

**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

MAR 25 1982

1. Name

historic Toof, John S., House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 246 Adams Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Memphis N/A 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: under restoration

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Jack B. Sellers

street & number 411 Perkins Road, South

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38117

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Administration Building

street & number 160 N. Mid-America Mall

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Memphis Landmarks Commission

city, town 901 Falls Building, Memphis state Tennessee 38103

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Set back approximately 23 feet from the north right of way of Adams Avenue in Memphis, the John S. Toof House is a three-story rectangular brick residence with raised foundation. The house faces south on a lot 36 feet wide, a common width for downtown Memphis lots in 1875, the year Toof purchased the property. The lot slopes northward at a descending angle, which permitted the builder to include a basement at the northern end with a door at ground level.

Framed by brick quoins and topped by a gable roof with projecting bracketed eaves above dentil molding (brackets and dentils are metal), the three-bay facade features rich ornamentation. In the east bay, a round arched entrance is covered by a gabled overdoor supported by metal ancones resting on brick pilasters. Galvanized iron and sheet metal scrollwork flanked by metal finials decorates the gable. The remaining bays of the first story and those of the second story contain 2 over 2 light windows with segmentally arched heads and decorated metal hoodmolds. Aligned with the central and west bays are two basement grill vents. A stone water table and stone belt course delineate the first story. Another belt course is located at the base of the third story, which features a central round arched window with hoodmold. Round windows with encircling metal ornamentation are located to either side and above the latter window.

The west elevation displays a metal dentilled cornice the length of the third story; three stuccoed chimneys; plain segmental arched windows, and a projecting three-story bay. The projecting bay has two windows on the first and second floors; three windows are on the bay's third floor, flanked by large metal S-scroll brackets. Again, paired brackets of galvanized iron metal top the brick quoins at the southwest corner. On the west there are no window wells in the basement, but a continuation of the iron grill vents like those on the front.

The north exterior wall is stuccoed except for the basement, which is brick; the interior basement floor is being levelled to provide headroom for satisfactory additional height. Structural examination revealed that this north wall previously had an open porch on both the first and second floors; these open porches are being re-constructed with iron railing appropriate to the Victorian period.

The prior open porches on the north exterior also wrapped around the east elevation with an overhang above the second floor; but at some previous time, these were enclosed. Badly deteriorated at the time of the present owner's purchase, this east section is being re-enclosed and stuccoed on both the first and second stories. Dentil work of galvanized iron and sheet metal is continued on the roof line above the third floor, with paired metal brackets topping the bricked quoins at the front corner.

There are no existing, or knowledge of, outbuildings at the John S. Toof House.

SUMMARY

All chimneys are stuccoed. As the exposed brick areas are of a soft nineteenth century composition, the house will be painted as a preservative measure. The original standing seam terne metal roof is being authentically replaced.

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Iron mantel pieces and shallow fireplaces are original. Most of the early patterned brass door locks and white porcelain doorknobs are intact, also several louvered wooden window blinds. The shallow fireplaces are being exactly restored and will burn coal, as originally. Floors are pine. Staircase risers are decorated with rope trim and stair balustrades are intact. Interior millwork around doors and windows reflects the simpler millwork of the period except for some ornate molding on walls of the second floor.

The current restoration architect is William H. Gaskill of the well-known firm of Yeates, Gaskill and Rhodes. Mr. Gaskill is also the official professional architect serving on the Memphis Landmarks Commission. He made measured drawings of the house before beginning work, took interior and exterior paint scrapings, and salvaged many layers of wallpaper which were soaked and separated for study of last-quarter 19th century designs.

Negotiations are preceeding with the City by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jack B. Sellers, to purchase flanking parking lots on the east and west of the Toof House, and to purchase a third larger parking lot immediately to the east which extends to the northwest corner of Adams and Fourth Street. Proposals and watercolor renderings illustrating suggested Victorian gardens to be opened to the public at stated times are now under consideration by the City Real Estate Department and the Rhodes-Jennings Company.

After restoration the house will be occupied by its owners.

