

Hilderbrand House
(Hilderbrand-McTighe House)
4571 Airways Boulevard
Memphis
Shelby County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-249

HABS
TN-249

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

Hilderbrand House (Hilderbrand-McTighe House) HABS No. TN-249

Location: 4571 Airways Boulevard, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee
Southeast Memphis Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.227040.3879560

Present Owner: Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority
2491 Winchester Road
Memphis, TN 38116

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: None

Significance:

The Hilderbrand House, known also as the Hilderbrand-McTighe House, is one of only a few antebellum farm houses remaining in Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee. Built *ca.* 1850-55 for Benjamin A. Hilderbrand (1806-1879), a locally prominent citizen of the extended Whitehaven community, the structure replaced an earlier dwelling on the 1,000-plus acre Hilderbrand farm, developed beginning in 1836. The Hilderbrand House is the oldest extant dwelling in the Whitehaven area of Memphis and Shelby County.

The Hilderbrand House is significant for its importance to local history and the character of its original construction and as an example of an antebellum house modified by the interests and tastes of subsequent property owners.

The house was built as an I-house plan with heavy timber framing, a common Antebellum rural house type in Tennessee. The Greek Revival treatment applied to the house is modest, though its level of detail has been somewhat occluded by later additions and alterations. The first major change was the addition of a rear wing in *ca.* 1900-05; this wing was expanded and interior alterations made to the original structure in *c.* 1915-20; finally, in *ca.* 1950-55, the trim and other elements of the main house block and its rear wing were further altered.

The Hilderbrand House recording project was executed in the Spring and Summer months of 1998 for the Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority by Hopkins and Associates. John Linn Hopkins and Marsha R. Oates of Hopkins & Associates coordinated the project and prepared the historical documentation of the property. David A. Cleaves of Self-Tucker Architects, Inc., prepared the architectural documentation under the supervision of Juan Self, A.I.A. The photographic documentation was by David Nester of David Nester Photography, Inc.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. PHYSICAL HISTORY

1. Date of erection:

A conclusive date for the construction of the Benjamin A. Hilderbrand House has not been determined, due to the lack of nineteenth century primary records (tax records, letters, diaries, etc.) or secondary source materials for the property and the area of Shelby County in which it is located. Local history and oral tradition place the date of its construction as early as *ca.* 1838.¹ The scant few primary documents strongly infer that the Hilderbrand family did occupy this site and have a residence there as early as *ca.* 1836-37, but no records conclusively locate the existing house on this site (as opposed to another or a previous house) until aerial photographs were taken of this site in June 1940.² However, based upon the stylistic treatments of the house, its methods of construction, and its comparison with other local structures with known construction dates, a building date of *ca.* 1850-1855 is a reasonable conclusion.

The Hilderbrand House is built using a variation of traditional heavy-timber frame construction which includes a mixture of hand-hewn and circular sawn framing members in the construction of its I-house plan. The sills and plate beams for the house are hand-hewn; the corner posts, studs, joists and original roof rafters are circular sawn; the trim elements are mechanically sash sawn; and the original lathing is hand-split. Unlike traditional heavy-timber framing, the studs are not mortised into the plates and sills but are toe-nailed. The first floor joists are notched but not mortised into the sills; instead, the plate beams serve as a ledger with the joists laid on top of these beams. The main framing members are not square beams; instead, they are L-shaped in cross section, fashioned from an 8" square post from which a 4" square rabbet has been removed. The resulting wall is roughly 4" in depth, but with the benefit of a heavy timber corner.

There is no well-documented history of framing techniques and of technological development in the Memphis, in part due to the relatively small number of antebellum buildings that have been investigated and documented for comparison purposes. Of those available, few antebellum houses have been examined to document framing systems and the technologies used to create them. However, a few comparisons of the Hilderbrand House can be made with other documented structures to provide some insight on its period of origin.

¹ Magness, Pere. *Good Abode* (Memphis: The Junior League of Memphis, Inc., 1983)166-7.

² Aerial Survey of Shelby County, Tennessee, June 22, 1940. Contained in the files of the Memphis and Shelby County Archives, Memphis, Tennessee.

The framing techniques used in the Hilderbrand House are not unique in Shelby County and its surrounding region. Rabbeted corner posts were used as early as *ca.* 1831³ in the construction of the first phase of the Hannum-Rhea House in Somerville, Fayette County, TN. The treatment of the joists being laid on the plates without mortises is also not unique, but the earliest known use of this framing technique has been dated to *ca.* 1854-1855⁴. The toe-nailing of the studs into the plate beams is not a common antebellum framing technique in this region and no other local examples are known from this period.

The variety of technologies used to produce the building materials in this house may offer additional insights into a construction date for the property. The mixture of hand-hewn, sash sawn and circular sawn lumber in the construction of the Hilderbrand House is evidence that the circular saw had not yet become the pervasive tool for the production of lumber, at least in rural areas.

The date for the arrival of circular saw technology in the Memphis area has not been precisely established. In the broadest perspective, the development of the circular saw can be dated to the late-18th century in England, but its practical application was limited by the lack of the technology necessary to produce a suitably thin blade: one of sufficient diameter to rip-cut a large log, but also, a blade with teeth strong enough to withstand many hours of use. The problem was not resolved until the development of the modern circular saw blade with its tempered teeth integral to the blade itself, a development that did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century.⁵ Once the technical problems were resolved, the circular saw revolutionized the form and cost of the building process.

The earliest known references for circular saws in Memphis occur in newspaper and directory advertisements from the middle 1850s⁶, which indicate that the technology was both available and marketable. *The Manufacturer's Schedule of the 1850 Census* identifies more than a dozen steam-driven sawmills operating in Memphis and Shelby County, but it is not known that any of those mills used circular saw blades in their operations at that time. Portable steam saw mills were advertised for

³Hopkins & Associates. *The Historical Development of the Hannum-Rhea House, Somerville, Tennessee*. Unpublished MS prepared for the Fayette County Chapter of the Association of Tennessee Antiquities.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Guedes, Peter, editor. *Encyclopedia of Architectural Technology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), pages 301-302.

⁶ By example, see advertisements contained in Ayres' *Descriptive Railroad Handbook of the Great Southern Route* (Memphis, George B. Ayres, 1858), n. p.; and, the *Memphis Daily Appeal*, Vol. IX, No. 181, October 16, 1858, page 1.

sale in Memphis by 1857⁷; also, a bill of sale for the "James M. Winslow's Lath Machine for cutting Laths out of the round log" has been found, dated 1856⁸. A circular saw blade would have been necessary to operate this machine.

In the middle nineteenth century, the circular saw was an emerging technology that greatly increased the production and efficiency of sawmills. If the circular saw were available before *ca.* 1850 in the Memphis area, it would have been extremely odd for this important improvement in technology to have not been promoted by the regional hardware supply houses of Memphis at that time.

Physical evidence of circular saw technology can be found regionally in buildings dating only from the 1850s. The blending of hand-hewn timbers and circular sawn framing is found in residences including Annesdale in Memphis (*ca.* 1852-55, NRHP 11/25/1980); the John M. Fleming Home Place in the Collierville vicinity, Shelby County, Tennessee (*ca.* 1857-58, NRHP 12/06/1990); the third additions to the Hannum-Rhea House in Somerville, Fayette County, Tennessee (*ca.* 1854-55); and, the Hedges Farm in the Victoria vicinity of Marshall County (*ca.* 1855, NRHP pending). Similarly, the two-story core of Greenlevel in Collierville (*ca.* 1842, NRHP 3/06/1987) was built entirely of hand-hewn timbers, but its portico, added in *ca.* 1855, was framed with circular sawn lumber. There are no buildings that date from the 1840s known in Shelby County and its vicinity which were built with circular sawn lumber.

