

**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 Leonard B. Fite House

and/or common Monthaven

**2. Location**

street & number 1154 W. Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Hendersonville N/A vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state Tennessee code 047 county Sumner code 165

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name The R. W. Comer and Sons Trust, c/o Mr. T. W. Comer

street & number 260 West Main Street

city, town Hendersonville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37075

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registrar of Deeds

street & number Sumner County Courthouse

city, town Gallatin state Tennessee 37066

**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

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Located approximately two miles west of Hendersonville and twelve miles north of Nashville in Sumner County, Tennessee, the L. B. Fite House faces south on the crest of a hill overlooking Gallatin Pike. A paved, tree-lined drive extends north approximately 400 feet from stone entrance gates along the road to within 150 feet of the house. At this point the drive forks; the west fork leads to a garage near the northwest corner of the house while the east fork leads to a residence several hundred feet northeast of the Fite house. The house itself is approached by a brick sidewalk laid in a herringbone pattern and lined with large trees and shrubbery.

Built circa 1860, the Fite House is a two-story L-shaped brick and frame structure with gable roof and stone foundation. The house's central hall plan, pedimented portico and symmetrical fenestration are typical of Greek Revival plantation homes in Middle Tennessee. However, the use of arched window and door openings and carved cornice brackets indicate the growing influence of Victorian decoration.

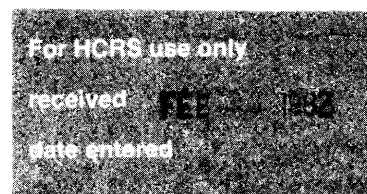
The five-bay main section, covered with weatherboard and flanked by brick exterior end chimneys, is dominated by a two-story central pedimented portico supported by fluted Ionic columns set on a cut marble porch. Paired brackets decorate the molded cornice of the pediment, in the center of which is an ornate circular wood vent. Fluted Ionic pilasters frame the central bay, which contains an elaborately treated recessed entrance and, above it, a pair of casement windows with wrought iron balconet. A molded elliptical arch frames the entrance, which is divided into three sections by molded round arches with colonettes. The central section contains a single leaf door with arched transom; to either side are arched sidelights above wood panels. In the second story a segmented arched opening with wood surrounds contains a pair of three-light casement windows. In each story of the remaining four bays is a rectangular two over two double hung sash window with bracketed sill, louvered exterior blinds and a segmental arch applied to the window head. A molded cornice with paired brackets and a plain frieze extends across the facade.

On the west elevation a three-bay, two-story brick ell laid in common bond is flush with the main section and contains a doorway covered by a one-story porch and four over four sash windows set into segmental arched openings with stone sills and louvered exterior blinds. Originally a one-story brick kitchen was located to the rear of the ell; this has been attached to the ell and its side porches enclosed with brick. The two stage porch which extended along the ell's east elevation has also been enclosed with brick. Windows in this enclosed section are primarily casement and fixed sash. A one-story flat-roofed brick section that is both one bay deep and wide abuts the east side of the ell and the rear elevation of the main section. The window in each elevation is similar to those in the west elevation of the ell.

In 1953 a one-story sunporch was added to the east elevation of the main section. Under a flat roof decorated with wrought iron railing, square wood posts alternate with three glass jalousie panels.

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The interior plan of the Fite House reflects the house's transitional character. As was typical of Greek Revival residences in Tennessee, the main entrance opens onto a wide central hall. Sliding double doors beneath a four-light transom provide access to a parlor and study on the west and east respectively. The unusual feature of the first floor plan is the rear stair hall located behind the parlor and at a right angle to the central hall. A dog-leg stairway with turned balusters is set against the rear hall's south wall. The remainder of the first floor contains a bedroom behind the study, a bath and small hall at the rear of the central hall and a kitchen and dining room in the ell, in addition to the enclosed porch area. A large central hall at the top of the stairway leads to bedrooms at the front of the house and in the ell. Outstanding interior features include a marble Greek Revival mantel in the parlor and wide plank poplar flooring on the second floor.

Several outbuildings are in close proximity to the house. Behind the one-story brick section and east of the ell is an octagonal well house with diagonal framing, roof trim using a dart motif and an octagonal roof covered with wood shakes and topped by a finial. Located to the rear of the house are (moving west to east) a circa 1940 3-car frame garage with gable roof, a 1½ story frame smokehouse with gable roof and 3 frame sheds. The latter buildings appear to have been constructed in the early 1900s.

