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Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Original site:

The house stood an eighth of a mile from its present location, on the north side of Hancock Street between Jackson and Thomas Streets. The house lot ran back to Dougherty Street, which then ran through from Jackson to Thomas; Jackson Street was also continuous. Because of Urban Renewal redevelopment, the house had to be either moved or razed. Also a part of the Urban Renewal plan, a new Dougherty Street was cut from north of the intersection of Thomas and Strong Streets westward to the intersection of old Dougherty and College. The house now stands facing northwest on the new Dougherty Street at the corner of Thomas, about 500 feet north and a hundred feet east of its original location.

Original form, additions and alterations:

The house as it stood on Hancock Street was a sprawling two-story white frame house with many chimneys, long veranda and fine trees. Since it was not feasible to move the whole rambling structure, it was decided to save only the original compact house, as it was revealed by architectural study. The study was carried out by architects C. Wilmer Heery and John Linley. (Measured drawings of the house before moving and demolition are on file at Heery & Heery, Architects, Athens office.)

The original house of 1820, then, was a frame house with exterior end chimneys and small front porch; it had two large rooms up and two down, with central hall, stairs rising on the right; it had a small room with fireplace off the dining room and doubtless a back porch. The early chimneys had sloping edge-laid (not stepped) high shoulders. Windows had small lights, nine over nine. It is thought that the left-hand room was the living room, since it had the most elaborate mantel, the right-hand room the dining room, and the small room off it, the pantry.

Two exterior features are unusual. The first is the soffit molding consisting of beveled-edged blocks of wood, drilled with lines of holes. It appears to be a naive interpretation of the Greek mutule, in which there are projections where this molding has holes. The Alston-Wiley house in Sparta, Georgia, has similar molding. The other feature is that the doorway, in addition to the arch of the semi-circular fanlight over the door, has sidelights terminating in a round arch. Fanlights were often used in the finer houses of this area in the period 1810-30, to judge by the few which have survived; however, the sidelights are uniformly square-headed. A fine feature of the doorway is the jamb paneling.

The first addition, made very early, was a large room with fireplace added to the dining room. Later, but before 1860, a two-story addition was built on the left side of the house, for which the original stairs were removed and new reversed stairs run up from the lengthened central hall. At some time the early small porch was replaced with a long veranda. In the late 19th century, probably, several one-story additions were made to the back of the house. A sloping floor showed a back porch later enclosed, but it was farther back than the original back porch would have been. An extra front window was cut in the original dining room, doorways removed and walls doubled to accommodate sliding doors to the two front rooms, windows and (continued)

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 Applicab	le and Known) 1820		
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	eck One or More as Appropris	ate)	
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built by a professor and the home of an illustrious president of the University, the Church-Waddel-Brumby house is a rare symbol of the early days of Athens and the University, and a rare example of Federal architecture.

The house has been the subject of much misinformation, including a wrong date. In synopsis, its actual history, as discovered in research for this nomination, is that Alonzo Church, professor at the University and later president, had the house built; never lived in it but sold it to Moses Waddel, who lived in it nine years while president of the University; and who sold it after his retirement to Mrs. Sarah H. Harris, whose descendants occupied it until the death of the Misses Brumby in the mid-1960's.

The University of Georgia, founded in 1785, first opened its doors to students in 1801. It consisted then of one school, Franklin College, named in honor of Benjamin Franklin. An energetic president, Josiah Meigs, the erection of a fine large brick building (Old College), and a growing student body and community marked the first decade. Meigs was succeeded by the Rev. Brown and the later by the Rev. Finley, who died in 1817. For several years the College had been declining in students, funds and enthusiasm. The Trustees spent the years 1817-19 searching for a new president, but their choices either declined or died. The College dwindled to seven students, and the little town of Athens stagnated. In March, 1819, the Trustees unanimously elected the Rev. Moses Waddel, a Presbyterian minister and famous educator. (Trustees' Minutes, 1 March 1819.) After much persuasion, he miraculously accepted.

After teaching in several other places, in 1804 Dr. Waddel had opened Willington Academy, near the little town of Willington, South Carolina; the site is now covered by the waters of Clark Hill Reservoir. Here in the backwoods the boys built little cabins in which they lived and did their own housekeeping; they pursued the frontier sports of hunting, running, wrestling; there was also dancing and debating. They had surely one of the earliest forms of student self-government, Dr. Waddel, however, having the final word. There were daily prayers, church on Sunday; plain fare at the table except for occasional peach brandy. The intellectual fare was a rigorous classical curriculum of Greek, Latin, history, geography, grammer. Among the students at this remarkable school were John C. Calhoun, William H. Crawford, A. B. Longstreet and George R. Gilmer; from the school came seven governors of South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama and senators, judges, college presidents, lawyers, clergymen.

