

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

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#39, PHOTO 6

NAME: Isaac Applewhite House

DATE: 1852; ca. 1890

ADDRESS: Church Street

BLOCK/LOT: See Verbal Boundary  
Description

PRESENT OWNER: Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Spencer  
P.O. Box 11  
Chappell Hill, Texas 77426

ACREAGE: 1.5

ORIGINAL USE: Residence

CURRENT USE: Residence

U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: 7.5' Chappell Hill, Tx

U.T.M. REFERENCE: 14/764690/3337690

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

Physical Condition: Excellent

Dates of Alterations: 1949 - 1958; 1959; 1963; 1980

The Applewhite House is one and one-half stories high and was constructed in 1852 of native cedar. Wooden beams used throughout the house are hand hewn and pegged. The plan consists of a central hall with two rooms on each side. The upstairs floor plan includes a wide central hall and one large bedroom on each side. A particularly noteworthy feature of the exterior is the decorative, late-19th-century, Eastlake-influenced front gallery which extends the entire length of the structure. This porch is supported by elaborate turned posts with knobs and modified scroll brackets. Spindles with movable and hand-made spool-like knobs along the porch frieze enhance the gracefulness of the porch. An additional decorative feature of the exterior is the carved vergeboard on the north end of the house.

An oversized dormer with a gable roof and pair of 4/4 windows dominates the roofline on the east front. A brick end-chimney, rising from the gable-roof on the south side of the house, served both the upstairs and downstairs rooms. An additional fireplace is located on the east kitchen wall. Composition shingles cover the roof's original cedar shingles.

Some original 9/6 and 6/6 light, double-hung, sash-type windows have been replaced over the years by similar custom-made modern windows where necessary. Several operable wooden shutters still exist. The paneled entrance contains an early screen door and is surrounded by sidelights and a transom. The simple design of the interior is reflected in the absence of trim around doors or windows, and by the original floors of thick cedar. Several rooms were paneled with modern plywood and beaded wainscoting in 1963.

The original section of the house, constructed in the 1850s, exhibited Greek Revival influence. A kitchen was originally detached from the main house, yet easily reached by a covered walkway. Later a porch was built across the back of the house and a room and porch constructed, thereby enclosing the space between the kitchen and house. Between

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1889 and 1896, the south side of the house burned. The flooring in the southern rooms, which was rebuilt after the fire, still shows evidence of the devastation. It is probable that the six-foot gallery off the back of the house and the gingerbread front gallery were added during this period.

The next major structural change was made between 1949 and 1958. The wide interior hallway was narrowed to accommodate closets, which were added to the two downstairs south rooms. In 1949 a garage was built near the north end of the kitchen. At this time, also, the rear porch was enclosed for living space, and rear storage rooms were removed. The 1949 garage was constructed of wood from these two rooms. A doorway connecting this rear wing with the main house was replaced by a window. Further modifications to the house were executed by the Spencers, who purchased the property in 1958. They installed an upstairs bathroom at the west end of the hallway and extended the original line of the smaller roof dormer at the rear twenty feet. In 1980 the owners also added a rear screened porch. These changes are nonetheless relatively inconspicuous, and the house is in excellent condition and retains its historic integrity.

Outbuildings on the property include a small board-and-batten chicken house built in the 1940s and two modern portable buildings. A cistern is also located at the northwest corner of the house, adjacent to the modern kitchen. A single-story wood-frame structure and a wooden water tank and windmill originally were located on the rear of the property.

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

Period: 1800-1899

Areas of Significance: Architecture, religion

Architecturally, the Applewhite House is significant as a fine example of local, eclectic, residential design in the second half of the 19th century, and represents the evolution of preferences for architectural styles during this period. Architecturally unique in the Chappell Hill vicinity, this house, with its symmetrical central hall plan, molded cornice with returns, and central entrance with sidelights and transoms, reflects a transition from a vernacular form of the Greek Revival to a modified Victorian style. The front porch trim reflects Eastlake influences. Although several alterations have been made throughout the years to the structure's interior and exterior, the house retains its architectural integrity and historic fabric. The property features several characteristics of its turn-of-the-century landscaping, including an informally landscaped lawn around the house, a garden, and several large pecan trees.

Historic archeological potential exists for the property as regards establishing the presence and utilization of early outbuildings. Fragments of historic debris including china and metal have been found on the property by the current owner. The original cistern, which is still intact but filled in, could possibly yield important historical information.

