone-clad surface has no architectural style, although the various types and patterns of the stones form a mosaic pavement over much of the silty clay that underlies it.

Today's Landing resulted from the joining of two adjacent landings, southern and northern, developed over two decades. The 1838 southern portion between Union Avenue and Beale Street was established as the South Memphis/Beale Landing and served the town of South Memphis – although it was little more than a stretch of unimproved riverbank served by a wharfboat. The northern portion began as a "public levee" along the river frontage of the town of Memphis between Jefferson and Union Avenues. It is unclear exactly when steamboats began tying up to the area. Both landing areas were strategically located, bracketing the ends of each town's commercial district, and when the towns of Memphis and South Memphis were unified in 1850 so were the landings.

Judging from eyewitness sketches, the earliest improvement was grading of the bluff. Images of the Chickasaw Bluffs north of Jefferson Street in the 1830s reveal an eroded bluff above a roughly scarred river embankment, perhaps the result of the combination of bluff sloughage and river accretions over time. It would have been necessary to undertake leveling and infill work in the 1840s to obtain the smooth and regularly sloping Landing shown in subsequent views of the Memphis waterfront.¹

The Landing's cobblestone paving project was begun in 1859-61, interrupted by the Civil War, and resumed in 1866-68, with the final phase completed in 1880-81. The initial contract called for stone paving to be laid twelve inches deep with a uniform grade, between Jefferson and Union and was later extended to Beale.² A high-quality fossiliferous limestone was used for the paving, which still covers the largest area of the Landing north of Union Avenue. The limestone was likely quarried on the lower reaches of the Ohio River in Hardin County, Illinois.³ These non-dimensional

¹Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 18-19.

²Ibid., 20-23.

³Ibid., 21, 42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

stones are laid in a somewhat regular pattern. Most of the original stones were laid in courses parallel to the river, but the original patterns of placement have been varied by repairs over the past 150 years.⁴

When the south end between Union and Beale was paved in 1880-88, a low-quality friable limestone was used.⁵ This more fragile limestone breaks apart under heavy use, and large-scale repairs were apparently undertaken almost immediately, using a higher-quality, oolitic limestone. The southernmost section of the Landing is characterized by complex patterns of original placement and repair.⁶ Today, the surface of the Landing shows cobblestone replacements and patching that reflect its working lifetime. Two small asphalt drives are used to serve the Memphis Riverboats, Inc., including the Memphis Queen II (Memphis Queen II Floating Vessel, NR 07/05/2006) west of the Monroe Avenue ramp.⁷

Over a hundred cast-iron moorings (ringbolts) remain on the Landing in various states of preservation. The most common type of mooring (almost 70 percent) is present throughout the site and is recognizable by a square iron plate at or immediately below the surface. This type of mooring is found mainly north of Union Avenue, and its association with the fossiliferous limestone suggests the moorings are original to the stone fabric and placed in a designed configuration.⁸ The predominant mooring plate measures a foot square and contains an oval opening through which the ringbolt stem extends from the top of the plate into an underlying cast iron or concrete block measuring a foot square also. A variety of chain links can be attached to this type of mooring. Some types are 19th century and the remaining are 20th century as ongoing use of the Landing has required replacements.

The Memphis river gauge is a narrow, cast iron ribbon set in a long rectangular concrete foundation. It was incorporated into the cobbles of the Landing's south end c. 1880 and extends east-west on the Landing. On the gauge the distance between one-foot marks is 80 actual inches, and it is marked in tenths of feet with 0.0 historically being lowest water level.⁹ Official flood stage measurements were taken here as it is the first point below Cairo, Illinois where the river is constrained, all the water passing through a narrow gap with Memphis on a bluff on one side and the Arkansas levee on the west. It was retired as the official river gauge in 1932.¹⁰

Two types of drainage patterns are found on the Landing. The six historic swales visible today consist of shallow courses of laid, patterned stones and appear to have been included in the original design and construction of the stone fabric (1859-68, 1880-81). The long axes of the swale stones are perpendicular to the waterline. Four historic culverts are situated along the base of the Riverside Drive berm; the first is opposite Court Avenue dating to the 1859-61 paving while the remainder are south of Union Avenue and date c. 1879-81. Later drainage culverts run beneath the berm at Riverside Drive and are of an unknown date.¹¹ Two kinds of storm sewers are present at the Landing. The 19th century sewers were constructed around the same time as the original paving beginning 1859 and are not usually evident at the surface. Those dating from the 20th century are minimally intrusive into the original stone paving. A large storm drain leading west from Gayoso Street is believed to have been built about 1912.¹²

⁴ Ibid., 53.

⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁷ Ibid., 71.

⁸ Ibid., 57-63.

⁹ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 71. For the inception of the Memphis River Gauge see Minutes of the Meetings of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen in the Memphis and Shelby County Archives, Dec. 11, 1871.

¹⁰ Andrea Hall, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, oral interview, Dec. 30, 2009.

¹¹ Ibid., 64-66.

¹² Ibid., 66-68.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Historic modifications to the Landing include railroad track construction along its upper edge, including the 1881-82 Mississippi & Tennessee Railroad (M&T, now Illinois Central) which provided rail service to the Landing. This M&T project and others done at that time, involved opening several streets from the Landing to Front Street, and required the removal of "the bluffs out of their line between Beale and Jefferson, amounting to over fifty thousand cubic yards."¹³ The 1888 *Sanborn Insurance Maps of Memphis* shows the M&T tracks cutting along the base of the bluff.¹⁴ The introduction of these railroad tracks reflects the continued function of the Landing as an important cotton port on the Mississippi River.

During most of the 19th century, the Landing fronted directly on the Mississippi River. Beginning about 1893, shortly after the new Memphis Bridge (now known as the Frisco Bridge) opened to span the Mississippi two miles to its south an outlying sandbar began developing at the mouth of Wolf River. As the diversion of much of the shipment of cotton from river to rail during this period largely negated any need for a remedy, no action was taken to remove the sandbar. The size of the sandbar increased as a result of the floods of 1912-1913, which changed the main channel of the Mississippi River to the existing channel east of Island 40.

By the 1920s, the sandbar, now known as Mud Island, had extended so far south that the Wolf River was trapped in a channel between the island and the bluff. Around 1935, the Wolf River was diverted into the Loosahatchie Chute on the north side of Memphis, and the three-mile reach at the Wolf River's mouth became a slack-water harbor.¹⁵ Today the Wolf River Harbor is a component of the Port of Memphis. The sandbar has not impeded the Landing's use as a river landing, however. It is currently used by the local riverboat excursion company, and, until they were recently decommissioned, the last remaining overnight passenger steamboats plying the Mississippi and its tributaries might be found docked at the Landing.

A more substantial historic change was the culmination of a plan put forward in 1933-34 to complete Riverside Drive along the foot of the bluff south of the Landing and to extend it across the brow of the Landing to Jefferson Avenue. Riverside Drive and Jefferson Davis Park were first envisioned in 1908 by landscape architect George Kessler as components of his Memphis Park and Parkway system (Memphis Parkway System, NR 07/03/1989, and Overton Park Historic District, NR 10/25/1979). Riverside Drive would connect downtown with Kessler's Riverside Park and the west end of South Parkway. It was completed in 1937 with funding from the Public Works Administration and elevated the grade of Riverside Drive and the Illinois Central Railroad tracks to a level at least fifteen feet above the pavement of the Landing. The current ramp was then installed, along with most of the culverts, walkways, and stairs that connect Riverside Drive with the Landing surface. On the north end of the Landing, the block between Jefferson and Court was raised to the level of Riverside Drive to create Jefferson Davis Park.¹⁶ The c. 1937 construction of Jefferson Davis Park and the installation of Riverside Drive are now historically significant in their own right.

The Landing's open setting along the riverbank is further enhanced by the historic bluff which crowns the site and is the location for Confederate Park and the historic Cossitt Library and U.S. Customs House. The Landing's upper slope was slightly altered by the c. 1997 modifications of the retaining wall directly below Riverside Drive. However, there is no doubt that someone from the historic period would instantly recognize the Landing and its purpose today.

The Landing's site and workmanship continue to illustrate the critical functions of commercial shipping of cotton via steamboats. The cobblestone landing is a unique example of the vernacular stonemason's craft and Nineteenth century engineering and design practices. Its simple, continuous slope has been described as the perfect form for a

¹³ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 24.

¹⁴ Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Memphis, Tennessee* (New York, NY: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., 1888), 1.

¹⁵ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

river landing on a body of water such as the Mississippi River with its dramatic changes in water levels. Furthermore, its permeable surface is environmentally sound by today's "Green" standards. The Landing's historic association with commerce is enhanced by its hand-hewn appearance and its integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials and feeling which combine to convey the integrity of this nationally significant resource.

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** a birthplace or grave
- ☐ **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)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

Circa 1838 - circa 1937

Significant Dates

1859-paving initiated

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Loudon, John (contractor for 1859 paving)

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):

- ☐ 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
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Narrative Significance

The Memphis Landing is being nominated for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its national significance in commerce as the major inland port for the shipping and transportation of cotton on the Mississippi River from 1838 to 1937. From its humble beginning as a large mudflat that developed at the river city's edge in the mid-1830s, the Memphis Landing would grow to become a national nexus of commercial opportunities offered by its advantageous location on the Mississippi River, the 19th century highway of inland America.

The sweeping national events contributing to this site's importance include the development of the United States (U.S.) inland navigation system, the settlement of the early cotton frontier, and the burgeoning growth of the American textile trade made possible by the invention of the steam engine, cotton gin, power loom, and the ante-bellum Southern genetic modifications of cotton varieties.

The spatial organization of the ante-bellum South's cotton economy was largely random and haphazard, with many small market centers serving as tiny economic hubs. The Landing, a.k.a. "the Child of Cotton", was an exception as it was the major hub of the transportation network of this dispersed pattern, allowing inland products to be shipped directly to coastal export centers.¹⁷

For more than a century, cotton was the nation's leading export, and the Landing's decades of continual use and improvement reflect cotton's global economic power and role in developing and fueling the finance, insurance, real estate and transportation industries in the U.S. as well as in Britain and France. National and international dependency on cotton and the vast wealth associated with its production would entice settlers and expand slavery westward, eventually leading to the American Civil War which would be fought over issues of economics and enslavement.

The History of Cotton in the Old and New Worlds

Cotton was not native to Europe; however, early Greeks, including the historian Herodotus, knew of it as a "wild plant that bears fleece exceeding in goodness and beauty that of sheep." Alexander the Great is credited with first bringing cotton from India to Europe around 300 B.C. From the 11th to the 13th century, Crusaders returning with cotton and silk fabrics stimulated the European appetite for luxury textiles that led, in part, to the age of exploration. Beginning in the 16th century, Europeans imported cotton fabric from India; yet it remained rare and extremely expensive, within the reach of only the wealthy. Around the middle of the 18th century, society ladies seized on the fashion of wearing cotton dressing gowns, called *indiennes* after their Indian origin, in preference to satins and silks. Yet, until 1800, the vast majority of people wore either woolen goods or linen made from the flax plant.¹⁸

In North America, *Gossypium* (*G.*) *arboreum* species cotton was first grown in Jamestown colony to which the Virginia Company sent cotton plants in 1607, but the rapid emergence of tobacco as the colony's cash crop doomed early cotton cultivation. Small amounts were raised from Georgia to New Jersey for consumption by small households, however, consumers who required larger amounts (for example, George Washington at Mount Vernon in 1773) imported bales of cotton from Great Britain. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, India and Asia provided most of the world's cotton, supplemented slightly by *G. barbadense* long-staple cotton produced after the 1740s in the South American colonies of Surinam (French) and Guyana (British and Dutch).¹⁹

¹⁷ Eugene R. Dattel, *Cotton and Race in the making of America, the Human Costs of Economic Power*, (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2009). 46

¹⁸ Jean M. West. "Slavery" [publication on-line], (New York, Thirteen/WNET, 2004) , http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_cotton.htm, accessed December, 2010

¹⁹ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

The Textile Revolution

Early America's future was changed forever because of a simultaneous occurrence of events that made the processing of raw cotton into cloth less expensive. This first global economic revolution began in Great Britain where several inventions — the spinning jenny, Crompton's spinning mule, and Cartwright's power loom — revolutionized the textile industry. The improvements allowed cotton fabrics to be mass produced, and therefore affordable to millions of people.²⁰ The second component was the harnessing of steam power. James Watts' steam engine began in the 1780s to power semi-automated factories on a previously unimaginable scale in places where waterpower was not available. The idea of using steam power to propel boats soon followed, and the riverboat was invented.²¹ The astonishing growth of the British textile industry created the first modern large scale industry as it began to move across the globe in search of lower production costs and larger markets. Cotton was the single most important contributor to Britain's economic power and rise to preeminence as a world power.²² After the Revolutionary War, American farmers started to increase domestic cotton production, and by 1784 British entrepreneur William Rathbone, IV started importing U.S. cotton into Liverpool.²³

Cotton Gin and Genetic Modification Increase Productivity

Following the Revolutionary War, prices for the historic cash crops of the South were depressed, in particular soil-depleting tobacco which sustained half of the southern planters. Slave labor, too, was declining as financially-strapped tobacco planters switched to grain production and sold off slaves. When the first bale of American cotton was shipped to England in 1784, there were only a half-million slaves in the United States, mainly working on rice, tobacco, and indigo plantations. These trends were dramatically altered by the invention of the cotton gin and the discovery and cultivation of *Gossypium (G.) hirsutum*, (Upland cotton), which today comprises 90% of the world's cotton crop.

