

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1085

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 Glen Leven
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 4000 Franklin Road NA not for publication
city or town Oak Hill NA vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Davidson code 037 zip code 37220

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 M. [Signature] October 2, 2008
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 of the Keeper Patricia Andrews Date of Action 11/19/2008

Glen Leven
Name of Property

Davidson County, Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7		buildings
1		sites
3		structures
		objects
11		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee, 1780-1960

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structures

AGRICULTURE/outbuildings

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structures

AGRICULTURE/outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Eastlake

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof METAL

other GLASS, WOOD

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets

Glen Leven
Name of Property

Davidson County, Tennessee
County and State

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.

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): N/A

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
SETTLEMENT
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1856-1958

Significant Dates

1856-57 (main house built)
1890 (significant interior remodeling)
1919 (death of John M. Thompson)
1957 (Glen Leven centennial celebration)

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

Thompson, John M. (1852-1919)

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Thompson, John, designer
Franklin, A. E., builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Metropolitan Historical Commission, Nashville, TN

Glen Leven
Name of Property

Davidson County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 66 acres Oak Hill 308 SE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>519483</u>	<u>3995566</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>521222</u>	<u>3955079</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>520838</u>	<u>3995838</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>520515</u>	<u>3995219</u>

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 Tara Mitchell Mielnik
organization Metropolitan Historical Commission date _____
street & number 3000 Granny White Pike telephone 615/862-7970
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37204

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 The Land Trust for Tennessee, c/o Janet Henderson
street & number 209 10th Ave S, Suite 530 telephone 615/244-LAND
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37203

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

7. Description

Glen Leven is a historic family farm of approximately 66 acres located at 4000 Franklin Pike in the City of Oak Hill (2006 pop. 4,726) in the southern section of Davidson County, Tennessee. The farm is centered on the historic house known as Glen Leven, built c1856 with c1890 changes, primarily to the interior. The farm also retains several domestic and agricultural outbuildings, including a garage/carriage house, icehouse/springhouse, smokehouse, farm office, barns, and remnants of a subterranean greenhouse. The house received interior updates and modernizations c1890 and has remained relatively unchanged throughout the 20th century. Until 2006, Glen Leven remained a working farm, with cattle and pastureland, and retains the majority of its acreage in fields. The site is generally bounded by Glen Leven Presbyterian Church on the north, Franklin Pike (US Hwy 31) on the west, Interstate 65 (and Armory Drive ramp) on the east, and a mid-20th century subdivision and the Father Ryan High School campus on the south. At the bequest of the last private owner, Susan Thompson West, upon her death in 2006 the house and three tracts of land became the property of the Land Trust for Tennessee, with stipulations that the land cannot be further subdivided or developed, and that the house should be maintained in good condition. The house and farm retain a high degree of integrity and a strong sense of association, feeling, materials, and setting of a late 19th century/early 20th century Davidson County farm.

1. Glen Leven (1856-57, c1890) (Contributing building)

Glen Leven is a two-story brick, central-hall plan house, sitting on a cut-limestone foundation, with a low-pitched standing-seam metal roof, imposing two-story Greek Revival portico, and substantial ell wing. The house faces west, toward Franklin Road, and much of the Franklin Road frontage of the property is lined with a stone wall. Stone entry gate posts with a metal gate open onto the front drive from Franklin Road.

The west façade has five symmetrical bays, with four double-hung 6/6 windows on each story. Windows are approximately 3.5 feet wide by 8.5 feet tall on the first story; second story windows are approximately 3.5 feet wide by 8 feet tall. Each window is flanked by working wood shutters and features a projecting label molding along the top of the window. The façade is dominated by an impressive two-story Greek Revival portico, consisting of four fluted wood columns supporting a flat entablature with dentil molding. The dentil molding extends across the façade cornice. A second story balcony features a wood railing with turned columns. The Corinthian capitols are cast iron and have the leaves bolted on. Three steps with iron handrails lead from the ground to the portico, where each column rests on a square limestone base. (The iron handrails may date from the c1890 changes to the house.) The front entrance consists of paired doors with a limestone lintel opening into a small entrance space with an elaborate c1890 decorative encaustic tile floor composed with multi-colored tiles in geometric and floral patterns. The paired front doors feature a glass transom. The second-story balcony doors are paired, with transom and sidelights, and have a prominent wood surround featuring pilasters.

The west part of the south elevation is brick, with three 6/6 windows on the first story, and two 6/6 windows on the second story, and a smaller 4/4 window at the attic level, all of which have wood shutters. Two chimneys flush with the elevation rise above the parapet roofline. On the east part, a two story wood porch dominates the ell. The balustrade is composed of a simple railing and chamfered columns. The shed roof of the porch incorporates the pitch of the gable roof of the front portion of the house. A small wood-sided

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

enclosure at the east end of the second-story porch has a 4/4 window on both the east and south elevations.

The east elevation is the back of the house and is dominated by the wood porch on the east portion of the main house, and the south elevation of the ell. The rear porch also includes an exterior stair with turned balusters along the southern wall of the ell (also visible on the south elevation). A small one-story, shed roof, wood porch is on the easternmost portion of the ell, and is enclosed with wood lattice, painted white. The eastern wall of the ell contains a single 6/6 window on the first floor. A small arched opening is located in the foundation below the window, accessing a storm cellar, and covered with wood doors. A wood post, approximately 6 feet tall and capped with a metal dinner bell is located just east of the house. A brick walkway leads from the rear porch to the north elevation of the house.

