

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 15 1984

date entered JUL 12 1984

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

1. Name

historic Richards, Newton Copeland House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 975 Peabody Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Vickie Lynn Starr

street & number 975 Peabody Avenue

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38104

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Shelby County Registrar

street & number 160 N. Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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 date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located in the residential Midtown section of Memphis, Tennessee (pop. 667,150), the Newton Copeland Richards House (ca. 1890) is a two-and-one-half-story frame house in the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles. The tall and narrow structure is situated atop a low rise above the grade of Peabody Avenue and is oriented on a north-south axis. The building's exterior is distinguished by a two-story porch with turned posts, a square baywindow, and a complex hip-and-gable roof. The interior has a noteworthy Eastlake staircase, original mantels and other woodwork, and still functional gas-and-electric lighting fixtures. The houses and apartment buildings surrounding the Richards House date primarily from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The building retains its exterior and interior architectural integrity to a high degree.

The front (north) facade of the structure is three bays wide and features an unusual two-level porch composition on the northwest corner. The lower entrance porch is curved in a three-quarter semi-circle that extends beyond the western building line of the structure. The porch is covered by a low conical roof that is supported by paired turned posts. An apron screen of fine turnings and sawn brackets decorate the eaves. The upper porch is built into the corner of the structure and features an elaborate screen of scrollwork and turnings arranged around a circular reveal on both the northern and western exposures.

To the side of the lower porch is a projecting square baywindow that contains a pair of 1/1 double-hung sash windows covered with a pent roof with scalloped shingles. Above the baywindow, a simple bay of paired 1/1 double-hung sash windows is featured. The remainder of the front facade is divided by decorative band courses; a band of narrow vertical paneling at the first-story sill and between the first and second stories, and a band of scalloped shingles between the top of the second-story windows and the gable end. The band courses continue on the side facades. The front gable end is filled with narrow diagonal paneling around a triplet of square, fixed lights. An attic vent of diaper patterned lattice fills the peak.

An unusual feature of the front facade is the small roof turret above the second-story porch. The sides of the conical-roofed turret contain stained glass panels, and its interior is accessible from the attic. According to local tradition, the turret was lit by a hanging lantern when the Richards family received guests. The glasswork remains intact though covered by tarpaper around 1955.

The side and rear (south) elevations are quite plain in comparison with the front. The band courses of narrow paneling from the front facade are continued along both the eastern and western side elevations. In addition the eastern elevation contains a two-story polygonal baywindow near the middle of the facade and a hooded porch that leads to the butler's pantry of the interior. The rear (east) elevation shows evidence of a partially open two-story rear porch that contains a service stair. The porches were enclosed with weatherboards around 1935.

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Richards, Newton Copeland House

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The interior plan of the structure is a skillful adaptation of a standard urban plan with the major rooms lying to one side of a stairhall. Rather than the long single flight of stairs, the Richards House features a short hall that terminates in a grand, open-well, four-run stair. The staircase is finely crafted in cherry, chestnut, mahogany, and red gum. The hall is dominated by a massive turned cherry post which doubles as a newel post and as a support for the upper hall floor. The balustrade of the stairs is composed of rope-turned balusters, with a small newel topped by a ball finial at each landing. A diaper pattern cornice apron of fine cherry dowels and balls is suspended from the ceiling on either side of the post and is supported by sawn brackets in a sunburst pattern. The stairhall also contains a simple modillioned mantelpiece with tan colored tiles. This mantel appears to be a ca. 1920 replacement.

The formal parlor and the dining room lie to the east side of the hall and are interconnected by a pair of original sliding doors. The parlor is accessible from the hall by a six-panel cherry door. The parlor itself is a modestly detailed space except for the elaborate Eastlake mahogany mantel and its light blue floral tiles. The dining room features a built-in china closet with glass doors and an ornate Eastlake cherry mantel with carved panels. Both rooms contain original chandeliers and wall sconces which combine gas and electric lighting elements in each fixture and are still operable. Sliding doors connect the dining room with the hall.