Based upon the comparative information available, especially considering the spread of circular saw technology across the Mid-South region, it appears reasonable to accept a construction date of *ca.* 1850-55 for the building of the Hilderbrand House.

2. Architect/builder:

Unknown.

3. Original and subsequent owners:

References to the following chain of title to the land upon which the Hilderbrand House stands may be found in the Office of the County Register, Shelby County Building, Memphis, Tennessee.

1836 Warranty Deed, December 5, 1836, recorded in Deed Book F, p. 209. Ton Tubby to B. A. Hilderbrand.

⁷ See advertisement for "Lownes, Orgill & Co." in Ayres' Descriptive Handbook, *op. cit.*, n. p.

⁸ Shelby County, Tennessee, Deed Book 23, page 132.

1879 Deed of Trust, April 14, 1879, recorded in Deed Book 126, p. 545-46. B. A. Hilderbrand to W. B. Vanhook.

1881 Trustee's Deed, December 29, 1881, recorded in Deed Book 140, p. 503-05. W. B. Vanhook to George W. Ham.

1893 Will, filed April 21, 1893, recorded in Will Book 12, p. 556-57 on November 23, 1894. George W. Ham to Mrs. Mary E. Ham.

1914 Sheriff's Deed, February 27, 1914, recorded in Deed Book 511, p. 586. Chancery Court of Shelby County to F. V. Holmes.

1914 Warranty Deed, January 5, 1914, recorded in Deed Book 589, p. 600. F. V. Holmes to Emmye B. Hilderbrand.

1925 Trust Deed, March 31, 1925, recorded in Deed Book 969, p. 595. Charles B. Hilderbrand to W. K. Noell.

1926 Subdivision Plat, September 17, 1926, recorded in Plat Book 9, p. 26. Plat of the Hilderbrand Subdivision, filed by W. K. Noell.

1929 Trustee's Deed, December 17, 1929, recorded in Deed Book 1304, p. 508. W. K. Noell to T. J. Gayley.

1937 Warranty Deed, October 28, 1937, recorded in Deed Book 1570, p. 370. T. J. and Fannie Pitts Gayley to Verver Brogdan (also: "Blagdon").

1941 Warranty Deed, February 16, 1941, recorded in Deed Book 1689, p. 68. Verver and W. E. Brogdan to W. D. Jemison.

1950 Warranty Deed, April 25, 1950, recorded in Deed Book 2547, p. 630. W. D. and Blanche Z. Jemison to William A. McTighe.

1987 Warranty Deed, November 25, 1987, recorded in Deed Book AE, p. 0348. Jane D. McTighe to the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:

Various, unknown.

5. Original plans and construction:

The Hilderbrand House was originally built in *ca.* 1850-55 as a two-story, five-bay wide, frame I-house with Greek Revival influence. The structure had two rooms

on each floor, placed on either side of a central stair hall. The structure is covered with a side gable roof with box cornice; its walls are clad with weatherboard siding; its windows originally were six-over-six light, double hung sash; and the house was raised on a brick pier foundation. Exterior end wall chimney stacks provide a fireplace in each of the four original rooms of the house. There is no physical evidence visible to identify the configuration of the original porch which has been subsequently altered; however, a one-bay wide, two-story portico would have been commonly built in this period, often with a second floor balcony. Structural evidence suggests that a one-bay wide porch or ell may have once extended from the rear of the building.

There are no known copies of plans, specifications, contracts or similar documents that detail or describe the original appearance of the Hilderbrand House. The same is true for subsequent periods of alterations to the property. Research to locate photographs of the property within this century is continuing.

Note: The Hilderbrand House will be demolished within several weeks after the completion of this report; there will also be concurrent archaeological recovery of features previously identified on the site surrounding the house. Selective demolition will be conducted by Hopkins & Associates to identify features of the house obscured by additions and alterations; and the final demolition process will be closely monitored to identify architectural treatments not discovered during the selective demolition process. These architectural findings will be sent to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Hilderbrand House record, along with copies of the archaeological findings for the property.

6. Alterations and additions:

The Hilderbrand House has had several periods of major alterations and additions. No documentary evidence is known that can be used to define the evolutionary phases of the property, and so its periods of additions and alterations can be attributed only by secondary evidence to general periods of time and to the corresponding owners of the property.

Some earlier alterations probably have been superseded by later construction activity. The earliest alterations to the structure appear to date from no earlier than the early twentieth century.

Ham Family Additions and Alterations, ca. 1900-05

The core of the rear ell for the Hilderbrand House appears to have been constructed after the death of George W. Ham in 1893, but before the death of Mary Ham in 1914. The characteristics of the materials used and the design elements introduced appear consistent with the period of 1900-1905. During this period or perhaps in an earlier

one, an original porch or other structure appended to the rear of the house was removed, as evidenced by joist pockets remaining in the rear sill of the main house. During the Ham's ownership, a one-story, two-room gable-roofed ell was built to the rear, with a shed-roofed gallery developed along its north side. The ell was constructed to provide a dining room and kitchen for the house, probably replacing an earlier detached kitchen. The materials used in the construction of the ell are consistent with the period of *ca.* 1900-1910. The foundation piers are hard-fired, machine-made bricks laid up with a commercial lime and white sand mortar. The framing is fastened with wire nails. The flooring has been recycled from another building, but its lower surface has been "backed off," or planed with a center recess to minimize warpage, a millwork treatment not common in the Memphis area before *ca.* 1900.

Of substantial interest is the discovery that the sills and floor joists of the rear ell were also recycled from an earlier building. The sills are 3" x 8" beams that were finish-planed by hand and bear traces of paint layers of white and robin's egg blue. One old joist pocket was discovered during the examination of this framing. It is not clear whether these beams were hand-hewn or circular sawn before planing. It cannot be determined whether the salvaged timbers and flooring were removed from a previous addition to this house or another building nearby. The blue paint color is regionally characteristic of the color used on exterior porch ceilings, but it was rarely applied as a general exterior paint color.

Other changes to the property at this time include the alteration of windows on the north and south facades of the original house block from their original six-over-six double-hung sashes, to two-over-two double-hung sashes. The doorway leading from the front stair hall to the south east room and the doorway leading from the north east room to the north (dining) room in the rear ell were both enlarged as double-doors; there is a shadow of a taller original window or door opening above these doors. Both sets of doors were trimmed with a simple, 5-inch wide, radius-edged architrave; it is believed that both doorways were outfitted with multi-light double-doors, though the opening leading to the dining room has the only surviving pair.

Charles B. Hilderbrand Alterations and Additions, *ca.* 1915-20

Another period of significant alterations and additions to the Hilderbrand House was *ca.* 1915-20, when the property was owned by Charles B. Hilderbrand. The changes made by the grandson of the original owner were by far the most extensive of any of the alteration periods.

The most evident changes made in this period were the alteration of the roof of the main house and the construction of the existing three-bay wide, shed roof porch with its second floor balcony. The roof peak of the house was raised three feet above its original height, as evidenced by the original roof rafters that remain in place.

