

#05001598

HPDCOPY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tyler, Mary Elizabeth, House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 2887 Howell Mill Road
city, town Atlanta () vicinity of
county Fulton code 121
state Georgia code GA zip code 30327

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	2	1
sites	0	0
structures	0	1
objects	0	0
total	2	2

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

W. Ray Luce

12-7-05

Signature of certifying official

Date

W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

() entered in the National Register

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions:

Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Wood: weatherboard
roof	Asphalt
other	Brick

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House was built in 1921. It is located on Howell Mill Road in a wealthy suburban neighborhood north of downtown Atlanta. Located on a rise above Peachtree Creek east of Interstate 75, the house is surrounded by mature landscaping with a broad front lawn between the house and the road. The asphalt drive meanders past the house to the caretakers cottage and garage.

Built as a Classical Revival-style house, the exterior is dominated by a two-story classical portico supported by colossal Corinthian columns and a one-story front porch that wraps around the sides of the house. The recessed classical entrance features a leaded fanlight and sidelights. A second-story balcony is located above the main entrance. The hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the exterior is sided with weatherboard.

The Georgian-plan house featured four unequal-sized rooms divided by a wide center hall. The front and rear parlors on the south side shared an interior chimney. The dining room and the smaller library on the north side each had a chimney. The stair at the rear of the hall rose half a flight to a landing where two stairs led to the second floor. The second floor accommodated three bedrooms and a sleeping porch. A bathroom was located between the front bedrooms above the center hall.

The interior was altered in the decades following Tyler's three-year period of ownership. Subsequent property owners have made changes including removing the wall and chimney dividing the front and rear parlors, partitioning the original library into a lounge and powder room, and rebuilding the rear kitchen wing to include a pantry, butler's pantry, sitting area, office, and two porches. The staircase was altered so that only one flight rises from the landing to the second floor. Two bathrooms were

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Section 7—Description

added on the second floor. Interior finishes were also added, such as dentil molding, wainscoting, ceiling medallions, and the beam ceiling in the living room.

In 1977, the Eatons built a two-story wing behind the living room. Designed by Atlanta architectural designer John Baxter, the addition includes a library on the first floor linked by a spiral stair to the sitting room, enlarged bathroom, and closets on the second floor. In 2000, Daphne Eaton, an interior designer, with Laura DePree of Keith Summerour and Associates rebuilt the rear ell to include a butler's pantry, larger kitchen, office, and laundry room. The new rear porch was designed to match the Corinthian columns on the front porch. Baxter also added a bathroom to the Chestnut-paneled library. The original second floor bathroom at the front of the house was divided to accommodate a laundry room.

The property includes a two-story three-bay garage that was built after 2000 and a small, four-room caretakers cottage. Constructed c.1921, the frame cottage was originally built as a two-room dwelling. Nonhistoric changes to the landscape include the construction of a small oval pool at the rear of the house in 1958, the grading of the original terraced lawn, and the addition of new gardens and planting beds. The house retains its historic appearance framed by hardwood trees with a broad front lawn between the house and public right-of-way.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Social History
Women's History
Architecture

Period of Significance:

1921-1924

Significant Dates:

1921—Mary Elizabeth Tyler built her house on 20 acres of land on Howell Mill Road.

1924—Mary Elizabeth Tyler, suffering from arteriosclerosis, moved to Los Angeles County, California in hopes of improving her health. She died there on September 10, 1924.

Significant Person(s):

Tyler, Mary Elizabeth

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House was built in 1921 by Mary Elizabeth "Bessie" Tyler, a major figure in the 1920s revival of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. The Classical Revival-style house was featured in newspaper articles and was a showplace for the Klan. Tyler built the house with money she derived from Klan memberships and it represents her success in expanding the Klan from an Atlanta-based social fraternity to a nationwide social and political organization.