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

Specific dates Built 1875 **Builder/Architect** Mathias Harvey Baldwin (1827–1891)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria B and C

This nineteenth century Victorian Italianate residence has both historical and architectural significance due to the business and civic activities of its first owner for who it was built--John S. Toof (1836–1916)--and its master architect, Mathias Harvey Baldwin (1827–1891). Baldwin at age 26 arrived in Memphis in 1858 and rapidly established a reputation as a conscientious, reliable designer of public, commercial and private buildings. In his lifetime he had several partnerships; of these the most notable was a ten-year association named Jones & Baldwin, his partner being Edward Culliat Jones formerly of Charleston, South Carolina. However, design of the John S. Toof House was by Baldwin alone, according to the 1883 publication by Reilly & Thomas, Commercial & Statistical Review of Memphis.

The Toof House is an outstanding example of the townhouses with Italianate ornamentation that were constructed on narrow lots along Adams Avenue in downtown Memphis during the mid-nineteenth century. Four of these, reportedly the most elaborate, remain. Of these the Toof House is notable for its ornate decorative details--brackets, hoodmolds and scrollwork--that were crafted from galvanized iron and sheet metal by Memphis craftsmen.

Adams Avenue was the major early east-west thoroughfare with an intermingling of commercial and private buildings, its west end at the water's edge being the town's public landing on the Mississippi River. On Adams, Toof bought his lot and engaged Baldwin as architect. The Toof family lived at this address from the year 1876 onward for many years.

Memphis histories and newspapers were filled with accomplishments of John S. Toof. On his arrival in April 1853 from Ohio, he connected at age 17 with an early newspaper, the Memphis Whig. Two years later he became editor of the Memphis Morning Bulletin in charge of city, river and commercial departments. He was chief organizer in 1859 of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and elected as its Secretary and Superintendent. In 1862 when the city was occupied by Union forces, he went into the wholesale grocery field at the same time doing business as a cotton factor and commission merchant. In 1870 he was an incorporator of the Memphis Water Company and in November 1873, was appointed by the city aldermen to the Drainage Committee following the devastating 1873 yellow fever epidemic, to study the city's sewerage system. (The Memphis Water Company merged in February 1888 with the Artesian Water Company.)

In December 1873 Toof was the central figure in organizing the Memphis Cotton Exchange and was elected Secretary and Superintendent.

John S. Toof was the first man in Memphis to collate and print, in tangible and intelligent form, the annual reports of trade and commerce, and to issue daily reports showing prices, stocks, and imports of cotton and other leading commodities which were the predecessor of blackboard uses on exchanges. His reports were quoted on exchanges in New York, Liverpool and Paris, and Keating's History of Memphis, 1888 has innumerable references documenting

9. Major Bibliographical References

Commercial & Statistical Review of Memphis by Reilly and Thomas, 1883. In Memphis Room, Memphis & Shelby County Public Library and Information Center
 Keating's History of Memphis 1888 - many references
 Two Master Architects of Early Memphis by Mrs. T. P. Hughes, Jr. In Memphis Room MPLIC.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	5
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 Zone

7	6	9	0	6	0
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 Easting

3	1	8	9	1	3	1	4	1	0
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 Northing

B

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

C

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

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 Northing

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 Northing

F

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 Northing

G

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 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See area outlined in red on attached Tax Assessor's Map. The boundaries conform to the dimensions of the lot on which the house is situated.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Eleanor D. Hughes

organization Member of Memphis Landmarks Commission date December 20, 1980

street & number 4140 Chanwil Avenue telephone 901/683-9272

city or town Memphis state Tennessee 38117

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. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/9/82

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the National Register
<u>Herbert L. Hays</u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>3/25/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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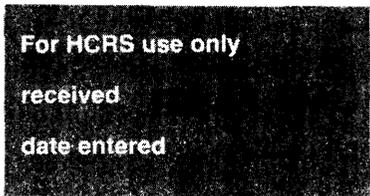
Continuation sheet John S. Toof House Item number 8 Page 2

Toof's abilities and contributions to Memphis growth. He died at the age of 80 in 1916.

The house was recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Jack B. Sellers, who are at present restoring the building.

