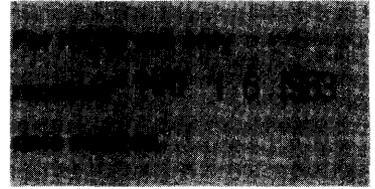


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Guerry-Mitchell House

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 723 McGarrah Street N/A not for publication

city, town Americus N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Georgia code 013 county Sumter code 261

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<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	N/A <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 Walter D. Stapleton, Jr.

street & number 723 McGarrah Street

city, town Americus N/A vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Georgia 31709

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Sumter County Courthouse

city, town Americus state GA

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 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

The Guerry-Mitchell House is a one story with basement, frame Greek Revival-style raised cottage with a hipped roof, a brick foundation, and a porch on all sides. The basement story is rectangular while the main floor forms a square. The roof of the house is covered in wooden shingles, and the exterior walls are covered in heart pine-weather-board. Ornamentation includes a sawn fretwork railing encircling the porch and bracketed porch posts (these appear to be later Victorian details). The windows are six over six and have pedimented window heads. The front door has sidelights, a transom and shouldered architrave trim. There are two corbeled interior chimneys with decorative details. The main floor is built on the four room, central hall plan, while the basement has been restored to a similar floor plan.

The interior features plaster ceiling medallions with brass chandeliers, simple, pilastered pine mantels, and picture moulding six inches from the ceilings, which are 12 feet high. The paneled doors are original and include their original ceramic knobs, brass fittings and iron locks. The walls and ceilings of the upper floor are lath and plaster, and the floors are 6" pine boards. Exposed brick and mortar form the walls of the basement story. The original brick floor of the basement was covered over in 1945 with concrete. The ceilings in the basement are 12" pine boards. The house sits on original hand-made brick piers. The understructure consists of twenty heart pine beams hewn by an adze. The beams are twelve inches on a side and either 52 or 58 feet long.

The lot includes informal landscaping of shrubs and hardwood trees. There are two large oaks near the well in the west corner of the lot. Historic outbuildings include a rectangular, weatherboarded carriage house in the north corner of the lot and a well with a wooden gabled-roof cover in the west corner. The house is located in a mixed commercial/residential area near railroad tracks and a freight depot. Northwest of the property is U. S. Highway 19 and city park space.

Changes to the house include the addition (in 1930) and recent removal of a bathroom to the east corner of the porch, the removal of part of the basement and the sealing off of a hallway, and the replastering of walls. Recent restoration has restored the basement level to its full four rooms and central hall. Rotted wood and deteriorating bricks have been replaced throughout the house with similar, hand-hewn and hand-made items.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local history
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1840 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Guerry-Mitchell House, built in 1840, is historically significant in the areas of architecture and local history. In architecture it is significant as an excellent example of a Greek Revival raised cottage built on the four-room central hall plan. It retains most of the original elements of its design including original doors and hardware, ceiling medallions, corbelled chimneys, simple mantels, high ceilings, basement, and floor plan. It is also an original structure built and remaining at its original location. The front and side porches feature distinctive Victorian detailing. In local history the house is significant as the original home of James Peter Guerry (1803-1878), a South Carolina native who moved to Americus with two of his brothers and was an early landowner and politician in Sumter County. He served as a state representative in 1841. After his sons returned from service in the Civil War he turned the house over to one of them, John C. Guerry, and retired to his plantation near Plains where he died. The son rented the house to Beverly Mitchell who later purchased it in 1878. Mitchell was a builder/contractor in Americus. The house remained in his family until the 1940's. One of the Mitchells, H. C. Mitchell, was a city councilman during the time he lived here. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria B and C.

### Historical Narrative

The Guerry-Mitchell House was built sometime between 1836 and 1840 by James Peter Guerry (1803-1878). J. P. Guerry purchased the land on which the house sits in parcels from 1836 to 1841. At that time, it was located just outside the Americus city limits. The area was known as Spring Hill because of the well on J. P. Guerry's property where travelers would stop and drink. Spring Hill gradually came within the city limits. The Guerrys were some of Americus's earliest settlers. According to a city census taken in 1846, there were 37 families living in or near Americus. J. P. Guerry and his brother, W. B. Guerry, a prominent Americus attorney and the 1846 census-taker, were included in this census.