The north elevation consists of the main house and ell, and is approximately 122 feet long. The first floor has eight irregularly spaced bays, while the second floor has ten bays, generally placed directly above the first floor bays, and a smaller 4/4 window in the attic level. All bays on the first and second floors except for one are 6/6 wood windows, most with wood shutters, similar if not identical in size to those on the south elevation. The wood shutters on the north elevation appear to be in considerably poorer condition than those on the west and south elevations. The main house section of this elevation duplicates the south elevation, with the exception of one first floor window on the south side, which does not exist on the north side. An elaborately carved Eastlake porte-cochere covers the single door on the north elevation, which is located in the ell at the juncture with the main house. The porte-cochere features a cross gable roof, slender square chamfered columns on limestone block piers, turned posts and dentils at the fascia, heavy molded circular motifs, and latticework in the gable ends facing west, north, and east. (Photos 5 & 6)

First Floor Interior

Glen Leven is a central hall plan house, two rooms deep, with a long ell extending east. Overall, the house reflects its appearance c1900, following several modifications made by John M. Thompson in the 1890s, including the replacement of the main staircase, a change in woodwork and trim, the addition of rooms on the eastern portion of the ell, and the installation of both electricity and interior plumbing. Floors throughout are wood, either oak or pine. The central hall is approximately 38.5 feet in length, and features an elaborately carved fireplace mantel along the north wall. The white painted mantel features carved vines with leaves and berries spiraling around engaged columns, with carved rosettes. Papyrus leaves, beaded trim, chamfered corners, and an inset tile fireplace complete the décor of the fireplace. Wide crown molding runs along the ceiling, and both ceiling and molded floor-level trim work, as well as doors and staircase are painted white. Five four-panel doors open from the central hall: two on the north wall, two on the south wall, and one on the east wall, into the kitchen. Door panels are chamfered, a usual design for paneled doors. The doors on the north and south walls are characterized by heavy door surrounds, featuring carved head blocks. An impressive staircase rises in the northeastern corner of the central hall, with an elaborately carved newel post, alternating squared and turned carved balusters, a sunburst motif in the carriage at the ground level, reeded balusters, and incised geometric patterns as part of the stair design. Most of the staircase is painted white, although the handrails and stair treads are natural. The stair replaced an earlier spiral staircase c1890. (Photos 22, 23, & 24)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

The front four rooms of the house are all generally 18 feet by 22 feet. The rooms on the south side of the house were traditionally the family rooms. The southwest room (front) traditionally served as the family "living room", and features large 6/6 windows on the west wall, facing the front of the house, with a large ornate decorative pier mirror rising floor to ceiling between the windows. The mirrors were placed in the house around 1890 and are now considered part of the house rather than furniture. The fireplace is centrally located on the south wall, with a 6/6 window to the east. The fireplace mantelpiece is very plain, with only a convex molding incised at intervals at the mantel frieze, narrow chamfering on the pilasters, and white paint. The firebox and hearth are square tile. Thin-plank wood floors run throughout both rooms on the south side. (Photos 9 & 10)

Large wood pocket doors separate the southwest room from the southeast room, which is similar in size. 6/6 windows in this room flank a fireplace, which is larger and slightly more elaborate than in the front room, with convex frieze molding similar to the southwest room fireplace. The mantelshelf is supported by carved wood brackets and there are paneled pilasters. This mantel, as in the southwest room, is painted white. The firebox and hearth are white rectangular tile. A small room in the northeast corner of this room has been enclosed for use as a bathroom, with fixtures dating from c1940. The bathroom has a ceramic tile floor and tub surround. A four-panel door on the east wall opens to the rear porch, with a two-pane glass transom above. The narrow chamfering on the panels is similar to that on the southwest room fireplace. (Photos 12 & 13)

The two front rooms on the north side of the house generally copy those on the south side. As the more public rooms, these rooms have more elaborate fireplaces and woodwork. The northwest room features an ornate large pier mirror between the 6/6 windows at the front of the house on the west wall, a twin to the mirror in the southwest room. The fireplace is centrally located in this room along the north wall. The mantel is wood-grained, and more elaborately carved than in the south rooms, with paired colonettes composed of rope molding flanking the fireplace pilasters. Rosettes and other sawn circular patterns are found on the fireplace mantelshelf and brackets that support it. The firebox and hearth are rectangular yellow tile. The floors in these rooms are wide wood boards, as compared to the thin strips of the southern rooms. The ceiling corners in this room are coved (curved) rather than squared, and a wood-grained picture rail with egg and dart detailing runs throughout the room at the height of the top of the windows. This room is painted a buff color. (Photos 14 & 15)

Paneled pocket doors on the east wall lead into the northeast room. The doors are surrounded by molded wood trim, a dentil cornice, and elaborate corner blocks that rise above the picture rail. The door surrounds for the pocket doors both on the west and east walls include a head block with a pyramidal cap and horizontal and vertical reeding. It is similar to that found in the central hall. Pocket doors on the east wall open into a rear hall, which runs north to south from the porte cochere on the north elevation to the kitchen. Large 6/6 windows on the north wall flank a fireplace with an elaborately carved mantel nearly identical to that found in the northwest room. Wood trim, including door surrounds, is wood grained. (Photo 16)

The rear hall is approximately 10 feet by 20 feet. Pocket doors open on both the east and west walls. An exterior door is centrally located on the north wall, and opens to the porte cochere. The walls are papered with early 20th century wallpaper in a block pattern with floral highlights; visible water damage to the ceiling and walls is apparent, especially on the north wall. A door on the south wall originally opened to the back