Eli Whitney is widely credited with the invention of the cotton gin (engine). After graduating from Yale University in 1792, Whitney traveled south to accept a teaching job. While staying near Savannah, Georgia, he heard planters lamenting their inability to exploit cotton. Using his familiarity with New England textile machinery, in roughly ten days during the spring of 1793, he developed a solution. A wooden roller embedded with wire spikes or teeth was fitted into a box. A second cylinder fitted with brushes revolved in the opposite direction. When Whitney fed the cotton into the machine, the wire teeth pulled the fibers through small slats in a grate, separating the seeds from the fiber. The gin tended to damage the fibers by cutting some short, but the cotton gin enabled a single worker to clean fifty pounds of cotton a day. The amount of labor and therefore the cost of producing cotton were greatly reduced.²⁴

In response to the textile industry's ever increasing national and international demand for raw cotton and the wealth to be garnered from producing it, Southern planters sought to improve production through genetic modifications as picking was the key binding constraint on cotton production.²⁵ The search began in 1806 when a Mississippi planter visiting Mexico obtained native Upland genotype cotton, *G. hirsutum* and passed the seeds to a Mississippi planter and agricultural scientist who began the tedious experimentation process.²⁶ Through a series of adaptations, the imported

²⁰ Eugene R. Dattel, "Cotton in a Global Economy: Mississippi (1800-1860)" [publication on-line] (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Historical Society, 2009), <http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/articles/161/cotton-in-a-global-economy-mississippi-1800-1860>, accessed 14 November, 2009.

²¹ Unaccredited author, "Innovations of the Industrial Revolution" [publication on-line] (2006), <http://www.industrialrevolution.sea.ca/innovations.html>, accessed December, 2009.

²² Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 37.

²³ West, "Slavery", accessed 30 December, 2010

²⁴ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 28.

²⁵ Olmstead, "Wait A Cotton Pickin' Minute", 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

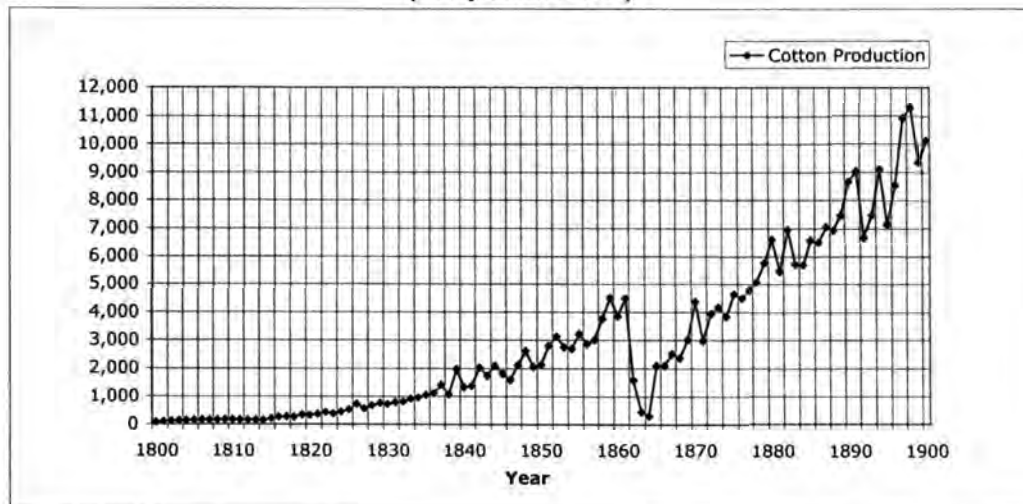
Section number 8 Page 7 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

genotype was transformed into a distinctive group known collectively as the American Upland cotton varieties. Upland cotton, with its short-staple lint (fibers between one and three-sixteenths and one and one-quarters inch) and light, fuzzy green seeds to which the lint is firmly attached, was well suited for cultivation in North America,²⁷

In 1808, samples of the fibers were sent to Liverpool to be tested for spinning quality and received a positive response. By 1820, the southern breeders had created cultivars perfectly adapted for production in the New South – the staple was longer, the grade of the lint higher, and it ripened earlier in the fall. It even displayed a notable tendency to mature many bolls simultaneously, and its large four or five-sectioned bolls opened so widely upon ripening that their lint could be plucked from the pod more easily and was immune to the cotton rot.²⁸

From 1820-60, the quantity of cotton produced increased almost 6 percent per annum whereas the sale price of cotton fell by eight tenths of one percent per year. The basic cause of the long-term price decline was the steady increase in productivity. In the fifty years preceding the Civil War, the average amount of cotton picked per hand increased two and a half times.²⁹

Table 1. American Production of Raw Cotton, 1800-1900³⁰
(500 pound bales)



In 1840, more than 800 million pounds of cotton were produced, and by 1850, more than two billion pounds, accounting for nearly half of the U.S.'s foreign.³¹ The financial panic of 1857 saw the Southern U.S. survive the economic collapse much better than the North because of Europe's continued demand for cotton. Southern cotton producers took European manufactured goods in trade and therefore was not dependent upon cash for payment. Production of plantation cotton had become so successful that the region's economy was dominated by this one crop. Other crops

²⁷ Ibid, accessed 30 December, 2010

²⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹ Ibid., 4.

³⁰ George K. Holmes (compiler), *Cotton Crop of the United States, 1790-1911*; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics, Circular 32 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), 5-8.

³¹ Richard N. Current (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 419.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

were still grown — tobacco, rice, sugarcane, and hemp, for example — but primarily as a local food supply or a secondary cash alternative.

By this time, cotton dominated not only the South's economy but also, at least in terms of export income, the entire country's as well. More than 60 percent of the total value of goods exported from the U. S. during 1860 was from cotton. Production increased and the U. S. prospered — until the Civil War.

Advancing Cotton Cultivation by Aboriginal Removal

After 1800, cotton cultivation and the use of slave labor to grow it, spread into the fertile frontier uplands of Georgia, Alabama, and other parts of the Deep South, as well as in the riverfront areas of the Mississippi Delta. Migrants, poured into the area during the early decades of the 19th century, and county population figures rose and fell as swells of people moved west. The land itself was cheap; as Founding Father Thomas Jefferson said: "It is cheaper to buy new land than to manure the old." ³²

Settlers, however, faced what they considered an obstacle. The land was home to the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole nations. In the view of the settlers, the Native Americans were standing in the way of progress, and no obstacle, foreign or domestic, could halt the advancing settlers. Eager for land to raise cotton, they pressured the federal government to acquire Indian Territory. ³³

General (later President) Andrew Jackson was a forceful proponent of opening the area to settlers. Between 1814-1824, Jackson was instrumental in negotiating nine treaties that divested the southern tribes of their eastern lands in exchange for lands in the West. As a result of the treaties, the U.S. gained control over three-quarters of Alabama and Florida, as well as parts of Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky and North Carolina. In 1830, a year after taking office as President, Jackson pushed legislation called the "Indian Removal Act" through both houses of Congress.

It gave the President power to negotiate removal treaties with the remaining tribes east of the Mississippi. By 1837, the Jackson administration had removed 46,000 Native Americans from their land east of the Mississippi, thus opening millions of acres of fertile land to cotton cultivation. ³⁴

Slavery and Cotton Cultivation

Cotton changed the dynamics of the southern culture and economy dramatically. Small independent farms gave way to large plantations, and the need for labor and great wealth to be gained from growing cotton extended the tragedy of American slavery westward. Cotton was a relative latecomer in the story of slavery in America.

Between the arrival of the first slaves in Jamestown in August 1619 and the ratification of the 13th Amendment prohibiting slavery (December, 1865), cotton only became a significant factor after the aforementioned invention of the cotton gin in 1793. ³⁵ Small-scale farmers did not need slaves to grow cotton, but large-scale operations (already accustomed to using slave labor on rice, tobacco, and indigo plantations) used slaves to meet the demand for labor. Slave plantations were highly profitable, efficient and fully capable of out-competing free farms. The greater efficiency of plantations stemmed from their ability to exploit the gang system. Slaves who toiled in the gangs of the intermediate and large plantations were on average over 70 percent more productive than either free farmers (Northern or Southern)

³² Henry Hobhouse, *Seeds of Change: Five Plants that Transformed Mankind* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 158.

³³ West, "Slavery", accessed 2 January, 2011

³⁴ West, "Slavery", accessed 28 December, 2010

³⁵ West, "Slavery", accessed 28 December, 2010

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

or slaves on small plantations.³⁶ As the demand for cotton grew, slavery was considered indispensable as a means of maximizing profit for this labor-intensive staple crop.

The demand for additional slaves to put acreage into cotton production was met in part by the transatlantic slave trade but primarily by the interregional domestic slave trade. The U. S. imported approximately 300,000 slaves between 1778 and the end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808, almost as many slaves as had been brought to the British colonies of North America from 1619-1778. As cotton production became increasingly profitable in the 1850s, the labor-intensive nature of non-mechanized cotton cultivation further institutionalized slavery and by the start of the American Civil War, the number of slaves had increased to almost four million.³⁷

Northern Capital and the Globalization of Cotton

The financial web spun from the cotton plant, and the resulting dependency on the monoculture of cotton had many facets. The South depended on the cotton; cotton depended on slavery. New York City depended on the cotton trade. British, French and New England textile mills all depended on American raw cotton. The American West (and Memphis in particular) greatly benefited from the intersectional trade generated by cotton. Memphis merchants shipped cotton from the Landing, sold goods to area planters and thus increased their borrowing capacity. The American government relied on tariff revenues generated by the South. American financial markets were supported by the balance of trade created by slave-produced cotton. By the 1830s, an Alabama legislative committee reported that New Yorkers collected one-third of all cotton revenues. Southerners estimated that Northerners extracted \$3 billion in gross domestic product (\$9.75 trillion in 2010 dollars) from their region between 1800 and 1860.³⁸

The cotton economy depended on Northern capital and operated on credit held by Northern banks. By 1860, 360,000 Northerners were living in the South and working as cotton traders, bankers, and factors. Planters were invariably in debt despite good but volatile investment returns. Southern wealth was tied up in slaves and land, and there was little capital for other purposes. In addition to the fees of Northern businessmen, Southerners knew they paid almost 90 percent of the country's tariffs because of their dependence on imported manufactured goods, which were taxed heavily.

Roots of the Civil War

Because cotton was global business, the ties across the Atlantic played an essential role in the hopes and fears that led to the American Civil War. Cotton also created a profound interdependence among the different regions of the U.S., and, by the late 1850s, dependence on cotton money gave enormous clout to Southern secessionists.

Although geographically a Northern metropolis, New York City was the 19th century hub for much of America's commerce, and cotton was no exception. A look at New York's role in the cotton trade reveals alliances and deep bonds between the North and South built on profit and personal relationships.³⁹ It was cotton that propelled New York City to commercial dominance, beginning in 1817 when the city developed a commercial environment that became known as the "cotton triangle". The points were New York, Liverpool and ports in the South. The Southern ports transported their cotton to New York, where it was simply moved from one dock to another and then loaded onto

³⁶ Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, "Wait A Cotton Pickin' Minute! A New View of Slave Productivity" (University of North Carolina Department of Economics Working Paper, August 2005); 15. Available from http://www.unc.edu/~prhode/Cotton_Pickin.pdf, accessed January, 2010.

³⁷ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 177.

³⁸ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 69.

³⁹ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 85.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

vessels bound for Liverpool, Le Havre or New England. The power of the cotton triangle quickly led to innovations since each player wanted more direct access and a larger share of the vast wealth cotton generated. In the 1830s the Southern cotton ports began dealing directly with Europe. Cotton was shipped via local rivers to the bustling port cities such as Memphis, which then sent their valuable cargoes on to the textile mills.⁴⁰

In 1822 cotton accounted for forty percent of New York's exports. The "Southern" trade, the sale of manufactured goods and attendant services to the South, has been estimated at \$200 million per year. When Southern planters defaulted, New York financial backers had to take possession of slave collateral. Many New York merchants had branches in New Orleans, Memphis and Charleston to handle transactions. Until the Civil War, according to the American labor historian Philip Foner, "New York dominated every single phase of the cotton trade from plantation to market."⁴¹

New England shared in the trade as well. The amount of raw cotton sent to New England mills grew steadily until the Civil War. This source of cheap raw material benefited the region, which had earlier accumulated money through shipping and the slave trade. The importance of cotton gave rise to the term "Cotton Whigs," a class of New Englanders whose cotton interest caused them to sympathize with the South. As the U.S. grew in complexity, its economic relationships grew accordingly, and no one region could dominate all aspects of the commerce. The gleaming white cotton boll became essential to the prosperity of the North.⁴²

The 1860 election of Republican Abraham Lincoln set in motion the secession of Southern states and brought commercial anxiety to the North. Although Lincoln promised not to interfere with slavery where it existed and was constitutionally protected, the North recognized that the Union faced an immediate threat of disintegration with catastrophic commercial implications.⁴³

Much of the South's cotton exports passed through New York, and the city's merchants took 40 cents of every dollar that Europeans paid for Southern cotton through warehouse fees, shipping, insurance and profits. Cotton revenues helped build the new marble-fronted mercantile buildings in lower Manhattan, fill Broadway hotels and stores with customers, and build block after block of fashionable brownstones north of 14th Street. If seceding Southern states formed their own nation, New York merchants could expect to lose much of that lucrative trade. Southerners threatened to blacklist Northern companies they felt sided too closely with the Union and to unilaterally cancel debts owed to Northern merchants. New York's elite — and the city's economy — would be devastated.⁴⁴ But, when the first South Carolina cannon was fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, support for the Union overwhelmed secessionist sentiment in the city. New York, alongside the rest of the North, proclaimed its loyalty to the United States.⁴⁵

On the eve of the Civil war, it was cotton that enabled the South to become a sustainable economic entity, independent from its Northern brethren. The South hoped to stand alone, not because it produced enough agricultural or manufactured products, but because cotton revenues could procure those items, including armaments from England, the North or the West. The South also wanted to protect new Southern textile manufacturers from the dreaded tariff, but the region still had little industry and no formidable economic existence without cotton. According to southern historian Frank Owsley, "If slavery was the cornerstone of the Confederacy, cotton was its foundation. At home its

⁴⁰ Ibid., 86.

⁴¹ Ibid., 86.

⁴² Ibid., 89-90.