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Continuation sheet

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Page

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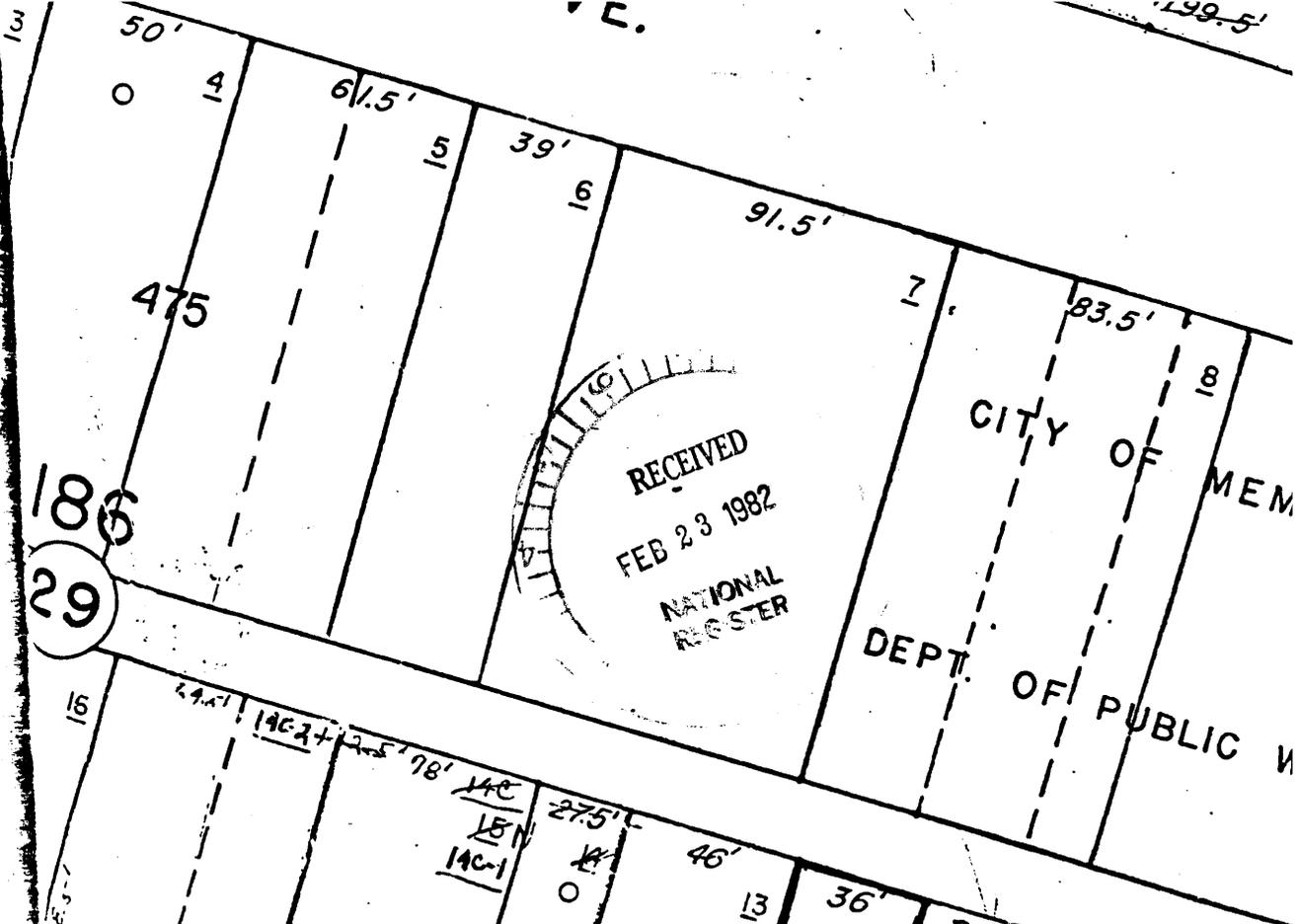
News of Bygone Days, Memphis Commercial Appeal

Deeds

City Directories

Cemetery Records

199-5'



