

**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 Demonbreun's Cave

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 1700 Omohundro Drive not for publication

city, town Nashville vicinity of congressional district Fifth

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<u> </u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture	<u> </u> museum
<u> </u> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial	<u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational	<u> </u> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment	<u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government	<u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial	<u> </u> transportation
		<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: None

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Davidson County Courthouse, Registrar's Office

street & number Public Square

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Tennessee Historical and Architectural has this property been determined eligible? yes no
Survey

date July 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 4721 Trousdale Drive

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37219

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Demonbreun's Cave is located in the south bluff of the Cumberland River in Davidson County, Tennessee, two and one-half miles east of the courthouse in Nashville. The limestone cave's main entrance is situated approximately twenty feet above average water level and forty feet below the crest of the bluff.

The main passageway, which branches into several minor passages, is approximately 125 feet long and averages six feet in height and width. The passageway opens inland into a forested ravine—approximately forty feet below and thirty feet south of Omohundro Drive which crosses over the cave—which is located under tract 11 and part of tract 19 on the enclosed map.

The two entrances were railed by the Colonial Dames of America approximately fifty years ago in order to prohibit trespassing, protect enclosed artifacts, and prevent the entry of refuse during high water. The artifacts have since been removed and part of the iron railing has been stripped.

A single story, weatherboard house, built ca. 1950, located on tract 11 of the enclosed map, is within the boundaries of the nominated property.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Jacques Timothé DeMont Brun, native of Quebec and resident of Kaskaskia, first visited the French Lick on the Cumberland River in Middle Tennessee in 1769. Due to the gatherings of large herds of deer and buffalo at the salt lick, he established a trading post where he bartered for skins with Cherokee hunters.

Demonbreun spent nearly every autumn and winter of the following twenty years trading at the lick, excepting his tenure as Lt. Commandant (governor) of the Illinois Country during 1783–86. Although he was not generally regarded to be a threat to the security of the hunting grounds, on at least one occasion Demonbreun found refuge from attackers in a cave approximately three miles east of the lick.

Due to the elevation of the main cave entrance in the south bluff above the river, an obscure rear entrance, and good ventilation, he was able to reside securely in the cave for a week. His wife, Terese, reputedly gave birth to the first Caucasian born in Middle Tennessee in Demonbreun's Cave.

Although there are many myths surrounding Demonbreun, and there are disagreements by historians as to the amount of time Demonbreun actually spent in the cave, there is general agreement that he did occupy the cave on occasions, sometimes to escape the pursuit of Indians.

By 1790, Demonbreun had secured his family from the Illinois Country, settled in a log cabin, and became a successful domestic merchant. On May 11, 1821, the first Mass said by a Bishop in Nashville took place in his home. On November 4, 1826, the Nashville Banner and Whig printed the following notice:

"Died in this town, on Monday evening last, Capt. Timothy DeMunbrane, a venerable citizen of Nashville, and the first white man that ever emigrated to this vicinity."

Timothy DeMonbreun's courage, solitary life, and fair trading practices, prepared the way for the permanent settlement of Middle Tennessee and Demonbreun's Cave may very well have saved his life. It has long been a landmark on the Cumberland River.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cate, Wirt Armistead, "Timothy Demonbreun." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Vol. XVI, No. 3, September 1957.
 DeMunbreun, Truman Weldon, The Forgotten Frenchman, Nashville: Jacque Timothé Boucher Sieur de Montbrun Society, 1977.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 1

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Nashville East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	2	5	5	5	0	4	0	0	2	1	2	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

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 boundary of Demonbreun's Cave nomination, shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled Davidson Co., TN, Sheet P94B and drawn at a scale of 200 feet to the inch, encompasses the entire area occupied by the cave.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Britt Casteel, Research Assistant

organization Tennessee Historical Commission

date November 1979

street & number 4721 Trousdale Drive

telephone (615) 741-2371

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee 37219

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Harold L. Hayden

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 11/27/79

For HCERS use only

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

Sally G. O'Leary
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/7/80

Attest: *Beth Grosvenor*
Chief of Registration

date 2/4/80

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED	FEB 7 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 2

Hugh D. Claughton, DVM
6043 Charlotte Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37209

Mrs. Fred H. Gates
1700 Omohundro Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37210