In 1919, in an effort to revive the flagging Ku Klux Klan, Imperial Wizard William J. Simmons, who had begun cross-burning ceremonies atop Stone Mountain in 1915, hired Klan member Edward Young Clarke and his business partner Mary Elizabeth "Bessie" Tyler to boost Klan membership rolls. Clarke and Tyler formed the Southern Publicity Association, which was located in the Flatiron Building in downtown Atlanta. Clarke and Tyler devised a pyramid-type recruitment system whereby local Klan recruiters across the country received monetary rewards for each new enlistment. Clarke and Tyler received \$2.50 of each \$10 initiation fee. In the 1920s, the Klan's staff of lecturers traveled the country speaking its pro-patriotism, pro-prohibition, anti-prostitution message with remarks tailored to local prejudices, such as Asians in California, Mexicans in Arizona, Indians in the Dakotas, Catholics in New Hampshire, and African Americans in the South. Both middle-class whites and poorly educated, working-class whites joined in droves and the membership increased from 3,000 in 1920 to almost three million in 1923. Clarke and Tyler invested their newly made fortune in Klan-related enterprises such as the *Searchlight*, the Klan newspaper, and the Gate City Manufacturing Company, which was the exclusive source for the white robes and hoods desired by Klansmen. In 1921, Tyler purchased 20 acres on Howell Mill Road on which she built a large, two-story Classical Revival-style house. Before her death in 1924, Tyler gave the house to Clarke, who quickly defaulted on the mortgage. The house was sold at public auction the following year.

The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House is significant in the area of social history at the national level of significance because it was the home of Mary Elizabeth Tyler who was instrumental in reviving the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. The Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866 as a social club whose members also galloped around town wearing hoods and terrorizing the freed black population. Soon, the Klan's main objective was to drive freed blacks away from polling places and into a state of economic and political subservience. Members, who were mostly rural Confederate veterans, sought to undermine Reconstruction. By 1872, the Klan leadership, split by infighting and a reputation as a terrorist group, disbanded the organization. Federal troops sent to contain the violence chased beleaguered Klansmen into hiding. By the end of Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan had ceased to be an active organization.

William J. Simmons reorganized the "second" Klan in 1915 with a Thanksgiving Day cross-burning ceremony atop of Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, Georgia. He centered his philosophy on a populist ideal of native-born Americanism. Southern traditionalists held a romantic memory of the Klan, believing it was necessary to save Southern white civilization from blacks, who had been spurred on by radical Republican Reconstructionists. Simmons adopted the 19th-century Klan's rituals, including secret initiations and white robes and hoods, along with its philosophy of white supremacy.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Simmons' success fed on the racism and xenophobia created by D. W. Griffith's 1915 film "The Birth of a Nation," and the lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish pencil factory manager in Atlanta who was accused of killing a young Christian girl. The membership was "... restricted to native-born American citizens who believe in the tenets of the Christian religion and owe no allegiance to any foreign Government, nation, political institution, sect, people or person." The Klan excluded Negroes, Jews, Catholics, Asians, and all recent immigrants.

The second Klan remained a local and regional group with limited membership from 1915 through World War I. By 1919, Simmons had a few thousand paid members and small Klaverns (chapters) throughout the South, but he had not realized the promise of a national fraternal order that he had envisioned. To help spread his vision, Simmons hired Edward Young Clarke and Mary Elizabeth Tyler, founders of the Southern Publicity Association, a small "public relations" firm in Atlanta, whose clients included the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Anti-Saloon League.

Tyler and Clarke succeeded in tapping popular sentiments of the era to support the growth of the resurrected Klan organization. Many Americans felt an emotional letdown after the fervor of World War I because of the Bolshevik uprising in Russia, race riots in the North and South, the migration of millions of blacks from the rural South to the urban centers of the North, concern over the rising Catholic population, distrust of foreigners and immigrants, and discontent and uncertainty with the rapidly changing modern American society in which radios, automobiles, and electricity were increasingly common. For many Americans, the Klan developed into a new social club, like the Elks, Rotarians, or Woodsmen of World. With the Klan's pronounced advocacy of Prohibition and the teaching of Protestant Christian religion in schools, it was seen by some as the savior of the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant way of life.

