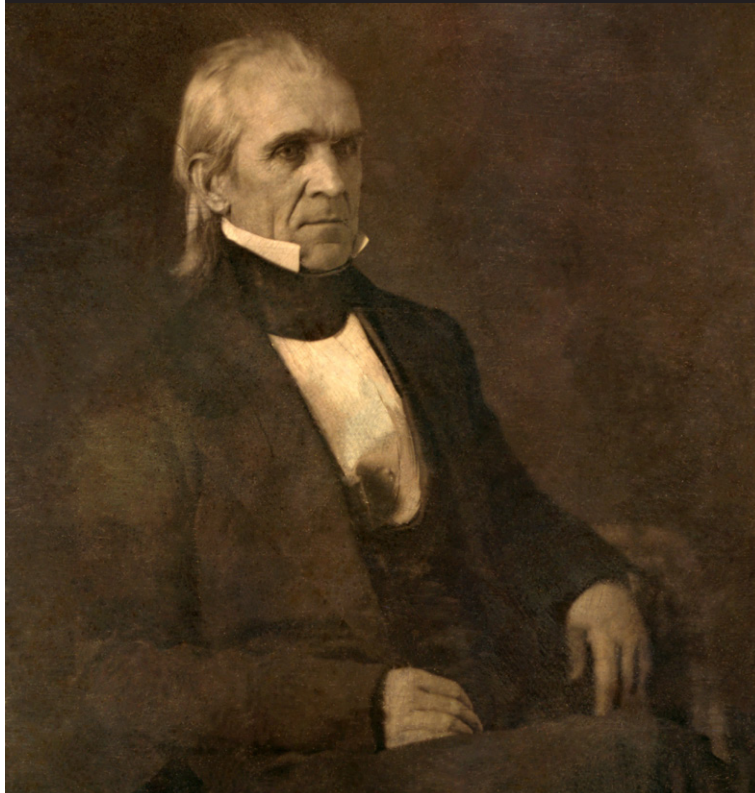


James K. Polk Home Special Resource Study

February 2021

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Hello Friends,

We are pleased to share that the National Park Service (NPS) is conducting a special resource study of the James K. Polk Home located in Columbia, Tennessee. James K. Polk was the 11th president of the United States and lived in Columbia, Tennessee, from 1818 until 1824.

The James K. Polk Home was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961. The National Park Service completed a reconnaissance survey of the site in 2014 to evaluate the property as a potential new unit of the national park system. The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (Dingell Act) directed the secretary of the interior to conduct a special resource study of the James K. Polk Home to evaluate its national significance and determine the suitability and feasibility of designating it as a unit of the national park system.

Since we are in early development of this special resource study, we would like to engage the public in discussions about the James K. Polk Home. A virtual story map and public comment web page will be available to learn more about the home and gather the public's ideas and opinions about the site. The National Park Service will evaluate the property using congressionally established criteria for national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management. The National Park Service will determine whether the site meets the criteria to be eligible for inclusion in the national park system and if so, will prepare the study for the secretary of the interior. The findings and any recommendations will then be submitted to Congress for consideration.

We welcome your feedback throughout this process.. To comment on this site and see more information and project updates, please visit <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/polksrs>.

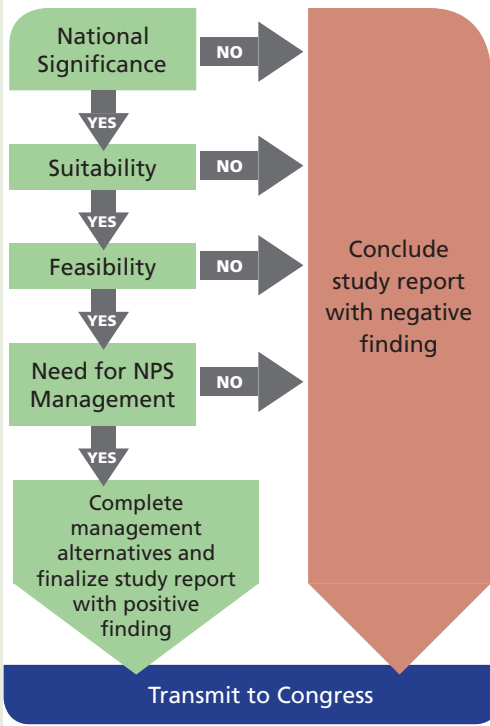
Your thoughts and ideas are important to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