The height of the original end wall chimneys was extended by approximately three feet to correspond with the new roof. The alteration of the roof was necessary to accommodate the monumental new porch across the front; even with the roof alterations, the height and depth of the porch only allowed the construction of a shallow shed roof to cover it. Matching box pilasters were installed on the facade following the removal and replacement of areas of its original siding beneath the porch.

On the first floor, there is evidence of extensive repair of the lath and plaster work at this time, resulting in major areas on both floors of the original house which had new plaster spread on circular sawn lathing. The rear ell was nearly doubled in width on its south side by addition of a bathroom and another porch, all under a shed roof.

The twentieth century Hilderbrand alterations also resulted in addition of a second floor bathroom with a low-pitched shed dormer built into the roof of the ell at its eastern end. Closets added at this time made each of the upstairs bedrooms smaller; the southern bedroom was provided with two closets, while portions of the northern bedroom were taken for a single closet and a hallway that connected with the upstairs bath. The construction work on the upstairs bath also appears to have resulted in the demolition of the north (dining) room ceiling and its replacement with bead board.

McTighe Alterations and Additions, ca. 1950-55

William and Jane McTighe instigated the last significant period of alterations and additions to the Hilderbrand House. The major work of the McTighes was a series of changes intended to "restore" the property by unifying its original Greek Revival elements with those incompatible changes accomplished earlier in the century.

The McTighes most significant change was the rebuilding of the front stair, which was designed in a diluted interpretation of the Craftsman style. The rise and run of the stair was adjusted to accommodate the reflooring of the rooms of the original house on both floors with wide, "pegged" oak flooring laid on 2" x 4" screeds. The new flooring required that doors be shortened, baseboards and the hearths on the first floor to raised match the new floor level. The original firebox openings in the chimneys on the first floor were rebuilt and enlarged. Doorways on the first floor that were altered by the Ham and Hilderbrand families earlier in the century were re-trimmed with peaked lintels and back bands to match the original Greek Revival details. In all cases, the new trim work was applied directly over the earlier, radius-edge trim, leaving the radius curve exposed on the outside edge. Some salvaged four- or six-panel doors were also installed in an attempt to match the impression of the original doors; the only extant doors which appear to be original to the house are the front double-leaf door and the door leading from the hall to the south east room of the first floor.

In the rear ell, the McTighes expanded the north (dining) room of the house to the north, taking in a part of a porch; a portion of the western end of this porch was also enclosed for a laundry room, and the remaining center portion of the porch was enclosed with windows and a doorway for use as a utility room. Wall and ceiling surfaces in the ell were refinished either with new drywall to cover bead board surfaces, or with a new coat of plaster. The porch on the southwestern corner of the ell was enclosed at this time and the walls covered with knotty pine paneling.

Apparently at this time a crude basement was excavated beneath the eastern third of the ell, where a gas hot water and oil-fired steam boiler were installed. The steam boiler provided radiator heat for the major rooms in the house; the radiators remain in place in most rooms. Gas lines were run in the house for gas fireplace logs and small heaters. Access to the basement area is through a trap door cut into the southern porch floor; this trap door was covered at a later time with another layer of flooring.

Today, much of the architectural character of the Hilderbrand House has been compromised through deterioration and vandalism. Three of its four mantelpieces have been lost, as have most of the stair elements. Vandalism has also resulted in the removal of one of the monumental box pilasters. Deterioration of the roofing over the porch and second floor bathroom has seriously compromised the structural integrity of the property, making the task of measuring and photographing the house difficult, and in certain areas of the building, dangerous.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

According to local tradition, Benjamin Hilderbrand and his older brother Daniel traveled seasonally to the general area of this property as early as 1819, trading with the region's Native Americans from their base in the Natchez vicinity of Mississippi.⁹ Soon after that date, the brothers reportedly applied for a 7,000 acre federal land grant in the area of northern DeSoto County, Mississippi and southwestern Shelby County, Tennessee, though the grant was never issued. If true, the issuance of the grant probably was stalled by a continuing border dispute between the State of Tennessee, the Chickasaw Nation, and eventually, the State of Mississippi. The border dispute was not resolved until the Chickasaw Cession of 1834, and the 440 square miles of territory ceded were divided among members of the Chickasaw Nation, who were permitted to sell their properties to Anglo-American settlers.¹⁰ One of the Chickasaws, Ton Tubby, deeded his interest in Section 1, Township 1, Range 8 West, and in Section 12, Township 1, Range 8 West, to Benjamin A. Hilderbrand on December 5, 1836 in two deeds for the total consideration of \$2,980.00.¹¹

On Section 1 in Township 1, Range 8 West, Benjamin Hilderbrand established permanent residence in Tennessee for the first time. Born in Mississippi in 1806, Benjamin A. Hilderbrand was among the earliest settlers of rural Shelby County. Hilderbrand moved permanently to Shelby County between 1830¹² and March 22, 1833, when he filed for a license to marry Susan Robertson, whom he married on March 28, 1833¹³. Hilderbrand's bride was born 1816 in North Carolina, the daughter of Medicus Robertson, Sr. (died 1844), another early pioneer of Shelby County.

Apart from marriage and deed records, the earliest references to Hilderbrand are found in the records of the Shelby County Court: in August 1836, it appointed Hilderbrand to be a member of a jury of residents from Civil District 12 to "mark out and lay off a road the nearest and best way from the town of Memphis passing by Person's Mill on the Nonconnor (sic) Creek to intersect a road lately marked out by order of the police court, DeSoto County in the State of Mississippi in Section 14,

⁹ Magness, *op. cit.*, page 167.

¹⁰ Harkins, John E. *Metropolis of the American Nile* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982), page 29-32.

¹¹ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book F, pages 208 and 209.

¹² The U. S. Census of Mississippi in 1830 indicates that Benjamin Hilderbrand was living with his brother, Daniel, in Franklin County, Mississippi at this time.

¹³ Shelby County, Tennessee. *Marriage Records*. Memphis and Shelby County Archives.

township 1, range 8 in said State on the Thompson line...."¹⁴ This road was first called the "Memphis to Jefferson Road", but later changed (*ca.* 1839) to Memphis to Hernando Road with the change in name of the Mississippi community of Jefferson to Hernando, as it is still known. Today, this roadway is Elvis Presley Boulevard, a part of U. S. Highway 51.

There is no record of Hilderbrand's ownership of land in Shelby County before December, 1836, which made his appointment to the road jury highly unusual. It should also be noted that one "M. Robertson" was also appointed to the same jury; this person is believed to be Medicus Robertson, Hilderbrand's father-in-law.¹⁵

Other references to Hilderbrand included the order by the County Court directing Hilderbrand to assist in the maintenance of the Memphis to Jefferson Road in November 1837, and to provide three "hands" to do his portion of the work. This appointment was repeated in 1838. He was appointed overseer of the second (southern) section of the Memphis to Hernando Road in 1839; this appointment was repeated in following years.¹⁶

The County Court references are significant for several reasons. First, the appointment of a person not owning land to a road jury was a highly unusual act by the Court, suggesting that Hilderbrand had already established himself as an important person in the civic affairs of rural southwestern Shelby County, perhaps due to his close association with Medicus Robertson (unfortunately, the schedule for this project did not permit a detailed examination of the life of Medicus Robertson). Second, and most important, is the reference in November of 1837 directing Hilderbrand to provide hands to assist in road maintenance on the Memphis to Jefferson Road. Appointment of road overseers and assistants for road maintenance was a common duty assigned by the County Court, but it was an obligation only conferred on resident property owners living in the vicinity of the particular road. This reference strongly suggests that not only had Hilderbrand become a resident property owner of Civil District 12 in the vicinity of the Memphis to Jefferson Road, but that he also was able to provide "hands" for the maintenance work- probably Hilderbrand's slaves. The impression left by this court entry is that in 1837, Hilderbrand had already begun to establish his farm on the property acquired from Ton Tubby in the previous year.

