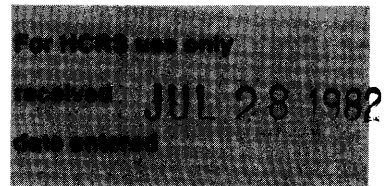


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic PRINTERS ALLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT

and/or common name

**2. Location** Roughly bounded by 3rd & 4th Ave., Bank Alley

Half of 200 block Third Avenue, North, half of 100 & half of 200 block  
street & number Fourth Avenue, North, and 300 block of Church Street N/Not for publication

city, town Nashville n/a vicinity of congressional district

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson code 037

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple Ownership - see Continuation Sheet

street & number n/a

city, town n/a n/a vicinity of state n/a

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registrar's Office

street & number Davidson County Courthouse

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37201

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Downtown Nashville Plan & Development Program Historical-  
title Architectural Survey & Analysis has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date April, 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

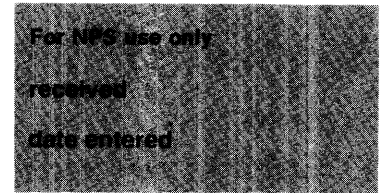
The Printers Alley Historic District includes fifteen structures in the heart of Nashville's Central Business District. It is bounded on the north by Bank Alley, on the east by Third Avenue, North, on the south by Church Street, and on the west by Fourth Avenue, North. Three structures are located to the south of Church Street and one building is on the east side of Third Avenue, North. The district is adjacent to the Second Avenue Commercial District on the east, the Cheatham Building on the south, and the Utopia Hotel is within this district. These have all been listed on the National Register in 1972, 1980, and 1979, respectively. The buildings in the district are all commercial structures dating from 1874 to 1929 and range from one to twelve stories in height. The architectural styles represented are those of the late Victorian era and the commercial styles of the early twentieth century which include Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Victorian Romanesque, Queen Anne, Neo-classical, Chicago, and Art Deco. The majority of the buildings date from 1890s to 1905 and range from three to six stories in height. Eleven buildings are built of solid masonry, one has a heavy timber frame interior structure, one is steel frame, and two are reinforced concrete. Thirteen of the fifteen structures are contributing in that they are significant in the historic and architectural development of the district and maintain most of their architectural integrity. The two non-contributing buildings have had their original facades completely obscured by new storefronts that disrupt the character of the district in their design and materials. All of the buildings appear to be structurally in good to excellent condition. Four structures are completely rehabilitated or have been continually maintained with full occupancy. The others are at least occupied on the lower floors, with vacant upper floors that have been allowed to deteriorate. All of the buildings have seen at least some alteration. Most of the alterations, however, have been restricted to the storefronts.

Buildings contributing to the character of the district:

1. 207 Third Avenue, North: built in 1892, this Chicago-style structure is five stories in height and built of solid masonry. It was designed by architects Thompson and Zwicker.  
The facade is supported by a beam decorated with a bear's head at each end; the storefront is fully glazed with no structural supports interspersed. The end walls of rusticated stone rise into decorative brickwork made up of four slender shafts that extend all the way up the facade. The second through fifth floors each have five rectangular windows with the middle three windows grouped together and separated only by slender Tuscan columns. Brick spandrel panels between each floor are decorated with straited brickwork below the windows. At the top of the building, the cornice supports a brick balustrade that reflects the rhythm of the window openings.  
The Printers Alley facade is unadorned and made up of large, evenly spaced, segmental arched window openings that are boarded up. The central opening on the alley level is a service door that opens onto a loading dock.  
The interior spaces are undivided on each floor. The only ornamentation consists of the staircases and the baseboards. The staircases have open risers and a landing midway between each floor. The newel posts are massive; they are turned, as are the balusters. Sections of these features are missing in places.
2. 208 Third Avenue, North: built in 1883, this Romanesque Revival style building is five stories tall and built of solid masonry. Evidence indicates that this building is the remaining one of a block of three buildings built as a unit. The first floor storefront is altered, but original fabric is evident. Three massive arches encompass the fenestration of the second through fourth floors and are surmounted by an arcade of five windows on the fifth floor, a stylized brick cornice

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number      Page  
                                 Historic District      7      2

and simple parapet. Despite its fragmentary nature, the composition is still one of merit and makes a positive contribution to the district. The interior spaces are undivided, and there is little ornamentation.

