

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

OCT 11 1984

date entered

NOV 8 1984

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

**1. Name**

historic Brown-Neas House

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number Old Johnson City Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Afton N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Greene code 059

**3. 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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Curtis M. (Edith) Neas

street & number Route 1

city, town Afton N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37616

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Greene County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Greenville state Tennessee 37743

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Brown-Neas House (c. 1868) is located on Singking Creek Road in Afton (population 210), five miles east of Greeneville in Greene County, Tennessee. This white, two-story, board and batten structure is one of the finest examples of a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style in upper East Tennessee. The house sits in the southwestern section of a sixty-six acre agricultural tract, and retains only one of its late nineteenth century outbuildings. A rear porch was enclosed in the twentieth century. Despite this minor exterior alteration, the house retains its historical and architectural integrity.

The Brown-Neas House is a square, three bay, two-story, board and batten structure. Its hipped roof is pierced by a center gable in the front. The red raised tin roof replaced the original cedar shake roofing in the early 1930s. The building stands on a coursed limestone foundation. An interior brick chimney with a tapered chimney pot rises from the center of both the northern and southern roof slopes. A one-story, flat roofed porch runs across the west (front) elevation.

The west elevation of the building is delineated both vertically and horizontally by the battens, the stringcourse that divides the first and second floors, and the triangular surround which outlines the center gable. A delicate jigsawed vergeboard decorates the gable ends and forms the eave ornamentation for the rest of the roof. The pattern alternates between solid tear drops with center holes and oval rings.

Except for the gable window, which is 2/2, all of the windows in the house are 12/12 and measure almost from the ceiling to the floor. A simple combination of classical mouldings is used for the cornices of the eleven large window surrounds. Classical motifs are also evident in the first and second floor doorways and in the porch posts. The front doorway is centrally located. It is wide, with flanking seven-paned sidelights and a five-paned transom. The door itself is made of four panels and forms the shape of a cross. A door of similar dimensions and design, but for a transom, stands above this door on the second floor. The four porch posts employ the Doric order and are paneled.

Design elements which occur on all elevations of the house include the board and batten siding, eave ornamentation and window surrounds. The north and south elevations are two bays wide with regular fenestration. There is a one-story porch addition to the rear of the house. The porch area that is now enclosed bathroom was once a wellhouse. There is a cellar entryway along the southern side of the house.

The interior plan of the Brown-Neas House is a symmetrical, central hall type with two rooms on either side of the staircase. Each room has a fireplace, paneled wooden mantels, and built-in closets. The wainscoting and staircase decoration are particularly impressive. The wainscoting measures about two feet high and employs a row of large recessed panels topped with a row of much smaller recessed panels and a classically derived rail moulding. A wave moulding is employed along the upper edge of the exterior staircase wall.

A frame late-nineteenth century barn and a frame mid-twentieth century shed are also located on the nominated property.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**            c. 1868                    **Builder/Architect**            Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Brown-Neas House (c. 1868), located in Afton, Tennessee is being nominated under National Register criterion C for its architectural significance as a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival Cottage style in rural Green County. The building illustrates the beginnings of the use of standardized machine-made architectural elements and unlike most frame residences of the period, it has not been altered significantly and retains nearly all of its exterior features.

The Afton region was one of the first sections of Greene County to be settled. Located five miles east of the county seat of Greeneville, the area was originally called Henderson's Station, after an early land owner and miller. By the 1860s, the name changed to Home and became known as Afton by 1898.

The Brown-Neas House was built c. 1868 for John Brown (1813-1884), a local farmer and miller. John Brown and his wife Sarah Wooley (1826-1910) purchased 244 acres of land along Sinking Creek in 1868. Along with farming 126 acres, John Brown ran a woolen mill and later a grist mill in the 1870s and 1880s. Their eldest surviving son Grinsfield (Grince) T. Brown inherited the house and surrounding acreage at his father's death in 1884 but Sarah Brown remained the head of the household until her death in 1910. Grinsfield Brown (1849-1933) married Ida Radner (1860-1908) in 1884 and they raised their three daughters in the house. He sold the farm in 1932 to Curtis M. and Edith Neas for \$10,000.

The Brown-Neas House is one of the finest examples of the Gothic Revival Cottage style extant in upper East Tennessee. Although its hipped roof, steeply pitched central gable, and board and batten siding are reminiscent of the designs of Andrew Jackson Downing from the mid-nineteenth century, the house also employs simplified classical treatments and restrained classical ornamentation. The interior is laid out in a center hall plan with a fine paneled staircase with simple square balusters and chamfered newel post. Interior woodwork such as the paneled wainscoting in the front rooms, door and window surrounds, paneled doors and simple classically inspired mantels are examples of fine local craftsmanship.

Alterations include the closing of the fireplaces and the enclosure of the rear porch. Despite these minor changes the Brown-Neas House retains its architectural integrity.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 3 acres

Quadrangle name Chuckey, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	3	4	4	0	2	0	4	0	0	5	5	3	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

See Continuation Sheet

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Gray Hagedorn, Historic Preservation Planner

organization First Tennessee Development District date July 5, 1984

street & number 207 N. Boone Street, Suite 800 telephone 615/928-0224

city or town Johnson City state Tennessee 37601

# 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.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 10/3/84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

Melore Byrum  
Keeper of the National Register

date 11-8-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Brown-Neas House

Item number

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Major Bibliographical References:

Cox, Elmer. Personal Interview. June 1984.

Federal Agricultural Census, Greene County, Tennessee 1870, 1880.

Federal Census, Green County, Tennessee 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900.

Federal Manufacturing Census, Greene County, Tennessee 1870, 1880.

Goodspeed, History of Tennessee. Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887.

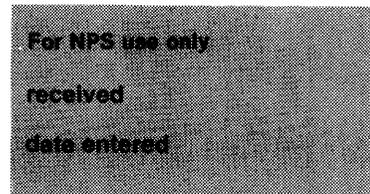
Jeffers, Mrs. Rex. Personal Interview. June 1984.

Neas, Mrs. Edith. Personal Interview. June 1984.

Seaver, Mrs. Louise. Personal Interview. June 1984.

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Continuation sheet Brown-Neas House

Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary:

The nominated property is square in shape and is bounded on the southwest by the Old Johnson City Road and on the remaining three sides by imaginary lines 250 feet long which intersect at right angles. This area is approximately three acres and includes the extant outbuildings and sufficient property to insure the historical and architectural integrity of the Brown-Neas House.