The 1840 Census shows Hilderbrand living in Civil District 12, specifically in the portion of the district that would later be called Whitehaven, as evidenced by the

¹⁴ Shelby County, Tennessee. *Minutes of the Shelby County Court*, Vol. 2, page 296. Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information System.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 372.

names of surrounding families known in the area.¹⁷ The census entry for the family contains enumerations of individuals identifiable as the immediate family members of the Hilderbrand household, including his wife Susan and the four children they had by this time.

Also noted in the 1840 Census is "M. Robertson" at the next household beyond Hilderbrand; this is believed to be Medicus Robertson, the father of Hilderbrand's wife, Susan. The Robertson household included Medicus, age between 40 and 50, another male aged between 20 and 30 (perhaps a brother or brother-in-law), and two males between 15 and 20 years of age, likely sons. The women of the family appear to have included Medicus' wife, age 40 to 50, perhaps an elderly sister age 50 to 60, one young woman age 10 to 15, one girl age 5 to 10, and two girls under the age of 5.

In October of 1847, the county court requested a study and then formalized a "new road" to commence "on the state line near Wimberleys on the Range line between Township 7 & 8 running north on & along said line as near as practicable passing B. A. Hilderbrant (sic) House & passing on to the Top of the Ridge opposite I. O. Twest from thence leaving the sd range line & running (a) westwardly direction crossing day (sic) creek & running on so as to strike the end of the lane between G. Smith & E. D. Bray thence west with their lines along sd Smith farm & continuing west to the Hernando road..."¹⁸ This road forms the basis for the present day Airways Boulevard from the state line to Raines Road. This reference is also the first conclusive reference proving Hilderbrand's occupancy in the vicinity of the current house location. Hilderbrand was later appointed to assist in the maintenance of this road with his "hands".¹⁹ The earliest known name for this road was the "Longstreet Road"²⁰; later documents label it as the "Hollyford Road."²¹

The 1850 Census shows B. A. and Susan Hilderbrand living on their farm in Civil District 12 with children Amanda, born *ca.* 1834; David, born *ca.* 1836; William W., born in 1838 (died 1915); John S., born 1839 (died 1873); Sarah E., born *ca.* 1842; and, Benjamin F., born *ca.* 1844.²² All of the children were born in Tennessee, and were all attending school when the Census of 1850 was taken. At the time of the 1850

¹⁷ U. S. Census of 1840, Civil District 12, Shelby County, Tennessee.

¹⁸ Minutes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, page 492.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, page 284.

²⁰ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 511, page 586.

²¹ Shelby County, Tennessee. Plat Book 9, page 26.

²² U. S. Census of 1850, Population Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee. Dates of death noted are found in McCorkle, Anna L., Record of Burials in the Edmonson Cemetery (unpublished MS, 1964, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center), n. p.

Census, the niece of Susan Robertson Hilderbrand, named Rebecca Robertson, age 14, was also living with the family and attending school with the Hilderbrand children.

The Slave Schedule of the 1850 Census recorded the Hilderbrands in possession of 19 slaves, of which ten were males ranging in age from 4 to 32 years of age. Nine female slaves ranged from 2 years to 35 years of age. The number of slave houses on the property at this time was not noted by the Census taker.²³

In 1850 the Hilderbrand farm consisted of 300 improved acres of land and 660 acres of unimproved land, valued by the family at \$10,000. The farm was worked by 9 horses and 4 oxen; 10 "milch" cows, 15 other cows, 12 sheep and 45 swine comprised the farm's remaining livestock. Major crops raised by the family and their slaves included 700 bushels of Indian corn, 250 bushels of oats, 10 bushels of Irish potatoes, 15 bushels of sweet potatoes, but only 2 (400 pound) bales of cotton - a level of production out of character with surrounding farms. The reason for this imbalance is not known. The family also reported that they had produced \$20.00 of goods by "home manufacture" (perhaps wool from their sheep), and had slaughtered \$25.00 of their animals, probably for home consumption.²⁴

Based upon crop yield statistics for this general era of agriculture, the yield of the Hilderbrand's farm required the use of approximately 33 acres to produce their corn (21 bushel/acre), 45 acres to produce their oats, 0.25 acre each for the Irish and sweet potatoes, and 6.5 acres for their cotton.²⁵ The yield reported would have required only 85 of the 300 acres of improved farm land that the Hilderbrands had available. Even if an additional 60 acres were allotted as pastures for the cows, sheep and horses, the yields reported are not consistent with the amount of acreage in production. The yields also do not appear sufficient to feed the Hilderbrand family and their nineteen slaves, even if the seven children attended a boarding school away from the farm for part of the year. The acreage might have been leased to another farmer, but no records have yet been found to support that possibility.

The 1860 Census, not surprisingly, shows a more complex family structure on the Hilderbrand farm. Benjamin Hilderbrand, then 56, reported that the value of his real estate holdings was estimated at \$20,800, while the value of his personal property was \$35,000, much of it probably accounted for in the value of his 29 slaves. The eldest daughter, Amanda, was not reported living with the family, and had perhaps married and moved out of Shelby County. The eldest son, David, had also

²³ U. S. Census of 1850, Slave Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

²⁴ U. S. Census of 1850, Agricultural Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

²⁵ Period crop yield statistics are derived from data obtained from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Office, Nashville, Tennessee.

married and was living in a separate household on the Hilderbrand farm with his wife Henrietta and their infant daughter, Susan. The remaining children, all in their teens and early twenties, were still living with their parents. William, the eldest of the children at home, listed his occupation as "farmer" and reported ownership of \$600 worth of real estate and \$200 of personal property. No deed records have been found in Shelby County to indicate where this property may have been located.²⁶ The returns of the Slave Schedule for 1860 show that the Hilderbrand's owned fifteen male and fourteen female slaves, housed in five dwellings on the property.²⁷

Because there are no separate returns for sons William and David, the returns in the Agricultural Schedule in 1860 are suggested to represent the production of the entire family and its slaves. Of interest is the fact that seven of the family's horses reported in 1850 had been replaced by mules in 1860, and the farm had 35 "other cows," more than twice as many as in 1850. Other livestock remained at comparable numbers. However, the crop yields provided by the family in the Census once again appear greatly understated. The farm was reported to have produced 28 bushels of wheat, 800 bushels of Indian corn, 15 bushels of peas or beans, 150 bushels of sweet potatoes, and 350 pounds of butter. Cotton production increased significantly, to 55 bales, which would have required 182 acres of land to produce. While the cotton production is comparable to other farms of a similar size, the other crop yields again appear meager in comparison with other farms in the immediate vicinity.²⁸

All of B. A. Hilderbrand's male children served for the Confederacy during the Civil War, and each returned to Shelby County after the war. Their mother, Susan, died in 1862.²⁹

On May 18, 1867, Benjamin A. Hilderbrand issued a series of deeds dividing some of his property holdings among some of his children, transferring by gift the title to 160 acres in the Twelfth Civil District. John I. Hilderbrand was deeded the northwestern quarter section of Section 12, Range 8, Township 1 West;³⁰ Daniel H. Hilderbrand was deeded the northwestern quarter section of Section 1, Range 8, Township 1 West;³¹ William W. Hilderbrand was deeded the southwestern quarter section of Section 1, Range 8, Township 1 West;³² and, Benjamin F. Hilderbrand was deeded

²⁶ U. S. Census of 1860, Population Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

²⁷ U. S. Census of 1860, Slave Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

²⁸ U. S. Census of 1860, Agricultural Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

²⁹ McCorkle, *op. cit.* n. p.

