

VLR 9/9/69 NRHP 10/15/66

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Alexandria (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:  
GADSBY'S TAVERN (1972)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
128 North Royal Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Alexandria

STATE Virginia	CODE 22314	COUNTY: Alexandria (City)	CODE 510
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
American Legion, Post 24

STREET AND NUMBER:  
128 North Royal Street

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria	STATE: Virginia	CODE 22314
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria	STATE: Virginia	CODE 22301
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
HABS

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D. C.	CODE 11
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STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Alexandria (City)

ENTRY NUMBER

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent
  Good
  Fair
  Deteriorated
  Ruins
  Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered
  Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved
  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

## a. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Gadsby's Tavern, which comprises two adjoining tavern buildings, is one of America's most famous taverns. The smaller of the two buildings was built in 1752 and known as the City Tavern, and sometimes as the Coffee House. During the last half of the 18th century, it was an important center in Virginia life. Washington recruited his first command of Provincial troops for the Great Meadows campaign in 1754 at City Tavern. He was quartered here when he received his commission as Major on General Braddock's staff. The Fairfax Resolves were prepared here -- those resolves that eventually grew into the Virginia Bill of Rights. In this tavern met the convention called by Washington to settle the question of import duties on the Potomac River commerce. The question seemed of larger importance and in time led to the convention in Philadelphia which prepared the Constitution of the United States. The first celebration of the adoption of the Federal Constitution subsequently took place here on June 28, 1788.

John Wise built a large three-story brick addition in 1792. It was opened on February 11, with festivities commemorating Washington's birthday. In Wise's new hotel, Alexandria architecture reached its highest expression, and it was the ultimate in comfort and elegance for its days.

In 1794, John Gadsby took over the tavern under a lease. As fine as the tavern had been under Wise, it was to reach new excellence and fame. Running the two taverns as one, under the name Gadsby's Tavern, he spread the fame of its comfort and culinary art throughout the country. From Boston to New Orleans, the traveler did his best to make Gadsby's. Gadsby established his own state line from Alexandria to Philadelphia, and it was necessary to be a guest with him in order to get a ticket.

Such men as George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, George Clinton, Benjamin Franklin, General Braddock, the Byrds, Fitzhughs, Lees and Washingtons are among those who visited Gadsby's. Indeed the two taverns housed and fed most of the famous persons visiting the country from 1752 for the next one hundred years.

The two buildings that make up the Tavern were purchased by the American Legion, Post #24 in 1926. Since then, patriotic organizations of Alexandria have joined in its restoration. The ballroom woodwork of the larger City Hotel, which was taken for the American Wing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been copied in detail and replaced. The front of this building was restored by the Mount Vernon Chapter of the D.A.R., and the main doorway was purchased from the Metropolitan Museum and restored in 1949. Two ballrooms, a walled courtyard with cobblestone surfacing, an underground brick kitchen, a tap room and lodging rooms furnished in the manner of Colonial Virginia give an excellent picture of tavern hospitality as it was enjoyed at this famous inn.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

Virginia	
COUNTY	
Alexandria (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

Item 7 cont'd

Gadsby's Tavern is an outstanding illustration of the central role played by many taverns in early American life.

b. BOUNDARIES:

Gadsby's Tavern is situated on a lot approximately 115 feet in depth and 100 feet in width; it is located on the southwest corner of North Royal and Cameron Streets, Alexandria.

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Travel</u>                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the best-known inns in Virginia, Gadby's Tavern comprises two adjoining buildings; the smaller City Tavern, which was built first, and the three-story brick building which was added 40 years later. Under both John Wise and John Gadsby, to whom Wise leased the tavern in 1794, the hostelry was renowned for both its hospitality and architecture.

Both buildings, especially the earlier one, are excellent representatives of their respective periods and styles.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Gay Montague Moore, Seaport in Virginia: George Washington's Alexandria (Richmond 1949); Work Projects Administration, Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion (New York, 1940).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 48' 35"	77° 02' 41"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Frank S. Melvin**

ORGANIZATION: **Virginia State Office, National Park Service**      DATE: **6/30/72**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box 10008**

CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond**      STATE: **Virginia 23240**      CODE: **51**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date 9/9/69

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 10/15/66

SEE INSTRUCTIONS