

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0689882

FOR NPS USE ONLY
NOV 27 1978
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED JAN 19 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

Bowdre-Rees-Knox House

AND/OR COMMON

Half Way House

LOCATION

Half Way House

S W of Thomson on

STREET & NUMBER

Belle Meade Hunt Club

Old Wrightsboro Road

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Thomson

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tenth - Rep. Douglas Barnard

STATE

Georgia 30824

CODE

13

COUNTY

McDuffie

CODE

189

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" 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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Robert Lee Knox

STREET & NUMBER

339 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Thomson

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia 30824

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. McDuffie County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Thomson

STATE

Georgia 30824

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

McDuffie County Survey

DATE

1976

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

(6)

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

The Bowdre-Rees-Knox House is located on the Wrightsboro Road on Land Lot 6A in McDuffie County. Built ca. 1806 for Thomas Bowdre and his wife, Ephatha Rees, the structure is a raised, one-and-one-half-story weatherboard cottage with modified pitch roof. Two bedrooms were added on the front and an enclosed shed addition built across the back. The present owner, Robert E. Knox, and the primary users of the house, the Belle Meade Hunt Club, renovated the house in 1974 for their use, adding a side deck to the west exterior wall, a modern kitchen and a bathroom to the interior.

The approach to the house is a long, tree-lined dirt drive with bordering fences. The house, too, is entirely enclosed by a wooden and brick post fence paralleling the house approximately thirty feet in all directions. The fence and yard landscaping in front of the house has been completed for the Belle Meade Hunt Club since 1974. The Hunt Club has built brick steps at the base of the entry stair which leads to a porch in antis between the two bedroom additions on the front of the house. The thin columns and louvered arcing across the front of the porch were probably added in the late nineteenth century by the second owner of significance, Vincent Rees.

The physical evidence present in the house suggests that the house may have faced Maddocks Creek and the older Wrightsboro Stagecoach Road which has been in existence since ca. 1760. As the town of Thomson grew in the mid-nineteenth century, the road to which the house is presently oriented was cut to make a shorter link between Wrightsboro and Thomson. It is thought that the house was modified to be oriented closer to this more convenient and more heavily traveled road.

Fenestration varies on all elevations of the house. Two windows across the front are double-hung nine-over-six and have operable shutters. Windows elsewhere on the house vary between nine-over-six and six-over-six. The smaller six-over-six apertures are tucked under the half-story peak of the modified-pitch roof on either end. There are two end chimneys on the west side and one on the east side. Both west-end chimneys have been extensively repaired, and one completely replaced.

The raised brick basement is flush with the plane of the house in most instances except for the open corners of the house, which are used for firewood storage.

To the left of the house is a covered well still in operation and also to be included in the nomination. The original well was somewhat closer to the house, but the existing well has served as a water source for the house since 1900.

[continued]

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The present deck on the east end of the house is thought to have replaced a raised walkway which led to an outbuilding, possibly a kitchen.

The original floor plan was typical of rural Georgia cottages. The first floor was originally a large parlor and smaller bedroom plan. The same arrangement is used today by the Hunt Club as a living room, dining room. The enclosed shed addition across the back of the house now contains a modern kitchen, bathroom and future library of the Hunt Club. The two bedrooms flanking the entry porch have few modern intrusions and retain their simple mouldings and random plank walls. The bedroom adjoining the dining room also has a simple mantelpiece and is now called the Blue Room. Junior Hunt Club members use this for a game room. The opposite bedroom has no fireplace and was thought to be reserved for guests.

The parlor features a tall, Federally-inspired heart-pine mantelpiece and chair rail with grained dichromatic, paneled wainscoting -- all original to the house. The pine floors have morticed joints and the walls had hand-rived lath. The room has been painted contrasting gold Williamsburg colors for the Belle Meade Hunt Club. The ceilings are plank with sculptural mouldings. Parlor doors leading to the front porch and back shed addition are capped by three lighted vertical transoms.

The smaller room adjoining the parlor is now used for a dining room and has similar decorative treatments. In this case, the paneled wainscoting has been painted gold, and the mantelpiece is a simpler copy of that in the larger parlor. A door to the right of the fireplace gives access to a raised deck, added about 1974, which runs almost the length of the west facade of the house.

A steep wooden stair leads from the dining room to two large brick-floored rooms with fireplaces in the basement. These rooms were originally used for preparing and eating meals. A storage room with dirt floor adjoins these rooms across the front and a bathroom adjoins the back. Summer beams and joists are exposed and timber posts are used for ceiling support.

Finally, in the half-story above the first floor are two bedrooms oriented end to end in a rectangular configuration, like the basement rooms. Slanted walls retain most of the original planking. At present, these two rooms are unused by the Hunt Club.