³⁰30. Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 60-2, pages 522-523.

³¹ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 60-2, pages 523-524.

³² Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 60-2, pages 524-525.

the northeastern quarter section of Section 1, Range 8, Township 1 West.³³ The final deed in this group consisted of the northeastern quarter section of Section 12 in Range 8, Township 1 West, and was issued to "my Daughter, Mrs. Sallie E. Elam."³⁴

In this series of transactions, it is significant that Benjamin A. Hilderbrand did not relinquish title to the southeastern quarter section of Section 1, Range 8, Township 1 West. This was the portion of the farm containing the Hilderbrand House. Of additional significance in this series of deeds is the transfer of property to Sallie E. Elam. Previous Census listings do not include Sallie's name among the family members of B. A. Hilderbrand. Sallie E. Elam appears in the 1870 Census as the wife of Ernest Elam, living in the Twelfth Civil District on a farm adjacent to Benjamin A. Hilderbrand.³⁵ Her age listed in the Census suggests that she was born in 1845, making her the youngest of the Hilderbrand's children. The reason for her absence from the 1850 and 1860 Censuses is not clear; it is possible that she could have been adopted by the family. Further research is needed to clarify this question.

The 1870 Census listed B. A. Hilderbrand as the head of his household, with his youngest son, Benjamin F., and Benjamin's wife, Mary B. living with him. Values for the elder Hilderbrand's personal property and real estate were not given.³⁶ In households immediately adjacent to B. A. Hilderbrand were a number of Anglo-American and African-American families who listed their occupations primarily as "farmers". No notation of personal property or real estate holdings was made for any of these families as well. Given that all property immediately surrounding the Hilderbrand House was owned by Hilderbrand or other family members, it is likely that most, if not all, of the other families listed in the Census were tenant farmers.

For reasons that presently are unclear, B. A. Hilderbrand issued a trust deed on April 14, 1879 to W. B. Vanhook for the purposes of securing two notes, one issued by his son, W. W. Hilderbrand, and the other by Sallie E. Elam, which totaled \$1,500.00. The deed of trust included the southeastern quarter of Section 1, Range 8, Township 1 West "together with all improvements thereon and the same tract of land on which I am now and have for several years lived, also two cows & their calves, 3 year lings (sic) and one dry cow on said place."³⁷ B. A. Hilderbrand died on December 22 of 1879.³⁸ The terms for default of the trust deed were carried out with

³³ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 60-2, pages 525-526.

³⁴ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 60-2, pages 526-527.

³⁵ U. S. Census of 1870, Population Schedule, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 126, page 545-546.

³⁸ Records of the Holt Funeral Home and the McDowell-Monteverde Funeral Home, Memphis,

the acceptance of W. W. Hilderbrand and Sallie Elam, which called for the property to be advertised and sold at auction. The property was sold by Vanhook to Dr. George W. Ham for the sum of \$1,470.00, and title transferred to Ham by a deed dated December 29, 1881.³⁹

Dr. Ham and his wife took up residence in the old Hilderbrand House, as was noted in a 1914 deed for "the old George Ham homestead".⁴⁰ Dr. Ham (1838-1892) and his wife Mary Ellen Gabbert Ham (1847- 1912) came to Shelby County from just over the state line in DeSoto County, Mississippi during the 1870s,⁴¹ apparently taking up residence in Shelby County for the first time with the acquisition of the former Hilderbrand property. Very little else is has been found about the life and career of Dr. Ham, but by appearances, he was a country doctor who also farmed the 160 acres of the former Hilderbrand property.

George W. Ham died in January 1893, leaving all of his assets and liabilities to his wife,⁴² who continued to reside in the old Hilderbrand house until her death in 1912.⁴³ She left no will.

The absence of a will left by Mary Ham caused the Probate Court of Shelby County to act in the division of her estate among her heirs. The matter was resolved by the decree of the court on December 13, 1913 to sell the property for the division of the proceeds among the major and minor heirs.⁴⁴ The sale of the property occurred on January 3, 1914. The winning bid of \$8,500.00 was received from the partnership of E. W. Hale and the firm of Bluthenthal & Heilbrunner; however, before the sale could be confirmed by the court, a higher bid was received from P. V. Holmes, causing the property to be re-bid among the parties. New bids were received from both parties on February 7, 1914, resulting in the sale of the property to P. V. Holmes for the price of \$10,200.00. The final sale was confirmed by the court on February 27, 1914.⁴⁵

Tennessee, n. p. (unpublished MS, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center).

³⁹ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 140, pages 504-505.

⁴⁰ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 589, page 600.

⁴¹ U. S. Census of 1870, State of Mississippi.

⁴² Shelby county, Tennessee. Will Book 12, pages 556-557.

⁴³ McCorkle, op. cit., n. p.

⁴⁴ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 511, page 586-589.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pages 586-589.

The circumstances surrounding the next transfer of the property are not entirely clear; however, Holmes issued a deed for the sale of the property to Emmye B. Hilderbrand on January 5, 1914, effectively two days before Holmes' re-bid for the property had been opened and affirmed by the Probate Court.⁴⁶ The sale was made pursuant to conditions and costs that could have only been known to Holmes, suggesting that he was working as agent in the sale for Hilderbrand. The transaction included \$1,500.00 paid in cash by Hilderbrand, with the balance due in five annual notes, for a total sales price of \$11,200.00.

Emmye B. Hilderbrand was the wife of Charles B. Hilderbrand (died 1962), the son of William W. Hilderbrand and the grandson of Benjamin A. Hilderbrand. Little else is known at this time about Charles Hilderbrand, other than the information found in deed records (also spelled "Hildebrand" and "Hilderbrant"). However, these records show that, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, he was actively buying and selling both city and rural real estate, particularly in the Whitehaven area. His interest soon focused on acquiring much of the lands originally owned by his father and grandfather, concentrated in Sections 1, 6, 7 and 12 in Ranges 7 and 8 of Township 1, North.

Charles Hilderbrand's efforts to re-assemble properties associated with his family apparently began in 1902, when he acquired the holdings of J. B. Hilderbrand, his cousin.⁴⁷ Other properties held by family members were acquired over the next two decades, including the acquisition in 1912 of the 160 acres deeded to his father by his grandfather a half century before.⁴⁸ The acquisition in 1914 of his grandfather's 160 acre farm in the southeastern quarter of Section 1 was a natural extension of his effort, though it was not the last. It is not at all clear where Charles B. Hilderbrand chose to make his home before 1914, but it appears that he took up residence in his grandfather's house after acquiring the property.

Hilderbrand's investments appear to have over-extended his means by 1925. In March 1925, Hilderbrand and his wife entered into a trust deed with W. K. Noell, effectively selling 931 acres that included his grandfather's and father's land holdings, among others.⁴⁹ The purpose of the trust deed was to settle several "debts and mortgages" held by the Hilderbrands, and allowing Noell to sell portions of the property as needed to extinguish the indebtedness. The property was described as containing lots 1 through 42 of "the unrecorded Hilderbrand subdivision," suggesting that Hilderbrand had planned to sell or already had begun to sell the

⁴⁶ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 589, page 600.

