

**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 Savage House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 167 Eighth Avenue, North N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson code 037

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name James B. and Jo Longacre

street & number 116 Harding Place Apt. C-1

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of Tennessee state 37205

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Metropolitan Courthouse

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Preliminary Plan:  
title Downtown Nashville has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1975  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

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

The Savage House is a three-story Italianate style townhouse (photos 1,2,3) built of dark red brick on a limestone foundation. The original house dates from the mid-nineteenth century and has several later additions. It faces east on Eighth Avenue, North, occupying almost the entire area of a 155 foot by 50 foot lot that runs through to Ninth Avenue on the west. The house was one of a solid block of similar, though not attached, houses but is now surrounded by commercial buildings, most of which are considerably larger in scale. Although the present structure includes three additions of significant size, its essential architectural character remains both inside and out.

The Eighth Avenue facade is basically intact in spite of peeling grey paint on the brick and deterioration due to neglect in recent years. Originally it was arranged in four bays with the central two bays farthest forward, located ten feet from the sidewalk. To the right of the central section, in a bay recessed five feet, is the main entrance which is sheltered by a wooden porch (photo 4). At the porch's corners are square piers with a recessed panel on each side supporting an entablature with ornate paired brackets over each pier. Set within this rectangular structure is a segmental arch supported by rounded colonnetts attached to the piers. The entrance itself consists of a pair of elaborately paneled doors beneath an arched transom flanked by arched sidelights of slightly less height. Colonnettes stand between the door and sidelights. The three arches are set into a rectangular frame. The transom arch reaches the lintel of this frame, and panes of glass fill the gap above the two shorter sidelights.

To the left of the central section of the facade is the fourth bay, recessed thirty-nine feet from the front of the house. Originally a door, very similar to the main entrance, opened onto a yard in the recessed area. A one-story addition enclosed this yard and the door is still visible inside (photo 5).

The facade is punctuated regularly by rectangular, one over one, double-hung windows. Each is crowned by a wooden cornice with iron consoles. The first floor windows at the center extend from the floor to near the ceiling and are noticeably taller than the upper floor windows. Hiding the hip roof is a projecting cornice with paired brackets and a paneled frieze (photo 6).

Two additions have altered this facade. The more obvious is the one-story addition which enclosed the yard to the left of the central bays and projects ten feet beyond them to the sidewalk (photo 3). Built sometime between 1900 and 1910, this addition originally had windows at its front similar to those original to the house and has a door and window in its north side. In recent years when an antique store rented this space, the large single window was installed at the front. To the right of the main entrance, filling the six-foot gap between the house and its neighbor to the north, is another addition (photo 7). Recessed sixteen feet from the entrance bay, this addition has a simple door on the first floor and one over one windows on the upper floors, each set under an unadorned brick segmental arch. Its age and function are still uncertain, though it was possibly built concurrent with a large addition to the rear of the building discussed below.

The rear facade of the house, facing west on Ninth Avenue, is that of a large two-story addition of brick on a stone foundation (photo 8). The ground slopes to the west dropping about fifteen feet between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. The first story of the addition is at the level of the basement of the original house, and the upper floor is several steps up from the original main level. The addition is fifty feet wide.

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There are rectangular, one over one, double hung windows along this facade and large, wooden, double doors at its far right side on the ground level. The window to the left of these doors has been enlarged and the sash in the far left upper floor window is not original. Several courses of corbeled and recessed bricks at the roof line constitute the only significant decorative treatment of this facade.

The original purpose and date of this addition are unclear. In materials and detail it appears to be of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was possibly built in conjunction with the small addition at the front of the house on the north side. The small addition at the front has a door onto Eighth Avenue and a door at its rear as well. The rear door opens onto a boardwalk running back to a door into the larger addition on the rear of the house (photo 9). This arrangement provides direct, but controllable, access from the street to the rear addition.