West of the garage is a 1-story L-shaped log house; this building was moved in 1930 from its original site along Center Point Road, which runs along the western boundary of the farm. Set on a stone foundation, the house has a gable roof, V corner notching and an interior stone chimney at the rear of the main section. The 3-bay main elevation contains a central entrance flanked by small 2 over 2 double hung sash windows. The date of construction is unknown but the quality of workmanship would indicate the first half of the nineteenth century.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** ca. 1860 **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Criteria B, C

The L. B. Fite House, built ca. 1860, is a late example of a Greek Revival Period plantation house exhibiting elements of the Victorian Period. Typical of Tennessee's Greek Revival Period in form and massing, the Fite House displays Victorian decoration through arched window and door openings and carved cornice brackets. Interior architectural features display the transitional feeling of the house through a subtle blending of elements common to both periods. Although the basic significance of the property is architectural, additional importance is derived from its long association with two prominent Nashville businessmen.

Leonard Beard Fite (1811-1882) moved to Nashville from Smith County, Tennessee in 1830 and by 1834 had opened a lucrative retail and wholesale dry goods store. In 1850 Fite purchased 306 acres of farmland on Mansker's Creek in Sumner County. He continued to live in Nashville until 1860 or 1861 when he sold his thriving business and shortly afterwards moved to his "pleasant home" <sup>1</sup> in Sumner County. It is believed that Fite had the house constructed prior to selling L. B. Fite and Company, his Nashville business. Fite continued to live in the house until his death in 1882.

Descendants of L. B. Fite sold the house and farm in the mid-1930s to Mont B. Comer. In 1914 Mont Comer's father, R. W. Comer, founded Washington Manufacturing Company and by 1917 both Mont Comer and his brother, Guy, had joined their father in establishing one of Nashville's best known industries. Washington Manufacturing's major line, Dee Cee work clothes, is an industry leader. Mrs. Mont B. Comer and her daughter continue to live in the L. B. Fite House, now commonly known as Monthaven.

Those properties already listed on the National Register from Sumner County reflect the architecture of the early settlement period and the growing affluence of Middle Tennessee in the early nineteenth century. The Fite House represents a later period in the development of rural residential styles in Sumner County.

<sup>1</sup>W. Woodford Clayton, History of Davidson County, Tennessee (Nashville: Charles Elder, rpt. 1971) p. 433.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Clayton, W. Woodford. History of Davidson County, Tennessee, with illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers. Philadelphia, Pa. : J. W. Lewis, 1880; rpt. Nashville: Charles Elder, 1971.  
Egerton, John, ed. Nashville: The Faces of Two Centuries. Nashville: Plus Media, Inc. 1979.

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 5.9 acres

Quadrangle name Goodlettsville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 16 Zone 53103410 Easting 41011821510 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 boundaries for the Leonard B. Fite House were drawn to include 5.9 acres of the 292 acre tract. In addition, to the Fite House the boundaries include the tree lined driveway, an octagonal well house, a one-story log cottage, a frame garage, a frame smokehouse and three frame sheds. Beginning at the intersection 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 Kay Benton, Architectural Historian  
Cynthia Cole, Coordinator of Field Services

organization Tennessee Historical Commission date December 1980

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.

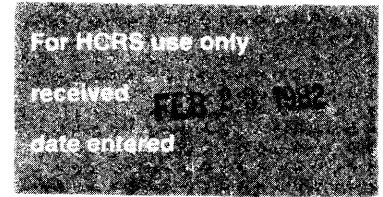
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Herbert C. Hayden*

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/12/82

For HCRS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
*Shelton Byers* Entered in the  
Keeper of the National Register National Register date 3/25/82  
Attest:      date       
Chief of Registration

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Nashville Business Directory, 1853-1861.

Sumner County Agricultural Census, 1860.

Sumner County Census Records: 1850, 1860, 1880, 1900.

Sumner County Inventories and Settlements, 1879-1887.

Sumner County Tax Books: 1891, 1913, 1921, 1936, 1939.

Sumner County Will Book # 4, p. 239-246-Leonard B. Fite

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

DATE ENTERED

Leonard B. Fite House

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the driveway and U.S. Highway 31E right-of-way proceed 120 feet east along the right-of-way to fence line; thence north 800 feet; thence west 320 feet; thence south 780 feet; thence east 200 feet along highway right-of-way to beginning point.

