

PH0003191

10th Congressional District  
Robert G. Stephens, Jr.

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Georgia	
COUNTY: Wilkes	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
APR 1 1 1972	

1. NAME

COMMON: East Robert Toombs District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

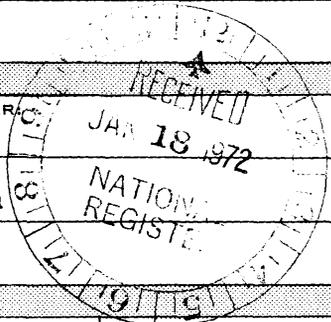
CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: Georgia

CODE: 317

COUNTY: Wilkes

CODE: 317



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Multiple Owners

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Office of Clerk of Superior Court, Wilkes County

STREET AND NUMBER: Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: Georgia

CODE: 13

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Washington Comprehensive Plan, Historic Area Study

DATE OF SURVEY: 1968

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Georgia Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 116 Mitchell Street

CITY OR TOWN: Atlanta

STATE: Georgia

CODE: 13

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Georgia

COUNTY: Wilkes

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 1 1 1972

DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site S

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

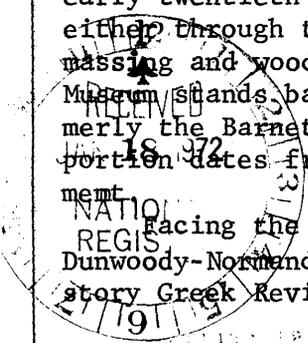
On East Robert Toombs Avenue from Alexander Avenue to Grove Street, all but a few buildings are ante-bellum structures elaborated by Federal and Greek Revival details, and set in spacious grounds among large oaks, cedars and magnolias. Approaching this section from the business center of the town of Washington, one passes from the bright sunlight of an area of shops and recently built filling stations into the subdued shadows created by large, old trees that arch over the roadway leading out of Washington toward Augusta. The district begins on the southeast corner of Alexander Avenue with the Washington Presbyterian Church and ends with the Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum. In between on the south side of the street is the Robert Toombs House with the massive Toombs oak, saved from destruction in the 1940's by Toombs' nâeces who live in the house. On the opposite side of the street a row of columned ante-bellum homes, some partially obscured by dense foliage, sets the tone of the area.

The Washington Presbyterian Church is a good example of the late colonial church type with its multi-stage steeple above a gable roofed rectangular building. Though its Doric columned porch was added in the later nineteenth century, it yet preserved the scale and character of the original meeting house.

Part way down the south side of the street beyond the church, the Greek Revival Doric portico of the Toombs house is visible down its old herringbone brick walk between dense vegetation. On either side of this house whose grounds once extended beyond the church, are later structures. The Episcopal Church and its manse were built not long after 1895, when a fire destroyed an earlier church located closer to the business district. The church is a late example of a shingle style structure with picturesque massing and generally Gothic details. The pattern of shingles and wooden tiles, and the corner tower which forms the belfry are like earlier Queen Anne buildings. These details are used here in a simplified manner without the variety of color generally part of this style. The small Victorian manse, and two other frame houses between it and the Presbyterian church on the corner, are also painted white, as if to blend with the earlier buildings and continue a similar crisp relationship between the white wooden forms and the dense green foliage of old trees and bushes. On the other side of the Toombs house a large, rambling, grey-and-white structure, the R. L. Duke House, is a later Victorian structure that probably dates from about 1890. It is generally Queen Anne in its irregular massing with hexagonal corner turret and wooden tiles. A porch supported on turned posts and brackets runs across the front and partially down one side. Between the Duke House and the Historical Museum are several late Victorian and early twentieth-century houses which fit into the character of the street either through the use of generally classic details, or by simplified massing and wooden framed exteriors. The Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum stands back from the street in gardens and a grove of trees. Formerly the Barnett-Slaton Home, this two-story frame house, whose oldest portion dates from 1835, has a later front porch trimmed with jigsaw ornament.

Facing the apex of its triangular lot across from the museum, the Dunwoody-Normandy House commands a view of the entire district. The two-story Greek Revival portico which accomplished this was an 1860's addition

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Georgia	
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FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 11 1972

(Number all entries)

7. Description , page 2

to an earlier house of about 1830-1840. The older plantation-plain structure is clearly visible with its roof line and front porch indicating an earlier orientation toward Robert Toombs Avenue. In the present facade added at right angles to the old front, the doorway with its rectangular transom and side lights framed by pilasters and entablature is in the severe Doric manner of the monumental portico.

