Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Rutherford	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
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SEP 2	0 1973

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The General Palmer house occupies an imposing site on Main Street in Murfreesboro, near the Rutherford County Courthouse. It is a rather large version of the Italianate villa popular in the middle third of the 19th century.

The main fabric of the structure is of brick with projecting bays and porticos of wood and iron. The plan is picturesquely asymmetrical with several projecting elements providing the same type of relief to the two-story facade.

The right-most front bays are the most deeply recessed, and in front of them is an iron-lace single story portico with an elaborate crocketed cornice. The ironwork between the upper sections of the coupled narrow piers is composed of an eclectic selection of pierced scrolls and panels of Gothic, Classical and Baroque detailing. The curvature of the lower-edges of the lace elements reflects the round-headed windows with heavy Italianate drip guards above each bay.

To the left of the portico is a forward projecting unit comprising a single wide entrance bay. On the ground floor the doorway is recessed behind a wide round arch on compound rispond pilasters with a prominent key-stone decoration. Above is a double round-headed lancet and rose beneath a round-headed drip guard.

To the left of the entrance is a broad bay with a projecting polygonal bay window on the first story only. The ends of the building are five bays deep with less deeply projecting elements and similar but simpler fenestration.

A broad entablature encircles the eaves of the home with a plain architrave, a frieze of modillions rhythmically broken by large coupled brackets surmounted by a projecting cornice with a compound profile. The building is covered by a simple hipped roof. The interior chimneys which project above the roof lines are of compound channels recalling 17th century Dutch, English and American examples.



Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Tennessee

county

Rutherford

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER DATE

SEP 2 0 197

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Cont.)

Flemish bond is not unusual in the area. No record has been found as to whether the ironwork is local or imported. There were a number of ironworkers in the state at the time of construction of this house, but it is not known who fabricated it. There are no known records or accounts which would give any details of the building.

S	IGNIFICANCE			
	PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
1	☐ Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is significant as the home of a prominent military and political leader, as well as possessing fine architectural quality. Joseph Benjamin Palmer was born in Rutherford County on November 1, He was educated in the primary schools of the neighborhood, and was afterwards, at Union University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Leaving the University, he taught school in Rutherford County for one year and then began to study law. Palmer was admitted to the bar in 1848. He was a Whig, and took an active part in politics from 1851 to 1861, standing for the Union until President Lincoln's call for volunteers was made. Palmer saw his first duty to his state and in May, 1861, he organized a company of infantry from Rutherford County, of which Palmer was elected Captain. immediately proceeded to organize the Eighteenth Regiment of Tennessee Infantry and was elected Colonel of the same. with this regiment in the capacity of Colonel, and later in command of a brigade until July, 1864, when he was commissioned a Brigadier-General.

At Fort Donelson, Palmer was captured and spent the next eight months as a prisoner of war at Fort Warren, in Boston Harbor. Palmer was exchanged and returned to his command. At the Battle of Murfreesboro, Palmer was wounded three times while leading his regiment in the famous Breckinridge Charge. Again at the Battle of Chickamauga, Palmer was seriously wounded but recovered to participate in the Dalton-Atlanta campaign.

In July, 1864, Palmer received his promotion to Brigadier-General. He was at the Battle of Franklin and Nashville with Hood. Following Hood's defeat in Tennessee, Palmer's brigade fought a rear guard action to cover Hood's retreat. After linking up with the forces of General Joe Johnston, Palmer was given command of all Tennesseans. General Palmer participated in the closing battle of the war at Bentonville, North Carolina where he had his horse shot from under him.

After the surrender of the Confederate forces, Palmer was paroled May 2, 1865, and returned home to Tennessee. He returned to his law practice and continued to have an active interest in politics until his death in November, 1890.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES								
The Goodspeed Histories of Bedford, and Marshall Cou Woodward & Stinson Printi History of Tennessee, 188 Tennessee: The Volunteer S & Austin P. Foster, (Chic Hearthstones: The Story of Hughes (Murfreesboro, Ten Consultant: Vaughn L. Glas Middle Tennessee State Un GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	nties ng Co. 6). tate 1 ago: S Histo n.: Mi gow, A	of , 76 .J ri d-	Tenne 1971; 9-1923 Clar CRuth South & Arc	ssee, Reprin , Edit ke Pul erfore Publis hitect	(Columented for the column of	John ' Jo	Tenn.: odspee T. Moc pany, es, Mac c., 19 ian,	ed's ore 1923).
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12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATIO	N	#	N	ATIONAL	REGIST	ER VERIF	CATIO	N .
As the designated State Liaison Officer for tional Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Pu 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for in the National Register and certify that it hevaluated according to the criteria and proceed forth by the National Park Service. The recelevel of significance of this nomination is: National State Local Local Executive Director Tennessee Historical Communication Communica	ablic Law inclusion has been edures set ommended		Chief, C	Register Office of A	Archeolog	y and Hist	toric Pres	
Date <u>5/15/73</u>			Date	9		5 7	3_	

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FOR NPS USE O	NLY
Rutherford	
COUNTY	
Tennessee	
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

The architectural elaboration of the Palmer House, the fine quality of its detailing, its imposing and important location within the town are all noteworthy. It is not the parsimonious Victoriana often seen in small American towns, but rather a full-blown picturesque Italianate villa of the mid-century. It typifies the pretentions, aspirations, and success of the American bourgeoisie to an unusual degree and as an historic, social and cultural document has great merit. The Italianate vogue became popular in the United States in the late 1840's and developed through the 1850's. This house represents the crescendo of the style in the following decade. It is also physical evidence of the rapidity with which certain Southern elements rose from the strong economic drain of the recently terminated Civil War.



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FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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(Continuation Sheet)

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8. <u>SIGNIFICANCE</u> (CONT.)

Although the architect or builder of the Palmer house is not known, it was built for General Palmer, with construction having began in 1867 and completed in 1869. The general built the house as a wedding present for his second wife, his first wife having died in 1856. The house became a symbol for hospitality in the community. General Palmer lived there until his death on November 4, 1890, when it was occupied by his son, Horace, who, like his father, was a prominent attorney.

AUG 23 1973 NATIONAL REGISTE