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

porch, a portion of which was enclosed c 1992 for a modern galley kitchen, which runs north to south along the east elevation behind the southern rooms. The kitchen has a linoleum floor over the original wood flooring of the porch, and paired French doors opening to the porch on the east side. Cabinets and appliances are installed on the west wall, against the brick of the back of the house, which is painted white. Paired doors on the west wall open into the central hall. (Photos 17, 18 & 19)

From the rear hall, pocket doors on the east wall open into in a large, 20 x 20 square room. Two 6/6 windows are on the north wall, while a 6/6 window and a door open onto the rear porch along the south wall. A fireplace is centered on the east wall, with a door opening just north of the fireplace. The floors are wide-plank wood. Both doors are four panel wood and feature heavy wood surrounds, with the carved head blocks as seen in the central hall and the north rooms. The fireplace mantelpiece in this room is elaborately carved, with fluted engaged columns with rosette bases and Corinthian capitals. A detailed floral motif, including elements of acanthus and papyrus leaves, is carved at the mantelshelf. The firebox and hearth are rectangular yellow tile, with a decorative iron insert. This room is painted green. (Photos 20 & 21)

The door on the east wall of the dining room opens into a butler's pantry leading to the rear portion of the ell of the house, added c1890 as a kitchen wing with servants' quarters above. This section of the house has been used in recent decades as an apartment for the caretaker of the house and farm. The rear portion consists of an entry hall from the porch, a kitchen, food pantry, butlers' pantry, and a stair to the second floor. Although some modern conveniences have been added, this rear portion contains historic woodwork, including the built-in china press and screened food pantries, windows, doors, floors, and trim work.

Second floor interior

The plan of the second floor of Glen Leven is nearly identical to the first floor. The wide central hall is accessed from the main staircase. At the top of the staircase on the east wall is a leaded glass window with colored glass, including teal and magenta diamond-shaped panes and a tortoiseshell-colored border. The window is surrounded by molded wood and bull's-eye corner blocks. A four-panel door with bull's-eye corner blocks accessing the second-story porch is just to the south of this window. Four doors open from the hall into rooms; two on the north side and two on the south. A doorway centrally located on the west wall opens onto the balcony of the front porch. A small coal stove (c1890) is centrally located on the north wall between the door openings. The hall has molded wood baseboards, wood floors, and plaster walls. (Photo 25)

The four rooms in the main part of the house on the second floor measure generally 18 feet by 22 feet, with similar trim and wide plank wood floors. The southwest room has two 6/6 windows on the west wall. A fireplace is centrally located on the south wall, with a single 6/6 window east of the fireplace. The fireplace mantel is very plain, painted white, with a tile firebox surround and stone hearth. Floors in this room, as in the central hall and the other rooms on the second floor, are wide plank wood, and the room is painted blue. A single four-panel door on the north wall enters the hall, and a single four-panel door on the east wall enters into the southeast room. (Photo 26)

The southeast room is painted light blue. On the south wall, a fireplace is centrally located, with a single 6/6 window to the west. The fireplace mantel is elaborately carved and painted white, and is similar to the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

elaborate mantels found in the northern rooms on the first floor, with paired colonettes, rosettes, and dentils at the mantelshelf. Two 6/6 windows are on the east wall, overlooking the porch. A single four-panel door is on the north wall, entering the hall near the staircase. (Photo 27)

The northwest room exhibits a good bit of water damage on the walls and ceiling. A single four-panel door enters the room from the hallway on the south wall. Two 6/6 windows are on the west wall at the front of the house. A fireplace mantel is centrally located on the north wall, with a single 6/6 window east of the fireplace. This fireplace mantel is nearly identical to the one found in the southeast room, elaborately carved, but unpainted. There are no openings on the east wall. (Photos 28 & 29)

The northeast room is entered from the hallway through a four-panel door on the south wall. As in the other rooms, the fireplace is centrally located on the exterior wall (north). In this room, the fireplace is flanked by 6/6 windows. The fireplace mantel is nearly identical to the ones found in the northwest and southeast rooms, and is painted white. A single four-panel door on the east wall enters into a small modern bathroom. The bathroom measures approximately 10 by 10.5 feet, and has a single 6/6 window on the north wall, mid-20th century bathroom fixtures, and a linoleum floor. (Photos 30 & 31)

A door on the east wall of the bathroom opens into a large back bedroom, measuring approximately 20 feet by 20 feet. This room is painted yellow, with two 6/6 windows on the north wall. A fireplace is centrally located on the eastern wall, with a carved mantelpiece, painted white, very similar to the other carved mantelpieces found in the other rooms on the second floor. Unlike the other fireplaces, this one has a brick firebox surround. South of the fireplace, paired four-panel doors conceal a narrow closet opening, with smaller two panel doors concealing additional storage space above; these storage openings may date from c1890. On the south wall, a 6/6 window and a four panel door open onto the second story porch. Two additional smaller rooms, added as servants' rooms c1890, and accessible only from the interior rear stair from the first floor, are east of this room, and make up additional apartment space for the caretaker. (Photo 32)

From the porch another four panel door opens onto a storage area measuring 10 x 9. (This storage area backs up to the small second story bathroom.) Enclosed built-in storage shelving dominates the east wall of this small room, while a steep staircase with turned balustrade rises along the west wall into the attic. At the east end of the second story porch, two small enclosures are accessed through separate doors. One of the upstairs porch storage rooms (wood paneled) was the c 1890 bathroom.

