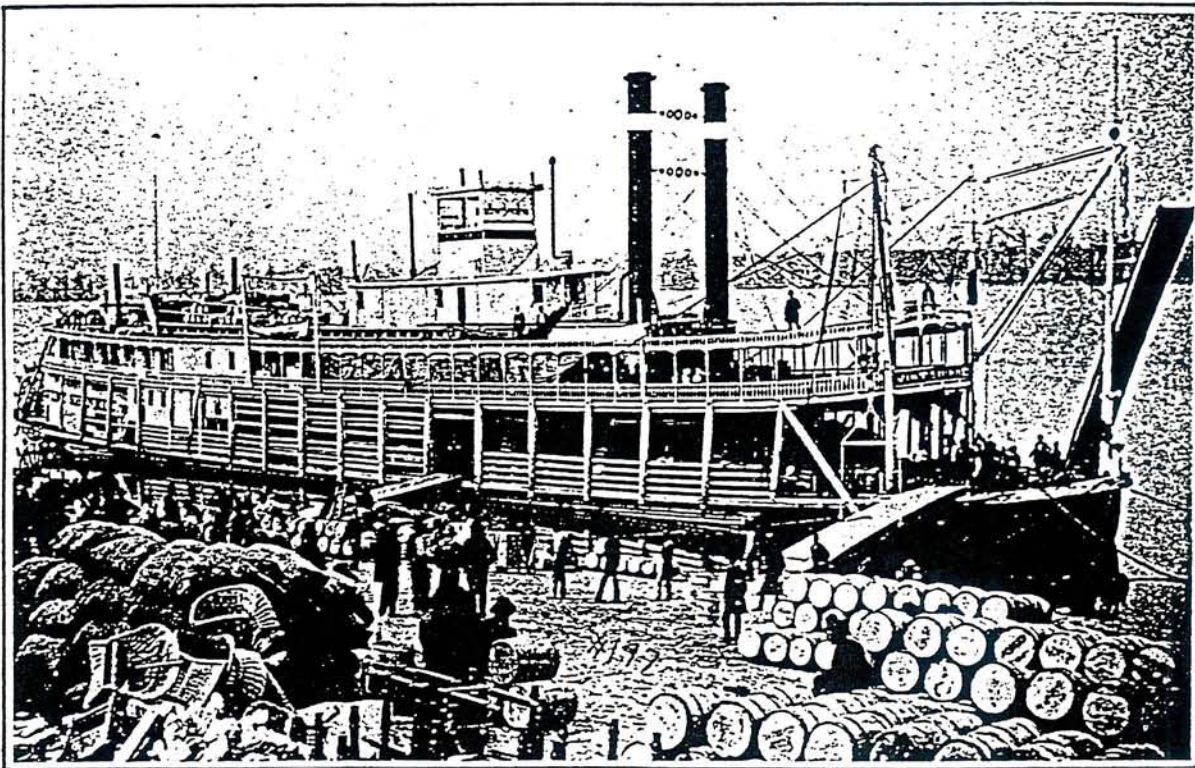


THE MEMPHIS LANDING
CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT AND PRESERVATION PLAN,
CITY OF MEMPHIS, SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

PART 1: CULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

(DRAFT)



GARROW & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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(DRAFT)

Submitted to:

City of Memphis
Division of Engineering
125 North Main Street
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Submitted by:

GARROW & ASSOCIATES, INC.
510 South Main Street
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Project No. 95-42-18-1834



Guy G. Weaver, Principal Investigator

Prepared by:

Guy G. Weaver, Garrow & Associates, Inc., Memphis
John L. Hopkins and Marsha R. Oates, Hopkins & Associates, Memphis
and Gary Patterson, Geological Consultants, Inc., Memphis

