

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000301

Date Listed: 4/5/94


Freed, Julius, House
Property Name

Gibson
County

TENNESSEE
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

4/5/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 7

This nomination is amended to show that the Freed house is located east of the courthouse, not west, as is shown in the narrative.

This information was provided by the Tennessee SHPO (3/30/94)

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

MAR 4 1994

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Freed, Julius, House

other names/site number Trenton Community Center, Villa Free

2. Location

street & number Eaton Street N/A not for publication

city or town Trenton N/A vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Gibson code 053 zip code 38382

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 forth 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 2/25/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State of 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): _____

for Signature of the Keeper 4/5/94
Ma J. M. [Signature] Date of Action

Freed, Julius, House
Name of Property

Gibson Co., TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
1		sites
1	0	structures
		objects
5	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: government office

SOCIAL: meeting hall

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Upright and wing with Italianate
influences

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK: STONE

walls WEATHERBOARD

roof ASPHALT SHINGLE

other GLASS: METAL: Cast Iron

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets

Freed, Julius, House
Name of Property

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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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/ EUROPEAN-JEWISH
 ARCHITECTURE
 COMMERCE
 ART

Period of Significance

ca. 1871-c. 1935

Significant Dates

ca. 1871

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Freed, Julius

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 # _____

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

Freed, Julius, House
Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.81 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Trenton 437 NW

1

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

3

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Zone Easting Northing

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 Carroll Van West

organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date September 15, 1993

street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947

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 Trenton (Tommie Goodwin, mayor)

street & number 309 College Street telephone 901-855-2013

city or town Trenton state TN zip code 38382

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 listings. 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 20503.

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Freed, Julius, House, Gibson Co., TN

VII. DESCRIPTION

The Julius Freed House is located on a well-landscaped city lot of 1.81 acres on Eaton Street west of the county courthouse in Trenton, Gibson County, Tennessee. Built in circa 1871-72, the weatherboarded frame two-story dwelling, with asphalt shingle roof and brick foundation, exhibits the vernacular architectural form categorized as upright and wing (sometimes referred to as a gabled ell), with a prominent side gable extension on the western side of the main (north) facade. The house exhibits a strong degree of historic architectural integrity and has two contributing outbuildings standing south of the dwelling.

The north facade has three bays. The center bay contains the front entrance on the first floor, with the original single leaf wooden Eastlake-styled door now protected by a modern storm door. On the second floor is a companion doorway, again with the historic Eastlake-styled door intact that leads to a second story balcony. It, however, has an early twentieth century screen door. The windows of this facade all feature arched window hoods. The west bay has an one over one window, with original hardware intact, on the first floor while a double window of one over one lights is on the second floor. The eastern bay contains an Italianate-influenced and three-canted bay window on the first floor. An air-conditioner has been placed in the center window. These windows, too, are one over one, with the original glass intact. The first floor bay window is topped by a mansard-styled flat roof. Directly above is a double window, in the same style as the west bay, that leads to a tiny second floor balcony over the first floor bay window.

Unlike the typical upright and wing dwelling found in Tennessee, the front (north) facade of the Freed House has prominent gables, with returns, on both its west and east ends. Both gables have a small original ventilation grill. An original dormer window lies above the center bay and allowed light into the second floor center hallway. Connecting the gables is a wide cornice with regularly spaced pairs of of delicately cut brackets, typical of Italianate style. The bay window also has brackets immediately above its windows which are then topped by a wide cornice with much heavier, classically oriented brackets supporting the mansard roof of decorative cut shingles over the bay window. The front porch continues with the same paired bracket design found on the roof line, again supporting a mansard type roof of decorative cut shingles. Both mansard roofs over the bay window and the porch have original cast-iron railings, but in the mid-

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twentieth century an unknown family member added the distinctive cast iron cut-out figures of two cats on the bay window balcony. The original wooden porch, with delicate Victorian supports, was replaced between 1905 and 1910 with a concrete porch, supported by squared, paneled columns more in line with the Classical Revival then sweeping the country. Perhaps the most eye-catching element is the original rain gutter at the northwest corner of the dwelling. This metal gutter features a metal cut-out of a bird nesting at its very top.