3.            209 Third Avenue, North: also built after the 1892 fire and designed by Thompson and Zwicker, this Victorian Romanesque style building is five stories in height and built of solid masonry. The polychromatic exterior finish of differently colored and textured stone, brick, and terra cotta is a treatment unique in Nashville. The storefront unfortunately has been completely altered, but the upper floors are a treasure of architectural detail. Two massive recessed arches extend from the second to the fourth floor on either side of a narrower arched central bay. A window in the center of the second floor is surmounted by a swan's neck pediment. The spandrel above the three arches at the top of the fourth floor is filled with foliated terra cotta decoration. The upward thrust of the recessed arches is further emphasized and terminated by twin gables that originally extended above the parapet.

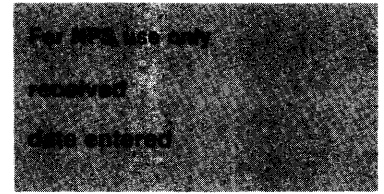
The Printers Alley facade serves as the entrance to a night club that occupies the first and second floors of this building. This facade is unadorned, containing only segmental arched window openings that have been boarded up.

4.            211 Third Avenue, North: also built after the 1892 fire and designed in the Victorian Romanesque style by Thompson and Zwicker, this five-story, solid brick masonry structure has undergone a recent renovation that unfortunately sandblasted the brick and altered the first floor storefront in an unsympathetic manner. The treatment of the storefront could be reversed, however. The upper floors consist of a series of arches. Two colossal arches extend side by side from the second floor to the fourth, enclosing windows and spandrels. The fifth floor is made up of an arcade of five windows surmounted by an arcaded corbel table. The stone cornice has dentils and lion's head end caps and rests on a row of brick inset panels. The entire facade is straited with alternating rows of light and dark brick. The lower two levels of the Printers Alley facade were altered during the recent rehabilitation to accommodate the main entrance to the building, an inset which serves as a parking space off the alley and a New Orleans style wrought iron balcony on the second level. The upper floors are unadorned with large segmental arch windows. All the windows in the building have been replaced with new aluminum frame units.

5.            Noel Block Garage (300-314 Church Street): this five-story parking garage, built in 1926, was the first in Nashville. It is reinforced concrete post and lintel construction with floors, roof, and ramps of reinforced concrete also. Brick curtain walls are broken into recessed bays with pairs of large rectangular metal-framed paned windows on each level that are typical of the period. The Church Street facade has eight equal bays, each containing space on the first level for commercial rental space except for the first bay on the west end of the facade. Here is a stone arched automobile entrance two floors in height, with Art Deco details and the name carved across the top. The Third Avenue facade is broken into two sections, unequal in height, even though both still have five levels. Each section has a wide central bay containing three windows flanked by narrow bays with one window on each level. The recess of each bay is capped with a dentil course and a row of Spanish tiles. The garage was built with a capacity for 320 cars.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