⁴³ Dattel, "Colon and Race", 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Lockwood, "First South Carolina, then New York." accessed 7 January, 2011.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

social and economic institutions rested upon cotton; abroad its diplomacy centered around the well-known dependency of Europe, especially England and France, upon the uninterrupted supply of cotton from southern states."⁴⁶

King Cotton Buys a War

In the long war years, cotton would provide credibility, arms for the military, a basis for tax revenue, and a diplomatic strategy for the fledgling Confederate nation. From the beginning of the war, cotton formed the basis of the South's overarching strategy to force Great Britain into open recognition of the Confederacy. Britain's support of the Confederacy lengthened the war considerably; her own imperial and economic interests reduced humanitarian feelings about slavery to relative insignificance. Cotton's brute commercial influence and irrepressible attractiveness were highly in evidence throughout the war. Although Britain technically remained neutral, its bald need for cotton shaped an involved and mutually advantageous relationship with the Confederacy. And although white Northerners and Southerners might have been pitted against one another in the battlefield, the two sides continued to trade cotton.⁴⁷

When the Confederacy initiated the Civil War, President Lincoln immediately ordered a blockade of all Southern ports that was designed to deprive the South of its money supply. Simultaneously, the South instituted an informal embargo on cotton exports as a ploy to bring Britain and France into the war on the side of the Confederacy. By 1862 cotton was piled up and rotting at warehouses all over the South, and both invading Federal forces and Southerners began to burn supplies. It has been estimated that over 2.5 million bales of cotton were burned during the period 1861-1865.⁴⁸

Britain, however, had stockpiled huge amounts of raw cotton and had a glut of textiles that could not be sold even at cost. The conflict in America had the surprising effect of being a boon to the English textile business. The "King Cotton strategy" of embargo failed to give the South economic leverage until the summer of 1862 when the "cotton famine" finally hit in Liverpool. Not only were Americans dependent on Southern cotton, but a shortage of its supply put more than 500,000 British mill workers out of work by December 1862.⁴⁹ With the exception of mill workers, however, the war was economically advantageous to Great Britain. Great amounts of British armaments – pistols, rifles, powder and artillery – flowed both to the North and South, and British exports actually increased from L164 million pounds in 1861 to L 240 million pounds in 1864.

As the South's finances worsened in the spring of 1862, the South was forced to rely on its only asset - cotton. The Confederacy sold warrants or cotton at a fixed price that benefitted the buyer since cotton was constantly increasing in value at this point. The Emancipation Proclamation was announced in September 1862, and, four months later, slavery ended. In April 1863 the Confederacy began to issue 20-year bonds redeemable in French francs, British sterling or cotton. Finally, they created cotton-backed loans known as Erlanger bonds. After the war, Jefferson Davis himself repudiated the ill-conceived cotton embargo. Ironically it was acknowledged that the South could have financed and perhaps won the war over slavery and cotton with the revenue from cotton sales except for the embargo strategy.

The federal government and northern capitalists were well aware that the economic importance of cotton had not diminished during the war and that restoration of cotton production was critical to the financial, post-war recovery of the nation. Cotton exports were needed to help reduce the huge federal debt and to stabilize monetary affairs in order to fund economic development, particularly railroads.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 96-7

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid, 170-71.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 174.

⁵⁰ Dattel, "Cotton in the Global Economy", accessed November, 2009.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

The area from Memphis to Vicksburg still boasted the richest cotton land in the world. Northern investors frantically scoured the South for arable land when 2.25 million bales of cotton traded for \$400 million in 1865. Although it never regained the dominance of its prewar position, cotton nonetheless reigned as America's most important foreign export until 1937.

Cotton Cultivation and Commerce in Tennessee

Cotton was not an aboriginal crop in Tennessee nor was it widely cultivated by the earliest settlers in mountainous East Tennessee, although gins were brought into Middle Tennessee during the 1780s and soon appeared on estate inventories and tax rolls. Andre Michaux, a French botanist who visited Nashville in 1802, spoke enthusiastically about the wealth to be made from growing and selling cotton. Prices at New Orleans' cotton market were avidly followed by the early Cumberland settlers, but Middle Tennessee's importance in terms of cotton production was eclipsed as virgin land became available.⁵¹

The emergence and large-scale cultivation of Upland cotton in Tennessee began in the 1820s with the opening of the land between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. The upper wedge of the Mississippi Delta extends into southwestern Tennessee, and it was in this fertile section that King Cotton took hold. Between 1800 and 1840, a period when annual southern cotton production increased from 40 to 871 million pounds, yields per acre increased by forty-six to seventy-eight percent due to the introduction of new varieties.⁵² Despite the importance of the crop in counties close to Memphis, the state's agriculture as a whole was never devoted exclusively to cotton, as it was in other southern states.⁵³ Memphis's location on the Mississippi River adjacent to the rich agricultural floodplain made it the state's and the region's primary site for cotton receiving and distribution. Cotton and the entrepreneurial activities surrounding its movement through the world market were responsible for much of the ante-bellum economic growth in West Tennessee and the tri-state Delta region.

Memphis, Its River Trade and the Early Landings

The first constitutional convention of Tennessee in 1796 recognized the importance of navigation rights on the Mississippi River, declaring that "an equal participation of the free navigation of the Mississippi is one of the inherent rights of the citizens of the State; it cannot, therefore, be conceded to any prince, potentate, power, person or persons whatever." River transportation was absolutely essential to Tennessee, especially to immigrants and for trade routes.⁵⁴

Memphis was preceded by a Chickasaw trading post established in 1794 but was not laid out as a city until 1819, two years after the price of cotton had reached an all time high of 29.8 cents a pound. Its earliest development was concentrated at the northern end of the city plan, close to the original river landing at the confluence of the Wolf and Mississippi rivers and the Bayou Gayoso.⁵⁵ Memphis and its cotton trade were born at the same time; the year 1828 saw both the incorporation of Memphis and the delivery of 300 bales of cotton from Fayette County. Twelve short years later the Memphis cotton market would handle more than 100 times that amount.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Wayne C. Moore, "Cotton", *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. [encyclopedia on-line]. (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Historical Society, 2002), <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=C149>, accessed 27 December, 2009.

⁵² Olmstead, "Wait A Cotton Pickin' Minute", 6.

⁵³ Moore, "Cotton".

⁵⁴ Waschka, "Transportation at Memphis", 31.

⁵⁵ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 16.

⁵⁶ W.L. Trask (compiler), *Annual Report of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Merchants' Exchange* (Memphis, TN: Cowperthwait, Chapman & Co., 1869), 34.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

The original shallow landing at the north end of Memphis at the mouth of the Wolf River, the "public landing" as it was designated on an 1819 map, was ideal for flatboats because its slope was relatively flat and its harbor sheltered from the currents of the Mississippi River. The use of this landing began to wane in the 1830s with the accretion of a sandbar across its frontage.⁵⁷ By 1837 flatboats were being replaced by steamboats, the new and larger vehicle for river transport. Goods that had been shipped to Memphis from the Atlantic Coast via New Orleans were now being sent to Memphis directly from the north down the Ohio River by steamboat, and the early landing was becoming less accessible for their use. The rapid growth of traffic plus the need for greater convenience for the Front Street cotton dealers, or factors, necessitated a search for a more suitable southerly river landing.

Between 1818 and the Civil War, the highest price for Middling (best quality) cotton was recorded in 1834-35 when it reached 15.2 cents a pound.⁵⁸ The high cotton prices directly correlate with the early development of the Memphis Landing beginning with the late 1830s. In 1838, the landing for the town of South Memphis was established by Captain William Hart along the public riverbank between Union Avenue and Beale Street by the simple act of moving his wharf boat from its mooring at the upstream landing and relocating it "below the corporation line".⁵⁹ Whereas flatboats found it difficult to maneuver in the swift river currents near the new landing, the faster, larger steamboats found the location advantageous.⁶⁰ It also enabled Memphis to accept trade diverted from flooded landings of other near-by river towns.⁶¹

The appearance of the Memphis Landing and the South Memphis Landing then were quite different from the existing stone pavement there today. Printed images from the 1840s and 1850s show the Landing as an expanse of rough, exposed, eroded bluff terraces, divided by east-west road cuts through the terraces to reach a narrow strip of land at the water's edge.

The Memphis Landing's Role in Expanding Cotton Commerce

Beginning with the early development of the Memphis Landing, the role of Memphis as an important collection point for the national market was firmly established. Not only was raw cotton brought overland from the interior, but small boats began to extend their trips to Memphis to take advantage of the new steamboat port for shipping raw cotton to domestic or European markets.⁶² As early as 1837, both Memphis and New Orleans commodity market quotations were published in Memphis newspapers, and New Orleans commission houses advertised in those same papers.⁶³

According to local historian J. M. Keating, 1841 was one of the most productive crop years in the Mississippi Valley.⁶⁴ By 1842, Memphis was handling an increasing part of the western river trade, which had grown to the point that it was nearly as great as the total value of the U.S. foreign trade.⁶⁵ In 1847 Memphis had nearly two thousand steamboat arrivals annually providing cotton to the world market.⁶⁶ According to Twyman's 1849 city directory, "The city wharfs are

⁵⁷ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 16.

⁵⁸ Eugene Smith, *Annual statement of the St. Louis Trade and Commerce of St. Louis for the Year 1916, Reported to the Merchants' Exchange* (St. Louis, MO: R.P. Studley & Co., 1917), 90.

⁵⁹ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 17.

⁶⁰ Robert A. Sigafos, *Cotton Row to Beale Street* (Memphis, TN: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 14.

⁶¹ Waschka, "Transportation at Memphis", 44.

⁶² Ibid., 34.

⁶³ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁴ John McCloud Keating, *History of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches, Vol. 1* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Company, 1888), 212.

⁶⁵ Waschka, "Transportation at Memphis", 53.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 56.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

sufficiently large for the present business of the city, are properly graded and well graveled, and can be easily extended to any required length; say three miles if necessary . . .⁶⁷

During the decade of the 1840s, construction of planked toll roads diverted the movement of cotton in northern Mississippi and neighboring Tennessee counties away from the Vicksburg market to Memphis for cheaper shipment up river. The Memphis market alone handled 140,000 bales assembled there from all points for shipment to the world textile centers. In 1846, the Memphis market had grown so large that Congress made the town a point of entry for the U.S, which was the genesis of the U.S. Customs House at Memphis. By 1852, in one three-month period, customs officials had collected \$6,000 (\$173,000 today) in duties and taxes.⁶⁸ An 1852 U.S. Treasury Report noted the importance of Memphis both as an international entry point and as a collection point for "surplus products", meaning raw cotton.⁶⁹ West Tennessee was producing four-fifths of the state's cotton crop by this time, and it was being shipped out of Memphis.

In 1849 the towns of Memphis and South Memphis were unified by an act of the state legislature, officially ending a decade of rivalry.⁷⁰ The population of Memphis had climbed at a remarkable rate after the Landing's construction, making it a major urban center. During the decade 1840-50 Memphis grew at a rate of nearly 400 per cent, faster than New Orleans, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Louisville or even St. Louis. It was, at this point, the largest city in Tennessee.

The Landing was a place where visitors were taken to give them some idea of the city's extensive cotton commerce. A correspondent writing for *De Bow's Review* observed in 1851: "Memphis now begins to deserve . . . the proud name of Egypt's capitol . . . the bustle upon the landing reminded me of some of the busiest portions of the levee in New Orleans; but on reaching the broad esplanade that extends the whole length of the city front, six hundred feet wide, and seeing it covered with countless wagons as far as the eye could reach, loading and unloading cotton and merchandise, I stood still with amazement to contemplate so novel a scene. It was a sight such as I never beheld before . . . It seemed as if every wagon in the country for fifty miles around was in Memphis."⁷¹

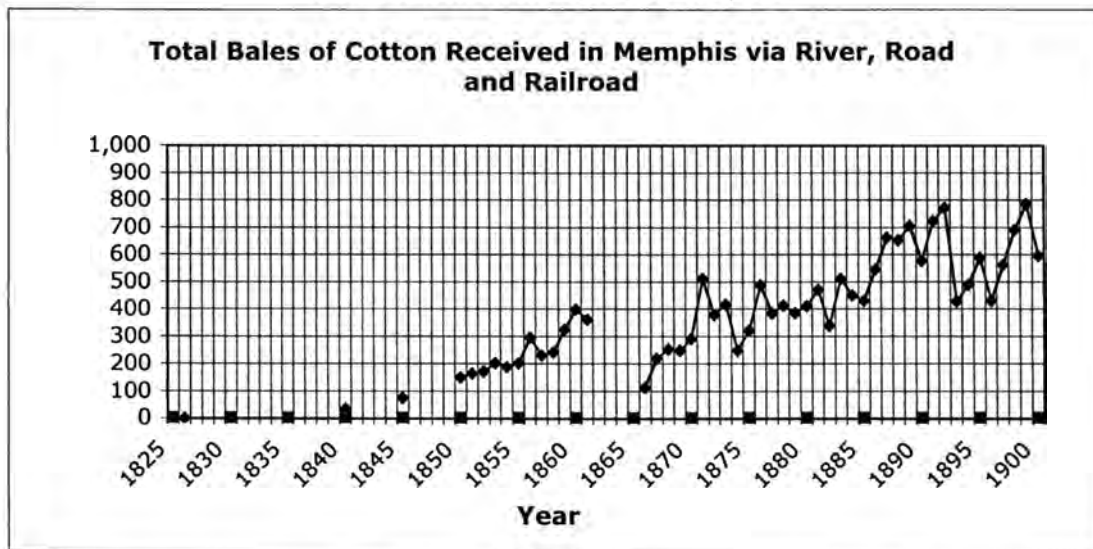
⁶⁷ R.B.J. Twyman, *Twyman's Memphis Directory and General Business Advertiser for 1850* (Memphis, TN: R.B.J. Twyman, Printer, 1849), 111.

