National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAY 1 8 1989

NATIONAL

REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property			
historic name Housto	n, William Cannon, Ho	use	
other names/site number Beaver			
2. Location			
	uston Lane		N/A not for publication
city, town Woodbu			N/A_ vicinity
state Tennessee code	TN county Cann	ion code	015 zip code 37190
3. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of F	Resources within Property
X private	X building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
public-local	district	1	1buildings
public-State	site	0	0 sites
public-Federal	structure	1	0 structures
paolio, recordi di sia di sia di	object	0	0 objects
		2	1 Total
Name of related multiple property listing		Number of c	contributing resources previously
Name of related multiple property listin	·9.		National Register
	····	iistea iii tiie	National Register
4. State/Federal Agency Certification	ation		
State or Federal agency and bureau	šee Historical Commis	ssion	See continuation sheet. Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
5. National Park Service Certification	ation	<u> </u>	
I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register.	Mah J. Bake	Entered in the National Regis	16 pme / 1489
removed from the National Register other, (explain:)	r		
	Signa	ture of the Keeper	Date of Action

6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC: single dwelling	DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: secondary structure	DOMESTIC: secondary structure
7. Description	
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
	foundation Limestone
Greek Revival	walls Weatherboard
	roofASPHALT_SHINGLE; TIN
	other CONCRETE; WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located on the McMinnville Highway (U. S. Highway 70S) in the eastern end of Woodbury (pop. 2,160), Cannon County, Tennessee, the William Cannon Houston House is a two-story, frame dwelling that exhibits adaptive characteristics of the vernacular I-house form, influenced by the Greek Revival architectural style. Capped by an asphalt shingle gable roof, irregular configuration features the basic I-house form on the front half of the house, combined with several additions to the rear that William Cannon Houston, added in the late nineteenth century to meet the needs of his expanding family, law practice, and political career. unaltered wooden trim over the doorways, wooden baseboards, wooden chair unaltered wooden staircases, and original wooden mantles, interior retains the room spaces and uses of the late nineteenth century. The front half of the house has the typical central hallway and two flanking rooms on each floor that characterize the I-house form, while the rear half of the house reflects the influence of an L-shaped addition of a hallway with five rooms on the first floor and a hallway and five rooms on the second floor.

The house began as a single pen-log building located along an Indian trail and the stagecoach road. Family tradition dates the log building to circa 1810. The geographer and vernacular architecture scholar, Fred Kniffen, has discussed the evolution of the I-house form in nineteenth century Field work conducted by scholars of vernacular architecture has discovered that many I-houses evolved from a single-pen log cabin to a log Owners then transformed the dog-trot into a more substantial farmhouse by adding a second floor, enclosing the hallway, and weatherboarding the entire structure, extending the gable-end chimneys to a full stories in height. Preliminary structural investigations of William Cannon Houston House (by family members) have uncovered that the property did experience a similar pattern of building evolution in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is certain that the single-pen still exists and now serves as the dining room on the first floor. When William Cannon Houston acquired the property in 1873, he directed the addition of several rooms to the rear of the original dwelling over the remainder of his life, many from circa 1880 to 1900. Since his death, the dwelling has experienced little change in its building fabric and retains a high degree of historic integrity.

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A brief description of the historic additions to the house and their approximate dates begins with the I-house portion constructed circa 1860. On the east side of the house, Houston cut a door from the dining room and added a formal parlor circa 1880. At this same time he extended the first floor hallway and added an ell to the south portion of the I-house. During these major additions to the first floor, Houston also made changes to the second floor, extending the hallway to match the first floor extension and then adding bedchambers in the ell. He connected these additions by a hip (Exact dating is not possible for many of the changes Houston made to the house. However, most information indicates they were completed between 1880 and 1900.) Houston made his last changes to the house shortly A laundry room was extended off the first floor hallway before his death. and a rear porch was created circa 1930. During the 1950s the family enclosed this porch and turned it into a modern kitchen.