To the rear of the first floor are the butler's pantry, kitchen, informal dining area, and original bathroom. These rooms are simply detailed with similar moldings to the front rooms and with wainscoting of narrow vertical paneling. In the rear (southwest) corner is the enclosed service stairs to the second floor, which was once partially open as a porch.

The second floor of the house has the master bedrooms towards the front of the building, and the children's rooms, closets, and servants' quarters to the rear. A small former sunroom is located behind the enclosed former porch and has been converted into a bathroom. Master bedroom features include original cast-iron mantels with Eastlake stenciling and transomed doors with the same molding used throughout the lower floor. The rear bedrooms and the bath are very simply detailed spaces. Near the rear of the second floor is an attic stairs.

The only outbuilding on the property is a later garage which stands on the site of the original carriage house. A well has been found near the northwest corner of the Richards House. The informal landscaping is limited to a few mature trees and shrubs.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates ca. 1890 **Builder/Architect** Robert Brinkley Snowden (attrib)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Newton Copeland Richards House (ca.1890) is nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its significance to Memphis and Shelby County through its architectural importance and its association with prominent businessmen of the city. The building is a noteworthy example of the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles as shown in its qualities of design and craftsmanship. The house was built at the beginning of the establishment of the city's architecturally important streetcar suburbs between 1885 and 1930. The building also holds significance in the areas of commerce and local history as the home of two presidents of the Memphis Cotton Exchange, Newton Copeland Richards and Mather T. Richards.

The Newton Copeland Richards House was constructed between August 30, 1889 and June of 1890 as one of the first residences within the George Peabody Subdivision, later known as Estival Park. At the time, the property lay outside the incorporated city limits of Memphis and was not annexed until around 1903. The subdivision was developed by the George Peabody Real Estate Company, with architect/developer Robert Brinkley Snowden as its president.

The structure occupies lot 44 and part of the west side of lot 43 in the George Peabody Subdivision, which was purchased from the land company by Newton C. Richards on August 30, 1889. Richards also signed a mortgage on the same day for over \$5,000, which is believed to have been used as a construction loan for the building of Richards' residence. If so, the total cost for the land and the house construction was approximately \$6,500. It is assumed that construction of the structure was completed by June of 1890. On June 18 of 1890 Richards purchased the remainder of lot 43 from the George Peabody Real Estate Company. A carriage house was later constructed on this lot.

The qualities of planning and craftsmanship evident in the Richards House indicate the employment of a skilled architect to design and construct the building. Though the architect for the structure has not been conclusively identified, the design is attributed to Robert Brinkley Snowden (1869-1942). Snowden is well known for his contributions to the design and development of residential and commercial architecture in the city of Memphis, most notably that of his own residence, Ashlar Hall, built in 1896 (N.R. 1983). It is suspected that his association with Richards through the George Peabody Real Estate Company may lead to Snowden's design of the structure.

The Richards House is one of the finest frame examples in Memphis of the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles. The exterior of the building is noteworthy for the large oval openings and other decorative features of its front porch. The interior has one of the best Eastlake staircases remaining in the city, as well as rare functioning gas-and-electric lighting fixtures. Memphis has very few surviving Queen Anne and Eastlake frame buildings which retain the high level of architectural integrity found in the Richards House.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis, TN-Ark.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 16 770720 3891580
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is bounded on the north by Peabody Avenue and on the east, south, and west by adjoining property lines. The nomination includes only the city lot historically associated with the house.

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vickie L. Starr (property owner), and John L. Hopkins, Director

organization Memphis Heritage, Inc. date April 1984

street & number P.O. Box 3143 telephone 901-529-9828

city or town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hoyer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/11/84

For NPS use only

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

for [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 7/12/84

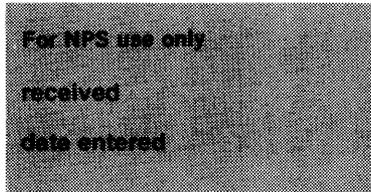
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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The original owner of the structure was Newton C. Richards (1854-1934) who was to become an important and influential member of the Memphis cotton industry after moving from New Orleans at age 29. Richards came to Memphis to oversee the cotton factor offices of Thomas H. Allen and Company. In 1891, Richards joined the cotton firm of Gordon, Pritchett and McCormack, which later became McCormack, Richards and Company. In this period, Richards saw the company develop into an important enterprise within the cotton trade. From 1902 to 1904 Richards served as the sixteenth president of the Memphis Cotton Exchange, and continued to be an influential member of the Exchange until his death.

