NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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: Nelson, Thomas, House

other names/site number: Forest Hill; O-44

2. Location

street & number: 700 Tenth Street — N/A not for publication

city, town: Boonville — N/A vicinity

state: Missouri code: MO county: Cooper code: 053 zip code: 65233

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
[x] private	[x] building(s)	1	____ buildings
[ ] public-local	[ ] district	____	____ sites
[ ] public-State	[ ] site	____	____ structures
[ ] public-Federal	[ ] structure	____	____ objects
	[ ] object	1	____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Resources of Boonville, Mo.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: Claire F. Blackwell — Date: 3 August 85

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:) ____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic: single dwelling	Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Greek Revival	foundation Brick walls Brick roof Asphalt other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

THOMAS NELSON HOUSE/FOREST HILL

SUMMARY: Constructed in 1843, the Thomas Nelson House, the Forest Hill which was the subject of one of George Caleb Bingham's few surviving landscapes, displays features and massing common to the late Classical Revival and early Greek Revival styles. The roof of the two-story with basement side gabled structure is sheathed with composition shingles, and interior end chimneys are located at each gable end. The single pile with central hall plan is repeated on each floor. A historic one-story with basement rear wing imparts an ell shape to the structure, while symmetrical, one-story wings added circa 1946 flank the two-story central section but do not break the plane of the facade. Despite the circa 1946 alterations, the Thomas Nelson House retains sufficient physical characteristics to convey integrity in terms of its Greek Revival workmanship, materials, and design, as well as its association with the George Caleb Bingham painting "Forest Hill--the Nelson Homestead." Its integrity of location is also unimpaired.

ELABORATION: The facade, or west elevation is dominated by a two-story gabled, pedimented portico, constructed circa 1853, which shelters three of the five bays set on each level of the facade. The four Doric columns which support the pediment and second story gallery are formed of brick, a technique also employed on Boonville's Thespian Hall, constructed circa 1855 (listed 1969). An iron railing on the second story gallery was evident in Bingham's 1877 painting, while a wooden balustrade with turned wood ornamentation enclosed the first story porch. The central bay contains a slightly recessed doorway with transom, narrow sidelights, and a heavy, simple surround common to the Greek Revival and some earlier styles. The six-over-six, double hung windows which occupy the remaining bays are shuttered and capped with flat, slightly pointed stone lintels. The northernmost and southernmost basement bays, which contain similar sash, are barely visible. Two additional bays are located under the porch. Several changes in the second floor fenestration occurred in a 1946 remodeling. The five bays were originally identical to those on the first floor, but, in 1946, the central bay was converted from a door to a window identical to those on the first story to accommodate a bathroom which was installed in the west end of the second floor central hall. The change is

[x] See continuation sheet

still apparent because of the wide door lintel which was retained over the new 1946 window. The two bays which flank the central bay originally contained windows but were converted to narrow doors with transoms. Their lintels were unaltered. The remaining two bays were unchanged and are identical to the first story window bays. The wide entablature at the roofline is unadorned, although the cornice halts short of the facade edge.

Both the north and south elevations of the main, two-story section are unadorned, their sole features the wide chimneys. In 1942, Gus and Sue Boller purchased the house and, in 1946, hired the architectural firm of Swanson and Turney of Kansas City to design a garage addition on the north elevation and, to retain the symmetry of the house, a comparable addition on the south elevation. Cochran Construction Company of Boonville was hired to build the wings. To minimize the impact of the additions, both wings were set back from the line of the facade and appear to recede from the original house. Consequently, they extend beyond the line of the rear elevation, and their floor levels are lower than the floor level of the main structure, as well. Both wings feature details which mimic Classical Revival rather than Greek Revival features. Therefore, although constructed of similar materials and with a similar entablature at their rooflines, they do not detract from the original circa 1843-1853 house.

The west elevation of both wings contains two symmetrically placed bays which contain six-over-six double hung windows. The north elevation of the northern wing, which contains a garage, houses two sliding garage doors surmounted by arched windows. The east elevation is featureless. A classic palladian window consisting of three bays with an arched central bay is set in the center of the south elevation of the southern wing, which serves as a parlor or sitting room. The east elevation of this wing also contains two symmetrically placed six-over-six double hung windows.