Tyler and Clarke began their work with the Klan in 1919 when the Klan had a membership of 2,000 to 3,000. Tyler and Clarke formed the Propagation Department of the Ku Klux Klan, which developed the ideas and strategies to boost Klan membership. By 1921, the Klan numbered almost 100,000 members, and by 1924 membership reached almost three-and-a-half million. Money was flowing into the Klan coffers not only from initiation fees but also from sales of Klan regalia and publications produced by the headquarters in Atlanta. The group became so influential in politics that many politicians felt compelled to join or at least court the Klan. The Klan marched in uniform in Washington, D.C., during the 1924 Democratic National Convention.

By the mid-1920s, membership in the Klan had spread from Georgia and Alabama into the Midwest, West, and the Northern Plains. Because of its increased memberships, the Klan wielded political influence in Texas, Oklahoma, Indiana, Oregon, and Maine, even more than in the South. At the height of the Klan's popularity in the mid-1920s, Indiana had as many as 500,000 members, whereas Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana each had between 50,000 and 200,000. Ohio and Texas each had as many as 450,000 members. As it embraced more members, the Klan became characterized by intolerance and prejudice toward those who looked, behaved, or believed differently than its membership. These attitudes manifested themselves in increasing acts of discrimination, intimidation, and outright violence. As the Klan increased its appeal to some segments of American

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

society, it also became feared, hated, and opposed by others.

In the early 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan touted itself as a white, Protestant, male-dominated secret fraternal order. The Klan's "all-American" philosophy, its support for Prohibition and religious fundamentalism, and its desire for a more conservative society also appealed to women. Satellite organizations in sympathy with the Klan sprung up, such as the Ladies of the Invisible Empire and the Grand League of Protestant Women. The Grand League called for "white supremacy, protection of womanhood, and defense of the flag." Some women's societies had a public presence, but many adopted the secrecy and the exclusionary practices of the Klan, even wearing hoods and costumes that appeared similar to the Klan's. As early as 1922, letters to the Klan's newspaper protested the exclusion of women from the Klan. The recent passage of the women's right to vote and the importance of women's activity in the temperance movement convinced Klan leaders to open the membership to women. Simmons appointed Mary Elizabeth Tyler to oversee plans for a women's organization, and she formed the Women of the Klan.

In the early 1920s, the Klan came under the scrutiny of Congress and the national press. Charges of immorality and mismanagement mounted, spurring the *New York World* to launch an in-depth investigation into the financial world of the Klan in 1921. The stories were published in national, regional, and local newspapers, including the *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* in Georgia. Simmons, Tyler, and Clarke were singled out for the wealth they accumulated through Klan memberships and other Klan-related activities. In 1921, the House Rules Committee held hearings on the Klan, but rather than diminishing the Klan's influence, however, these hearings and the publicity around them resulted in further increases in Klan membership. By the end of 1922, the Klan operated in 39 states.

Clarke and Tyler brought Hiram Evans, a dentist from Dallas, Texas, to Atlanta to assist the Propagation Department. Later, they secretly groomed Evans to succeed Simmons as head of the Klan. The conspirators persuaded Simmons to take a six-month vacation. When he returned, the coup was complete and Evans held the title of Imperial Wizard and had control of the Klan. Simmons received the newly created title of Emperor. Evans then defected from his co-conspirators Tyler and Clarke and decided they must relinquish control of the Propaganda Department. By November 1923, Evans succeeded in canceling the contract with the Southern Publicity Association. Evans banished Clarke from the Klan. Tyler, whose health was failing, left Atlanta and moved to California where she died in 1924. Under a federal indictment in Texas for fraud, Clarke fled the country. Later, he returned to start his own fraternal order, the Mystic Kingdom.