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	Clarke County, Georgia deeds and tax records.													
	Cooper, Patricia Irvin, personal inspection and conversations with C. Wilmer													
	Heery, John Linley and John Waters. Jones, James A., History of the First Presbyterian Church of Athens, Georgia,													
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Form 10-200a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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(Continuation Sheet)

7. Description - page 2

doors cut or blocked, baths added.

The house sat on small brick piers in the usual Southern fashion, with tree trunk sections bolstering joists in mid-floor. The dependencies had disappeared by the turn of the century.

In the extant, 1820 house, the rooms are light and well-proportioned, with ceilings about 11 feet high. Ceilings throughout are flush beaded boards. The house still has its original pine floor boards, usually five or six inches wide. Downstairs there is wainscoting, upstairs chair rails only. Surmounting a thick six and a half inch baseboard, each section of wainscoting consists of a single horizontal (pine) board about 18 inches wide. Walls are plastered except in the upper stair well, upstairs hall and bath, which have beaded board walls. The living room mantel has three sunbursts, a molding of little, rounded short and long blocks, rather like uneven teeth in a comb, and on each side, a pair of delicate engaged reeded colonnettes. The ornamentation of the dining room mantle consists of three reeded lozenges; this mantel has single, fatter columns. The upstairs and office mantels have flat pilasters and plain architraves.

Excluding porches and office, the original house measures 44'6" by 20'2".

Restoration:

Here we will describe the restoration and some of the evidence from which the original form of the house, given above, was deduced.

The small room off the dining room had had a fireplace which had been torn down, only its foundation remaining beneath the house. The modest size of the fireplace suggests that this room was never a kitchen, but rather a pantry with warming fireplace. The original placement of the rear wall of this room is uncertain. The room serves as an office for the house guide. No evidence remained of the original back porch, but it is assumed the house had to have one, like every early Southern house. In restoration, the house was given a deep back porch onto which open the pantry-office and the central hall. The location of the original staircase was deduced from the patch in the floor where the newel post had been removed, the large patch in the upstairs hall where the stairwell had been floored over, and the exact fit of calculations for the stairs proposed for the restoration. The room at the top of the stairs has always had board walls; there is no evidence of former plaster. It may well have been intended, when the house was built, as literally a bath room, for which use wooden walls would be less damaged by moisture than plaster.

Much of the original material had disappeared over the years or was too rotten to use. Outside, nearly all the soffit molding is original. The weatherboarding is both old and new. Chimney bricks are from early chimneys of the house or from other old structures; foundation bricks are new. The

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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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7. Description - page 3

blinds at the windows are duplicates of the original. Inside, floors, some of the wainscoting, and mantels are original; the pantry-office mantel is from the earliest addition to the house. One original door had survived (to the bedroom); it furnished the prototype for the others. All are six-paneled. Hardware and light fixtures are new. The original colors were used in the dining room and in the living room woodwork; elsewhere, paints from the Williamsburg group of colors.

The width of the reconstructed front porch was determined by holes found in the siding where early railings had been butted in. The design of the porch and pillars is based on extant early models, particularly in New England where the carpenter-contractor may have come from.

The doorway presents puzzles which long antedate the restoration. One strange feature is that the flush or shiplapped siding which surrounds the doorway, and which is itself framed by a vertical strip of molding, does not extend to the edge of the (original) porch in the universal fashion of shiplapped siding. Another is the four small rectangular holes, long since filled by blocks of wood, which occur just within the shiplapped area, two high and two at porch-floor level. One theory is that the doorway is not the first used in the house, but that the first doorway and surrounding area were removed at some time and the present doorway installed. If so, the substitution must have occurred very early, since after the mid-1830's, when the first Greek Revival houses and campus buildings were erected in Athens, fanlights were displaced in favor of the trabeated Greek mode. Another theory is that the unusual arched sidelights were put in c.1860, when round-arched fireplaces and door-panels were in voque; this is, that the former square sidelight tops were replaced then with arches. Still another theory holds that the doorway is original, but that the first front porch was narrower than the one for which the railings were found, extending only to the edge of the shiplapped area. This porch had pilasters at the edge of the shiplapped area; the square holes referred to above are where these were attached; it had no railing.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (July 1989) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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/ significance - page 2

Arrived in Athens in May, 1819, Dr. Waddel at once set about raising funds, recruiting faculty and students, and having repaired the deteriorating buildings. He was literally the savior of the College (and consequently, of Athens.) A. B. Longstreet said of him: "The effect of his coming to this Institution was magical. It rose instantly to a rank it had never held before, and which I am happy to add it has maintained since. . ."

