

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **OCT 6 1980**
date entered **DEC 3 1980**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Williams, Col. John, House

and/or common Sertoma Learning Center

2. Location

street & number 2325 Dandridge Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Knoxville ___ vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status See Cont'd	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied sheet	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name State of Tennessee - Commissioner of Finance and Administration

street & number State Capitol Building

city, town Nashville ___ vicinity of state Tennessee 37219

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse - City and County Building

street & number Main Avenue

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee 37901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Williams House sits facing southwest approximately 225' from Dandridge Avenue atop a grassy knoll dotted with boxwoods, maple and hickory trees. Located in East Knoxville only 2 1/2 miles from the heart of the city, the house can be approached either through the decorative wrought iron gate up the boxwood-lined walk, or by car on the driveway that encircles the school and grounds.

Approximately 75 feet to the southeast of the Williams House, a contemporary, 1-story brown brick structure which houses the recreation center for the school was completed in 1976. Approximately 100' behind the main house and down a slight hill sits a greenhouse; approximately 125' to the northwest of the main house, a 2-story red brick dormitory was built in 1955. All these structures are at such a distance that they do not distract from the Williams house.

The decorative iron gate, which fronts the property on Dandridge Avenue, was moved in 1885 to its present site when the Negro division of the Tennessee School for the Deaf moved to the Williams house from its former home at what is now City Hall. The school's name can still be seen on the side of the iron fence flanking the arched entry to the property.

The Williams house was built around 1826. According to the Williams family, Mrs. Williams built the house as a surprise for her husband on his return from Guatemala, where he served as ambassador. Built under the supervision of Mrs. Williams, the bricks were made on site by slaves. Bricks laid in the common bond form 18" thick walls.

Designed in the Federal style, the 2-story house was built on the central hall plan and is two rooms deep with a one story kitchen-dining ell flanked on both sides by long porches. The front or southern facade has 5 bays each containing 12/12 light sash windows with stone lintels. The central entrance door is framed by sidelights and fanlight under a later single bay porch supported by wood posts. The east and west facades have external gable end chimneys. Each chimney is flanked by twelve over twelve light sash windows in the first and second stories and by a pair of small square windows in the attic story. The steep gable roof is sheathed in seamed metal. A small pediment with fanlight is centered on the roofline of the front facade.

The Williams house has an L-shaped addition on the rear or northern facade built in two phases. The first section of the ell was added ca. 1926 to provide dorm and classroom space. It replaced the former kitchen ell and removed an interior staircase. The second section of the ell was added in 1940 to provide more classroom space and auditorium. Both additions were designed by Barber and McMurray of Knoxville. Using the same brick construction, the additions are 2-stories in height, with 8/8 and 12/12 light sash windows with the same stone lintel and cornice design. The gable end roof is of lower pitch, and some of the windows have been replaced with single light sashes however, the additions blend very well with the original building. In 1954 the entire structure was painted a soft pinkish-white, then later repainted white.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black history
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1826 **Builder/Architect** Melinda White Williams

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Colonel John Williams House, built in 1826, is significant because of its architectural merits, its association as the home of a prominent Knoxville politician and its later use as the Negro Division of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb. In recent years the house and grounds have been utilized as the Sertoma Learning Center for the mentally retarded.

The Williams House is typical of Federal style houses in the East Tennessee area although it does have an unusual pediment with fanlight at its roofline. It is unique because of its setting which has been retained for the past 150 years and its geographical location in the city. There are no other houses of this style and setting located in east Knoxville.

