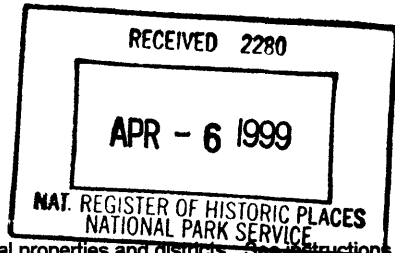


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



525

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 Railroad Park  
other names/site number Central Park, Kiwanis Kiddie Park, Kiwanis Park

2. Location

street & number 100 Park Street  not for publication N/A  
city or town Union City  vicinity N/A  
state Tennessee code TN county Obion code 131 zip code 38261

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.)

Herbert L. Hays 3/31/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy 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:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action  
5-5-99

Railroad Park  
Name of Property

Obion County, TN  
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** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year 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)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
TRANSPORTATION  
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

#### Period of Significance

1889 - 1946

#### Significant Dates

1889, 1936, ca. 1939

#### Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad and Perkins, James (station agent)

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Railroad Park  
Name of Property

Obion County, TN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.43 acres

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Union City, TN 427 NE

1 16 316720 4032880  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

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 Nathan Poe and Carroll Van West  
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date May 1997  
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615 889-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

### 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 Union City (contact: Don Thornton)  
street & number PO Box 9 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Union City state TN zip code 38261

**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.

Railroad Park  
Name of Property

Obion County, TN  
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	
	1	buildings
2		sites
2	3	structures
1		objects
5	4	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 & Architectural Resources of Union City, TN

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls Weatherboard

roof WOOD

other IRON

**Narrative Description**

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

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Railroad Park  
Obion County, Tennessee

## 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Railroad Park (now know as Kiwanis Park) in Union City, Obion County, Tennessee, is an evolved example of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban architectural landscape movement generally known as the railroad garden or railroad park. Occupying the block bounded by West Church Street to the north, Park Street to the south, Depot Street to the west, and Park Street to the east, Railroad Park is a good representative example of this type of urban park category. It qualifies as a park, rather than as a station garden since it is located southwest and across the street and railroad tracks from the historic Union City railroad depot. The original layout of the park, dating from its construction in 1899, is intact and retains integrity after a century of intensive use and various ownership changes.

Railroads built railroad gardens and parks for a number of self-serving reasons that were achieved through the park's most obvious purpose, to provide a pleasant area for boarding passengers and weary travelers to spend their time between the arrival and departure of trains. Based upon a simple plan, three asymmetrically arranged paths run from different boundaries of the park and connect near its center, forming a circular space. The main entrance, which leads directly to the town depot, runs from the corner of Perkins Street and West Church Street to the middle of the park. Another entrance, located on the north side of the park as well, runs from near the corner of Depot Street and West Church Street to the middle of the park, the entrance located on Depot Street. The third entrance provides access to the park from the south edge, running northeast from Depot Street and meeting the other two paths in middle of Railroad Park. Irregularly placed shade trees, mostly planted from 1889 to 1940, and cast iron Victorian-styled park benches line these paths. A cast iron fence, circa 1889, runs around the eastern and northern perimeter of the park, perhaps to prevent children from getting too close to the nearby train tracks.

### Inventory

1. Railroad Park site (circa 1889, 1939)

Derived from a plan credited to James Perkins, ticket agent, Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad, who began the park's beautification in 1889. Original tree planting occurred at that time, supplemented by additional landscaping added by the Public Works Administration and the City of Union City, circa 1939. (C)

2. "Leda and the Swan" statue (circa 1897-circa 1939, 1994)

In 1897, a group of community women donated the statue of "Leda and the Swan," the Obion County contribution to the Tennessee State Centennial celebration in Nashville, to Railroad Park. The elaborate two pool, tri-level fountain was placed in the middle of

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Railroad Park  
Obion County, Tennessee

the circular area created by the three intersecting paths. An ornate wrought iron spiked rail with curving structural bars was built to surround the fountain. The new fountain served as the focus of Railroad Park, offering an elegant and relaxing play of water to interested visitors. At an unknown date between World War I and World War II, but believed to be circa 1939, concerned citizens removed the statue from the park in order to protect it. In an effort to restore the park in 1993-1994, an extensive search throughout the city finally located the statue. The statue was restored and rededicated in 1994. At that time, new cast-iron park benches were placed in a circle around the statue. The restored fountain, which had stood in the park from circa 1897 to 1939 at least, is a contributing structure (C).