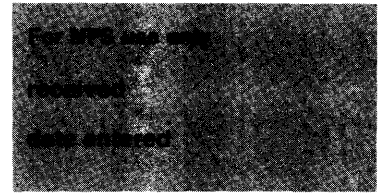


Printers Alley  
Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 3

6. 313 Church Street: built in 1874 in the Romanesque Revival style, this five-story solid brick masonry structure is one of two buildings in Nashville known as the Banner Building. The first four floors are in almost original condition except for a few alterations mainly on the first floor. An ornate peaked-roof top floor has unfortunately been replaced by an unsympathetic unadorned one. The facade is supported on the first floor by four massive pilasters. The central doorway is recessed behind an arch supported by Corinthian columns on pedestals. The central bay is greatly emphasized on the upper facade by ornate detailing. A pair of windows on the second floor has arched transoms that are enclosed by massive hood molds with corbel stops. They support the projection of the bay on the upper floors. Within the projection is a monumental recessed arch with tripartite windows and transoms on both levels. The flanking bays have single rectangular windows on each level with arched transoms capping the fourth floor windows. All of these elements accentuate the verticality of the design only to be interrupted by a flat obtrusive fifth floor. The Printers Alley facade is made up of numerous windows of varying shapes taken from the front facade. An entrance to a basement restaurant has been added along with an imposing flashing sign above. Despite the loss of the original top floor and a few minor alterations, the building maintains much of its architectural integrity and its historical significance is not diminished.
7. Ambrose Building (162 Fourth Avenue, North): built as the Bruce Building in 1905 for the Marshall and Bruce Publishing Company, this three-story structure has a wood column and beam support system with exterior load bearing masonry walls on the sides and rear.
- This building successfully employs classical detailing with the modern innovations of the Commercial style. The form of the building is Neo-classical with a ground story upon which rest two monumental pilasters with stylized Ionic capitals at either end of the structure. These pilasters support a massive yet simple cornice spanning the full width of the building. This treatment allows for the complete expanse of the facade to be glazed on each level. The building was completely rehabilitated in 1979 at which time the windows were completely replaced. The brick of the first floor facade was stuccoed over because it had been irreversibly damaged by an earlier renovation. The first story has a simple arched recessed entrance in the center balanced on each side by simple storefront windows. The upper two floors are completely glazed and separated by an unadorned but wide spandrel panel. On the Printers Alley facade, the upper floors were altered by extending a fully glazed curtain wall a few feet out from the original facade over the alley. This facade had no ornamentation whatsoever and the alteration did not harm the integrity of the building.
8. J. C. Bradford Building (170 Fourth Avenue, North): built as Nashville's first skyscraper in 1905, this building has undergone four name changes and a major addition and remodeling in 1938. The twelve-story steel frame structure with brick curtain walls was designed by architects Barnett, Hayes, and Barnett for the First National Bank. Subsequently, it has been called the Independent Life Building, Third National Bank Building, and since 1968, the J.C. Bradford Building. The original structure was built in the Neo-classical style. When Third National Bank acquired the building, they built an addition to the east of the original structure which doubled the size of the building and removed virtually all original exterior ornamentation. New

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

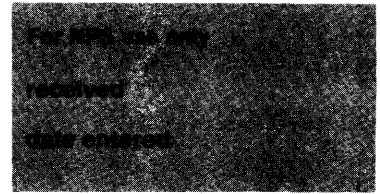
Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number 7      Page 4  
                                 Historic District

Art Deco details were added to both the interior and exterior. Even though this major alteration is less than fifty years old, the most significant attribute of this building is that it was Nashville's first skyscraper and steel frame building. This is worthy of recognition. The detailing of the alteration is of a high quality and would be eligible in its own right in a few years. The base of the building which consists of the first two levels is faced with limestone. Pilasters with stylized capitals establish the rhythm of the bays, and ornamental cast metal spandrel panels separated the first and second level within each bay. Above this base is an unornamented brick shaft of eight stories containing paired rectangular single-light windows evenly spaced within the facade. A stone belt course delineates the remaining two stories from the shaft. The uppermost story contains large round arched window units which terminate the rhythm of the fenestration. A flat limestone parapet with rectangular grilles evenly spaced above each bay complete the facade. The interior of the banking room is quite impressive in its scale and with its Art Deco detailing. The movable iron screen at the entrance to this room is outstanding with its circular medallions of polished brass, each with a sign of the zodiac in relief.

