

Theme 7b

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	North Carolina
COUNTY:	Caswell
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Yellow Tavern**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Union Tavern**

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Main Street, South side between Lee Street and Farmer's Alley**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Milton**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**Second**

STATE: **North Carolina**      CODE: **37**      COUNTY: **Caswell**      CODE: **033**

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mrs. Mary Pulliam**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Main Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Milton**

STATE: **North Carolina**      CODE: **37**

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
**Caswell County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Courthouse Square**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Yanceyville**

STATE: **North Carolina**      CODE: **37**

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **North Carolina**

COUNTY: **Caswell**

ENTRY NUMBER

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	<i>(Check One)</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	<i>(Check One)</i>			<i>(Check One)</i>		
	<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 information on this form was taken primarily from data compiled by Ruth Little Stokes of the Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina. We are grateful to her for its use here.

The Union Tavern is an imposing commercial structure of Federal design set directly on Main Street, west of the crest of the hill, in Milton. The two-story gabled brick building is six bays wide and two bay deep, with a one-story frame wing at the south-east (rear) corner, a frame porch on the east side and a brick and frame wing on the west side. The brick of the facade is laid in Flemish bond, and that of the remaining three sides is laid in one-to-three common bond.

The most striking features of the main (north) facade are the three entrances in the second, fourth, and sixth bays from the left, each entrance being a round-arched opening with a molded architrave, a twelve-light fanlight, and raised-paneled soffits and reveals. The center and west fanlights still retain the delicate, elaborately worked metal sunbursts which originally highlighted the hub of each. The outer entrances are double doors, each leaf with three flat panels, and the center entrance is a single flat-paneled door. At both levels of the facade are nine-over-nine sash windows set within wide molded architraves. The first-story windows are surmounted by stuccoed flat brick arches with keystones, and the second-story windows are surmounted by flat brick arches. Raised paneled shutters hung on iron strap hinges flank the first floor windows. Standing seam tin covers the gable roof. There are four interior brick chimneys: one on the east side, one on the rear, and two on the west side.

The staggered placement of openings and the patched appearance of the brickwork of the rear elevation indicated alteration. Single doors occur in the center bay of the first story and in the west bay at both levels. The window architraves are simpler than those of the facade, and the sash at both levels has been changed. Flat arches surmount each opening. The rear eaves are plain and the gable eaves are outlined by plain raking cornices. The west side elevation has no openings. In the front bay of the east side in the first story is a single door, and in the rear bay is a floor-length sash window. The five-bay one story east side porch with Doric posts supporting a hipped tin roof, with a railing of turned balusters, is a later addition, as is the rear wing. West of the main facade is a one-bay brick continuation of the facade wall, also laid in Flemish bond, but without rear walls and roof. The only opening in this wall segment, a single door, has a flat-paneled soffit and reveals. A twentieth century one-story frame shed addition now stands behind this wall segment. The wall is perhaps the remains of a commercial or residential wing, either contemporary to the main structure or an early addition.

The interior of the tavern follows a center-hall plan at both levels. On each side of the narrow first-floor hall is a great room with a wooden post-and-lintel arch is now infilled by a partition wall. The second-floor hall opens into two bed-chambers on each

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**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) **1848-1858**

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) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <b>Afro-American history</b>                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |  |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Union Tavern, locally known as the Yellow Tavern, is architecturally one of the finest of the few known taverns still in existence in North Carolina. The tavern years are extremely colorful, but the building is best known for its association with Thomas Day, the free black cabinetmaker born in Virginia in 1801.

Records show that Thomas Day was operating a workshop as early as 1818, and that in 1823 he moved to Milton where he later converted the old tavern into a studio. During these early years Day trained the slaves of wealthy whites and employed a few white apprentices to assist him in his expanding business. However, as soon as the slaves became proficient, their owners called them home; thus, to maintain a permanent staff, Day became a slaveholder himself.

