Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

PH 0502715

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

VLR-6/21/77 NRHP-2/23/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY AUG 16 1977

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OWNER OF	PROPERTY				
NAME Mr. Hora	tio D. Thompson				12 T T T
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REPRESENT	TATION IN EXIS	STING SURV	$^{\prime}$ EYS (2)	See continu	ation Sheet #1
TITLE				4	
	(1) Historic Ame	rican Building	s Survey T	nventory	
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DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

__EXCELLENT

__FAIR

_DETERIORATED

__RUINS

__.UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

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CHECK ONE

X_ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Church Hill, at Timber Ridge, is set among the rolling hills of the Valley of Virginia in Rockbridge County, adjacent to the eighteenth-century Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, a National Register property. The plantation house is a two-story, three-bay, rectangular building built of brick laid in Flemish bond on the front and in five- and seven-course American bond on the sides and rear with stuccoed Doric pilasters at the corners and mid-points of the long sides. There is an original, one-story kitchen ell on the rear, also built of brick which is laid in nine-course American bond with Flemish variant. All of the windows are glazed with six-over-six sash and have louvred blinds. A full Doric entablature is carried around the main block. The whole is crowned by a low hipped roof with interior end chimneys and a central monitor with a low balustrade decorated with sawnwork four-pointed stars. There is a portico sheltering the front door which is in the east bay of the facade. This portice consists of a pedimented roof with a full Doric entablature supported on two pairs of coupled, unfluted, Greek Doric piers. Stylized, winged orbs decorate the frieze and the architrave. The kitchen ell is undecorated except for a plain board suggesting a frieze which is attached to the long sides. It too is covered with a low hipped roof and is crowned with an interior end chimney.

The plan of Church Hill is an unusual one; it consists of four rooms of unequal sizes. The main entry of the building opens into the northeast corner room, the smallest of the four, which contains the principal stairs. The largest room is the northwest corner room, or parlor; behind this is a third room which presently serves as a dining room. In the southeast corner is the original dining room which contains an auxiliary stair to the second floor, ascending along the lateral partition wall.

The main stair is an open-string, L-plan one with two rectangular balusters to a tread, a round banister which is ramped and eased at the urn newels, and no brackets. The doors in the stair hall are grained in imitation of mahogany, and the stair risers have light grey marbleizing with trompe I oeil masonry joints. Noteworthy as well is the early striped green wallpaper which survives in this room.

Old wallpaper survives in the parlor as well. This room is further decorated with a plain mantel with a light molded shelf supported on entablature blocks and a tablet which are molded and which rest upon the light architrave surround. The doors in this room are grained and retain their original Carpenter locks.

The southwest room, which presently serves as the dining room, has a black Benjaminesque Greek Revival mantel with plain, Doric pilasters supporting an unadorned frieze. A similar mantel is used in the southeast room, where wallpaper like that in the parlor covers the walls.

There is no decoration in the kitchen ell which, however, has its original crane surviving in the fireplace.

No early outbuildings survive. There is one log building which tradition claims was constructed from logs salvaged from the Sam Houston birthplace cabin, but this claim cannot be documented.

(see Continuation Sheet #1)

Du



PERIOD -- PREHISTORIC

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

COMMUNITY PLANNING

....LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

_RELIGION

_1400-1499

__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC

__CONSERVATION _LAW _SCIENCE

...1500-1599

AGRICULTURE

---1600-1699

X ARCHITECTURE

__UTERATURE

SCULPTURE

X_MILITARY

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

1700-1799

...ART

EDUCATION ENGINEERING

__ECONOMICS

MUSIC

THEATER

X1800-1899

__COMMERCE

 Δ _exploration/settlement

__PHILOSOPHY

TRANSPORTATION

_1900-

...COMMUNICATIONS

_JNDUSTRY __INVENTION

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_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

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OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

1848

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Church Hill, a rolling tract of land adjacent to the Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, is notable for the handsome Greek Revival plantation house which stands on it. The blockish, hip-roofed form with its stuccoed corner pilasters, fine-Flemish- and American-bond brickwork, trompe 1' oeil interior decoration, and plain but graceful interior woodwork is typical of the high standards of craftsmanship and design which characterized substantial domestic, Greek Revival architecture in rural America. Built in 1848 by the Thompson family and still owned by them, the farm was the birthplace of Sam Houston, a major figure in the American settlement and takeover of Texas. Tradition locates the cabin in which Houston was born on the site of the kitchen ell of the present house.

Robert Houston was granted 307 acres of land in what was then Orange County in 1742 by Benjamin Borden, the original royal patentee of Rockbridge County. Houston deeded one acre of his tract to the Timber Ridge congregation as a site for its church. When he died in 1761 the title to this holding passed to his son Samuel. Sam Houston the Texan was born to Samuel and his wife Elizabeth on the Timber Ridge property in 1793. Thirteen years later the elder Houston moved to Tennessee, selling the plantation to John Kinnear, whose heirs, in 1836, sold 136 acres of the tract to Horatio Thompson, Kinnear's son-in-law. Thompson was minister of the Timber Ridge Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church. books through the late years of the Kinnear ownership and the first twelve years of Thompson's possession assess the buildings on the tract at \$150. In 1848, \$500. worth of new building was added, but the total assessment was only \$500. This appears to indicate that the previous building, possibly Houston's birthplace, was demolished in 1848 to make way for the present house.

The property has passed through three more generations of Thompson family ownership since the first Horatio built the house. Horatio D. Thompson is the present owner.

Form No. 10-300a (Hey-20-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Church Hill, Rockbridge County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6,7,9 PAGE

- 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
 - (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey 1968, 1977 State Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Richmond, Virginia
- 7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries have been drawn to include the main house, a modern frame barn, and the aforementioned log building. The property is bounded on the northeast and the southeast by roads and on the northwest and southwest by lines containing the three buildings and four surrounding acres.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rockbridge County Deed Books F, T, 92, 139; Will Book #24.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Augusta County Will Book #3.