⁶⁸ Waschka, "Transportation at Memphis", 55-6.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁰ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 18.

⁷¹ "Memphis, Her Growth and Prospects", *De Bow's Review* XI (Nov. 1851), 532-33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 15 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, TennesseeTable 2. Cotton Received in Memphis⁷²

According to historian Robert Sigafos: "Technological spurs . . . helped connect Memphis with important outside markets . . . for trade and transportation."⁷³ The cultivation and distribution of cotton, the Landing and the financial intermediaries who provided operating capital and marketed the crop were responsible for most of the economic growth of Memphis during the decade 1850-1859. The economic fortunes of local real estate, commerce, steamboats and telegraph businesses were heavily dependent on this basic agricultural commodity as there was little other industry to underpin the local economy.⁷⁴

By 1851 *De Bow's Review* also proclaimed that Memphis had become the largest spot cotton market in the country: "There is more cotton sold at this point, by the planter who produces it, before it passes into the hands of the commission merchant, with his items of storage, drayage, insurance, and commissions, than at any other point in the U.S." The author went on to say that "Memphis cottons, in point of quality, are inferior to none in the U.S. because they consistently took first place in competitions. And I doubt not that their character will be fully sustained at the . . . [exhibition] which is shortly to take place at London."⁷⁵ His prediction proved correct. Shelby County Upland staple cotton received international attention when a trio of planters active in the Shelby County Agricultural Society, entered a bale of county cotton in the 1851 London Crystal Palace Exhibition and brought home a prestigious gold Prize Medal.⁷⁶

Regulating and Paving the Memphis Landing

The Memphis Landing distinguished Memphis as the major shipping and distribution hub for cotton commerce and was more important to the early city and its commercial and economic development than the Memphis International Airport is today. Memphis was granted a new charter by the State of Tennessee in 1854 that spelled out the duties of the man

⁷² N.S. Graves (compiler), *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Memphis, Tenn. for the Year 1901* (Memphis, TN: S.C. Toof & Co., 1901), 33.

⁷³ Sigafos, *Cotton Row*, 27.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁵ "Memphis, and Its Manufacturing Advantages", *De Bow's Review* X (June 1851), pp. 525-529 (quote from p. 528).

⁷⁶ Marius Carriere, "Dr. Samuel Bond and the Crystal Palace Medal." *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 41 (1987): 1-3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

in charge of the Landing, the wharf master.⁷⁷ The wharf master reported at the end of June 1858 that during the previous year: 2,279 steamboats had arrived at the Port of Memphis, and 379 flatboats. The next year, 2,338 steamboats and 226 flatboats landed.⁷⁸ It appears that upwards of 2,000 steamboats landed every year at Memphis for most of this period. The number of steamers landing in Memphis would pick up undiminished after the Civil War and continue into the 1890s.⁷⁹

The output of cotton increased markedly between 1850 and 1860 as the prices rose accordingly. During the year ending August 31, 1852, Memphis received 72,000 bales; in 1853, 203,000 bales; and in 1854, 180,000 bales.⁸⁰ According to the 1859 Tanner's City Directory there were sixty-six cotton brokers and cotton factors operating at that time in Memphis.

With all the river traffic, the lack of an easily maintained surface on the Landing caused great difficulties for stevedores loading and unloading the boats, as well as draymen hauling the goods up and down the grade of the Landing. Wet clay, sand, and gravel churned up by iron wagon wheels, and hooves of oxen and mules made the Landing virtually impassable in rainy weather, a problem that was compounded by the Landing's exposure to the river's current.⁸¹

When cotton reached a decade high price of 12.4 cents a pound in 1856, the city decided to issue a bond to pave the Landing. By 1859, when paving began, the volatile commodity had dropped to 10.6 cents a pound, coinciding with the opening of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, and fueled a boom in activity at the Landing to connect the river with rail transport. At that time, the City hired paving contractor John Loudon to initiate "paving the wharf with limestone or granite" between Adams and Union Avenues to cover a width of 100 feet and length of 3,300 feet. Loudon was a Cincinnati stonemason and stone paving contractor. He owned a series of barges used to haul stone for his contracting projects from quarries on the Ohio River.⁸² Improvements to the southern portion of the Landing were also attempted in 1859-1861 as part of his contract. Loudon's biographers suggest that he did not finish his contract before the arrival of Federal forces in Memphis in June 1862.⁸³

During the 1860-61 Season, 369,633 bales were received here and steamboats carried out all but five percent.⁸⁴ At that year's cotton valuation of about ten cents per pound, this amounted to \$18.5 million, (the equivalent of half a billion dollars today).⁸⁵ In 1860, when over 3.8 million bales were grown nationally, the Memphis market was international in scope, shipping 370,000 bales, a fraction under ten percent of the nation's total cotton production.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ Louis J. Dupree (compiler), *A Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Memphis, from the Year 1826 to 1857* (Memphis, TN: Memphis Bulletin Co., 1857), 91-94.

⁷⁸ Smith P. Bankhead (compiler), *Digest of the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Memphis from 1826 to 1860* (Memphis, TN: Saunders, Oberly & Jones, 1860), 462.

⁷⁹ Hinton, "Historical Sketch", 69-70.

⁸⁰ W.H. Rainey, *W.H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory, and General Business Advertiser, for 1855 & '6'* (Memphis, TN: E.R. Marlett and W.H. Rainey, 1856), 68.

⁸¹ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 19.

⁸² Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 20.

⁸³ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁴ Forrest Orren Lax, "The Memphis Cotton Exchange from Beginning to Decline" (Master's thesis, Memphis State University, 1970), 4.

⁸⁵ Jno. F. Toof (compiler), *First Annual Statement of the Trade & Commerce in Memphis*, (Memphis, TN: O'Neill and Parish, Printers, 1861), 11.

⁸⁶ Memphis Chamber of Commerce. *First Annual Statement of the Trade & Commerce in Memphis*. (Memphis: O'Neill and Parish, 1861), 42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Table 3. Cotton Shipments (In Bales) From Memphis, 1858-1861⁸⁷

Destination	1858-59	1859-60	1860-61
New Orleans	241,546	263,589	134,366
Ohio River	59,827	111,144	153,894
St. Louis	23,724	16,769	13,802
European and Northern Points	160	14,989
Interior Points	256	2,806
Total	325,097	391,918	369,857

Cotton Economics during the Civil War Years

After the election of 1860, Memphians were ambivalent about secession, mirroring the sentiment of the state as a whole, but, as the months rolled by, local secessionists became more vocal and war fever grew. In May 1861, the city voted to secede, and over 3,800 volunteers enlisted. Memphis proper quickly became a military depot and ordnance (explosive weapons) but did not build up its defenses, relying instead on the border defenses at the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

The Confederate Congress embargoed cotton and relied on individual states to impede both its production and shipping. After a planter's convention held in Memphis in February 1861, a Memphis newspaper editorialized: "Keep every bale of cotton on the plantation. Don't send a thread to New Orleans or Memphis till England and France have recognized the Confederacy-not a single thread." In 1862, *The Index*, a British pro-confederacy journal wrote about the burning of "one hundred thousand bales" of cotton at Memphis to curtail cotton supplies.⁸⁸

The invasion of Tennessee began early in 1862 when Federal land and naval forces under General Ulysses S. Grant moved against Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, both of which fell in February. Grant's forces proceeded to penetrate deep into the state along the Tennessee River. Meanwhile, another Federal army under General Don Buell captured Nashville (February 25) and Confederate forces abandoned Middle Tennessee. The governor, legislators, and other state officials fled from Nashville to Memphis, which was itself captured on June 6, 1862 by Union forces advancing down the Mississippi River. After a brief riverfront skirmish in which the Federal navy quickly and decisively defeated the wood clad Confederate gunboats, the Confederate state government ceased to exist. Although Memphis fell, much of West Tennessee and northern Mississippi remained contested, and Memphis thrived on the contraband trade that flowed southward to the Confederacy in the form of food and supplies, while blockade runners and speculators from the Deep South brought in confiscated goods and smuggled cotton via the Landing.

The June 1862 fall of Memphis was followed by an orgy of cotton trading. The Union army was reportedly "paralyzed by hordes of speculators who followed on its heels to reap the harvest that waited in its wake." General Sherman declared that Memphis, because of cotton trading, was more valuable to the Confederate army after it fell.⁸⁹

As the embargo progressed and pent-up demand for cotton drove prices higher, opportunities for profit and corruption on both sides abounded, especially in important Confederate cities such as Memphis. Senator Zachariah Chandler lamented that by mid-1864 twenty-to-thirty million dollars in goods and supplies had been shipped to the Confederacy through Memphis alone. Around this same time, General Daniel Sickles wrote to Lincoln that "goods and to the amount

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 170.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 203

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

of half a million a week went through our lines, [and were] sold" in Memphis. Northern soldiers and private citizens alike were more than eager to buy cotton and sell goods to the Confederacy.⁹⁰

By this time, nearly all the cotton sent to market via the Landing was either grown on plantations leased by Northerners or purchased from Southern planters by Northern speculators.⁹¹ As cotton reached an unprecedented dollar a pound in early 1865, the New York journalist Charles Dana formed a partnership with Roscoe Conklin to trade cotton in Memphis, from where he sent reports to U. S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton:

The mania for sudden fortunes in cotton, raging in a vast population of Jews and Yankees scattered throughout this whole country and town [Memphis] almost exceeding the regular number of residents, has to an alarming extent corrupted and demoralized the army.⁹²

Cotton Commerce after the Civil War

River traffic picked up again after the war, and work on paving the Landing resumed in June 1866. A local newspaper reported that "Ground was broken yesterday for the new paving on the wharf, which is to extend from Jefferson to Monroe Street, and to be one hundred feet in width, composed of square blocks of stone. About twenty laborers were at work this morning. We hope that the contractor will push this matter through, so that those who have business on the levee will never more have to wade ankle-deep in slush".⁹³

The number of Memphis dealers in cotton – brokers, buyers, and factors – increased dramatically between the mid-1850s and the late 1860s. It seems likely some consolidation of firms followed thereafter, as their number decreased and stabilized; the amount of cotton they handled certainly did not diminish.⁹⁴ The 1869 *Annual Report of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Merchant's Exchange* commented on the city's recent advances. "Our well earned fame as the greatest inland cotton market of the country will cause cotton to seek our market from greater distances than ever before. . . . Shipping one-tenth of the entire Cotton crop of the U.S., the dullest mind can without difficulty comprehend that our future is to be a prosperous one . . . We have become third on the list of the cotton marts of the country, and are now only surpassed by New Orleans and Savannah. Mobile, which last year received more bales than Memphis, has fallen behind us this season more than 25,000 bales. We have beaten Charleston nearly 50,000, and we are the first on the list of inland cities. . . . Our cotton now goes directly North and without changing either bulk or ownership, is put down at the mills ready for consumption".⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Ibid., 204.

⁹¹ Ibid, 207.

⁹² Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, 210.

⁹³ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 23.

⁹⁴ Data taken from Memphis city directories, 1855 through 1900, History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center.

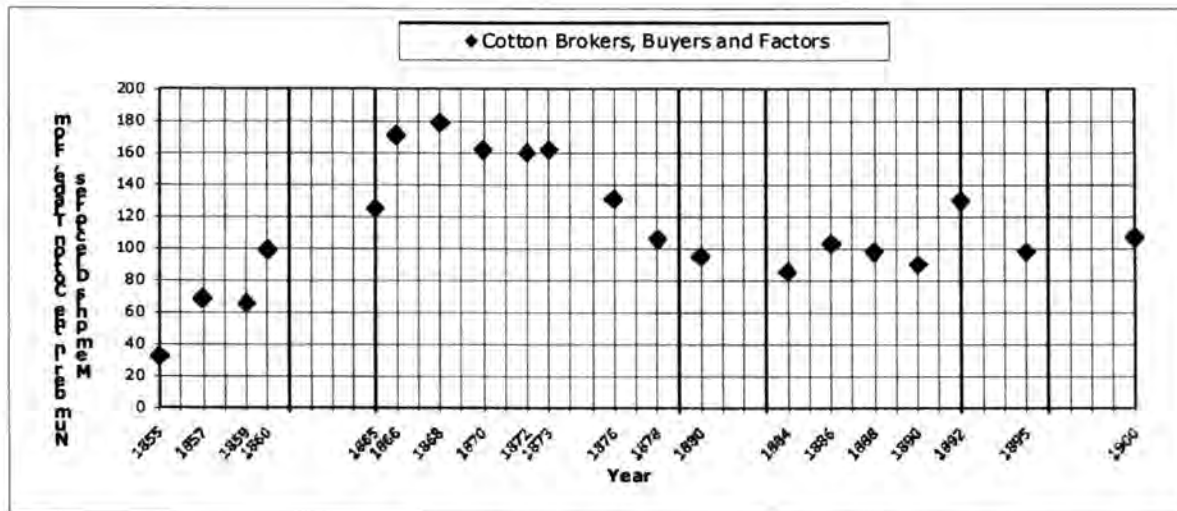
⁹⁵ Trask, *Annual Report*, 10-11, 31-32.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Table 4. Memphis Cotton Dealers⁹⁶



Following the organization of cotton exchanges in St. Louis and New York (1870) and New Orleans (1871), Memphis cotton buyers pushed for an exchange in Memphis. Many who sold cotton on commission for planters believed that speculation in futures depressed prices. When the Memphis Cotton Exchange (Exchange) finally opened on Front Street in 1873, it formally established a "spot" market with no provision for trading in futures contracts. Raw cotton sent to Memphis was bought and sold "on the spot". The Exchange sent samples of the different grades of cotton traded in Memphis to Liverpool, New York, and New Orleans and requested separate quotes and prices for Memphis grades. To advertise their product, the Exchange periodically gave a prize for the best bale of cotton received in the Bluff City and sent the prize-winning bale to fairs in the U. S. and Europe.⁹⁷

The vast wealth connected with the commercial trading of cotton is reflected in the Landing's wharfage and the City's investment in its improvement. Revenues from wharfage were \$53,886 in 1870 (9.4 percent of the city's total revenue); \$33,248 in 1871; and \$31,118 in 1872 (about five percent of the city revenue). In 1874 there was a push to improve the southern end of the Landing.⁹⁸ The City constructed the Memphis river gauge: "to construct upon the slope of the paved Landing a water gauge so that the exact change of the River's rise and fall can be read at any time."⁹⁹ In 1880, the City began paving the southern end of the Landing and contracted with W. H. Grider for the work.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Data taken from Memphis city directories, 1855 through 1900, History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center.