Hiram Evans ruled the Klan as the Imperial Wizard from 1924 to 1929. In transforming the Klan into a political movement, Evans sought control over Klansman who held elective office. In order to create a new public image and reach the widest electorate, he ordered an end to vigilante activity. He even tried to create a Klan church as a separate Protestant denomination. In the face of his attempts to moderate the Klan, membership declined. The passion and nativism of the post-World War I years abated and the increasing prosperity of the late 1920s provided an alternative to the Klan prophets of doom. In addition, a pronounced antagonism toward the Klan was established in

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

the nation's urban centers. By the end of 1926, the Klan's membership had fallen to 2,000,000. By 1928, the Klan's membership numbered fewer than 150,000 and its political influence was practically non-existent.

The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House is significant in the area of women's history at the state level of significance because Tyler achieved extraordinary success in business and social organization during a period when few women engaged in entrepreneurship. An emerging statewide context on women and women-related historic resources in Georgia indicates that Tyler was in the vanguard of women working in the field of business. Her success as a businesswoman in a male-dominated business environment is even more remarkable given the fact that her most famous and financially rewarding client was a male-dominated organization, the Ku Klux Klan.

Her early life is not well documented but Mary Elizabeth "Bessie" Tyler was married at age 14 and deserted by 15. In her middle 30s, Tyler was a widow with a grown daughter. She learned about the Klan from her brother who had joined the order. By 1919, she formed a partnership with Edward Y. Clarke to create a publicity company known as the Southern Publicity Association, with offices located in the prominent Flatiron Building in downtown Atlanta.

In 1919, Clarke and Tyler signed a contract with the Ku Klux Klan to promote and increase its membership. Their efforts were extraordinarily successful. The emotional attitudes of the era played to their advantage, with labor strikes, bolshevism, and large waves of immigration following World War I. Tyler, who was known for business acumen and financial expertise, developed a sophisticated recruitment and fee structure in which she and Clarke received \$2.50 of every \$10 initiation fee. This fee was also divided among the local recruiters so that little was left for the national organization. Hundreds of thousands joined the Klan, resulting in a financial windfall for the publicists. Clarke and Tyler, wealthy from their Klan activities, invested in new Klan-related enterprises, such as the Gate City Manufacturing Company, which was the only source for the white robes and hoods eagerly desired by Klansmen. The company also produced lodge supplies, paraphernalia, and equipment for the use of secret societies. The official Klan newspaper, *Searchlight*, was owned by Tyler and published in the Flatiron Building.

In June 1921, Clarke and Tyler incorporated the Clarke Realty Company to handle the purchase and sale of the growing number of Klan properties in Atlanta. The realty company bought a \$25,000 apartment for Clarke and a \$45,000 home, known as Klan Krest, for William J. Simmons on Peachtree Road. In that same year, the Klan purchased a house on Peachtree Street for \$75,000, which served as the Imperial Palace, the ceremonial headquarters of the national organization (which is no longer extant). The Klan also bought ten acres of the Civil War battlefield on Peachtree Creek, on which they built a 5,000-seat meeting hall to hold the first "Imperial Klonvocation," or national convention of the Klan (which is also no longer extant). In 1921, the Klan purchased Lanier University in Atlanta, which operated for less than a year.

In April 1921, at the high point of her association with the Ku Klux Klan, Tyler purchased 14 acres of land on Howell Mill Road, north of Peachtree Creek, on which she built a large, two-story Classical

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

Revival-style house. The house was mentioned in newspaper accounts and was likely considered a showplace of the Ku Klux Klan during the early 1920s. By the spring of 1924, Tyler was suffering from arteriosclerosis and had been kicked out of the Klan. In hopes of improving her health, Tyler, her second husband, and her adult daughter moved to Los Angeles County, California, where she died on September 10, 1924.

In the four years that Tyler engineered the meteoric rise of the Ku Klux Klan, she amassed a personal fortune that enabled her to purchase real estate and develop independent businesses. At the time of her death in 1924, Tyler's cash worth was well over \$500,000.

The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House is significant in the area of architecture at the local level of significance because it is a good example of the Classical Revival style. Popular throughout Georgia from the 1890s to the 1930s, the Classical Revival style employed combinations of Greek and Roman details drawn from the Early Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles of the early 19th century. The Tyler House features a symmetrical facade and a one- and two-story portico supported by colossal columns, the most common element of the style. The Georgian plan was altered and additions to the rear have compromised the overall form of the house, but its front façade with monumental portico and flanking porches remains the dominant historic architectural feature.