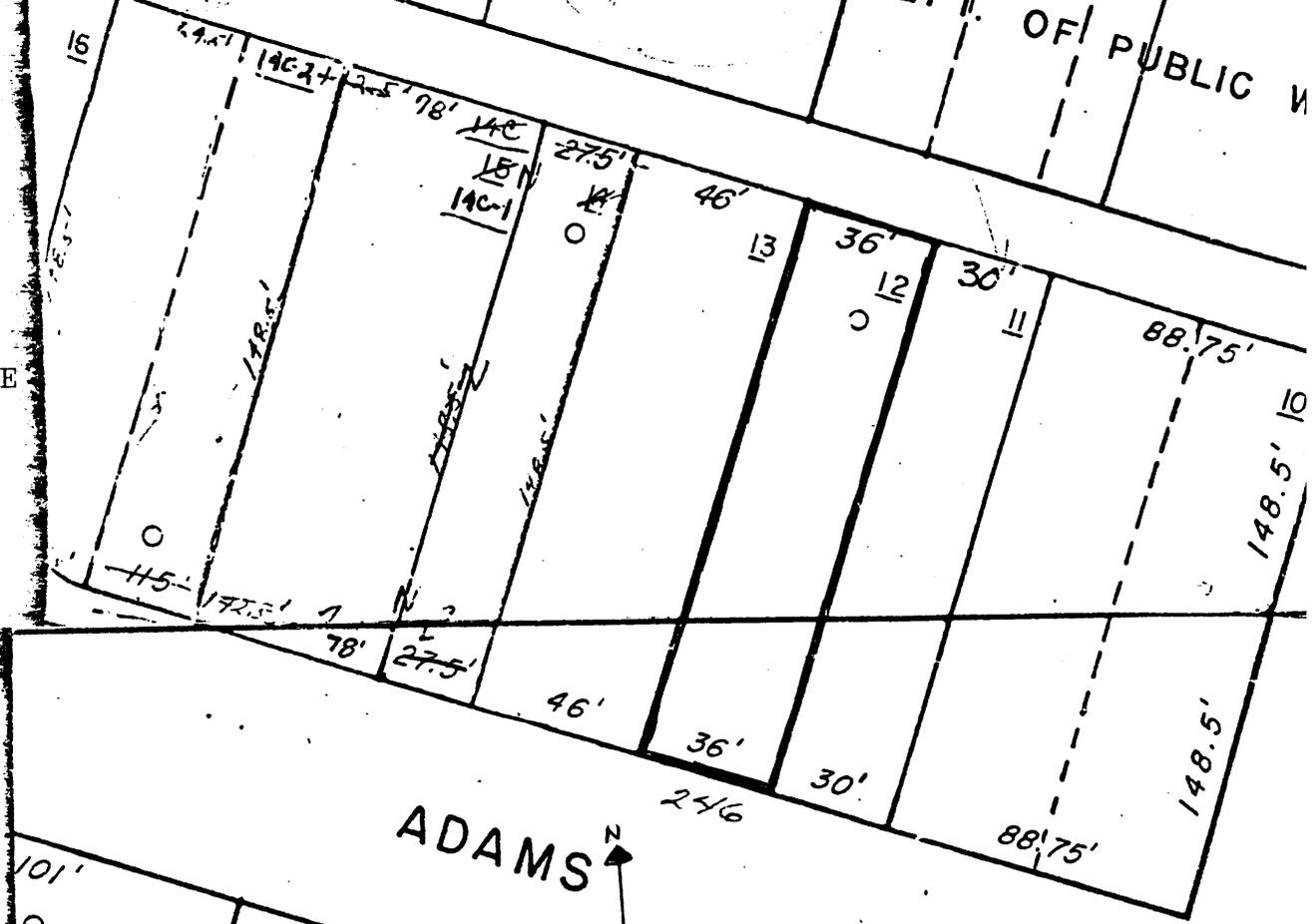
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CITY OF MEMPHIS
 DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS

186
 29

JOHN S. TOOF HOUSE
 MEMPHIS, TN
 246 ADAMS

Scale: 1" = 50'



ADAMS