**3. Bandstand (circa 1939)**

In 1939 the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad deeded Railroad Park to the City of Union City and in that same year, city workers combined with workers funded by the Public Works Administration to make changes in the park. The most important contribution was the construction of the bandstand circa 1939. This hexagonal frame structure sets upon a hollow foundation of bricks. A series of wooden steps located on the north side of the building offer the only access to the interior. Closely situated wooden boards form a railing encircling the edge of the interior, reaching a height of about four feet. Wooden posts located at each corner of the hexagon extend above the railing to the ceiling. The spaces above the railing and between the posts are open. The roof hangs over the floor of the bandstand. Each hexagonal section curves upward to a triangular point, all meeting to form a pagoda-like shaped roof, which is covered with wooden shingles. (C)

**4. Civil War Monument (circa 1909, 1939)**

Obion City's second Civil War monument was erected on the grounds of the Obion County Courthouse in 1909. Sponsored by the local chapter of the UDC, this obelisk-styled monument rises approximately fifty feet and is topped by a sculpture of a Confederate soldier. It was moved to Railroad Park circa 1939 as the Public Works Administration began the construction of the new Obion County Courthouse in Union City. (C)

**5. Playground Area (circa 1945)**

The Kiwanis Club assumed maintenance responsibilities for Railroad Park circa 1939 and the name changed to Kiwanis Kiddies Park by the mid-1940s. During that decade, the club added playground facilities for local children. A contributing swing set (circa 1945) remains from the original playground. A plastic circular slide was added circa 1990. Overall the playground area is a contributing site within the park. (C)

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6. Kiwanis Park Gate (1954)

The Kiwanis Club in 1954 changed the name of the park from the Kiwanis Kiddie Park to Kiwanis Park. To mark this change, as well as to undertake another civic project in the year of the centennial celebration of Union City, the club erected a new entrance gate at the northwest corner of the park, near the junction of Depot and West Church Street. The arched gate is not intrusive and generally matches the appearance of the iron fencing that surrounds the fountain and the borders of the park. Due to its date of construction, however, the gate is a non-contributing structure. (NC)

7. Restroom (circa 1970)

This one-story brick building, with concrete foundation and asphalt shingle roof, was added by the city in order to add men's and women's restroom facilities to the park. Due to its date of construction, it is a non-contributing building. (NC)

8. Water Fountain (circa 1970)

This pebble stucco water fountain was added at the time of the construction of the restroom. Due to date of construction, it is a non-contributing structure. (NC)

9. Park Benches (circa 1889, 1939, and 1994)

Along the paths and surrounding the fountains are cast iron park benches. A few of these are historic, but most date to 1994 when the fountain was restored and replaced in the park. As a group, the benches represent a non-contributing street furniture, due to the date of replacement. (NC)

The overall appearance of the Railroad Park has changed somewhat over time. However, considering that the property is located in the middle of a busy and developing business district, the original simple elegance of Perkins' Railroad Park plan is still very visible and is a source of pride for the city. Both public officials and private citizens in Union City have taken great pains to maintain the park and their work and additions have not undermined the park's original design and have enhanced its original purpose. The overall feeling of the park, created by the large shade trees, paths, and open spaces, still conveys a tranquil setting within the urban commercial setting of downtown Union City.

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Railroad Park  
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## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Railroad Park in Union City, Obion County, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its association with the railroad development of Union City's urban landscape and for its social role as an important meeting place and as a site of social pride, both contemporary and historic, in Union City. Additionally Railroad Park is also eligible for the National Register under criterion C as a local manifestation of a significant landscape movement, the railroad garden movement of the nineteenth century.