Overall, Glen Leven reflects a mid-19th century house with late 19th century modifications, and very few concessions to modern conveniences. Although bathroom and kitchen fixtures have been added, along with central heat and air, these additions are unobtrusive and do not in any way detract from the decidedly 19th century feeling of the house.

2. Woodshed/cistern, before 1950 (contributing structure)

A small structure with pyramidal roof, separate from the house, sits north of the ell. The metal pyramidal roof is supported by four slender plain wood columns on a concrete pad, features latticework at the fascia, and is currently used to protect firewood. Before use as a shed, this was a cistern. (Photo 6)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

3. Smokehouse, c1857 (contributing building)

This one-and-one-half story brick building sits east of the ell of the house. The gable roof is standing-seam metal (gable ends face east and west). (Photo 33)

4. Farm office, c1857 (contributing building)

This one story, brick building sits east of the house and directly south of the smokehouse. The building has a single 6/4 window on the west elevation, a single 6/4 window on the east elevation, and a four-pane half-glass door on the south elevation. The gable roof is standing-seam metal (gable ends face north and south), with an interior brick chimney in the north gable end. A stone wall remnant runs north-south just east of these buildings. (Photo 33)

5. Greenhouse, c1850 (contributing structure)

Glen Leven was famed throughout its history for its gardens, and Conn Harris and Margaret Thompson were especially noted for their horticultural skill. The greenhouse sits southeast of the main house, near the remnants of the landscaped flower garden of Glen Leven. Brick and wood structural elements remain. Glass panels are currently stored in the smokehouse. Limestone steps lead down to a doorway on the east side of the brick structure below grade. Although some boxwoods near the greenhouse mark the location of the landscaped garden, the garden features have been lost. (Photos 34 & 35)

6. Horse barn, c1890 (contributing building)

The horse barn lies farther south of the greenhouse and gardens, and appears to date from the Victorian era. This large rectangular building is of board and batten construction, painted white, with a metal roof and carved wood pendants in the bargeboard and at the roofline on the elevations. Some oral history suggests that the barn is older than the house and the bargeboard was added later. The barn has a central aisle with stalls and sheds on both sides, and a large hay loft. A small gable roof projects from the west over the loft door. (Photo 36 & 37)

7. Carriage house/garage, c.1920 (contributing building)

The one-story carriage house/garage sits north of the main house, on a circular drive travelling from the front of the house, east through the porte cochere, then circling north to the carriage house. Constructed of brick laid in the common bond, this square building features two bays with paired wood doors opening on the south elevation. The gable roof is composite shingle and features carved pendants, like those on the barn, in the bargeboard and at the roofline. (Photos 38 & 39)

8. Spring house/ice house, c1850 and c1900 (contributing structure)

One of the unique features at Glen Leven is the stone spring house which sits at the base of the hill on the western property line, just below Franklin Pike. This square building appears to have been built in two phases, probably first in the first half of the 19th century, and then shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. The earliest portion of the building appears to be constructed of dry-stack stone, and is in poor repair, but the later portion is constructed of cut stone with mortar and features buttresses on the east and west elevations. The springhouse has a flat roof and features a large window on the north elevation. The building is constructed over a natural spring on the property, and local residents recall that it was used for a time as a storage facility for a Nashville ice company making deliveries in the southern section of the county. (Photo 42)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

9. Stockbarn, c1945 (contributing building)

A mid-20th century stockbarn lies east of the house and outbuildings, near the eastern property line. It is a rectangular-shaped building of vertical wood boards with metal roof, and gable ends on the east and west. It is of frame construction, with a central aisle and large hay loft. A gable roof projects from the west end over the loft door. (Photo 40)

10. Entry gates and stone wall, c1900 (contributing structure)

The western boundary of Glen Leven, along Franklin Pike, is marked by a stone wall with large stone pillars capped with circular features at the entrance drive. Metal gates are still attached to these stone pillars, but currently a modern cattle gate has been added to discourage trespassing. (Photo 41)

11. Field patterns, c1945 (contributing site)

The agricultural field patterns of the Glen Leven farm retain a great sense of integrity dating to at least Overton Thompson's ownership of the property from the 1940s, if not prior to that date. Mature trees, historic fence lines, and maintained pastureland help define the agricultural from the domestic complex. Glen Leven is one of only a handful of remaining historic farmsteads in Davidson County, and as such, the field patterns should be considered a contributing site to the National Register nomination. (Photo 43)

12. Dinner Bell, c 1890 (contributing object)

A wood post, approximately 6 feet tall, capped with a metal dinner bell is located just east of the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

8. Statement of Significance

Glen Leven, at 4000 Franklin Road in Oak Hill, Davidson County, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its local significance in the settlement and agricultural history of Davidson County; under Criterion B for its association with John M. Thompson, a locally-significant farmer and horse breeder, state legislator, and State Commissioner of Agriculture who was also responsible for the Eastlake changes to the house; and under Criterion C as an extremely intact example of mid-19th century house with Eastlake detailing. This complex, including house, farm, and associated outbuildings, constructed between c1850 and c1950, is one of the few remaining examples of a historic farmstead in Davidson County, and contains perhaps the largest associated acreage. Although a number of historic 19th century homes remain in Davidson County, very few historic agricultural complexes remain in the largely urban and suburban county. Glen Leven is virtually unchanged from its c1900 appearance, with extremely limited modernization to the interior, and retains several outbuildings.

