State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

X MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR _______ THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME
HISTORIC
General Thomas Boykin House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER 0.9 mi down private land, W side
SR 1214, 1.5 mi SW of Jct with SR 1222
CITY, TOWN __________
STATE North Carolina

3 CLASSIFICATION

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4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Jeff D. Johnson, III
STREET & NUMBER 306 Elizabeth Street
CITY, TOWN Clinton, North Carolina
STATE North Carolina 28328

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
SAMPSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE
CLINTON, N.C. 28328

Book 559, Page 409

6 FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE Thomas Butchko, Jim Sumner, Researcher
ORGANIZATION Survey & Planning Branch, Research Branch
STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh, NC
STATE
DATE June 12, 1985
TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545
This large, two-story with attic frame house, built about 1810, is the seat of the county's prominent Boykin family. General Thomas Boykin (1785-1859), was a Captain in the War of 1812 and later General of the Militia; he served two terms in the state House and one term in the state Senate. The son who inherited the homeplace, John Loftin Boykin (1812-1902), served in the state House in 1850-51. Thomas was the son of Byus Boykin (1747-1812) who passed through the area in about 1807 while moving from his native Virginia to Georgia; he was so impressed with the land that he settled here instead. The Boykin descendants were to become large landowners in Sampson County - at one time owning much of the land between Clinton and Garland - prosperous planters and prominent citizens and leaders, with four different members of the Boykin family serving three senate and four house terms in the State General Assembly. This Boykin house is the oldest family house that survives, and built in the vernacular Federal style with a hall-and-parlor plan. It is the earliest and largest Federal house remaining in the county, and has remained essentially unaltered through the years, although time and more recently neglect and vandalism have taken their toll. Built with the finest heart pine timber available, the house, although vacant for at least ten years and somewhat deteriorated, is in a stable condition with excellent restoration potential.

The large, frame, weatherboarded house is sheltered under a gable roof of standing seam metal and faces south; on the west is a one-story, two-room wing, added later. Between the two sections, connected by an enclosed breezeway, is an American bond (irregular) end gable chimney whose shaft has fallen. The complimentary chimney at the east end of the main block has been removed. The gable eaves are flush. Across the southern facade stood a full-width porch that has been lost, leaving only the wide board sheathing on the house's first story face. The center window on the second floor was originally a door, permitting access either onto a second floor porch, the form of which is unknown. Sash are nine-over-nine on the first floor and nine-over-six on the second. The small attic windows have been boarded in. Exterior surrounds are flat and plain, with wide board being used for the two center bay door surrounds. The rear, or north side, has no remnants of a porch, although one surely existed. The rear door does have a transom and several of the rear sash do retain their original paneled shutters. The house is raised on a brick and rock pier foundation.

Entrance from the front is into the hall of the hall-and-parlor plan interior. Along the north wall of each floor are arranged three small, engaged shed rooms, the center one containing unusually steep, dog-leg stairs with delicate slender, square spindles carrying the rounded handrail; these stairs extend to the unfinished, one room attic. The interior is plastered, except for the stair hall and west shed room on the first floor and the stair hall and parlor room on the second floor. The only original mantel remaining in the main block is the large, three-part, late Federal one with engaged, fluted Doric columns in the downstairs parlor. The other three have been removed. Detailing in the first floor parlors consists primarily of a molded chair rail and three-part door and beaded window surrounds. A simple, paneled wainscot is in the parlor; doors have six flat panels. The finishing
upstairs is finer than that of the first floor, and features a superb paneled wainscot in the hall that has a beaded, spiral trim at the base. A wall was added some time ago, dividing the original hall into a center hall and bedroom. Upstairs surrounds are the same as those on the first floor with the addition of an excellent beaded corner-block. The side, two-room ell contains the kitchen and dining room; the interior chimney has mid-19th century vernacular mantels. Sash are four-over-four.

The Boykin house is located nine-tenths of a mile down a private lane, sheltered by several outstanding oak trees and surrounded by extensive fields and woods. As the owner of the house has recently died, the prospects of the estate selling to someone able to restore are promising; the house has been out of the Boykin family since about 1940. There are no remaining outbuildings.
The General Thomas Boykin House, the largest and earliest of the county's handsome Federal residences, is the oldest family seat of the county's prominent Boykin family. It was erected about 1810 for Thomas Boykin (1785-1859), a Captain in the War of 1812, later a General in the Militia who served three terms in the state House and Senate. His father, Byus Boykin (1747-1812), settled in the area in 1807. Tradition maintains that while moving from his native Virginia to Georgia, Boykin was detained by a freshet on the Great Coharie Creek. Deciding he liked the land, he settled here instead, purchasing an initial tract of 50 acres. His descendants were to become large landowners and prominent planters, citizens and leaders of the county. The builder's son who inherited the house, John Loftin Boykin (1812-1902), also served in the state House. The residence, a handsome two-story with attic, hall-and-parlor plan house with engaged rear shed rooms on both floors is a notable example of the rural Federal style. At the time of its completion, this house was the finest and most stylistically up-to-date house yet built in the county; a fact it most likely owes to the Virginia upbringing of the builder. The house, which has been vacant for about ten years, and has suffered from neglect and vandalism. The house is currently in the estate of the deceased owner and will be put up for sale; its potential restoration by a direct descendent looks favorable.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. Indicative of and associated with the settlement and growth of the county in the early 19th century.