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

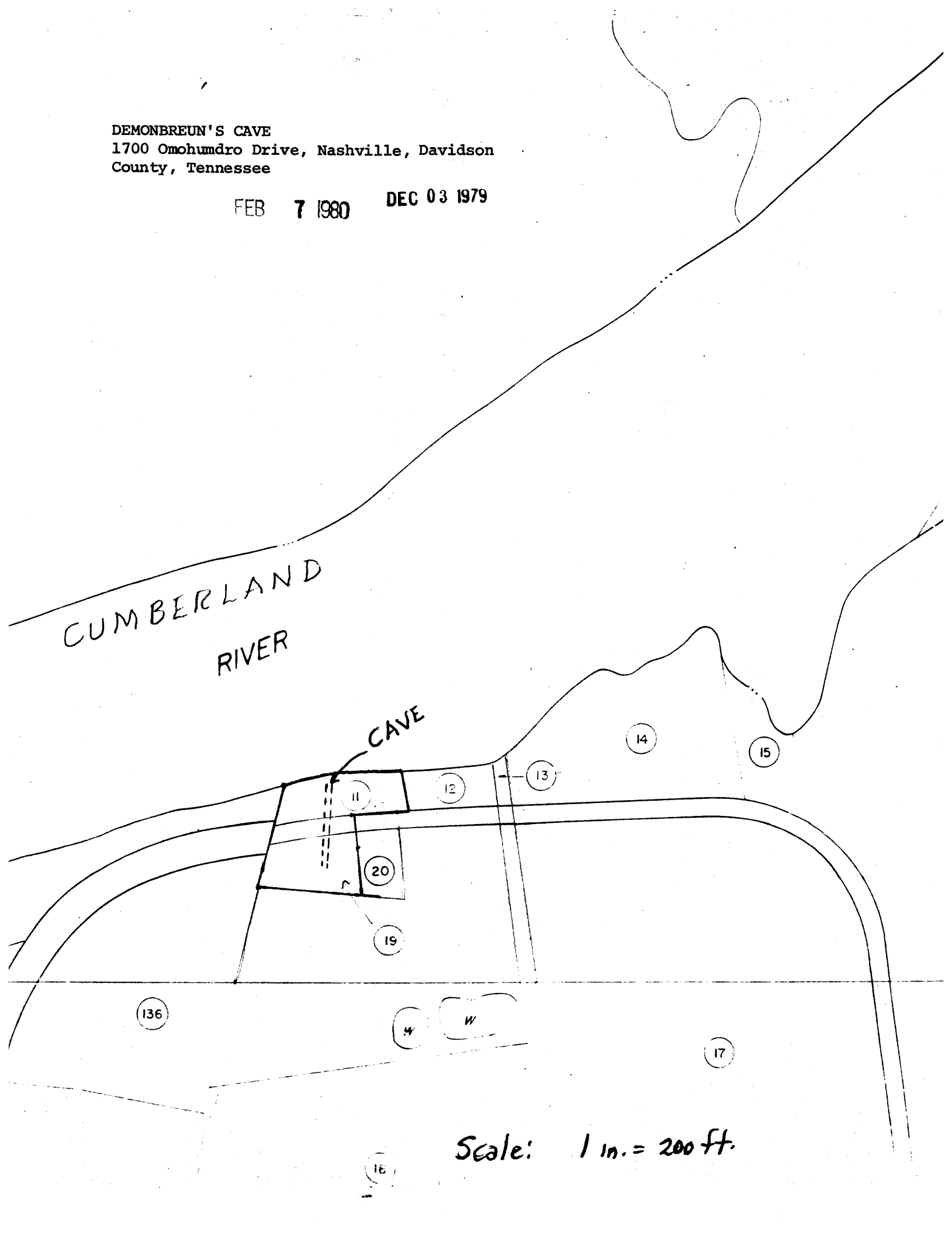
Formsbee, Corlew, and Mitchell, Tennessee: A Short History, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969.

Haywood, John, Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee, Knoxville: Tenase Co. (reprint), 1969.

Guild, Josephus C., Old Times in Tennessee, Knoxville: Tenase Co., (reprint) 1971.

DEMONBREUN'S CAVE
1700 Omohundro Drive, Nashville, Davidson
County, Tennessee

FEB 7 1980 DEC 03 1979



Scale: 1 in. = 200 ft.