

VLR-11/18/80 NRHP-6/28/82

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic George Oscar Thompson House (preferred)

and/or common Sam Ward Bishop House

2. Location

street & number Route 604 _____ not for publication

city, town Tazewell vicinity of _____ congressional district 9th (William C. Wampler)

state Virginia code 51 county Tazewell code 185

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yea: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ward Bishop

street & number Route 1, Box 444

city, town Tazewell _____ vicinity of _____ state Virginia 24651

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tazewell County Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Tazewell _____ state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond _____ state Virginia 23219

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The George Oscar Thompson House, Tazewell County, is a handsome dwelling picturesquely sited in Thompson Valley. Thomas Mastin Hawkins, a well-known master builder, was responsible for constructing the Thompson house in 1886-87. Hawkins built approximately twenty houses in the Tazewell area from 1870-90, and most are related in form and detail. Like Hawkins's other houses, the Thompson residence is marked by its simple form and practical, coherent design.

The Thompson house is a two-story, T-shaped frame structure that is underpinned by limestone ashlar. Small shed-roofed additions at either side of the rear ell have not compromised the integrity of the original form. The entire structure is covered by a standing-seam metal roof. Corbeled interior chimneys break the roof slopes at three points. The eaves, which break into gables at the south, east, and west elevations, are a distinguishing feature of Hawkins's work. A deep cornice enriched by sawn brackets circles the house. Corners are marked by corner boards. The fenestration pattern of the original portion is 2/2 sash. Except for the ell and additions, all windows are capped by window hoods supported by small sawn brackets. A one-story porch supported by chamfered posts embellished with sawn brackets protects the center bay of the three-bay facade. Attention is drawn to the center bay of each story because of the special treatment given to the openings. The first-floor entrance is framed by a transom and sidelights and pilasters on either side of the door. This ensemble is then framed by a simple architrave and cornice supported by two brackets. There is a balustrade at the second story, and sidelights expand the opening to three parts. Valuable documentation linking Hawkins to the house surfaced when an entrance door pilaster plinth was replaced. On the back of the original plinth, a pencil inscription read: "maid (sic) by Thomas M. Hawkins Seniouir (sic) the Fourth day of July 1887". The house had no cellar until this century when one was excavated to facilitate the installation of a furnace.

The Thompson house interior is a variation of the Georgian plan as evidenced by the symmetry of the exterior massing. The center passage is partitioned laterally to form two chambers, each containing a stair to the second floor. The front passage separates the parlor and a bedroom; the rear hall divides dining and family rooms. The first-floor ell is used as a den. All second-floor rooms function as bedrooms, except for the ell chamber which is divided into a bath and storage area. Interior trim is simply executed throughout the house. Baseboards encircle all rooms, and all first-floor mantels are plain and uncarved, characteristic of most late 19th-century woodwork found throughout this area. A stair which linked the first-floor southwest bedroom to the room above has been removed, as has a stair at the rear of the ell that provided access between floors. The two handsome, curved stairs, positioned back to back, each in a separate room, in the center passage space, are stylistically typical of the Victorian period. Each has a substantial turned newel post and two turned balusters per tread. The front stair is the more ornate. Both were probably ordered from woodworking catalogues rather than crafted locally. When the cellar was excavated, the closet under the rear stair was opened, and a stair was installed to provide access to the cellar. Of special note are the traces of Sullivanesque wallpaper that once covered the closet wall.

The Thompson house has several dependencies, including a fine limestone spring house. Especially important are the one-room log structure and the 1½-story frame structure which tradition suggests were the first and second houses of the Thompson family. Other outbuildings include barns and sheds for animal and farm implement storage.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1886-87 **Builder/Architect** Thomas Hawkins

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The work of Thomas Mastin Hawkins, a well known and talented master builder of Tazewell County, the George Oscar Thompson House was erected in 1886-87 for Thompson, whose uncle in 1814 purchased the land on which it stands. While the house is a blend of traditional and popular late 19th-century architectural ideals, its details and composition are quite sophisticated and surpass in quality those usually found in this remote county. Two earlier dwellings also survive on the property: a late 18th- to early 19th-century log house and a large frame farmhouse, which was erected in three stages between 1831 and 1851. Associated historically with the Thompson family, who pioneered in the settlement of this area in the 18th century, the three houses are significant as a rare architectural continuum, representative of nearly two centuries of cultural development in southwestern Virginia.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The land on which the George Oscar Thompson House stands is located approximately five miles south of Tazewell in Thompson Valley, site of an Indian massacre in the 1770s. The valley takes its name from a Scotch-Irish immigrant family who settled in this part of Tazewell County just after the American Revolution and whose descendants held continuous possession of this property for almost a century. The construction date of the log house, the earliest of three surviving dwellings on the property, is unknown; but there is little doubt that the log structure was already standing when William Thompson acquired the land from William Brooks in 1814. Thompson's deed of that year particularly referred to "the dwelling house of William Brooks," as well as to the 156 acres of farmland.¹