B. The house was the residence of General Thomas Boykin (1785-1859), Captain in War of 1812, later a General in the Militia and a three term member of the state General Assembly. This is the homeplace of the county's prominent Boykin family-large landowners, prominent citizens, prosperous planters, and members of the state General Assembly.

C. The house is an early and excellent example of the Federal style as built by local craftsman in the early 18th century. It is the earliest and largest of the county's numerous early plantation houses.

D. Is likely to yield information valuable to the study and history of the region.
The General Thomas Boykin house was constructed about 1810 near the present town of Clinton. For much of the nineteenth century it housed one of Sampson County's leading families.

Thomas Boykin (1785-1859) was one of four children of Byus Boykin (1747-1812) and Elizabeth Boykin, who moved from Virginia to Sampson County in the early part of the nineteenth century. Thomas Boykin's brother John Boykin also became a prominent Sampson County planter and served in the North Carolina Senate from 1842 until 1843.¹

Thomas Boykin was prominent in a number of civic affairs. He was a captain in the War of 1812 and later was a general in the militia. Boykin was one of the commissioners who laid out Clinton in 1818 and served in the North Carolina General Assembly for most of the 1820s.²

Boykin married Elizabeth Fennell and they had ten children. Son John L. Boykin represented Sampson County in the General Assembly in 1850 and 1851. He also obtained the house prior to the Civil War. Census records show that the Boykin farm was large, although not one of the largest in the county. The 1860 census credits John L. Boykin with 1,800 acres of land valued at $15,600 and a personal estate, including 28 slaves, valued at $24,510. The plantation had a large amount of livestock valued at $1,490 and grew a variety of crops, including wheat, rye, corn, oats, rice, peas, and beans, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and 7½ tons of hay.³

Following the Civil War the Boykin plantation became a farm. Boykin continued to farm, although not on the prewar level. In 1870 he had 175 of his over 2,000 acres under cultivation, while in 1880 he had only 40 acres under cultivation. Boykin continued to own large amounts of livestock and had begun to grow cotton by 1870.⁴

John Boykin lived at the Boykin house until his death in 1902 at the age of 90. His son George R. Boykin (1848-1909) owned the house next followed by Lofton Kerr, a grandson of John L. Boykin. The house left the family in 1940 when it was purchased by Jabez Williams. In 1947 he sold it to local historian Cora Bass in 1947. The property is currently owned by Jeff D. Johnson, III, a descendant of the builder. Although unoccupied for some time it is hoped the house can be restored.

### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mrs. Anne Jacobs Boykin Murphy, *History and Genealogy of the Boykin Family* (Richmond, VA, 1964)

Mrs. Taft (Cora) Bass, "Sampson County's Boykins gave County Heroes in Three Wars." Raleigh News and Observer, June 13, 1948

Jeff. D. Johnson, III, Clinton

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY**

249

**UTM REFERENCES**

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**ZONE EASTING NORTHING**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The property of be nominated is 249 acres, more or less, as described in the Sampson County Register of Deeds Office, Book 559, Page 409, dated 7 November 1947 and as shown on the Map of Dr. J. H. Williams Farm, dated 20 April 1943, and registered in Plat Book 1, Page 306. Copies of the map and deed are attached.
The General Thomas Boykin house is one of the more important houses in the county, both because of its age and because of its long association with one of the county's most prominent families.

NOTES


2. Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, 68, 318. Boykin was a representative from 1821-1822, a senator from 1824-1826, and a representative again from 1827-1829.


NORTH CAROLINA - SAMPSON COUNTY.

L. C. Kerr, being duly sworn, says that the foregoing and annexed plat is in all respects correct and was prepared from an actual survey made by on April 20th., 1943.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this the 12th. day of May, 1943.

Notary Public.

By Commission Expires: Dec. 11, 1944.

NORTH CAROLINA - SAMPSON COUNTY.

The foregoing plat is adjudged to be duly proven as required by law. Let the said plat