The NPS Study Team

The Study Process

Special Resource Study (SRS) Completion Pathways



About the Study Area

The NPS study area includes the James K. Polk Home, the Polk Sisters' House, kitchen outbuilding, gardens, garden cottage, and the Polk Presidential Hall all located on a single block in downtown Columbia, Tennessee. As the only surviving residence in which President James K. Polk lived besides the White House, the home in Columbia is most closely associated with James K. Polk.

Samuel Polk, James' father, purchased the land in Columbia, Tennessee, in 1816 and began construction of the two-story brick Polk home. James lived in his parent's Federal-style residence from 1818 until 1824 while he attended college and began his law practice in Columbia.

James K. Polk married Sarah Childress in 1824 and permanently moved out of his parent's home. Samuel Polk and his wife Jane remained in the home until their deaths in 1827 and 1852, respectively.

After his time in Columbia, Polk went on to serve as a Tennessee state

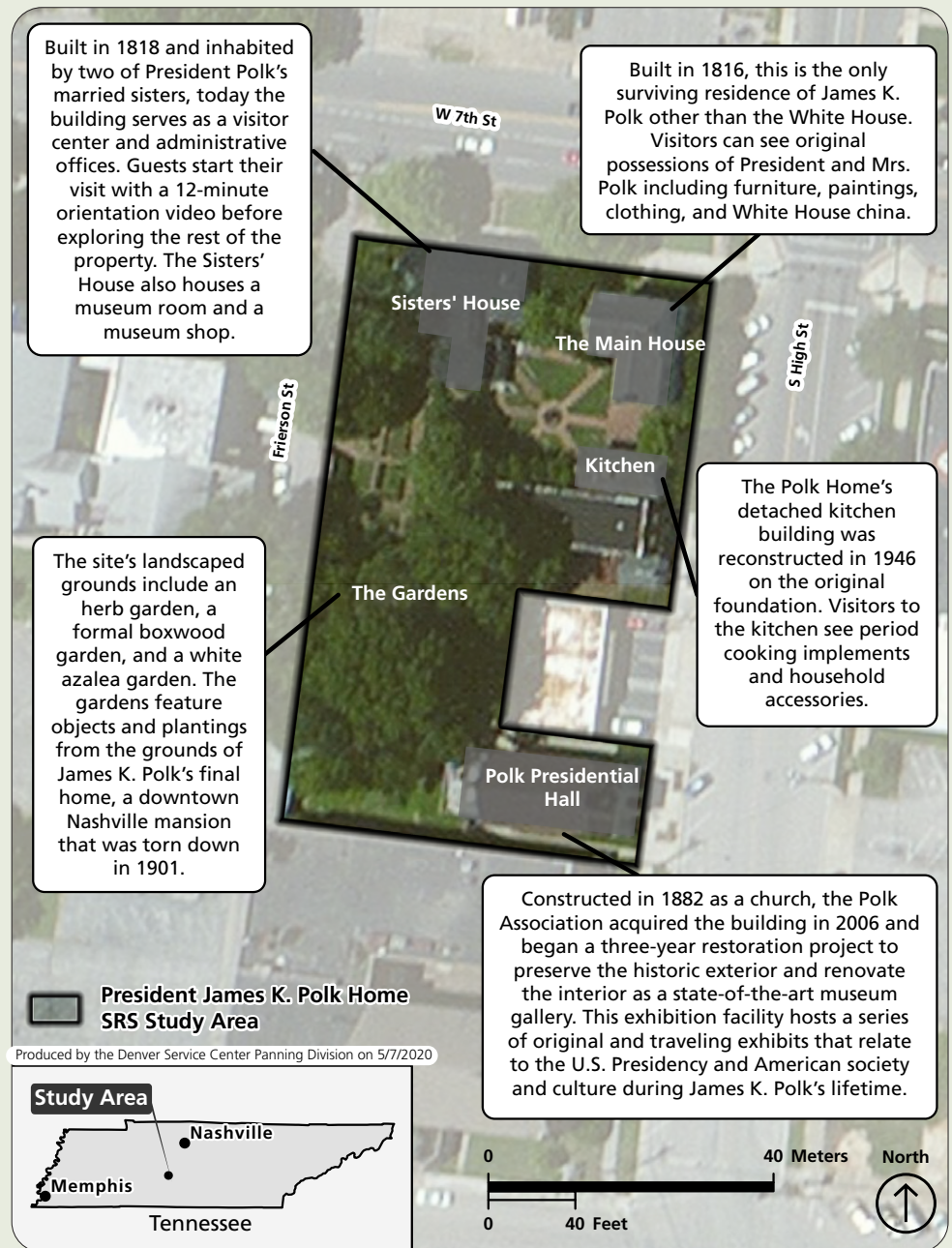
legislator, US representative, governor of Tennessee, and the 11th president of the United States.