The origins of the Railroad Park (and the city) traces back to the development of a regional railroad transportation system in the upper South in the years before the Civil War. Projected as the junction site of the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad and the Mobile and Ohio, George Washington Gibbs established the town in 1854, suitably enough, as 'Junction City.' However, due to a name conflict with another city in Tennessee the city was forced to change its name to Union City. The two companies completed construction and began operation in 1861, but the almost immediate intervention of the Civil War stopped service to Union City. After the war, the Mobile and Ohio and the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St Louis railroads found the roads each had built in the 1850s destroyed, a Mobile and Ohio company report attesting "all of our bridges, trestle work, warehouse and station buildings between Union City, Tennessee and Okalona, in Mississippi, a distance of 184 miles, were destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

The rebuilding process began immediately, both in Union City and throughout Obion County. Apart from the construction of a new railroad depot (Union City Mobile and Ohio Railroad Station, NR 7/28/1995), shared by both railroads in Union City, the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad also owned a parcel of land just west of the north-south running Mobile and Ohio tracks. For approximately twenty years, the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis and the Mobile and Ohio Railroads used the unimproved lot as a supply dump and cargo yard for the storage of cross ties, logs, and products awaiting transport to other cities and markets. The depot manager placed the waiting cargo on the northern side of the park near to the depot leaving plenty of space in the middle of the lot for a pond that "was built for a furniture factory that stood where Clymer's Furniture is now. They used the water for the [factory's] boilers."<sup>2</sup> Union City citizens and visitors from rural areas also used the lot as a parking lot. Owners left their buggies, carriages and wagons there as they conducted business at the many shops, stores and business that had sprouted up around the train station on Depot Street and what is now known as First Street. This southern area of the lot eventually came to be called the 'Jockey Yard' and in addition to serving as a parking lot it also doubled as a trading area. Starting sometime after the end of the Civil War, 'Trade Days' took place on the first Monday and

<sup>1</sup> James H. Lemly, *The Gulf Mobile and Ohio: A Railroad that had to Expand or Expire*. (Homewood, Ill: Richard D Irwin, In., 1953), p 311.

<sup>2</sup> *A Century on Parade: Centennial Diadem of Dixie*. (Union City: Centennial Committee 1954.)



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third Sunday of each month and continued up to at least the 1920s, as indicated by the photograph taken by local photographer Vern Sabin in 1922.<sup>3</sup> A social gathering of still impressive size in 1922, the 'Jockey Yard' and 'Trade Days' provided a meeting place for rural and town citizens. It offered a chance for farmers to sell extra products and food and in broad terms represented an area where small farmers could negotiate and mitigate the slow transition from a subsistence to a market economy that the arrival of railroads represented. Other types of transitions were in store for the unimproved lot across from the Mobile and Ohio Station. In the 1870s an interesting landscape movement that combined both railroads and landscaped gardens began to spread across the United States and eventually these changes came to Union City.

The railroad garden movement grew out of the European railroad practice of constructing residence quarters for employee's families on the station grounds. Often only casual plantings by wives attempting to beautify dreary grounds and provide fresh vegetables for their families, European railroads nonetheless capitalized upon the aesthetic idea of gardens and eventually managed to transform such vernacular attempts at beautification into a formalized landscape movement. Utilizing the skills of a growing professional discipline, European railroad companies hired landscape architects to design station grounds and by the 1860s many stations throughout Europe boasted landscaped grounds. In the late 1860s the idea predictably jumped across the Atlantic to the United States and by 1915 landscaped station grounds and gardens were as ubiquitous in the United States as the trains themselves. Viewed originally by railroad corporations simply as a way to increase passenger traffic the remaining parks and gardens of the "railroad gardening craze" today represents the synthesis in a public place of "diverse needs of corporations, municipalities" and "civic betterment groups."<sup>4</sup>

In Connecticut agricultural reformer and landscaper Donald G. Mitchell introduced in America the idea of the railroad garden in a series of essays on railroad landscapes and railroad gardens. Mitchell argued that station ground and ground in the vicinity of the station could be converted "from muddy, garbage and equipment-strewn wastes into greens that should give piquant welcome to every stranger and grow to be an object of town pride."<sup>5</sup> Such a ground could serve several purposes. First, it obviously displayed the philanthropic and "neighborliness" of the railroad corporation to townspeople, who, though often dependent on the railroads, were sometimes less than enamored with the dirty, industrial appearance of railroad ground. In this view of neighborliness, Mitchell strongly suggested that the railroads and communities jointly appoint a "custodian" charged with the maintenance of the park. In such a framework of

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<sup>3</sup> Bill Threlkeld and Charlene Threlkeld. *A Time Returned: A Pictorial History of Obion County, Tennessee*. (Virginia Beach, Virginia: The Donning Company, Publishers, 1994). p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> John R. Stilgoe. *The Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and The American Scene*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Donald G. Mitchell. *Out of Town Places: with Hints for Their Improvement*. Reprint. (New York: Scribner's 1884) pp. 148, 151

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cooperation, Mitchell believed the railroad grounds and park could commit to symbolize the intention of the railroad corporation and the community to grow together, provide benefits to both and add a little beauty to the dreary iron and coal landscape of America's industrial revolution.