The facade of the William Cannon Houston House faces north toward Hill's Creek and U. S. Highway 70S. The principal section of the residence is an I-house, a two-story, two-room, deep building with a gable roof. three-bay facade consists of a projecting pedimented portico, flanked by one-over-one blind shuttered windows, which are original and retain the original leaded glass panes, except for two missing panes in the right first floor window. The current shutters were added in the 1960s, although architectural evidence suggests that shutters of some type were located on the facade windows. A two-story Greek Revival influenced portico on the center of the facade features a wooden scallop motif on the pediment. railed balustrade encloses the second story pedimented porch. and second story fenestration includes a centrally located door flanked by two windows; both doors are original, although protective screen doors were added at an unknown date in the twentieth century. After acquiring the dwelling in 1873, Houston directed the removal of a two-story porch that once dominated the facade. The stone foundation for the extended porch and faint architectural ghosts of its initial configuration are all that remain of this feature. The north and south elevations of the I-house have brick These elevations are identical, true to the exterior end chimneys. symmetric construction of I-houses. Original one-over-one windows flank the central chimneys on the first and second stories, except for one fourover-four double window on the north facade, added at an unknown date.

A Victorian-influenced addition dominates the east facade. The addition dates to approximately the turn of the century and was made under the direction of Houston. This one-story gable roof addition has one chimney and features an open pediment with a wooden ornamentation on the east elevation. A three-sided one-over-one bay window projects from under the

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pedimented gable. The south elevation of this addition has a door, which is original. The west elevation of this addition abuts a two-story, two-bay wide hipped roof portion which extends on the east side of the I-house, and which gave the dwelling an initial L-shaped configuration. Partially filling in the L-shape form on the first floor is a porch and laundry, added circa 1930 shortly before Houston's death. The addition retains the original four-over-four double-hung windows of the laundry room, along with the original screen door. In the 1950s, however, the Houston family converted the porch into a modern kitchen by remodeling the open space into a room, adding two casement windows and a doorway with a protective screen door.

The south (rear) elevation is a two-story gable roofed addition constructed in the late nineteenth century. A band of five windows is on the second story and two double six-over-six windows project from the first floor. A one-story porch covers one-fourth of the south of this elevation.

The west elevation features the dwelling's original L-shaped addition, constructed under the direction of Houston in the late nineteenth century, according to family tradition by circa 1880. Featuring a central chimney, the addition is asymmetrical in appearance, suggesting that Houston made the changes in the house over a period of time, from his acquisition of the property in 1873 through circa 1900. Architectural investigations indicated that the addition initially featured a one-story porch that extended along two-thirds of the addition's length, from north to south. In the early twentieth century, certainly by circa 1910-20 when a modern bathroom was constructed, Houston had enclosed most of the porch creating additional living space for his large family. The second story of the west elevation addition has three six-over-four double-hung windows, containing their On the first story, two small paneled shuttered original glass lights. windows provided ventilation and lighting for the modern bathroom. enclosed porch section of the first floor also features a pair of three double-hung one-over-one windows. The porch section which led to the dwelling's original kitchen was not enclosed, revealing some of original features of the first story north elevation addition, including a doorway (which is original, but now has a protective screen door) and two double four-over-four windows. A gable roofed frame and concrete generator house, built circa 1930, partially hides this section of the first story of the west facade.

No major structural changes have been made to the interior of the house. The I-house portion of the dwelling features two rooms on either side of a central hall, and both rooms retain wooden mantles and four-inch-high

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wooden baseboards added by circa 1860. Upon entering the house, the room immediately to the left of the central hallway is the dining room, used for this purpose by the Houston family since acquisition of the dwelling in 1873. It features original built-in cupboards. This room is the original single-pen log trading post of Sam McFerrin who located at this site in circa 1810 to trade furs with Native Americans. No evidence suggests that the post has been moved; indeed, it appears that the house grew and expanded from this initial building. The central hallway features original pine baseboard trim and a built-in bookcase added by Houston in the late nineteenth century. To the right of the hallway is a bedchamber, featuring circa 1860 baseboards and a mantle. The pine mantle has classically influenced embellishments. At an unspecified date in the twentieth century, the ceiling in the room was lowered approximately six inches.

The second set of rooms extending off the first floor hallway date to the Houston additions of circa 1880. To the left is a formal parlor, flooded with light from the Victorian bay window. As true with the other rooms in these additions, the chambers retain their original pine woodwork and mantles. All of the walls are plastered. To the right of the hallway are the modern bathroom, added by circa 1920, and a family den, which dates to the late nineteenth century, but acquired its current appearance in circa 1920. The den contains an unadorned, functional staircase which provides a rear entry to the second floor.

