

PH0691143

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 9 1977
DATE ENTERED NOV 23 1977

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
Skipwith Hall
AND/OR COMMON
Oakwood Hall

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *W of Salem St on*
Highway 50
CITY, TOWN
Columbia
STATE
Tennessee
VICINITY OF
Sixth
COUNTY
Maury
CODE
47
CODE
119

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Harlan
STREET & NUMBER
4920 Franklin Pike
CITY, TOWN
Nashville
STATE
Tennessee

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Maury County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Columbia
STATE
Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey
DATE
1968
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Tennessee Historical Commission
CITY, TOWN
Nashville
STATE
Tennessee

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Skipwith Hall is located approximately six miles northwest of Columbia, Tennessee, on the north side of the old Williamsport Pike on Highway 50. The two-and-one-half-story plantation house is approximately 200 feet beyond the road in the center of a landscaped lot which is surrounded by a 950 acre farm. The property has several farm buildings including a log barn and a stone and timber frame barn which are located west of the house, being separated from the park by the spur line of the railroad. A mile or so north of the farm, acres of the original property have been purchased by the Federal Chemical Company for the phosphate deposits there.

Skipwith Hall was designed in the southern type, late Georgian transitional style and the 1860s remodeling to the exterior clearly shows the Neo-classic influence. The original plan is the same and the only major new construction occurs in the porch additions at the back.

Skipwith Hall is constructed of timber frame with formal shiplap siding under the front portico. Beaded edge weatherboard siding is used for the remainder. Facing toward the southwest, the two-story main block has a low profile gable roof, large stone chimneys and one-story wings projecting out to each side. There is a one-and-one-half-story wing built out from the back for the dining room. Forming an ell is the screen porch and the open porch additions built out from the rear wall of the east side elevation.

The old kitchen house is connected to the main house by a covered walkway built out from the rear door in the dining room wing. The outbuilding has a full basement and has been remodeled as a three room guest house.

Nathan Vaught built the magnificent portico across the front facade. This addition is composed of six squared columns supporting the flat deck roof which is fronted by a decorated parapet and molded cornice with bracketed eaves.

The balanced fenestration features french style doors leading to the principal rooms. These doors were added by Nathan Vaught and have wide transom lights and wood shutters. The original sashes are 12/12 light and many of the original blown glass panels remain. The main entrance door features a wide fan light and side light panels. The hand-carved doors are the "cross-and-bible" design and many have the original hardware.

On the interior the house is divided equally by wide transverse halls on both levels. The main hall leads to the large dining room which is one step lower than the hall. This room has pine flooring, and it has been changed at the right end to accommodate the present kitchen. The windows on the back side of the wing have been changed, and there are doors leading from the kitchen to the back porch.

Beginning with the first straight run of steps opposite the entrance, the staircase has a split mid-stage landing built across the rear wall. There is a short flight of stairs leading from the short landing to the room built under the eaves of the rear addition. This room was designed to house coffins made for the Skipwiths and Littlefields. There is a second staircase from the second story hall to the attic. The attic is floored and the timber rafter trusses are numbered and pegged. There are trap doors to the roof at either end, adjacent to the stone chimneys. These maintenance portals were built with ladders for access to the roof. The chimney on the northwest gable has been removed.

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The 24' x 24' parlor room is located to the left side of the entry hall. There is a doorway from this room to the room located in the wing. All of the rooms have twelve foot ceilings and the floor plan for the chamber at the right side of the hall is identical except for the entrance which is located behind the staircase. The two chambers on the second story are also 24' x 24'.

The interior woodwork has been well maintained through the years. The graceful staircase has a ramped walnut handrail and each step is set with closely spaced tapered balusters. The interior walls are framed out and finished with plaster over lath and chair rail moldings. The original floors are still in use. Each room has a fireplace and each fireplace is fitted with the original hand-carved paneled mantel.

Cornelia Skipwith Littlefield is credited for designing the beautiful landscaped garden that once graced the east lawn. Like the fine gardens found in Virginia, this garden featured a broad grape arbor which extended down one side and was connected at the center to arbors which divided the gardens into four equal sized rectangular shaped plots by their crossing. The estate had a formal garden and orchard of very fine quality for its early date in Tennessee. A hedgerow divided the formal garden from the park on the right side. Composed of three types of plantings, it featured hedges of mimosa, lilac and English boxwood. The four rectangular shaped plots were bordered with a variety of plantings. Three of the plots were for flower gardens and the fourth was the kitchen garden. Further to the east side of the formal garden was an extensive orchard planted with many varieties of fruit trees. Some damage to the property occurred in 1833 when a storm destroyed many of the fine trees and plantings. The orchard area is now a field and none of the original plantings remain.

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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1815-20

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

An intimate friend of General George Washington and Lafayette, Major General Nathan Greene was granted 25,000 acres of land in Maury County, Tennessee, west of Columbia, for his services during the Revolutionary War as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the South.

This was the earliest land grant in this region and the Indian title had not yet been removed when the grant was issued to Greene. This defect was corrected by a new grant issued in 1807.