9. U.S. Bank Building (200 Fourth Avenue, North): built in 1929 as the Noel Hotel, this twelve-story, reinforced concrete structure with brick curtain walls is a stripped-down, 1920s modern adaptation of the Neo-classical style. It was designed by Nashville architects Marr and Holman. Though very stark in its overall appearance, there is some very elegant classical detailing. The ground story base with mezzanine has a rusticated and coursed ashlar limestone finish with large expanses of glass on the front and elegant arched windows on the rear extension. The ground story has a cornice with Greek Fret moulding. Capping the parapet on the rear extension are classical urns. The shaft is very plain with evenly spaced individual single-light rectangular windows. Stone spandrel panels with diamond insets separate the windows on either end of the facade. The interior, unlike the exterior, is quite ornate with its polished marble and brass, and plaster work detailed in stylized classical motifs. After the hotel closed, the building was adapted as a bank in 1973 with the upper floors serving as offices and the lobby as the main banking room.
10. Utopia Hotel (206 Fourth Avenue, North): built in 1891, the six-story solid masonry structure with stone Romanesque style facade was designed by Nashville architect Hugh C. Thompson and was listed individually on the National Register in 1978.
12. Climax Saloon (210 Fourth Avenue, North): built in 1887, this three-story solid masonry structure has an Italianate style galvanized iron facade that in all probability was chosen from a catalogue. This is the only such example known in Nashville. The original first story storefront has been completely obliterated by numerous "face-lifts." The upper facade is remarkably intact considering the neglect it has had. One small section of metal at the top left is missing, the windows are in very poor condition, and an extremely ornate parapet has been lost. Nevertheless, that which remains is highly significant. Four narrow, round-arched windows on the second and third floors each are recessed into a wall of rusticated and coursed ashlar and separated by slender Corinthian column with capitals at the impost level. The end walls have rusticated and coursed ashlar buttresses with Corinthian capitals also at the impost level. A belt course separates the floors. Above the third floor is a frieze with decorated panels. Caryatids formerly separated these panels and supported the parapet. The three-story

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



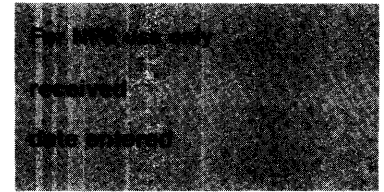
Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number      Page  
                                 Historic District      7      5

block extends only half the length to the alley. The basement and first story extend the full length and probably originally housed the kitchen. The Printers Alley facade has no noteworthy details. The building houses a night club in the basement, a hot dog store on the front first level and a restaurant in the rear. The upper floors, vacant and greatly deteriorated, are remarkably intact. The original layout and most of the original finishes are extant (these include wood trim, Italianate cast iron mantels, some interior shutters, remnants of wallpaper, some of which is Lincrusta-Walton, murals that are barely discernible, and even remnants of light fixtures). There are some alterations that were probably made when it was still a saloon, including false walls in bedrooms on the third floor where the girls could hide in case of a raid.

13.      212 Fourth Avenue, North: built in 1917, this two-story, solid brick structure is built in a simplified Commercial style with decorative green and white glazed brick. The first floor storefront has been altered and the brick painted, but the upper floor is in original condition. The facade is white and embellished with green brick along the sides of the four rectangular windows in a staggered pattern, in a belt course across the facade at the top of the windows, and in the parapet creating a panel design. The main block of the building extends only half the depth of the block. The basement extends to Printers Alley but is completely obscured with new brick and a billboard. The first floor houses a restaurant, and the upper floor is vacant with numerous rooms. The wood trim is a simple design commonly seen in structures of the 1910s and 1920s.
  