The east elevation has undergone few changes since the 1870s. Two sections are discernible. The north section is two-story, with single Italianate-styled brackets on the wooden cornice. There are two original one over one windows, with decorative wooden Italianate-influenced lintels, at the northernmost end and a smaller one over one window, again with a decorative wooden Italianate-influenced lintel, on the second floor on the southern end. This small window provided light to a second-story bathroom. A corbeled brick central chimney is also evident in the two-story section. The southern section of the west elevation, however, differs from the two-story section. It is one-story and its cornice lacks decorative brackets, except for where a three-window bay window touches the roof line. The cornice of this bay window has the similar low-relief decorative bracketing found on the north facade windows. South of the bay window are two irregularly spaced one over one windows. The southernmost window is smaller and was probably altered when the kitchen area was modernized in the late 1930s. Between these two windows is a ventilation grill also added during the kitchen modernization.

The south elevation is the rear of the house and here the changes that the house experienced in the early twentieth century begin to become apparent. The three original interior corbeled brick chimneys are evident as is a modern brick chimney added to the exterior when the kitchen was modernized in the late 1930s. The elevation takes the form of the nineteenth-century "piano-box" vernacular form with two gable ends, with returns, connected by a center section. A wide, plain cornice links the three sections. There are windows in each gable end. The eastern one over one window is smaller than the western and was probably altered during the kitchen modernizations of the late 1930s. The western window, however, is four over four, double-hung. The center section has a modern storm door, flanked by two sets of matching windows and covered by a metal awning. This area was once a screened-in porch, but during the 1930s the family used wood

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paneling and the new windows to enclose the space. At this time they also added the present concrete steps and metal stair rail.

The west elevation exhibits the house's most significant architectural changes since its original construction. According to a historic photograph published in W. P. Greene's Gibson County, Tennessee: A Series of Pen and Picture Sketches (1901), the original west elevation contained two sections. The north section was two-story, with a paired decorative cornice, with returns, in the gable end. A double one over one window, with a low-relief decorative bracket lintel, stood on the second floor, while another three-window bay window, with Italianate-styled decorative brackets, mansard roof, and cast-iron railing, brought light into the first floor. The historic photograph also partially documents a south section of one-story, with the gable end facing west, that had featured a slightly arched four over four window with the shutters. The two-story north section is largely intact today. However, in the 1930s the family built a bathroom extension out from the southernmost window of the bay window. This extension has a flat roof, with a small window in its eastern end, and is poorly incorporated within the rest of the dwelling. The gable-end one-story wing documented in the 1901 photograph has also been changed. Probably altered during the time of the new porch construction in 1905 to 1910, this section is a largely unadorned extension of three rooms with a wide plain cornice linking three regularly spaced windows. Because each of the windows have the same slightly arched lintel noted in the historic photograph, and the interior woodwork is similar to the rest of the dwelling, it is believed that this section is the original wing, but that it was turned into a L-wing for unknown reasons in the early twentieth century.

The interior of the dwelling has many intact historic features. Its light fixtures, except for the ceiling fan added in the enclosed back porch on the first floor, date to the period when electricity became available in Trenton at the turn of the century. Pine hardwood floors exist throughout the house, although some floors have been carpeted. Steam radiators, added in circa 1928, are located throughout the dwelling as well. The interior floor plan of the house is a central hall plan variation typical of upright and wing form. From the front door, you enter a long central hall, measuring 12' 5" by 17' 11", that has the original staircase on the west side. The staircase features an original paneled newel post and original turned balusters. Flanking the center hall are a parlor (east) and a bedroom

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(west), which is now a pool room. As is common in this type of house, the parlor is the room created by the side gable and bay window on the front facade. Measuring 18' by 22' 2", the room has 12" wooden baseboards and original pine hardwood floors. The fireplace has tile flooring and the wooden decorative painted mantle is a very prominent, and significant, feature. Painted in the plain painter tradition by an unknown artist, the mantle has been decorated to simulate marble and has Eastlake-influenced geometrical designs and floral patterns. Directly above the coal grate is a landscape painting of a river valley. To either side of the grate are two additional landscape paintings. The west painting is a stream with trees; the east painting is of trees with hills.

