

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 1 1985

date entered MAR 28 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Thomas Montgomery House

and/or common Palmetto Farm (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Tennessee Highway 64 N/A not for publication

city, town Palmetto X vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Bedford code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Roberta Ransom Mason

street & number Route 1, Shelbyville Highway

city, town Lewisburg NA vicinity of state Tennessee 37091

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bedford County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Shelbyville state Tennessee 37160

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the Bedford-Marshall County line, two miles east of Farmington, Tennessee is Palmetto Farm, an imposing and finely detailed Greek Revival home. The two-story frame house is the centerpiece of an intact nineteenth century farmstead and is surrounded by a number of original outbuildings including a detached log kitchen, an icehouse/cistern, two small barns, and a servant's quarters. The house occupies a large lot on the south side of the Lewisburg-Shelbyville highway and is set amidst mature maples, poplars, and other native trees.

The main facade of the house faces north towards the highway and is three bays wide. A monumental pedimented portico with a scroll sawn balcony supported by four square paneled columns forms the central entry. Built-in benches on either side of the lower porch further delineate the area. The main door on the first floor features vertical-paneled double doors framed by movable eight-light sidelights and a nine-light transom. Screen doors with spindlework trim from the mid-Victorian period are also found here. The central doorway to the second floor balcony is somewhat simpler, with one large paneled door flanked by four-light fixed sidelights. Windows on the front are double-hung sash with 6/6 lights.

The east and west sides of the main house are characterized by exterior brick end chimneys with corbeled caps, gable returns, and 6/6 sash windows on both floors.

A one and one-half story ell extends from the west corner of the rear of the main structure. This section was added in 1872 by Robert Montgomery. A screened shed porch extends along the east side of the ell and across the rear of the main section. The ell connects the house with a log kitchen. The gallery's floor was originally a deck connecting the detached kitchen with the main house and is constructed of puncheons, or logs with only the upper surface dressed.

The small log kitchen at the rear was the original house built on the property by Thomas Montgomery in the 1840s. The single-pen building features a stone chimney on the west side, two small windows, and a small belfry containing the original farm bell on the roof on the east side.

A one story frame addition, added in about 1872, is connected to the west side of the main house by a covered breezeway. A rear shed section and a front shed gallery supported by wooden posts with sawn brackets are elements of this addition.

The interior of the main section of the house is arranged around a central hall, which features a broad dogleg ash staircase with an ornate newel post, alternating oak and walnut turned balusters and ornamental brackets. It was probably added when the house was enlarged in 1872. The floor in this section is ash. Fluted wood trim with ball-and-target cornerblocks surrounds the two paneled doors in this section of the house.

The east room or parlor on the main floor features a large wooden mantel with molded cornice, an ash floor, plain wooden baseboards, and French doors added about 1930 that open into the rear gallery. The ceiling in this room and others on the principal floor in this section are constructed of wooden boards. The west room has a similar mantel, an ash floor, and two vertical-paneled doors that open into the rear ell and to the breezeway providing access to the west wing. The west door is topped by a four-light transom window.

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The second floor of the main section consists of two bedrooms arranged around the central hall. The west bedroom features a beaded-board ceiling, blue poplar floors, and a two paneled door. The east bedroom is similar but features a small fireplace, now converted to coal, with a wooden mantel topped by a simple molded cornice.

The one and one-half story rear ell, added in 1872, contains a central parlor, dining room, and small connecting hall. The central parlor, which probably served as a bedroom, features an 11 1/2 foot ceiling of plain wooden boards, a floor of random-width cedar planks, double-leaf doors that open into the connecting hall, a two-paneled door with four-light transom opening onto the east gallery, a small closet with a four-paneled door, and a large fireplace with heavy wooden mantel, now connected to a woodstove. The dining room behind this room has beaded wainscoting, a built-in china cabinet on the north wall, a four-paneled door that opens on to the side gallery, and an ash floor. The small connecting hall may have served as a dressing room for the adjacent chambers. It features a cedar floor, two-paneled wooden doors, and a plain baseboard. The west part of this hall was partitioned off as a bath around 1930. The old log kitchen at the rear of the ell has been remodeled to serve contemporary needs.

The two small bedrooms in the west addition feature wooden mantels with molded cornices, tongue-and-groove board ceilings and four-paneled doors. A small shed section at the rear, containing an office and a small bath, was added in about 1900.

Several yards to the east of the rear ell is the farm's old icehouse and cistern shed, a frame structure with a single enclosed room and an open shed area. The eaves of the roof are decorated with sawtooth wood trim. A stone-lined cellar is located beneath the structure. The small building rests on a stone foundation and is topped by a metal roof. At one time a part of this outbuilding served as the cook's quarters.

