

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICEPH0682501  
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RECEIVED AUG 21 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 14 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1** NAME

HISTORIC

Latta House

AND/OR COMMON

## LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

917 Troy Ave.

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Dyersburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seventh

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Dyer

CODE

45

## CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

\_\_\_ DISTRICT

 BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_\_ SITE

\_\_\_ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

\_\_\_ PUBLIC

 PRIVATE

\_\_\_ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

\_\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

 OCCUPIED

\_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_ NO

## PRESENT USE

\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_\_ PARK

 PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_ OTHER:

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Franklin Latta

STREET &amp; NUMBER

917 Troy

CITY, TOWN

Dyersburg

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dyer County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Dyersburg

STATE

Tennessee

**6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE

August 1972

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Latta House is located in Dyersburg, the county seat of Dyer County, on 917 Troy Avenue, approximately three-quarters of a mile north of the courthouse. Although originally the main house of a twenty-nine-acre plantation, it now stands on a one-and-a-half-acre, tree-shaded suburban lot.

The house was under construction when Samuel Rankin Latta, teacher, and later soldier and prominent attorney, purchased it in June 1852 and by December of that year, he had completed it for his new bride. As originally built, it was a three-room cottage which contained one large and two small rooms; this cottage composes the main block of the present house. The building was enlarged by the addition of single-room wings to the northeast and southeast corners of the facade and by a two-room ell attached to the west elevation. The one-story frame house is cased with weatherboards and the complex gable roof system is covered with composition shingles. It stands on a painted brick foundation.

The facade (east elevation) consists of a five-bay, symmetrical block, sheltered by a full-length porch with a very shallow pitched roof. Projecting from the main block and flanking the porch are wings which have their ridge axes perpendicular to that of the main block. The entrance door, with its Greek Revival head and side lights and shouldered architrave, is flanked by floor-length windows which have louvered shutters. Another room was added to the west elevation of the main block in 1935. A porch on the south side of the ell has been enclosed, and it was extended south to join with the one-room wing on the southern-most part of the west elevation.

The interior has over the years undergone extensive remodeling. The main block still retains one nineteenth-century mantel and vestiges of the original woodwork.

None of the original outbuildings--smokehouse, kitchen, corn crib, and stable--have survived. Approximately thirty feet southwest of the house stands a modern, two-car garage.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      ca. 1852      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Samuel Rankin Latta

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel Rankin Latta was born in New Alexandria, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, on December 2, 1827. As a boy he learned his father's trade, saddlery, and attended the local subscription school where he acquired a classical education. He taught school in neighboring towns for several years until he decided to continue his education. In 1850, Latta graduated from Jefferson College, Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania. He worked for a short time as a daguerrotyper and as a chain man for the Pennsylvania Central Railroad. Later that year he moved to Dyersburg, Tennessee, and there taught school for three years. In 1854 he was admitted to the bar and became a partner of T. E. Richardson. He achieved prominence in West Tennessee as an attorney, Democratic Party platform speaker, Presbyterian Church leader, and officeholder in the Masonic and Odd Fellows' lodges. He raised a company of volunteers for the Confederacy in May 1861 and was elected its captain. This company, which joined the 13th Tennessee Regiment, fought in the battles of Belmont and Shiloh. After the war he returned to his law practice in Dyersburg, where he died. S. R. Latta was a social critic and close observer of society, and his diaries shed valuable light on life in antebellum West Tennessee.

The Lattas are a family of attorneys. Samuel Rankin Latta was the first, and each succeeding generation has produced at least one practicing attorney. Other members of the family have engaged in banking and railroad construction, and Frank W. Latta, a son of Samuel Rankin Latta, served as mayor of Dyersburg. In all, five generations of the Latta family have lived in this house.

The Latta House is a well-preserved example of the early nineteenth-century cottage style of architecture found in the lower South. To this basic form, two wings were attached in an unusual manner, resulting in a form suggestive of a style locally known as "the piano box," from its resemblance, in plan, to a square grand piano. In the traditional form of the so-called piano box style, the wings are an integral part of the plan, forming a U, rather than attached at the corners, as is the case in the Latta House; this style is known throughout the deep South from Georgia to Louisiana. The Latta House, therefore, illustrates the use of this southern style as a guide in the problem of locating additions to the cottage form to effect a satisfactory total design.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Annual of Washington and Jefferson College for 1890. Washington, PA, 1891.  
 Diary of Samuel Rankin Latta, 1848-57, photocopy in Tennessee Historical Commission files, Nashville.  
 Samuel Rankin Latta, manuscript autobiographical sketch, 1886 and 1906, photocopy in Tennessee Historical Commission files, Nashville.  
 Information provided by Mrs. Franklin Latta, Dyersburg, Tennessee.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5 Latitude 36° 02' 31"  
 Longitude 89° 23' 06"

QUADRANGLE NAME Dyersburg QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The property nominated is a rectangular lot which measures 400' by 160' and is bounded as follows: beginning at a point; thence 160' north along Troy Avenue; thence 400' west; thence 160' south; thence 400' east to the beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Barbara H. Church, Architectural Historian  
Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION Tennessee Historical Commission DATE August 1978  
 STREET & NUMBER 170 Second Avenue North TELEPHONE (615) 741-2371  
 CITY OR TOWN Nashville STATE Tennessee

# 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 DATE 8/11/78  
 TITLE Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11-14-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER Charles H. ...

ATTEST: CHIEF OF REGISTRATION James H. Gilman DATE 11/14/78