15.      Southern Turf Saloon (222 Fourth Avenue, North): built in 1895, in the Queen Anne style, this four-story solid brick structure with limestone front facade was the most elegant of the saloons in Nashville. Early descriptions of the interior speak of "mirrors, bronze statuary, rare paintings, mahogany furnishings, tropical plants, marble halls and electric fans." Today, most of the interior features have been lost; and unfortunate alterations, though hopefully not irreparable, have been made to the exterior front facade on the first and second levels. The building is structurally still in excellent condition and most of the architectural detail remains. When viewing the building, the eye is immediately drawn to the corbeled turret at the left upper corner of the front facade. The corbeled base, which has been covered with black stucco along with the entire second floor facade, rises to encompass three long narrow windows on the third floor, three shorter windows in the attic story, and a dome with fish scale shingles and a flagpole at its peak. The third floor front consists of windows that match those of the turret. Three are grouped together in the center and one is slightly removed to the right side to balance with the turret. The attic story has an arcade of four shorter windows with the same spacing. An elaborate belt course which separates the third floor from the attic story and a cornice with dentils extend across the front facade and wrap around the turret. The brick facade on Bank Alley is as ornate as the front elevation with its three two-story bay windows and decorative brickwork on the chimneys and corbel table at the cornice. Some windows on the first story and others at various locations have been bricked up. The basement facade along Printers Alley has rockfaced coursed ashlar with a doorway to the left side and a wide bricked up window opening in the center. The basement facade along Bank Alley has a storefront of square decorative cast iron posts that extend halfway up the block. The space between the posts have been filled in with metal panels. The basement houses a night club, the first floor a men's clothing store, and the second and third floors are vacant. While most of the wood trim exists along the exterior walls of the upper

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number      7      Page      6  
                                 Historic District

---

floors, the original stairway between the second and third floors, and a few interior partitions remain, the rest of the interior has been removed.

Buildings not contributing to the character of the district:

11.            208 Fourth Avenue, North: a portion of this two-story brick structure appears to be residential in character and probably dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century. Additions to the front and rear of the original structure were made in the second half of that century. Early photographs of the Utopia and Climax show slivers of each end of this building. It seems to have a simple early Victorian facade, with glazed storefront on the first level, two-over-two light sashes on the second, and a simple boxed cornice. Because the facade is completely covered over with the present non-contributing false front, it would be impossible to classify this as a contributing building in the district. If more evidence can be found to document the Victorian facade and a commitment is made by the owners to return the facade to that configuration, it is hoped that the classification of this structure could be reconsidered and it be determined to be contributing.
  
14.            Burger King (216-218-220 Fourth Avenue, North): built in 1971 to house three tenants, this one-story masonry structure had an elaborate glazed terra cotta facade with Beaux-Arts style detailing which was covered over by the present tenant. It is believed that the terra cotta was damaged in attaching the existing facade to the structure. Again, it is hoped that a contributing determination could also be made for this building if there were a commitment to rehabilitate the original facade.

# 8. Significance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry printing	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

---

**Specific dates**    N/A                      **Builder/Architect**    N/A

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Printers Alley Historic District, nominated under National Register criteria A and C, derives its significance from four areas: industry, commerce, entertainment, and architecture. Nashville is nationally known for its printing and publishing industry. This industry began shortly after the founding of Nashville and was thriving by the middle of the nineteenth century, with an abundance of newspapers, periodicals, and religious materials being published there. These activities were located in buildings that were serviced by Printers Alley. Nashville also developed rapidly as a commercial center. College Street (now Third Avenue, North), south of Union Street, was known as the retail furniture district. The district's prominence lasted until the turn of the century, and many businesses operated stores there for another fifty years. The Men's Quarter on Cherry Street (now Fourth Avenue, North) developed during the Victorian years as a block devoted almost exclusively to saloons and other entertainment businesses for men. Such activities were suppressed in the early twentieth century; but in the last twenty years, there has been a rebirth. Now fronting on Printers Alley, the former Men's Quarter is again a major entertainment district. The alley itself, in addition to the buildings that surround it, has a significance of its own. The alley always has been the scene of much activity which is tied to the uses of the buildings. It has been a place for socializing as well as working. The Printers Alley Historic District contains fifteen buildings which form an excellent collection of the rich architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Together, they illustrate the transition from Victorian to modern architecture in Nashville and the technological advances which made this possible. At least nine of the buildings in and adjoining Printers Alley are individually significant. The Printers Alley Historic District consists of only a portion of Printers Alley, the furniture district, and the Men's Quarter. Many buildings have either been demolished or have lost their architectural integrity. This district represents a concentration of those buildings that retain their historical and architectural integrity.