An interesting symbolic adjunct to the architectural significance of the house is the way in which the house's Classical Revival-style architecture lent a degree of respectability and legitimacy to the organization with which the house's original owner was closely related. Throughout Atlanta and Georgia, Classical Revival-style architecture is closely associated with economic success, social acceptability, and cultural achievement. The choice of such a powerful symbol underscored Mary Elizabeth Tyler's efforts to succeed at business while helping to build an influential social organization.

National Register Criteria

A—The Mary Elizabeth Tyler House is significant in the area of social history because of its association with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1920s.

B—The Tyler House is significant in the area of women's history because of its association with Mary Elizabeth Tyler, an extraordinarily successful businesswoman who transformed the Ku Klux Klan from a regional order to a nationwide social and political organization.

C—The Tyler House is significant in the area of architecture because it is a good example of a Classical Revival-style house. Built in the first decades of the 20th century, these houses are defined by prominent one- and two-story porches, symmetrical fenestration, and classical details that adorn traditional Georgian house types.

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1921 with the construction of the Mary Elizabeth Tyler House and ends in 1924, when Mary Elizabeth Tyler, suffering from arteriosclerosis, moved to California in hopes of improving her health.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The nomination contains two contributing resources: the house and caretakers cottage. The garage, which is less than 50 years of age, is counted as a noncontributing building and the pool, constructed in 1958, is a noncontributing structure.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The following narrative was produced by Ced Dolder, Historic Preservation Consultant for Ray & Associates, in 2004.

In 1915, William J. Simmons revitalized the Ku Klux Klan with a cross-burning ceremony on Thanksgiving night atop Stone Mountain, located 15 miles east of Atlanta. Membership in the Klan languished through World War I. Simmons employed a publicity firm to increase the Klan's visibility and membership rolls. Klan member Edward Young Clarke and Mary Elizabeth Tyler were the owners, managers, and only employees of the Southern Publicity Association. Clarke, a nervous energetic man, was a member of an established Atlanta family whose father at one time had owned the local newspaper, the *Atlanta Constitution*. By 1919, he joined in partnership with Mary Elizabeth Tyler to form a publicity company known as the Southern Publicity Association, with offices located in the prominent Flatiron Building in Atlanta. Mary Elizabeth Tyler had been married at age 14 and deserted by 15. In her middle 30s, Tyler was a widow with a grown daughter. She learned about the Klan from her brother who had joined the order. Tyler provided her business acumen and financial expertise to the Southern Publicity Association. By late 1919, Southern Publicity had successfully promoted the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Anti-Saloon League.

Simmons found in Clarke a great ability to organize men and movements and in Tyler unusual financial aptitude and keen perception into men's character. They both were shrewd and skillful in business promotions. Clarke was recognized as a "modern disciple of P. T. Barnum," and was able to convince Simmons and the Klan membership of his capabilities. Tyler was characterized as someone with a calculating mind and business nerve. Together they created a dynamic force to promote and expand the Ku Klux Klan. Simmons signed a contract with Southern Publishing Company on June 7, 1920 to publicize and propagate the Klan.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Tyler and Clarke realized immediately the popularity of the Klan's philosophy to some segments of American society and the potential for financial growth. They immediately began re-organizing the Klan and formed the Propagation Department, which was headed by Clarke. Edward Clarke, who received the title of Imperial Kleagle (General Superintendent of the Organization Division), publicized the Klan to increase membership rolls. Under the terms of their contract, Clarke and Tyler received \$2.50 from every \$10 initiation fee.

Clarke and Tyler divided the nation into eight "Domains." Each was presided over by a Grand Goblin. The Domains were then divided into "Realms" (regions of the country). Each Realm had a King Kleagle with his own staff of publicists known as Kleagles. The Kleagles received \$4 for each new member they recruited. The \$10 initiation fee was divided among the King Kleagle who got \$1, the Grand Goblin \$.50, the Klan treasury \$2, and Clarke and Tyler who received \$2.50. Clarke and Tyler increased the membership of the Klan from 2,000-3,000 in 1920 to almost three million by 1923. By the mid-1920s, the Klan claimed over four million members, the most members ever claimed by the organization.