On the northern side of the street, all but one small late Victorian house are early nineteenth-century structures. On the corner the Randolph-Colley-Wickersham House presents a two-story, two-columned and pedimented portico to the street. A triglyph frieze elaborates this portico, as well as the cornice around the body of the house. A delicate iron balcony on iron brackets is an unusual feature over the front entrance. In a treatment that is characteristic of many of these houses, which all date, at least in part, from the 1830's, the entrance door is framed by pilasters, rectangular transom and side lights, and this same general arrangement is carried out in the window-door above the balcony.

The Charles Wickersham home, built c. 1830, is a white frame home similar to its near neighbor the Randolph house in the treatment of its doorway and tall entrance portico. Here the detailing is more elaborate and the Doric order more attenuated, suggesting the earlier date of this portion. In addition the four columns of its full porch are set on bases and treated like the Tuscan or Roman Doric of the handbooks of the period. Slender fluted half columns frame the doorway and the entablature is elaborated with a row of dentils, as is the entablature of the portico. Side porches echo this main motif with similar entablatures supported on Doric posts of square profile.

Coupled columns of square profile support the entrance portico on the Dyson House next door. Long known in Washington as the "Old Castle" for reasons not clear in its white frame, two-story, Federal period exterior, this house was built in 1820. The divided stairway leading above the daylight basement, the detailing of the cornice and the rectangular transom and side lights with hanging balcony suggest that these features were added later in the more monumental approach of the late Federal-early Greek Revival house common to the piedmont region in the 1830's.

The Gabriel Toombs house next door, was probably built also about 1830, although on not so monumental a scale as its neighbor to the east. Again, two-story square columns, in this case single supports, carry a gabled portico. The entrance is framed by rectangular side lights, Doric pilasters and entablature. The detailing of the hanging balcony, turned posts of vaguely Eastlake heaviness and a curious cut-work pattern along its lower edge, suggest a later addition, possibly c. 1871 when the house was given by Gabriel Toombs to his daughter.

One of the earliest structures on this street, at least in part, is the Hillhouse-Wood House across East Robert Toombs Avenue from the Presbyterian Church. Largely obscured by thick foliage, as is its neighbor the Gabriel Toombs House, this building is unusual in its horizontal proportions. The original house which Sarah Hillhouse built on this site in 1814 is probably the back portion, a narrow, two-story and shed plantation-plain style build-



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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COUNTY Wilkes	
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ing. This structure now forms the stem end of a T-plan, with a second portion at right angles facing Robert Toombs Avenue. This part is also a gable roofed, narrow profile clapboard structure to which one-story wings have been added. Its one-story porch supported on square Doric posts, inserted between the side wings, helps to provide the horizontal emphasis which is so different from the other tall porticos on this side of the street. The doorway is given the formal treatment of rectangular transom and side lights framed by Doric pilasters and entablature and leads into a wide, shallow hall with a curving Georgian stairway.



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

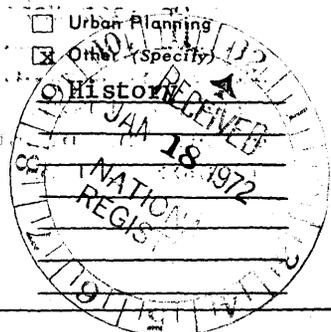
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" 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) c. 1790- 1900 (refers to text citations)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input 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

East Robert Toombs Avenue between Alexander Avenue and Grove Street comprises an historic district of unusual architectural cohesiveness. The majority of the structures on this tree-lined section of the street date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The few later additions, in scale or building materials, are compatible with the earlier forms. Together with the setting of dense foliage and tall trees, these buildings provide a strong sense of time and place. This is not a static image, but one in which there is a sense of organic growth and the passage of time conveyed by both buildings and trees.

The Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum, a major structure at one end of the district, has been listed on the National Register. In addition two other buildings, the Robert Toombs House and the Washington Presbyterian Church, have been selected, because of their architectural qualities as well as historical associations for separate nomination. All three of these structures have been marked by the Georgia Historical Commission as historic places. Further, Frederick D. Nichols suggests the architectural interest of several of the East Robert Toombs buildings when he includes them in The Early Architecture of Georgia.

In addition to the architectural quality of this district, the history of many important Washington people and events is closely associated with its homes and churches. Perhaps its most famous citizen was Robert Toombs, Georgia's "unreconstructed rebel," who was not only active in Georgia politics but served in the United States Congress for sixteen years before resigning in 1861 to take an active part in both the government and armed forces of the Confederacy. It is reported that the massive post oak in front of his home sheltered the Federal soldiers who came in the spring of 1865 to arrest Toombs, and that soldiers marched down the street from its site with his picture on the point of a bayonet. After fleeing to Europe and living there a few years, Toombs spent his later years in Washington and died irresolute in his house on December 15, 1885.

