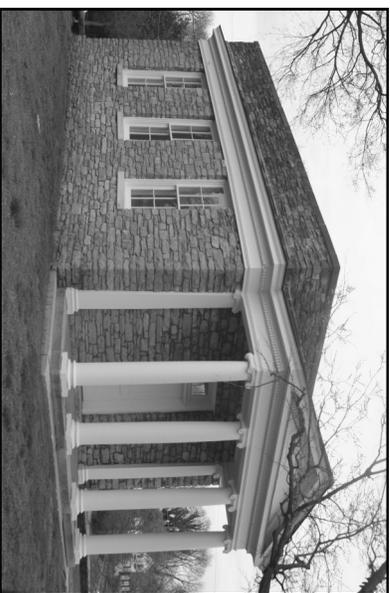


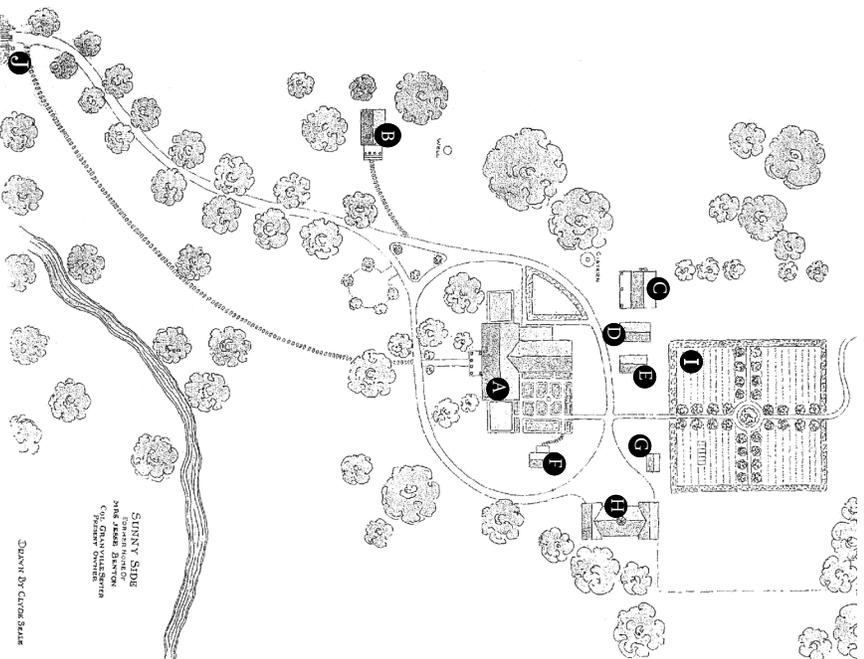
Three log outbuildings once stood at the rear of the house (see C, D, E on map). Only one remains today—the smokehouse, which was moved to its current location prior to the 1930s. The two-story cabin, above, was once servants quarters.



This classically styled office building was built around 1930 for Granville Sevier (see B on map).



The main property entrance off Granny White Pike is still present in the park today, adjacent to the current park entrance (see J on map).



- A. House
- B. Office
- C. Two-story cabin
- D. Smokehouse
- E. Log cabin
- F. Storage/office/school
- G. Storage (1960s construction)
- H. Carriage House
- I. Subterranean Greenhouse
- J. Original Entrance

\*There have been other outbuildings across the property throughout its long history. Many were moved (like the smokehouse) or changed purposes (like the office turned schoolhouse turned storage building) as the needs of the property owners changed. Those noted above have been verified through photographic and archaeological evidence. As more research becomes available, we look forward to sharing those with you.

*Map on front cover:*  
Map of Davidson County  
Tennessee, 1871  
(Library of Congress,  
Geography and Map Division)

*Map on back cover adapted from:*  
Sunnyside, The Home of  
Colonel Granville Sevier  
(History of Homes and  
Gardens of Tennessee, 1936)

**Metropolitan Historical Commission**

3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, TN 37204  
(615) 862-7970  
nashville.gov/MHC

# Sunnyside in Sevier Park



*From a country estate to an  
urban park, the history  
of Sunnyside reflects  
the history and growth of Nashville*

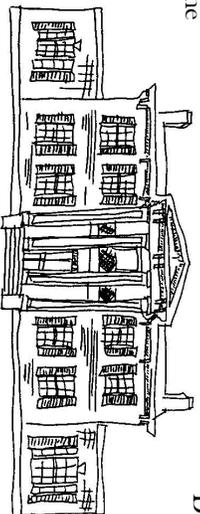
Sunnyside, as this two-story frame house is known, was built in about 1852 for Mary Childress Benton. Its site is part of Nashville's early settlement history. On July 10, 1788, the state of North Carolina granted Thomas Hardiman 640 acres, equivalent to one square mile, along Brown's Creek for his service in the Revolutionary War. The property changed hands several times before Mary Benton purchased about 38 acres of it in January 1852. By this time, a house of cedar logs and several other small cabins existed on the present home site.