Simmons, an orator and an idea man, was not involved in the organizational details of the Klan. Clarke and Tyler worked themselves into key positions of power that led to their own enrichment. Untold amounts were spent to publicize and advertise the Klan in newspapers and magazines. The Klan maintained a staff of mostly ministers, who traveled the nation speaking of the country's future peril. The lecturers tailored their speeches to whatever local prejudices existed: Asians in California, Mexicans in Arizona, the Indians in the Dakotas, Catholics in New England, and African Americans in the South. Furthermore, the Klan was patriotic, supported prohibition, and was anti-prostitution. Thus, recruitment could pander to any and all local passions. Clarke and Tyler directed their message to the emotions and never couched their propaganda in intellectual terms. New members of the Klan were middle-class and lower-class, less-educated whites of both industrial and rural America. The membership also included men of prominence and civic leaders who joined to advance themselves in local politics.

Clarke and Tyler's efforts to promote the Klan were extraordinarily successful. The emotional attitudes of the era played to their advantage, with strikes, bolshevism, and waves of immigrants following World War I. Hundreds of thousands were recruited to join the order, resulting in a financial windfall for Clarke and Tyler. With their newly found wealth, they began to increase their financial holdings and develop new enterprises, such as the Gate City Manufacturing Company, which was the only source for the white robes and hoods eagerly desired by Klansmen. The company also manufactured lodge supplies, paraphernalia, and equipment for the use of secret societies. Atlanta city directories indicate that C. B. Davis and wife, Lottie, owned the company. However, court testimony reveals that Clarke and Tyler owned the company. The official Klan newspaper, *Searchlight*, was owned by Tyler and published in the Flatiron Building in Atlanta. Clarke owned the National Motor Specialty Corporation.

Clarke and Tyler incorporated the Clarke Realty Company in June 1921 to handle the purchase and sale of the growing number of Klan properties in Atlanta. The realty company bought a \$25,000

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

apartment for Clarke and a \$45,000 home, known as Klan Krest, for William J. Simmons on Peachtree Road. The Klan explained to its membership that the home had been donated by rank-and-file members as a token of love and esteem for the Imperial Wizard, although it was likely purchased by Tyler. In 1921, the Klan also purchased the former home of H. M. Durant at 2699 Peachtree Street for \$75,000, which served as the Imperial Palace, the ceremonial headquarters of the national organization. (The Cathedral of Christ the King razed the Imperial Palace in 1937 to build a cathedral on the site.) The Klan also bought ten acres of the Civil War battlefield on Peachtree Creek, on which they built a 5,000-seat meeting hall to hold the first "Imperial Klonvocation," or national convention of the Klan. In 1921, the Klan purchased Lanier University in Atlanta, which offered degrees in liberal arts, fine arts, home economics, commerce, law, and pharmacy. Required courses included the Bible and American history. The University operated for possibly a year, but was not listed in the Atlanta City Directory in 1923.

In 1922, Simmons and Clarke's influence in the Klan began to erode. Clarke was accused of fleecing the Imperial Treasury. His accounts were so tangled that no one could determine the true assets of the organization. Hiram W. Evans, a dentist from Dallas, Texas, came to Atlanta in the spring of 1922 to restore the finances of the organization. Soon, Evans was elected Imperial Wizard and Simmons was given the powerless office of "Emperor." Once elected Wizard, Evans cancelled the Klan's contract with Southern Publicity. Tyler left the Klan and soon after Clarke left. In 1923, as Simmons and Clarke fought to retake control of the Klan, Simmons reached a settlement with Evans. Clarke was "banished," suspended from Klan membership forever.

