

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 678171

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 14 1979

DATE ENTERED MAY 8 1979

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

*Cobb-Treanor House* Name OK  
*Ms. Smith*  
*3-15-79 CE*

The Treanor House

AND/OR COMMON

The Treanor House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1234 South Lumpkin Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Athens

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tenth - Rep. D. Barnard

STATE

Georgia

VICINITY OF

CODE  
13

COUNTY  
Clarke

CODE  
059

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Ms. Helen Treanor and Ms. Sapelo Treanor

STREET & NUMBER

1234 South Lumpkin Street

CITY, TOWN

Athens

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Superior Court

STREET & NUMBER

Clarke County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Athens

STATE

Georgia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic Structures Field Survey: Clarke County, Georgia

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Treanor House is essentially a Greek Revival plantation house with a Gothic Revival portico. The house itself is simple and straightforward. On the outside it is two stories high, with an attic under a low hip roof. Contained inside is a four-over-four arrangement of rooms with a central stair hall. The front facade is three bays wide and is symmetrically arranged around a centered front doorway on the ground-floor level and a centered balcony and doorway on the second-floor level. The front facade is prefaced by a full-width, two-story-high portico. To the rear of the house are attached gabled ells and additions. The sides of the house are four bays deep (two bays to each of the end rooms). Two exterior brick chimneys are symmetrically placed at each end of the house. Construction of the house is frame throughout, upon a foundation of brick piers. The exterior is covered on three sides by plain clapboards; the front facade is sheathed with smooth flush siding. The interior is finished with painted plaster on lathe highlighted by painted wood trim. The roof is surfaced with seamed sheet metal painted red.

The detailing and ornamentation of the main body of the Treanor House are Greek Revival in style. The front doorway is a typical, trabeated Greek Revival composition: the front door is flanked on either side by architrave moldings and sidelights and is framed above by a full-width, lighted transom. The balcony doorway duplicates this front doorway at a slightly reduced scale. The front windows on the first floor are framed in architrave molding identical to that used around the front door; second-floor windows are trimmed with simpler architrave molding. All front windows have six-over-six sash and are flanked by wooden blinds painted green. The front wall is finished in flush, tongue-and-groove weatherboarding. Side walls and the rear wall are covered with plain clapboards meeting at slender corner boards. Side windows have nine-over-nine sash and are framed by simple architrave molding. The four brick end chimneys are stuccoed.

The interior arrangement and finish of the Treanor House are also Greek Revival in style. Rooms are arranged four-over-four with a central stair hall. The rooms to the left of the central stair hall (to the left of the front door) are similarly sized and detailed, and are connected by double sliding doors. Rooms to the right of the stair hall are similarly detailed but differently sized; the front room is larger, and the rear room correspondingly smaller. Windows and doorways throughout are framed with shouldered architrave molding. Fireplaces have simple architrave mantels supported by plain wooden pilasters. Doors have four panels arranged two-over-two. Baseboards are beaded, and there are no continuous cornice moldings or chair rails. The stairway has an octagonally-shaped newel post with a turned cap. Walls and ceilings are painted plaster over lathe. The floors are planked.

[continued]

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The front portico of the Treanor House is Gothic Revival in style. The portico consists of eight wood columns rising from brick foundations below to shallow, elliptical arches above. The columns are exceedingly slender in proportion and quatrefoil in section. The spandrels of the arches are punctured by "carpenter" jigsaw cut-outs. The cornice features a row of delicate dentils between the architrave and the frieze. The eight columns form seven bays, with three equally-sized bays on either side of a wider (about twice as wide) central bay.

The grounds around the Treanor House have maintained much of the character of nineteenth-century landscaping. Trees -- primarily oaks, evergreens, hollies and magnolias -- and lawn surround the house. To the front is an unpaved but curbed semi-circular driveway and a long, straight, concrete walk aimed directly at the front door. To the rear, traces of the original formal gardens are still evident.