The symmetrical arrangement of the facade bays is maintained on the rear, or east, elevation, and the six-over-six double hung sash are repeated, although the stone lintels are absent. Due to the sloping nature of the lot on which the house is located, much of the basement is exposed on this elevation. On the south end of the first floor level of the central structure, two window bays are visible. The remainder of the first floor level, which corresponds to the central hall and northernmost room, are concealed by the ell and an enclosed porch. All five second-story bays are intact and contain windows identical to those visible on the first story. Roofline entablature is identical to that on the facade. Only one basement window, located under the southernmost bay, remains. A second bay has been filled with brick.

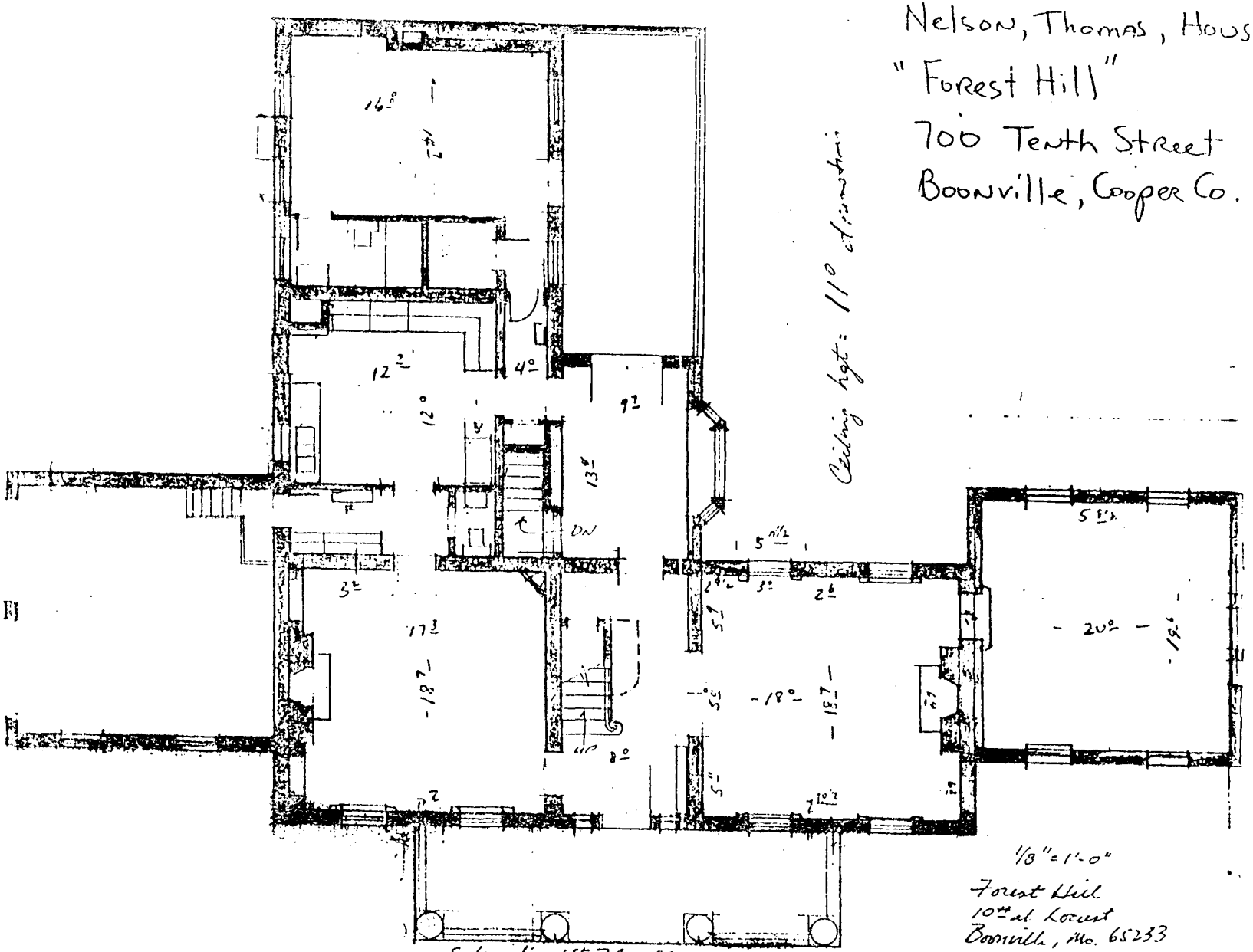
The one-story, gable roofed ell extends flush with the north elevation of the two-story central structure. In 1946, the ell, which was severly deteriorated, was also restored by the Bollers. Its entablature at the roofline is severely reduced and an interior end chimney is set in the gable end. Three asymmetrical bays comprise its main level features. The westernmost bay is occupied by the leaves of a casement window, each leaf containing six panels. In the 1946 remodeling, this window was converted into a door, which led to a small porch or stoop, both removed in a recent restoration. The remaining two bays contain the six-over-six, double hung sash which are common to the other elevations. A single identical sash is partially visible in the basement level, set roughly below the central bay of the main level.