The farm complex represents the evolution of a historic family farm in Middle Tennessee from the mid-19th through the mid-20th century, and the changes in the house and farm represent both changes in agricultural practices as well as in the individual circumstances of the Thompson family, a prominent Davidson County family. Under criterion B, the farm is associated with prominent local farmer and attorney John M. Thompson, who was born at Glen Leven and lived and worked here for his entire life.

The nominated property also meets the registration requirements for historic family farms as outlined in the "Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee, 1780-1960" Multiple Property Submission and retains a high degree of integrity. Three of the most important characteristics as outlined in the "Historic Family Farms" MPS are that the nominated complex should include "a historic dwelling; outbuildings that are associated with the dwelling and/or associated with a significant agricultural period in the history of the farm; and historic fields that are associated with a significant period of agricultural production in the history of the farm."¹ Glen Leven meets all three of these requirements.

Historical background

The 66 acres that make up the farm known today as Glen Leven are a small part of the original 990 acres owned by Thomas Thompson in the 1790s. Thomas Thompson was born in North Carolina in 1759, and along with friends, left the state in the late 1770s, joining up with a group led by James Robertson, which was establishing a new settlement on the bluffs of the Cumberland River, Fort Nashborough. Thomas Thompson was one of the signatories of the Cumberland Compact in May 1780, the document which governed the new settlement until the creation of Davidson County in 1783. Later in 1780, Thompson joined up with the Revolutionary forces and was captured; he returned to Davidson County in 1783 and received a grant of land south of the settlement. By 1790, Thompson had built a blockhouse and brought his wife Nancy from North Carolina to his lands. Due to land disputes with relatives and neighbors,

¹ Carroll Van West, "Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee" Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1995), F-41.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

resulting in part from an erroneous survey of the original land grant, Thompson's acreage was greatly reduced by 1800.²

Thomas and Nancy Thompson had five children, including son John, born in 1793 and the only son who survived to adulthood. It was John Thompson who inherited the bulk of the remaining land, building a separate house on the property in the 1820s for his new wife, Mary Washington, whom he married in 1823. Mary Washington Thompson had two daughters but died while the girls were very young. John remarried in 1830 to a young widow, Elizabeth (Betsy) Turley Buchanan, but Betsy died giving birth to a son, who also died before his second birthday. John married another widow, Martha Dunn Rawlings, in 1832, and she also had a daughter, Ann Elizabeth.³ It was during these years that the Glen Leven property first became known for its gardens, with family records showing that John had ordered several varieties of flowering bulbs from Holland.⁴ Both Thomas and Nancy Thompson had died by the mid-1830s, and Martha died in 1848.

In 1851, the fifty-eight year old widower John Thompson married the twenty-eight year old Mary Hamilton House, who was herself a widow with a young daughter, Sallie. Within three years of their marriage, the Thompsons had two sons, John and Joseph, and decided to build a new house for their growing family. The house, two years in the making, was said to have been one of the finest houses in Nashville, but sadly the home burned to the ground the night before the family was to move in, catching fire to the old house as well. The large family moved into one of the farm outbuildings during construction of the resulting Glen Leven, the two story brick central hall house that remains today. The house was constructed by A. E. Franklin of Nashville as revealed by a letter dated March 15, 1856: "Mr. J Thompson Sir I will build your house according to the plan and specifications gave me by your wife for \$7,444 (sic) and give you round fluted columns in front and 9 white walnut doors without extry charge__ further I will bind myself to get your house done by the 10th of Sept next under a forfeit of \$1000 dollars to give you all I agree to by you. A. E. Franklin."⁵ Historian Paul Clements states that shortly after the house was finished, a visitor "commented that the view from the house resembled the view from the island castle at Loch Leven in Scotland," which is the reason the plantation became known as Glen Leven.⁶

John Thompson was considered one of the wealthier men in Davidson County, and through his business dealings, was able to regain the lands his father had lost, and added to those. Paul Clements reports in his study of antebellum Davidson County houses, *A Past Remembered*, that Thompson owned almost fifty slaves as early as 1830, and seventy-five by 1840.⁷ The 1860 census reveals that John Thompson held \$105,000 in land and \$263,050 in personal property. Family history relates that John Thompson was known for his willingness for hard work and his shrewd business sense, that he worked alongside the field

² Paul Clements, *A Past Remembered* (Nashville: Clearview Press, 1987), 82-84.

³ Clements, 82; Jane Thomas, *Old Days in Nashville* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1897; reprint, Nashville: Charles Elder, 1969), 111-113.

⁴ Roberta Seawell Brandeau, *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee* (Nashville: The Garden Study Club of Nashville, 1936; reprint, Nashville: Friends of Cheekwood, 1964), 165.

⁵ A. E. Franklin to John Thompson, 15 March 1856. Letter and transcript sold at auction of Glen Leven property, 15 September 2007. See <http://caseantiques.com>, accessed 16 May 2008.

⁶ Clements, 84.