The central hallway of the first floor ends at the main staircase, which dates to circa 1860, and the original rear porch of the house. staircase is approximately 36 inches wide and retains all of its original wooden hardware, including square banisters and delicately turned stair In the 1950s, however, the family enclosed the porch and created a To the right of the kitchen continues the addition of the late nineteenth century which contained the dwelling's circa 1880 kitchen (now used for storage) and the laundry room (added circa 1930). laundry room, with its construction dating to a later period than the original additions of the turn of the century, has a concrete floor. Otherwise, each of the rooms on the first floor retain the original wooden pine floors of circa 1860 for the I-house portion and circa 1880 for the additions. Each room also contains a fireplace and original mantle save for the first floor bathroom (circa 1920), the laundry room (circa 1930), and kitchen (circa 1930). Except for the more elaborate Victorian influenced mantle in the main dining room, the painted pine mantles are derived Since these rooms from vernacular interpretations of classical styles. were established after the house had been wired for electricity, they used electrical power for heating, and in the kitchen, for cooking.

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As common in many dwellings of Victorian era origins, the second floor rooms in general are much less adorned than those of the first floor. First floor rooms were often looked upon as more public spaces, where entertainment and social events would take place. Houston's house contains important evidence of this distinction. For example, the fireplace mantles in the dining room and the connected formal parlor are the most stylistically district in the dwelling. The second floor was a more private space. Consequently, to show one's position and possessions in life, the first floor was typically more adorned, the showplace of the house.

The first floor staircase leads to the end hallway of the second floor. To the right is a single large bedroom directly over the dining room. The room, interestingly enough, contains a decorative pine chair rail of approximately three inches in width. This chamber, like three of the other four rooms of the second floor, contains original pine mantles that date, at least, to the acquisition of the property by the Houston family in 1873. This first bedroom also contains a wooden irregular-cut door to the attic, which provides access to the house's original electric wiring.

The dwelling still uses the original wiring, which could be of significant interest to historians of technology since the Houston house was the first dwelling to be wired for electricity in Cannon County. It also was the first house to have private telephone service, although the hardware for that service has been replaced in the twentieth century by modern telecommunications equipment. Across the central hallway is another bedroom, part of the house's circa 1860 section. Another chamber associated with the original I-house configuration is a closet that was converted into an indoor bath by circa 1920. At this point, a doorway provides access to rooms associated with the addition of the late nineteenth century. first of these two connected bedrooms contains an unadorned staircase which connects the room to the den directly below. The last bedroom looks out to Indeed, the second floor interior provides the best evidence of the dwelling's L-shaped configuration after Houston had completed his major additions by the turn of the century. The original I-house section contains the hallway, flanked by two bedchambers. From the west chamber flows three additional rooms, creating the L-shape. On the second floor, every room retains the pine flooring, pine baseboards, and classically derived mantles from the date of each chamber's individual construction. All of the walls are plastered.

Records are sketchy about the outbuildings once associated with the farm-house. Many of these were destroyed when the Cannon County High School was

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constructed in the late 1970s. Today, only a gable-roofed wooden shed remains. It dates to the early twentieth century but does not contribute to the significance of the property. Visible at the west elevation of the dwelling is its original cistern, conditionally dated as circa 1860. This is a contributing structure.

The Houston House retains a high degree of integrity on both its interior and exterior. Located on a hill overlooking the path of the early nineteenth stagecoach road and Hill Creek, the dwelling's siting is particularly compelling and reflects its nineteenth century origins. The property has served as a landmark for decades and historically served to remind travellers that they had arrived at the outskirts of Woodbury.

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PORCH

NOT TO SCALE

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this prop	erty in relation to other properties: statewide \(\text{X} \) locally	•
Applicable National Register Criteria A B CC	□D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	□D □E □F □G N/A	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) POLITICS/GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE	Period of Significance 1876-1918 Cultural Affiliation N/A	Significant Dates N/A
Significant Person Houston, William Cannon	Architect/Builder unknown	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The William Cannon Houston House is being nominated to the National Register under criterion B. Houston was a noted politician and lawyer from Cannon County. He served as a judge, Democratic party elector, and member of both the State House of Representatives and the U.S. Congress. During his terms of office Houston helped formulate legislation to settle the state debt question and to establish the Alaska Railroad. After he retired in 1918, he devoted himself to agriculture and became an innovator of modern farming methods in Cannon County. The house is also being nominated under criterion C as an excellent example of the evolution of a log dwelling into an I-house form that has elements of Greek Revival in its facade portico and symmetrical proportions. The interior retains classically influenced mantles, its original staircase, central hall plan, and original pine trim. The only major alterations that occurred to the house were when Houston lived there.