Richards' son, Mather T. Richards (1892-1975) was born in the home of his father, and continued to live in the structure after his father's death. Mather Richards continued his family's involvement in the cotton industry, and followed in his father's footsteps as president of the Memphis Cotton Exchange during 1948 and 1949. After moving from the house in 1951, Richards sold the property to cousin, W.A. Wigginston, who carefully altered the property for four apartments. The structure remained in the hands of Richards' family descendants until 1981. Its current owner, Vickie Starr, is carefully returning the house to its original appearance and use as a single family dwelling.

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Major Bibliographical References

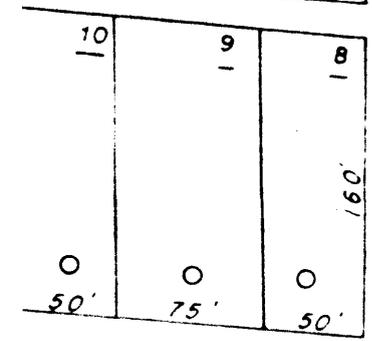
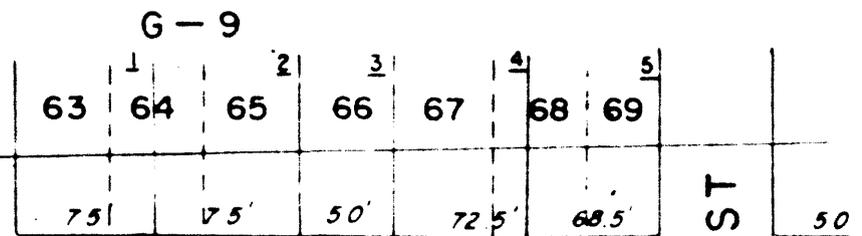
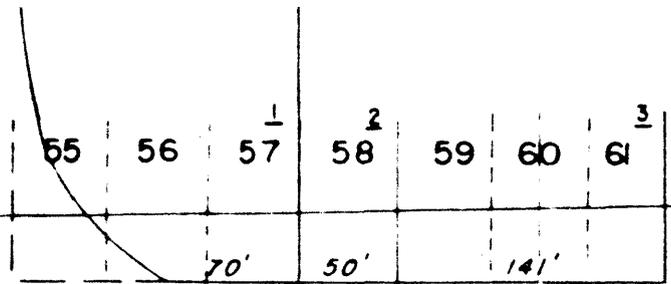
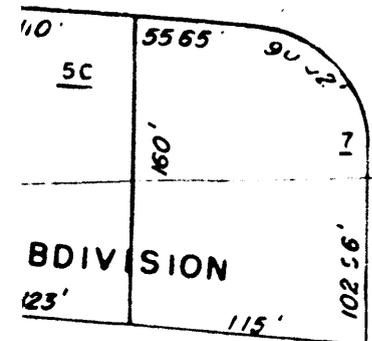
Interviews by Vickie Starr with Mrs. Mather Richards, Kitty Nowlin, and Margaret Campbell.
Fall 1983.

Magness, Perry. Good Abode: Nineteenth Century Architecture in Memphis and Shelby
County. Memphis: Junior League of Memphis and Towery Press, 1983.

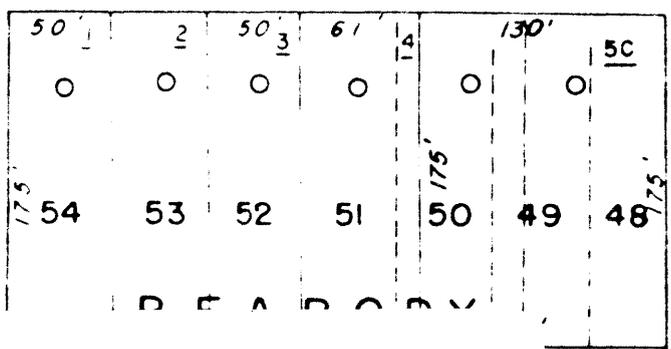
Memphis City Directory. 1890-1900.