Skipwith Hall was built in 1815-16 on the northern boundary of the original Greene land grant. Greene's land in Maury County was actually settled by Captain William Littlefield, Greene's brother-in-law, who moved to Columbia around 1800. Littlefield startled some of the early settlers when he produced the first piano known in the area. William Littlefield built a rock house on the land at the south side of Williamsport Pike, opposite where Skipwith Hall stands today.

In 1810 General Greene's daughter, Cornelia, married William Littlefield's son, Edward Brinley Littlefield (1785-1836), of Newport, Rhode Island. This was Cornelia's second marriage, following the death of her first husband, Peyton Skipwith. Cornelia visited Mount Vernon as a child and was a guest of General and Mrs. Washington when she spent two winters at the Presidential Mansion in Philadelphia. Many details of her life were published in "Recollections of Washington and his Friends," Century Magazine, January 1898, written by Cornelia's granddaughter, Martha Littlefield Phillips. According to this source, Lafayette visited Nashville in 1825, and he called on Cornelia and on William Littlefield's widow. Cornelia Greene inherited over 1,000 acres of General Greene's grant when he died. Skipwith Hall is the only house left standing built by a member of this family on the original 25,000 acre land grant.

The Maury County Deed Book of 1817 gives the dimensions of the land showing the proportions and amounts the Littlefields received. In 1836, Cornelia conveyed this property to her two sons, George G. Skipwith and Peyton H. Skipwith. George G. Skipwith executed a deed of trust to the Planters Bank in 1849 and the bank sold the property to Mr. Benjamin Harlan whose descendants still own Skipwith Hall. The following notice appeared in the Columbia Observer, April 16, 1840, listing the Littlefield plantation for sale:

I offer for sale the plantation on which I reside in Maury County, Tennessee, consisting of sixteen-hundred acres of land, seven miles west of Columbia. There are two large dwelling houses, one of stone and one of frame, with barns and stables and all the necessary out-houses belonging to each, a first rate saw-grist mill and distillery in fine order, all being nearly new; there are three-hundred acres in blue grass and the same quantity of red clover. The

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Smith, Reid. Majestic Middle Tennessee. Prattville, Alabama: Paddlewheel Publication, 1975, p. 31.
- Phillips, Martha Littlefield. "Recollections of Washington and His Friends" The Century Magazine. January 1898.
- Jones, N.W. A History of Mount Pleasant. Columbia Observer, April 16, 1840.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 13

UTM REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the point where Gin Branch crosses under State Highway 50, running in a northeasterly direction along Gin Branch for 880 feet to the confluence of an unnamed creek entering from the west, thence in a southeasterly direction paralleling Highway 50 for 800 feet, then turning 90 degrees and running for 560 feet to the right-of-way boundary of Highway 50, thence along the right-of-way for 1400 feet to the point of beginning.

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

Gail Hammerquist, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

March 1977

STREET & NUMBER

170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE

(615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

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

Herbert L. Hayden

DATE

5/4/77

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Robert B. Rethig

DATE

11/23/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

DATE

11-21-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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place has nine never failing springs upon it, and is in fine condition for the raising of stock. The place and the society in its vicinity is so well known that I deem it useless to describe it more particularly."

"Persons wishing to purchase can get a bargain by application to the subscriber, as he is determined to sell. The place will be divided if necessary, the payments made easy to the purchaser." "March 12, 1840" George G. Skipwith

Edward B. Littlefield became involved in Tennessee politics when he ran for the Senate against Lucius J. Polk and won. He moved to Nashville where he remained, leaving the farm and factory management to the children. At that time a mill and distillery were located on the property.

Major Ben Harlan moved to this area from Kentucky in the 1830s. He bought Skipwith Hall from the Littlefields, but called the property "Oakwood Farm." Harland developed a stock farm and his success made the place prominent in the South. Harlan imported stock from Spain and exported animals to customers in the south. The Harlans entertained many visitors who came to see their racehorses or to witness a cock fight, a favorite past time of this colorful era.

The Harlans contracted Nathan Vaught to remodel Skipwith Hall in keeping with the times. Vaught was a master carpenter-builder who worked in the area between the years 1808-1861. Titled "Youth and Old Age," Vaught's diary of 1871 gives an account of the Harlan contract:

We also in 1860, put up a large fine front portico the whole length of the house and remodeled all the front windows of Mr. Ben Harlans old house 7 miles west from town on the Williamsport Road. This was quite a heavy job."

This contract was one of the last contracts Nathan Vaught accomplished before he sold his carpenter shop in Columbia.

Skipwith Hall has been preserved through the years with few major changes to the interior. It is an excellent example of a Middle Tennessee plantation house of the antebellum period.

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Turner, William B. A History of Maury County, January 1964.
Garrett and Alexander. "A Guide to Points of Interest in Maury County, Tennessee."
Brandau, Roberta Seawell. History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee. Nashville:
Parthenon Press, 1936.
Southern Agriculture. August 1, 1925.
Smith, J. Frazier, AIA. White Pillars. New York: William Hepburn, Inc., 1941.

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	Latitude	Longitude
A.	87° 08' 27"	35° 38' 29"
B.	87° 08' 30"	35° 38' 24"
C.	87° 08' 46"	35° 38' 30"
D.	87° 08' 36"	35° 38' 32"