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)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Local History

SPECIFIC DATES *ca. 1806* BUILDER/ARCHITECT *Unknown*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated between the Old Stagecoach and Wrightsboro roads, the Bowdre-Rees-Knox House is locally significant for its architecture and history. A raised basement, weatherboard cottage, the house was built soon after 1806 and is named for the three primary owners who occupied the house during the past 172 years. Present owner Robert E. Knox and primary users, members of the Belle Meade Hunt Club, have neatly preserved the cottage for their use as an entertainment and club center. The members of the club have long referred to the house as the Half Way House, as it is a midpoint landmark in their fox-hunting territory.

The early history of the Bowdre-Rees-Knox House is closely linked with the eighteenth century Quaker township of Wrightsboro in St. Paul's Parish, now part of McDuffie County. The land on which the cottage is built was part of the land granted to Quaker leader Joseph Maddox in 1770 as a horse-pen tract for the Wrightsboro township. The 1,500-member Quaker settlement was so depleted by constant Indian attacks and by families moving to the Mid-West to shun the steady growth of slavery, that by 1805 the town was completely dead. Very few traces of the township remain; and, for this reason, the Bowdre-Rees-Knox site may have potential archaeological significance. The Old Stagecoach Road behind the house originally linked Augusta with Wrightsboro and is known to have been in existence as early as 1759. The physical evidence in the house indicates that originally the house may have been oriented toward the Old Stagecoach-Wrightsboro-Augusta Road, which is closer to the house than the newer Wrightsboro-Thomson Road. The latter is said to have been built later in the nineteenth century as a shortcut between the new town of Thomson and Wrightsboro.

Thomas Bowdre, the original owner of the house, came from Virginia and was thirty-three years of age when he bought the land on which he built the house. According to the 1806 deed, the 150-acre tract which he purchased from Peter Parham was "originally granted to Jos. Maddox and known by the name of the horse pen tract lastly conveyed by Jacob Bull, Esquire to the said Peter Parham in 1794." Bowdre and his wife, Ephatha Rees, reared ten children in their small house and, according to the tax digest of 1827, fared well in frontier Georgia. Bowdre farmed 1,540 acres with forty-four slaves. He also owned three town lots in Wrightsboro, a four-wheel carriage and gig.

[continued]

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baker, Pearl. A Handbook of History: McDuffie County 1870-1970.
McDuffie Progress, March 11, 1971
 Smock, Bette. Half Way House.
 Personal inspection, July 20, 1978.
 English Crown Grants in St. Paul's Parish, Georgia, 1755-1775.
 Columbia County Court of Ordinary Deeds and Mortgages, Books D,I,N,O.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5.20 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Wrightsboro

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,7 | 3,5,6,2,8,0 | 3,7,1,1,8,3,0

B | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

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

Ann DeRosa Byrne, Architectural Historian Intern; Morton R. McInvale, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Preservation Section

August 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

270 Washington Street, S.W.

(404)656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Atlanta

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

TITLE

Elizabeth A. Lyon

DATE

10/13/78

State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

1-19-79

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1/18/79

OFFICE OF REGISTRATION

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In 1835, Thomas Bowdre sold the house and a 600-acre tract to his wife's cousin, Vincent Rees. Thomas Bowdre died in 1846 and was buried with two of his daughters in a small cemetery off the new Wrightsboro Road. The rest of the family is thought to have relocated in Wilkes County. Vincent Rees and his many relatives were prosperous landowners in the Wrightsboro area. Rees lived in the cottage until his death in 1885, at which time E.B. Rees, who inherited the property, immediately sold it to T.A. Scott. Twenty-two years later, Scott conveyed the land to Peter S. Knox in whose family the house has remained since that time.

The Knox family and the Belle Meade Hunt Club are responsible for so well preserving the house and its history in its original setting. Most of the fine interior details remain, and the land surrounding the house is unhampered by intrusions. The Bowdre-Rees-Knox House is one of the earliest and best preserved examples of the raised cottage architectural type in Georgia.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Geographical Data ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southeast corner of the drive where it meets the New Wrightsboro/Thomson-Washington Road and running with the drive northeast 1000 feet approximately to a point 210 feet in front of the house; thence southeast 185 feet; thence northeast 420 feet; thence northwest 420 feet; thence southwest 420 feet; thence southeast 185 feet to the driveway; thence with the driveway southwest 1000 feet approximately to southwest corner of driveway at the said road; thence south 50 feet approximately to point of origin.

BOWDRE-REES-KNOX HOUSE
Thomson, McDuffie County, Georgia
Source: McDuffie County Tax Map
Scale: 1 inch = 800 feet approximately
Aerial Photograph

NOV 27 1978

JAN 19 1979

6B
388.5 AC

13
2 AC

OLD STAGECOACH RD.

Grave
yard

SEE

THOMSON WASHINGTON ROAD

6A
357.9 AC

S

8 AC

WRIGHT

17

56

17

