# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

**Type all entries - complete applicable sections**

## 1. NAME

**Common:**

Alston House

**And/or Historic:**

House in the Horseshoe

## 2. LOCATION

**Location and number:**

On SR 162A, .5 miles from jct of SR 162A and SR 1621

**City or town:**

Glendon township (Eighth Congressional District)

### State

North Carolina

### Code

37

### County

Moore

### Code

125

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

### Categories (Check One)

- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

### Ownership (Check One)

- Public
- Private
- Both

### Status (Check One)

- Public Acquisition
- In Process
- Being Considered
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

### Accessible to the Public

- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

### Present Use (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Agricultural
- Government
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

**Owner's Name:**

State Department of Archives and History

**Street and number:**

109 East Jones Street

**City or town:**

Raleigh

**State:**

North Carolina

**Code:**

37

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.:**

Moore County Courthouse

**Street and number:**

- City or town:
  - Raleigh

**State:**

North Carolina

**Code:**

37

## 4. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**Title of Survey:**

- Date of Survey:
  - Federal
  - State
  - County
  - Local

**Depository for Survey Records:**

**Street and number:**

- City or town:
  - Raleigh
DESIGNATION OF SITE AND THE ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Alston House, built about 1772, is a two-story frame dwelling with a gable roof, exterior end chimneys, and a foundation of brick and stone piers. The house is covered with replacement lapped weatherboards except under the porches where the original flush siding remains. The main (west) facade is five bays wide and features a shed porch with chamfered wooden supports and square balusters. The central entrance is quite well-executed, with rather elaborate decorative detail that contrasts with the plainness of the rest of the facade. The six-panel door is flanked by fluted pilasters and surmounted by a fanlight which contains geometric tracery and is framed by a molded architrave with keystone. There is also a doorway to the right of the central entrance which leads into the south parlor and appears to be a later alteration. To the left of the main entrance both bays are marked by large windows with nine-over-nine sash. At the second level the windows are much smaller, containing six-over-six sash. Each gable end is dominated by a large double-shouldered Flemish bond brick chimney with a T-stack. Each chimney is flanked by windows with nine-over-nine sash in the first story and with two-over-two sash in the gable. The rear facade is similar to the front with all but the central bay under the shed porch marked by large windows. The rear central entrance, like that on the front facade, is more elaborately treated than is the rest of the facade. The door is flanked by fluted pilasters and topped by a pediment. The ramped entablature is adorned by a band of incised geometric designs below a row of dentils which is repeated in the pediment.

The interior of the Alston House has a center hall plan. The narrow hall has a flush-sided ceiling and walls above a flat-paneled wainscot. The enclosed stair is not located in the hall but ascends from the front of the south parlor, and is reached by two doors, one opening into the parlor and the other into the hall. The south parlor is quite plain with a flat-paneled wainscot and horizontally sheathed walls, except over the mantel where the boards are vertically set. The mantel has a molded architrave around the opening and a small cornice shelf. The north parlor is more elaborately finished with plaster walls above a flat-paneled wainscot with an incised geometric design resembling a Greek key pattern. The mantel is especially fine with the opening flanked by fluted pilasters which support a full entablature including a ramped architrave adorned by pierced narrow spoon and floral designs below a narrow cushion frieze. The molded shelf features an incised design similar to that on the wainscot. Framing the flush-paneled overmantel are fluted pilasters and a cornice ornamented with pierced dentils which carries around the room and breaks over the pilasters.

The second level presents a similar floor plan but with the stair ascending to the center hall. The newel consists of a slender turned column on a flat-paneled pedestal in contrast to the heavy turned balustrade. The most noticeable feature on the second floor is the variety of wall types. The stairwell and north wall of the hall have long vertical flat panels reaching from the floor to the ceiling. The east and west walls are horizontally sheathed. The north room has completely plastered walls with no wainscot while the walls in the south room are horizontally sheathed above a flat-paneled wainscot. The mantel in the south room has an arched opening below a crudely molded shelf. The opening in the north room is rectangular and is framed by a wide architrave with no shelf.
The Alston House, or House in the Horseshoe, derives its name from its location in a horseshoe bend of the Deep River. In 1747 the house site was originally granted to Edward Griffith, secretary to Governor Gabriel Johnston. Griffith transferred the land to Johnston soon afterward, but the governor died in 1752 and willed 7,000 acres including the house site to his nephews John and Samuel Johnston.

Samuel Johnston, a lawyer and later governor, conveyed his half-interest to his brother-in-law, George Blair, in 1763. The property was then divided and sold to several different parties, but was bought in 1772 by Phil Alston. The house was probably built by Alston about 1772 or 1773. Although Alston was distinguished as a lieutenant colonel in the state militia, a justice of the peace, and a state senator, his career was marked by nefarious activities. He was twice indicted for murder, removed as a justice of the peace, and suspended from the General Assembly for a variety of reasons. In 1781, during his ownership, a group of Tories led by David Fanning attacked Alston and some of his men at the house. After several casualties on both sides Alston surrendered, leaving the house riddled with bullet holes, many of which remain.

In 1790 Alston left the state, selling the house and plantation to Thomas H. Perkins of Orange County. Perkins was a member of the House of Commons and Moore County's largest slaveholder in 1790, with 24 chattels. In 1798 Perkins sold the plantation to Governor Benjamin Williams, who owned the place (named "Retreat") until his death in 1814. Williams enlarged the house by adding two wings, a kitchen, and a master bedroom. He was the house's most illustrious owner, being a colonel under George Washington, ex-officio president of the First Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina, a member of the Third Congress in Philadelphia, and four times governor of North Carolina.

Williams's son, Benjamin Charles, inherited the property in 1825 but died soon afterward with the land and house going to his second wife, Mary McRhyde Williams. She remarried Dr. Charles Chalmers, and they occupied the house until 1853, when the house and land were sold to a coal miners syndicate. At least one mine was opened near the mouth of Governor's Creek, but little coal was ever taken. Anderson Jones took over the house as a tenant of the syndicate in 1853 and bought the place in 1874. He died in 1909, and the house was sold in 1910 to H. L. Farley of Dillon, South Carolina. Farley destroyed several of the outbuildings and tore down the wings added by Governor Williams. In 1911 the property was purchased by George Wilcox,
8. Significance

In whose family it remained until 1946 when it was transferred to R. G. Hancock of Chatham County. In 1955 the home was acquired by the state and is now under the supervision of the Moore County Historical Society for purposes of operation.

The house, which remains much as it stood in the late eighteenth century, is of interest both as a Tory battleground and as the home of several of North Carolina's most important political figures. Architecturally it is a typical eighteenth century plantation house which is distinguished by the strikingly elaborate and well-executed detail of the doorways and some of the interior woodwork.
**Geographical Data**

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Approximate Acreage of Discovered Property: Five Acres

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundary:

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<th>State</th>
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Form Prepared By

Survey and Planning Unit, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor
State Department of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

Director, State Department of Archives and History

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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 [x] Local

Name: H. G. Jones

Date: April 26, 1971

Director, State Department of Archives and History

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

[ ]

Date

ATTEST:

[ ]

Date

Keeper of The National Register
Alston House
SR 1624
Glendon township, North Carolina

State Highway Commission
Scale: 1"/1 mile
January 1, 1967

Latitude       Longitude
degrees minutes seconds  degrees minutes seconds
35°  27'  57"         79°  23'  07"

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Glendon Ch.
Cool Springs Ch.
Putnam

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Scale: 1"/1 mile
January 1, 1967

Latitude       Longitude
degrees minutes seconds  degrees minutes seconds
35°  27'  57"         79°  23'  07"