John Williams was born in Surry County, North Carolina on January 29, 1778. He attended school in North Carolina and studied law, but never practiced there. In 1803, he was admitted to the bar and set up practice in Knoxville. In 1805, he married Melinda White, daughter of James White, founder of Knoxville, and Mary Lawson White. He served as Attorney General from 1807-08 and in 1813 was commissioned to recruit the 39th regiment of the East Tennessee Mounted Volunteers. In 1814 he served under General Andrew Jackson in the campaign against the Creek Indians at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. During this time, a bitter quarrel erupted between the two men, which affected Col. Williams' political career the rest of his life. In 1815 Col. Williams was elected to the U.S. Senate and served for 7 years. In 1823, Gen. Jackson (supported by Judge John Overton, Nashville, husband of Col. Williams' sister-in-law, Mary White Overton) opposed Williams for the Senate seat and won. John Quincy Adams appointed Col. Williams Charge'd Affaires to the Federation of Central America, where he served from December 1825-26. Upon returning to Knoxville, he ran for Tennessee State Senator from Knox and Anderson counties. The Jacksonians, including his brother-in-law, U.S. Senator Hugh Lawson White, exerted all their influence to defeat Williams; but he won and became a leading spokesman of the anti-Jackson faction. During this same time, he was a charter trustee of the East Tennessee College and chairman of the first Board of Directors of the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad. On August 10, 1837, John Williams died at home. Mrs. Williams died the following year. Both are buried in the churchyard of the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Knoxville.

Not until 1855 was the estate sold. Mr. Abner G. Jackson, co-owner of the A. G. Jackson and Co., a staple and fancy dry goods store, bought the house and 158 acres for \$6,000. In 1869 Mr. Jackson died, and the estate was sold to a medical society. They bought the property with the intent of using it as a hospital. The plan failed, however, Dr. and Mrs. Boyd (a member of the medical society) acquired the property. From 1883-85 the State leased the property for \$300 a year for the Negro Division of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb.¹ At that time there were approximately 25 students who lived at

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deaderick, Lucille, ed. Heart of the Valley, A History of Knoxville, Tennessee, Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976.
 Goodspeed's History of Hamilton, Knox and Shelby Counties of Tennessee. Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing, 1887-reprinted 1974.

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 5.2

Quadrangle name Knoxville, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	2	3	9	7	9	0	3	9	8	4	4	2	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing					

C

Zone		Easting						Northing					

D

Zone		Easting						Northing					

E

Zone		Easting						Northing					

F

Zone		Easting						Northing					

G

Zone		Easting						Northing					

H

Zone		Easting						Northing					

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is approximately 200'x375'. Bounded on the north by the parking lot, on the west by the dormitory building, on the south by Dandridge Avenue, on the east by the Recreation Center. See attached map.

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 Nissa Dahlin Brown, Historic Preservationist

organization East Tennessee Development District date July 10, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 19806 telephone (615) 584-8553

city or town Knoxville state Tennessee 37919

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Norbert L. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 9/26/80

For HCERS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Frederic W. Ray date 12/3/80
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: Sandra J. Gant McClelland date 12-3-80
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number 3

Page 2

The Williams House is currently unoccupied because of the recent collapse of the ceiling in the addition. The State is getting estimates from contractors as to the cost of tearing down the addition that collapsed. The Williams House itself remains unscathed and is structurally sound but will remain closed until something is done about the collapsed section.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED	1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

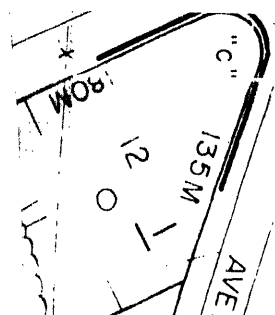
the school. In 1885, the State Legislature authorized the purchase of the house and 27 acres for \$5,500 and provided \$1,000 to fence the property and repair it. As the school grew, two additions and a new dorm were built; and approximately 55 acres were added. By 1955 the school consisted of eighty students, five teachers and two counselors.

With desegregation laws of the 1960s, the Negro division moved to the new Tennessee School for the Deaf facility at Island Home Boulevard. In 1970 the State began leasing the Williams house and 88.2 acres to the Sertoma Learning Center for the mentally retarded. In 1976, the Center built a recreation center. On February 13, 1980, the ceiling collapsed on a portion of the 1920s addition, but the original Williams house remained unscathed. Currently the State is discussing what to do with the collapsed portion of the addition.

