

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0693201

 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DEC 12 1978

DATE ENTERED

JAN 25 1979

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

HISTORIC

Felton, Rebecca Latimer, House

AND/OR COMMON

Felton House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

N of Cartersville off U.S. 411  
1/4-mile E. of U.S. 411, 2 miles SW of I-75 Junction

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Cartersville

mic.

VICINITY OF

7th Lawrence P. McDonald

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

CODE  
13COUNTY  
BartowCODE  
015**3 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:
**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Minnie C. Rogers Estate c/o Ms. Louise Rogers; Mr. Frank Bishop

STREET &amp; NUMBER

438 S. Tennessee Street

Route 3

CITY, TOWN

Cartersville

VICINITY OF

Georgia

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bartow County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Cartersville

Georgia

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Felton House is a Plantation plain-style one-and-a-half story frame structure with kitchen ell apparently added at rear. The main house is five bays wide and has a gable roof. The one-bay entrance porch has a plain pediment with a 6 over 9 window and is supported by two narrow square columns. Other windows are 9 over 9. Two very wide, plain double doors with sidelights extend the width of the hall. Exterior chimneys on either side have corbeled caps. There is a third, interior, chimney in the ell.

Inside there is paneled wainscoting in the two front rooms. Fireplaces are covered with plywood below the paneled frieze and simple mantel; doors have two plain vertical panels. The walls above the wainscoting and in some other rooms are sheathed.

The ell, on the left side, has a gabled roof extending over a porch which continues the line of the central hallway. The ell contains six-foot extension of the left rear room as well as the kitchen. There is a chimney between these two rooms. A horizontal ridge following the plane of the rest of the rear wall indicates the extension on the interior, although on the exterior it was carefully incorporated into the end of this room. There is an obvious vertical line in the weatherboarding, however, where the kitchen begins.

There is a shed porch along the rear of the main portion of the house.

Tenants are living in the house and apparently have made such cosmetic and functional alterations as they choose, such as boarding the fireplaces and covering the walls in the left rear room. The tenants do not use the upper floor and keep the door leading to the stairs at the right rear of the hallway closed at all times. All existing outbuildings are of 20th Century construction and replaced earlier structures which served similar functions.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

History

SPECIFIC DATES                      c. 1853                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT                      Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The one-and-a-half story plantation plain style house is significant as the home of Rebecca Latimer Felton from 1853 to 1905. Mrs. Felton gained national prominence in 1922 as the first woman sworn in as a United States senator. Though her appointment to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Thomas E. Watson was little more than a graceful gesture on the part of the governor--an election to fill the position permanently was announced immediately--the distinction nevertheless capped the career of a lifelong fighter for women's rights and one of Georgia's most politically astute citizens.

Born June 10, 1835, near Decatur, Georgia, Rebecca Felton was the daughter of Charles and Eleanor Swift Latimer. Her father owned and operated a plantation and a tavern and country store overlooking the South River in Dekalb County along the Decatur-Covington Highway, some 15 miles from Atlanta. Variousy known as "Flat Shoals" or "Panola Plantation", it left their family before her father's death, but was considered for restoration in 1933, as a memorial to her. She graduated from Madison Female College in 1852 and married William Harrell Felton (1823-1909) surgeon, methodist minister and farmer, who was finishing a single term in the State legislature, in 1853, and she moved to this house in Bartow County, near his father.

The next 20 years were spent rearing a son and bearing four other children who died in childhood. The family spent part of the war years as refugees in Macon where William Felton served as a surgeon for the Confederacy. After the war, the Feltons were destitute; their farm was in ruins, and she taught school in Cartersville to help make ends meet. During these trying years the Feltons acquired a sympathetic understanding of the plight of the small farmer which resulted in their being in the forefront of the Independent Democratic movement (a predecessor of Populism).

The Feltons returned to politics in 1874, he running for the U.S. Congress as an independent candidate in what many considered the bitterest campaign in the state's history. The democratic organization, important political leaders, and the press of the district and state were allied against William and Rebecca Felton and their calls for progressive legislation; he won by a small majority and went on to serve three terms. The two of them were referred to as "Thunder and Lightning" in recognition of their fearsome campaigning abilities. He served from 1875 to 1881 when he was defeated for reelection. He became a state legislator in 1884 and served to 1890.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Cartersville, Georgia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A | 16 | 702850 | 3787000 |

B | | | | |

C | | | | |

D | | | | |

E | | | | |

F | | | | |

G | | | | |

H | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

Janice Prescott, contractual research consultant

NAME/TITLE  
Elizabeth Lyon, consultant  
Kenneth H. Thomas Jr., Historian

ORGANIZATION DATE  
Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE  
270 Washington Street, S. W. 404-656-2840

CITY OR TOWN STATE  
Atlanta Georgia

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X 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 *Elizabeth A. Lyon*

TITLE Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10/13/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER *[Signature]*

DATE 1/25/79

ATTEST: CHIEF OF REGISTRATION *[Signature]*

DATE 1/29/79

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In congress, William Felton gained a reputation as an outstanding orator. Rebecca Felton served as his private secretary and general counselor, playing a major role in the preparation of his speeches. She was well-reknowned for her political ability in Washington.

Back in Georgia, she was known as a powerful orator and writer. Through her regular column in The Atlanta Journal, "The Country Home," from 1899 until her death, she wielded considerable influence in formulating public opinion in Georgia. She advocated equal rights for women, temperance, and penal reform, and was "generally to be found on the side of civil righteousness and progressive legislation," according to Knight (1931). Her blind spot, though, was Jim Crow legislation. She feared that equal rights for Black men would endanger the safety of white women.