Single bays on each level are set in the north half of the west elevation of the ell. They display the sash common to the house.

A screened porch extends approximately two-thirds of the length of the south elevation of the ell. The remaining one-third of that elevation, which joins the main structure at its central hall, is enclosed with brick veneer with a cantilevered bay window centered in the south wall of the brick enclosure. An additional window opens onto the porch from the brick enclosure's east wall. Three bays--a centrally placed door flanked by windows--open from the ell onto the porch. The same fenestration is repeated on the basement level, with the exception of a scaled-down, six-over-six, double hung window substituted for the bay window. The porch overhang creates a ground level gallery for the basement ell on the elevation. Three brick columns with arched headers support the porch.

The interior of the Thomas Nelson House was extensively remodeled in 1946, although most of the original floor plan was retained. Few interior details remain, although the two fireplaces in the first story of the main central structure exist, in altered form. Most alterations to the original floor plan occur in the ell, which has been repartitioned on the main level into a kitchen, hallway, and den, and the brick enclosed portion of the reconstructed porch, adapted as a dining room.

Nelson, Thomas, House
"Forest Hill"
700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper Co.



Schematic 1st Floor Plan.

1/8" = 1'-0"

Forest Hill
10th at Locust
Boonville, Mo. 65233

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) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1843	1843
Art	c. 1853	c. 1853
	1877	1877

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY: The Thomas Nelson House, Forest Hill, 700 Tenth Street, is significant under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Despite circa 1946 additions, the house retains most of the features which characterized the Greek Revival architectural style and is one of the most distinctive examples of the style in Boonville (see "Historic Resources of Boonville: The Steamboat Era, 1826-1870"). The Nelson House is also significant under Criterion A in the area of ART. The house is the subject of one of Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham's later paintings, "Forest Hill--the Nelson Homestead," executed in 1877. "Forest Hill" is one of only fourteen surviving landscapes done by Bingham, who was primarily a portrait and genre painter. The painting of the Nelson house is acknowledged as a unique example of a type of painting rarely attempted by the artist, and the Nelson House retains the form and setting which Bingham attempted to convey in his 1877 painting.

ELABORATION: In 1843, Thomas Withers Nelson, a Boonville merchant and wholesaler (see "Historic Resources of Boonville: The Steamboat Era, 1826-1870"), constructed his Greek Revival style house. The two story front porch with four Doric columns and iron balustrade on its second story was added circa 1853.

Architecture

From circa 1830 until 1850, the Greek Revival style was the dominant style of American domestic architecture. Introduced on public buildings circa 1825, the style was widely and rapidly disseminated by carpenters' guides and pattern books and persisted into the early 1860s in the interior states and rural areas. The circa 1853 full height and less than full width front porch of the Thomas Nelson House recalls the Early Classical Revival style from which the Greek Revival developed. Utilized by about one-fourth of all Greek Revival houses, this porch type was most common in the southern states. The Nelson House also exhibits most of the features which identified the style, such as a cornice line emphasized by wide trim, Doric columns, and an elaborate door

☒ See continuation sheet

surround incorporating transom and sidelights. Despite the circa 1946 additions and alterations, the Thomas Nelson House remains a distinctive example of the Greek Revival style in Boonville (see "Historic Resources of Boonville: The Steamboat Era, 1826-1870").

