

**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 Maxwellton

and/or common Sneed House

2. Location

street & number 3105 Southern Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Memphis _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Eighth

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name John Sneed Ewell

street & number 3105 Southern

city, town Memphis _____ vicinity of _____ state Tennessee 38111

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Registrar

street & number Shelby County Courthouse

city, town Memphis _____ state Tennessee 38104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Memphis Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January 1978 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Memphis Landmarks Commission, Falls Building, 22 North Front Street

city, town Memphis _____ state Tennessee 38103

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

The one story, frame weather-boarded house is of a Victorian vernacular form characterized by a front porch in antis, sometimes referred to as "pianobox" style.

Bays at each end of the facade (north elevation) are centered by a recessed porch, with an entry to an offset central hall and side entries to each bayed room. The balustrade, which probably was originally wooden, has been changed to wrought iron. A gable roof, with an added shed roof in the back is now covered with asphalt shingles. The house rests on brick piers with lattice trim separating them. Windows are four over four double hung sashes. Shutters of modern construction have been added. A projecting bay with two windows appears in each end bay; centered above it in the gable is a wood ventilation grill. The house has three brick chimneys.

The interior of the house clearly reflects its Victorian origins. Fourteen foot ceilings, porcelain door knobs, four inch pine board floors, and Victorian fireplaces with wooden mantel and tile surrounds and hearths appear in the five fireplaces in the house. The unaltered interior rooms of the house include an entry hall with attic access, a large central room now used as a dining room, with a fireplace utilizing two shared chimneys.

To the rear of the house is a series of rooms which have been added in what was probably originally a back porch.

The house sits to the south of the Southern Railroad easement approximately 150 feet. Old plantings of cedar and oak trees confirm the age of the house, which is approached by a circular driveway. Remaining on the lot is a sunken, brick walled "greenhouse," approximately eight feet deep, ten feet long and four feet deep, which was originally covered with movable glass panels, and was used to winter plants.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1874 **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Maxwelton is the only extant example of "pianobox" styling in Memphis, and in addition it is a very well preserved example of vernacular Victorian architecture. Its construction date is difficult to determine. 1874 has been referred to as the date of the house because newspaper clippings and deed records show the Sneed family to be living there at that time. However, oral history reveals that the house was purchased from Levi Joy, who, according to city directories, was living in the area in 1872. Tax records indicate an 1860 construction date for the house, and again, according to oral history, events associated with the Civil War occurred here. Therefore, 1874 has been assigned as the latest (and most certain) date of construction, although the house could be earlier.

The property, which includes the house tract, was owned by E. A. Spottswood in 1860; there is no record of when or how he took possession. The Spottswood estate sold the property to Minerva O. Anthony in 1869, and she in turn sold the property to John Sneed in 1874. John Sneed was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1820 at the home of his maternal grandfather, John Louis Taylor, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. He moved to West Tennessee when a child, and received his education while living at the home of General Calvin Jones in Bolivar, Tennessee, and practiced law in Hardeman County. He served as a captain in the Mexican War, and was appointed a brigadier general in the Provisional Army of Tennessee during the Civil War by Governor Isham G. Harris. In 1845 he was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly; in 1848 as attorney general of the Memphis Judicial District; and in 1854 to the office of attorney general of Tennessee and court reporter for the Tennessee Supreme Court, where he served five years. In 1859, he was a Whig party candidate for U.S. Congress, but was defeated. In 1870 he was elected to the Tennessee Supreme Court where he served eight years. In 1879 he was a Judge of the Court of Arbitration. He was a Democratic elector for the state of Tennessee in the eighties and nineties. From 1894 until his retirement in 1900 he served as chancellor of the Chancery Court of Shelby County. He was one of the founders of St. John's Episcopal Church, and its sole financial support for ten years.

The house is one of the earliest and few remaining segments of a town called Buntyn. Buntyn in 1890 had a population of approximately 200, and began as a farm community. It was favored with a station on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, which bisected the community, and it grew as a small trade and transportation center which retained its character until the first quarter of the 20th century. The area was annexed by the expanding city of Memphis in 1929.

The house is occupied and well maintained by the great-great-nephew of Judge John Sneed. It has remained in the Sneed family for 105 years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Bolivar Bulletin, July 22, 1938.

The Commercial Appeal, January 21, 1846, January 10, 1874, August 2, 1894, July 10, 1901, August 10, 1901.

The Evening Scimitar, July 29, 1901.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 1.5

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Southeast Memphis

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
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2	3	0
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4	5	0
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3	8	8	9
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5	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property, Maxwellton, comprises Lot 2 of the E. A. Spottswood subdivision; it is essentially a rectangular tract which measures 185.28' x 346.8' x 192.42' x 346.8' and is recorded in Shelby County; Lot Book 1, page 1. This is the entire tract owned by John Ewell Sneed.

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 Bettie Shink and Ann K. Bennett

organization Metropolitan InterFaith Association and Memphis Landmarks Commission

date August 14, 1979

street & number Falls Building, 22 North Front Street

telephone (901) 528-2834

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Hayden

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 1/8/80

For HCRS use only

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

W. Ray Luce

date 3/10/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Kristin O'Connell*

date 2/29/80

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 23 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAR 10 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Maxwelton is the only extant example in Memphis of a type of Victorian cottage of which only a few survive in Tennessee. This form is characterized by a distinctive U-shaped plan with the branches of the U joined by a porch. Most of the cottages of this type are single-story, frame, relatively stylistically simple buildings. Although essentially symmetrical, the entrance is sometimes placed off center. Especially distinctive features are the bay windows in each projecting branch and polar triangle attic vents; these elements emphasize the inherent symmetry usually found in this form.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED JAN 29 1980
DATE ENTERED MAR 10 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

J. M. Keating, History of the City of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee,
Vol. I. Syracuse: N.Y.: D. M. Mason and Co., 1888.

J. Harvey Mathes, The Old Guard in Gray, Memphis: S.C. Toof and Co., 1892.

J. P. Young, Standard History of Memphis, Tennessee. Knoxville: H. W. Crewe
and Co., 1912.