

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

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Kingston House

and/or common Johnston House

2. Location

street & number U.S. 30, at Kingston bridge. N/A not for publication

city, town Unity Township vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Westmoreland code 129

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" 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 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 Appalachia Enterprises, Inc. (% Victor P. Smith)

street & number P.O. Box 242

city, town Ligonier vicinity of state Pennsylvania 15658

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Greensburg state PA 15601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Western Pa. Architectural Survey, 1936
title Westmoreland Co. Historical has this property been determined eligible? yes no

Preservation Survey, 1979-81
date first survey 1936 - second survey 1979-81 federal state county local

depository for survey records first survey, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, PA; second survey,
Planning Commission, Westmoreland Courthouse.

city, town Pittsburgh, Greensburg, state PA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located along the Loyahanna Creek about three miles southeast of Latrobe, Kingston House is a five bay, 2½ story, single pile center-hall house built of rubble stone masonry with irregular quoins defining the corners. The 2½ story central block has one story wings that are aligned with the entrance block but slightly recessed on the rear facade. The interior end-chimneys on both the one and two story sections are built of course ashlar masonry. Wood entablature on front and rear facades have finely proportioned brackets and a fluted motive on the cornices. A 1½ story masonry wing, added in 1830, projects from the south wing of the rear elevation. A 1 story gallery with a shed roof extends along the rear facade of the main block. Galleries along the rear elevation of each wing have been enclosed. The sashes are 12 over 12 on the first story and 8 over 12 on the second story. The wing windows are 8 over 12. Kingston House has undergone very few alterations is essentially the same house that Alexander Johnston first occupied in 1815.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c.1815 **Builder/Architect** Miller

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The early nineteenth century was a time of settlement and commercial development in Western Pennsylvania. Kingston House became a significant part of that activity. Built along a much used east-west highway, the house served countless settlers, traders and travelers, including two Presidents, as an inn for almost forty years. Kingston House was also the home of a prominent Westmoreland family, the Johnston family. Alexander Johnston, for whom the house was constructed in 1815, held numerous county positions. Two of his sons distinguished themselves militarily. A third son, William Freame Johnston, was the governor of Pennsylvania from 1848 to 1851. As the only surviving building closely associated with the life of Governor Johnston, as an integral part of the early transportation system in the western part of the state, and as an excellent example of an early western Pennsylvania home, Kingston House remains an important piece of the history of Westmoreland County and the state.

Located along the Greensburg-Staystown section of the road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh (now U.S. 30), the house became a frequent stop for travelers even before the turnpike was completed. For over thirty years Kingston House offered food and lodging to the almost continuous flow of wagoneers and settlers who used the road. During the 1840's, the house was also a regular stagecoach stop. Passengers could refresh themselves with food and drink while drivers attended to their horses. Among the notable guests at Kingston House were William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor who stayed at the inn during their presidential campaigns in western Pennsylvania. Throughout its years as an inn, the house maintained a reputation for being friendly and well maintained.

Kingston House was built for Alexander Johnston, a Scots-Irish immigrant, who came to western Pennsylvania in the late eighteenth century. In 1811 he purchased a tract of land, known as the Kingston tract, along the Loyahanna Creek in Westmoreland County. On his land, Johnston established one of the first iron businesses in western Pennsylvania. After a few lean years as an ironmaster, Johnston gave up his iron business and converted his home, Kingston House, into an inn. As an innkeeper, Johnston experienced quick success. The house remained a popular hostel through the 1840's. Aside from his commercial pursuits, Johnston also was active in county political affairs. A staunch Federalist and later a Jackson Democrat, he held numerous local offices including sheriff, justice of the peace, county treasurer and court register and recorder.

Alexander Johnston was not the only prominent resident of Kingston House. Johnston's oldest son, John, a graduate of West Point, had a notable military career which included service as a captain during the Civil War. Another son, Richard, served as a volunteer in the Mexican War. A survivor of many bloody battles Richard was killed at Molinaro del Rey and afterward was remembered as a local war hero. The most distinguished of Johnston's sons was William Freame Johnston who was Governor of Pennsylvania from 1848 to 1852. William became president of the state Senate in 1847 after skillfully guiding relief measures through the state legislature. As Senate leader, he assumed executive responsibilities when Governor Shunk resigned in 1848. Immediately calling a special

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Continuation sheet Kingston House

Item number 8

Page 2

gubernatorial election, Johnston ran on the Whig ticket. Upon his election in October, 1848, he became the first Whig governor in Pennsylvania history. As governor Johnston significantly reduced the state debt and initiated actions that led to the publication of the Pennsylvania Archives and Colonial Records. After a narrow defeat in the 1851 gubernatorial election, Johnston returned to practice law in Westmoreland County, and remained active in political affairs on both local and state levels.

Kingston House has been recognized for some time as a fine architectural example of an early Western Pennsylvania home. It's size and quality are unusual for the early period in the region. Constructed in the Federal vernacular, Kingston House is of rubble stone masonry with irregular quoins defining the cornices. The house is 2½ stories with a five bay central block flanked by one story, two bay wings. The windows are double hung, 12 over 12 on the first floor and 8 over 12 on the second floor and in the wings. The wood entablatures on the front and rear facades have well proportioned brackets and a fluted motif on the cornices. Considered a spacious and attractive home by all who visited it, Kingston House has been a local landmark since the time it was constructed.

For almost 175 years Kingston House has had an important place in the history of Westmoreland County and Pennsylvania. As an integral part of the early transportation system in western Pennsylvania and because of its prominent occupants, Kingston House is a structure of great significance to Pennsylvania.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Albert, G. D., History of the County of Westmoreland, PA, Phila.:1882, pp. 175, 204, 221, 302,
Stotz, C.M. The Architectural Heritage of Early Western Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1936, pp. 43,44,46,173.84-87.

10. Geographical Data (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

Acreeage of nominated property 1.35 acres

Quadrangle name Derry

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on the southside of U.S. 30, 72 ft. west of the Kingston bridge; thence south 210 ft. with a rail fence, along the line of property now or formerly owned by John Johnson, to a private road; thence west with road 261 ft. to a right-angle bend; from there (SEE CONT. SHEET)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. George Swetnam/Helene Smith

organization N/A

date May 11, 1982

street & number (Smith) Box 104 A RD #3

telephone 412-832-7767

city or town Greensburg

state PA 15601

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Kingston House
Westmoreland County, Pa.

Zone: 17
E. 460980 N. 4461180

