

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 15 1975
DATE ENTERED JUN 10 1975

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Olden-Pyne Houses

AND/OR COMMON Drumthwacket

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
344 Stockton Road

CITY, TOWN
Princeton

STATE
New Jersey

___ VICINITY OF
CODE
34

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifth
COUNTY
Mercer
CODE
021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<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 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
State of New Jersey

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Mercer County Court House

STREET & NUMBER
South Broad Street

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE
N.J.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

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

^{nine}~~eleven~~ The property known as Drumthwacket consists of approximately eleven acres, embracing formal gardens, wooded lawns, and two significant buildings.

The earlier of these, on the northwest edge of the property adjacent to Stockton Road, is known as Drumthwacket Lodge or the Thomas Olden Cottage. Probably built shortly after 1757, it is a one-and-a-half story clapboarded house with gable roof. Windows and doors are irregularly placed. Some original beaded siding remains in place on the south side of the house.

The western end of the house is evidently the older portion of the structure. It rests on a deep basement with foundation walls and chimney base of a rubble stone construction typical of the Princeton area in the eighteenth century. The plan of the first floor was originally of two rooms, sharing a single central chimney. The west room has subsequently been divided in two by a board partition. In both rooms most of the early woodwork -- simple paneled chimney pieces, breast closets, chair rails and cornices -- remains intact. There is a fine corner cupboard in the more easterly room. A loft, not accessible from either room, extends above them.

To the east, a kitchen on crawl space has been added to the house, probably at an early date. A stair rises here, to a second floor room, against what was once the exterior wall of the house covered with beaded weatherboards. The most striking feature of the kitchen is the large fireplace with its stone back exposed on the exterior. The profile of a beehive oven is still visible, although the oven itself has been removed.

Behind the smaller house is the mansion known, like the entire property, as Drumthwacket. The building consists of a central block, constructed c. 1833-35, flanked by lower wings added between 1893 and c. 1910. The central portion is five bays wide and two-and-a-half stories high, covered by a low hip roof pierced on all four sides by paired dormers. The front and back are covered with flush board siding. The facade is very rich with a colossal colonnade in the delicate version of the Ionic order popularized by Minard Lafever. The doorway, with transom and sidelights is flanked by attached Ionic columns and enriched with leaf moldings and palmettes. There is a triple window above with elaborately carved moldings.

Although the exterior is largely intact, numerous alterations have been made to the interior of this part of the house. The hall remains the same in plan, with original doorways opening from it. The Colonial Revival stair with Palladian window on the landing and the paneled dado are, however, alterations of the late nineteenth century. The two rooms to the left of the hall were thrown together as one in the 1890s, at which time the original mantels were replaced with Colonial Revival examples. The partition was restored in the early 1950s. A fine Greek Revival frieze has survived both alterations.

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Olden Pyne House
Princeton, N.J. 34
Mercer County 021

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The partition between the two rooms to the right of the hall was removed during the 1950s and flush contemporary-style mantels installed. Adamesque ceilings, presumably dating from the 1890s, and Greek Revival woodwork from the original building period around windows and doors, remain intact.

On the second floor, the plan has been changed by the addition of bathrooms and corridors giving access to the wings. However, the two major rooms on either sides of the hall retain simply-detailed Greek Revival mantels, with shelves supported by columns, and the woodwork of the small room at the front of the hall is intact. There are several small rooms, presumably for servants, on the third floor.

The wings, two stories in height, with flat roofs marked by pierced balustrades, are recessed from the plane of the facade of the central block, except for the ends, which terminate in pavilions in the same plane. These are further marked with restrained pilasters and pediments. The eastern wing is the earlier, containing kitchen, pantries, servants' hall and offices on the first floor, and guest bedrooms with simple Colonial Revival detailing on the second.