The Printers Alley area was the home of printers and publishers in Nashville. Even though most of these concerns did not front on Printers Alley, it served as a place for the handling of goods and the distribution of publications, particularly newspapers. At its heyday, 1915, thirteen publishers and ten printers were located in this area. The area had been laid out by 1831, and the office of one of Nashville's early leading newspapers was adjacent to it at that time. By 1853, there were three newspapers and at least one other printing office. An 1855 deed refers to a printing office situated on a parcel bounded on two sides by Deaderick Street and Black Horse Alley. The 1866 deed to the same parcel refers to the alley as Black Horse or Printers Alley. Two newspapers listed their address on Printers Alley, one in 1865 and the other in 1866. The Tennessean, Nashville's leading newspaper today, and its predecessors are known to have had six different locations in the area of Printers Alley. As the Union and American, this newspaper built the building at 313 Church Street in 1874. In 1883, they moved to another location in the area, and the Nashville Banner, Nashville's other leading paper, moved into 313 Church and remained there until 1922. From 1916 until 1937 the Tennessean



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 5 acres

Quadrangle name Nashville West, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

116	520020	4100201510
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

116	521081510	4100201010
Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

116	511991310	41001181510
Zone	Easting	Northing

D 

Zone	Easting	Northing

E 

Zone	Easting	Northing

F 

Zone	Easting	Northing

G 

Zone	Easting	Northing

H 

Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries of the Printers Alley Historic District are outlined and hatched in red on the accompanying Davidson County Base Map P93A. The boundaries conform to the dimensions of the building owners property. These boundaries represent the greatest concentration of

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John H. Compton/Graduate Architect

organization Metropolitan Historical Commission date May, 1982

street & number 701 Broadway, Customs House telephone (615) 259-5027

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Michael L. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 7/23/82

For NCRS use only

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

Alton Byers Entered in the National Register date 8/26/82

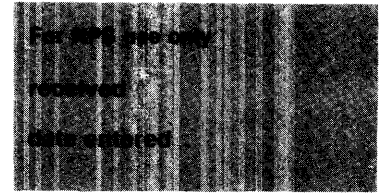
Keeper of the National Register

Attch: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number      8      Page      2  
Historic District

was located in the old Southern Turf building at 222 Fourth Avenue, North. The building at 162 Fourth Avenue, North, built in 1905 for Marshall and Bruce Publishers, has continued to house printing companies until 1976 when Ambrose Printing, one of Nashville's leading firms, relocated. Buildings associated with printing are #2, #6, #7, and #15.

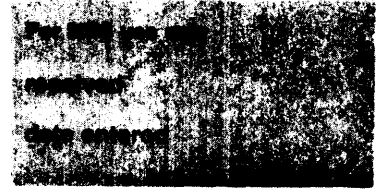
In the nineteenth century, College Street (now Third Avenue, North) was an integral part of the commercial core of Nashville. While Market Street (listed in the National Register as the Second Avenue Commercial District) served primarily as a wholesale, warehouse, and light manufacturing area, College Street served as a retail center for hardware, furniture, and other manufactured goods. The block between Church Street and Bank Alley was devoted almost totally to furniture stores with four listed there in 1853. Nashville had a population of a little more than 10,000 at that time. By January of 1892, when a fire destroyed almost the entire west side of College Street between Church and Bank, there were eight furniture stores in the area. All five of the buildings south of Bank Alley which were destroyed in the fire were rebuilt for furniture stores. The four buildings (#1, #2, #3, and #4) on Third Avenue in this district have been used almost solely as furniture stores during their lifetimes. Even with the expansion of furniture stores onto Broadway in the twentieth century, Third Avenue remained an important location for furniture merchandising until the middle of the twentieth century.