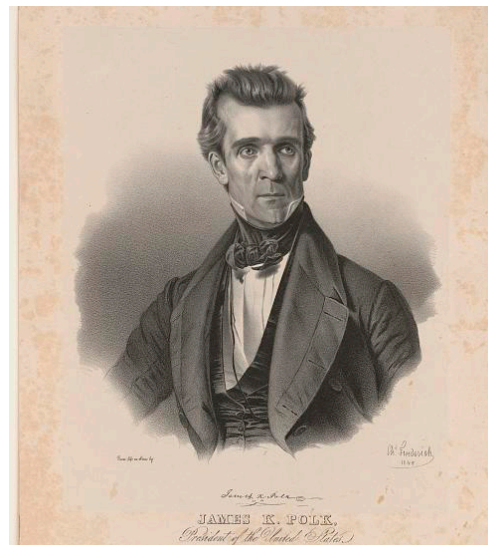
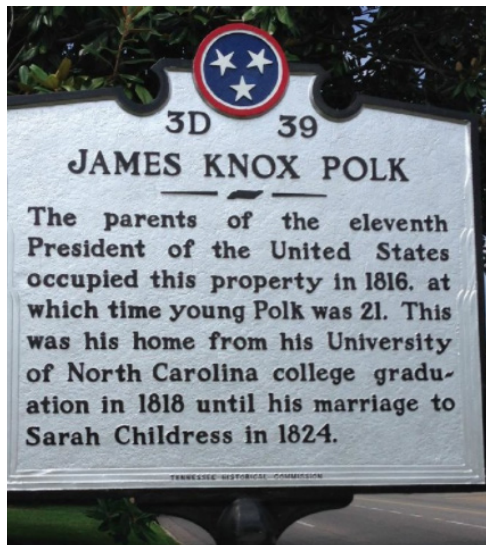
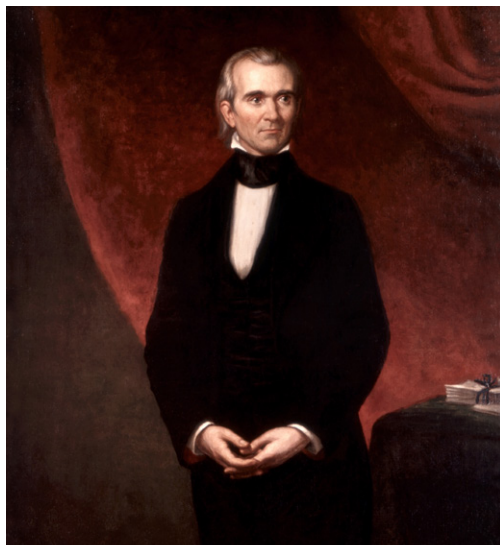
While James K. Polk only served one term as president from 1845 to 1849, he accomplished each goal that he set out to accomplish: including major land acquisitions for the United States; the positive settlement of the Texas border dispute; lower tariff rates; and the establishment of a new federal depository system.