Fifteen yards southeast of the log kitchen section is a small frame structure. The simple weatherboarded building has a vertical-batten door on the west side, small 2/2 light sash windows, and a metal gable roof.

Some distance behind this structure are a frame chicken house and a privy, both simple buildings with little decoration, constructed around 1940 and, therefore non-contributing elements of the nominated property. To the southwest of the main house are three other small outbuildings: a simple frame carriage house built around 1900; a combination milk-shed and tractor barn, built a few years later, and a small central passage hay barn, built around 1935.

The house and its outbuildings occupy a large lot on the south side of the highway with extensive farmlands surrounding the lot on all sides. The landscaped lot is shaded by a number of mature trees, with oaks and maples predominating, and is surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. The buildings have retained their architectural and historical integrity.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1847 Builder/Architect Thomas Montgomery

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Palmetto Farm, the Thomas Montgomery House, is being nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its significance to the Middle Tennessee counties of Bedford and Marshall, in architecture and history. The house, which was built in the early 1840s, is an outstanding local example of Greek Revival architecture. The building is one of the largest and most finely detailed frame houses in the south central Tennessee region. Historically, Palmetto Farm is significant for its association with Robert Montgomery, an important political figure in Bedford County. Surrounded by a number of outbuildings (included in the nomination), Palmetto Farm has retained its historical and architectural integrity.

Thomas Montgomery built the home in 1847 on land which he had purchased in 1838. The family lived in a large single-pen log structure while the main house was being built. This small structure is now the detached kitchen at the rear of the service ell. Montgomery, a native of South Carolina, named the place "Palmetto Farm." (The little community around the house was once known as "County Line," but the Post Office refused to recognize the name, and the community became known as Palmetto.) Montgomery was a local merchant, operating two stores across the road from the house. After his death during the Civil War the property passed to his son, Robert Montgomery. Robert was a farmer, banker, merchant, grain broker and one of the most powerful political figures in Bedford County. His oldest daughter, Alice, married James Fount Tillman, and made her home at Palmetto Farm while her husband served in the state legislature. Tillman later served as Register of the Treasury under President Grover Cleveland (1893-97). After this time, Tillman was active in organizing a farm organization, the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of Tennessee.

Later James Fount Tillman, Jr., became the owner of Palmetto Farm. At his death, his wife, Sadie Wilson Tillman, inherited the home. She was a former missionary to China and was widely known for her writing and speaking. When she was elected President of the Methodist Women, she traveled all over the world from her office in New York, although Palmetto Farm remained in the family as it still does today.

Palmetto Farm is an outstanding local example of the Greek Revival style. Distinguishing features of this outstanding building include a monumental pedimented portico and entries highlighted by sidelights and transom windows on the exterior and an exquisitely crafted stairway in the interior. The house has suffered few alterations and retains its historical and architectural integrity.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Nine acres

Quadrangle name Belfast, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	3	0	5	2	0	3	9	2	7	3	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Tennessee code 047 county Marshall code 117

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central TN Development District date October 1984

street & number P.O. Box 1346 telephone 615-381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38402

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/20/85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

for Melores Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date 3-28-85

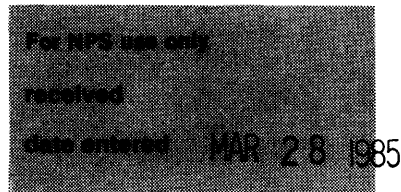
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Bibliography

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Goodspeed's History of Tennessee. Chicago and Nashville: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887.

Marshall County Historical Society. Marshall County Historical Quarterly, Winter 1973-74, 130-131.

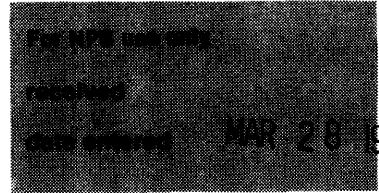
Marshall County Historical Society. "Land East of Farmington". Marshall County Historical Quarterly, Vol. XV, No. 11, Summer, 1984.

Mason, Roberta Ransom. Personal Interview. October, 1984.

Whitesell, Ralph. Personal Interview. October, 1984.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property is a nine acre lot, roughly rectangular in shape, which is bounded on the north by Tennessee Highway 64, on the west by the Palmetto-Belfast Road and on the south and east by fence lines. This boundary includes sufficient land to include all outbuildings and protect the historical setting and architectural integrity of Palmetto Farm.