The bedroom (now pool room) on the opposite side of the hallway also features a decorative painted mantle. No landscape paintings exist, but the mantle has been marbelized and also features geometric designs in the Eastlake tradition. The room measures 22' 6" by 16' 11" and has the original pine hardwood floors. Baseboards are 12" high and on the east side of the mantle is an original closet. In the southwest corner of the room is the door to the bathroom, added in the 1930s, previously noted on the west elevation. This bathroom exhibits some Art Deco design elements in its mirror, geometric designs in the tile, and a streamlined overhang over the tub. In general, it is representative of the standardized bathroom fixtures of the 1930s.

The basic floor plan of the entrance rooms of the house is generally repeated throughout the first floor. South of the parlor is the original dining room, which has 3' wooden wainscoting and measures 16' 11" by 21' 5". The room has original pine hardwood floors and three significant built-in features: a corner cupboard in the northeast corner, a classical influenced mantle, with overmantle mirror and the original grate, in the southwest corner, and in the northwest corner French doors with beveled glass that connects the parlor to the dining room.

The west wall of this room, however, was altered when the dwelling was remodeled for the use of the Senior Citizens Club after the city acquired the property in 1975. Its original opening to the central hall was enlarged and then the west wall of the central hall was removed so that the hall and what had been an original bedroom became one large (over 30 feet long) meeting room. The hall retains its original 3' wainscoting, but its pine hardwood floors were carpeted. The bedroom had no

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wainscoting and its pine hardwood floors have also been carpeted. In the southwest corner of the room is a door for another bathroom, which was modernized in the 1930s in the Art Deco style.

The rear sections of the first floor also mirror alterations made in the 1930s. South of the dining room is a pantry, then the kitchen. Both rooms were redecorated in the 1930s and most of the fixtures and hardware in both rooms date to that decade. An arched entrance was cut into the pantry's south wall to lead directly to the kitchen. The family recalls that \$5,000 was spent on remodeling the two rooms. West of the kitchen was the original rear porch of the house. This space, however, was enclosed during the 1930s renovations to create a sitting room. The original use of the room is clear from the weatherboard paneling still evident on the east and west walls of the room. On the east wall is a door to the kitchen while on the west wall are two matching doors leading to an original bedroom (now used for storage), measuring 15' 7" by 11' 10" and the earlier mentioned bathroom, measuring 15' 7" by 7' 6". On the north wall of the porch/sitting room (leading to the central hall) is an original Eastlake-styled door with a stained glass window.

The second floor of the dwelling has a central hall plan arrangement similar to that on the first floor. Original pine hardwood floors are intact and wooden baseboards, measuring 11", can be found in the three primary spaces: hall, master bedroom, and guest bedroom. The hall's north wall has an Eastlake-styled door that leads to a balcony. On its east wall is a door that leads into the large master bedroom. On the south wall of the master bedroom is an original wooden mantle, flanked by closets. The central hall's west wall has a door that leads into the guest bedroom. Again on the south wall of this room is an original wooden mantle, flanked by closets.

At the southwest corner of the second floor's central hall is the staircase. On the south wall of the central hall is a door that leads into a large storage area while south of this space is a small door that leads into the unfinished attic. At the southeast corner of the central hall is a door that leads into the second floor bathroom. This room too reflects Art Deco styling in its tilework, very similar to that found on the first floor, and dates to the 1930s.

The property has two contributing outbuildings. Immediately south of the dwelling is a weatherboard frame tool house (C) that

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dates to circa 1920. This building was the service area for the property's once extensive gardens. On the southern border is a weatherboard frame garage (C) that was built circa 1920.

Remaining elements of the early twentieth century landscaped gardens constitute a contributing site (C) in this nomination. For example, in the early 1900s, the family would plant some five to ten thousand tulips throughout the large lot. Implanted concrete walks, Celtic cross designs, and planters can still be found throughout the yard, suggesting the basic outlines of the gardens.