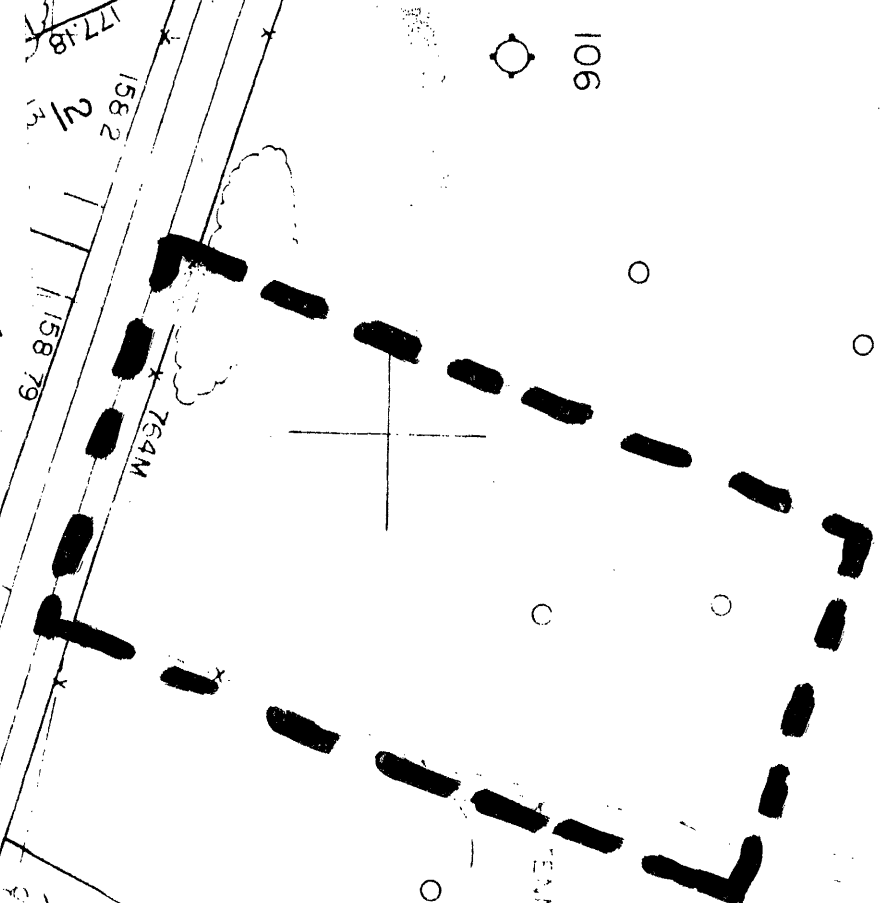
The nominated property is approximately 200 feet wide by 375 feet deep. It is to include only the Williams house, its 1920 and 1940 additions, and a portion of the iron fence fronting Dandridge Avenue. It is bounded on the south by Dandridge Avenue, on the east by the Recreation Center, on the north by the parking lot at the edge of the rear addition, and on the west by the dormitory building. These boundaries will include the entrance which maintains its historical appearance.

¹The Williams youngest daughter Susan, married John L. Moses, who had come to Knoxville in 1841. He helped found the First Baptist Church and was President of both the Tennessee Deaf and Dumb School Board of Trustees and the University of Tennessee. Their son, Thomas L. Moses, was principal of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb when the State began leasing the old Williams home in 1883.

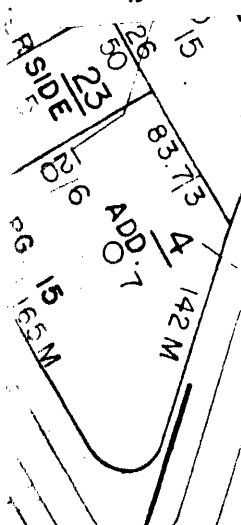
740 M 100.95



106



Col. John Williams House
 (Sertoma Learning Center)
 Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee



G-95-C

TENNESSEE

FOR THE DEAF

SCHOOL

32.2 AC

3

22797

305AC

4703

51759

326 M