In plan, the original house is fairly typical of current local practice. The front door opens into a 32 foot by 10 foot stair hall (photo 10). The stair rises along the north wall in a single straight run, curving only with the last five steps to meet the second floor. The stair to the third floor is similar (photo 11). Double parlors connected by pocket doors open off the south side of the hall. The rear parlor and the stair hall open into a transverse hall. This hall opens through pocket doors into the first series of three connecting rooms running back toward the west, and, through a short passage, onto a two story back porch (photos 12, 13).

The back porch overlooks a 16 foot by 34 foot yard occupying the area between the house and its neighbor to the south. Three sets of stairs run off this porch. One runs up to the second story and another runs down to ground level and doors to the partial basement of the original house and to the lower level of the rear addition. The third is a short flight of seven steps up to the upper level of the rear addition.

At the south end of the transverse hall is another parlor which extends to the southern lot line. Originally the east side of this room opened onto the side front yard but now opens into the early twentieth century addition mentioned above, a single room 48 feet long by approximately 12 feet wide. At its west wall, this room has a three-sided projecting bay which overlooks the rear yard and on one side contains a door onto the back porch (photo 14).

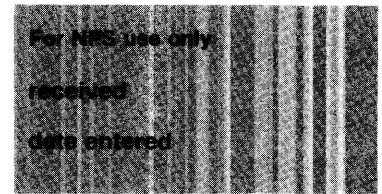
At the north end of the transverse hall is a door onto the board walk which runs between the small addition at the front of the house and the larger addition at the rear.

The plan of the original main floor is echoed on the second floor except that the rear wing which opens onto the back porch contains two rooms rather than three. On the third floor are three rooms corresponding to the three parlors on the main floor. A small stair runs from the second and third floor rooms above the bay-windowed rear parlor.

Interior detailing of the original house is also typical of local contemporary building. Moldings are massive yet fairly simple. Four panel doors are complemented by corresponding recessed panels in door jambs (photo 15). The stair is also fairly simply detailed with turned balusters and a massive eight-sided newel post on the ground floor (photo 10). Mantels, metal on the first floor and wooden on upper floors, are in character with the rest of the house (photo 16).

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The rear third of the bay windowed rear parlor is divided from the rest of the room by a wall with a large rectangular opening framed by a fluted column with a composite capital at each side and crowned by a classical entablature. The stylistic character of this rather prominent feature suggests that it is a twentieth century alteration (photo 17).

There is little decorative elaboration in either of the additions on the front of the house. The large room on the south side is simply finished with modest crown molding and baseboards. The smaller additions on the north side contain bathrooms on the second and third floors, probably the original use for these added spaces.

The large addition at the rear was built as a single room on each level. The lower room has a concrete floor several feet above the level of Ninth Avenue with a ramp down to the doorway onto the street. The upper level was a vast story-and-a-half room with open wooden trusses at the ceiling. At some point, probably in the early twentieth century, this room was divided into several smaller rooms arranged around a transverse hallway. A false ceiling was installed. This ceiling is partially collapsed, and the original truss system is again visible (photo 18).

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) medicine
<b>Specific dates</b> ca. 1850s	<b>Builder/Architect</b> unknown			

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** National Register criteria B and C

The Savage House, an Italianate-style town residence, is significant as the sole survivor of this type of building in Nashville, and as an excellent example of the Italianate style. It has been associated with significant people over the years as well, particularly Dr. Giles Savage and his daughter Dr. Kate Savage Zerfoss, both ophthalmologists, whose medical practice in this house spanned seventy-seven years.

What is now the Central Business District in Nashville used to be the location of many blocks of town residences representing the gamut of Victorian building styles. The Savage House is now one of only four houses remaining in this area, and the other three are scheduled for demolition in early 1983. The Savage House is soon to be the only town house remaining in downtown.

As an example of the Italianate style in Nashville, the Savage House is also unique. It is the only survivor of a large number of similar houses, generously scaled, with an emphasis on exterior decoration and built to occupy the full width of a city lot. With the exception of two large country estates, other surviving Italianate houses in Nashville are suburban in character, smaller in scale, and much simpler in decorative treatment.

