# National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form

## 1. Name

Common: John Gordon House

## 2. Location

Street and Number: 1/2 mile south of State Hwy. 50 at the Duck River

City or Town: Williamsport, Tennessee

Congressional District: Sixth

## 3. Classification

### CATEGORY (Check One)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object
- Building

### OWNERSHIP
- Public
- Private
- Both

### STATUS
- In Process
- Being Considered
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

### ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- Yes: Restricted
- No

### PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Religious
- Scientific
- Park
- Museum
- Other (Specify)

- Transportation
- Preservation work in progress

Awaiting development as part of a park.

## 4. Owner of Property

Owner's Name: State of Tennessee, Department of Transportation

Street and Number: Andrew Jackson Building

City or Town: Nashville, Tennessee

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.: Register's Office for Hickman County

Street and Number: Courthouse

City or Town: Centerville, Tennessee

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title of Survey: 

Date of Survey: Mar 15 1974

Depository for Survey Records: 

Street and Number: 

City or Town: 

State: Tennessee

Entry Number: 119,081
The Gordon House, a brick home standing about 1/2 mile south of State Highway 50 near the Duck River (on the dividing line between present Hickman and Maury counties), is believed to be as originally constructed by John Gordon's wife in 1818. The two-story house appears to be of the late Georgian style, but carries the flavor of the Tennessee frontier, i.e., the floor plan consisting of one-room depth, end-wall fireplaces and corresponding rooms with fireplaces overhead, are also features of the dog-trot houses of the early nineteenth century.

The home, facing south, has four large rooms: upper and lower rooms on the west side are about 18' x 18'; upper and lower rooms on the east side are about 12' x 18' in size. The four fireplaces are over-sized, and a wide stairway stands next to the north wall, leading to the second story. The bricks are slightly oversized, but whether made commercially or on the plantation is unknown.

There are three large, evenly spaced windows in the walls of the lower and top levels, with two doors that give balance and symmetry to the front elevation. The present second-story front porch roof, supported by four square wooden columns, is reportedly a recent (about 1947-48) addition.

The home's interior, said to have been decorated by Gordon's wife (who supervised the home's construction, as Captain Gordon was away at that time fighting in the Seminole Indian War), is not elaborate but is nicely finished. The fireplace mantels are wooden with a combination of simply designed pilasters and panels; the wide, 7-foot-high doors are of poplar; the board flooring is of ash and poplar; there are plain, wide chair rails and baseboards, and the brick walls have been covered on the interior with white paint. The stairwell is guarded by wooden banisters and newels, supporting a moulded railing.

A contemporary frame addition to the rear (north) wall of the house remains intact, but will most likely be removed when the original house is restored.

The home, occupied until purchased in 1969 by the State of Tennessee, stands in a state of good repair; it is solidly built and will, with restoration and care, see many years of use.
The Gordon House was the home of Captain John Gordon, famed Indian fighter, and was one of the first private brick buildings within a 30-mile radius. Captain Gordon was awarded large grants of land by the government in recognition of his services; on part of his land, near Duck River, he built this home, reputed to have been one of the finest in the country.

John Gordon, born in 1763 near Fredericksburg, Virginia, came to Nashville about 1786. In 1793, he was commissioned by Governor Blount of Tennessee to be a Captain of mounted infantry of the Davidson County regiment. In 1795 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Davidson County, and the next year was designated the first postmaster of Nashville. During the years 1790-95, Gordon established himself as an Indian fighter, defending the Cumberland Settlement against attack from hostile Cherokee and Creek Indians. In 1801-02, when the army was widening and clearing the Natchez Trace from Nashville to Natchez, Mississippi, Gordon made an agreement with the Chickasaw Chief, George Colbert, to operate a trading post and ferry on the Duck River, near the site of the home Mrs. Gordon would begin in 1817. After the treaty of 1805 when the Indians gave their lands in this area to the United States government, Gordon received 640 acres on the Duck River from the Tennessee General Assembly in 1806. Sometime between 1808 and 1812, Gordon moved his family from Nashville to Duck River (nearby Gordonsburg is named for John Gordon). During the Creek Indian Campaign of 1813-14, Gordon led a company of "spies" under General Andrew Jackson's command. After the war Gordon returned home, but joined with the military again in 1818 (when his home was completed) during the Seminole Indian Campaign. He became ill while campaigning and died in 1819, leaving a wife and large family.

Gordon's house, ferry, and trading post stood near the Old Natchez Trace, a primitive Indian trail which was the main highway to the Old Southwest from the mid-1780's to 1830. Gordon operated his commercial enterprise where the Trace crossed the Duck River, when the legendary figures of Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett (and assorted types of boatmen, merchants, soldiers, murderers, thieves, et.al.) traveled the historic route until the advent of the steamboat in the late 1820's. Recognizing the importance of the Tennessee landmark, officials of the Natchez Trace Parkway (National Park Service, Department of the Interior) have included the Gordon House in their plans for interpretative use, as part of the Parkway's Living History program. The home is to be restored to its original appearance, with demonstrations presented of frontier life in the early 1800's.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research reports on John Gordon, filed at Natchez Trace Parkway Library, Tupelo, Miss. (supplied by William E. Cox, Assistant Chief Park Interpreter)
Spence, W.J.D. and D.L. A History of Hickman County, Tennessee, 1900.
Miscellany of records in Tennessee State Library & Archives, Nashville.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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<tr>
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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 68