For the railroads, railroad parks and gardens provided passengers a pleasant area to wait for trains and refresh weary travelers during a ten or fifteen minute break. A lot like Union City's filled with extra railroad ties and equipment, dust and a muddy factory pond would never make a visitor feel welcome, rather it would become a place that people would avoid. A garden or park on the other hand conveyed to the regular passenger the railroad's wish to please them and hopefully attract new clients as well. Companies wanted to attract people to their trains and their towns - "by building fine stations sited among shrubs, trees, and flowers, railroad companies hoped to make new, half developed towns attractive to prospective residents . . . Good stations and grounds attracted passengers, and so made good business sense."<sup>6</sup>

Railroad gardens also served as a focal point for a community's betterment programs. The first, best and sometimes only chance for a community to make an impression upon visitors to their town was in and around the railroad grounds. An expansive site, landscaped and well kept, would illustrate the progressive nature of the city as well as leave a pleasant memory of green avenues and cool, shady areas in the minds of the travelers. Who knew what traveling businessman might decide to build his factory in a town, thereby increasing rail traffic, the population of the town and the prosperity of both railroad corporation and town, due in part to the memory of a railroad park. Finally Mitchell's argument, as a landscape gardener, intended to show that the art of landscaping could be applied to a multitude of urban uses, not just for elaborate cemeteries, rural escapes for the rich, and urban retreats from industrialization (best represented by New York's Central Park). By combining one of the symbols of industrialization, the railroad, with landscaping, Mitchell attempted to tell Americans that they should begin to "beautify heavily uses places within the metropolitan corridor," and integrate industrialization and realities of urban life, rather than fleeing from cities to the country.<sup>7</sup>

It is for these reasons, with surrounding railroad corporations following suit throughout the United States, that the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad decided to turn the unimproved lot across the tracks from its track-bound depot into a park. In 1889 James T. Perkins began the process of beautifying the lot, naming it "Railroad Park."<sup>8</sup> "Jim Perkins, who was the [area] head of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad, filled the pond up and planted the trees that was in the park, also the trees that ran along the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis

<sup>6</sup> Stilgoe. p.230

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* p. 229

<sup>8</sup> Rebel C. Forrester and Bill Threlkeld. *Roads less Traveled: Self-Guided tours to Historic Sites and Scenic Areas in Obion County.* (Union City, Tennessee: R. C. Forester and Bill Threlkeld, 1996.) p. 98.

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track.<sup>9</sup> Union City, in gratitude to Perkins, named a street after the agent. During the height of America's 'railroad gardening craze,' the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad's decision to put aside land used primarily for storage to create a pleasant environment of long walkways, shade trees and benches, reflects the company's desire to please its passengers, grow and cooperate with the community. It also served to increase its own business. The 'Jockey Yard' remained for several years, although the remainder of the lot served as a park.

The original layout of the park still exists, as evidenced by the now mature trees that still line the three avenues of the park that meet at the fountain. As such, the existence of Railroad Park acts as a unique, interesting and direct link to the early history of Union City, the community's relationship with the industrialization, urbanization and landscapes all culminating in the railroad gardening movement.

The process of maintenance and beautification did not halt with the original layout of the park. In 1896, Tennessee celebrated its centennial and each county was given the option of contributing to the celebration. When Obion County administrators decided not to make a contribution a group of 'determined ladies' from Union City collected \$350.00 and bought a fountain depicting "Leda and the Swan," two figures from Greek mythology and had it set up with other county's contributions on the Centennial Grounds in Nashville. After the celebration, the fountain returned to Union City and was placed in the Railroad Park where the three tree-lined avenues met. Placing such a monument, bought with privately raised funds in Railroad Park illustrates once again the ongoing efforts of both Union City and the railroads to create a park that represented both community and corporation - the railroad owned the park but the community was encouraged to take part in its beautification.

