

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 16 1976
DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

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 ****

Pleasant L. Matthews House

AND/OR COMMON

R. D. Shelley Dairy Farm

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SW of Georgetown on

Ooltewah-Georgetown Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Georgetown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Hamilton

CODE

65

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: vacant

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Raymond D. and Alice B. Shelley

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 131, Ooltewah-Georgetown Road

CITY, TOWN

Georgetown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hamilton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Georgia Avenue at 6th Street

CITY, TOWN

Chattanooga

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE

October 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input checked="" 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

Pleasant L. Matthews began constructing his "mansion" on his 1,080-acre plantation in 1846. Ten years later, on October 30, he brought his bride Margaret Williamson to the completely finished and furnished house. A respected planter and attorney--although he never practiced law--Matthews built this fine Tennessee Vernacular residence and fabricated the furniture and interior refinements largely with his own hands. Although he was an ardent Unionist who was incarcerated by the Confederates, Matthews' association with the masonic fraternity may have been the reason that the house survived the Civil War. Matthews died on October 12, 1898, and his wife followed him on March 15, 1919. The property has been owned throughout the years by the builder's descendants; R. D. Shelley, the present owner, is Matthews' great grandson. Used as a residence until 1967, the appearance of the house has been altered only slightly. Although a tornado destroyed a portion of the roof, the porch, and a few pieces of the original weatherboard siding, in April 1974, the house remains basically sound.

The two-story frame structure was designed according to the favorite antebellum plan: two large rooms on each floor, separated by a central hall, in the main section, and a story-and-a-half ell, containing the kitchen and dining room, attached to the south end of the east wall. All framing--sills, studs, plates, and rafters--are massive, hand-hewn, and joined together with mortise and tenon joints and trunnels. (The studs measure approximately 4" x 6" and the joists 5" x 10".) Poles were used as rafters in the ell and as collar braces in the main section. The gable roof was covered with wooden shakes which the owner replaced in 1929 with composition shingles; a temporary material now covers the storm-damage part of the roof. Galvanized roofing sheaths the gable roof of the ell, but the original wooden shingles are underneath this covering. The external chimney at the south end of the building, reputedly constructed of hand-made brick fired on the grounds by Cherokees, remains intact, but its mate on the north end was recently rebuilt. The central chimney in the ell is original. The stone foundation piers, like the hand-planned, yellow poplar clapboards, are also original.

The main (or west) facade has the grace and symmetry which are characteristic of this architectural style. Single windows--nine-over-six at the second-floor level and nine-over-nine at the first--flank the elaborate, two-story entrance. (This fenestration pattern is repeated throughout the building.) Only one of the original sashes has survived, and some of the nineteenth-century glass remains. An unusual feature of the house is the paneled and bracketed frieze which appears on the east and west elevations under the plain, boxed cornice; the second-floor windows and entrance extend into the frieze. The lower-story entrance has a single-leaf, paneled door, side panels, and head and side lights; the whole is framed with ornate molding. Except for the absence of a head light, the upper entrance duplicates the lower. All of the original shutters have been removed.

In the late nineteenth or early twentieth century the original, two-story, portico, with its four square columns, was replaced with a porch which resembled the earlier one except that it had a shed roof. The 1974 tornado severely damaged the porch, and it was removed. There are porches with shed roofs on each side of the ell. The

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sheltered entrance on the north side of the ell is similar to the main entrance. A concrete block furnace room was recently built adjacent to the north ell porch.

The interior of the house is completely original. The main section contains 18'x 18' rooms and a 12' x 18' central hall, and every room has a fireplace and, except for the kitchen, an ornate mantle. The ceilings and walls were built of random-width, heart pine boards, which were hand planned and joined with tongue and groove joints; the present floor covers the original board flooring. Hand-made moldings, chair rails, mantles and wainscotting; a staircase with winders; and hand-wrought hinges and hardware are features of this building. A dozen or more of the original pieces of furniture, including several beds, two desks, a chest or two, and a corner cabinet, remain and are in fairly good condition. Still another interesting feature is the hall lighting fixture; installed when the house was erected and originally designed for lighting with a candle, the owner wired it when the building was electrified.

Only two original outbuildings still stand. The barn, although considerably altered, contains all of its hand-hewn timbers. Northeast of the house is a single-story, frame wheat house which was used to dry grain before milling. The carriage house, smokehouse (said to be identical to the wheat house), and bee house have been demolished. A mounting stone, comprised of three stacked buhrstones, is found a few yards west of the main entrance.

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 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 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 1846-55

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Pleasant L. Matthews

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pleasant L. Matthews was born on August 17, 1825 near Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee. He began his career as a tanner, but after acquiring a large tract of land, he turned to farming and became an enterprising farmer and one of the most respected citizens of northern James (later Hamilton) County. The Matthews House was, for many years, the social center of Georgetown. During the Civil War he served as an advisor to the Union forces in the region; his brother George held the rank of lieutenant in the Confederate Army. Matthews held the post of justice of the peace for twenty-seven years.

Antebellum, frame, Tennessee Vernacular residences, especially those in nearly original condition, are uncommon in southeastern Tennessee, and the Matthews House ranks among the best examples of this architectural style in the state. The frieze is a design refinement which seldom appears on houses of this style, and a frieze decorated with panels and brackets is rare indeed. The structural stability, as well as the quality of the ornamental woodwork, inside and out, further attest the builder's skill as a designer and craftsman.

The existence of custom, hand-made furniture further enhances the significance of the property. The ornamentation found on the individual pieces matches or compliments the interior refinements of the house. Decorative and utilitarian, rather than elaborate or fine, best describe the furniture and furnishings. Design elements are, in most cases, applied onto the pieces, not carved or routed. The finish on each is more practical than polished.

An energetic and active organization based in Ooltewah, the James County Historical Society, is presently planning to restore the Matthews House. The group intends to set up its headquarters and establish a museum in the 130-year-old residence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Goodspeed, Weston A., et al. Goodspeed's History of Tennessee Containing Historical and Biographical Sketches of Thirty East Tennessee Counties Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder, Booksellers, 1972; original edition, 1887.
 Little, Sue. "Pleasant's Place," The Morning Sun (Cleveland, Tenn.), November 20, 1975.
 Interview with R. D. Shelley and Alice B. Shelley, July 21, 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1,6 | 6,8,5,0,0,0 | 3,9,0,5,5,0,0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

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

Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

July, 1976

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. Stagner

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

9/10/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

12/12/96

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/6/76