UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(TYPE all entries — complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Nordecai House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mimoso Street bounded by Nordecai Drive on the West, by Cedar Street on the North, by Wake Forest Road on the East, and Mimoso Street on the South

CITY OR TOWN:
Raleigh

STATE:
North Carolina

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)

☐ District ☐ Building
☐ Site ☐ Structure
☐ Object

OWNERSHIP

☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both

PUBLIC ACQUISITION:

☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

☐ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC

☐ Yes:
☐ Restricted
☐ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural ☐ Government
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial
☐ Educational ☐ Military
☐ Entertainmnt ☐ Museum
☐ Religious ☐ Scientific
☐ Other (Specify)

☐ Transportation ☐ Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Raleigh Historic Sites Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
P.O. Box 690

CITY OR TOWN:
Raleigh

STATE:
North Carolina

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Wake County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
310 Fayetteville Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Raleigh

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
32

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:
The oldest section of the Mordecai House was a simple hall-and-parlor frame dwelling. Originally this section may have been one-and-a-half stories, which were subsequently raised to two stories. At an early date two shed rooms were added along the west side. There was an open passage between these two rooms. The passage was later enclosed and parts of it partitioned to form a small storage room and three closets. At approximately the same time the south shed room was extended to the west, a flue built on its south wall, and the western end partitioned to form a narrow service passage. The major expansion of the house consisted of erecting a frame Greek Revival two-story section on the south side making the house L-shaped thereby changing its east-west orientation to a southern one. At this time the chimney of the south room of the oldest portion was removed and the room was transformed into a gracious stair hall by removing the old stair and constructing a new one in the opposite corner. On the interior some of the original fabric of the old section remains including two mantels which bear a marked resemblance to designs found in William Salmon’s Palladio Londinensis. The later stair is simple but graceful, being enriched by nice profile brackets. The Greek Revival trim of the south section is quite effective in its restrained simplicity. There are panels below the windows which add to the verticality of the design as they and the windows are framed by the same reeded surround punctuated by corner blocks decorated with roundels. The mantels are of Federal inspiration, but the use of diminutive Ionic pilasters show the influence of the new style. On the exterior there is a marked contrast between the formal facade of the south front and the picturesque informality of the rest of the house. The former features a superimposed pedimented portico correctly employing the Ionic order above the Doric. The portico is flanked by pairs of windows on both levels. Each window has nine-over-nine sash. The house is painted white and many of the original green blinds with stationary louveres survive. The later section of the house is approximately 52 feet by 20 feet. The older section including the shed rooms is approximately 32 feet by 34 feet.
### SIGNIFICANCE

**PERIOD** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [ ] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

**SPECIFIC DATE** (If Applicable and Known)

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Archaeological
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Mordecai House was built about 1765 by Joel Lane for his son Henry on land reputed to have been granted by George III. Seven years later Joel Lane sold 1,000 acres near his son's home to be used for the capital city of Raleigh. The house takes its name from Moses Mordecai, who married twice into the family of Henry Lane—first to daughter Margaret and after her death to her sister Ann Willis Lane. Before his death in 1824, Moses Mordecai hired William Nichols for the purpose of enlarging the original structure. Four rooms facing south were added to make the house a Greek Revival mansion. This addition is significant as an existing example of the work of the architect, William Nichols. In the years 1820–1822 Nichols remodeled the old State Capitol originally built in 1792–1794.

Moses Mordecai was the son of Jacob Mordecai. The latter was a pioneer in the field of education in North Carolina as he founded a girls school in Warrenton in 1806.

"For more than a century after the coming of Jacob Mordecai into North Carolina his family and descendants played an important part in the history of the state. In many walks of life they could be found promoting the good of their country and community, and they were particularly noted for their legal ability. Especially prominent were the members of this family about Raleigh, where they greatly aided the development of that section." (North Carolina Historical Review, Jan. 1945, p. 63.)

Among Jacob Mordecai's children were: Moses, a prominent lawyer and Raleigh member of the 1805 Court of Conference; Samuel, a prominent businessman in Richmond, Virginia, who wrote a history of that city; Solomon, who studied medicine in Philadelphia and practiced in Mobile, Alabama; George of Raleigh, an eminent lawyer, president of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, and president of the Bank of North Carolina; and Alfred, who graduated first in the class of 1823 at West Point, taught there for several years, he rose to the rank of major and during his army career was the commander of several arsenals, and the author of several tracts on military engineering and other subjects. During the Civil War he resigned from the U. S. Army and lived a civilian life in Philadelphia. After the War he became assistant engineer for the Mexican Imperial Railway.

Moses Mordecai had two sons, Henry and Jacob, and one daughter, Ellen, by his first wife and one daughter, Margaret, by his second. Henry was
a prosperous planter and lived at the Mordecai house. He was a member
of the State Legislature. His daughter, Margaret, married Dr. William
Little, a distinguished Raleigh physician. Their descendants owned
and occupied the Mordecai house until it was sold in 1967. Moses
Mordecai's daughter Ellen married her first cousin, Samuel Fox
Mordecai, son of Dr. Solomon Mordecai of Mobile. Ellen Mordecai was the
author of Gleanings From Long Ago, a delightful collection of stories
and descriptions of ante-bellum life in Raleigh and the surrounding
areas. Her son Samuel Fox Mordecai, Jr. was the dean of the law school
of Trinity College (later Duke University) from 1904 until his death
in 1927. Moses' daughter Margaret married John Devereux who was head
of the Quartermaster's Department of North Carolina during the Civil
War.

When the Raleigh Historic Sites Commission acquired the house it
came into the possession of many of the original furnishings which
range from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the early
twentieth. In addition it rescued the significant Mordecai papers
and library. The papers are now on deposit with the State Department
of Archives and History in Raleigh. They include documents dealing
with the Mordecai and Little family, their relations, and other
prominent North Carolinians including Christopher Gale (1680-1734),
William Person, Philemon Hawkins (1752-1833), and Stephen Haywood.
The extensive library covers over 250 years of publication. It is
the plan of the Raleigh Historic Sites Commission to catalog the
library and place it in the Mordecai house. The house is presently
undergoing an interior restoration. When this is completed, the
original furniture, portraits, books and memorabilia of the Mordecai
family will be returned.


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>0° 47' 33&quot;</td>
<td>78° 36' 02&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>0° 47' 33&quot;</td>
<td>78° 36' 02&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>0° 47' 33&quot;</td>
<td>78° 36' 02&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3.85 acres

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Jack Zehmer, Survey Specialist, and Sherry Ingram, Survey Assistant

ORGANIZATION:
North Carolina Department of Archives and History

ADDRESS:
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWNS:
Raleigh

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
32

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 [ ]

Name:
Dr. H. G. Jones
Title:
Director, State Department of Archives and History
Date: April 27, 1970

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