⁴⁷ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 313, page 253.

⁴⁸ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 538, page 103.

⁴⁹ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 969, page 595.

property, in lots ranging from 10 to 25 acres in size.

Noell formalized the unrecorded subdivision with a plat recorded on September 24, 1926.⁵⁰ The plat is a valuable historical record apart from its worth in demonstrating the pattern of land division for the area in succeeding year: it also notes the location of houses, barns and other outbuildings throughout the entire 931 acre parcel, including the two houses, two barns and what is believed to be a carriage house on lots 23 and 24 of the subdivision - the developed core of land that comprised the former Benjamin Hilderbrand home site. Though the locations and relative scales of these improvements are represented schematically on the plat, this is the earliest known image representing the organization of the old house site. Each of these buildings corresponds in general location and use with buildings visible in the earliest aerial photographs of the property, which date from 1940.⁵¹

The fifty acres of lots 23 and 24 were sold by Noell to T. J. Gayley and his wife Fannie Pitts Gayley on December 17, 1929.⁵² The Gayleys sold the northern 22 acres of the property, containing the Hilderbrand House, to Vever and W. E. Blagdon [also spelled "Brogdon" in later records] in October of 1937.⁵³ The Blagdons retained the property for only four years, selling it to W. D. and Blanche Z. Jemison in February of 1941. The Jemisons sold the same property to William A. and Jane D. McTighe on April 25, 1950.⁵⁴ Apart from further subdivisions of the property since 1950 that reduced the house lot to its current size of a little more than four acres, the former Hilderbrand House remained in the hands of the McTighes until its sale to the Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority in 1987.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Shelby County, Tennessee. Plat Book 9, page 26.

⁵¹ Aerial Survey of Shelby county, Tennessee, June 22, 1940. (unpublished MS, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center)

⁵² Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 1570, page 370.

⁵³ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 1689, page 68.

⁵⁴ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book 2547, page 630.

⁵⁵ Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book AE, page 0348.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. GENERAL STATEMENT

1. **Architectural character:** The Hilderbrand House is a notable example of an antebellum, Greek Revival I-house which has evolved in design and character through time to suit the needs and interests of its subsequent property owners. The structure stands as an important local document of the Greek Revival architectural style and of the spread of building technology during the middle nineteenth century in the Mid-South region.

2. **Condition of fabric:** In general terms, the architectural and structural fabric in the Hilderbrand House is in predominantly poor condition due to neglect and vandalism.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

1. **Overall dimensions:** The structure is a two-story, center-hall I house with rear ell additions. The main block of the house is five bays wide, composed of one room on either side of the center hall; and, two bays deep, composed of one room in depth. The main block of the house is 58' - 6" across the front facade, and 19' - 5" deep. The height from the first floor level to the eaves of the front facade is 19' - 9" ; the height from the first floor level to the peak of the north side facade is 28' - 5". A two-story, three bay porch supported by paneled box columns on the front facade is 32' - 2" wide, 10' - 8" deep, and 20' to the eaves. The porch contains a one-bay wide, one bay deep balcony on the second floor measuring 8' - 2" wide and 10' - 8" deep.

The rear ell addition is one-story, with a small dormer-like addition for a second-floor bathroom. The rear ell runs 32' - 1" and is 3 bays deep; it is 33' - 5" wide, also in a 3 bay configuration. The bathroom dormer space above the ell is one bay in width and depth and measures approximately 11' - 5" by 10' - 4".

The original block of the house was built with a simple crawl space, as was the rear ell. A crude basement was excavated beneath the ell at a later date; it is an unfloored space with no retaining walls measuring approximately 15' square.

2. **Foundation:** The foundation for the original house block and its rear ell is built of brick piers. The original house block is supported by piers laid up with hand-made brick and mortar composed of tan river sand and lime, while the piers of the ell have machine made brick with a white sand and cement-lime mortar. The perimeter of the foundation was enclosed with a brick filler between the exterior piers in *ca.* 1950. Decorative cast iron foundation vents were set into the brick filler.

3. Walls: The exterior walls of the structure are clad in varieties of bevel siding with wide reveals, with exposures ranging from 5 to 7 inches. The corners are finished with single 4-inch boards applied on the front and rear faces of the corners.

4. Structural systems, framing: The structural system for the original block of the house is a variation on a traditional heavy-timber framing system that is described in detail in PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION, Section A (1). The rear ell is constructed of balloon framing, using some recycled timbers for framing the sills and floor joists.

5. Porches, balconies, etc.: The monumental porch of the front facade is an addition to the original block of the structure that dates from *ca.* 1915-20 (see Part I, Section A (6) "Charles B. Hilderbrand Alterations and Additions"). While it appears that this porch replaced an earlier one on this facade, there is no visible physical evidence to indicate the configuration of the earlier porch. The existing front porch has a low shed roof supported by four paneled box columns, with a one-bay wide second floor balcony supported by the middle pair of columns. The outside pair of columns are reflected by paneled pilasters attached to the facade; one of these pilasters has been lost to vandalism. The porch is detailed with a dentil molding on the fascia of the box cornice. The columns are detailed in no formal order, but have a dentil molding in place of a capital; there is no expression of a base on the columns. The porch ceiling and the ceiling of the balcony are covered with tongue and groove narrow bead board originally painted blue. The porch balcony is detailed with a balustrade of cross brace block elements.

A series of porch configurations was once featured on the rear ell; all of these porches have been enclosed during successive periods of alterations (see Section I (6) Alterations and additions for further information).

6. Chimneys: The Hilderbrand House has two original brick exterior gable end wall chimneys; a third, interior ridge chimney was constructed in the center of the rear ell as part of its original construction *ca.* 1900-05. The original exterior chimneys were built of hand-fired brick laid in a common bond on a stepped brick footing. The stacks corbel inward to a flue beginning at a point level with the top of the second floor windows. The height of the flue was extended by approximately three feet when the roof pitch of the house was increased *ca.* 1915-20; the added flue was built to gently corbel inward on all four faces.

The chimney of the rear ell was built to vent stove flues for the dining room and kitchen of the ell, and its mass is located in the kitchen space against the common wall with the north (dining) room. The chimney is built of machine made brick laid in common bond on a stepped foundation.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The original block of the Hilderbrand House has one exterior door on the first floor, which contains a pair of four-panel doors (two tall panels above two short panels), topped by an eleven light transom and flanked by six-light sidelights above a single panel. The lengths of the sidelights and the panels below correspond to the lengths of the panels on the doors. The doors are set in a simple Greek Revival architrave with ears, set off by a back band. An original or replacement rim lock lockset for the doors has been lost to vandals, as has the other door hardware. Above the main entrance is a doorway to the porch's balcony, which contained a single-light over two (horizontal) panel door. The upper doorway is surrounded by a simple board trim. It is not clear whether the doorway is an original opening, or an alteration of an earlier window in this location.

The rear ell contains doorways on its north and south elevations. The southern doorway contained a solid core "slab" door installed *ca.* 1975-80; the northern doorway contains a twelve-light door, installed *ca.* 1915-20.

b. Windows and shutters: The original windows of the main block of the Hilderbrand House are six-over-six, double-hung sash lights, built with mortise and tenon construction and pinned together at the corners. All of the remaining original sashes are located on the front facade of the building. The windows of the side (north and south) facades and rear (west) are 2/2 double-hung wooden replacement sashes, installed *ca.* 1900-05. All of the windows of the main block of the house have been fitted with operable wooden shutters, which appear to date from *ca.* 1950-55, based upon their construction, material characteristics and mounting hardware.