She was a member of the National Woman's party and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Her support for temperance was based on the belief that it would help provide safer homes for women. She used the WCTU as a vehicle to plead with the legislature to provide separate facilities for women and children in prisons and to protest the appalling conditions of the convict lease system. A pioneer in demanding equal rights for women in religious organizations, she was of course active in the suffrage debate. Mrs. Felton devoted considerable space in "The Country Home" to the subject, arguing that women should have the vote in order to protect their property interests and to prevent unfair taxation.

Mrs. Felton was criticized throughout her career for her outspokenness. In 1876, when she campaigned for her husband, the Rome Tri-Weekly Courier said her actions did not "exactly come up to Southern standards of propriety." In 1915, the Macon News stated that she of all people should understand the "tradition of Southern womanhood" and found it regrettable that she should be "stumping the state in behalf of the equal suffrage propaganda."

Undaunted by the controversy that attended almost her every word and deed, she told men critical of the temperance movement that if they had done their duty at the ballot box, public protest would be unnecessary. And she suggested to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, who were at the time engaged in erecting monuments to the dead on every courthouse lawn, that the greatest monument Georgia women could erect would be an educational institution for women, especially one with emphasis on vocational training. She opposed World War I, conscription, and the League of Nations, and protested the imprisonment of Eugene Debs, American Socialist leader, for opposing the war.

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Widowed in 1909 Rebecca Felton remained undaunted. In 1912, she was a delegate to the Progressive party national convention, and in 1924, to the Democratic convention. In 1921, President Harding appointed her to his presidential advisory commission.

Antedating the present surge of interest in women's history, she wrote The Romantic Story of Georgia's Women, detailing the fight for women's rights and temperance and the contributions of women to the state. In 1911, she wrote My Memoirs of Georgia Politics, giving unflattering accounts of politicians who had opposed her and her husband and paying tribute to those she considered to be on the side of honest government. In 1919, she wrote Country Life in Georgia in the Days of My Youth. She also wrote small pamphlets and articles.

Felton was appointed to the Senate October 3, 1922, took the oath during a special session November 21, and attended the meetings of November 21 and 22. At her death in 1930 the Senate adjourned.

Mrs. Felton's successor, Walter F. George, had been elected in time for the special session, but he agreed to wait until she had been sworn in before presenting his credentials. In an unusual move, the Senate invited the 87-year-old junior Senator from Georgia to address it. According to Knight (1931), "she spoke as it was her habit to speak--sure of herself and plainly to the point." She ended with these words: "I commend to your attention the 10 million women voters who are watching this incident. . . . When women actually join the Senate you will get ability . . . integrity of purpose. . . . exalted patriotism and . . . unstinted usefulness."

The Feltons moved to a home in Cartersville, which remains at the corner of South Avenue and Leake Street, and this was considered her home around 1911. At the time of her death, a farm that she had given her son in 1924, was her home and it was to this latter place that dignitaries paid their respects at her death.

This home is significant as the site where Rebecca Latimer Felton spent the majority of her political career. It was from here that she emerged, by her own admission, from the clutches of a conventional wife's role to work side by side with her husband after "The War" to keep the family solvent. Eventually, she became his "right hand" during his political campaigns and while in office, finally emerging as a major figure in her own right--one of the few 19th Century and early 20th Century women to do so. Her appointment as the first woman to the U.S. Senate, although it appears tokenism today, was then the ultimate compliment to a woman who had challenged the traditions of her antebellum upbringing and had dared to be different. Although the Feminist movement has made dramatic progress in recent

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decades, few women have surpassed the achievements of Rebecca Felton. The house is significant architecturally as a surviving example of the antebellum one-story plantation plain homes in an area devastated by Federal troops during the Civil War. Evacuated during the war by the Feltons, it remarkably escaped total destruction. Due to their continued small-sized family, the Feltons made few alterations to the central structure of the house with its four rooms. Even during their years of triumph, the Feltons remained in this house. This home is national significance because it was Rebecca Felton's home during the formative years of her career. Research indicates this to be the only known surviving structure associated with her adult life.

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Major Bibliographical references

- Talmadge, John E., Rebecca Latimer Felton (Athens, 1960)  
Floyd, Josephine Bone, "Rebecca Latimer Felton, Champion of Women's Rights,"  
Georgia Historical Quarterly. Vol XXX, No. 2, 1949.  
Georgia Press Reference Association, Women of Georgia, (Atlanta, 1927)  
Knight, Lucian Lamar, Georgia and Georgians. (Chicago, 1917)  
Knight, Lucian Lamar, Georgia's Bi-Centennial Memoirs and Memories, (Atlanta, 1931)

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the Old Cartersville-Knoxville Highway (in Land Lot 51) that is directly in front of the center of the front door of said house the boundary runs along said road in a northeasterly direction 75 feet to a point and thence along a line that parallels the northeast facade of the house at a distance of 50 feet from said facade to a point and thence at a right angle in a southwesterly direction of 150 feet at a distance of 43 feet from the rear wall of the ell of the house and paralleling said wall to a point and thence at a right angle and parallel to the southwest facade of the house approximately 300 feet to a point on the highway and running with the highway to the point of origin.

These lines are determined to be approximately 50 feet on either side of the central portion of the house (which is 47 feet wide)



SKETCH MAP - NOT TO SCALE

JAN 25 1979

Rebecca Latimer Felton House  
Cartersville, Bartow County, Georgia