Defining the northern border of the property, separating the yard from the sidewalk, is a cast-iron fence that dates to at least 1900. This fence (C) is a second contributing structure in this nomination.

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VIII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Julius Freed House, originally constructed in circa 1871-72, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its significant association with Julius Freed, an important Jewish merchant in Trenton from the Reconstruction Era to the early twentieth century who was significant in the commercial development and history of Trenton. It is also eligible for its local significance in architecture as a historically intact example of an Italianate-influenced upright and wing vernacular dwelling and in art for its decorative painted mantles of the plain painter tradition.

Born in Prussia on January 25, 1835, Julius Freed immigrated to the United States as a young man in 1854, arriving in Columbus, Georgia, where he worked as a peddler. Three years later, Freed moved to Memphis and established a dry goods business. In 1860, he left for the railroad junction town of Jackson where he remained in business until April 1861. Following Governor Isham Harris's call for the militia, Freed left his Jackson business to join a company originally organized in Memphis. Consequently he served in the Fifteenth Tennessee Infantry of the Army of Tennessee, and was wounded in battle at Perryville, Chickamauga, and during the Atlanta campaign. Captured during Hood's attack on Nashville in December 1864, Freed became a prisoner of war for the rest of the Civil War.

Upon his release in May 1865, Freed moved to Trenton, a small railroad town and county seat in Gibson County. Like other hopeful entrepreneurs, Freed looked to build his fortune out of the ashes of the Civil War. But as a thirty-old Jewish merchant, Freed was eventually transformed in his private life as he adapted his ethnic background to the rural, Anglo-Saxon, and protestant world of Trenton and Gibson County. "Although Julius became a respected member of the community," observed family historian Lisa Freed, "the family's assimilation was never total because, like most Jews living in small towns in the South, Julius believed in preserving his heritage." (1)

In the late antebellum era, the South in general had attracted German Jewish immigrants because the setting and market conditions were like those many had experienced in Germany: largely rural, dependent on small trade centers where even a small amount of capital could go far. Julius' early career in the South certainly matched that general trend. Beginning as a peddler in Columbus, Georgia, he amassed enough capital to start his own small business in Memphis before moving to Jackson just

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as it was becoming an important regional railroad center at the start of the Civil War.

When he arrived in Trenton in 1865, Freed established a partnership with another new German Jewish merchant, Julius Ebert, as the major partner. At this time, Freed had already taken several steps toward cultural assimilation. His initial work as a peddler led him to lose his German accent and he thoroughly accepted regional foodways. But his "Hebraic features," as the family put it, still made Freed appear as the outsider, someone different in the community. Yet serving in the Civil War had accelerated his assimilation. As historian Lisa Freed noted, the war "Americanized" southern Jews "and enhanced their status." Freed "was chauvinistic about the South and proud of his service in the Confederacy" and he "became a charter member of the Col. R. M. Russell Camp No. 906, of the Confederate Veterans. (2) He also became a member of the Ku Klux Klan in a county that was particularly a stronghold for the organization. Freed joined because, in the words of his son, "all the Southern people did" and because it gave him more legitimacy, and acceptance, as a member of the community. In 1876, he became a member of a local fraternal lodge, the Peabody Lodge of the K of H (no reference to the full name of K of H can be located), and later joined the Knights of Pythias, which further signified his assimilation and acceptance in the Anglo culture of Trenton. (3)

The Ebert & Freed store met with gradual success and in 1871, Freed had gained enough financial independence to marry Henrietta Cohn, a German Jewish immigrant and the sister-in-law of Ebert. It was at this time, or within the following year, that Freed and his wife began the construction of their home on Eaton Street. During this decade, following the death of his partner Ebert in 1878, Freed opened his own business on the town square and by the late 1880s he too had taken in a German Jewish partner, as his business was known as J. Freed and Oppenheimer Dry Goods. He became a major investor in, and a trustee of, the local bank.