The Printers Alley area is nationally known as an entertainment center. The factors contributing to this reputation began in the 1890s when Cherry Street between Church and Union Streets was the Men's Quarter, which became the social center for the male populace for nearly two decades. Within this one-block area located in the heart of the city, a gentleman could find saloons, billiard halls, restaurants, men's furnishings, cigars and tobacco, barber shops, bath-houses, and loan offices. Three establishments, the Climax Saloon, the Utopia Hotel and the Southern Turf, formed the core of this area, and their accommodations and provisions were known as the finest to both the visitor and the resident of Nashville. The Little Gem, one of the most popular restaurants in the city, was also on Printers Alley. The Men's Quarter catered solely to men and became not only a sanctum for them but also an area where any respectable lady would refuse to be seen. The demise of the Men's Quarter came after the turn of the century with the reform movement and the enactment of statewide prohibition in 1909. Many of the male-oriented businesses continued in spite of the decline of the area, and local tradition says that at least one speak-easy operated out of the basement of one of the saloons and opened onto Printers Alley. This became the precursor for the thriving entertainment complex that has developed in Printers Alley over the past twenty years, while the Fourth Avenue storefronts have had commercial uses that serve the downtown office workers. Buildings which contribute to this area of significance are #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, and #15.

Printers Alley is the unifying factor in this district. Here all the different uses of these buildings came together and gave the alley a life of its own. The loading and unloading of goods in and out of furniture stores, printing shops and the male-oriented saloons and business, the distribution of newspapers to carriers, the presence of the Little Gem Restaurant in the alley, the casual and spontaneous socializing resulting from all of this activity made the alley a unique place. Even though the uses of the buildings have changed, Printers Alley retains its character as an active and vital place where people still gather.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet      Printers Alley  
                                 Historic District      Item number      8      Page      3

---

The Printers Alley Historic District is architecturally very significant to Nashville. Its late Victorian buildings are very elegant. The slightly taller masonry buildings on Third Avenue, North, show in their detailing the early influence of the Chicago School. The advent of the modern skyscraper in Nashville at the corner of Church and Cherry Streets is of major importance, along with the construction of the first automobile parking garage, the Noel Block Garage. Other innovations of early twentieth century architecture are represented by materials used in the ornamental detailing of buildings in the district, such as glazed brick and terra cotta and Art Deco stonework and bronze spandrel panels. While the alley facades have no distinctive architectural details, the simplicity, texture, and age of their materials collectively give them integrity. All of the buildings that are listed as contributing support the district architecturally.

All of the buildings appear to be structurally in good to excellent condition. Deterioration is found primarily on the upper vacant floors of nine buildings. All of the buildings are currently being used or have plans underway for their redevelopment. Four buildings have been rehabilitated or have had continued maintenance and use. There is much interest in the rehabilitation of those buildings where the upper floors are currently not being used.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Printers Alley  
Continuation sheet Historic District Item number 7 Page 2

---

Interview with Percy Cohen, April 26, 1981.

Interview with William Waller, April 26, 1981.

Nashville City Directories, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Register of Deeds, Davidson County Courthouse, Deed Book 19, p.449.

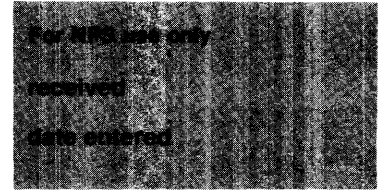
Deed Book 37, p. 705.

Thomason, Philip, "The Men's Quarter of Downtown Nashville," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Spring, 1982, pp. 48-66.

Wooldridge, J., Editor, History of Nashville, Tenn, H. W. Crew, Nashville, 1890.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