The house began as a single-pen log cabin located on an old Indian trail and the historic Old Stage Road, used by fur traders and travellers in the early nineteenth century. Family tradition dates the cabin at circa 1810. Cherokee Indians travelled this road on the Trail of Tears and camped near the house in 1838. During the Civil War, Nathan Bedford Forrest used Old Stage Road on his way to the Battle of Stones River at Murfreesboro in neighboring Rutherford County. Forrest's troops headquartered at the house for a brief time at midnight on July 12-13, 1862. By this time, the house had evolved into a two-story I-house, much as the facade appears today.

In 1873 ownership of the house passed from the McFerrin family to William Cannon Houston. Born in Bedford County, Tennessee, on March 17, 1852, Houston's father died when Houston was only one year old. In 1857, his mother was remarried to Benjamin Fugitt of Cannon County and the family relocated to the Dolittle community, two miles north of Woodbury. Local historians are unclear about his early education; perhaps he attended Laurens Academy in Woodbury. After the Civil War, however, he attended the county's best educational institution, the Woodbury Academy, which had

9. Major Bibliographical References	
Blake, Morgan and Stuart Towe. <u>Lawmakers and Pul</u> Nashville: Eagle printing, 1915.	olic Men of Tennessee.
Brown, Sterling S. <u>History of Woodbury and Cannot Manchester</u> : Doak Printing, 1936.	on County, Tennessee.
Mason, Robert L. <u>History of Cannon County, Tenno</u> Lancer Printing, 1984.	essee. Murfreesboro:
McBride, Robert M. and D.M. Robison. <u>Biographica</u> <u>Tennessee General Assembly</u> . Nashville: Ten Commission, 1979.	al Directory of the nnessee Historical
Designed designed at the (MDO). N/4	See continuation sheet
Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) N/A	Primary location of additional data:
has been requested	X State historic preservation office
previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register	Other State agency Federal agency
designated a National Historic Landmark	Local government
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	University Other
recorded by Historic American Engineering	Specify repository:
Record #	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property <u>approximately 8 acres</u>	
UTM References A 1 6 5 8 5 0 5 0 3 9 6 4 7 4 0 B Zone Easting Northing C 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	Zone Easting Northing
Woodbury 319 SE	See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description	
The boundary for the William Cannon Houston Ho accompanying Cannon County tax map. See map.	use is shown on the
	See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
The boundary contains sufficient land to prote architectural integrity of the house.	ct the historic and
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title <u>C.V. West and Mary Mason Shell</u> organization <u>Center for Historic Preservation</u>	date March 2, 1989
COMMINGRALIZED TENTER OF THE STANDARD TO SECURITE	
street & number P.O. Box 80, MTSU	telephone 615-898-2947 TN zip code 37132

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evolved from the Baptist Female College (NR6/25/87). The evidence indicates that Houston received a typical Victorian curriculum, with emphasis on the classics, grammar, history, and mathematics. These courses prepared Houston well for his later career in law and politics.

Upon his graduation, Houston began his career as a local businessman. He purchased the McFerrin House in 1873; the following year he joined with John C. Cook to publish and edit the Woodbury Press. The newspaper remains important to the community today, although it had been renamed the Courier in the twentieth century. More important to Houston at the time, the newspaper served as a springboard to political office. In 1876, at the age of 24, Houston waged a successful campaign for the State House of Representatives. Before he was even 25 years old, Houston was on his way to becomming one of the most important politicians in the county.

In the late 1870s, Houston laid the foundation for his later political predominance in the county. In 1878, he married Lura B. Kittrell of the Kittrell family. The next year, he was admitted to the Tennessee bar and opened a law practice in Woodbury. From this point on, Houston's ties to the old political elite in Cannon County and his stature as one of Woodbury's best attorneys would serve him well in his professional and political career. He was elected again to the state legislature in 1880 and re-elected in 1882. During these years, Houston played an important role in the settlement of the state debt question, one of the burning political issues of the post-Reconstruction period. In 1883, he formed a legal firm with James A. Jones, another prominent Victorian era figure in Cannon County law and politics.