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ABSTRACT

At the request of the City of Memphis, Garrow & Associates, Inc., prepared a cultural resource assessment and preservation plan for the Memphis Landing, a nineteenth century stone revetment on the Wolf River Harbor at the riverfront in Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee. This volume presents the results of the cultural resource assessment; the preservation plan is found in Part 2, a separate volume. Objectives of the study include: 1) documenting the evolution of the built environment; 2) formulating a predictive model of buried archaeological deposits at the Landing; 3) identifying natural and cultural causes affecting the preservation of the Landing; and 4) assessing the significance of the Memphis Landing using criteria established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Memphis Landing currently covers approximately 379,000 square feet. Approximately 70,000 square feet of this total is composed of silty river clay above the waterline and below the present edge of the stone paved surface. An estimated 813,442 cobbles cover the remaining 309,000 square feet. The Landing is composed of nine different rock types in a variety of patterns that reflect historical building and repair episodes.

Current information suggests that the Landing is the product of three nineteenth century building episodes and one twentieth century repaving project. The first major paving of the Landing, of which no clear evidence remains, occurred between 1859 and 1860. Between 1866 and 1869, the stone pavement was extended south from Court Avenue to Union Avenue. The third major construction period was 1879-1881, when the Landing was extended to the south side of Beale Street. The final major modification to the Landing was ca. 1932-1937, with the completion of Riverside Drive to the east and Jefferson Davis Park on the north.

Both the historical documentation and existing site conditions give clear evidence for the necessity of periodic repair to the Landing. Factors contributing to the deterioration are both natural and cultural. Natural forces include erosion by rainwater runoff, fluctuations of the water level, and alternating siltation and scouring from river currents. In many cases, these natural effects have been exacerbated by the lack of periodic maintenance. Cultural factors include the choice of raw materials, infrastructure additions, and use-attribution.

Archaeological resources at the Landing are of two types. The first includes sections of the original stone fabric and other surface features such as moorings and stone-lined drainages. Second, there is a potential for buried archaeological deposits and features beneath the stone pavement. Based on surface and documentary evidence, the Landing can be divided into three zones. In Zone 1, significant cultural resources are present at the surface, and there is a potential for significant subsurface archaeological deposits. In Zone 2, there is little surface integrity, but there is a potential for significant subsurface deposits. In Zone 3, modern construction has destroyed the possibility of significant archaeological deposits.

The Memphis Landing was recognized as a significant historic resource by its inclusion in the boundaries of the Cotton Row Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in August 1979. It is now appropriate that the Memphis Landing be resubmitted as an individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. On a national level, the Memphis Landing represents the significant national themes of river commerce and westward migration in the nineteenth century. Therefore, it is recommended that nomination of the Landing as a National Historic Landmark should be pursued.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report of a multidisciplinary investigation of cultural resources at the Memphis Landing, a cobblestone revetment along the east side of the Wolf River Harbor in downtown Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee. The study was conducted at the request of the City of Memphis, Division of Engineering and Division of Housing and Community Development, as part of an overall preservation plan for the Landing. The investigations reported here were performed between August and November 1995 by Garrow & Associates, Inc., Hopkins & Associates, and Geological Consultants, Inc.

The Memphis Landing, also called the Cobblestone Landing or the Memphis Wharf, is a rare historic resource that holds great value in continuing the tradition of the city's river heritage. The existing cobblestones are only a segment of a much larger paved landing first constructed during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1979, the Landing was found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A and C and is included as a disconnected contributing element of the Cotton Row Historic District (Frankle 1989). To ensure the Landing's continued existence in the face of natural erosion and proposed riverfront redevelopment, the City of Memphis is required to enact informed management practices and future design standards. This report details the existing condition of the Landing and is the first step toward formulating a final comprehensive preservation plan.

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

In the summer of 1994, the City of Memphis began constructing a retaining structure at the foot of Beale Street to be used as the foundation for the relocation of the Tom Lee Monument. The excavations dislocated a large section of the cobblestone Landing and exposed underlying nineteenth century archaeological deposits associated with site 40SY352 (Bowman 1981). Construction was halted at the insistence of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The City prepared an after-the-fact application for a permit under Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1977 (also known as the Clean Water Act). In the review of the permit application, the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) requested Phase II testing for cultural resources as a requirement relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4870f, regulations codified at 36 CFR Part 800).

