

PH0671878

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 31 1977

DATE ENTERED DEC 16 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC ~~Wild Heron~~ Wild Heron

AND/OR COMMON Wild Horn

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *1.5 mi. S.W. of Savannah*
four miles south of U.S. Highway 17 at the
intersection of Wild Horn and Grove Point Roads

CITY, TOWN Savannah

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
1st - Bo Ginn

STATE Georgia

CODE 13

COUNTY Chatham CODE 051

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Shelby Myrick, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER Rt. 4, Box 381-B

CITY, TOWN Savannah

VICINITY OF

STATE Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Savannah

STATE Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE (1) Historic American Buildings Survey
(2) Chatham County Survey

DATE (2) 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS (2) Historic Preservation Section; Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN (2) Atlanta

STATE (2) Georgia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Although located barely fifteen miles southwest of Savannah in what is rapidly becoming a suburban area, the Wild Heron Plantation house retains much of the atmosphere of the mid-eighteenth century in which it was constructed. This raised, one and one-half story frame house is typical of the coastal Raised Cottage style and is one of the earliest dwellings still extant in Georgia.

The house was restored in the 1930's, but original structural elements were retained and many architectural details are still visible. The foundation of the house, for example, was enclosed during the restoration, but the brick piers remain - Savannah red clay brick throughout, with the exception of the four front pillars (still exterior) which are tabby brick. Also visible from the ground floor are the hand hewn pine beams which were pegged together to form the foundation of the main floor. These are eighteen to twenty inches thick and were notched numerically to indicate their location for the builders. This basement floor now consists of a dining room, family room, kitchen and bath and was extended to the north of the house, supporting a new screen porch on the main floor.

The main floor has a modified four room plan with a hall between the two back "shed" rooms, now a library and a bedroom. A large parlor and a bedroom are located to the front. The staircases, located in the hall, are recent, the underhouse area originally having been inaccessible from the upper floors. When the main staircase was replaced, the original handrail and newel post, a simple four-sided column which converges at the top to a flat surface, were retained.

Some panelling was added to the walls of the main floor in the 1930's, but in the front rooms the walls are plaster over the original 31-inch wainscoting. This is made of random width pine panels and is topped by a two-inch chair railing. At one time the wainscoting the the chimneypieces were painted to simulate mahogany, but this finish has been removed. The parlor mantelpiece is distinctive, extending up to the cornice on either side of the fireplace, giving the over-mantel area a framed appearance. The mantel shelf, diamond centered frieze and partial fluted pilasters are supported by the bolection molding that follows the perimeter of the fireplace. The bedroom mantelpiece, although simpler in design, is similar in appearance and also features the separate mantel shelf. The library mantelpiece is an arched Victorian style. The iron hardware which secured the front door bar is still located on either side of this door. The original wide pine-planked flooring is on the second floor and the wainscoting, here painted, is a full 35 1/2 inches high at the point where the gable breaks.

With the exception of the front, under-porch area, which has flush, beaded boards, the house has been weatherboarded. The front porch, itself, has a shed roof, supported with narrow, six-sided pillars, is presently screened and is reached by a contemporary staircase. The half story features three simple dormers across the front with small six over six light windows. The house has three chimneys, the two east chimneys being particularly
(continued)

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES **c. 1752-1756**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Probably built within twenty years of the founding of the colony of Georgia, Wild Heron Plantation house is one of the oldest domestic structures in the state and is a relatively intact example of a typical architectural genre which flourished in coastal Georgia and South Carolina. Also adding to its significance is its association with Francis Harris and his son Francis Henry Harris, two prominent figures of the Colonial and Revolutionary eras in Georgia and its operation through two hundred years as a working plantation, owned for much of that time by descendants of the same family.

The house was built on a five hundred acre tract of land granted to Captain David Cutler Braddock in 1747. Braddock, "allowed to be an excellent seaman," according to the Royal Governor's Council President, James Habersham in 1750, (Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. 26, p. 140) is the likely builder of the house. It is generally assumed to have been constructed between 1752 and 1756 when the captain was loaned a large sum of money by Francis Harris. The wainscoting, chimney and mantel designs and the modified pitch of the roof are also suggestive of an eighteenth century construction date.

