

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Jersey	
COUNTY: Mercer	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Maclean House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
President's House (1756-1879) (Dean's House, 1879-1968)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Nassau Street, NW of Nassau Hall

CITY OR TOWN:
Princeton

STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: COUNTY: **Mercer** CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <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
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Princeton University

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Princeton 08540** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Mercer County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey (9 sheets and 2 photos)

DATE OF SURVEY: **1935-36** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Designed and constructed by Robert Smith of Philadelphia, the President's House, as built in 1756, was a brick two-story gable-roofed rectangular structure with a one-story polygonal bay extending from the west side near the southwest (rear) corner. The house was five-bays or 39 -feet wide and 30-feet deep. Windows on the main (north) facade were topped by flat stone winged arches with keystones. The center door had a fanlight and was surmounted by a triangular pediment. The exterior has retained its original appearance except for several minor alterations. A small double dormer window has been inserted in the center of the front roof (and also a similar dormer in the rear) to create a third floor. Both the present wide one-story frame porch on the front of the house and the one-story frame polygonal bay that projects from the east side of the house near the northeast (front) corner were added in 1868.

The interior of the house has also been little-altered. The center door opens into a central hall that extends through the residence to the rear. The original stairs are located at the rear of the hall and against the east (or left) wall. To the left of the hall, in front, is the library and in the southeast corner the study. The fireplace wall of the library is fully paneled. To the right of the hall are the parlor and, behind this, the dining room with its original polygonal bay. The brick and stone two-story service wing extends to the south (rear) from near the southwest corner. The second floor of the main house has four bedrooms and the third floor three more chambers. The service wing has two-bedrooms on the second floor. The house is in excellent condition, used as offices for the Alumni Council, and open to visitors.

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1775-1783**

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 type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input 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

Erected in 1756, the President's House (later known as the Dean's House and now as the Maclean House) served from 1768 to 1779 as the home of John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Presbyterian clergyman, president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and statesman. The Georgian structure is little-altered and now serves as the offices of the Alumni Council of Princeton University.

Brief Sketch of the Life of John Witherspoon, 1723-1794

John Witherspoon was born at Yester, near Edinburgh, Scotland, on February 5, 1723, the son of a clergyman. He was awarded the Master of Arts degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1739 and a divinity degree in 1743. He served as a minister in Presbyterian churches in Scotland from 1743 until 1768. He married Elizabeth Montgomery in 1748, by whom he had 10 children. In 1768 he accepted the call to assume the presidency of the College of New Jersey at Princeton. Though not a profound scholar, Witherspoon was an able college president. During the period 1768-1776, the college of New Jersey took a new lease on life. The endowment, the faculty, and the student body steadily increased. He introduced to Princeton the study of philosophy, French, history, and oratory, and he insisted upon a mastery of the English language.

Witherspoon had disapproved of ministers participating in politics and this fact, possibly, delayed his appearance on the political stage. It was not until 1774 that he manifested more than a casual interest in the controversy with Great Britain. On June 22, 1776, however, he was chosen as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Arriving in Congress at the time when Congress was on the point of adopting a resolution of independence and drafting the Declaration, in a speech on July 2, he assured Congress that the country "had been for some time past loud in its demand for the proposed declaration," and stated "it was not only ripe for the measure but in danger of rotting for the want of it." Witherspoon served in Congress with some intermissions from June 1776 until November 1782. He was appointed to more than 100 committees and was a member of two standing committees of major importance--the board of war and the committee on secret correspondence or foreign affairs. He took an active part in the debates on the Articles of Confederation, assisted in organizing the executive department, shared in the formation of the

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

New Jersey, A Guide to Its Present and Past (American Guide Series) (New York, 1939), 381.
 Varnum L. Collins, Princeton Past and Present (Princeton, 1931), 132-34.
Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XX, 435-38. Article by John E. Pomfret.
 Elizabeth Fields and Dr. J. E. Fields, "The Signers Lived Here," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, May 1951, 6.

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	° ' "	° ' "		40 ° 20 ' 56 "	74 ° 39 ' 36 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: _____

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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian**

ORGANIZATION **Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Division of History, National Park Service** DATE **2/8/71**

STREET AND NUMBER: **801 - 19th Street, NW**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **D.C.** CODE _____

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE New Jersey	
COUNTY Mercer	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance: (1) President's House /and/or John Witherspoon Home

new government's foreign alliances, and played a leading part in drawing up the instructions of the American peace commissioners. During the Revolution the student body at Princeton was dispersed and the college could not be used for educational purposes. Witherspoon spent his last years, from 1782 to 1794, in endeavoring to rebuild the college and in this task he was only moderately successful. In 1783 he was elected to the New Jersey legislature and again in 1789. In 1787 he was a member of the New Jersey convention which ratified the new Federal Constitution. From 1785 to 1789 he was also engaged in the plan of organizing the Presbyterian Church along national lines. Making a major contribution, he was moderator of the first Presbyterian General Assembly, meeting in May 1789. His last years were sad and difficult, owing to the forlorn condition of the college treasury, the depleted state of his own purse, and the death of his wife. In 1791 he married the 24-year old widow, Ann Dill, by whom he had two daughters. Blind for the last two years of his life, Witherspoon died on his farm, "Tusculum," on November 15, 1794 and was buried in the college's President's Lot at Princeton.

History of the President's House

The President's House was designed and built by Robert Smith of Philadelphia in 1756. The structure was used from 1756 until 1879 as the official residence of the presidents of the college. Witherspoon lived in the house from 1768 until 1779, when he moved to "Tusculum" on his farm near Princeton. From 1779 to 1794 the President's House was occupied by Witherspoon's son-in-law, Samuel S. Smith, a vice-president of the college. From 1879 until 1968, the building was utilized as the residence of the Dean of the Faculty and known as the "Dean's House." Since 1968 the structure has been called the "Maclean House" and is used as the headquarters of the Alumni Council, the governing body of the Princeton National Alumni Association.