The house as it stands today is largely intact, with only minor additions and changes in details. Additions to the rear of the house, made in the second half of the nineteenth century, include a kitchen, a long porch, storage rooms, a stairway, and servants' quarters. On the front of the house, the balcony railing and balustrade are possibly replacements for the originals; they are identical to the railing and balustrade of the porch added to the rear of the house in the late-nineteenth century. Inside the house, the fireplaces have been blocked off and space heaters installed.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" 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 ca. 1840

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Treanor House is significant historically, architecturally, and due to its landscape, as an example of an antebellum home in the midst of the academic community of Athens, Georgia. Historically, it was the home of a number of Athens' most illustrious citizens, most notably the Cobbs and the Rutherfords; and architecturally, it is a fine example of the eclectic revivalistic movement of the mid-nineteenth-century architecture in a city where many contemporaries were building Greek Revival "temples." Similar examples of houses of this adaptation can be found scattered in the hinterlands of Georgia, but this remains the only one of this style in Athens. The historic landscape has been preserved as best as possible in the midst of twentieth-century encroachments.

The building date of the Treanor House is shrouded in mystery, as the original owner, Colonel John Addison Cobb (1783-1855), a wealthy planter and former legislator, did not record his deeds. Traditionally, the house is said to have been a wedding gift from Cobb and his wife (Sarah Rootes, 1792-1865) to their daughter Laura (1818-1888) at her marriage March 23, 1841, to Williams Rutherford, Jr. (1818-1896). The Cobbs and the Rutherfords were living at the same household in the 1850 Census with Rutherford's real-estate holdings valued at \$5,000, a fair value for a house of this size in those days, as judged by tax digests of town property.

The Cobb family was described by the late Dr. Robert Preston Brooks in 1930 in the Dictionary of American Biography as one "which by reason of its wealth, social prestige and the ability of its members, occupied a secure position in the small group of planters who dominated the political life of the South throughout the antebellum period."

John A. and Sarah Cobb's most famous children were Howell Cobb (1815-1868), who was Speaker of the United States House of Representatives from 1849-1851, governor of Georgia from 1851 to 1853, and secretary of the treasury under President Buchanan; and Thomas R.R. Cobb (1823-1862), who was a well-known lawyer, author of the Digest of the Statute Laws of the State of Georgia (1851) and The Code of the State of Georgia (1863), major achievements in law prior to his death on the battlefield at Fredericksburg.

[continued

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Clarke County, Georgia, Tax and Deed Records.

Davis, William C. The Columns of Athens (Atlanta, 1951).

Marsh, K.F. Athens: Georgia's Columned City (Athens, 1964).

[continued]

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.58

QUADRANGLE NAME Athens West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 280090 3758420

B               

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that land as shown on Clarke County, Ga., Tax Map 17-3-A-Z, Block A, Parcel 14, fronting 140' on Lumpkin Street.

## 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 Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian  
Richard Cloues, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation Sec., Dept. of Natural Resources

DATE November, 1978

STREET & NUMBER 270 Washington St., S.W.

TELEPHONE (404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN Atlanta

STATE Georgia 30334

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE      LOCAL X

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

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

TITLE Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 5/8/79

## FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
ATTEST: *William Tolovich*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 5-8-79

DATE May 2, 1979

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After the death of John A. Cobb in 1855, the Rutherfords came into full possession of the house and sold it on July 1, 1857, to Henry L. Brittain for \$2,000. The site then included 25 acres. The deed references a survey of the area done in 1836 which indicates a possible settlement date for this area of the county.

Rutherford was a graduate of the University of Georgia and taught mathematics there. It is said that he sold the house in order to move on campus, perhaps due to a regulation requiring professors to live on campus, as he became a professor there in 1856, the year before he sold the house.