The 1890s would witness Houston's emergence as an important politician on the state level. In 1892, he served as a state Democratic elector for the presidential candidacy of Grover Cleveland. During the nineteenth century the elector designation meant more than it does today. In Houston's case it meant that state party leaders had recognized him as a promising politician worthy of support and patronage. It also allowed Houston to It also allowed Houston to become better known in th congressional district and to raise his "name recognition". Two years later, Houston became a circuit judge, a post he would retain for the next ten years. In 1899, Houston remarried, selecting Elizabeth Minor McLemore, of the politically-prominent McLemore family in Williamson County, as his bride. Thus, Houston's expansion of his home reflected both his new marriage (and may well have reflected the tastes of Elizabeth McLemore Houston) and his increasing prominence as an attorney and judge.

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His reputation as a judge led Democratic party regulars in Middle Tennessee to urge Houston to run for the U. S. Congress. His 1904 campaign was successful and Houston would serve for the next 14 years in Washington, the longest stretch in time in congressional office for any Cannon County In Washington, Houston served as chairman of the Committee on resident. Territories during the administration of Woodrow Wilson. Perhaps his most important bill was the act establishing the Alaska Railroad, which linked Seward and Fairbanks. He also was a member of the Judiciary Committee. Houston retired from politics at the age of 66 to concentrate on his farm Like many Tennesseans in the early twentieth century, Houston activities. was an agricultural innovator, interested in the promise of progressive farming techniques. He built the first silo in Cannon County in 1916 for a booming dairy cattle operation. He also brought new technology to his house, being the first in Woodbury to have indoor plumbing, a telephone, and electricity.

The original I-house that Houston acquired in 1873 also changed over time, reflecting his expanding web of legal and political connections, along with the needs of his expanding family. He had six children with his first wife and four more with his second wife. The house greatly expanded in size from 1873 to 1920 to find room for the children and all the entertainment a man of means, and political clout, like Houston, was expected to provide in late Victorian society. Almost every structural alteration the house has experienced came from Houston's direction, the last being the laundry room, added in circa 1930. Houston died the following year, in 1931.

Two different obituaries, published in Nashville papers and retained by the family, give us an idea of contemporary opinion about Houston:

Six feet tall, spare and erect, even with his accumulated years, he was a man physically conspicuous, and for forty years or more was rated Cannon County's outstanding citizen. He had an extraordinary hold on the affections of the people of his county, and he was equally popular among the people of the adjoining counties, among whom he had a wide acquaintance, because of his long public service. He was a genial gentleman, loyal to his friends, and possessed the attributes of leadership to a high degree.

Perhaps no man in public life in the state more fully typified the old-time Southern gentleman than did Judge Houston. He looked and acted the part perfectly....His home was an open house

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and many were the friends whom he entertained, who were among the leading men of the country. He lived beside the Memphis to Bristol highway which is the main highway from Washington to the Southwest, and many of his old Congressional friends (such as Sam Rayburn and John Nance Garner of Texas) still often visited en route to or from Washington.

Thus, the architectural conservatism of his Greek Revival influenced farmhouse suited Houston well. Its vernacular origins, shared by others in the county, and its prominent position on the outskirts of Woodbury, reminded voters in Cannon County that Houston was of them; he came from their country. As a place of gracious hospitality for his fellow Southern Democrats with its great portico reminding all of the "Lost Cause" and the glory of the antebellum South, it too stood as a political symbol of Houston, a Southern Democrat in a conservative era.

Houston was the most important politician in the county around the turn of the century, having served six terms in the United States Congress, time in the state legislature, and as a judge. Perhaps it is difficult for those outside of this rural community to appreciate Houston's achievements. In any election to federal office, the votes of Cannon County have always been a decided minority; consequently both parties have typically selected candidate fro other counties. No one has ever held as high a political office; and not until the middle decades of the twentieth century, had any one has wielded significant power in the community for a longer period than Houston's forty-two years. Jim Cummings was a well-known politician during the twentieth century, but his success was in the state house where Cannon County's votes could play a decisive role. Houston never had this advantage in his quest for federal office. Yet his election campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives were invariably successful. Houston walked the halls of Washington and counted among his political allies such national figures as Sam Rayburn of Texas. Indeed, Rayburn was a frequent visitor to Houston's Woodbury home, underscoring Houston's prominence in the Democratic party. No other Cannon County politician has achieved such a record of success in the U.S. Congress. Houston's career spanned from one era of politics to one quite different one - from the Democrats despair in th reconstruction period to the renewal of national Democratic power during the Woodrow Wilson administration.