Harris, an English-born accountant, came to Georgia about 1739 to assist Thomas Causton with the trustee accounts. In 1744 he became a partner with James Habersham in the commercial firm of Harris and Habersham. He was also a member of the Royal Governor's Council and Speaker of the House of Commons. Harris was probably married in England about 1754 and tradition holds that his wife, Mary Goodall, was heiress to an estate in England known as Wild Heron which she sold. Harris abandoned the merchantile trade and became a planter, acquiring land on the Little Ogeechee River. He paid \$1168 for Braddock's tract, the high price indicating the presence of a house on the property, and the English name was transferred to the American land. It was contracted, English fashion, to Wild Heron, a name which later evolved to Wild Horn, and the property was known by that name until the Myrick family discovered and reinstated the original name after they purchased it in 1935.

Having been granted 1300 acres in 1762 and purchased 1600 more in the same vicinity, Harris had accrued a considerable holding by 1769. Unfortunately he lived only two more years. His son, Francis Henry Harris, inherited the property but was soon caught up in the turmoil of Revolution. Colonel Harris was an outstanding soldier, serving heróically until 1781, when he was wounded at Eataw Springs, later dying at Santee Hills. His sister, Elizabeth Harris MacLeod, inherited the property which passed, in turn to her son, Francis H. MacLeod.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Personal Inspection, Victoria Reeves Gunn, August 25, 1976
 Chatham County Will Book J, p. 80
 Colonial Grant Books
 Colonial Deed Books
 Candler, Allen D. and Lucien Lamar Knight, eds. The Colonial Records of Georgia.
 39 volumes. Atlanta, 1904-1916.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY app. 6 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	479310	3537010	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of Grove Point and Wild Horn Road, proceed due north approximately 209 feet; thence due east approximately 1227 feet; thence due south approximately 418 feet; thence due west to Grove Point Road; Thence due north to the point of 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 Dr. Elizabeth A. Lyon, Manager Survey & Planning Unit
Victoria Reeves Gunn - Historical Consultant December 12, 1976

ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation Section; Department of Natural Resources DATE

STREET & NUMBER 270 Washington Street SW TELEPHONE 404/656-2840

CITY OR TOWN Atlanta STATE Georgia

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 [Signature] DATE 5-12-77
 TITLE Chief, Historic Preservation Section DAVID M. SHERMAN

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>12/16/77</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <u>12-19-77</u>

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notable. The three brick shoulders of the diminishing shafts appear to be unique. The back chimney is a slightly smaller reproduction of the front. The roof is a modified pitch typical to Georgia with a slight bell cast to the porch attachment.

The setting is well preserved, with wide lawns extending to the river marshes and an enclosed formal garden designed by Mrs. Shelby Myrick, Sr. in the 1930's. There are several ancient live oaks, a large magnolia tree and a tall palm tree on the southeast corner which is traditionally believed to have been planted by one of the plantation's first brides in the early 1800's.

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MacLeod managed the plantation until his death in 1864. The Ogeechee River area in which it was located, had become a logical extension of the great rice planting corridor of the Savannah River. In addition, the extensive high land acreage allowed for the growing of the South's king crop, cotton. When MacLeod died just before the collapse of the Confederacy the so-called "Settlement Tract," on which the house was located, was a legacy to his son, Richard, who, followed by his descendants, owned it through the difficult intervening years until Shelby Myrick, Sr. purchased it in 1935. The Myrick family has done a careful and successful job in the restoration of the house which retains its eighteenth century character as well as its structure.

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Sewell, Cliff, "Wild Heron Plantation," Savannah Morning News and Evening Press Magazine, November 30, 1969.

Zimmerman, Helena, "Wild Heron Plantation," Savannah Morning News, March 9, 1975.

Information Provided by Shelby Myrick, Jr. Mr. Myrick has done considerable primary source research on Wild Heron and is preparing a biography of Francis Henry Harris.

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Wild Heron, Savannah, Chatham County
Photographs by: David J. Kaminsky
Date: August, 1976
Negatives filed at: Department of Natural Resources

1. South front facade
2. West facade
3. East Facade
4. Second floor bedroom, illustrating wainscotting and flooring
5. Parlor, illustrating mantelpiece, molding and wainscotting
6. Downstairs bedroom mantelpiece
7. Front Door, interior
8. Newel post and staircase, hall
9. Brick support, basement; rafters