

PH0042841

10th Congressional District

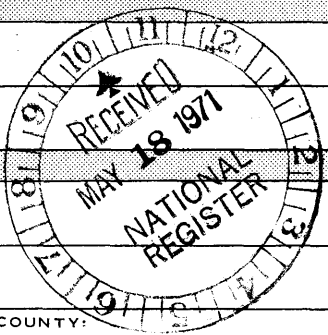
Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

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: Oconee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 10.5.10.0005	DATE 5/13/70



**1. NAME**

COMMON: Eagle Tavern

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: U.S. Highway 129

CITY OR TOWN: Watkinsville

STATE: Georgia      CODE: 13      COUNTY: Oconee      CODE: 219

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<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 type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Georgia Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 116 Mitchell Street, S.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Atlanta      STATE: Georgia      CODE: 13

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

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

STREET AND NUMBER: Oconee County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Watkinsville      STATE: Georgia      CODE: 13

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Building Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: D.C.      CODE: 08

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Georgia

COUNTY: Oconee

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ENTRY NUMBER: 10.5.10.0005

DATE: 5/13/70

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent   
  Good   
  Fair   
  Deteriorated   
  Ruins   
  Unexposed

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(Check One)

Altered   
  Unaltered

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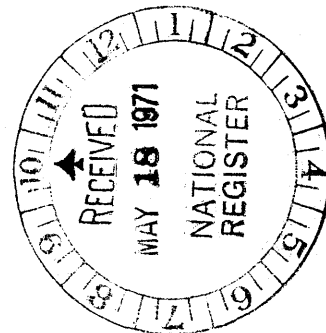
(Check One)

Moved   
  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1958 when the old, two-story Eagle Tavern became state property to be restored as a museum, it was a much larger structure than it is today. Then there were 16 rooms most of which dated from the 1840's; today it consists of two rooms downstairs with two above reached by a narrow, treacherous staircase. This two-story, four-room, frame structure was the earliest part of the building. It was found packaged within the larger structure by Thomas G. Little, the architect in charge of restoration. (Local people had always believed that somewhere within the ramshakled building was hidden the county's oldest structure, a two-room, log blockhouse. This proved to be only partly true.) The architect recommended restoring only this early section. Restoration funds were limited, the condition of the 1840-ish additions was so poor, and the earliest section had all earmarks of being the oldest surviving frame building in the Georgia upcountry. Physical evidence, such as beaded weatherboards, and stylistic characteristics give the building an earlier date than the historical documents associated with the building. In short it is stylistically so conservative that it might have been built in the Virginia or Carolina piedmont in the 1760's but documentary evidence seems to point to a date no earlier than about 1820. This sort of structure is described in Georgia as being in the "plantation plain style." It is early Georgian in feeling and made of wood throughout. Features are: a tall brick chimney rising on the north gable end of a pitched roof; a simple box cornice front and rear; two front doors (the right one leading into a tavern room and the left into a store); on the south gable end a service door for wagon deliveries with, below the threshold, a wooden bumper; nine over six windows on the second floor and nine over nine on the first; the whole rests on a full basement with a fireplace.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input 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. 1820

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation		

RECEIVED  
 NATIONAL REGISTER  
 HISTORIC LANDMARKS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Eagle Tavern in Watkinsville, Georgia, has been restored by the Georgia Historical Commission as an example of an early frontier tavern, stage stop and store. Like similar establishments throughout the young nation, it was a community center for political, social and economic activities. In 1956, after Lanier Richardson Billups, a descendent of one of the tavern's owners, deeded the structure to the state, the Commission began a research program to determine the best way to preserve the Eagle and to present it to the public. At that time, the Eagle was made up of 16 rooms and much history, some of which proved to be legendary. The legends were useful too because in investigating them, important facts came to light. One legend maintained that the ramshakled, 16-room building was originally a 2-room log blockhouse built as a defense against Indian attacks. Rather than an early fort, architectural research revealed a well-preserved, 4-room tavern-store, c. 1820, framed within decaying 1840-ish additions. Further architectural and archaeological investigation determined that the Eagle was a busy establishment by 1825. The poor condition and size of the total building and the quality and good condition of the earliest section were the reasons for paring the 16 rooms down to four and presenting the Eagle as a representative tavern and store of the 1820's.

With the exception of the chain of ownership of land from 1791 until Richard Richardson acquired the property in October 1836, exact accounts of the Eagle must be largely conjectural. We do know that during this time Watkinsville was a crossroads between the capital in Milledgeville and the newly chosen site of the University of Georgia in Athens. (Another legend surrounding the history of the Eagle was that it was here that meetings were held to decide the location of the University.) Increased traffic in Watkinsville surely brought increased trade to the Eagle for in 1830 an outdoor kitchen was built and in the 1840's additions to the hotel were begun. The years prior to the Civil War were the busiest for the tavern but the years afterward saw a decrease in activity. The transfer of the capital to Atlanta, the expansion of the railroads, the decline of plantation economy and the death of Richardson in 1871 contributed to the lessening of tavern business in the eastern part of the state. Many people attempted to maintain the tavern but by the 20th century it had come to represent the romantic past rather than to function as a vital center of activity.

The Georgia Historical Commission, through the restoration and furnishing of the earliest section of the building, and by means of exhibits continues to perpetuate Eagle Tavern as a representative historical setting for a way of life which has passed.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Larson, Eve, "Georgia's Blockhouse Tavern," Atlanta Journal Magazine, January 7, 1945.  
 Mitchell, William R., Jr., Personal Inspections.  
 Sparks, Andrew, "Old Eagle Tavern Will Preen Its Feathers Again," Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, April 13, 1958.  
 Sparks, Andrew, "Roads and Taverns 142 Years Ago," Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, February 5, 1967.  
 Files and Documents, Georgia Historical Commission.

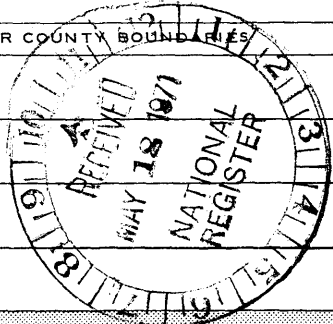
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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	° ' "	° ' "		33° 51' 50"	83° 24' 23"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one acre

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: William R. Mitchell, Jr., Director, Ga. Historic Sites Survey  
Carole Summers

ORGANIZATION: Georgia Historical Commission DATE: May 7, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 116 Mitchell St., S.W.

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 Mary Gregory Jewett

Title State Liaison Officer

Date May 7, 1971

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

Ernest A. Connelly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/13/70

ATTEST:

William R. Mitchell, Jr.  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS