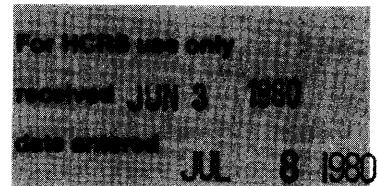


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Poplar Hill

and/or common Cynthia Lea House

**2. Location**

street & number Route 1 \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Blaine \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district First

state Tennessee code 047 county Grainger code 057

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
X building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
object	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Edwin E. Corbitt

street & number Route 1, Box 216

city, town Blaine \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Tennessee 37709

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grainger County Register's Office

street & number Courthouse

city, town Rutledge state Tennessee 37861

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic Sites Survey  
East TN Development District has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June 1974 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town 4721 Trousdale Drive, Nashville state Tennessee 37219

## 7. Description

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

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

Located north of Highway 11W near Blaine, Tennessee, in Grainger County, the Cynthia Lea House is set on a slight rise in a wide valley south of the Clinch Mountains, which serve as a backdrop to the property.

A rare example in East Tennessee of a Gothic Revival cottage, the house is a two-story L-shaped brick structure painted white with steeply pitched gable roofs on both the rectangular main section and the ell. The bricks for the walls, which are twelve inches thick, were made in a brick yard located to the rear of the house by slave labor.

The facade or south elevation is dominated by three wall dormers. The large central dormer rises to the same height as the roof. Centered under it are a single leaf wood main door with rectangular transom and sidelights and, in the second story, a pair of one-over-one double hung sash windows separated by a wood mullion and trimmed with wood surrounds that feature segmented arched heads. Below the peak of the dormer is a circular decorated wood vent. Aligned beneath each of the two smaller end dormers are, in the first story, a pair of one-over-one double hung sash windows with plain wood surrounds and a wide mullion and, in the second story, a six-over-six double hung sash window with wood surrounds that feature a segmental arched head. A one-story porch, which wraps around the south and west elevations, has a sloping roof, wood Doric columns and a pedimented entrance with diamond-shaped shingles. The porch was added around the turn of the century. A pair of brick chimneys are found on the central portion of the roof ridge.

In both the east and west elevations, each story contains a single window like those in the second-story of the facade's end bays. Each elevation also has a circular decorative wood attic vent.

The rear or north elevation has a wall dormer near the west end with a six-over-twelve double hung sash window set into a segmental arched opening with plain wood surrounds. Intersecting the rear elevation east of the dormer is a one-and-one-half story brick ell with gable roof and two central brick chimneys. One-story shed roof porches extend across each side of the ell. The west porch and a portion of the east porch have been enclosed. A one-story frame addition under the wall dormer abuts the ell's west porch.

On both floors of the house, the central hall is flanked by single rooms. A half-turn staircase in the hall features turned balusters and a large turned newel post.

In each room fireplaces, centered in the wall adjacent to the hall, retain the original mantelpieces inlaid with a bevelled mirror. The ell contains a family room and kitchen.

A one-story frame building, located beside the house, once served as the office of a former owner, Dr. Willis Idol, a prominent physician who practiced in Grainger County in the early 1900s. The building is now a carpenter's shop.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

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Structurally, the house is in good condition although tie rods have been installed to prevent the outward bowing of the brick walls. The house shows some signs of deterioration, but the present owner is beginning restoration.

## 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/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

Specific dates      1830      Builder/Architect      Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cynthia Lea House, constructed in 1830, is significant as a rare and early example in East Tennessee of the Gothic Revival style and the only example of that style in Grainger County. As was typical of Gothic Revival dwellings, the house is characterized by verticality, which is emphasized by the steeply pitched gable roof and wall dormers. Ornamentation has been minimized; only the segmental arched window openings and decorated attic vents relieve the austerity of the exterior.

In 1830 the house was built for Cynthia Lea, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Major Lea. Her father, who had come to Grainger County from Virginia in the 1790s, married Lavinia Jarnigan, daughter of Captain Thomas Jarnigan. Captain Jarnigan had received 24 square miles of land in Grainger County for his services during the Revolutionary War. To each of his children he gave 400 acres. The home for Cynthia would be built on Mrs. Lea's share. The Leas became a prominent farming family. One of the sons, Luke, became an influential lawyer in Nashville. During a visit to her brother, Cynthia met and was courted and proposed to by Sam Houston, then Governor of Tennessee. She refused his proposal and returned home. After her parents opposed Cynthia's wish to become a missionary in Africa, she married a recently widowed Baptist minister with seven children, Elihu Milliken. Although disappointed by her marriage, Cynthia's parents had a house, which was named Poplar Hill, built for her as a wedding present.

After Mrs. Milliken's death in 1883 at the age of 80, the house was purchased by Dr. Willis Idol, a prominent physician in Grainger County. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Edwin E. Corbitt, who intend to rehabilitate the house.

The nominated property includes only that portion of the tract of land occupied by the house and carpenter's shop.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Roach, Thomas; History of Grainger County; McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library;  
Knoxville, TN  
Roach, Thomas; "Grainger County in Days Gone By"; The News; Rutledge, TN; 1962-63.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.5

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

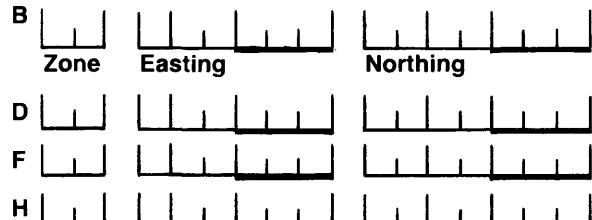
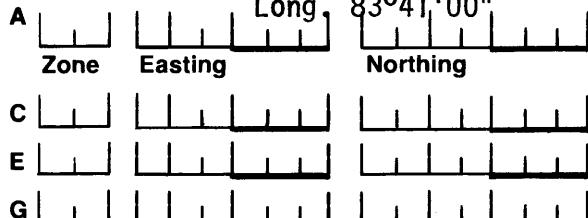
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Quadrangle name Luttrell

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References Lat. 36°10'40"

Long. 83°41'00"



### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes only that portion of the tract of land occupied by the house and carpenter's shop as shown on the enclosed map.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nissa Dahlin Brown, Historic Preservationist

organization East Tennessee Development District date December 18, 1979

street & number P.O. Box 19806 telephone (615) 584-8553

city or town Knoxville state Tennessee 37919

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Robert E. Hager

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 5/28/80

For HCRS use only

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

date

7/8/80

*Jacqueline W. Ray*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *James O'Connell*

date

7/2/80

*Carroll*