The Savage House has an interesting history. Estimates date the house to the 1850s, but its existence appears certain by 1859. In that year it was sold to Mrs. Mary E. Claiborne, who operated a respectable boarding house at this address until 1881. Her guests were respectable middle class people, some socially prominent in local circles. Mrs. Claiborne's boarding house is a well-remembered local institution. In 1884 the house was bought by Julius Sax, who in 1891 leased the house to the Standard Club, a Jewish social club. There is no record of the construction date of the large addition on the rear of the house, but it is certain that it existed by 1891 because the Standard Club used its basement for bowling lanes. In later years, the Standard Club changed its name to the Woodmont Country Club, and is today Nashville's only Jewish social club.

After changing hands again, the house was bought in 1889 by Dr. Giles Christopher Savage and his wife, Leslie Alice Jones. Dr. Savage, an ophthalmologist, was a leader in his field, pioneering several surgical procedures to correct astigmatism and teaching in the medical department of the University of Nashville and Vanderbilt University. He published numerous papers on ophthalmology and edited and published The Ophthalmologic Record.

For several years, Dr. Savage used the house as residence, office and infirmary. Soon after he bought the house, he added the large one-story addition at the front of the house as a waiting room for patients. He also divided the large upper-floor room in the rear addition into bedrooms for infirmary patients. After 1905 the family no longer lived in the house, but Dr. Savage continued to practice there until his death in 1930 at the age of 76.

Dr. Savage's youngest daughter, Kate Savage Zerfoss, is also an ophthalmologist. Born in 1895, she received a BS degree from Vanderbilt University in 1918 and, because Vanderbilt

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

American Medical Directory. Chicago: American Medical Association, 1974.  
American Women, Vol. III, 1939-40 Los Angeles: American Publications, Inc. 1939.  
Encyclopedia of Southern Baptist. Nashville: Broadman Press. n.d.  
Fryer, Libby Zerfoss, Interview, August, 1982.  
Zerfoss, Kate Savage, Interview, August, 1982

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .17

Quadrangle name Nashville West, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	1	9	4	6	0	4	0	0	1	6	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

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D 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is the entire area of the 50' by 150' lot on which the Savage House is located.

### 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 David Paine/Architectural Historian

organization Metro Historical Commission date September, 1982

street & number 701 Broadway, B-20 telephone 615-259-5027

city or town Nashville state Tennessee

## 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 E. Hanger

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 12/3/82

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

Delores Byers Entered in the National Register date 1/11/83  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Savage House