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maury</td>
<td>119</td>
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</table>

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mrs. Ilene J. Cornwall, Board of Directors
ORGANIZATION: Natchez Trace Association of Tennessee
STREET AND NUMBER: 1004 Narpeth Valley Court
CITY OR TOWN: Nashville
DATE: 3-5-73

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 [x]

Name: [illegible]
Title: Director of Field Services
Tennessee Historical Commission 3-13-74

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Date: 4/18/74

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register
Date: 4/18/74
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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**NAME**

- Gordon, John House

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**LOCATION**

- **STREET & NUMBER**: Northwest of Williamsport off Tenn. Hwy. 50
- **CITY, TOWN**: Williamsport
- **STATE**: Tennessee

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**CLASSIFICATION**

- **CATEGORY**: [ ] DISTRICT  [X] BUILDING(S)  [ ] STRUCTURE  [ ] SITE  [ ] OBJECT
- **OWNERSHIP**: [X] PUBLIC  [ ] PRIVATE  [ ] BOTH
- **STATUS**: [X] OCCUPIED  [ ] OCCUPIED  [X] UNOCCUPIED  [ ] WORK IN PROGRESS  [ ] ACCESSIBLE
- **PRESENT USE**: [ ] AGRICULTURE  [ ] MUSEUM  [ ] COMMERCIAL  [ ] PARK  [ ] EDUCATIONAL  [ ] PRIVATE RESIDENCE  [ ] ENTERTAINMENT  [ ] RELIGIOUS  [ ] GOVERNMENT  [ ] SCIENTIFIC  [ ] INDUSTRIAL  [ ] TRANSPORTATION  [ ] MILITARY  [X] OTHER: waiting to be developed as part of a park

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**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

- **NAME**: State of Tennessee, Department of Transportation

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**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

- **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**: Register's Office for Hickman County
- **STREET & NUMBER**: Courthouse
- **CITY, TOWN**: Centerville
- **STATE**: Tennessee

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**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

- **TITLE**
- **DATE**

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**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

**RECEIVED**: JUL 21 1977

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**DATE ENTERED**
The Gordon House, a brick home standing about 1/2 mile south of State Highway 50 near the Duck River (on the dividing line between present Hickman and Maury counties), is believed to be as originally constructed by John Gordon's wife in 1818. The two-story house appears to be of the late Georgian style, but carries the flavor of the Tennessee frontier, i.e., the floor plan consisting of one-room depth, end-wall fireplaces and corresponding rooms with fireplaces overhead, are also features of the dog-trot houses of the early nineteenth century.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10

UTM REFERENCES

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C [1, 6] [4, 7, 6] [3, 2, 0] [3, 9, 5, 2] [6, 2, 0] D [1, 6] [4, 7, 6] [3, 2, 0] [3, 9, 5, 2] [7, 6, 0]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nomination property consists of a rectangular tract approximately 840' x 520', containing 10 acres; beginning at Point A, running south a distance of 520 feet; thence west 840 feet; thence north 520 feet; thence east 840 feet to the beginning.

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

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<td>Maury</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

Ilene J. Cornwell, Information Officer

Tennessee Historical Commission

170 Second Avenue North

Nashville, Tennessee

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

DATE 7/19/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Robert B. Retting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11/23/77

ATTEST:

DATE 11/23/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
from the acting superintendent of the Natchez Trace Parkway requesting that the acreage be reduced to ten acres, and that the boundaries be amended in accordance with the enclosed map. The land which is to be omitted from the nomination is vacant land and is not necessary to interpret the John Gordon House.
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME
   COMMON: John Gordon House
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: ½ mi. south of State Hwy. 50 at the Duck River
   CITY OR TOWN: Approx. 3 mi. northwest of Williamsport
   STATE: Tennessee

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: Herbert L. Harper
   DATE OF PHOTO: January, 1972
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: Tennessee Historical Commission

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   Front or south elevation
Form No. 10-301o

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME

COMMON: John Gordon House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

½ mi. south of State Hwy. 50 at the Duck River

CITY OR TOWN:

Approx. 3 mi. northwest of Williamsport

STATE:

Tennessee

CODE:

47

COUNTY:

Maury, Hickman

CODE:

119,061

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Herbert L. Harper

DATE OF PHOTO: January, 1972

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

Tennessee Historical Commission

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Front and east end elevations
| **STATE** | Tennessee |
| **COUNTY** | Maury, Hickman |

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. **NAME**
   - COMMON: John Gordon House
   - AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER: 1/2 mi. south of State Hwy. 50 at the Duck River
   - CITY OR TOWN: Approx. 3 mi. northwest of Williamsport
   - STATE: Tennessee

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**
   - PHOTO CREDIT: National Park Service
   - DATE OF PHOTO: 1969
   - NEGATIVE FILED AT: Tupelo, Mississippi

4. **IDENTIFICATION**
   - DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: Mantel in west room, second floor
**1. NAME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON:</th>
<th>AND/OR HISTORIC:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Gordon House</td>
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**2. LOCATION**

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<tr>
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<td>Maury, Hickman</td>
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**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

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<td>National Park Service</td>
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**4. IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Upstairs stair railing