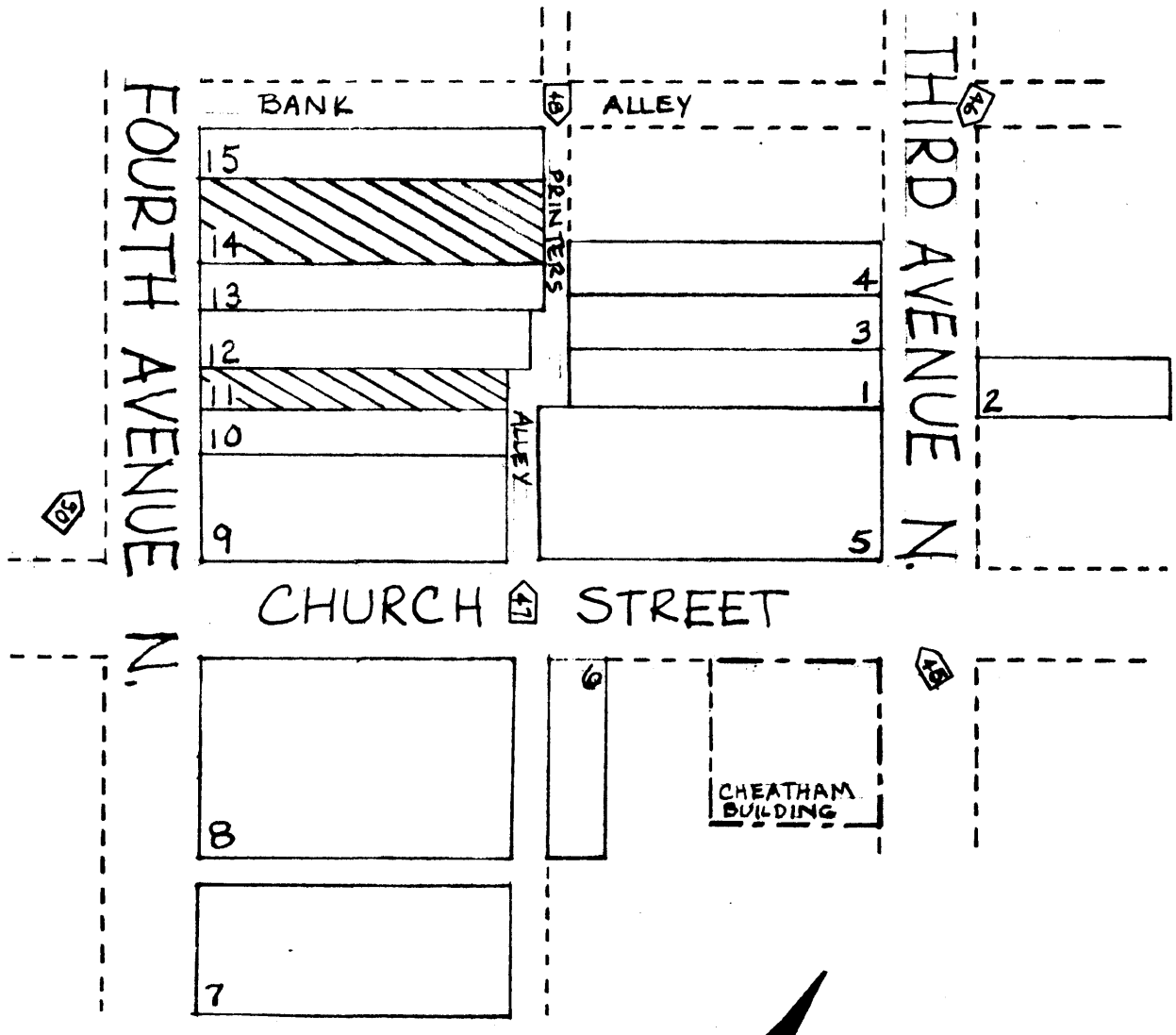




---

Continuation sheet      Printers Alley      Item number 10      Page 2  
                                 Historic District

buildings that retain their architectural and historical integrity. 208 Third Avenue, North (#2) is the only structure included on the east side of the street because all of the others have either been demolished or extensively altered. The 208 building is an integral part of the furniture district and is a contributing structure in all respects.

WESTERN BOUNDARY SECOND AVE.  
HISTORIC DISTRICT



 BUILDINGS NOT CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT  
 ANGLE OF STREETSCAPE PHOTOS

# PRINTERS ALLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

SCALE: 1 INCH = 100 FEET



Printers Alley Historic District  
 Davidson County, Tennessee  
 Base Map  
 Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet.