

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 21 1976

DATE ENTERED

MAY 22 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Ralph Banks Place

AND/OR COMMON

Coldwater Plantation

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 2 miles east of Georgia Highway 77 and
2 1/4 miles south of Elbert-Hart County line

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ruckersville/Elberton

 VICINITY OF

10th - Robert G. Stephens, Jr.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

COUNTY

Elbert

CODE

105

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. James Oliver Banks (See continuation sheet for additional owners)

STREET & NUMBER

Route 3, Box 272

CITY, TOWN

Elberton

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

30635

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Elbert County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Elberton

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Elbert County Architectural Survey

DATE

November, 1975

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS DNR/ Historic Preservation Section

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ralph Banks House, known as the Coldwater Plantation was built by Ralph Banks who in 1785 settled in the fertile region between the Savannah and Broad Rivers in what is now Elbert County. Exactly when the frame, two story house with front and rear shed porches, jerkin head roof, diaper pattern chimneys and a four room central hall plan was built is not known, but speculations range from 1788 to 1800.

An avenue of elms leads to the front facade of the house which has a one-story full width porch supported by square wood pillars, and a central gable. Underneath the porch are flush siding, a central door with a transom light and four large nine-over-nine windows with shutters. Above the porch are five corresponding smaller six-over-six windows. The rear facade is similar to the front, having corresponding windows and a shed porch which is supported by turned posts. A one room late 19th century frame kitchen appendage now stands perpendicular to the northern half of the rear facade.

The Banks House with its jerkin head gable roof, originally had a pair of chimneys at each end; one on the northern end has fallen, but the southern chimneys standing today displaying their diaper pattern of glazed headers. The chimneys have been repointed, making their design of three concentric diamonds difficult to perceive. On each chimney, six concentric diamonds are stacked one on top of the other reaching up to the shoulder whose slope is emphasized with tumbling brickwork. The stacks are decorated with a stringcourse at the cap and the bases are stepped. One chimney has a plaster inset where apparently a name or date was inscribed.

This large house has two stories, plus cellar and attic. Originally an enclosed staircase starting from the rear of the central hall provided access to both floors and the attic space. Now a single flight of open stairs starts from the front of the central hall, leading only to the second floor. On the first floor, the central hall walls are made of thick horizontal pine sheathing, while on the second floor the hall has vertical paneling. The direction of the sheathing in the siderooms on the two floors is similarly incongruent; the rooms on the second floor are made of vertical paneling while rooms below have horizontal paneling. The first story rooms have approximately ten foot ceilings while the upper story ceilings are somewhat lower. The siderooms have cross and bible doors and 32 inch chair rails. Mantelpieces in the side rooms of the main floor and on the front two of the second floor rooms, each have mantelpieces that vary slightly but can generally be described as being approximately four and a half feet high and five feet wide with side pilasters rising to an unadorned frieze then up to a mantel shelf which extends vertically about six inches beyond the pilasters making the total width of the mantels span at least six feet. In the corner of one room on the first floor is a high and narrow cupboard with a tall splayed entablature beneath which is a glazed section of shelves, and a paneled cabinet below that. Recently, modern bathroom facilities have been carved out of the southeast room on the second floor and in the added appendage along the north end of the bottom floor.

Behind the Bank's House are various fruit trees and two 19th century outbuildings. Both outbuildings are frame constructed and weatherboard siding; one is square with a conical roof and the other is one room structure with a low shed porch. Further away from the house stands a group of barns and sheds. Beyond the outbuildings the sloping pasture land is intersected by Coldwater Creek. Today the house is located about two miles east of Georgia Highway 77 and about 2.3 miles south of the Elbert-Hart County line in Elbert County.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ralph Banks House of Elbert County, Georgia, is of statewide significance both architecturally and historically. Historically the house is known as the birthplace of Dr. Richard Banks for whom Banks County Georgia was named and was the supposed site of the first Methodist Conference held by Bishop Asbury in 1788. Probably built during the time period from 1788 to 1800, the Banks House is one of the oldest and most unusual houses in Georgia. Characteristics in the Banks House that are unusual in Georgia for this early date include the jerkin head roof and the large four-over-four room plan. Another salient feature of this house is the diapered pattern brickwork in the chimneys.