The west wing contains the drawing room. To achieve height, its floor is three steps lower than the older part of the house. Originally this room was elaborately decorated with carved wood and plaster in elaborate Georgian Revival style. Much of the decoration was removed in the early 1950s by Mr. A. N. Spanel, who purchased the property during the Second World War. One section of the room has been partitioned off to serve as a small kitchen. Beyond the drawing room is the library, in Tudor Gothic style, with carved stone fireplace and beamed oak ceiling, with the interstices between the beams filled with canvases painted with the marks of medieval artists. The bookcases are of oak. Sliding window shutters and doors are of metal grained to imitate the woodwork, in an attempt at fireproofing. A door in the northwest corner leads to a small terrace, from which another door gives access to a one-story addition containing a study or den. This terminates in a semi-circular window, and is lined with wooden shelves and cabinets. Above the drawing room and library is a master suite with Colonial Revival detailing. It is entered through a small paneled rotunda, crowned by a stained glass dome.

Originally, of course, the grounds around Drumthwacket were farmland. In the 1830s, when the central part of

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Olden House
Princeton, N.J. 34
Mercer County 021

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the mansion was built, the ground in front of it was laid out in lawn, and a number of evergreen and deciduous trees were planted, which still stand. In 1905 a major landscaping project was undertaken, designed by Daniel W. Langton. A landscaping plan was developed for the entire estate, including woodlands, farm, greenhouses and cutting gardens. A stream was dammed to form several ponds adorned with rustic bridges. There was also a deer park, and the grounds were also stocked with sheep, peacocks, and imported black and white squirrels. Portions of this still survive, although the majority of the estate has been subdivided. Langton's chief efforts were directed at the formal gardens at the rear of the mansion. From its stone terrace, shallow grass terraces descend to a formal garden, laid out around what was thought to be a Renaissance Italian fountain, but is actually a late-nineteenth century pastiche. The formal garden was surrounded by an Italianate balustrade of cement. The outlines of this garden are still visible, although it is badly overgrown and weather and foliage have destroyed a great deal of the balustrade. From this level a flight of steps descends to what was originally a grass tennis court and bowling green, the latter replaced in the 1950s by a swimming pool. Steps lead down to a still lower level, at which a small pool is surrounded by large trees and evergreens.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1757-60; 1833-35 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown; Raleigh C. Gildersleeve
 1893-1910

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In one property Drumthwacket embodies three important phases in the history of much of rural New Jersey: the modest farmstead of the eighteenth century; the suburban retreat of the man of new wealth in the early to mid-nineteenth century; and the great estate of the gilded age of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The small Thomas Olden Cottage was built for a descendant of one of the earliest families to settle in the Princeton area, shortly after he inherited the property in 1757, on land which had been in possession of his family since 1696. While its detailing is modest, it reflects characteristics of the mid-Atlantic Georgian style typical of the area. It is unusual that its modest scale has been preserved without significant later additions or alterations. Such small houses must once have been common in the area, as evidenced in a petition of 1758 requesting a barracks at Princeton, which states, "...many of your Petitioners are poor, have small houses and numerous families, with not more than one room..." (1) The petition was signed by two of Thomas Olden's brothers, although not by him. No other house of this scale has survived in the area without having been incorporated into a larger structure.

Thomas Olden's grandson, Charles Smith Olden, was born in Princeton in 1799, the son of a local merchant. In 1823 he was employed by the merchantile firm of Matthew Newkirk in Philadelphia. From there he went to New Orleans, where he was in business from 1826 to 1832, where he is said to have amassed a comfortable fortune. In 1832, having inherited a generous bequest, he returned to Princeton. On his return he purchased the ancestral 40 acres, gradually adding to it until his holdings amounted to over 500 acres. At first he seems to have lived the life of a gentleman farmer, but gradually he became active in public affairs. From 1845 to 1869 he served as treasurer and as a trustee of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. A Republican, he served as State Senator from 1844 to 1850, and as Governor from 1860 to 1864. He was a judge of the Court of Errors and Appeals from 1868 to 1873, and Riparian Commissioner from 1869 to 1875.

