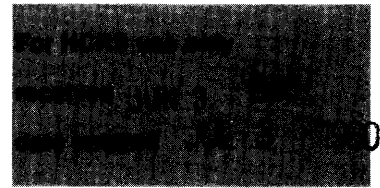


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Cummings, Judge Will, House

and/or common Same

2. Location

W of Chattanooga at

street & number 4025 Cummings Road not for publication

city, town Chattanooga vicinity of congressional district Third

state Tennessee 37419 code 47 county Hamilton code 065

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name John T. and Jimmie L. Cagle

street & number 4025 Cummings Road

city, town Chattanooga vicinity of state Tennessee 37419

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hamilton County Courthouse, Register's Office, Book 2467, Pg. 448

street & number Georgia Avenue

city, town Chattanooga state Tennessee 37402

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Chattanooga-Hamilton County Landmarks Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

city, town Chattanooga state Tennessee 37402

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Located on Cummings Road off Cummings Highway on a small hill in a relatively undeveloped portion of Hamilton County near Tiftonia, Tennessee, the 1903 Judge Will Cummings House is an early example of the Bungalow style. Irregular in shape, the house is two stories in height with a dormered gabled roof with large overhanging eaves. A one story circular bay is located on the south elevation. While of frame construction and covered with wood shingles, rubble stone is used for the foundation as well as for an exterior covering for much of the first floor level; this is especially effective for the treatment of the three-sided veranda style porch. Window arrangement and treatment are irregular. One door is located centrally on the facade and is flanked by a transom and sidelights; two other doors are located on a side and rear porch. The house's two chimneys are rubble stone and are located in the rear of the house. There is a two story screen porch on the rear of the house.

Although the house was left vacant for a brief period and a deterioration process began, a recent renovation by new owners of the property has halted this deterioration. Thus, the arrangement of the interior spaces has been largely unaltered and is typical of many Bungalows of this period with large, airy rooms that open into other rooms through arches.

The site has changed little in recent years. Although close to nearby Tiftonia and the interstate highway, the area has retained its rural atmosphere. Located on a hill, the house sits at the end of a winding drive with stone entrance gates. The five acres that now remain with the homesite include a garage-guest house and a barn-stables.

The boundaries of the property being nominated were drawn to the dimensions of the 5.3 acre parcel on which the house now sits.

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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1903 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Judge Will Cummings House derives its significance from its association with Will Cummings, a major social and political figure of Hamilton County.

Born in 1870, Cummings was the oldest son of John and Rebecca Cummings, early settlers who were known as the "Lord and Lady of Wauhatchie" due to their extensive land-holdings in the Wauhatchie (Tiftonia) area.(1). At the age of twenty-four, Cummings began his long career as a politician in Hamilton County by being elected to the Hamilton County Court in 1894. He served on both the city and county courts until 1912, when he was elected Judge of Hamilton County. He served as Judge until 1942, with the exception of one term (1918-26). Thus, Judge Cummings served as Judge of Hamilton County longer than any other individual.

During his period in office, Judge Will Cummings made numerous contributions toward a progressive development of Hamilton County. Some of his early efforts as judge led to local political reforms such as reducing the number of justices of the peace in the county from fifty to less than ten, and placing the city judge (while he himself was a city judge) on a salary system rather than the more profitable fee system.

After working with these initial reforms, Cummings was elected Judge of Hamilton County in 1912. During his first six year term, Cummings was instrumental in the development of three major transportation projects in the county. In an effort to develop Hamilton County's road systems for interstate traffic, Cummings was one of the local leaders in two major road constructions. One was the Hamilton County portion of the Suck Creek Road or Dixie Highway, an interstate highway from the Canadian Border to Florida designed to increase tourism for cities along its route. Another innovative road facility developed by Cummings was the Wauhatchie Pike, which opened in 1918 and was one of the first concrete roads in Hamilton County.(2). It was Cummings who organized efforts to apply for federal monies, and when local bonds failed to raise Hamilton County's required portion, Cummings borrowed money under his own name to secure the federal aid grant.(3). At that time, local newspapers cited Wauhatchie Pike as the tenth federally financed road in the United States and as the first federal aid project in the South.(4)

Another transportation facility for which Cummings was largely responsible is the John Ross or Market Street Bridge in downtown Chattanooga. At a time when only one bridge (the Walnut Street Bridge, officially closed June 1978) connected Chattanooga to Hill City (or the northern portion of the county), Cummings organized the movement to build a second bridge which evolved as one of the most controversial actions of his tenure as County Judge. In the midst of construction, unexpected foundation problems were discovered at the Market Street site, and the cost of the bridge doubled

9. Major Bibliographical References

Armstrong, Zella. The History of Hamilton County and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Vol. II.
 Chattanooga: Lookout Publishing Company, 1940.
 Heiner, Paul. Chattanooga Yesterday and Today: Vol. II. Chattanooga: Heiner Printing
 Company, 1956.
 Hixson, Fred. The Age of Will Cummings, Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, 1962.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 5.3 acres **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Wauhatchie Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification
 The property is located east of Cummings Road and southeast of Cummings Highway and is listed as County Assessor's Parcel Map Number 153-27.01.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title M.A. Carver, Preservation Planner
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
 organization Regional Planning Commission date March, 1980
 street & number 200 City Hall Annex telephone 615 - 757-5216
 city or town Chattanooga state Tennessee 37402

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 Herbert L. Hager

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/27/80

For NCHS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Keeper of the National Register John W. Ray date 7/3/80
 and Kristen J. O'Connell date 7/2/80
 Chief of Construction

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the original estimate. This additional \$500,000 could not be raised locally, and Cummings then went to New York to seek funding. There he met with difficulties until a Chattanooga native, Adolph S. Ochs, editor and owner of the NEW YORK TIMES, provided Cummings with a letter of introduction which secured the remaining financing.