⁹⁷ Janie V. Paine, "Memphis Cotton Exchange: One Hundred Years"; otherwise unattributed and unpaginated pamphlet, Memphis Room, History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center, call no. M338.17351/P145m.

⁹⁸ *Minutes of the Meetings of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen*, in microfilm roll #184, "Shelby Co. Memphis City Records", History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center; the volume is titled "Index Book I. Board Alderman [sic]. Jan. 10, 1870. To June 22, 1874. General." See February 4, 1874, pp. 876-77.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, see November 3, 1871, p. 340.

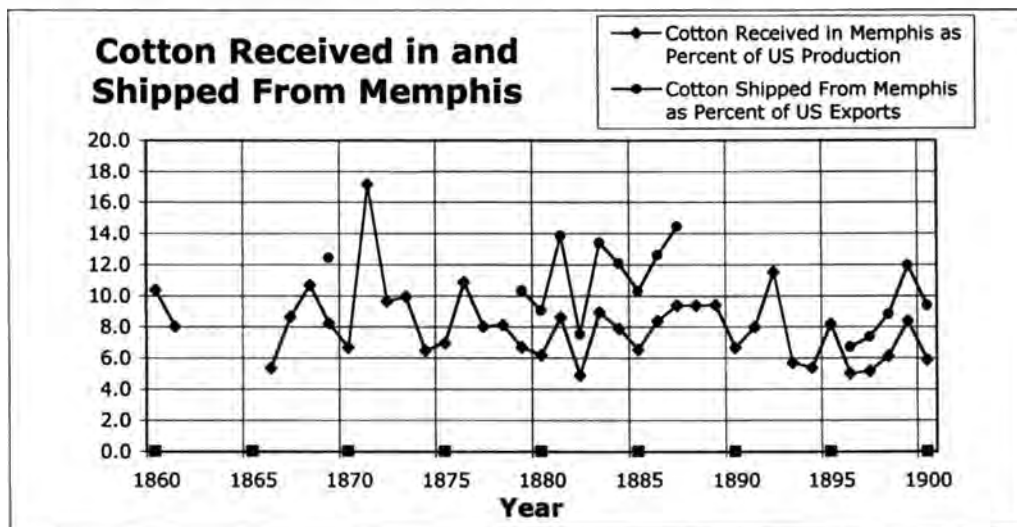
¹⁰⁰ Weaver, "Memphis Landing", 33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Table 5. Memphis Cotton Shipments as Percent of U.S. Production or Export¹⁰¹



The quantity of cotton arriving in Memphis by river between the mid-1870s and the early 1900s remained relatively constant at something in excess of 100,000 bales per year (89,289 bales in 1885 and 131,553 in 1897). The amount was large in comparison with earlier years, but it was only about one-third of the total cotton brought into the city. Railroads were becoming the freight haulers of choice. By the 1890s steamers were bringing in around 20 percent of the arriving cotton, but more than ninety percent was departing the Landing by rail with railroad depots, offices and warehouse located as close to the Landing as possible.

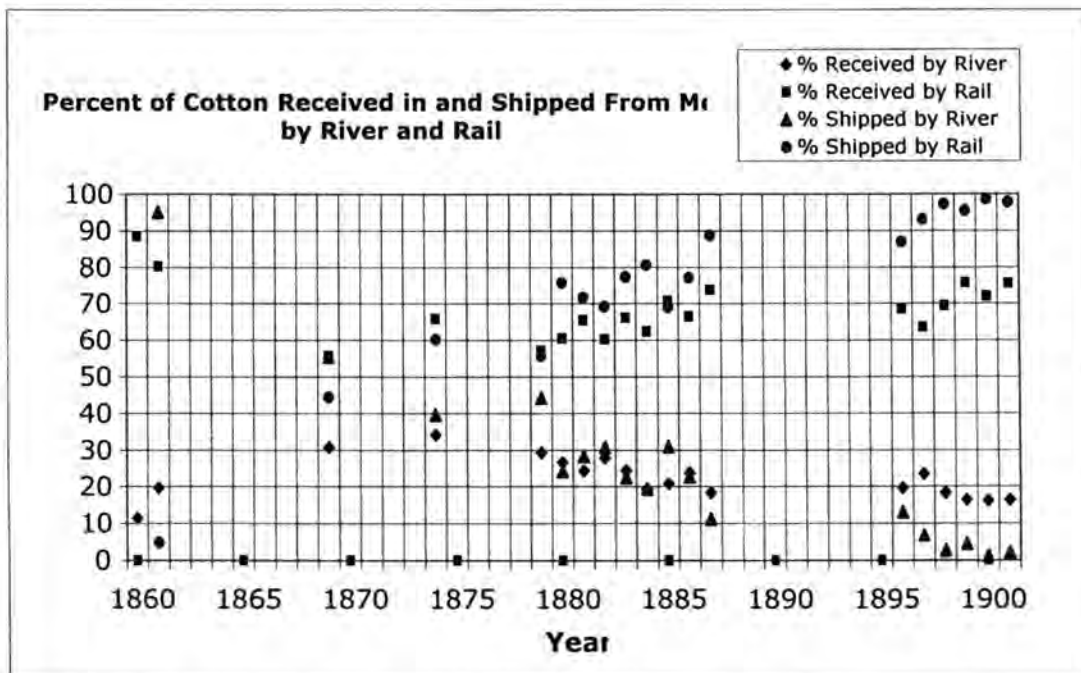
¹⁰¹ Data from Holmes, *Cotton Crop*, 5-8, and from Graves (compiler), *Annual Statement*, 33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 21 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Table 6. Cotton Arrivals and Departures by River and Rail¹⁰²



Comparisons with Other Major Cities on the Mississippi River

During the 19th century three cities on the Mississippi River – St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans – were the major transportation points with their historic riverfront landings serving as the connectors for inland America. The three vary in terms of their construction, development, and use. Of them, the Memphis Landing remains in context as the extant river landing designed specifically for steamboat trade and cotton commerce on the Mississippi River.

St. Louis

St. Louis, with a sandy beach beneath a limestone bluff, was a major trading center and depot of the fur trade by 1803, and was incorporated in 1809. In 1817 the *Zebulon M. Pike* reached St. Louis, at the time the northern-most steamboat port on the Mississippi River. In 1819 iron rings for docking steamboats were inserted into the limestone, and a system

¹⁰² For years 1859-61 data is from Jno. S. Toof, *First Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Memphis . . . Reported to the Memphis Chamber of Commerce* (Memphis, TN: O'Neill & Parrish, 1861), 11. For year 1868-69 data is from W.L. Trask, *Annual Report of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Merchants' Exchange* (Memphis, TN: Cowperthwait, Chapman & Co., 1869), 44-45. For year 1874 data is from John S. Toof, *Twelfth Annual Statement of the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures, Railroad and Other Interests of the City of Memphis* (Memphis, TN: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1875), 8. For years 1878-82 data is from *Commercial and Statistical Review of the City of Memphis, Tenn., Showing Her Manufacturing, Mercantile and General Business Interests* (Memphis, TN: Reilly & Thomas, 1883), 47. For years 1882-87 data is from various editions of E.A. Keeling (compiler), *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Memphis, Tenn. . . . Reported to the Memphis Merchants Exchange* (Memphis, TN: [various printers and years]), sections on Cotton Receipts and Shipments. For years 1895-1901, data is from "Annual Cotton Statement: Season 1911-1912", an unpaginated pamphlet published by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, in the Vertical File "Memphis – Cotton Exchange", Memphis Room, Memphis Public Library and Information Center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 22 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

of wharves was begun in 1828.¹⁰³ A number of streets had been graded to the water's edge and paved with stone to the riverside, and by 1835 the cross streets had been graded and paved to serve as channels for the direct flow of merchandise and freight from steamers and other vessels across the wharf proper, and up to the warehouses on Front, Main, and Second Streets.¹⁰⁴

Missouri is located north of the prime cotton production areas of the southern U.S., and, although cotton cultivation began in the 1810s in the "boot heel" counties along the Mississippi, cultivation in the area diminished as prices fell. In 1849, census takers recorded that cotton was not cultivated in the state. The St. Louis market shipped only 2,145 bales of cotton in 1851, and it was not until after 1855 that cotton prices rose to their pre-1830 levels and limited production resumed.¹⁰⁵

Instead, the city became an important trade center for other commodities, not only serving the overland route for the Oregon and California trails, but as a supply point for the upper Mississippi. By the 1850s, St. Louis had become the largest U.S. city west of Pittsburgh, surpassing New Orleans to become the second-largest port in the country with a commercial tonnage exceeded only by New York.

St. Louis trade came to a standstill when the Civil War started, as it was tied to the South to a greater degree than comparable Ohio River cities such as Cincinnati or Pittsburgh. Trade fled to the safer confines of Chicago, with the result that the Chicago mercantile machine was up and running in 1865 with newly expanded rail lines, while St. Louis was only beginning to rebuild from the War.¹⁰⁶ "Completion of the Eads Bridge in 1874, and ever-mounting competition from the expanding railway system . . . [resulted] in the gradual disuse of the historic riverside wharfs of Old St. Louis."¹⁰⁷

By the early 1930s, St. Louis' civic leaders were despaired by the crumbling St. Louis riverfront area and envisioned that building a memorial there would both revive the riverfront and stimulate the economy. The nonprofit Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Association was formed to create a suitable and permanent public memorial to the men who made possible the western territorial expansion of the United States.

Demolition of the riverfront buildings took place between October 1939 and May 1942. All but two structures in the wharf area from the edge of the river west to what was formerly Third Street were demolished for a new flood wall at 411' above sea level and a vast grassy plaza area for the Gateway Arch. Its historic context is further compromised by construction of three merged Interstate highways (I-44, I-55 and I-70) which separate it from the city. Unlike the Memphis Landing, the St. Louis wharf was not constructed for cotton shipping and does not reflect the role of cotton commerce and its role in the global textile industry.

The Port of New Orleans

With its initial settlement by the French in 1706, New Orleans is one of the oldest cities in the U.S. In the late 1700s, because of its controlling location on the mouth of the Mississippi River, the New Orleans seaport was a major transshipment point for American and foreign goods. Commodities from the upper Midwest and agricultural products from the South flowed down the Mississippi River and its tributaries on flatboats and keelboats to the city. These

¹⁰³ Don Rickey, Jr., "The Old St. Louis Riverfront: 1763-1960", *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 58 No. 2, Jan. 1964, 174-90; quote from p. 183.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰⁵ Gary Gene Fuenfhausen, "The Cotton Culture of Central (Little Dixie) Missouri" [publication on-line] (2001), http://littledixie.net/history_of_the_cotton_cultur.htm, accessed December 2009. Originally published in *Midwest Open Air Museums Magazine*, Summer Issue; 7 May 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Uncredited author(s), "Business, Commerce, & Industry" (City of St. Louis, 2007), <http://stlouis.missouri.org/government/heritage/history/buscomind.htm>, accessed January 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Rickey, "St. Louis Riverfront", 190.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 23 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

products were offloaded and stored in warehouses or transferred directly to oceangoing vessels, and forwarded to the Northeast, Europe, and the Caribbean. With the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, New Orleans became an American city and a major port of entry for the entire country.¹⁰⁸

After the founding of New Orleans, work began almost immediately on an earthen embankment, dike or levee, designed to protect the area from flooding between the Mississippi River and the eleven squares of town fronting on the river. At first the levee was only fifty-four hundred feet long, but this was nevertheless a very substantial undertaking for those days.¹⁰⁹ It may have been about four feet high and fifteen feet wide.¹¹⁰ For decades the city's wharves were nothing but the broad flat tops of this levee.¹¹¹

In time the wharves evolved into piers extending from the levee out into the water, beginning the development into the extensive New Orleans landmark of the late 19th Century. The river continued to deposit sand and earth along the front of the levee as the opposite bank eroded, adding new ground that resulted in a widening of the landing area. With the coming of the steamboat, regulations were put into effect and steamboats were ordered to dock only between Canal Street and Customhouse Street, while flatboats landed above this area and ocean-going vessels tied up below it.¹¹²

By 1845 the levee, "for an extent of five miles" was "crowded with vessels of all sizes, but more especially ships, from every part of the world". Its piers ranged "along the whole length of the city" and extended back "an average of some two hundred feet . . . continually covered with moving merchandize."¹¹³ The wharves were not contiguous along the whole length of the river front, however, and stretches of empty levee still intervened between the units of the system.

During the 1820s-1830s, New Orleans was the commercial center and financial intermediary for goods from all reaches of the Mississippi. However, the focus of New Orleans' economic activities began to change in the late 1830s. Until then, about 90 percent of the city's trade consisted of downriver shipments of Midwestern foodstuffs. Aiding the change was the completion of the Erie and other canals in the 1820s and 1830s which drained away much of the upper Midwest grain trade. By 1850 it had become clear that increased facilities for reaching Atlantic markets through canals and railroads had led to the diversion of goods to the East that formerly had gone to New Orleans.

By the late 1840s cotton was king, and New Orleans and the Mississippi River planters prospered. Between 1840 and 1860, Louisiana's annual cotton crop rose from 375,000 bales to nearly 800,000 bales. This ever-increasing production of southern cotton helped New Orleans retain its ante-bellum status as the second leading seaport in the U.S., behind only New York City, until the 1850s.¹¹⁴ However, after that time, the lessened traffic in upper Midwestern commodities and the increased world demand for cotton pushed New Orleans into a less national, more regional orientation and role.¹¹⁵ On the eve of the Civil War, port activity centered on exporting local cotton and importing goods destined for plantations.