With his business success came political power. He served as a city alderman during the 1880s and in 1897 he was placed on the city board to manage the waterworks of Trenton. Yet, although Julius and his wife Henrietta assimilated to the foodways, lifestyles, and upper class customs of Southern life, they maintained several of their cultural traditions. According to the family history, they "inwardly maintained a consciousness of their Jewish identity." (4) For example, since the nearest synagogue (Temple Adas Israel--NR 1/9/79) was at Brownsville, the

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mother led observations of all of the Jewish holidays and special occasions at the home. Freed closed his store on these days as well. The family also sent all of the male children to the nearest Rabbi (Jackson or Memphis) for the infants to be circumcised. But while the family largely kept their religion private, they could not escape negative stereotypes of Jews that traveling revival shows would periodically bring to Trenton. Family historian Lisa Freed concluded that Julius Freed "never denied his heritage and he had contempt for those who did, especially the converted Jews brought to town as exhibits by evangelists touring the rural communities." As one of Freed's sons recalled,

You closed your store when these revivals were on. So they had this converted Jew preaching . . . And they marched down, the schoolchildren marched, and my father stood out in front of his store and this converted Jew who was leading the parade . . . came by and he knew that my father thought there was a little hypocrisy in that And he stopped and . . . he said something to my father: 'Well it's all right, it's all right.' My father said, "Well don't go on the other side of the street, 'cause if you're doing all right I'm gonna work the other side of the street myself!"
(5)

Freed maintained a position of prominence in Trenton until his death in 1908. In 1893, he had taken his son Henry into his mercantile business, now called J. Freed & Son (later Freed & Sons). When local businessmen compiled a booster history of the county in 1901, Julius Freed and his home were both pictured as examples of the best Gibson County had to offer. As his son later recalled, Julius Freed had established the mercantile business of Trenton, with the best stock of goods available and a very loyal patronage. The profits from the store allowed Freed and later his sons to continually expand the family's investments into local real estate and a cotton gin. Julius Freed had submerged enough of his Jewish identity to become part of the political, social, and economic ruling class of Trenton. Yet he remained proud of his ethnic heritage and the family, at home, maintained Jewish cultural traditions until his death.

After Julius Freed's death, five of his children continued to live in the house for the remainder of their lives and the changes the house experienced during the early twentieth century can be attributed to their needs and tastes. Their gracious home

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was "filled with oriental rugs and ornate fireplaces. Every wall of the dining room was lined with cabinets, filled with china, crystal and silver." Helen Freed called the house "Villa Freed," and she and her sister Katie surrounded the dwelling with "a beautiful garden full of roses, tulips, hyacinths, and buttercups." (6) The Freeds took on the trappings of the Southern upper-class, even hiring African-American youngsters as playmates and joining the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

The children of Julius and Henrietta Freed proved much more assimilated than their parents ever were. The family even came to practice such Christian holidays as Christmas and Easter. "In a small town, without a wider Jewish community to buttress a sense of religious independence, it is a great deal to ask of a family to be the only house on the block with a somber mood at Christmastime," concluded historian Eli Evans. "Some Jews gave in slowly, others acquiesced totally, a few watched their children convert and blend in completely." (7)

The Freed children became one of the dominant families in Trenton during the first half of the twentieth century. Joe Freed was a local political power, serving as a city alderman for over 35 years and becoming a political ally of Senator Kenneth McKellar. Sylvane Freed was president of the Bank of Trenton and stayed involved with this institution for over 60 years." In 1961, two local historians concluded that the Freeds "have made many contributions [a city fountain, ball park] to the town's public good, especially to the city schools, where they were all happy in the early school days." (8) One of the family's last acts of generosity was to give the city an unique and valuable set of Veilleuse-Theieres (night light teapots) from the collection of Dr. Frederick Freed and to donate the family home as a memorial to Julius and Henrietta Freed in 1975-76.

