

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Robertson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.5.47.0020	DATE 5/6/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
Wessyngton

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
3 miles south near Cabel Creek

CITY OR TOWN:
Cedar Hill vic. (South)

STATE Tennessee	CODE 047	COUNTY: Robertson	CODE 147
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Washington family heirs c/o Mrs. Arthur Kensolving

STREET AND NUMBER:
6001 Huntridge Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Baltimore

STATE:
Maryland

CODE:
024

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Robertson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Public Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Springfield

STATE:
Tennessee

CODE:
047

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Tennessee

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1815 a federal house was begun on the land of Joseph Washington in Robertson County. The two story house with simple federal lines probably had a chimney on either end and a small square porch in front. It is made of red brick and has a limestone and brick foundation. The original house had a central hall with stairway and rooms to either side. The house today, however, still contains the original block but has had additions across the front and a wing to the back has been added in more recent years as the family remodeled and expanded.

The house is surrounded by several remaining outbuildings which were necessary in the operation of a plantation the size of Wessyngton. Originally there were many slave cabins, barns, a carriage house, caretakers quarters, poultry houses, a crib and ~~grainery~~, etc. *granary*. Today, the smokehouse, kitchen, dairy house, and office are among the remaining outbuildings.

A lovely garden was designed and built south of the house for Mrs. Joseph Washington, wife of the builder. The flower garden is a plot about one hundred feet square, having a circular summerhouse in the center. In each corner of the garden is a triangular bed, and opposite each triangle is a circle. The design was a well proportioned one and is still quite evident. A walk past the entire garden leads to the family cemetery where four generations of the Washington family are buried.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1815-1819

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Probably the most conspicuous and wealthy family in Middle Tennessee is the Washington family of Robertson County. It is not only prominent for wealth, but for high intelligence, social distinction, and good citizenship. For many decades its members were the largest planters in the state and won high merit as successful agriculturists, as well as for distinguished civil service in the state. The land bought by Joseph Washington in 1796 and lands added soon after have stayed in the same family for five generations or over 150 years.

Joseph Washington came to Robertson County in 1796 from Virginia and first settled on 60 acres lying on the north side of Sulphur Fork Creek about 3 miles south of the present town of Cedar Hill. This land had been a land grant from North Carolina. Here he lived in a rude log house. In 1802 he purchased the remainder of the 640 acre grant from Moses and Aaron Winters. He then moved to a house on this tract. Joseph Washington, like most farmers of that day, converted his surplus corn into whiskey and apples and peaches were turned into brandy as these were the most easily transported and most profitable crops for marketing. Many of the settlers in Robertson County came from southeastern Virginia and knew well the art of distilling which for many years brought fame to the county.

In 1808 Mr. Washington, then 42, married Mary Cheatham, 16, and in 1815 began building Wessyngton which was completed in 1819. To Joseph and Mary a son was born in 1815 and he was named George Augustine. George grew up like his father and cared only for the pleasures of a domestic and private life. The plantation begun under Joseph Washington flourished under George Augustine. After his father's death in 1848, George took over the operation of the plantation. Plantation records show that the value was listed in 1850 at \$20,000 and by 1860 its worth was listed at \$250,000. Acreage grew from 4,700 acres to 13,000. The tobacco crop rocketed from 15,000 bushels in 1850 to 250,000 bushels in 1860 making Washington one of the world's largest tobacco growers. Tobacco and hams were shipped from Wessyngton to New Orleans each year by chartered boat. According to newspapers of the period Washington hams were sought by hotels all over the South, which catered to the most exacting taste, and even as far north as Philadelphia it was not unusual to see on the bill of fare of a high-priced restaurant "Washington Ham" as the tempting special on the menu.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

d. 1872

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brandau, Roberta S. (Ed.), History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee (Nashville, 1936).

Jennings, John, "Wessyngton Sees 150th Fall" Nashville Banner, October 25, 1969.

Springfield Record "Chronicles of Robertson County," August 1902.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	36°	30'	04"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	87°	00'	15"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

UTM
16/499640
4039350
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
May Dean Eberling

ORGANIZATION: Tennessee Historical Commission DATE: 1-13-71

STREET AND NUMBER:
403 7th Avenue, S.

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 047

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Stephen S. Lawrence
Stephen S. Lawrence

Title: Executive Director
Tennessee Historical Commission

Date: 1-13-71

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAY 6 1971

Date: _____

ATTEST:
William Mustang
Keeper of the National Register

Date: APR 9 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Tennessee	
COUNTY	
Robertson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71.5.47.0020	8/6/91

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

In 1861 the war temporarily broke up the peaceful home life at Wessyngton. George had business interests in New York and spent much of the time there, even moving the family there when things seemed perilous at home. George never was interested in politics but finally served in the 38th Tennessee General Assembly from 1873-75. His son Joseph Edwin (1851-1915), however, was more interested in politics and upon graduation from Vanderbilt Law School was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1876. In 1887, at the age of 36, he was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives where he served ten years.

George A. Washington died in 1892 and the following year the plantation was divided among the surviving children. Joseph E. got the home tract which contained 799 acres. The remaining tracts, taken by the other children, had fine homes built on them very soon. Joseph, after returning to Wessyngton from Washington, D.C., was appointed county road commissioner and was elected a director of both the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad and the Nashville and Decatur Railroad.

He died in August, 1915, leaving four children. George Augustine (1879-1964) graduated from Yale University in 1900 and from Harvard Law School about 1902. From 1903 until the Depression he practised law in New York City. At the time of the Depression in 1930 he returned to Wessyngton to keep the estate together. The house now belongs to the fifth generation of the Washington family, but the surname Washington connected with the home tract as Wessnygton has died.

There is a movement underway in Robertson County to make the old plantation a park and preserve the old mansion. Meanwhile, the sturdy brick structure wraps itself in solitude and awaits its future destination.