The April 1862 capture of New Orleans was a significant event of the Civil War. The great river was now closed to northern and southern trade alike and Union warships were able to patrol all but 200 miles of the river. It was hoped

¹⁰⁸ Unaccredited author(s), "Antebellum Louisiana: Urban Life" (The Cabildo, Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, 2009), <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/cabildo/cab9a.htm>, accessed 15 October 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Harold Sinclair, *The Port of New Orleans* (New York, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1942), 39.

¹¹⁰ Thomas E. Redard, "The Port of New Orleans: An Economic History, 1821-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1985), Vol. 1, 30.

¹¹¹ Sinclair, *Port of New Orleans*, 168.

¹¹² Sinclair, *Port of New Orleans*, 166.

¹¹³ B.M. Norman, *Norman's New Orleans and Environs, Containing a Brief Historical Sketch of the Territory and State of Louisiana, and the City of New Orleans*. (New Orleans, LA: B.M. Norman, 1845), 81.

¹¹⁴ Raymond Martinez, *The Story of the Riverfront at New Orleans* (New Orleans, LA: Industries Publishing Agency, 1955), 15.

¹¹⁵ Uncredited author(s), "Antebellum Louisiana: Urban Life"

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 24 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

that after the war ended New Orleans would recover its trade rapidly, but it was more than twenty years before it regained even its mid-century position.¹¹⁶ In retrospect, the 1850s were the high water marks of cotton shipping and cotton culture for the 19th century New Orleans economy.¹¹⁷

By the latter part of the 19th century, the earthen levee had be extensively reworked with a facing of planks and was paved, at least in part, also with planks. Wooden piers were built out from this former landing, supported on piles driven into the riverbed. Every spring when the river rose to flood levels, these structures were in danger of being swept away; the culprit was sand and mud that accumulated during the rest of the year and which undermined supports as it poured out whenever the waters fell. The supports and structures above were then easily washed away when the river rose.¹¹⁸ The top of the levee would eventually be covered with concrete. In time, the historic system of wharves built out from the levee on wooden piles, subject as they were to continual reconstruction, were demolished. Nothing remains extant of the historic levee system today.

The Memphis Landing After Its Prime

As noted earlier, the amount of cotton leaving Memphis by river showed an unmistakable decline in the 1890s as the construction of the Memphis Bridge in 1891 challenged the Landing's importance to the cotton trade and freight trains began to emerge as the favored way to move raw staple across country. By this time steamer design had improved carrying capacity so fewer vessels were required for transport, however the Landing continued to see heavy commercial activity with arrivals of between 2000 and 2500 boats yearly until the early 20th century. The partnership of steamboats and cotton bales was greatly diminished by the 1920s. Nonetheless, the Landing was still used to transport cotton from isolated plantations and small towns along the river until well into the 1930s. Today the Landing continues to be used for river-related traffic and tourism.

Conclusion

The Memphis Landing is a unique resource which played a significant national role in the American cotton trade as the major inland America port for the shipping and transportation of cotton staple which fueled the global textile trade resulting from the technological advances created during the 18th and 19th century's world-wide Industrial Revolution.

¹¹⁶ Martinez, *Story of the Riverfront*, 15.

¹¹⁷ Donald McNabb & Louis E. "Lee" Madère, Jr., "A History of New Orleans" [publication on-line] (2003), <http://www.madere.com/history.htm#017>, accessed 7 January 2010.

¹¹⁸ John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans*, Vol. II (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 600-601.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 25 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Bibliography

- Bankhead, Smith P., compiler. *Digest of the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Memphis from 1826 to 1860*. Memphis, TN: Saunders, Oberly & Jones, 1860.
- Carriere, Marcus. "Samuel Bond and the Crystal Palace Medal." *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 41, 1987.
- _____. "Commerce of Memphis, 1859-60", *De Bow's Review* XXIX, 1860,
- _____. *Commercial and Statistical Review of the City of Memphis, Tenn., Showing Her Manufacturing, Mercantile and General Business Interests*. Memphis, TN: Reilly & Thomas, 1883.
- Current, Richard N, editor. *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* Vol. 1 New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
- Dattel, Eugene R. *Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power*. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2009.
- _____. "Cotton in the Global Economy: Mississippi 1850-1860" [publication on-line] (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Historical Society, 2009), <http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/mississippi-historical-society/18/>; accessed November, 2009.
- Dupree, Louis J., compiler. "A Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Memphis, from the Year 1826 to 1857.", Memphis: Office of the Memphis Bulletin Co., 1857.
- Fuenfhausen, Gary Gene. "The Cotton Culture of Missouri's Little Dixie". *The Midwest Open Air Museums Magazine, Summer Issue 2001*, 7 May 2001. Originally published in *Midwest Open Air Museums Magazine*, Summer Issue; 7 May 2001.
- Hobhouse, Henry. *Seeds of Change: Five Plants that Transformed Mankind*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Forrest, Orren L. "The Memphis Cotton Exchange from Beginning to Decline." MA thesis, Memphis State University, 1970.
- Graves, N.S., compiler. *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Memphis, Tenn. for the Year 1901*. Memphis, TN: S.C. Toof & Co., 1901.
- Hinton, Eugene H. "A Historical Sketch of the Evolution of Trade and Transportation at Memphis, Tenn." (1912), Typescript in the Memphis Room, History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center.
- Holmes, George K., compiler. *Cotton Crop of the United States, 1790-1911; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics, Circular 32*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912.
- Keating, J. M. *History of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, Vol. 1, Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Company, 1888.
- Kendall, John Smith. *History of New Orleans*, Vol. II. Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 26 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Lockwood, John and Charles. "First South Carolina, then New York." [publication online] (New York: New York Times, 2010), <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/12/09/visualizing-slavery/>, accessed December, 2010.

Martinez, Raymond. *The Story of the Riverfront at New Orleans*. New Orleans, LA: Industries Publishing Agency, 1955.

McNabb, Donald & Louis E. "Lee" Madère, Jr., "A History of New Orleans" [publication on-line] (2003), <http://www.madere.com/history.html#017>, accessed January, 2010.

Memphis Chamber of Commerce. *First Annual Statement of the Trade & Commerce in Memphis*. Memphis: O'Neill and Parish, 1861.

_____ "Memphis, Her Growth and Prospects", *De Bow's Review* XI, Nov. 1851.

Minutes of the Meetings of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, in microfilm roll #184, "Shelby Co. Memphis City Records", History Department, Memphis Public Library and Information Center; the volume is titled "Index Book I. Board Alderman [sic]. Jan. 10, 1870 to June 22, 1874.

Moore, Wayne C. "Cotton", *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. [encyclopedia on-line]; (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Historical Society, 2002), <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=C149>, accessed December, 2009.

Norman, B.M. *Norman's New Orleans and Environs, Containing a Brief Historical Sketch of the Territory and State of Louisiana, and the City of New Orleans*. New Orleans, LA: B.M. Norman, 1845.

Olmstead, Alan L. and Paul W. Rhode, "Wait A Cotton Pickin' Minute! A New View of Slave Productivity" (University of North Carolina Department of Economics Working Paper, August, 2005); 15. <http://www.unc.edu/~prhode/CottonPickin.pdf>, accessed January, 2010.

Paine, Janie V. "Memphis Cotton Exchange...One Hundred Years." Memphis: Memphis Cotton Exchange Centennial Program, 1973.

Rainey, W. H., compiler. *W.H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory, and General Business Advertiser, for 1855 & '6"*. Compiled and published by E.R. Marlett and W.H. Rainey. Memphis, TN, 1856.

Redard, Thomas E. "The Port of New Orleans: An Economic History, 1821-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1985), Vol. 1, 30.

Rickey, Jr., Don. "The Old St. Louis Riverfront: 1763-1960", *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 58 No. 2, Jan. 1964.

Sigafoos, Robert A. *Cotton Row to Beale Street*. Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979.

Sinclair, Harold. *The Port of New Orleans*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1942.

Smith, Eugene. *Annual statement of the St. Louis Trade and Commerce of St. Louis for the Year 1916, Reported to the Merchants' Exchange*. St. Louis, MO: R.P. Studley & Co., 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 27 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Toof, Jno. F., compiler. *First Annual Statement of the Trade & Commerce in Memphis*. Memphis, TN: O'Neill and Parish, Printers, 1861.

Trask, W.L., compiler. *Annual Report of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and Merchants' Exchange*. Memphis, TN: Cowperthwait, Chapman & Co., 1869.

Twyman, R. B. J., *Twyman's Memphis Directory and General Business Advertiser*. Memphis, TN: 1849.

Unaccredited author. "Antebellum Louisiana-Urban Life." [Cabilido Museum on-line], (New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 2009); <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/cabilido/cab9a.htm>; accessed October 2009.

Unaccredited author(s), "Business, Commerce, & Industry" (City of St. Louis, 2007), <http://stlouis.missouri.org/government/heritage/history/buscomind.htm>, accessed January, 2010.

Unaccredited author. "Life Cycle of Cotton Plant." [online publication] (Ontario, Canada: Curl Brothers Textiles, LTD., 2009), <http://www.curlbros.com/cottinfo.htm>, accessed January, 2011

Unaccredited author. "Innovations of the Industrial Revolution" [publication on-line] (2006), <http://www.industrialrevolution.sea.ca/innovations.html>, accessed December, 2009.

Waschka, Ronald W. "Transportation at Memphis before the Civil War." MA thesis, Memphis State University, 1970.

Weaver, Guy, John Hopkins, Marsha Oates and Gary Patterson. "The Memphis Landing Cultural Resource Assessment and Preservation Plan, Part 1-Cultural Resources Assessment." Memphis: Garrow & Associates, 1996. Scanned.

West, Jean M. "Slavery" [publication-on-line], (New York, Thirteen/WNET, 2004) http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_cotton.htm, accessed December, 2010.

Memphis Landing
Name of Property

Shelby County Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11 acres Northwest Memphis 404 NE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	768039	3892664
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	15	768263	3893269

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

☐ 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 Judith Johnson/architectural historian
organization J Johnson & Associates date December 2010
street & number 158 Windover Road #6 telephone 901/603-0054
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38111

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 City of Memphis, c/o Mayor A C Wharton, Jr.
street & number 125 North Main Street telephone 901/576-6007
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38103

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 28 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee

Verbal Boundary Description

The western boundary is the Wolf River Harbor, the southern boundary is from terminus of Beale Street to harbor, the northern boundary is the terminus of Court Avenue to harbor, and the eastern boundary is Riverside Drive. Tom Lee Park borders the area on the south and Confederate Park borders the area on the north; they provide boundaries for the nominated area.

Boundary Justification)

These are the boundaries that are included in the National Register nomination for the Cotton Row Historic District. It is the part of parcel 002001- 00010 and is owned by the city of Memphis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 29 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee



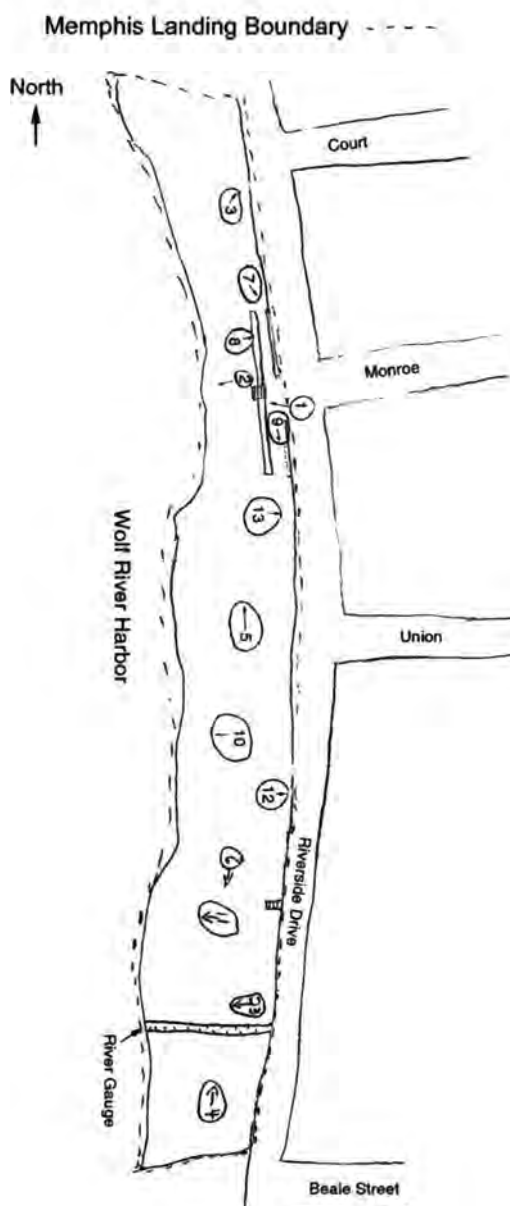
- 1 Memphis Cobblestone Landing
- 2 Memphis Riverboats
- 3 Mud Island River Park
- 4 Amphitheater
- 5 Mud Island Ramp
- 6 River Museum
- 7 Yacht Club
- 8 TN Visitor Center
- 9 Jefferson Davis Park
- 10 Cannon Center for the Performing Arts
- 11 Shelby County Administration Bldg.
- 12 City of Memphis Administration Bldg.
- 13 Monorail Station
- 14 Confederate Park
- 15 Court Square
- 16 Univ. of Memphis School of Law / U.S. Customs House
- 17 Cossitt Public Library
- 18 Cotton Museum
- 19 Beale Street Landing
- 20 Tom Lee Park



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 30 Memphis Landing
Shelby County, Tennessee