The house is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a significant local example of upright and wing Victorian-influenced architecture and for the local plain painter tradition represented by the two first floor mantles. Built in circa 1871-72, the house's upright and wing Victorian configuration was a first for Trenton (judging by the dates of the remaining historic buildings in town). Its architectural distinctiveness was also demonstrated when the dwelling was one of the few Trenton homes included in the 1901 booster publication about Gibson County. The building exhibits both Italianate influences (the brackets on the cornice; the bay windows) and Second Empire influences (mansard-like roofs on the balconies)

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typical of vernacular-based structures built in the region following the Civil War. Both Victorian styles were actually introduced before the war, but in smaller southern towns Italianate and Second Empire-influenced homes were often built during the Reconstruction Era.

The painted mantles in the parlor and the bedroom (now pool room) of the first floor are the only identified examples of decorative interior painting known in Trenton. The artist is unknown. The reliance on Eastlake designs shown on both Freed mantles is reminiscent of a decorative painted ceiling at the Meady White House in Saltillo, Hardin County (NR 7/1/93). But the decorative scheme at the Meady White House did not include any extant examples of landscape painting, as found on the parlor mantle of the Freed House. The depicted scenes include a quiet river valley, a stream in a forest, and trees in the hills. The best documented plain painter of Tennessee during the late Victorian period, Fred Swanton who worked in Middle Tennessee during the 1880s, shows a reliance on landscape motifs. (9) Southerners became entranced by landscape painting in the late antebellum period and continued to prefer these scenes of unblemished nature at the time the Freed House was constructed. As extant local examples of this under-documented art form in Tennessee, the painted landscape scenes on the parlor mantle are of unusual significance and deserving of further study.

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Endnotes

1. Lisa Freed, "The Freed Family: Jewish Transformation in the South," Thesis, Bennington College, 1978, p. 3.
2. Ibid., 14-15.
3. Ibid., 16.
4. Ibid., 17.
5. Ibid., 18.
6. Ibid., 21.
7. Eli Evans, The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South (New York, 1976), 140.
8. Frederick M. Culp and Mrs. Robert E. Rose, Gibson County: Past and Present (Trenton, TN, 1961), 110.
9. Carroll Van West, "Middle Tennessee Houses and the Plain Painter Tradition: The Work of Fred Swanton in the Late Victorian Period," Forthcoming Paper to be presented at Ohio Valley History Conference, Western Kentucky University, October 1993.

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X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property corresponds with the attached map which marks the boundaries of city lot "E"-6 of the property tax map for Trenton, Gibson County, Tennessee.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries of 1.81 acres contain all of the historic property associated with the Julius Freed House since its original construction in circa 1871-72.

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Freed, Julius, House, Gibson Co., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Freed, Julius, House
Trenton, Gibson Co., TN

PHOTOS BY: Carroll Van West
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Box 80, MTSU
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

DATE: May 1993

NEGATIVES: Tennessee Historical Commission
701 Broadway
Nashville, TN 37243

North facade, facing south
1 of 35

East elevation, facing west
2 of 35

South elevation, facing north
3 of 35

West elevation, facing northeast
4 of 35

West elevation, facing east
5 of 35

North facade, facing southeast
6 of 35

Garden house outbuilding, facing southwest
7 of 35

Garage outbuilding, facing south
8 of 35

Celtic cross's garden element, facing east
9 of 35

First floor hallway, staircase, facing southwest
10 of 35

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First floor staircase, facing south
11 of 35

First floor hallway, facing north
12 of 35

West parlor (poolroom), facing south
13 of 35

Eastlake decorated mantle, west parlor, facing south
14 of 35

Bathroom off of west parlor, facing west
15 of 35

East parlor, facing north
16 of 35

East parlor, facing south
17 of 35

Eastlake painted mantle, east parlor, facing south
18 of 35

Detail, decorative painting, mantle, east parlor, facing south
19 of 35

Detail, decorative painting, mantle, east parlor, facing south
20 of 35

Dining room, facing northeast
21 of 35

Dining room, facing south into kitchen
22 of 35

Hallway, meeting room (altered bedroom), facing west
23 of 35

Bathroom, off of altered bedroom, facing northeast
24 of 35

Hallway, first floor, facing south
25 of 35

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Kitchen into pantry, facing northeast
26 of 35