⁷ Clements, 84.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

hands in the fields, and that he operated almost as a bank with his investments and through loans to his friends, who repaid handsomely but fairly. Family tradition also holds that he "was well known as the kindest, most generous, most upright man in the community," and Clayton's *History of Davidson County, Tennessee* concurs that he was "charitable toward all and hospitable to the poor... a man of the strictest morals, the kindest of husbands, and a loving, faithful father, sparing no pains and no expense to make all about him comfortable and happy."⁸

The Civil War and Glen Leven

As the Civil War broke out, John Thompson initially contributed heavily to the Confederate cause. But after the fall of Nashville in 1862, Thompson was imprisoned in Nashville and then pledged to withhold financial contributions to the Confederates. With John too old to enlist, and his sons too young, Mary and the children remained at Glen Leven during the war and hoped to avoid the fighting. The war came to Glen Leven instead, as the house fell between the lines of fighting during December 1864. Family history tells that on one occasion, Mary was standing at the rear of the house when a Union cavalryman rode up, barking orders that she chose to ignore. The rider aimed his pistol at her, and she stood firm. He then fired at her, missed, and rode off, leaving a bullet hole in the back wall of the house. Glen Leven was also used as a field hospital following the Battle of Nashville, and Mary cared for injured soldiers both on the battlefield and in the house.⁹ Because of its location and significance in the Battle of Nashville, it is believed that the Glen Leven property may also be significant for its potential in yielding archaeological information, but the site has not been assessed for its archaeological potential.¹⁰

During the Civil War, troops on both sites requisitioned supplies from Glen Leven. Guided by his business acumen, John Thompson provided whatever was required, but asked that the commanding officer sign a receipt indicating what his troops had received. Following the war, when taxed for his property both in town and at Glen Leven, Thompson presented receipts signed by Federal officers in lieu of taxes, saving Glen Leven and at least half of his town properties. John Thompson also retained a great deal of his business interests, and was able to keep the farm running a profit in the years following the war.¹¹

John M. Thompson (1852-1919)

When John Thompson died in 1876, he left the Glen Leven estate to his older son John M.; while leaving land and money to the younger son, Joe; and money and business property to his only surviving daughter, Ann Elizabeth Horton. Mary Thompson remained at Glen Leven for the rest of her life; she died in 1901.

⁸Joe Thompson, Jr., "The Thompson Story," in *Nashville: A Family Town* (Nashville: Nashville Public Library, 1978), 33; W. W. Clayton, *History of Davidson County, Tennessee* (Philadelphia, J.W. Lewis, 1880), 69A.

⁹Clements, 84; [Author unknown], "Glen Leven," typewritten family history in files of The Land Trust for Tennessee, after 1970.

¹⁰Metal detectors have found minie balls, belt buckles, etc. on the site but there has been no professional assessment of the archaeological potential for the site. See letter from James Kay, Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, to Jeanie Nelson, Land Trust for Tennessee, 25 June 2007 and 23 July 2007.

¹¹Clements, 84; "Glen Leven"; Thompson, 38-39.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 11Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

John M. Thompson married Mary McConnell White Overton (known as "Conn"), one of the daughters of John Overton at neighboring Travellers' Rest plantation (NR 12/30/1969) in 1878 (after being turned down by her older sister, Martha). Their first child, Mary, was born the next year, and twin daughters, Harriett and Conn, in 1883, followed by sons John in 1885 and Overton in 1888.

In 1888, five-year-old Harriet died of diphtheria. Her heartbroken father vowed that the germs which had taken one child would not take his others, and he moved the family to their Overton grandparents' house at Travellers' Rest which had recently been enlarged, while he set about making Glen Leven safe. The family history describes the work done at Glen Leven in the year after Harriet's death:

wallpaper in the front hall was steamed off... the north side of the house was elongated by attaching a kitchen with pantries and a cross hall. Two servants' rooms were built above the kitchen and the back porch was extended and an equally long porch built over it upstairs... A flush toilet was installed at the end of the upstairs back porch. A Closet was built on the upstairs porch to hold fishing tackle and hunting gear. Down came the spiral stairway; in went the shiny massive horror that ends with carved newel posts in the center of the hall. The baseboards, cornices, mouldings, and door frames of the north rooms were pulled out and replaced with cherry, also the double sliding doors between the rooms on that side of the house. The house was wired for electricity and a telephone was put in.¹²

The large gold leaf pier mirrors in the front parlors were purchased at this time at an estate sale in Nashville. The Thompson family lived at Travellers' Rest for a year while the work was being done; shortly after they moved back in, daughter Mary fell ill with diphtheria, although she recovered. Not long after the renovations, John and Conn converted the south rooms on the first floor to "family" rooms, using the southeast room as his bedroom, and installing a bathroom in one corner of the room. Another son, Joe, was born in 1890, and another daughter, Elizabeth, in 1892.

During his ownership, John M. Thompson grew corn, wheat, and cotton at Glen Leven, as well as garden produce which he marketed to the Maxwell House Hotel (owned by his in-laws, the Overtons). He also raised livestock, including a short-lived venture in thoroughbred horses as co-owner/director of the Hermitage Stud farm adjacent to Glen Leven. Thompson and the co-owners were best known for their horse Wedgewood, who was so popular that the road from the Cumberland Fair and Racing Association (now the state fairgrounds) to Franklin Pike, leading to Glen Leven and the Hermitage Stud, was named Wedgewood Avenue.¹³ The Hermitage Stud closed at the end of 1897, with the horses sold at auction at Madison Square Garden in New York.¹⁴ In addition to running the farm at Glen Leven, John M. Thompson

¹²"Glen Leven."

¹³William Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), 154-162. See also Hamilton Busbey, *Recollections of Men and Horses* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1907), 254-262, and *Nashville American*, 25 May 1898.