ART

A number of artists sketched and painted Missouri subjects during its frontier and early statehood periods, but George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879) "was the first to attempt a serious interpretation of the region."[1] Born in Virginia, Bingham came to Franklin, Missouri, with his family in 1819. After his father's death in 1823, the family moved to Arrow Rock and, at the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed as a cabinetmaker in Boonville. In 1833, the self-trained artist painted his first portraits, but his earliest extant paintings are from the following year. Also in 1834, Bingham opened a St. Louis studio. In 1837, he built a house in Arrow Rock (NHL 1965; NRHP 1966), which he occupied only on visits and sold in 1845. Bingham continued to paint and live in central Missouri and held both elective and appointive offices in the state, although he also worked and resided intermittently outside of his adopted state. For example, Bingham at various times maintained studios or accepted commissions in Natchez, Mississippi; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Paris; and Dusseldorf.[2]

While Bingham painted a number of studies of Missouri subjects and scenes, he was regarded primarily as a portraitist and several prominent citizens of Boonville, where Bingham briefly lived, sat for their portraits. In 1844-1845, Bingham painted Thomas Nelson; his wife, Mary Gay Wyan; and Mrs. Nelson's mother, Nancy Shanks Wyan. In 1869-1870, Bingham returned to paint the Nelsons' daughters, Mrs. James Day and Mrs. James T. Birch. In 1877, following the death of his second wife in the previous year, Bingham returned to Boonville for a summer visit with the Nelsons and again painted Nelson and his wife, and Mrs. Birch. In a letter to James Rollins, Bingham proudly described

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[1]Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Missouri, compiler, The WPA Guide to 1930s Missouri, new foreword by Charles van Ravenswaay and new introduction by Howard Wight Marshall and Walter A. Schroeder (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), p. 170.

[2]James Francis McDermott, George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), pp. 15-17 and 402-411; Robert L. Dyer, Boonville: An Illustrated History (Boonville, Missouri: Pekitanoui Publications, 1987), pp. 50-57; and George McCue, Bingham's Missouri [Catalogue of the collection of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis] (n.p., 1975).

the 1877 portraits of Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Birch as "the best female portraits that I have ever painted, and may show that my skill rather increases than diminishes with increasing years."[3] Mrs. Birch also served as the model for "The Palm Leaf Shade," which the artist began during this visit and which was completed the following year. From July through late September, 1877, Bingham remained with the Nelsons, where he occupied a temporary studio in the second floor north bedroom, according to oral tradition.[4]

In addition to the portraits of the Nelsons and Birch, Bingham also painted "Forest Hill--the Nelson Homestead," during this visit.[5] According to Maurice E. Bloch, the work is "an unusual type of landscape for Bingham . . . [He] seems actually to have gone further than the traditional portrait of an estate . . . by introducing figures that bring the composition into the realm of the storytelling picture."[6] Only forty landscapes painted by Bingham have been identified and only fourteen of these survive or have been rediscovered. Most of the landscapes were assigned by Fern Helen Rusk to what

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[3]C.B. Rollins, ed., "Letters of George Caleb Bingham to James S. Rollins, Part VII. Letters: October 26, 1873-November 4, 1877," Missouri Historical Review 33 (April 1939): 382.

[4]Interview with Sue Boller by Steve Mitchell, April 13, 1989, Boonville, Missouri; and McDermott, p. 156.

[5]The painting was originally misidentified as "Birch Homestead at Boonville." Fern Helen Rusk, George Caleb Bingham: The Missouri Artist (Jefferson City, Missouri, Hugh Stephens Company, 1917), p. 103; and E. Maurice Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: A Catalogue Raisonne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 146.