Yet Cummings was defeated in the 1918 election - largely as a result of his progressive actions. The chief issues were his actions which led to the reduction of the size of the quarterly county court, the Dixie Highway ("the road to no-man's land")(5), and the Market Street Bridge (a project many felt to be a wasteful extravagance). Over the next six years, the County Judge maintained the status quo during his conservative term, and Cummings was reelected on a progressive platform in 1924 and served until 1942.

During this second period in office, Cummings continued his efforts to maintain an excellent county road system. During the late 1920s, a major road building program was conducted in Tennessee, and Cummings was responsible for many major county roads, such as Dayton Pike, Ringgold Road, Lee Highway and Taft Highway, being constructed as four lanes.(6). It was also during this period that the twenty-four mile Will Cummings Highway was constructed between Jasper and Chattanooga. Open in 1935, the road was named in honor of Cummings and appropriate plaques were erected in each city. The Chattanooga plaque reads:

"The Will Cummings Highway

In recognition of the rare vision, the indomitable courage and capacity of achievement of Will Cummings, County Judge of Hamilton County, the pioneer of permanent road building and public improvements in East Tennessee and the Chattanooga district, the 1931 Session of the State Legislature of Tennessee by Joint Resolution designated this highway, "The Will Cummings Highway."

Here is one of the most picturesque highways of the state. It extends from Chattanooga to Jasper. Passes under the historic Point of Lookout Mountain (the site of the "Battle Above the Clouds"). Above the famous "Moccasin Bend." Winds through Wauhatchie Valley. And skirts the beautiful Tennessee River. Every foot of this scenic route was bitterly contested and fought for by the Federal and Confederate Armies during

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the "War Between the States."

This marker is erected by grateful citizens in appreciation of the services rendered Hamilton County and this section of the State by Judge Will Cummings."(7)

A bronze plaque was erected on Jonas' Bluff on Lookout Mountain in 1937, which reads:

Will Cummings Highway

Federal Aid Project No. 1

(Profile of Cummings)

1937

Will Cummings, County Judge

Pioneer Road Builder

Progressive in politics, Cummings was an avid "New Dealer" and close friend of Franklin Roosevelt. Since Cummings' office was an unofficial center for the unemployed seeking jobs during the Great Depression, Cummings actively sought a major project during the New Deal that would alleviate many of Chattanooga's unemployment problems. Thus, when Chattanooga was not selected as the site for one of the early dams constructed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, Cummings was instrumental in convincing Roosevelt of the need of the dam in the Chattanooga area to relieve flooding, provide electricity, and to ease unemployment problems. Not only did Roosevelt agree to support the Chickamauga dam, but visited the dam site in 1938 and stayed at the home of the Cummings. The Roosevelts were so impressed with the Cummings farm and their efforts in soil conservation that Eleanor Roosevelt devoted her "My Day" column to her visit to Chattanooga and the Cummings farm.

Although Cummings remained a "local" politician all his life, he was an influential figure in national politics through his friendships with men such as Roosevelt, board members of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and United States Congressmen. This influence can be seen in Governor Henry Horton offering

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Senator Cordell Hull's seat to Cummings after Hull resigned to serve in Roosevelt's cabinet as Secretary of State. Yet Cummings declined the offer so that he might work at a local level and recommended William Brock.

Thus, Cummings' contributions to the Hamilton County region are innumerable, but generally consist of improved road systems, the construction of the Market Street Bridge and the Chickamauga Dam, and local political reforms and school improvements. As a local leader, Cummings was one of the most influential men in the development of Hamilton County. When he left office in 1942, the CHATTANOOGA TIMES, in an article entitled "End of an Era on the Hill," wrote:

"Many years after he ceases to be a dynamic force in this community, the fruit of his vision will be a monument to him, and his name must go into the records as one of the great community builders."(9)

At the time of his death in 1969, he was described as "probably Hamilton County's most influential political personage" who was enormously influential in Hamilton County as well as on a state to national level.(10)

In summary, as county judge longer than any other person, Cummings was a leader in politics who was instrumental in achieving many beneficial projects and progressive reforms for Hamilton County and who served as a "behind-the-scenes" politician on a state and national level in efforts to further the goals of Hamilton County. The house being nominated (the Will Cummings House) is more closely associated with his life than any other existing building, serving as a social center for political life in the area as well as one of the few showplaces in this area of Hamilton County. Today, it remains as a lasting memorial, not only to Judge Cummings, but to the entire Cummings family and their role in the development of the Wauhatchie area and Hamilton County.

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FOOTNOTES:

1. Chattanooga Times, 1 July 1928. The home of John and Rebecca Cummings was destroyed by fire in 1979.
2. Chattanooga Times, 21 October 1937.
3. Fred Hixson, The Age of Will Cummings (Kingsport, Tenn: Kingsport Press, 1962), p. 50.
4. Ibid: Chattanooga Times, 25 February 1918.
5. Chattanooga Times, 10 March 1969.
6. Ibid.
7. Chattanooga Times, 18 August 1935.
8. Chattanooga Free-Press, 25 October 1937.
9. Chattanooga Times, 30 August 1942.
10. Chattanooga Times, 10 March 1969.

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(11/78)

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Chattanooga News-Free Press, 25 October, 1937.

Chattanooga Times, 19 April 1922, 1 July 1928, 21 October 1937, 30 October 1942,
25 December 1956, 10 March 1969.