¹⁴*New York Times*, 17 February 1898.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 12Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

also practiced law, having studied at Cumberland University and Vanderbilt University, and was admitted to the Nashville Bar in 1875. After the birth of his children, Thompson began to dabble in politics in the 1890s.¹⁵ He was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1893 and to the State Senate in 1895, where he served until 1903, serving briefly as Speaker of the Senate. He served as Tennessee's Commissioner of Agriculture from 1907 to 1911 under Governor Malcolm Patterson. He was again elected to the State Senate in 1917 and served there until his death in 1919. He also served on the board of directors of Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville, during which time the preparatory school moved from its temporary site near the State Capitol in downtown Nashville to its present-day location on Harding Road.¹⁶

In 1882, Thompson purchased a lot in Section 9 at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville (NR 11/25/2005), and had eight family members reinterred from the family cemetery at Glen Leven, including his grandparents Thomas and Nancy Thompson, and his father John Thompson.

"Living at Glen Leven is a complicated business"¹⁷

Following John's death in 1919, his children drew lots to divide the property. Daughter Mary, recently widowed herself, drew the lot containing the house parcel of Glen Leven, and she and her children moved into the house with her mother. Conn Thompson died in January 1923, and Mary swapped her property with that of her sister, Conn Thompson Harris, who had married Dr. A. W. Harris in 1902. The other Thompson children built houses on their parcels of the surrounding property, and thus the family remained close by. The Harrises lived at Glen Leven for approximately twenty years, modernizing the kitchens and bathrooms as well as the heating and cooling of the house during that time, and retaining a reputation for the gardens and hospitality to be found there.¹⁸

Dr. Harris died in 1941, and a few years later Conn Harris left Glen Leven to live with her daughter. Her brother Overton Thompson and his wife Margaret moved in at Glen Leven in 1946, and over the next twenty years, Overton worked to recreate farm life at Glen Leven, working the land now owned by his sister in addition to the lands remaining with the house, primarily raising beef cattle and feed for those cattle. This increasing dependence on livestock on Middle Tennessee farms is highlighted in the "Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee" Multiple Property Submission: "The new emphasis on livestock kept corn production at relatively high levels, produced both as a basic item for the dinner table and for the consumption of the livestock."¹⁹ The livestock barn at the eastern edge of the property was added during this time.

¹⁵David C. Rutherford, *Bench and Bar: Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee* (Nashville: David C. Rutherford, 1981), 67.

¹⁶"Glen Leven;" Robert McBride, ed., *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly, Vol. II (1861-1901)*, (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives and Tennessee Historical Commission, 1979), 900-901.

¹⁷Quotation from "Glen Leven," regarding life at Glen Leven in the twentieth century.

¹⁸Brandau, 165.

¹⁹Carroll Van West, "Historic Family Farms of Middle Tennessee" Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1995), E-31.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 13Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

According to the family history, Overton "rehabilitated the last remaining cabin on the place," indicating that the slave cabins and tenant houses had all been moved or razed prior to 1960; none of the slave cabins or tenant houses remain as of 2008. In 1957, the extended Thompson family celebrated Glen Leven's centennial, with a family reunion at the house.²⁰



*Thompson family reunion at Glen Leven, 1957.
Photograph used with permission of Travellers Rest Plantation.*

²⁰Glen Leven.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

Overton Thompson died in 1968, and for the first time, a part of Glen Leven was sold out of the family, to country music industry executive, Shelby Singleton. The house and five acres were sold to Singleton but the remainder of the farm stayed with the family. Singleton had just produced his first number one hit, with Jeannie C. Riley's "Harper Valley P.T.A.", written by Tom T. Hall and originally recorded by Singleton's wife, Margie Singleton. However, Singleton apparently never moved in at Glen Leven, and the house sat vacant for almost two years, when Susan Thompson West, a Thompson descendant, purchased the house and land in 1971. West owned the house and farmed the land for three decades. Upon her death in 2006, she willed the house and land to The Land Trust for Tennessee, with a perpetual easement upon the property and protections for the historic house and outbuildings.²¹

²¹Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 4472, Page 245 and Book 4537, Page 416; The Land Trust for Tennessee, "Glen Leven Proposal Packet," 1 June 2007.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 15

