

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 1 1975
DATE ENTERED APR 14 1975

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wallace, George W., House - Williams, Erastus A., House

AND/OR COMMON

Towne-Williams House (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

722 Seventh Street North

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

North Dakota

CODE

038

COUNTY

Burleigh

CODE

015

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 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Alice J. Towne et al

STREET & NUMBER

722 Seventh Street North

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Dakota

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Burleigh County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

514 East Thayer Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

North Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of North Dakota, Liberty Memorial Building

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (slightly)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1885, the Towne-Williams house and grounds occupy two 50' by 140' lots on the northeastern corner of a block near the center of Bismarck, North Dakota. At the time of its construction, the house stood alone, on grass-covered prairie, about two blocks north and three blocks east of the area where other pretigious houses of intricate lines and elaborate detail, representative of the late Victorian period, were being built by prominent families of the community.

The house is two stories high, of frame construction with clapboard siding, finished with vertical corner boards, the whole resting on a foundation of mortared fieldstone. The three-bay-wide front facade is highlighted on the right by a three-sided, two-story bay window, topped by a steepled tower adorned by metal finials. On the left, a roofed verandah extends across the front facade and along the south wall. Boxed and bracketed eaves and hanging trellage enhance the verandah which is supported by ornate wooden posts. An open porch with ornate posts, shelters the main architrave, which is plain and flush, below an entablature. Window openings are flat-headed with a slight entablature, plain surrounds and lug sills containing long, vertically rectangular, double-hung windows. On the second story, the windows are of similar design but are paired and separated by mullions.

A wrought iron belvedere once topped the medium-hipped, shingled roof, whose lines are broken by cross gables and a gabled dornor on the front. Overhanging eaves protect boxed and decorated cornices. The gable eaves are boxed and decorated, and, on the north and east sides, bracketed. A trellised balcony rises above the verandah on the south wall, covering another three-sided bay window, the center of which opens like a door to the exterior. By comparison, the north wall is comparatively plain, boasting only the north gable with its decorated facia and bracketed, boxed eaves and an entablature dividing the two stories at floor level. A closed, flat bay, protruding from the wall, marks a small pantry on the interior and breaks the lines of the otherwise plain surface. A wing at the rear was converted, on the ground floor, from a pantry to a garage, following the advent of the automobile. The original wooden porch and verandah, floor and substructure, were replaced by a concrete slab in the late 1920's.

On the interior, the house is also only little altered. A former china closet was converted into a main floor bath. The incorporation of the garage left only a narrow hallway connecting the basement stairs, kitchen and an outside rear exit. The main floor contains six rooms and two hallways. A parlor and dining room are located at the front, divided by the hallway. A small pantry and a large living room, also on opposite sides of the hallway, fill the middle section. The bath and kitchen stand at the rear. An ornate stairway of polished wood leads to the second floor which contains two large and three smaller bedrooms. A sitting room, a bath and a servant's waiting station. A speaking tube connects the master bedroom with the kitchen. The original wood trim, infrequently refinished, is intact and accentuates the papered walls. Hanging light fixtures and three spectacular fire-places, one with Delft tiles depicting scenes from Shakespearean works, window seats in the window bays and extensive woodwork further recall the home's Victorian elegance.

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1885 - Present BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Towne House is the most unaltered survivor of a handful of large, mansion-size residences built on the near north side of Bismarck soon after the city became the capital of Dakota Territory in 1882. Prior to that event, although the town had been in existence for more than a decade, it had been a relatively small settlement dependent upon the railroad, the steamboat trade and the supplying of goods and services to military posts, Indian agencies and the few settlers in the vicinity. Relocation of the territorial capital at Bismarck set off a short period of business expansion and prosperity which ended in about 1885.

The house was built in the summer of 1885 by George W. Wallace. Little can be learned of Wallace's background and activities. He apparently arrived in Bismarck in the spring of 1885, purchased two lots on what was then virgin prairie between the business district and the newly completed capitol building and had the residence constructed.

Contemporary newspapers indicate that Wallace and his wife participated in community social events and were members of the local Presbyterian church. No notice of their 1886 activities could be found beyond the fact that they left Bismarck for Philadelphia in late August, traveling by railroad and Great Lakes steamer.

For thirteen years the house appears to have either stood empty or been rented for short periods of time. In 1893, for example, when banker Asa Fisher sold his mansion to the State of North Dakota for use as an executive mansion, he and his wife took up residence in the Towne House.

In September 1899, the house was purchased by Erastus Appelman Williams, a pioneer Bismarck attorney and Republican politician who was then serving his second term as Surveyor General of North Dakota. Born October 14, 1850, at Mystic, Connecticut, Williams had moved with his family to Wisconsin and later to Freeport, Illinois, where, in 1870, he was admitted to the bar. The following year he hung up his shingle in Yankton, then the capital of Dakota Territory. In 1872 he was among the first to arrive at the site of Bismarck, a town being established at the point where the Northern Pacific Railroad, then under construction, proposed to cross the Missouri River.

Soon after his arrival he was elected to the territorial House of Representatives; subsequently he served in nine other legislatures of Dakota Territory and North Dakota, his last term being in 1915. Twice he was elected Speaker of the House. During his first legislative session Williams County was created and named for him.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bismarck (North Dakota) Tribune
 July 14, October 4, 9, 1885
 September 1, 1886
 April 20, 1894
 September 23, 1899
 November 2, 1911

March 26, 1930
 February 25, 1936

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM OK
 CD

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.3216

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 4	3, 6, 4, 0, 9, 3	5, 18, 5, 16, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Walter L. Bailey, Historic Preservation Planner
Frank E. Vyzralek, Archivist

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>State Historical Society of North Dakota</u>	<u>March 26, 1975</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>Liberty Memorial Building</u>	<u>701-224-2672</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Bismarck</u>	<u>North Dakota</u>

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.

SIGNATURE Jane E. Sherry
 TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE March 26, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>4/14/75</u>
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>APR 10 1975</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

He was appointed to three terms as Surveyor General of North Dakota, beginning in 1890, and was thereafter referred to as "General" Williams. He also served as president of the Bismarck city commission from 1909 to 1913.

Besides his political activities, Williams practiced law in Bismarck continuously after 1872. In 1882 he married Jennie Hettinger, daughter of a wealthy Freeport, Illinois, businessman. She died on April 19, 1894, leaving him with five young children. It was largely to provide a suitable home for his motherless family that, five years later, he purchased the house built by George Wallace.

From 1899 through the late 1920's, when Williams retired from public life, the house at 722 Seventh Street North was a center of social and political life in Bismarck. On November 1, 1911, the bay window in the northeast parlor was the setting for an impressive wedding ceremony when his daughter, Alice Jennie, married Dr. Roy S. Towne, a young Bismarck dentist. Towne had graduated from the University of Iowa dental school in 1907 and subsequently practiced his profession in Jamestown, Linton and Washburn, North Dakota, moving to Bismarck in 1910. He became acquainted with the Williams family during his tenure at Washburn, since Williams maintained a small ranch in the vicinity of that village. Following their marriage Dr. and Mrs. Towne occupied a house within a block of the Williams home. The couple eventually moved into the mansion, which Dr. Towne purchased in about 1926. Williams lived with the family until his death on March 26, 1930.

During the depression years of the 1930's, Dr. Towne planned to have the mansion remodeled into an apartment house and even had architect's drawings prepared. On February 24, 1936, however, he was killed in a freak accident. After his death Mrs. Towne continued to live in the house with her two children and the rebuilding plans were dropped. In recent years she and a housekeeper have occupied the house.