The rear ell of the house has windows of a variety of sash types and configurations, representing several periods of installation. These windows are predominantly six-over-six double-hung sash lights, installed during alterations during *ca.* 1915-20 and *ca.* 1950-55.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The roof of the main block of the Hilderbrand House is a simple gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The rear ell was built as a simple gable roof; it, too, is covered with asphalt shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves: The roof of the main block of the Hilderbrand House was finished with plain projecting eaves and a simple fascia board when the roof pitch was raised in *ca.* 1915-20. The rear ell has exposed rafter tails with square cut ends. Neither roof has gutters.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A small low, shed-roofed dormer was added in *ca.* 1915-20 above the rear ell abutting the rear (west) wall of the main block of the house to provide a second floor bathroom for the house. The dormer is in an extremely dangerous state of deterioration and was not inspected closely.

C. DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR:

1. **Floor plans:** Floor plans for the Hilderbrand House are included with this report for reference purposes.

2. **Stairways:** The only stairway in the Hilderbrand House is in the center of the original house block. Though the original stair was located in this same place, the existing stair is a complete replacement, installed in 1950-1955. The existing stair is a three-run, U-shaped stair with simple Craftsman-derived newels and a simple rail that is rectangular in section. All of the balusters have been removed by vandals; however, the "shadows" left on the floor and rail indicate that the balusters were simple square block spindles.

3. **Flooring:** The surface flooring of the Hilderbrand House is quarter-sawn, tongue and groove, medium-brown stained oak flooring with false "pegs" at the butt joints, measuring six inches wide. This Colonial Revival flooring was installed in *ca.* 1950-1955 on screeds throughout the first and second floors of the main block of the house, and in the north (dining) room of the rear ell. The other surface flooring in the rear ell are a plywood decking laid on screeds covered with sheet linoleum, also installed in *ca.* 1950-1955.

The original flooring materials of the building are visible in several locations. In the main house block, the original flooring is sash-sawn, tongue and groove flooring with a random width ranging between five and six inches; the wood appears to be poplar. A dark brown color was used in the most recent painting of the floor. In the rear ell, the original flooring used was a tongue and groove, yellow pine flooring of a regular width of three and one-half inches. Nail holes and shadowing on the underside of the flooring are visible from the crawl space, indicating that the flooring was recycled from another building for use in this project. The original and subsequent finishes of this flooring are not known.

4. **Walls and ceiling finish:** Originally, the walls and ceilings of the Hilderbrand House were finished with plaster. The original fawn-colored scratch coat was laid over hand-split lathing; the mortar used for the scratch coat appears to have been made with a mixture of local river clay, river sand, and crude lime, with a binder of what appears to be hog hair. A thin slurry was applied over this base as a finish coat. No decorative plaster treatments are present in the house today, if any ever existed.

The main house block has sustained two major periods of alteration that have affected its plaster surfaces. The most extensive work was carried out in *ca.* 1915-20,

when the ceilings of the second floor were stripped and altered in height as part of the alteration of the house's roof pitch. The ceilings were replaced with a wall system composed of circular sawn lath, a gray lime-based mortar scratch coat, overlaid with a plaster finish coat. Other repairs employing this wall system are visible on the first and second floors, particularly in areas where openings were changed in location or size. Another period of alterations in *ca.* 1950-1955 resulted in repairs throughout the house, most notably in the area surrounding the new stair. The wall system used in this period for large repairs employed metal lath over a lime-based mortar scratch coat. A thin layer of finish plaster was applied in areas of repair as well as a general resurfacing treatment for much of the first floor. This plaster surface is notable for its content of 95 per cent fibrous asbestos by weight, according to environmental testing that has been carried out on the property. There are no decorative cornices in the main block of the house, and all surviving wall papers and other decorative treatments are from the *ca.* 1950-55 period.

The rear ell of the property contains a number of wall and ceiling systems that have been installed over time. In the north (dining) room and kitchen, the wall surfaces and ceiling were originally sheathed with tongue and groove bead board. The bead board was subsequently covered with a gypsum wall board in *ca.* 1950-1955. The other notable wall finish is found in the southwest room of the ell, which was sheathed in knotty pine paneling when the room was enclosed. Portions of the original exterior weatherboard siding are visible in several locations.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Only two doorways in the Hilderbrand House appear unaltered from their original appearance in *ca.* 1850-1855. The first of these is the front entrance; the second is the doorway on the first floor that connects the hall with the south east room. These doorways were built with a simply detailed treatment in the Greek Revival style that uses a flat trim and peaked lintel, topped with a raking cornice fashioned with a beveled reveal. Though the front doors are four-panel arrangements, the interior door leading from the hall to the south east room is a six-panel arrangement of four equal panels over two short panels. There is no physical evidence to indicate that either the door or doorway has ever been modified to accept a replacement door. Each of these doors bears evidence that they were false-grained, perhaps in imitation of mahogany.

All other doorways in the main block of the house have been altered in some way or added since the original period of construction. All other original doorways have replacement doors. Other doorways, particularly those of the first floor, have been added or enlarged. In most cases, however, the newer openings have been fitted with trim to imitate the original peaked lintel, Greek Revival design of the original doorways. Notable among these are the two double-door openings of the first floor: the first connecting the hall with the north east room; the second connecting the northeast room with the north (dining) room. Both of these doorways were altered or added in *ca.* 1950-55. Only the doorway between the north

east room and the north (dining) room retains its doors today; they are simple twelve light double doors. Other doorways in the house have five-panel or six-panel doors, with the exception of one opening which has a salvaged, mid-nineteenth century door that has been shortened from its original height. The rear ell of the house has a variety of doorways and doors; none of these is particularly notable.

b. Windows: All existing windows in the main block of the Hilderbrand House retain their original interior window trim. The window trim used on the first floor repeats the treatment of the doorways with back-banded trim boards, peaked lintel and beveled cornice. The window trim of the second floor is a simpler design with a plain back-banded surround. A variety of other trim configurations are used in the rear ell, none of which is particularly notable.

6. Decorative features and trim: Few other notable features remain in place, due to alterations over time and recent vandalism. The house has only one mantelpiece remaining of the four it once contained. The mantel is located in the south east room of the first floor. The mantel is an extremely simple expression of Greek Revival composition. It has flat, chamfered pilasters on plinths (without capitals), a broad frieze with low peaked arch (reflecting the profile of the peaked window lintels), and a beveled cornice molding that supports a simple, shallow mantel shelf. There is evidence that the mantel was originally false-grained in imitation of mahogany or walnut.

The house has two styles of baseboards. The first is a simple 6" baseboard with no molded profile, except for the slight rounding of the upper interior edge; this baseboard is found in the south east room of the first floor, the south bedroom of the second floor, in the enclosed space beneath the stair, and in the hall way that wraps around the bathroom on the first floor. The second is a 9" baseboard with a complex molding on its upper edge; this baseboard is found in the north east room of the first floor, the north (dining) room of the first floor, the stair hall on both levels, and in the north bedroom. Neither baseboard is out of character with a house constructed originally in *ca.* 1850-55. However, all of the floor levels have been raised, and there is evidence that baseboards have been moved from once place to another in the house during various periods of alteration and addition. Therefore, it is quit impossible to determine which may be the original treatment for any of the rooms of the house, if any of the baseboard is original at all.