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 31

Memphis Landing, Shelby County, TN

Photos by: Judith Johnson

Date: November, 2009

Negative/digital copy: Tennessee Historical Commission

Memphis Landing overview from center, facing northwest
1 of 24

Memphis Landing looking toward Memphis Riverboats and dock, facing west
2 of 24

Northeast portion of landing and Jefferson Davis Park, facing northeast
3 of 24

View from of southern portion of landing, facing north
4 of 24

View from northern portion of landing, facing southwest
5 of 24

View of southern portion taken from midway point, looking southwest
6 of 24

Northern ramp of Court Street vehicular entrance, facing south
7 of 24

Detail-cobble berm on Union Avenue vehicular entrance
8 of 24

Southern ramp of Union Avenue vehicular entrance and asphalt walkways, facing southwest
9 of 24

Detail of 1879-81 paving on southern end of Landing, facing southwest
#10 of 24

Detail of 1879-81 paving on southern end of Landing, facing southwest
#11 of 24

Detail of repaired paving on eastern edge of southern end of Landing, facing southwest
#12 of 24

Detail of paving at center of Landing, facing due east
#13 of 24

Detail-friable limestone

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 32

#14 of 24

Detail-cobbles and original Silty clay landing

#15 of 24

Detail-cobbles w/historic sewer cover

#16 of 24

Detail-cobbles

#17 of 24

Detail-dislodged original mooring ring on north end of landing

18 of 24

Detail-variation of mooring ring

#19 of 24

Detail-variation of mooring ring

#20 of 24

Detail-exposed mooring ring with asphalt patching

#21 of 24

Detail-historic swale

#22 of 24

Detail-Memphis River Gauge-looking west

#23 of 24

Detail-Memphis River Gauge at 33 foot mark

#24 of 24

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

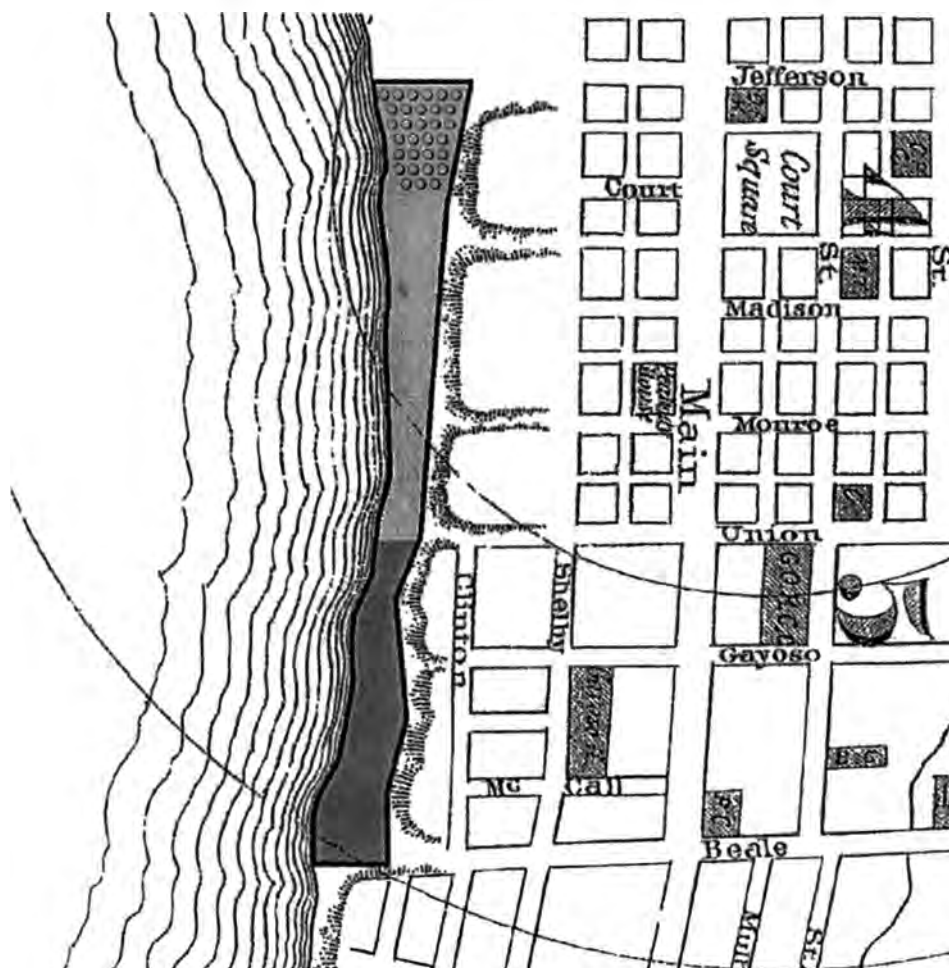
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 33

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing designated on overlay of 1872 Map of the City of Memphis, Compiled by A.J. Murray, C.E., Boyle & Chapman, Publishers.

— Memphis Landing

- Memphis Wharf 1838
- South Memphis Landing 1839



Jefferson Davis Park 1936

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 34

DESCRIPTION: Current Memphis Riverfront, courtesy Google Earth



Memphis Landing

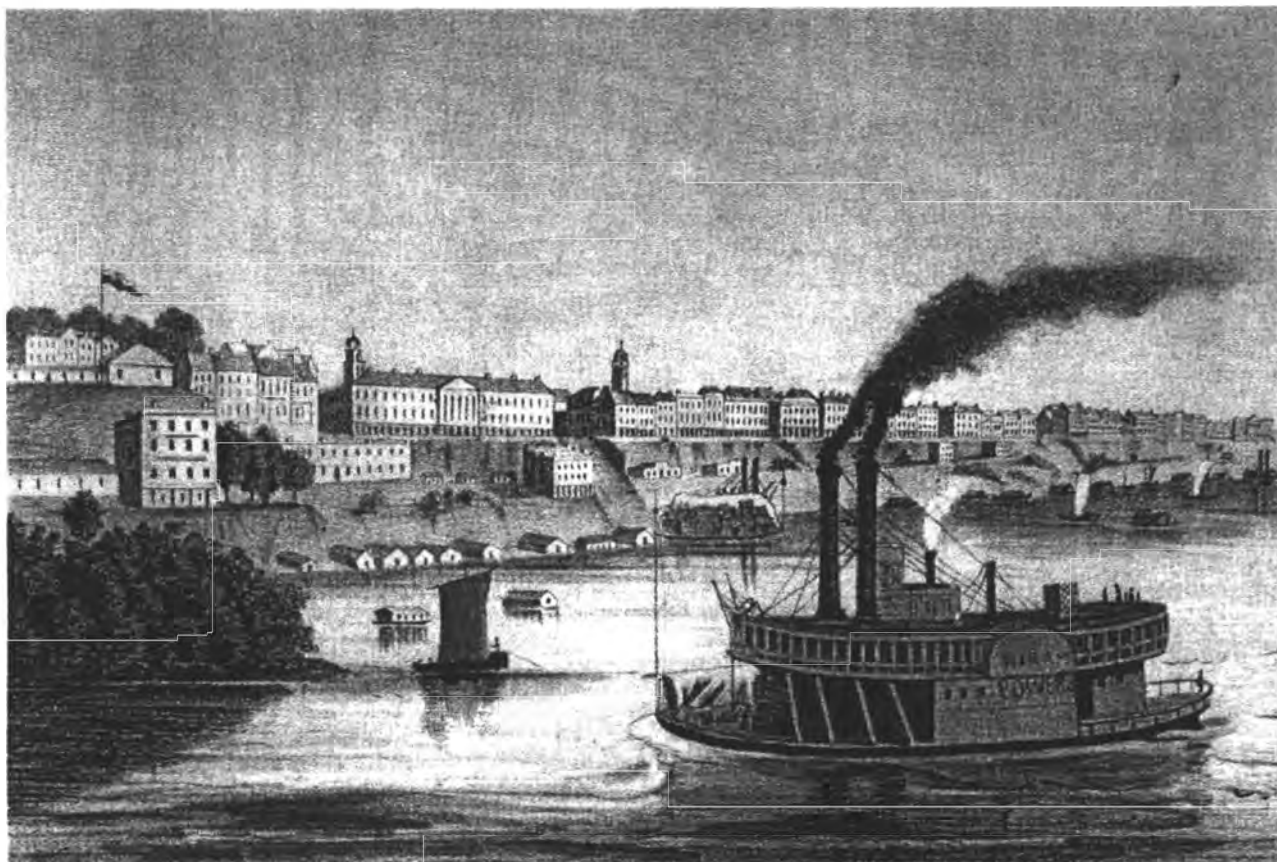
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 35

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing 1846/1847

Multi-stone lithograph by Henry Lewis from *Das Illustrierte Mississippthal*, published 1854 -1858 by Lith. Inst. Arnz & Co., Dusseldorf. Plate 67.



H. Lewis

Plate 67. MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 36

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing, 1862

Illustrations by Alexander Simplot for "Harper's Weekly."

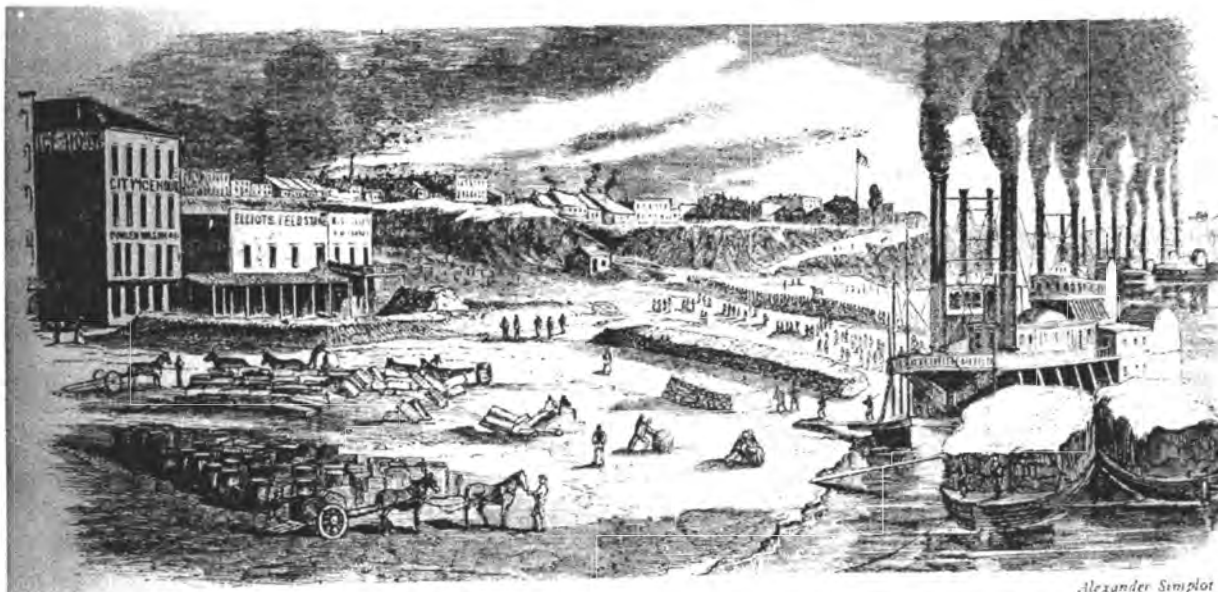
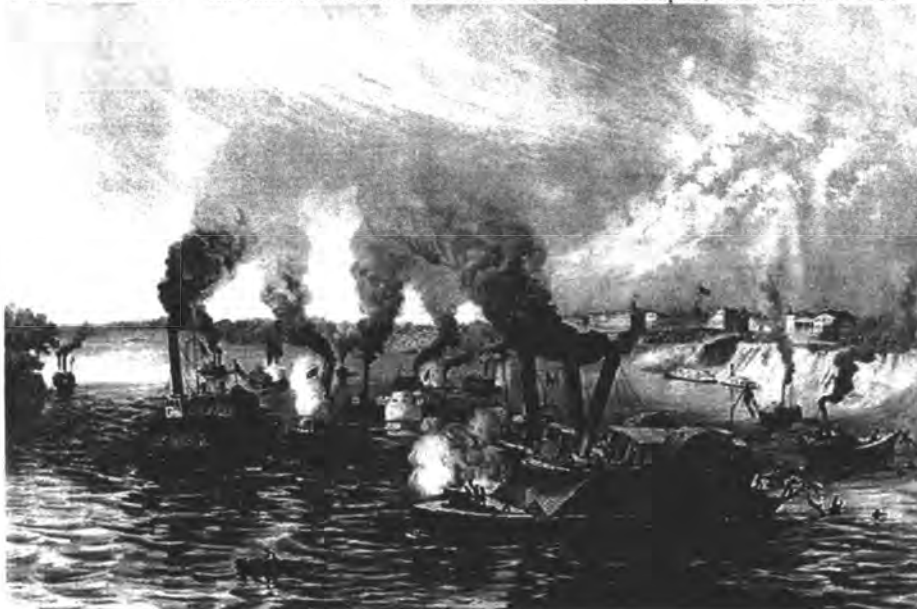


Photo # NH 42367 "The Total Annihilation of the Rebel Fleet ...", off Memphis, Tennessee, June 1862

