

PH0031569

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Georgia
COUNTY: Dougherty
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE NOV 19 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
~~The Bridge House~~

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Tift's Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
112 North Front Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Albany

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
2nd - Dawson Mathis

STATE: Georgia CODE: 13 COUNTY: Dougherty CODE: 095

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	

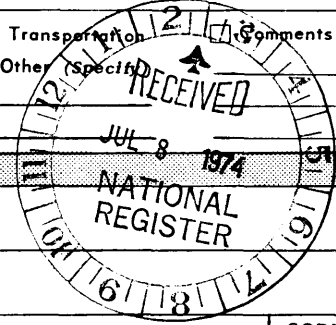
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Keenan Auto Parts Company

STREET AND NUMBER:
112 North Front Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Albany

STATE: Georgia CODE: 13



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Dougherty County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
225 Pine Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Albany

STATE: Georgia CODE: 13

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Georgia Heritage Trust

DATE OF SURVEY: July, 1973 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Georgia Heritage Trust, Department of Natural Resources

STREET AND NUMBER:
270 Washington Street, S.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Atlanta

STATE: Georgia CODE: 13

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Georgia
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7. DESCRIPTION

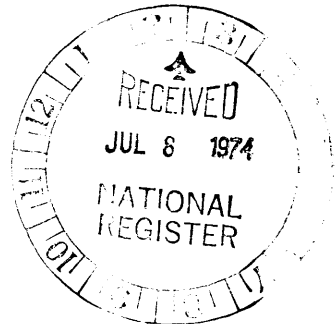
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bridge House, built circa 1857 by Colonel Nelson Tift, is a large two story building with symmetrical classical proportions, four chimneys and Italian details such as arched brackets under the eaves. Although there have been changes and additions to the building over the years, the basic classic lines and Italianate details of the building have survived. The major change has been the addition of a brick warehouse behind the building. The flights of iron stairs have been removed from the north and south ends of the building. The building is now painted white with green shutters on the six windows that face west along the front facade. The double sash windows on either side of the tunnel that led to the bridge have been replaced by plate glass show windows. The tunnel that led to the bridge has been glassed in, making the ground floor front facade seem more solid than it originally would have been.

Since the tunnel has been closed off, the ground floor interior space that once consisted of Colonel Tift's office, the tunnel, and the toll-keeper's apartment is one large room presently used for the selling and storage of auto parts.

The second floor theatre and ballroom, that once had an elaborate stage with a frescoed proscenium and ceiling, now has been completely converted into office space. Only one of the open fire places remain to suggest the former richness of the room's details.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1857

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>History</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Classical-Italianate style Bridge House, built circa 1857 is significant as the only known extant bridge house in Georgia. Once a center of Albany, economically and socially, with its theater - ballroom above the busy agricultural bridge traffic below, the Bridge House now houses the Keenan Auto Parts Company.

The Bridge House was built as a result of a dispute between Colonel Nelson Tift and the Baker County Commissioners over the building of Albany's first bridge over the Flint River. Before this bridge was built, travel across the Flint River from Albany was hampered by the use of a hand operated ferry. Colonel Tift, the owner of the ferry, had wanted the County Commissioners to build a bridge on this spot for the town. When they refused to do so, Tift hired Horace King, a well known black bridge builder of Georgia, to build a bridge that he could run as a business. The Bridge House was built at the same time as a bridge with a tunnel through its ground floor as a collection point for tolls on wagons and horses using the bridge. The charging of a toll was one of Tift's methods of recouping the large sum of money that he had spent in building the bridge and the Bridge House. The citizens of Albany were pleased to finally have a bridge and gladly paid the toll at first; however, the toll soon became a burden. This resentment against Tift and the bridge may have led directly to the burning of the first bridge several years after it was built. A second bridge was soon built on the foundations of the first one and sold to the county for \$20,000. However, Tift still owned the land at either end of the bridge and the Bridge House.

Tift had been running the second floor of the bridge as a theater and ballroom called Tift's Hall, since the building had been completed, to replace the money spent in constructing the building. He hired fresco artists from New York to paint scenes on the ceiling of the room and the proscenium arch over the stage. It was considered the most beautifully decorated theater in the state during the middle nineteenth century. Because of its luxuriousness, Tift's theater attracted many important actors and musicians of the mid-nineteenth century. Such performers as Laura Keane, the Swiss Bell Ringers, Harry McCarthy and the Crisp family of Shakespearean players which included Charles F. Crisp who later became a Georgia congressman, performed at Tift Hall.

Since the theater seats were moveable, the theater could become a ballroom when it was necessary and many balls and dancing classes were held there during the 1850's.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Albany Herald, May 23, 1958
 Dougherty County History and Reminiscences, Published 1924
 Gunnels, Mrs. Whitfield, prepared first draft of National Register form now on file at Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section
 Landmark Tour, Booklet
 Macgregor, Elizabeth Z., personal inspection, May 9, 1974
 Southwest Georgia Historical Society, 1970

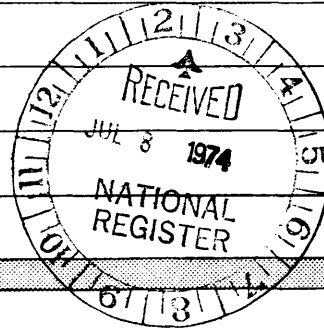
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . "	0 . "		31 ° 34 ' 40 "	84 ° 08 ' 56 "	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Elizabeth Z. Macgregor, Architectural Historian
Carole A. Stevens, Staff Researcher
 ORGANIZATION: Historic Preservation Section, Dept. Natural Resources DATE: March 28, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: 270 Washington Street, S.W., Room 703-C

CITY OR TOWN: Atlanta STATE: Georgia CODE: 13

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Mary Gregory Juntt

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date March 28, 1974

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

A. P. Martensen
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/19/74

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 11.14.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Georgia	
COUNTY Dougherty	
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NOV 19 1974	

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

During the Civil War, the area of land between Bridge House and the river was turned into slaughter pens for hogs and cattle. The basement was used to pickle the meat in brine so that it could be shipped to the troops at the battle front.

In 1916, P. A. Keenan bought the building and established a blacksmith shop called the Empire Smithing Company which later became the Keenan Auto Parts Company. The building is used as the home office of the Keenan Auto Parts Company today.