Ralph Banks was a prominent member of the Coldwater Community which consisted of a "fine class from Virginia and North Carolina, being of wealth and culture." Banks himself an educated man, saw to it that all fourteen of his children were educated. One son, Richard, took his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania; his skill as a surgeon was known throughout Georgia and South Carolina. The federal government employed Dr. Banks to visit the Cherokee Indians, and he earned the gratitude of these native Americans by some very marvelous cures. Due to his universal esteem, in 1858 when the Cherokee territory was obtained, it was called Banks County in his honor.

At the time of Ralph Banks' death in 1824, Coldwater Plantation had served as the home of the Middle Georgia's wealthiest cotton and tobacco planters, his wife and their fourteen children. Coming to Georgia in 1785 from Granville County North Carolina, Banks was granted a parcel of land on Coldwater Creek in Wilkes County which changed to Elbert County in 1790. According to local tradition, Banks had finished his large house before 1788 when he married his childhood sweetheart from North Carolina and brought her to Georgia. This claim is dubiously based on another claim that the First Methodist Conference in Georgia, lead by Bishop Asbury, was held at the Banks House in 1788. According to Asburys Journal "our conference began at the Forks of Broad River where six members and four probationers attended". There are no grounds to suppose the conference was held at the Ralph Banks House since the forks of Broad River consisted of an area called Petersburg, 20 miles away. In 1799 Asbury's Journals do give us reason to believe that the house was constructed; he writes in November; "Rode twenty miles to Coldwater; in a cold day, and held meeting in a cold house, but we had a warm hearted people, and were comfortably entertained by Ralph Banks". So in 1799 we know Ralph Banks had a comfortable dwelling, of some description. No other documentation exists or hints as to when the house was built, but by 1800 the Banks family had expanded to eleven members and the large amount of living space needed suggests the house was already built and accommodating the growing family.

A four-over-four room with central hall plan is unusually large for 1788 in Georgia where the typical plan for such a date would have been two-over-two without central hall. If the house was indeed built by 1788 it is the oldest existing house in Elbert County and one of the oldest extant buildings in the state of Georgia. The Banks House has some very

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Banks, Elbert A., Banks of Elbert, Heritage Papers, 1972.
 Cooper, Patricia I., Interviewed, June 1976.
 Elbert County Courthouse: Will Book "M" 1822-29, Tax Returns for 1814, Tax Records 1787.
 Macgregor, Elizabeth Z., Maurie G. Golsen, inspected site, June, 1976.
 McIntosh, John H. The Official History of Elbert County, 1790-1935, Cherokee Pub. Company, Atlanta, Georgia 1968.
 Stowers, Mr. & Mrs. J.A., interviewed June 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 46 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

See certification sheet

E. 1 7 3 2 8 3 8 0 3 7 8 9 0 0 0

A | 1,7 | 3|2,8|8,8,0 | 3,7|8,9|0,0,0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C | 1,7 | 3|2,8|7,4,0 | 3,7|8,8|3,6,0 |

B | 1,7 | 3|2,9|1,1,0 | 3,7|8,8|7,2,0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D | 1,7 | 3|2,8|3,4,0 | 3,7|8,8|3,6,0 |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning point is 2 miles on a dirt road east of Highway 77 at intersection of S986, from here continue in a northerly direction for 550' then due east for 1700' to Coldwater Creek. Follow Coldwater Creek southeast to its intersection with Gum Log Branch; then follow Gum Log Branch in a southwest direction for 1800'; continue due west for 1500' to S986, then follow S986 for 1800' to beginning point.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Maurie Gail Golsen, Intern (Elizabeth Macgregor, Architectural Historian, Consultant)

ORGANIZATION

Dept. of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section

DATE

August 11, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

270 Washington Street, S.W., Room 703-C-10

TELEPHONE

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

David M. Sherman

DAVID M. SHERMAN

12-14-76

TITLE

Chief, Historic Preservation Section

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Walter Cole*

DATE *5-22-78*

DATE *5-12-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET Owners ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 2

Captain William R. Banks
1104 Croton Drive
Alexandria, Va. 22308

Mr. Thomas G. Banks, Jr.
Route 2, Box 307 P
Ardmore, Oklahoma 73401

Ms. Sarah May Banks Leslie
1901 N.W. 59th Street
Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118

Ms. Lucy Mildred Banks Van de Pas
2607 Olive Street
Texarkana, Texas 75501

Mr. James Robert Banks
504 N.W. 42nd Street
Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

interesting and unusual architectural characteristics for Georgia. Its jerkin head gable roof is uncommon in Georgia during this early period, but is found often in more northern ly states. Another characteristic rarely seen in Georgia is the diaper pattern chimney. Diapering is a rarity in Georgia but there are two other nearby examples in Elbert County one is the Rucker House (c.1815) and the Ralph Gaines House (1820). The great similarity between these chimneys and the rarity of diapering hints at the possibility that the same craftsman constructed all these chimneys.

Ralph Banks House, over 170 years old, stands today in excellent condition as a remnant of a large and self sustaining plantation of a wealthy tobacco and cotton planter According to his Estate Inventory in 1824, at the time of his death, Banks had 63 slaves, a large amount of livestock including horses, cows, fattened pigs, geese and sheep. His crops included potatoes, wheat, peas, oats, corn plus 3594 pounds of "ginded" cotton and 215 gallons of brandy, nineteen of wine. The Bank's Coldwater Plantation consisted of a tannery, sawmill and blacksmith shop. Folklore tells us that Ralph Banks "always had grain to sell and money to lend. Banks wealth is reflected in his list of household furniture, which included "1 clock and looking glass . . . lot of books . . . 6 Windsor chairs . . . a corner cupboard . . . 3 candlesticks . . . 2 carpets . . . silver spoons . . . pewter and tin . . . plus a sideboard, tables, bedroom furniture, chests, etc. . . ". One documented account of Banks dealings with a master craftsman does exist in his Estate Accounts: in 1804, 4 dollars was paid to John Cooper who was a well known chairmaker.

Presently the house has been purchased by Banks descendants and is used by them on weekends and for family reunions. One hundred and fifty acres of land associated with Coldwater Plantation are now used as pasture.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Geographical Data ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE

AMENDMENT
RALPH BANKS PLACE, ELBERT COUNTY, GEORGIA

Acreage of Nominated Property: approximately 15

Quadrangle Name: Rock Branch

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24000

UTM References: A 17/3788690/328300
B 17/3788680/328830
C 17/3789130/328380

Verbal Boundary Description: Beginning at a point on the highway to the south of the main house, where the 600 foot Contour Interval crosses the highway, the boundary follows the Contour Interval on the east side of the highway until it again meets the highway north of the main house, then follows south along the highway until the point of origin, excepting the highway right-of-way.

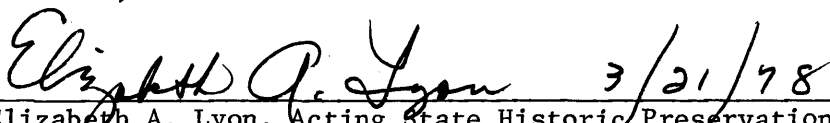
The acreage nominated includes the essential part of the plantation: the main house and outbuildings within a natural feature (the 600 foot Contour Interval). The outbuildings are marked on the U.S.G.S. map attached.

On December 2, 1976, the Georgia Review Board recommended that the Ralph Banks Place be listed on the National Register due to the eligibility of the structure and not the acreage. The Board does not require consultation upon reduction of acreage.

Prepared By:

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.
Historic Preservation Section
Department of Natural Resources
270 Washington Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-2840

March 16, 1978


Elizabeth A. Lyon, Acting State Historic Preservation Officer