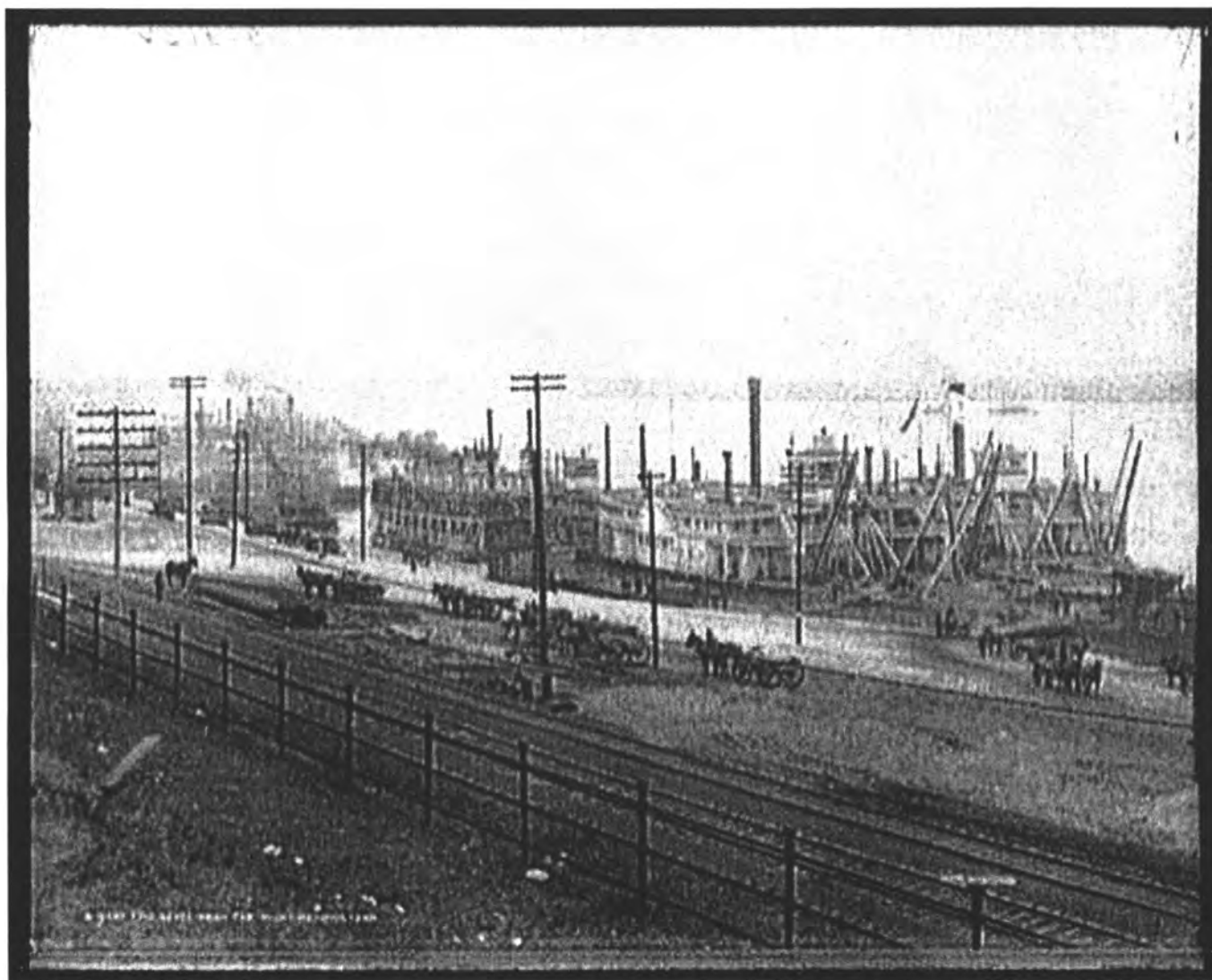


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 37

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing, looking west from M&T Railroad, date unknown.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 38

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing, cotton bales for the world market.

Photo by Coover #1206, signed by W. R. McKay. Steamers: Peters Lee (foreground), City of St. Joseph (second).
Collection of Memphis/Shelby County Library.



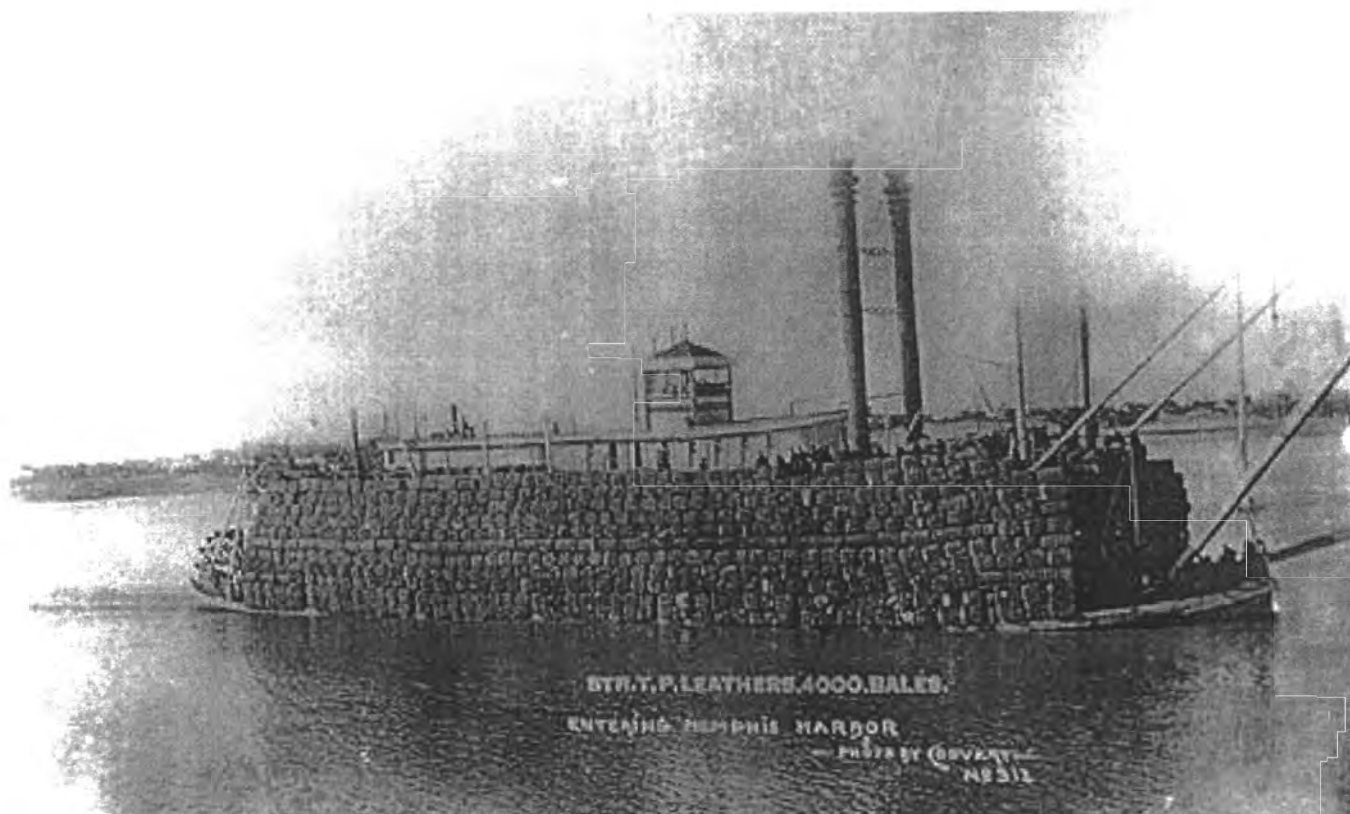
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 39

DESCRIPTION: 4,000 Bales Entering Memphis Harbor

Photo by Covert, #312, Steamboat T. P. Leathers. Collection of Rick Brashier.



STN. T. P. LEATHERS. 4000. BALES.

ENTERING MEMPHIS HARBOR

PHOTO BY COVERT
#312

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 40

DESCRIPTION: Memphis Landing looking northeast, cotton bales awaiting transit.
Photo by Coover, #214. Dye Collection.

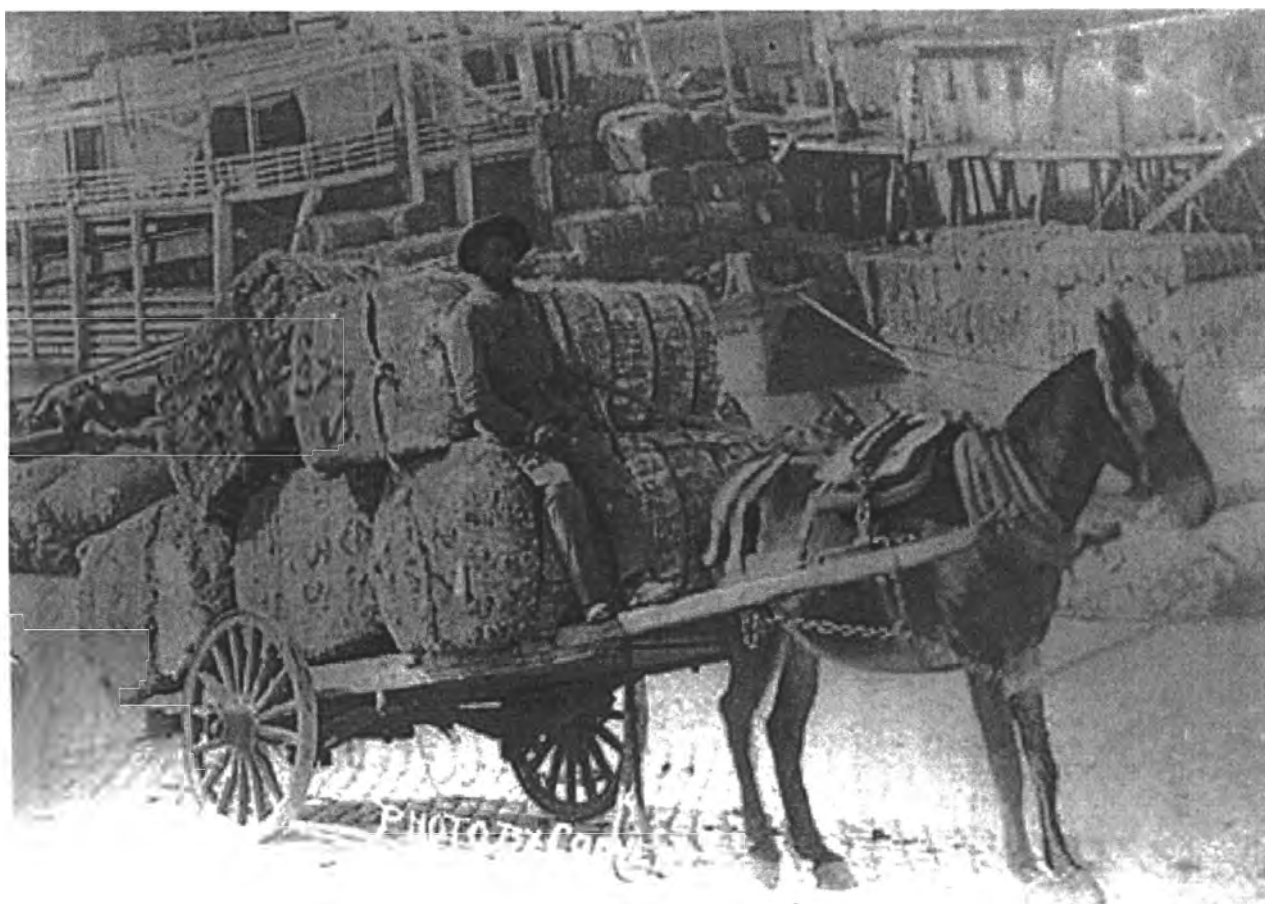


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 41

DESCRIPTION: Working on Memphis Landing
Photo by Coover. Brashier Collection.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Memphis Landing
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Shelby

DATE RECEIVED: 6/03/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/24/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/11/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/19/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000460

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

 ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See comments

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Memphis Landing, Shelby County, TN

Reference Number: 11000460

Reason for Return

This nomination is being returned for substantive revision. Memphis Landing appears to be eligible for the National Register, but the documentation provided does not fully support the stated area or level of significance of the property.

The property was nominated at the national level of significance under Criterion A, with Ethnic Heritage: Black as the area of significance. The nomination does a very good job of describing the history of the landing, its use and development over time, and its central role in the cotton economy as a transshipment point.

The material as presented demonstrates that the Memphis Landing is a significant property in the commercial history of ante and post bellum Memphis, that it played a significant role in the regional economy, and that it remains one of the few extant ports designed specifically for the steamboat trade. The nomination does a good job in comparing it to other, major river ports on the Mississippi system.

What it does not do is justify national significance for its relationship to Ethnic Heritage: Black. In order to make a case for national level significance in that particular area, the context would need to be greatly expanded. There are many places and properties that reflect the African American experience both during the slavery era and afterwards. This nomination does not look at the property in relationship to the ethnic experience, except to demonstrate that it was constructed by African Americans and that the primary labor associated with it was performed by African Americans.

The amount of information about the commercial importance of the property is sufficient to warrant listing at the national level. We suggest editing the nomination to reflect the Commercial significance of the property. With additional contextual work, this could

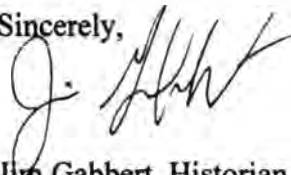
Property Name: Memphis Landing, Shelby County, TN
Reference Number: 11000460

also be looked at under Criterion C, as an engineering property, possible at the national level but definitely at the state level.

Please provide either an expanded context relating the Ethnic Heritage: Black, that looks at labor systems during the period 1859-1937, or edit the nomination to change the area of significance to Commerce.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at [<James_Gabbert@nps.gov>](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Gabbert', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Jim Gabbert, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
7/27/2011

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY Memphis Landing
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Shelby

DATE RECEIVED: 11/04/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/20/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000460

DETAILED EVALUATION:

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/25/2011 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Return comments addressed

*Memphis Landing is a nationally important remnant of the
Commercial traffic on the Mississippi, especially Cotton trade.
Memphis was a major port; the largest inland port for cotton
transshipment, and one of the few designed specifically
for steam boats that remains intact*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept it

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





















































TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
2941 LEBANON ROAD
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0442
(615) 532-1550



October 25, 2011

Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service
National Register Branch
1201 Eye Street NW
8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the revised documentation to nominate the *Memphis Landing* to the National Register of Historic Places. The consultant stated that it was revised according to the reviewer's comments.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Claudette Stager at 615/532-1550, extension 105 or Claudette.stager@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer

EPM:cs

Enclosures