Drumthwacket, as he built it, represented the height of style of the new wealth generated by westward and southward expansion after the Louisiana Purchase. This type of four-square Greek Revival mansion with colossal portico became archetypical in the South, but is very rare in New Jersey, where only a handful of examples other than Drumthwacket survive. Not only is the building an example of an unusual type for the State, but the quality of its

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Princeton, 1945.

Dictionary of American Biography. New York, 1928-1940.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA approx. 9

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

UTM OK / HIR

A

1	8	5	2	7	6	2	9	4	4	6	5	2	6	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Constance M. Greiff, Director

2/24/75

ORGANIZATION

Heritage Studies

DATE

609-924-4733

STREET & NUMBER

17 Clover Lane

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Princeton

STATE

N.J. 08546

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

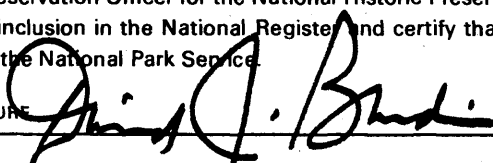
NATIONAL _____

STATE XXX

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



DATE
May 8, 1975

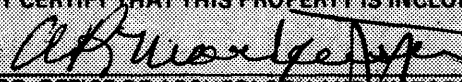
TITLE

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

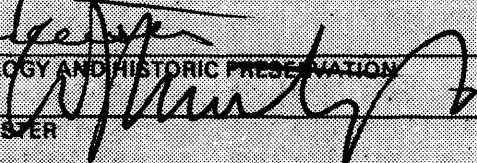


DATE

6/19/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:



DATE

JUN 9 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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detailing is extremely high. Even in the nineteenth century, its antiquarian appeal was recognized. One account of Gov. Olden's funeral included the following description: "It is an old baronial mansion of the style of fifty years ago, rambling and broad, with a great portico with heavy wooden pillars...the hall...(is) an immense one as modern houses go..." (2).

Moses Taylor Pyne, who acquired Drumthwacket in 1893, was heir to a substantial family fortune. He attended the College of New Jersey, graduating in 1877, and married a descendant of Princeton's most prominent local family, Margaretta Stockton. His first interest in life was the welfare of the college. Elected to the Board of Trustees in 1885, he served on most of its important committees. In particular, as chairman of the building Committee, he was one of the foremost advocates of the Collegiate Gothic style.

During the first twenty years of his ownership, Pyne devoted himself to the improvement of the property, under the supervision of architect Raleigh C. Gildersleeve and landscape architect Daniel W. Langton. The result was a lavish and somewhat eclectic product of the gilded age, with references to the American past, to English country houses, and to Italy. Gildersleeve's additions to the house were not particularly notable on the exterior, but the intention was evidently more to achieve harmony with the existing central block than to outshine it, and in this he succeeded. The interior of the Tudor Revival library is, however, an excellent interior space and a good example of the genre.

The gardens were considered notable in the early twentieth century and enough survives so that the contrast between the formal gardens close to the house and woodland and open fields beyond can still be enjoyed. In Pyne's day, the grounds were open for the quiet enjoyment of the public and evidently made a strong impression on at least one admirer. "Princeton," wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald, "is in the flat midlands of New Jersey, rising, a green Phoenix, out of the ugliest country in the world... around Princeton, shielding her, is a ring of silence...great estates with peacocks and deer parks..." (3). The plural is an literary exaggeration. Drumthwacket was the only estate in the vicinity to boast both peacocks and deer.

- 1) Petition to the Legislature for a barracks at Princeton.
New Jersey State Library, Archives and History Bureau.
- 2) Newark Daily Advertiser, April 10, 1876.
- 3) F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Princeton," College Humor, December, 1927.

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Philadelphia, 1879.

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"Some Notes on the Life of M. Taylor Pyne '77, "Princeton
Alumni Weekly, XXI, 28 (April 27, 1921), 662-663.

Files of E.D. Cook & Co. Realtors

Interview with Mr. and Mr. A.N. Spanel, April 18, 1967.

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