

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

1. NAME

COMMON:
Richard Stockton Birthplace and House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Morven

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
55 Stockton Street, at Library Place

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Governor's residence</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of New Jersey

STREET AND NUMBER:
55 Stockton Street

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

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS ETC.:
Mercer County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Broad Street

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

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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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

"Morven" is a large brick, three-part Georgian composition about 146 feet long. The central or main block is two-stories over raised basement, five bays or 46 feet wide, and 34 feet deep. The two wings, also of brick, are lower, two-story structures and are built on the main axis. The east wing is four bays or 42-feet wide and 25-feet deep, and the west wing is five bays or 60 feet wide and 20-feet deep. The design of the central block is basically early Georgian and this has been somewhat altered by the 19th century addition of a wide one-story Greek Revival porch to the center of the front or south elevation.

The center door in the main block opens into a central hall that extends through the house; the entrance hall intersects at right angles the stair hall that runs across the rear of the main block and connects with the two wings. On the left of the entrance hall is a large dining room and on the right the Gold Room. Fireplace walls in these rooms are fully paneled. The east wing, which was partially burned by the British, has two large family rooms,--the Red Room and Library, on the first floor. The east wing contains the service quarters, including the kitchen. The only recent (1945-54) change to the house is the addition of a solarium, or Green Room, to the north or rear side. Here a former small one-story porch, located in the center of the main block, has been enclosed to form a new room.

The earliest section of "Morven" was built between 1701 and 1709 by Richard Stockton I. Architectural evidence indicates that the house then grew in a series of steps until, by 1775, its appearance was much as it is today. The brick courses of the two wings vary from those in the main part of the house to such extent that it is improbable that the wings and the central block were constructed simultaneously. Structural variations in the wings themselves, moreover, suggest that even they were built at different times. Architectural evidence, however, indicates that rooms in the main or central block apparently have not been changed to any appreciable degree over the years. The interior of the house largely dates from the late 18th or early 19th century as the structure was partially burned on two occasions--once during the Revolution and again in 1821 and each time required extensive repairs.

The structure is in excellent condition. Used as the Governor's Mansion, the residence is not open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. 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) **1775-81**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abariginal | <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/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Morven" was the birthplace and home, from 1730 to 1781, of Richard Stockton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence for New Jersey, lawyer and judge. The early Georgian exterior of the mansion is little-altered; its interiors, however, date from revisions that were made following the fires of 1776 and 1821. In excellent condition, "Morven" now serves as the Governor's mansion.

Brief Sketch of the Life of Richard Stockton, IV, 1730-1781.

Richard Stockton was born at Princeton, New Jersey, October 1, 1730, the son of a wealthy landowner and judge. In 1748 he graduated from the College of New Jersey at Newark (later Princeton University) and took up the study of law, receiving his license as an attorney in 1754. Stockton married Annis Boudinot, a talented poetess, about 1755. It was she, drawing from the lays of Ossian, who applied the name "Morven" to their house.

In the course of the next 10 years Stockton built up a large practice and became generally recognized as one of the most eloquent members of the bar in the middle colonies. As a trustee of the College of New Jersey he made a mission to Scotland in 1766-67 and was able to induce the Reverend John Witherspoon to accept the presidency of the New Jersey institution. In 1768 Stockton was appointed to the council of New Jersey, which position he retained until the end of the royal government. In 1774 he was commissioned one of the justices of the supreme court. His leisure time during this period was devoted to the improvement of his extensive land estate, "Morven," at Princeton, where he bred choice horses and cattle and collected art and books. On June 22, 1776 he was elected to the Second Continental Congress, where he voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence. During the summer and fall of 1776 he served on numerous important committees of Congress. That fall, accompanied by George Clymer, he visited and reported on the condition of the northern army in upper New York State. In November 1776 the British invaded New Jersey. Stockton removed his family to Monmouth County for safety, but while there he was betrayed by Loyalists and taken prisoner. Imprisoned in New York City, he was subjected to indignities which provoked a formal remonstrance from Congress in January 1777. Efforts to secure his exchange were finally successful, but by then his health had been shattered. In addition, the British had partially burned the east wing of "Morven" and pillaged his estate, thus greatly depleting his fortune. He remained a invalid until his death at

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XVIII, 45-47. Article by Richard B. Morris.
 Elizabeth Fields and Dr. J. E. Fields, "The Signers Lived Here," Daughters of the American Revolution, May 1951, 6.
New Jersey, A Guide to Its Present and Past (American Guide Series) (New York, 1939), 388, 389.
 Dorothy H. McGee, Famous Signers of the Declaration (New York, 1955), 121-28.
Great Georgian Houses of America (2 vols., New York, 1933-37) I, 191-95.
 Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes-North (New York, 1956), 158.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	0 0 0	0 0 0		40 20 51	74 40 01	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **5 acres**

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: **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE: **2/5/71**

STREET AND NUMBER: **801 - 19th Street, N.W.**

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 the 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 _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE New Jersey	
COUNTY Mercer	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance: (1) Richard Stockton House, "Morven"

Princeton on February 28, 1781. Stockton was buried in the Stony Brook Quaker Meeting House Cemetery near Princeton.

The Continental Congress met in Princeton in the summer of 1783 under the Presidency of Elias Boudinot, brother of Richard Stockton's wife, Annis Boudinot Stockton. Boudinot chose "Morven" for his official residence, and it was here that American Revolutionary leaders gathered to celebrate the signing of the peace treaty terminating the war with Great Britain.

Ownership of "Morven" remained in the Stockton family until 1945, when the house was acquired by Governor and Mrs. Walter E. Edge. In 1954 they donated the house and five acres of land to the State of New Jersey; the mansion has been used since that date as the official residence of the governor of New Jersey. The house is not open to visitors.

9. Major Bibliographical References:

Varnum L. Collins, Princeton Past and Present (Princeton, 1931), 26-28.