At the request of the City of Memphis, Garrow & Associates conducted archaeological test investigations at the Tom Lee Monument relocation site in October 1994. The primary goals of the investigations were to identify, record, and evaluate any potentially significant cultural resources threatened by the planned construction. These goals were addressed through a preliminary literature and records search, archaeological field investigations, and laboratory analysis (Weaver et al. 1994).

The Phase II testing identified two significant archaeological resources: the cobblestone pavement and the archaeological deposits beneath it. Rather than a single monolithic entity, the cobblestones were recognized as a complex mosaic of various shapes, patterns, and materials that together reflect changing commercial, economic, and technological conditions in Memphis during the nineteenth century. As a significant archaeological resource, the cobblestones, as well as the underlying cultural deposits, were recommended eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion D (Weaver et al. 1994:i, 1). Other recommendations were offered to mitigate the adverse impact to the Landing as a result of the Tom Lee Monument relocation project. These recommendations included: 1) additional historical research to document the construction

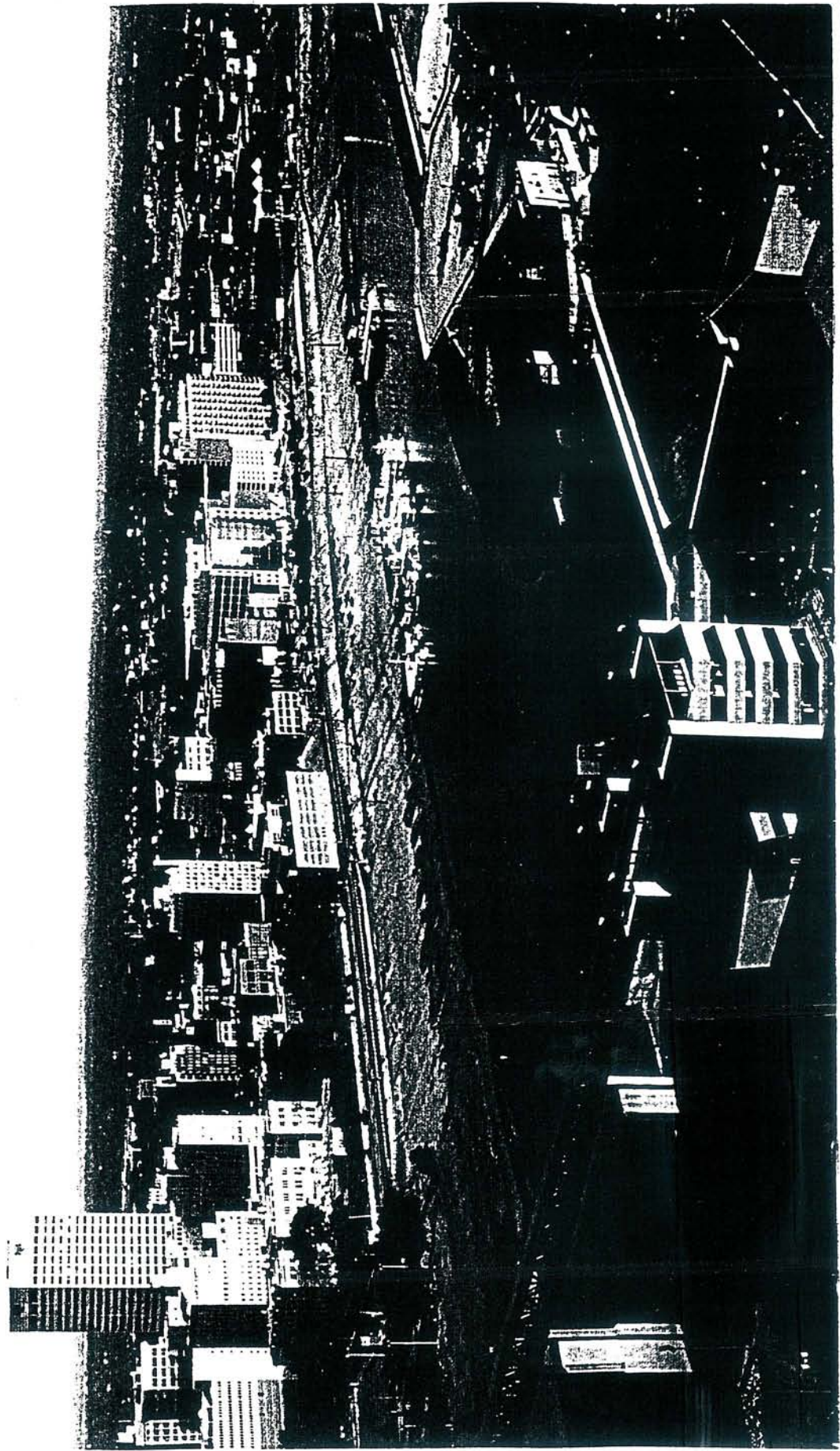


Figure 1. The Memphis Landing Today (View to the South).

sequence of the entire cobblestone Landing; 2) a study to document the existing conditions of the cobblestone Landing; 3) archaeological data recovery of buried deposits at the site of the proposed Tom Lee Monument relocation; and 4) preparation of a preservation plan that would establish standards for future treatment of the Memphis Landing (Weaver et al. 1994:54-56).

Subsequent to the Phase II report, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was executed and accepted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Memphis, the Tennessee SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The MOA included the following stipulation:

7. Preservation of Northern Cobblestone Area

- A. Prior to any ground disturbance, the City of Memphis shall, in consultation with the SHPO and Corps of Engineers, prepare a preservation plan for the total remaining cobblestone area north of the Tom Lee Monument relocation project area. The preservation plan shall include, but not be limited to:
- 1) Additional archival research;
 - 2) Mapping and photo-documentation of the cobblestones;