[6]Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 183; and Dyer, pp. 50-57. According to Anna Birch Lyons, "'the figures in the foreground are those of our colored nurse, (who cared for all of my parents last four children) named Polly Lee--together with myself, my brother (George Bingham Birch) and my sister (Cornelia Woodworth Birch). . .'" Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: A Catalogue Raisonne, p. 146. Mrs. Fulton Stephens, Nelson's great-granddaughter, added, "'the dog is announcing the arrival of the doctor in his carriage to bring my father (James Erskine Birch) into the world' . . ." Ibid.

she defined as Bingham's "third period (1856-79) . . . [which was] characterized by still further progress in facility of technique and expression, due in great part to his increased experience . . ."[7] Although Rusk described landscape painting as an "addition to his range of subjects,"[8] Bingham had attempted landscapes as early as 1835. Several landscapes were completed in 1845-1846 and from 1849 through 1851 for a number of Art Unions, but when these sources of patronage ended, so, apparently, did Bingham's interest.[9] During a trip to Colorado in 1872, Bingham resumed the painting of landscapes. With the building of the transcontinental railroads, there was renewed national interest in the West, which may have induced Bingham to proclaim his intention to devote more time to landscape painting. Despite his pronouncement, few of his attempts during this period were completed.[10]

Critics acknowledged the technical competence of Bingham's landscape paintings. However, his work was conservative and not innovative. Bingham, generally, was content with simple, precisely organized and composed representations of heroic, idealized scenes. In his landscapes, he usually employed prescribed formulas for his compositions to create fashionable "fancy pictures" for Art Union patrons.[11] Most of Bingham's known landscapes were accomplished without relation to particular locales or features. In contrast, "Forest Hill" was similar to the background landscapes found in some genre pictures, in which the compositions were less romanticized and more realistic, usually representing western scenes. The painting of which the Nelson House was the subject was also one of his few landscape compositions of an actual scene and one of the few late landscapes concerned with a Missouri subject. Of the fourteen surviving examples of his landscape paintings, "Forest Hill--the Nelson Homestead," "is the only known landscape by Bingham that is actually a 'portrait' of a gentleman's estate."[12]

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[7]Rusk, p. 110.

[8]Ibid., p. 111.

[9]Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist, pp. 171-172.

[10]McDermott, p. 157; and Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist, pp. 173-174.

[11]Bloch, George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist, p. 175.

[12]Ibid., pp. 175-175 and 247; and McDermott, p. 180-181.

Bloch, E. Maurice. George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of An Artist. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

_____. George Caleb Bingham: A Catalogue Raisonne. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Boller, Sue. Interview with Steve Mitchell. Boonville, Missouri. April 13, 1989.

Caldwell, Dorothy J., ed. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue. Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963.

Christ-Janer, Albert. George Caleb Bingham: Frontier Painter of Missouri. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975.

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Melton, E.J. Melton's History of Cooper County, Missouri. Columbia: E.W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1937.

Rollins, C.B., ed., "Letters of George Caleb Bingham to James S. Rollins, Part VII. Letters: October 26, 1873-November 4, 1877," Missouri Historical Review 33 (April 1939): 349-384.

Rusk, Fern Helen. George Caleb Bingham: The Missouri Artist. Jefferson City, Missouri: Hugh Stephens Company, 1917.

Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Missouri, compiler. The WPA Guide to 1930s Missouri. New foreword by Charles van Ravenswaay and new introduction by Howard Wight Marshall and Walter A. Schroeder. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[x] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] 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:

- [x] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	522980	4313700
B			
C			
D			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The property lies within an undesignated lot within the city of Boonville, Missouri. Due to the fact that this area has not received block or lot numbers, the following verbal boundary description conforms to the house lot as it is today. Beginning at the northeast corner of the boundary (the southeast corner of 10th and Boller Streets) then east along Boller Street 150', then south 180', then west to 10th Street 150', then north along 10th Street 180' to the beginning point.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the single parcel of land that is occupied by the property and its immediate surroundings. The legally recorded lot lines that have been historically associated with the property retain integrity and form the limits of the boundary.

[ ] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Preservation Planning Section

organization Missouri Historic Preservation Program date May 5, 1989

street & number P. O. Box 176 telephone 314/751-5365

city or town Jefferson City state Missouri zip code 65102

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street

Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri

Steve Mitchell

December 13, 1988

Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory

View from west

1 of 9

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
View from Northwest

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Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
View from Southwest

#3 of 9

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
View from Southeast

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Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
View from Northeast
5 of 9

ANTIQUES

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
Detail of facade porch; view from Northwest
#6 of 9

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
View from west, detail of entrance
#7 of 9

Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
December 13, 1988
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
Detail of window, view from west

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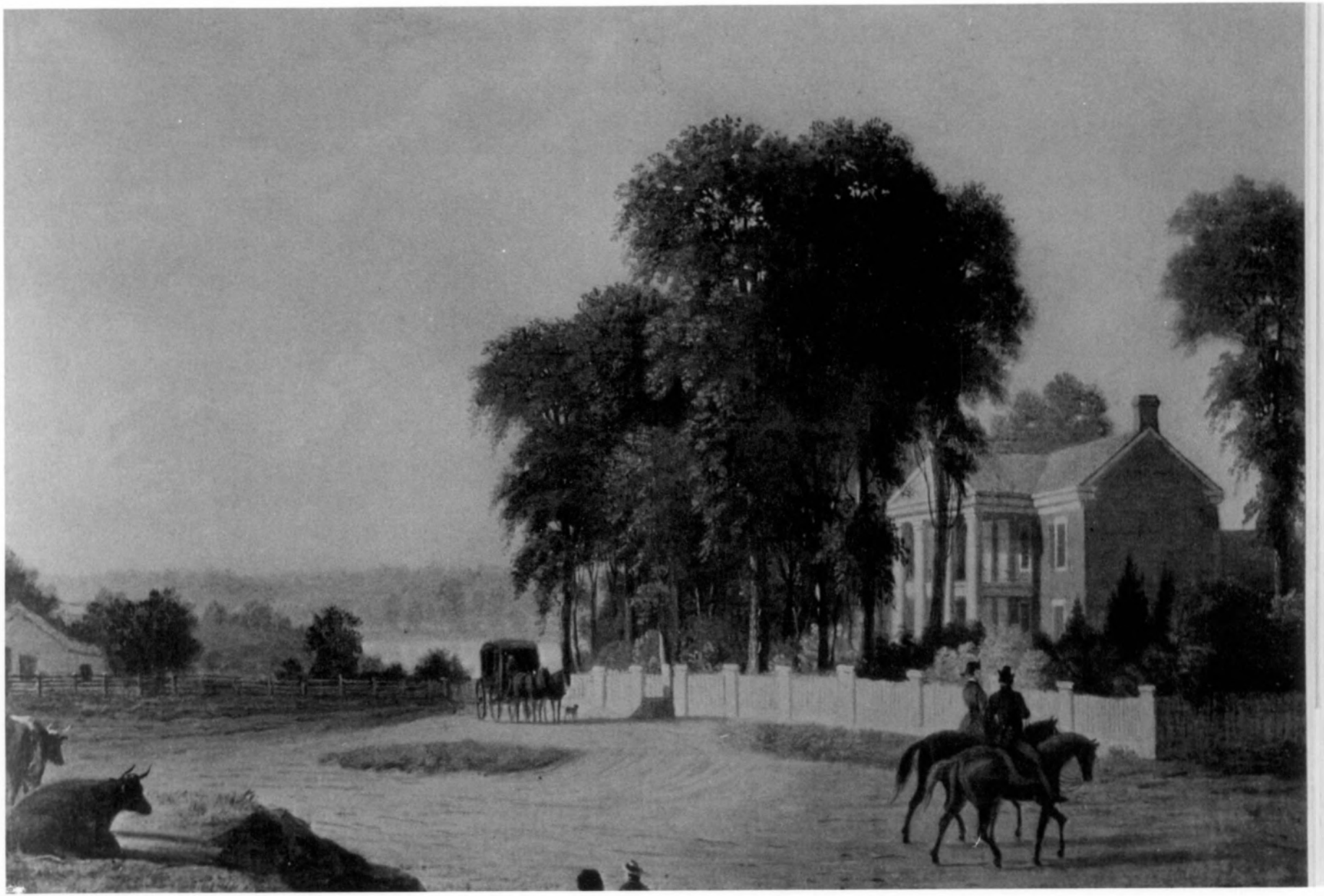
Nelson, Thomas, House

700 Tenth Street
Boonville, Cooper County, Missouri
Steve Mitchell
July 27, 1989
Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory
Detail of painting, "Forest Hill - The Nelson Homestead,"
by George Caleb Bingham
9 of 9