In April 1921, Tyler purchased 14 acres of land on Howell Mill Road, north of Peachtree Creek. That year, she built a large, two-story Classical Revival-style house. The house was mentioned in newspaper accounts and was likely considered a showplace of the Ku Klux Klan during the early 1920s. Tyler married a theatrical agent, Stephen W. Grow, in the summer of 1922. By the spring of 1924 she was suffering from arteriosclerosis. In hopes of improving her health, Tyler, her husband, and her adult daughter, Dorris M. Tyler, moved to Los Angeles County, California, where she died on September 10, 1924.

After Mary Elizabeth Tyler's death, the house was sold eight times between 1924 and 1927. Tyler's daughter deeded the Howell Mill Road property to Edward Y. Clarke on July 7, 1924 for \$32,400. Clarke indebted himself to the Mortgage Security Company on July 8, 1924, and it subsequently signed the mortgage to W. S. Eakins on July 15, 1924. Eakins defaulted on the debt and the house was sold on the courthouse steps of Fulton County for \$3,000 in November 1925. On November 4, 1925, C. B. Davis sold a quit claim deed to M. W. Lamar of Dade County, Florida. Lamar retained ownership until June 20, 1927 when he sold the property to Mrs. June Courtney. By August 4, 1927, Courtney had sold all 14 acres to James B. Scales. Scales in turn sold the property to Mrs. Elizabeth T. B. Cobb on September 2, 1927.

Beginning in 1927, the house was occupied by the new owners, Richard and Elizabeth Cobb. Richard was a sales manager for the Consolidated Quarries Corporation. During the Depression years, records show that Cobb refinanced his mortgage to Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company in

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

1929, but remained living in the house. Cobb's name is not listed in the 1933 *Atlanta City Directory*. Consequently in the years from 1932 through 1937, it is unknown who resided at 2887 Howell Mill Road, but it is thought to have been a nursing home. Between its construction in 1921 and 1937, additional bathrooms and bedrooms were added and the wall separating the front and rear parlors was removed.

In 1937, Penn Mutual sold the property to Dr. H. Clifford Sauls and his wife, Betty. Sauls bought the property for \$18,000 and the taxes owed on the property. Sauls was a prominent physician in partnership with Dr. Carter Smith, and had offices on the 12th floor of the Medical Arts Building in downtown Atlanta. Sauls' purchased the entire 14 acres, but he divided the tract several times during his ownership so that the houses rested on approximately six acres at the time of its sale to the Berrys in 1948. Sauls was constructing a new house on the site of the tennis court when he died suddenly. His wife moved into the new house, and in 1948 sold the older house and remaining acreage to Dr. and Mrs. Maxwell Berry.

Dr. Berry was another prominent Atlanta physician and founder of West Paces Ferry Hospital and Annandale Village in Suwannee, Georgia. Dr. Berry was a founding Elder of Trinity Presbyterian Church on Howell Mill Road. The Berry's hosted organizational meetings, policy discussions, study groups, and social gatherings. The Trinity church congregation, which embraced inclusive racial policies as a basic tenet of faith, operated the Trinity School, the first private school in metropolitan Atlanta to desegregate its student body.

The Berrys sold several acres on the north side of the property with frontage on Howell Mill Road in the early 1950s. The current property at 2887 Howell Mill, now just under four acres, was deeded by the Berrys to their daughter Daphne Berry Eaton in 1977 for \$225,000. The house is now held as a joint tenancy by Mrs. Eaton and her husband, Dr. S. Boyd Eaton.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.96 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 739000 Northing 3746540

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The nomination includes the house and remaining 4-acres historically associated with the Mary Elizabeth Tyler House. Some of the land originally associated with the estate was sold by a previous property owner between 1937 and 1948.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 34 Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 1600
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** December 1, 2005
e-mail steven_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Ced Dolder, historic preservation consultant
organization Ray and Associates
mailing address 327 7th Street, NE
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30308
telephone N/A
e-mail N/A

- () property owner
(X) consultant
() regional development center preservation planner
() other:

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) S. Boyd Eaton and Daphne Berry Eaton
organization (if applicable) N/A
mailing address 2887 Howell Mill Road
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30327
e-mail (optional) N/A