Dr. Waddel (he spelled his name thus, but later generations have spelled it Waddell) and his family moved into the frame house on campus provided for the president, after repairs had been made, as John Waddel tells us in his Memorials of Academic Life. John was the youngest child of Moses Waddel.

In November, 1819, Alonzo Church was elected professor of mathematics. His duties and salary were to commence the first Monday in January (1820). (Trustees' Minutes, 9 November 1819). Dr. Church, a native of Vermont, and also a Presbyterian minister, was then teaching at an academy at Eatonton, Georgia.

The question of whether Church did build the house called the Church-Waddel-Brumby house, as A. L. Hull's <u>Annals of Athens, Georgia</u> allege, has been a puzzle for anyone attempting research on the house. While Hull seems ignorant of any Waddel ownership, M. F. Perkerson's <u>White Columns in Georgia</u> lists both Waddel and Harris as owners. This book was published in 1952 and Mrs. Perkerson surely interviewed the Misses Brumby. There is no deed showing Church either buying or selling the house, nor do the Trustees' Minutes provide an answer. Tradition dated the house from 1818.

Research for this nomination found that John Waddel's Memorials solves the mystery. The following is from page 75:

". . . it is proper to state that in 1819, except the house of the President, the Board had provided no residences for the other members of the Faculty. When Dr. Church was elected he at once proceeded to build a very excellent two-story framed dwelling on a beautiful and large lot in the northern part of the town. Before, however, it was completed he accepted a proposition from Dr. Waddel to exchange places with him; that is, that Dr. Church should sell his house and lot to Dr. Waddel and occupy the President's house as his residence. Not long after this the house into which Dr. Church removed was greatly improved, a second story being added . . . Dr. Waddel continued to reside in the house bought of Dr. Church until he resigned and left the town of Athens."

Since Church was elected in late 1819, his duties and salary commencing in early January, 1820, the house was therefore built mostly or altogether in 1820.

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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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8. Significance - page 3

It may be remembered that Dr. Waddel was at this time a man of fifty, for whom the hullaballo of close proximity day and night to the students and to the college bell, hung in front of the President's house, doubtless offered little attraction. For the younger Dr. Church the advantages of the exchange would have been financial; for one thing, he lived thenceforth in a tax-free house.

Clarke County tax records support John Waddel's statement. Alonzo Church is shown in 1820 paying taxes only on two slaves. He pays taxes on a town lot valued at \$2,000 only in the year 1821 (presumably title had not yet been transferred.) Thereafter he pays no town lot taxes from 1823 onward on property valued at \$3,000 or more. Incidentally, it appears that then as now, taxes were paid on what was owned as of January 1.

This researcher believes that Moses Waddel built the earliest addition, the room attached to the dining room. He would also have built the dependencies.

Meanwhile, Dr. Waddel, a man of property when he came to Georgia, had bought, in October, 1819, a tract of 470 acres on the Middle Oconee and Dougherty Creek. This tract lay three miles west of the then town of Athens. He bought it from John Golding; Golding had bought it from Jesse Pye and the latter from John Pope. (Deed Books N, p.122; A, p. 319; L, p.37) Dougherty Creek was the present Brooklyn or Bobbin Mill Creek (cf. Deed Book W, pp. 446 and 475.) Alonzo Church bought a farm on Trail Creek c.1823; no title is recorded but ownership shows up on the tax record. He also, in 1830 and 1835, bought small adjoining tracts of what is now South Milledge Avenue, in order, it is said, to build a peaceful weekend retreat (Deed Book, P, pp. 82, 372).

In addition to his teaching and administrative work, Dr. Waddel organized the Presbyterian Church in Athens, in December 1820, serving as its minister.

A son of Dr. Waddel's, James P. Waddel was first a tutor at the College and then a professor of ancient languages for many years.

In 1829, Dr. Waddel resigned the presidency and in February, 1830 returned to South Carolina. (Waddel's <u>Memorials</u>, p.185 ff.) Dr. Church became president of the College, serving until 1859. The Rev. Nathan Hoyt was elected minister of the Presbyterian Church (March, 1830; installed in May.)