Mary Benton was the widow of Jesse Benton, who, along with his brother, Thomas Hart Benton, is remembered for engaging in a famous pistol fight with Andrew Jackson in 1813. The on-going quarrel with Jackson caused both brothers to leave Nashville. Thomas Hart Benton moved to Missouri, becoming a well-known public figure and U.S. Senator from 1821-1851. Jesse left Nashville to live and own property in both Texas and Louisiana, refusing to "live longer among people who gave such political preference to a man like Andrew Jackson." Jesse died in 1843.

During the construction of the house, Mary lived in the existing log house and found it so comfortable that she incorporated it into an ell behind the main house. The main house is a traditional frame building, known as an I-house, with two rooms downstairs and two upstairs on either side of a central hall. Sunnyside's vernacular interpretation of popular antebellum architectural styles combines decorative brackets—usually an Italianate feature—with the central porch, two-story columns, and symmetry of Greek Revival.

Mary brought her widowed niece, Minerva Douglass, and her niece's two children, Henry and Mary, to live in the completed house. Young Mary Douglass gave Sunnyside its name, reflecting its bright, open hillside location. Mary Douglass later married Theodore Francis (Frank) Sevier of Kentucky, and the young couple lived at Sunnyside until the Civil War, when Frank enlisted in the Confederate Army.

John Shute bought the property during the Civil War for his daughter, the wife of Stephen Childress, a relative of Mary Benton (see map on front cover). The couple changed the name of the house to Lee Monte to honor Confederate General Robert E. Lee. The Battle of Nashville raged around the house on



December 15 and 16, 1864. The property stood between

Confederate and Union lines and still bears reminders of the fighting in scars left by mine balls on the porch door and columns. Wounded

Union soldiers were treated here in the days following the battle. The Childress family returned after the war and enlarged the farm to 140 acres before selling it in 1875.

In 1882, Dr. L.G. Noel purchased the estate at auction. Noel owned the property longer than any other individual, renaming it Idlewild after his mother's home in Memphis. Dr. Noel was a prominent Nashville dentist and also taught classes at Vanderbilt, where he served as chair of dental pathology from 1905 until the dental school closed in 1926. During this period, the property slowly changed from a country estate to a suburban one as modern conveniences like telephones and indoor plumbing were added. A few chickens, horses, and a dairy cow remained, but farming gave way to suburbanization as the Noel family subdivided part of the land.

After Dr. Noel's death, Granville Sevier, son of Frank and Mary Douglass Sevier, came back to visit the house where his mother had grown up. In 1927, he purchased 20.5 acres from the Noel family and brought his mother back to the home she had christened Sunnyside. Sevier renovated the house, adding the one-story brick wings, enlarging the basement, and building the stone office (see B on back cover map). His heirs sold the property to the city of Nashville after his death in 1945.

Sevier Park opened on this property in 1948. In 1954, a swimming pool was added to the park, and a community center was built in 1963. By 1985, the park had picnic shelters, a ball diamond, tennis courts, a playground, and a basketball court. Sunnyside was occupied by the family of a Park Department superintendent until 1987. Later, the building housed various community groups. A major restoration was completed in 2004, and Sunnyside is now home to the Metropolitan Historical Commission and Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission. A new community center opened in Sevier Park in 2014.

Jesse Benton, Mary Benton, Mary Douglass Sevier, and Granville Sevier are buried at the Nashville City Cemetery, 1001 4th Avenue South.



Of the original four-bay carriage house pictured here, only the section on the far left remains (see H on the back cover map). The right and center portions were removed due to structural decay. The school/office, greenhouse, and other wood-frame farm buildings have all been lost to time and the elements.



This scrap book page was donated to MHC and contains newspaper clippings from a 1929 Nashville Banner article about the property.