Polk is known for expanding the United States with the annexation of Texas, the Oregon Territory, and the Mexican Cession following the

Mexican-American War. The United States grew by more than a million square miles, adding territory that now comprises the states of Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, much of New Mexico, and portions of Wyoming, Montana, and Colorado.

The James K. Polk Memorial Association administers and operates the James K. Polk Home and Museum and owns and preserves artifacts and original documents directly relating to President Polk. The Memorial Association also offers guided tours and educational programs to the public.





Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Special Resource Study?

A special resource study evaluates an area's eligibility of an area to be recommended for designation as a national park or other special designation. The study evaluates criteria for inclusion in the national park system and is designed to provide Congress with information about the resource qualities at the site and alternatives for protection, which can be used in the legislative process of designating potential additions to the national park system. The National Park Service prepares the study for the secretary of the interior; the findings and any recommendations will then be presented to Congress. Regardless of the outcome of the study; new units of the national park system can only be established by an Act of Congress or by Presidential Proclamation.

2. How Will the James K. Polk Home be evaluated?

The 1998 National Parks Omnibus Management Act (54 United States Code 100507) established the process for identifying and authorizing studies of new national park units. Under the law, a study area must meet all four of the following criteria to be recommended as an addition to the national park system:

- Contain nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources
- Represent a natural or cultural resource that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies, tribal, state or local governments, or the private sector
- Must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and visitor enjoyment, and (2) capable of efficient administration by the National Park Service at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition costs,

life cycle maintenance costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements.

- Require direct NPS management that is clearly superior to other management approaches

NPS personnel will evaluate the James K. Polk Home according to the above criteria. If at any point throughout the special resource study process NPS staff determine that the site does not meet one of the criteria, the study will end, and the team will prepare a document with a negative finding for Congress.

3. What Are Some of the Possible Outcomes of the Study?

Over the last 20 years, about one in three completed congressionally authorized studies has resulted in a positive finding (the study area met all of the criteria). Many studies conclude that resources do not meet the required criteria or that existing management, technical or financial assistance, or local, state, or private initiatives are preferable to the establishment of a new national park unit.

If the special resource study results in a recommendation from the secretary of the interior to add the James K. Polk Home to the national park system, Congress may or may not act on or follow the recommendation. There is no timeframe for legislative action.

4. When Will I Learn the Results of the Study?

The National Park Service will publicly release a study report after it has been submitted to Congress. In most cases, the National Park Service will not release findings or drafts of the study before submitting to Congress.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
JAMES K. POLK HOME SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY
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LAKEWOOD, CO 80228

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



How to Participate

We encourage you to learn more about the special resource study process and share your ideas during the process in the following ways:

- Stay updated by visiting the study website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/polksrs>.
- Send us your thoughts and comments:
 - » **Online:** Visit the web address above and click “Open for Comment.”
 - » **By mail:** Send your comments to:
National Park Service – Denver Service Center
Attn: Julie Bell, Project Manager
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287
 - » **By phone:** Julie Bell (project manager) at 303-987-6726.

In your comments, we are particularly interested to hear your thoughts and ideas about the following:

1. What is your vision for preserving the James K. Polk Home and how would you like the site to be managed? What types of activities and experiences do you want to see as part of the Polk Home’s future?
2. What objects, buildings, remaining features, values, and stories do you believe are most important at this site and why?
3. Do you have any other ideas, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us, including your level of support for a potential NPS designation?



Thank you for taking the time to learn about and comment on this study. We look forward to hearing from you.