At this point we may consider a legend perpetuated by Hull's Annals, that a clan of industrious carpenters named Peck, from Vermont, built a half dozen houses in Athens, among them Dr. Church's. There are no Pecks in the 1820 Clarke County census. However, a Peck turns up in Hancock County (Sparta) and a John Peck and William Peck in Putnam county (Eatonton). In the Athens tax records, Mitchel Peck appears in 1820, Jonathan M. Peck in 1821, John M. and Benjamen B. in 1822, Benjamen in 1823 and Jonathan M. in 1824. It was earlier noted that the same soffit molding as on the Church-Waddel-Brumby house appears (continued)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES 174 INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. Significance - page 4

on a house in Sparta, and we know that Church earlier lived in Eatonton. So possibly these Pecks are carpenters moving about Georgia and building. All are gone from the Athens tax rolls after 1824, nor do any appear in the 1830 census of Clarke, Hancock or Putnam Counties.

In April, 1834, Moses Waddel, through his attorney in fact, sold the house to Mrs. Sarah H. Harris for \$2500. The parcel comprised lot 33 and the adjoining half of lot 34, one and a half acres all told. (Deed Book P, pp. 203, 204 and 260.) Lots 33 and 34 made up the block bounded by Jackson, Hancock, Thomas and Dougherty, as shown by the William L. Mitchell survey map of 1852.

Mrs. Harris, born Sarah Herndon Watkins, was the widow of Judge Stephen Willis Harris, son of Sampson and Susannah (Willis) Harris. Stephen W. Harris was a graduate of the University in its first graduating class (1805), a trustee of the University, planter and judge. The family was living in Eatonton when he died in 1822 (will probate 11 Nov. 1822), leaving a wife and ten children. Following the pattern of many planter families, Mrs. Harris moved to Athens where the boys could attend the University (Franklin College.) Hull's Annals, p.453, are in error on the year of her coming to Athens.) Almost certainly, Mrs. Harris made the second, two-story addition to the house. (On the Harris family see Early Settlers of Alabama by James E. Saunders, New Orleans, 1899.)

Mrs. Harris's daughter, Arabella, married the attorney Benjamin F. Hardeman of Oglethorpe County; she died young, leaving two small children. Col. Hardeman and the children then lived with his mother-in-law (see the Clarke County 1850 census) and in 1860 he bought the house for her. (Deed Book W, p.217.) Col. Hardeman's daughter, also Arabella, married John W. Brumby. In 1871 her father deeded her the house (Deed Book AA, p.477.) The daughters of this marriage, Miss Mary Harris Brumby and Miss Anne Wallis Brumby, were the last private owners of the house.

By mid-20th century the house had become one of the oldest remaining in Athens. Its only contemporaries are the Hoyt House (built between 1826 and 1829) and the Rucker-Teague house, date unknown but probably built <u>ca</u>. 1820 and in Clarke County.

When the two ladies died, in the mid-1960's, the section of town in which the house stood had been designated an Urban Renewal area, and the federal government bought the whole block where the house was, and the street behind it, for a new federal building. Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, Inc. was founded by concerned citizens in 1967, to save the house from demolition. The house was moved in October, 1967 to another Urban Renewal lot nearby, described earlier, which the City of Athens made available for the house.

The Church-Waddel-Brumby house is owned by the City of Athens and leased to Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, Inc. Funds for the restoration came from

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. Significance - page 5

local sources, in the form of public donations and help from the City, and from matching funds from the Urban Renewal Administration of HUD, the first Urban Renewal funds used for historic preservation in the Southeast. Restored in 1971-72 under the direction of C. Wilmer Heery, A.I.A., and opened to the public in April, 1972, the house became a Welcome Center for the Georgia Department of Community Development in January, 1973. A gift from Heery and Heery, Architects, in 1973, provided for landscaping.

At present Heery & Heery is developing Athens History Village, Inc., a motel-restaurant-office complex, across Dougherty Street from the house. The complex includes the restoration of two old houses and a model of Athens in 1820. This project and the Church-Waddel-Brumby house complement each other perfectly.

The house offers visitors the experience of a dwelling of dignified simplicity; of modest size, fine proportions and careful workmanship. In addition to these considerations, the house is a notable survivor and symbol of the early decades of Athens and the University of Georgia.

9. Bibliographical References (continued)

Minutes of the Trustees of the University of Georgia Waddel, John N., Memorials of Academic Life, Richmond, Va., 1981.