7. Hardware: All of the original or later hardware, lighting fixtures and etc. have been removed from the property by vandals. The remaining hinges are unremarkable. The only other hardware element surviving in the house today is a cast iron firebox insert located in the south bedroom; it is a semi-circular arched, Italianate insert which was installed when the fireplace was modified to burn coal.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The Hilderbrand House was heated by burning wood or coal until *ca.* 1950-1955, when a steam heating system was installed in the house. Radiators for this system remain in most rooms of the house.

b. Lighting: No original or later lighting fixtures remain in the house. The locations of ceiling-mounted electrical fixtures are the only evidence of lighting devices remaining.

c. Plumbing: Interior bathrooms were added to the Hilderbrand House in *ca.* 1915-20; the bathrooms were completely renovated in *ca.* 1950-55.

9. Original furnishings: No original furnishings or decorative treatments remain in evidence in the Hilderbrand House today; those that do remain consist of wall papers and carpeting dating from *ca.* 1950-1955 and subsequent redecorating periods.

D. SITE:

1. General setting and orientation: The Hilderbrand House is sited upon a low rise facing east, set approximately 400 feet from the center line of Airways Boulevard. The property today contains slightly more than four acres, consisting of a frontage of 210 feet and a depth of 962 feet. The widening of Airways Boulevard in *ca.* 1960 cut into the slope of the front lawn of the property, resulting in the construction of a concrete retaining wall along the right of way and driveway leading from the road to the front yard of the house. The drive loops through the front yard to a drop-off point at the front porch. The area immediate around the house is enclosed with a chain link fence, installed in *ca.* 1985 in an effort to protect the house from vandalism.

The front yard of the Hilderbrand House is landscaped with a variety of native and ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers. The yard also has a few large cedar trees. They may be the earliest landscape elements which survive on the property. Other trees on the property include magnolia, holly, oak and maple trees, none of which appear to pre-date *ca.* 1900.

The immediate rear yard of the house site is devoid of plantings with the exception of a single small maple tree. At a point approximately 100 feet behind the rear of the house, the mown yard gives way to dense overgrowth which covers the remainder of the property. With the exception of a half dozen red oaks near the center of this portion of the property, the overgrowth is of recent origin. The oak trees appear to be of fifty to seventy five years old.

2. Historic landscape design: Like the Hilderbrand House, its site and its

landscape have evolved over time. The earliest documentation of the appearance of the property dates from aerial photographs taken in June of 1940, when the site contained twenty-two acres.

The 1940 aerial photograph of the property reveals little additional information about the site. The configuration front yard is unchanged from its appearance today, except for the amount of tree cover. A secondary drive is shown leading along the north side of the house to an outbuilding or outbuildings immediately north of the rear ell; another drive leads from the circular drive at front along the south side of the house to the rear, where a carriage house or garage is visible. The carriage house would be located approximately at the tree line of the overgrown area of the site today. To the rear of the property stood a barn, the location of which can be confirmed by foundations and the larger oak trees found in this area of the site today. The property was surrounded at this time by cultivated fields, pastures and meadows.

The locations of the carriage house and the barn correspond with those of a carriage house and barn indicated on a schematic site plan of the property, prepared in 1926 as part of a subdivision plan for the property holdings of Charles B. Hilderbrand.

Previous descriptions of the site and its outbuildings are limited to a notation of five slave houses located on the property at the time of the 1860 Census.

Archaeological testing of the site has identified the location of various drives, gardens and outbuildings in the side and rear yards of the property. The analysis of the testing program is continuing; further archaeological recovery on the site is expected in the future. The results of the completed archaeological testing and recovery program for the site will be conveyed to the Historic American Buildings Survey, so that further discoveries may be included in the Hilderbrand House files.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS:

No plans of the Hilderbrand House are known to exist from any of its various building phases.

B. HISTORIC VIEWS:

No historic ground-level views of the Hilderbrand House are known to exist. Aerial views of the property dating from June 22, 1940, October 11, 1953, and January 8, 1959 are in the aerial photograph and map collections of the Memphis and Shelby County Archives, Memphis, Tennessee, a division of the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library system.

C. INTERVIEWS:

No individuals associated with this property were located during the course of this project.

D. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES CITED

1. Primary and published sources:

Aerial Survey of Shelby County, Tennessee, June 22, 1940. Contained in the files of the Memphis and Shelby County Archives, Memphis, Tennessee.

Records of the Holt Funeral Home and the McDowell-Monteverde Funeral Home, Memphis, Tennessee. (unpublished MS, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center).

Shelby County, Tennessee. Deed Book F, 23, 60-2, 126, 140, 313, 511, 538, 589, 969, 1570, 1689, 2547, and AE.

Shelby County, Tennessee. Marriage Records. Memphis and Shelby County Archives.

Shelby County, Tennessee. Minutes of the Shelby County Court, Vols. 2, 3, 5 and 6. Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information System.

Shelby County, Tennessee. Plat Book 9.

Shelby County, Tennessee. Will Book 12.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Ayres, George B. *Ayres' Descriptive Railroad Handbook of the Great Southern Route* (Memphis, George B. Ayres, 1858).

Magness, Pere. *Good Abode* (Memphis: The Junior League of Memphis, Inc., 1983).

Guedes, Peter, editor. *Encyclopedia of Architectural Technology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

Harkins, John E. *Metropolis of the American Nile* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982).

Hopkins & Associates. *The Historical Development of the Hannum-Rhea House, Somerville, Tennessee*. Unpublished MS prepared for the Fayette County Chapter of the Association of Tennessee Antiquities. 1994.

McCorkle, Anna L., *Record of Burials in the Edmonson Cemetery* (unpublished MS, 1964, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center).

Memphis Daily Appeal, Vol. IX, No. 181, October 16, 1858, page 4.

U. S. Department of the Census. *Censuses of Mississippi, Population Schedules, 1830, 1870*.

U. S. Department of the Census. *Censuses of 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, Population Schedules, Civil District 12, Shelby County, Tennessee*.

U. S. Department of the Census, *Censuses of 1850 and 1860, Agricultural Schedules, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee*.

U. S. Department of the Census, *Censuses of 1850 and 1860, Slave Schedules, Twelfth Civil District, Shelby County, Tennessee*.

E. LIKELY SOURCES NOT YET INVESTIGATED:

Unknown

F. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

N/A

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a mitigative recording pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration, the Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority, the Tennessee historical Commission and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The project was conducted by Hopkins & Associates, a historic preservation planning firm based in Memphis, Tennessee, pursuant to a contract with the Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority under the supervision and direction of Solomon M. Garrett, Jr.

The contextual and architectural histories for the project were prepared by John Linn Hopkins and Marsha R. Oates of Hopkins & Associates. The measured architectural drawings of the property were prepared by David Cleaves of Self-Tucker Architects, Inc., under the supervision of Juan Self, A.I.A. Finally, archival photographs of the property were prepared by David Nester of D. Nester Photography, Inc.

In association with the architectural recording phase of the project, the mitigation of adverse impact on the Hilderbrand House has also included archaeological testing of the surrounding site. The archaeological testing has been carried out by Hopkins & Associates through its subcontractor, Weaver & Associates, also of Memphis, Tennessee, under the direction of Guy G. Weaver.

Prepared by: John Linn Hopkins
Marsha R. Oates
Title: Architectural Historians
Affiliation: Hopkins & Associates
Date: August, 1998