During the almost 20 years the Rutherfords occupied the house, the most noted event was the birth of their daughter Mildred Lewis in 1851. "Miss Millie," as she was known, became one of Athens' most noted women. She organized the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy following Reconstruction and later traveled the country in defense of the "Old South" in opposition to the "New South," as viewed by prophets such as Henry W. Grady and Clark Howell. She had a great deal to do with popularizing the romanticized image of life in the South later depicted in Gone with the Wind, and gave her speeches while often dressed in a hoop skirt. She was also director of the local girls' school, the Lucy Cobb Institute. After her death in 1928 the United Daughters of the Confederacy placed a marker in her memory in front of the house, which they called "Rutherford Hall."

Henry L. Brittain (1798-1890) was 59 years old when he purchased the site and he lived until age 92, presumably dying in this house. His daughter, Sue Brittain Martin (1844-1939) inherited the house, known to many still living as "The Brittain Place." Mrs. Martin sold it, including 25 acres, in 1905 to E.G. Whitehead of Athens, who lived there briefly. He transferred it in 1911 to Mrs. Susie M. Whitehead and she, in 1912, transferred it to A.W. Ashford of Watkinsville.

Mr. Alexander Woodson Ashford (1852-1930), a wealthy merchant of Watkinsville, Georgia, obtained use of the home for his four sons while they attended the University of Georgia. The house became a private family dormitory where the boys would spend the week, with the aid of servants, and then return home to Watkinsville for the weekend lest they party too much in Athens. Long after all the sons left school, Ashford sold the house in 1929 to James C. Maxey of Watkinsville, who in turn sold it in 1935 to Mrs. Kate McKinley Treanor, widow

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of Edward D. Treanor. After her death in 1946, her daughters, the Misses Helen and Sapelo Treanor, have lived in the house, especially more so recently, since both have retired. Miss Sapelo Treanor taught foreign languages at both Valdosta State College (then Georgia State Woman's College) and LaGrange College before her retirement to Athens. Miss Helen Treanor, who lived in the house with her mother, taught in the public schools of Athens and was principal of Alps Road Elementary before her retirement. Their brother Edward, after he retired, also lived at the house. Katherine Treanor Cobb and her husband, Judge Carlisle Cobb (descendant of Colonel John A. Cobb) lived in the cottage in the side yard that was created by merging the old kitchen and office.

The Treanor family has maintained the house in much the same style as their predecessors, keeping it as a visible link to the grandeur of the antebellum South.

From a purely architectural point of view, the Treanor House is significant because it represents popular eclectic and revivalistic movements of mid-nineteenth-century American architectural history. Moreover, it combines two of these movements -- the Greek Revival and the Gothic Revival -- which were generally considered to be stylistically and thematically antagonistic. The Treanor House combines in a single design (there is no reason to believe that it was anything other than a single, integral design) the popular Southern Plantation-style Greek Revival and the vernacular or carpenter Gothic Revival. In doing so, it brings together the two major revivalistic styles of the early-nineteenth century in a manner that anticipated the eclecticism of the later-nineteenth century. The Treanor House is, thus, an interesting and relatively rare amalgam of mid-nineteenth-century architectural styles and movements. And yet, although there are few others like it in the state, in nearby Oglethorpe County there is a nearly identical house (the Edwards-Byrd-Haston House), and in William Columbus Davis' The Columns of Athens (1951) there are several documented instances of a similar eclectic melding of seemingly disparate styles of mid-century, all of which suggests that the Treanor House was part of a larger movement rather than an idiosyncrasy. Indeed, one might say that the attenuated columns of the front portico of the Treanor House represent an important vernacular expression of the mid-nineteenth-century Gothic style developing in Georgia against the earlier and more pervasive Greek Revival background.

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Marshall, Mrs. George T. Oconee Hill Cemetery (Athens, 1971).

Preston, Howard L. The History Group, draft of National Register nomination, 1976.

Rowe, H.J. History of Athens and Clarke County (Athens, 1923) (including sketch of Miss Millie Rutherford).

Telephone interviews by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., with Miss Sapelo Treanor, Mrs. Kenneth Morris, both of Athens; Miss Mildred Mell of Decatur, Georgia; and Mrs. Daisy Billups Harrell of Watkinsville, Georgia; spring, 1978.