Memphis Commercial Appeal: March 18, 1934; February 13, 1975; January 23, 1983.

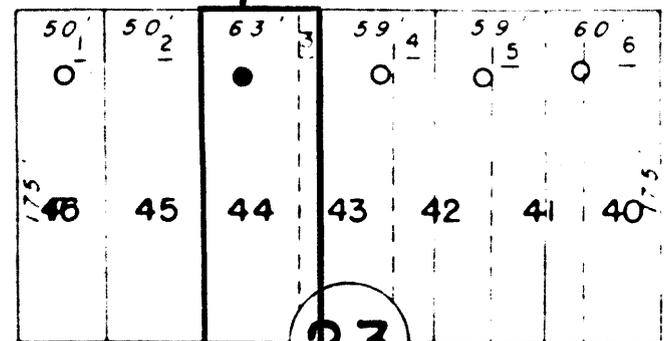
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ST.



D U D D L E Y



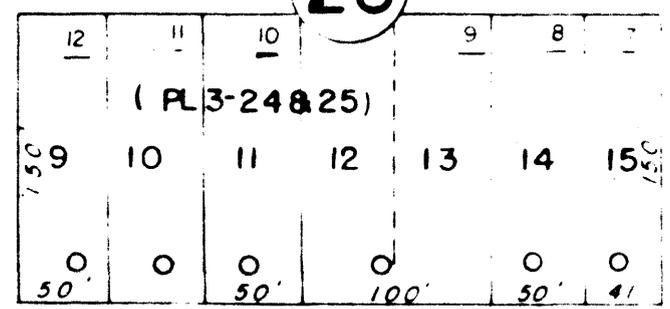
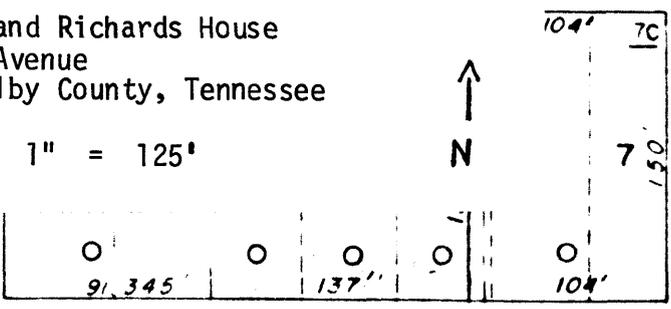
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ST.

Newton Copeland Richards House
975 Peabody Avenue
Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

Tax Map

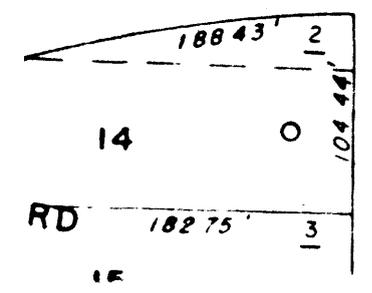
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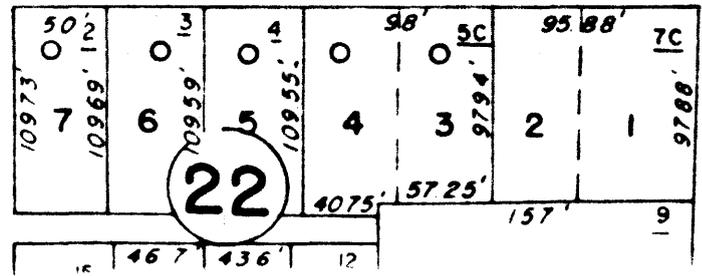
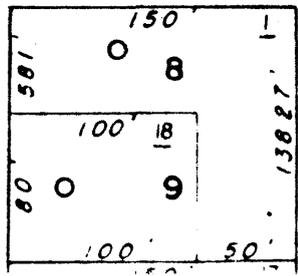
23

(PL 3-24 & 25)

E . H . C R U M P B L V



EAST



22