By 1834 Thomas Day's career was firmly established. He had many wealthy customers, including the governor of North Carolina. It was his privilege to visit many of the finer homes of the area, often staying as long as a week designing and planning the furnishings of each room. By the mid-nineteenth century his workshop had the largest production volume and greatest number of apprentices in the state. His fine furniture with its distinctive large-scale Empire styling enlivened by sinuous curves and unusually three-dimensional classical ornaments of apparent African-inspired stylization, was in demand throughout the northern Piedmont of North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia. Interior architectural trim, such as mantels and newel posts, exhibiting his characteristic exuberant geometric and curvilinear patterns appears in several Milton residences as well as in the finer mid-century farmhouses throughout Caswell County.

Thomas Day's success in his trade brought him equal success in his private life. Day married Aquilla Wilson, a free black woman from Virginia. A North Carolina law in force at that time prohibited the immigration of free blacks into North Carolina. Being unable to bring his wife to live with him in Milton, Day threatened to leave the state. In an effort to keep the gifted craftsman in the area, Milton citizens presented a petition to the General Assembly asserting his value to the town and state. As a result, the legislature exempted Day's wife from the law. Another example of his personal success is reflected in the bargain between Day and the Milton Presbyterian Church of which

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Caswell County Records, Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 House Journal, North Carolina General Assembly  
 Little-Stokes, Ruth. "Milton: Paradise Lost." Southern Antiques and Interiors, II (Spring 1973), pp. 3-16  
 Milton Gazette and Roanoke Advertiser, Vol. I, No. 52, June 5, 1830.  
 Robinson, Wilhelmena S. International Library of Negro Life and History. Historical Negro Biographies.

(Partial Listing)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			<b>O R</b>	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	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
				UTM: 17.660524.40 44960		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Marcia M. Greenlee, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION: Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE: Sept. 27, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 1420 N Street, Northwest, Suite 101

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D. C. 20005

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION	NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION
<p>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:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____  <i>Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____  <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE	
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Caswell	
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*(Number all entries)*

**#7 - Description Page 2**

side. Although the interior trim has undergone much alteration during the building's changing roles, enough of the original remains to determine that the decorative motifs of the exterior were continued on the interior. The interior walls are plastered, above molded baseboards, and the ceilings are wood-sheathed, although in every room except the south-east room on the first floor the ceilings have been covered with pressed tin in a variety of patterns. If cornices were originally present, they were probably removed when the ceilings were covered with tin. Wide, three-part molded architraves surround the openings, and each door contains six flat panels. The stair, which rises in two flights at the rear of the hall against the west wall, is protected by a plain railing, with a square newel, slender pilasters, and a shaped handrail.

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#8 - Significance

he was a member. Day executed handsome church pews of walnut, yellow poplar and pine with gracefully curved arms in exchange for the privilege of sitting in the main area of the church auditorium otherwise restricted to whites only.

Thomas Day's success was not the result of a monopoly on cabinetwork in Milton. Milton's cultural milieu supported a sizeable colony of craftsmen whose shops were a conspicuous feature of the town. The skills of Day's competitors were varied and well advertised. Thomas Day, however, is the best known nineteenth century North Carolina cabinet-maker.

An Antiquarian article (September 1928), in describing Thomas Day, stated "Thomas Day, an issue free Negro and owner of Negro slaves lived at a time and in a country where Anglo-Saxon supremacy precluded recognition of the Negro race save as laborers-yet he mastered the difficulties of life and used the wonderful talent that was given him to design and build." Thomas Day, through determination, overcame the harsh prejudices of the dominant society. Through the development of his skills and the marketing of his talents he became nationally famous and accepted within that society. His talents and achievements were nationally acknowledged and acclaimed during his lifetime and are still so today. Both the man and his work deserve national commemoration. The Union Tavern, nominated for his commemoration was the workshop studio Day used while in Milton.