J. P. Guerry was an early land-holder and politician in Sumter County. He served as a representative in the Georgia legislature in 1841. In addition to his property on Spring Hill, J. P. Guerry had a small plantation between Americus and Plains.

J. P. Guerry's sons, James L. and John C., grew up in Americus and Sumter County. In 1861, both young men joined the Muckalee Guards (Co. A, 12th Regiment, Georgia Vol. Infantry Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A.). James and John both were wounded in the Civil War and were discharged with honor to return to Sumter County.

J. P. Guerry moved to his plantation near Plains c. 1867. He died in 1878, leaving the Americus house to his son John.

(Continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 1/2 acres  
 Quadrangle name Americus, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

**UMT References**

A 

1	6	7	6	0	7	4	0	3	5	5	2	4	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundary of the nominated property is marked on the enclosed tax map and includes all that the current owner owns at this location and all that remains associated with this house.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section date March 25, 1983  
Dept. of Natural Resources

street & number 270 Washington Street telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA

# 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 Elizabeth A. Lyon  
 Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/21/83

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>for Melissa Byers</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>6/16/83</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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received  
date entered

Continuation sheet      Significance      Item number 8      Page 2

John Guerry apparently did not live in the house. Instead, he continued to rent the house to Mr. Beverly Mitchell. Mitchell was related to the Guerrys by marriage, having married a cousin of John Guerry. He had apparently been living in the Guerry House in Americus since J. P. Guerry had moved to the plantation. Beverly Mitchell bought the house from John Guerry in 1878.

Beverly Mitchell was a builder/contractor in Americus. An Americus city directory of 1869 listed Beverly Mitchell as an employee of the City Mill and Tannery. Another source (Col. Hancock's A Short Outline of the History of Americus, Georgia (1869)) indicates that Beverly Mitchell was also the builder of a row of brick buildings on Cotton Avenue, the cotton trade district.

After Beverly Mitchell's death, his daughters continued to live in the Guerry-Mitchell House. A 1900-1901 city directory lists Ella and Sallie Mitchell as living on McGarrah Street. Also listed at the same address was H. C. Mitchell who was an Americus City Councilman. By 1921, only Ella and Sallie Mitchell are listed in the city directory as living at 723 McGarrah. Sallie was a music teacher.

Sallie Mitchell was the last of Beverly Mitchell's children to die. Her will of 1942 directed Mrs. Annabelle Roney Holmes of Cordele to look after Mrs. Emma Cheek Cannon. Mrs. Cannon was a cousin who had been living at the Guerry-Mitchell House with Sallie. Sallie Mitchell's will called for Mrs. Holmes to provide Mrs. Cannon \$25.00 per month from the Mitchell estate, and to let Mrs. Cannon continue to live at the house on McGarrah. Mrs. Cannon in turn passed on an unencumbered title to the Guerry-Mitchell House to Mrs. Holmes. Americus city directories indicate that Mrs. Emma Cheek Cannon lived at this house at 723 McGarrah until at least 1960.

In 1963, Mrs. Holmes sold the Guerry-Mitchell House to William W. Grant. Mr. Grant worked for the City of Americus, and later became the Director of the City's Street and Sanitation Department.

In 1975, William W. Grant sold the Guerry-Mitchell House to Fred Horne, a local real estate developer. The house was purchased from Mr. Horne by Walter Stapleton Jr. in 1978. The Stapletons are currently restoring it.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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received  
date entered

Continuation sheet      Bibliographical Reference item number      9

Page      2

Campbell, Susan. Historic Property Information Form, October, 1981 based on city directories, Guerry Family Papers, deeds and county histories.

"Death of Judge James P. Guerry, The Semi-Weekly Sumter Republican, Sept. 28, 1878.

Guerry, Rev. Edward B., "The Pedigree Tables of Guerry, Rembert . . .", Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina 76 (1971) 77-108.

Letter, Mrs. Walter D. Stapleton, Jr. to Elizabeth A. Lyon, September 1, 1982.