In 1821 William Thompson sold the 156 acres and the log house to Archibald Thompson, his brother. The deed specifically included "...the house and greater part of the improvements where William Brooks, Jr., formerly lived..."² The Tazewell County tax books list the property but do not indicate any improvements; this may be explained, however, by the very low rate for taxing improvements in that county and by the small size of the log house. Archibald Thompson married in 1821 and two years later was appointed lieutenant in the county militia. In 1831 he added \$100 worth of improvements, and this addition may represent the construction of the earliest part of the frame farmhouse. Thompson added further improvements to the property in 1840 (\$50) and 1851 (\$250), by which time the farmhouse probably had assumed its present form. In the meantime he also had acquired 553 acres of land from the estate of John Brooks and 82 acres from his father, John Thompson. The 1850 census describes Archibald Thompson, age fifty-three, as a successful farmer who with his wife Polly had six children and owned real estate valued at \$5,000.

Archibald Thompson died in 1878, after having served for many years as magistrate and postmaster for Thompson Valley. The ultimate heir of his residence was his youngest son, George Oscar Thompson. George Oscar, born in 1839, married Mattie Hopkins in 1873; they

9. Major Bibliographical References

Richmond, Va. Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives. George Oscar Thompson House, Tazewell County, file 92-18. Betty Hollowell, unpublished paper on Thomas M. Hawkins, 1980.

Tazewell County. Deed Books, 2-13.

Will Books, 3, 5.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 16 acres

Quadrangle name Tazewell South, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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4	5	0	6	6	0
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4	1	0	2	9	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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4	5	0	6	8	0
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4	1	0	2	6	4	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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4	5	0	5	0	0
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4	1	0	2	5	8	0
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D

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4	5	0	4	8	0
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4	1	0	2	9	7	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on N side of route 604, about 450' NE of intersection of 604 with route 602; thence extending about 1300' N; thence extending about 600' E, thereby crossing approach road N of the house; thence extending about 1100' S to N side of 604; thence extending about 600' SW along said side to point of origin.

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date November 1980

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Tucker Hill
Tucker Hill, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date NOV 18 1980

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.	
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

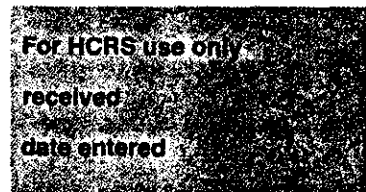
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

George Oscar Thompson House, Tazewell County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7,8,9

Page 1



7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The 16 acres which comprise the George Oscar Thompson House nomination include the main house, the two earlier dwellings, and all farm buildings.

MEH

8. SIGNIFICANCE

had four children. In 1886 he engaged T. M. Hawkins to erect a new residence for his growing family.

According to a newspaper account which appeared soon after his death in 1908, Thomas Mastin Hawkins began as a carpenter and later in life became a contractor on a large scale. His contemporaries remembered him as a careful, trustworthy, and skillful workman who built some of the best dwelling houses in this area. His memorialist also noted that "in religion he was a Baptist, in politics a Democrat, and in both relations he was zealous, unwavering and uncompromising."³ Firmness and resoluteness also characterized his work as a builder. Hawkins, who often took three years to complete a house, once stated that he built a house to stand one hundred years. On the back of an original entrance door plinth of the George Oscar Thompson House (now replaced) the following inscription is still legible: "maid (sic) by Thomas M. Hawkins Seniour (sic) the Fourth day of July 1887". Other notable Hawkins houses in the Tazewell area include the Alexander St. Clair House, the Bane House, the J. Oscar Correll House, the George W. Gillespie House, and the John Six Place.

George Oscar Thompson died in 1906, and, under a deed of partition of that year, the residence parcel went to his daughter, Mary G. Thompson. In 1911 she sold the property to Samuel B. Ward. On his death in 1932, responsibility for the house devolved on his widow, Margaret Hayter Ward. The house is now the residence of Sam Ward Bishop, grandson of Samuel B. and Margaret Ward.

MTP/RAC

¹Tazewell County Deed Book 2, p. 211.

²Tazewell County Deed Book 3, p. 384.

³Obituary of Thomas M. Hawkins, Clinch Valley News, April 10, 1908.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Thomas Mastin Hawkins". Obituary. Clinch Valley News, April 10, 1908.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Tazewell South, Va. 1968(PR1977)

GEORGE OSCAR THOMPSON HOUSE, Tazewell Co., Va.

UTM References:

A-17/450660/4102980 B-17/450680/4102640

C-17/450500/4102580 D-17/450480/4102970