The Houston House on the McMinnville Highway in Woodbury, which is remarkably intact in both its exterior and interior, with most rooms retaining the function of the Houston era, gives us an idea of the way of life of a prominent Middle Tennessee politician and shows us how his residence

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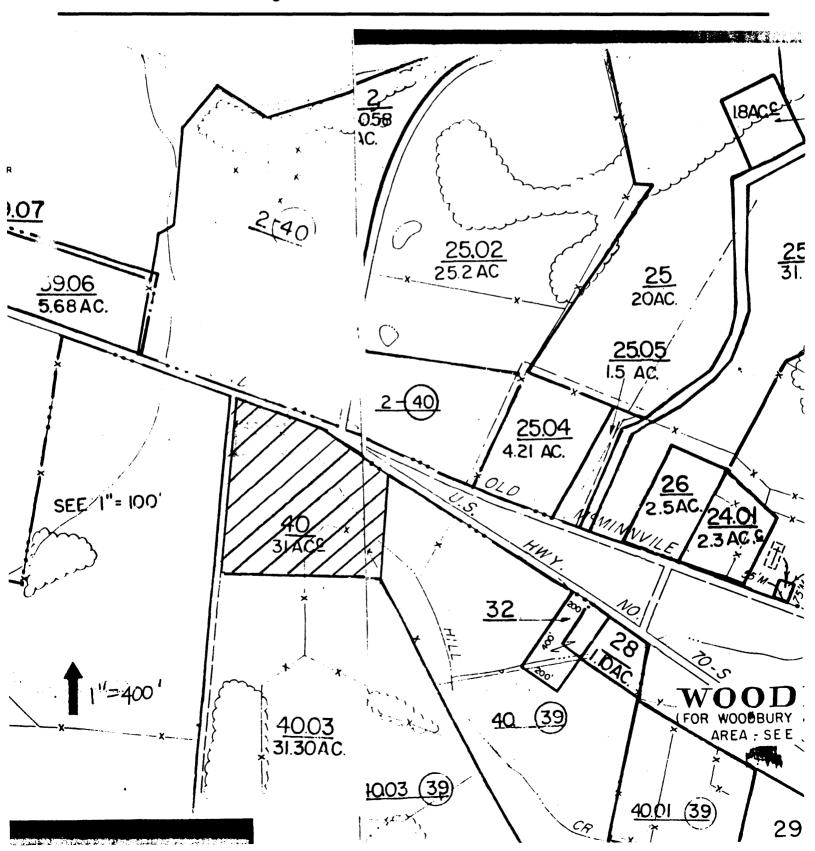
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evolved as he continued to prosper. Only two other properties are listed in the National Register from Cannon County. These are the Baptist Female College/Adams House (NR6/25/87) and the Readyville Mill (NR7/2/73). The Houston House stands out as the only know residence with the Greek Revival/I-house combination in Cannon County that has remained so unaltered and reflects this once popular form of design.

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Houston, William Cannon, House

107 Houston Lane

Woodbury, Cannon County, Tennessee

Photo by: C. V. West

Date:

November 1988

Neg:

Tennessee Historical Commission

Nashville, Tennessee

Facing south, north facade

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Facing east, west elevation

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Facing southeast, west elevation

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Facing east, west elevation, detailing I-house section

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Facing north, south elevation

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Facing northeast, west and south elevations

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Facing west, east elevation

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Facing west, east elevation

Facing west, detail of formal parlor addition

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Facing east, cistern

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Facing west, 1st floor living room #11 of 20

Facing east, 1st floor formal parlor #12 of 20

Facing south, 1st floor formal parlor with classical influence mantle #13 of 20

Facing south, doorway connecting first floor dining room to formal parlor #14 of 20

Facing east, 1st floor dining room with Victorian influenced mantle #15 of 20

Facing south, first floor hallway #16 of 20

Facing northeast, built-in bookcase in 1st floor hallway #17 of 20

Facing southeast, 1st floor staircase #18 of 20

Facing north, 2nd floor hallway #19 of 20

Facing southeast, 2nd floor bedchamber over the 1st floor dining room #20 of 20