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Constructed just three years after the sale of lots began in Chappell Hill in 1849, this structure is one of the earliest surviving houses in the historic residential section. Because of its close proximity to the Chappell Hill Female College and its association with early Methodist ministers, the Applewhite House played an important role in the early educational history of the town, functioning as a gathering place for receptions and other social events connected with the college.

The house is particularly significant for its association with several early settlers and religious leaders of the community; they include Isaac Applewhite, Allen Lewis of Galveston, and Robert Alexander. Isaac Applewhite was a minister, lawyer, and teacher whose hobby was carpentry. He utilized native cedar in the construction of his one-and-a-half-story dwelling known early as the "House of Cedar", this timber being readily available prior to the Civil War. Reverend Applewhite, who was widely known and respected as a Methodist-Episcopal lay leader and affiliate of Rutersville College, the first Methodist school in Texas, moved to Chappell Hill from Osyka, Mississippi, in 1852. It is known that Applewhite also owned and operated with his neighbor, F. J. Cooke, a steam sawmill and gristmill in Washington County from 1855 until 1857, when he released his share to Cooke. Applewhite was also an important force in influencing the citizens of Chappell Hill and Washington County to support plans for the construction of its first railroad.

On December 20, 1862, ownership of the house passed to Allen Lewis, who was prominent in the cotton industry in Galveston. Lewis was also a dedicated Methodist, who had taken a very active part in building the new Methodist church in Galveston. In 1877 the house was sold to Robert Alexander, one of the first Methodist missionaries to reach Texas. Reverend Alexander succeeded Dr. Martin Ruter as the minister responsible for the establishment of the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Texas. Alexander and his father-in-law, Reverend David Ayers, were friends of William B. Travis, who sometimes personally assisted the Methodist missionaries in their camp meetings.

Dr. Paul M. Raysor, the son of Peter A. Raysor, who was an important influence in the early civic and industrial development of Chappell Hill, purchased the house in 1889. It was probably during his ownership that the south end of the residence burned and the Eastlake front porch was added. Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Spencer of Houston purchased the house in 1958 as a weekend home. They moved to Chappell Hill permanently in 1964.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Brenham Banner-Press, Brenham, Texas, October 28, 1965

Brenham Banner-Press, Brenham, Texas, March 29, 1972

Betty Plummer, Historic Homes of Washington County, 1821-1860, San Marcos, Texas, 1971

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Files, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas

Washington County Deed Records, Brenham, Texas

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A lot of parcel of land in Chappell Hill, Washington County, Texas. being all of Acres Lot #8 and the north half of Acres Lot #10 and described as beginning at the corner of Chestnut and Church streets; thence south along the east line of Church Street 241.5 feet; thence east 148.5 feet; thence south 30 feet; thence east 137.5 feet; thence north 271.5 feet to Chestnut Street; thence west along the south line of Chestnut Street 274.7 feet to the place of beginning, containing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Chappell Hill Multiple Resource Area  
State Washington County, Texas

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |   |   |  |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1.  | Main Street Historic District                                     | <b>Substantive Review</b>               | Keeper <u>Linda McClelland 5/15/85</u> |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 2.  | Applewhite, Isaac, House  | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 3.  | Chappell Hill Circulating Library                                 | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 4.  | Chappell Hill Methodist Episcopal Church                          | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 5.  | Chappell Hill Public School and Chappell Hill Female College Bell | <b>Substantive Review</b>               | Keeper <u>Linda McClelland 2/20/85</u> |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 6.  | Felder, E. King, House  | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 7.  | Rogers, William S., House   | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 8.  | Routt, J.R., House  | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 9.  | Smith, John Sterling, Jr. House                                   | <b>Entered in the National Register</b> | Keeper <u>Shelene Byers 2/20/85</u>    |
|     |   | Attest                                  |  |
| 10. |   |   | Keeper                                 |
|     |   |   | Attest                                 |

85000342

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Applewhite, Isaac, House (Chappell Hill MRA)  
Washington County  
TEXAS

Working No. JAN 14 1985  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.4.86  
Date Due: 2/14/85 - 2/28/85  
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 2-20-85  
☐ RETURN  
☐ REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
		<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

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## 8. Significance

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

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## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet*



Historic Resources of Chappell Hill  
Chappell Hill, Washington County, Texas

#39 Isaac Applewhite House  
Church Street

Photo by Julie Edwards, March 1984, neg on  
file at Texas Historical Commission

Northwest elevation, camera facing southeast  
photo 6 of 58

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000834