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 16

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

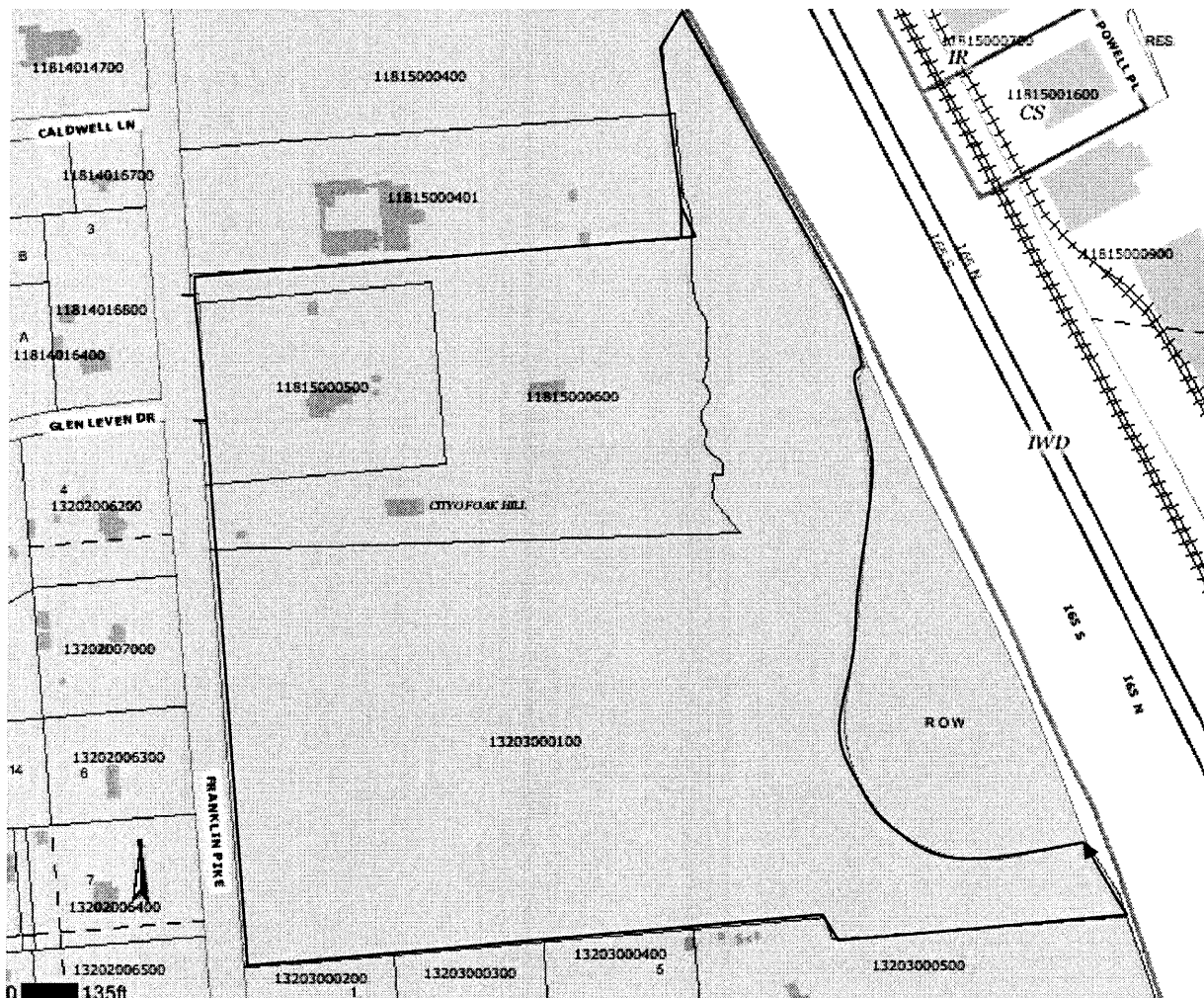
10. Geographical Data

Verbal boundary description:

The nominated property includes 66 acres owned by The Land Trust for Tennessee, shown on the attached map as Parcels 11815000500, 11815000600, and 13203000100. The property is bounded on the north by Glen Leven Presbyterian Church, on the south by a mid-20th century subdivision, on the west by Franklin Pike, and on the east by Interstate 65.

Boundary justification:

The boundaries of the nominated property are those of the remaining 66 acres historically associated with the Glen Leven property, and include the house, outbuildings, and fields of Glen Leven that are now owned and protected by The Land Trust for Tennessee.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 17

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

Photographs

Photographer: Tara Mitchell Mielnik
Metropolitan Historical Commission
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, TN 37204

Date: November 2007 and January 2008

Digital files: Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, TN 37214

- 1/43 Façade/west elevation, facing ENE
- 2/43 Façade/west elevation, facing ENE
- 3/43 South elevation, facing N
- 4/43 South elevation and ell, facing N
- 5/43 North elevation, facing S
- 6/43 Porte cochere and woodshed, facing E
- 7/43 Entry porch, tile detail
- 8/43 Center hall, fireplace detail
- 9/43 Southwest room, facing W
- 10/43 Southwest room, fireplace detail
- 11/43 Southeast room, facing SE
- 12/43 Southeast room, facing N into central hall
- 13/43 Southeast bathroom, facing N
- 14/43 Northwest room, facing W

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 18

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

-
- | | |
|-------|--|
| 15/43 | Northwest room, facing E into northeast room, rear hall, and dining room |
| 16/43 | Northeast room, fireplace detail |
| 17/43 | Rear hall, facing N, door to porte cochere |
| 18/43 | Rear hall, wallpaper detail |
| 19/43 | Kitchen, facing S |
| 20/43 | Dining room, facing E |
| 21/43 | Dining room, fireplace detail |
| 22/43 | Central hall, stair detail |
| 23/43 | Central hall, stair |
| 24/43 | Central hall, looking down from stair landing, facing W |
| 25/43 | Second story, central hall, facing E |
| 26/43 | Second floor, southwest bedroom, facing SW |
| 27/43 | Second floor, southeast bedroom, facing S |
| 28/43 | Second floor, northwest bedroom, facing N |
| 29/43 | Second floor, northwest bedroom, fireplace detail |
| 30/43 | Second floor, northeast bedroom, facing NE |
| 31/43 | Second floor, northeast bedroom, fireplace detail |
| 32/43 | Second floor, rear bedroom, facing east |
| 33/43 | Smokehouse and office, facing NE |
| 34/43 | Greenhouse, facing N |
| 35/43 | Greenhouse, facing E |
| 36/43 | Barn, facing W |
| 37/43 | Barn interior |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 19

Glen Leven
Davidson County, Tennessee

- 38/43 Carriage house, facing N
- 39/43 Carriage house and drive, facing N
- 40/43 Stock barn, facing N
- 41/43 Front entry gates, facing W
- 42/43 Springhouse, facing S
- 43/43 Fields/setting, facing SE



ALLEN LEVIN, DAVIDSON COUNTY SITE / SKETCH PLAN

rock barn

smokehouse

office

wood shed/cistern

greenhouse

horse barn

John Levin

carrage house/garage

Microsoft
Virtual Earth

springhouse

ferry gates

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