Damaged several years later by exposure to the weather, concerned citizen's removed "Leda and the Swan" from the top of the fountain and placed it in storage. In 1993, almost one hundred years after its initial placement in Railroad Park, when another beautification movement, the Union City, City Beautiful Commission decided to restore the fountain, the figures could not be found. The top of the fountain was eventually located and in 1994, the commission paid for its restoration. In addition the commission also purchased reproductions of the original park benches that lined the avenues along with Perkin's trees. All of these restoration efforts to beautify and maintain the park are present day manifestation and link so the same spirit of community pride that prompted the community to originally collaborate with the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad on the park project.

In 1936, another event involving the park represents larger regional and national trends. Faced with continually dropping ticket and cargo sales, the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad discarded the extra maintenance and responsibility that the park required and deeded

<sup>9</sup> Oral Interview with Rebel C. Forrester, Obion County Historian.

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Railroad Park, a symbol of different priorities and a different era, to the government of Union City. Shortly thereafter, the city added two features to the park, a bandstand south of the fountain and the Civil War monument located between the two northern entrances. The city allowed the Public Works Administration to relocate the Civil War monument to Railroad Park while that New Deal agency built the new courthouse. Both of these structures represent the change in ownership and slight change in purpose that the park took on after 1939.

The Union City Kiwanis Club took over the responsibility of maintaining the appearance of the park soon after the group organized in 1939. During this same period the Kiwanis Club of Union City also assumed the maintenance of the 'colored kiddies park,' although it is not presently known where this site may have been located. During this period Railroad Park was known as 'Central Park,' denoting its new role as a city park. But by 1954 according to a Union City's centennial celebration magazine *A Century on Parade*, the name had changed to 'Kiwanis Kiddies Park.' This change in names indicates the change in use from a railroad park to a community playground, as well as honoring the principle caretakers of the park. At sometime after 1954 the name changed to 'Kiwanis Park,' the present name of the park.

In the mid-twentieth century officials took action to reestablish the park's role as a social meeting place in Union City. The bandstand was added to the Railroad Park, a meeting place nearby the area once known as Jockey Yard.<sup>10</sup> A social meeting place in its own right, the structure hosted many political speeches and debates, and in recent years it has become a popular site to announce local political campaigns.<sup>11</sup> Kiwanis Park is also host to a variety of community activities including an annual petting zoo, the nationally popular "Art in the Park" trend, and war ceremonies. The park still acts as a community park since playground equipment has been added and serves as the end of local parades. Finally in July of 1994 Union City reinitiated the old 'Trade Days' that once took place there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Meeting on Saturdays during the growing season, Kiwanis Park serves as host to the 'Farmer's Market,' where farmers and citizens of the town can once again sell extra food on the open market.<sup>12</sup> The 'Farmers Market', held on the same grounds of the old Jockey Yard, links contemporary Kiwanis Park and Union City directly to a historically important social meeting ritual, 'Trade Days.' Though there is no longer a railroad stop, the park still plays an important role in the life of Union City and is a visible reminder of those earlier days when the railroad was

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> "Politics in the Park - Gubernatorial Candidates Speak to Party Faithful." *Union City Daily Messenger*, 14 March 1993.

<sup>12</sup> "Farmer's Market on Saturdays." *Union City Daily Messenger*. 11 July 1994.

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Railroad Park  
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an important link to other towns and cities. Railroad Park meets the criteria set forth in the multiple property nomination "Historic and Architectural Resources of Union City, TN" for its role in transportation, social history and landscape architecture.

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## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary is the Union City Railroad Park, Listed as parcel 25 on the Union City, Obion County Tax Map Q-48-1.