 - 3) Geologic study of the cobblestone area that includes distribution, size, texture, pattern, and lithology of the entire cobblestone area;
 - 4) Plan for future renovation programs including repair methods;
 - 5) Plan for future potential economic developments and long-term maintenance in the area (restaurants, boat docks, general accessibility, etc.);
 - 6) Plans for interpretive booklets and exhibits.

To these ends, Garrow & Associates presented a proposal to the City outlining a multidisciplinary approach to the problems of preservation, maintenance, and future development of the Memphis Landing. A contract between the City and Garrow & Associates was executed in July 1995, and the services were completed between August and November 1995. The project was divided into two phases.

The first phase, reported in this volume, consists of a cultural resource assessment and was designed to further our understanding of the existing conditions, history, geological character, and archaeological potential of Memphis Landing. Specific goals of the study include:

- Documenting the evolution of the built environment;
- Formulating a predictive model of buried archaeological resources at the Landing;
- Identifying and describing natural and cultural factors affecting the preservation of the Landing;
- Assessing the potential significance of the Landing using criteria established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The second phase of the study was the preparation of a preservation plan for the Landing. The plan develops a set of standards and guidelines for the City of Memphis that will balance the need to preserve the Memphis Landing's historical qualities with the needs that may arise in its future development. Those recommendations are presented in Part 2, a separate volume.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This report details the goals, methods, and results of the cultural resource assessment of the Memphis Landing and is the first phase of an overall preservation plan. Chapter II describes the study area and presents an overview of its environmental setting. Chapter III discusses the history of the Memphis Landing. Methods and results of the lithological examination are presented in Chapter IV, and archaeological methods and findings are presented in Chapter V. Conclusions and recommendations are provided in Chapter V. An aerial view of the Landing, showing lithological pattern distributions, is included as Appendix 1.