Item number 8

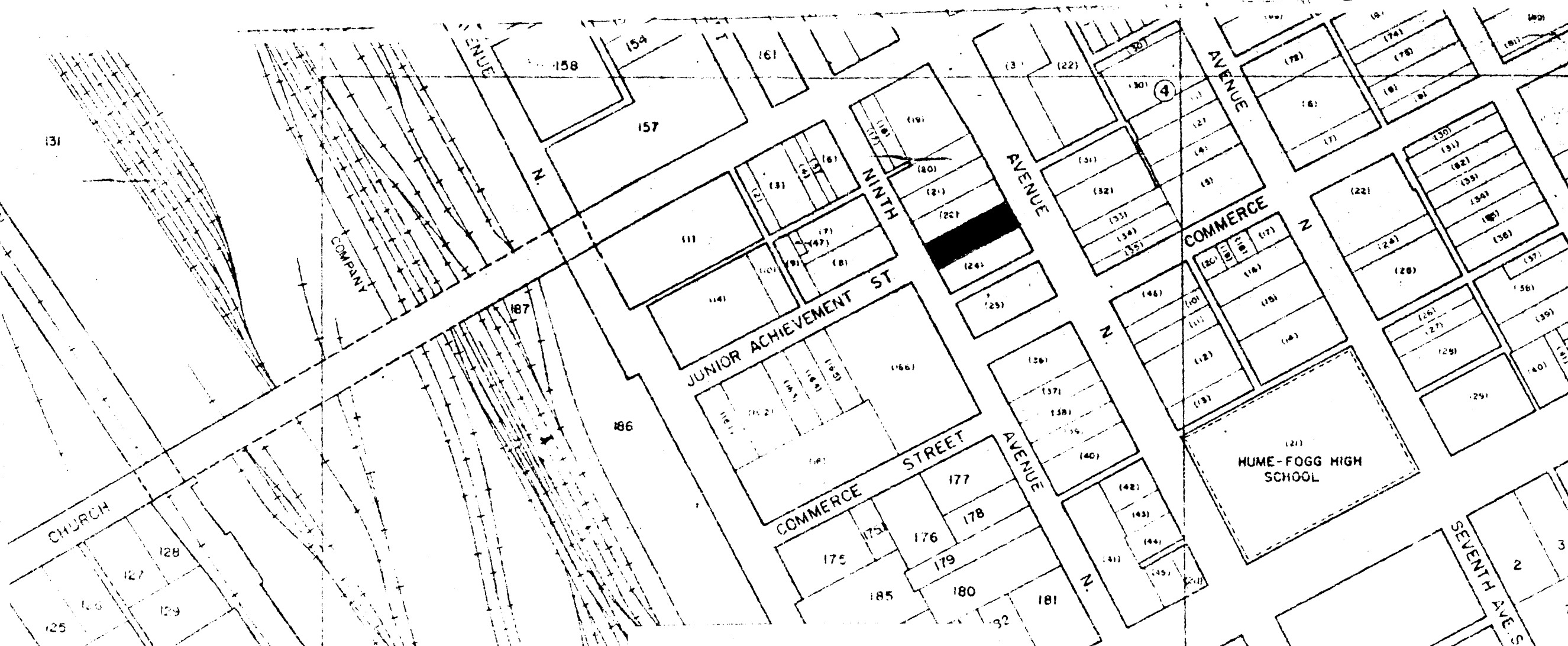
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would not accept a female medical student, attended Tulane University Medical School where she was graduated in 1922. She was licensed and joined her father's practice that same year. After Dr. Savage's death in 1930, she continued her practice in the house until her retirement in 1975.

Like her father, Dr. Zerfoss's practice was marked by pioneering efforts and like her father, she taught ophthalmology in the Vanderbilt Medical School. While neither the first nor the only female physician or professor in the Nashville area, her achievements are remarkable given the context of the time. Dr. Zerfoss is also married to a physician. Her husband, Dr. Tom Zerfoss, was a general practitioner with the Vanderbilt Student Health Service for many years.

Although the Savage family moved from the house in 1905, Dr. Savage's wife, Alice, and another daughter Nell Savage Mahoney, occupied apartments in the house for several years later on. The other daughter, Portia Savage Ward, operated an antique shop in the house for twenty years, until 1980.

At present the Savage House is empty, and neglect since 1975 has begun to take its toll in deterioration, especially in the rear addition where the roof has leaked. Basically, however, the house is in sound condition, with all of its interior and exterior decorative features intact. The new owners, who purchased the house in October 1982, are finalizing plans for renovation to be completed in 1983 which will provide for a restaurant on the street floor and office space above. The work will conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.



Savage House  
 167 Eighth Avenue, North  
 Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee

SHEET P93D

THIS SHEET DERIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY MAP SHEETS PRODUCED BY AERO SERVICE CORPORATION:

SCALE	SHEET NO.	SCALE	SHEET NO.
1" = 200'	93-1	1" = 100'	93-2
1" = 100'	94-5	1" = 100'	94-6
1" = 400' SHEET NO 93			

ORIGINAL MAP SERIES COMPILED BY PHOTOGRAMMETRIC METHODS DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY APRIL, 1961. PROPERTY DATA FROM GED RESEARCH, FIELD RECONNAISSANCE AND SUBDIVISION PLATS

# DAVIDSON COUNTY TENNESSEE