Doorway, second floor, facing northeast
27 of 35

Hallway, second floor, facing south
28 of 35

Mantle, east bedroom, second floor, facing south
29 of 35

East bedroom, second floor, facing southeast
30 of 35

Mantle, west bedroom, second floor, facing south
31 of 35

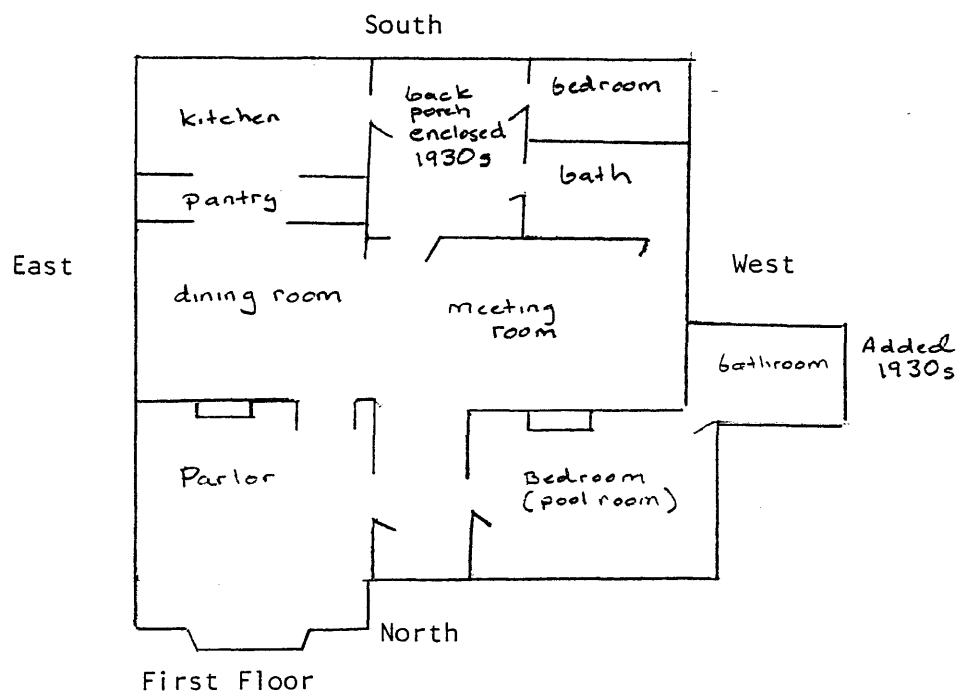
West bedroom, second floor, facing southeast
32 of 35

Bathroom, second floor, facing west
33 of 35

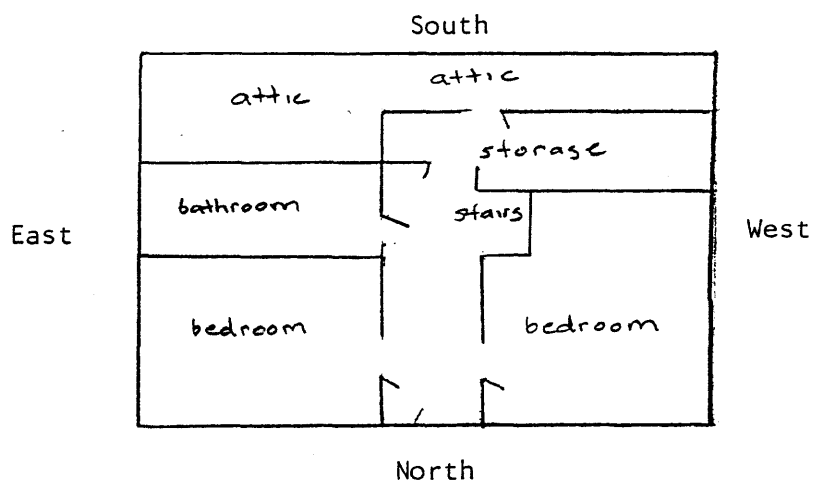
Storage room, second floor, facing west
34 of 35

Unfinished attic, second floor, facing southeast
35 of 35

Interior Floor Plans: Freed House, Trenton, Gibson County, TN



Second Floor



Not to Scale