Among other well-known state and local personages who occupied some of the West Robert Toombs Avenue houses was a Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, Isaiah T. Irvin, who lived in the Dyson House from 1851 until September, 1860, when he was killed in an explosion of the steamship, Bayou City. Also, Gabriel Toombs, Robert's brother, lived in two of the houses, that which bears his name, and after he gave this one to his daughter, in the former Hillhouse home. The Randolph-Colley Home was probably brought to its present form by Maria J. Randolph, who legend says was a descendant of Pocahontas. She was known in the town for her fine style of living, her elaborate carriage, fine silks and elegant entertaining, and seems to have epitomized the aristocratic southern lady whose townhouse reflects, as do

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Eliza Bowen, The Story of Wilkes County, Georgia (Marietta, 1950).  
 Georgia Writer's Project, W.P.A., The Story of Washington-Wilkes (Athens, 1941).  
 Robert Marion Willingham, We Have This Heritage (Washington-Wilkes, 1969).  
 Willis C. Lindsey, Sr., Homes and Sites of the Residents of Washington-Wilkes County, Georgia, compiled 1953-1958.  
 Willis C. Lindsey, Sr., A History of Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia, typewritten bound manuscript.  
 Grace Gilliam Davidson, Early Records of Wilkes County, Georgia, I, II (Macon, 1932).  
 Frederick D. Nichols, The Early Architecture of Georgia (Chapel Hill, 1957).  
 Elizabeth A. Lyon, personal inspection, July, September, 1971.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

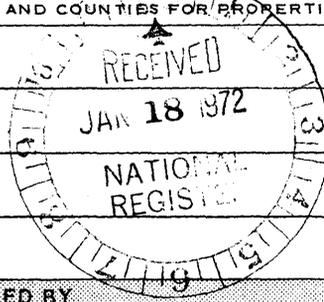
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	33° 44' 12"	82° 44' 12"		"	"	
NE	33° 44' 12"	82° 43' 57"		"	"	
SE	33° 44' 6"	82° 43' 57"		"	"	
SW	33° 44' 6"	82° 44' 12"		"	"	

NO DATA  
CX

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **17 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Dr. Elizabeth A. Lyon, consultant, Washington-Wilkes Historic Foundation**

ORGANIZATION: **Department of the History of Art** DATE: **October 27, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Emory University**

CITY OR TOWN: **Atlanta** STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **13**

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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 May Gregory Jewett

Title State Liaison Officer

Date January 12, 1972

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

Robert M. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/11/72

ATTEST:  
William S. Brantley  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 11 1972

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STATE	
Georgia	
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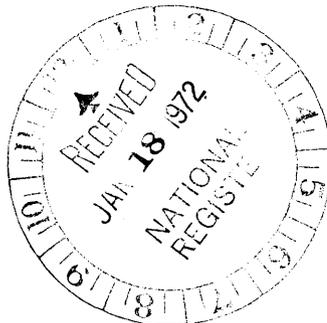
**8. Significance**

its neighbors on this street, the era of the planter aristocracy in Washington.

In addition to its homes, this section of the street is the site of two of the churches of Washington. The Episcopal Church came late to the neighborhood in 1895 after its earlier building burned, but the Washington Presbyterian Church was one of the earliest church buildings in Washington. John Springer, the church's first pastor, was an important figure in the early development of the Presbyterian denomination in Georgia, being the first Presbyterian minister to be ordained on Georgia soil. Other well-known ministers such as S. J. Cassels and Francis R. Goulding served the church and distinguished citizens including Alexander Stephens were members of the congregation. Mrs. David Hillhouse, who became the first woman newspaper editor in Georgia after her husband David's death in 1804, was also a member of the congregation. For many years, 1814 until her death in 1831, she lived across the street from the church.

The land on which the Hillhouse home stood was, like the remainder on the northern side of the street, once part of the holdings of the Gilbert family whose house stood north of the area. Much of the land along the Augusta Road (now East Robert Toombs Avenue) was sold before 1821 as home sites by William G. Gilbert. The settlement which grew up there and whose homes still line the street was known in early ante-bellum days, when it was still outside the town of Washington, as Gilbertsville. A history of the transactions on these lots, as well as some interesting information on the buildings and life of the period is extant in the deeds and other county records.

The historical associations that accrue to the East Robert Toombs area and are expressed by the combination of buildings and settings produce a remarkably impressive historic place in a town that has a rich heritage of historic architecture.



STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA  
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAY PLANNING  
 IN COOPERATION WITH  
 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

CITY MAP  
**WASHINGTON**  
 WILKES COUNTY

SCALE IN FEET  
 0 660 1320

POPULATION 4440 (1960)  
 1969