### Boundary Justification

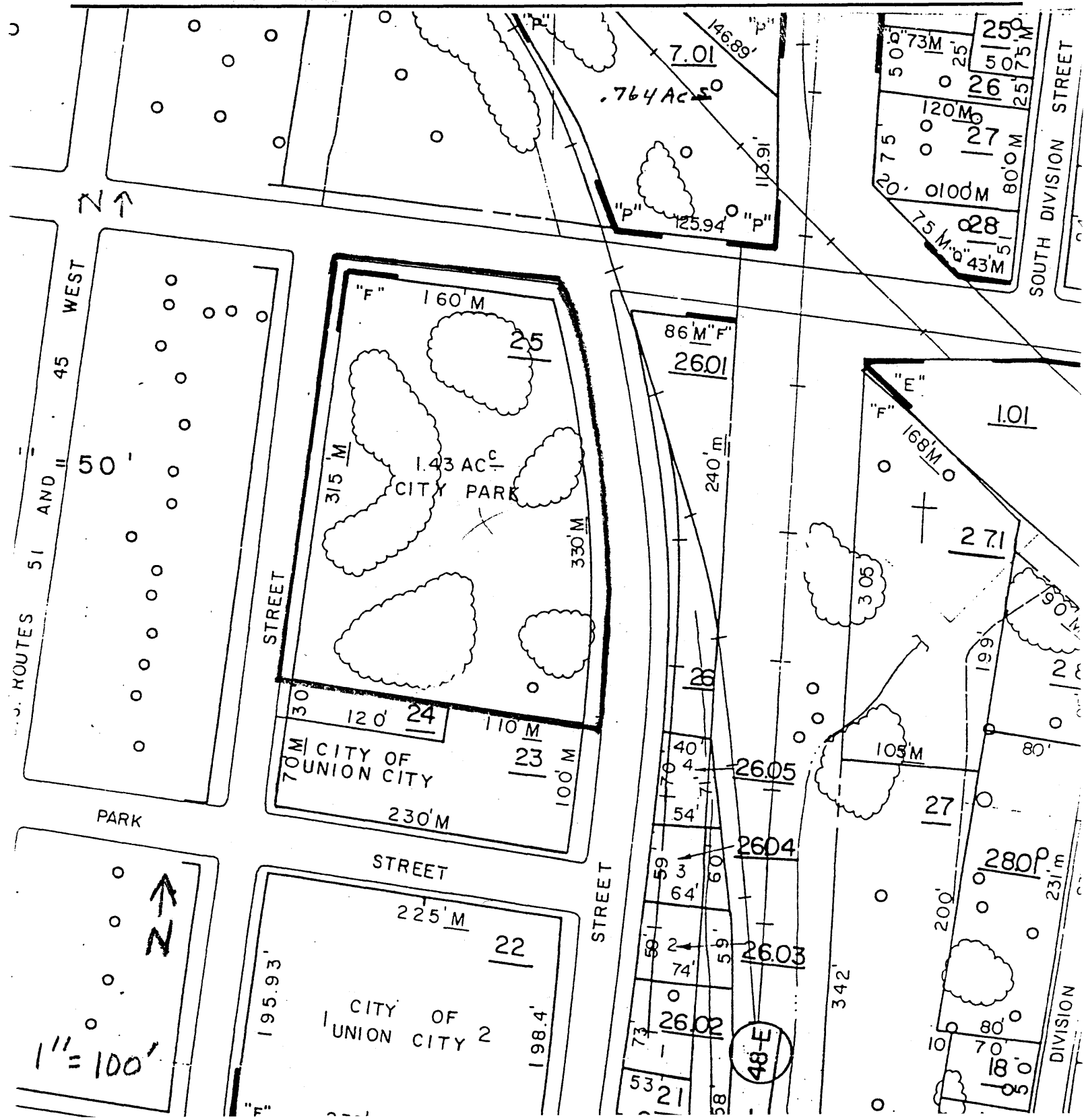
The nominated parcel includes all of the extant historic property associated with Railroad Park.

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National Park Service

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Railroad Park  
Union City, Obion County, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West  
                  MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: November 1996

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
                  Nashville, TN

Park overview, facing northwest  
1 of 10

Park overview, west boundary, facing south  
2 of 10

Kiwanis Park entrance arch, facing southeast  
3 of 10

Kiwanis Park entrance arch, facing south  
4 of 10

United Daughter of the Confederacy Civil War monument, facing southeast  
5 of 10

Center section of park and fountain, facing southeast  
6 of 10

Fountain, facing south.  
7 of 10

Band Stand, facing southwest  
8 of 10

Detail of cast-iron fence  
9 of 10

Modern Restrooms, facing northeast  
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