

PH 0501280

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 20 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 30 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

\*\*

Seawell-Ross-Isom House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Beauregard and Elm

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fort Gibson

\_\_ VICINITY OF

No. 2

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oklahoma

40

Muskogee

101

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

## OWNERSHIP

## STATUS

## PRESENT USE

\_\_ DISTRICT

\_\_ PUBLIC

 OCCUPIED

\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_ MUSEUM

 BUILDING(S) PRIVATE

\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_ COMMERCIAL

\_\_ PARK

\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_ BOTH

\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

 PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_ OBJECT

\_\_ IN PROCESS

 YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_ NO

\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

M. M. Norris

STREET &amp; NUMBER

2516 Taylor Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Commerce

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Texas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Muskogee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Muskogee

Oklahoma

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Special Seawell-Ross-Isom House Survey

DATE

1976

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Survey

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As indicated on the Harris map of Fort Gibson, "Lieut. Seawell's Private Property" consisted of an 18 x 30-foot log house connected by covered walkway to a separate kitchen structure on the east so as to form an "L." It retained this configuration until after its purchase by Walter Scott in 1909. Scott made no changes in the two 15 x 18-foot rooms, connected by massive, eight-foot-wide, back-to-back fireplaces. He did however remove the separate kitchen, add porches and rooms to three sides, all under a new roof that did not disturb the single, center-of-the-house chimney. These changes created a 38 x 48-foot ground-level rectangle with an 18 x 42-foot attic. Some relatively minor interior changes were also made in 1930.

It was in 1965, however, that a fire, started by lightning, caused extensive damage to the roof ... and led, fortuitously, to discovery of more construction details than had previously been known. Four layers of siding were found on the outside of the log walls. There were also numerous finishes on the inside, including the remains of a plastering. These details can be seen today in the fireplaces, in the log wall beside the stairway (see picture), and in the chimney as it thrusts through the attic.

The original house was built to last. Its two rooms were framed by hand-hewn logs that included some walnut. These were interlocked in such a manner that they cannot be dismantled except in sequence from the top down. They are secured by walnut pegs and are as solid today as when first laid.

The double fireplace is relatively rare. The stones were not dressed, but crude fieldstones picked up in the area. Despite this, the fireplaces and chimney remain crack-free and usable, although they were closed in 1940 when gas heaters were installed.

Mantle and woodwork framing of the fireplaces, as well as interior window and doorway trim of the original section is of early 19th century vintage. The original roof was supported by rafters consisting of post oak saplings about four inches thick. Each was skillfully notched, fitted, and pegged into the walls. The attic was reached by steep ladder-type outside stairway (enclosed in the 20th century remodeling). It was (is) floored with rough lumber, partitioned only by the massive 6 x 8-foot chimney. Over the years it has served as bedrooms and for storage.

With its white-painted frame siding and broad front porch the Isom house today, from the outside, would seem to be a product of turn-of-the-century Victorianism. Inside, however - solid, and isolated from outside noises as well as from heat and cold - its two-room log core and double stone fireplaces attest to an earlier, highly skilled, perhaps even more resourceful craftsmanship.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1830's to 1870

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Log core of the Seawell-Ross-Isom House is possibly the oldest residence in Oklahoma. It is almost surely one of the oldest to have served continuously as a residence. Fort Gibson (the military post) was established in 1824. Oldest map of the fort in the National Archives was drafted by a Lt. Arnold Harris, as Aid-de-Camp to General Matthew Arbuckle from 1834 to 1839. On it, some 100 yards to the east of the stockade, is drawn "Lieut. Seawell's Private Property," a two-room structure with kitchen attached so as to form an "L." A careful check of the direction and distance verifies the location of the house (now considerably enlarged and modernized - without, however, changing the solid log core with its unusual double fireplace). Construction details (cf. No. 7) also tend to authenticate the age of this old section, as do family and local histories. It was undoubtedly built in 1839. It could possibly be ten or more years older than that.

\* \* \*

Little is known about ownership and/or occupancy of the house in its early years, other than that in the mid-1830s it was "Lieut. Seawell's Private Property." Local legend has long referred to it as the "Zachary Taylor House." But official records place General Taylor in Fort Gibson for only a short period in 1841. He was ordered to replace Gen. Matthew Arbuckle as commander of the Second Military Department, headquartered at Fort Gibson, in May. He arrived June 22, but "finding no suitable quarters for his family," moved his office and residence to Fort Smith, this in "early July." The original log stockade was badly run down by this time and the permanent stone buildings that were to replace it had not yet been built - on higher ground to the east of the Seawell house. So it is quite possible that General Taylor did spend a brief time in the sturdy two-room log house, but this would seem to qualify it only for Zachary-Taylor-slept-here status.

Best known owner of the house is William Potter Ross, nephew of Principal Chief John Ross of the Cherokees, who served the nation for many years (1839-1866), including the tragic Civil War period. When he died in 1866, Will Ross - who had come to Fort Gibson three years earlier as sutler for the Third Indian Home Guard Regiment - served the last year of his term. He remained on in the home until 1870, when he moved to a farm outside Fort Gibson. He later completed Chief Lewis Downing's term and was in all respects an outstanding Cherokee statesman.

Again little is known for sure about ownership of the house for the rest of the 19th century. Old timers recall that in the mid-1890s a George Sanders lived in it. First transaction recorded on the property's abstract is dated Nov. 2, 1908. It shows one Lizzie A. Sanders, George's wife, as gaining title for \$78, according to procedures established by the Dawes Commission in connection with dissolution of the

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Foreman, Grant, Ed., Indian-Pioneer History (Unpublished Interviews),  
 Vol. 79, pp. 106-114  
 Hubbell, Joe, "Fort Gibson's Ison House," soon to be published in The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	15	29	6	10	10	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

**Kent Ruth, Deputy**

ORGANIZATION

**Oklahoma Historical Society**

STREET & NUMBER

**Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

DATE

**February 1977**

TELEPHONE

**405/884-5456**

STATE

**Oklahoma**

# 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

*Harry E. Deupree M.D.*

DATE

*7-14-77*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*1-30-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*

DATE

*1-27-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

**Seawell-Ross-Isom House**

Cherokee Nation and Creation of the State of Oklahoma in 1907. A Walter Scott purchased the old house in 1909 for \$800. He changed the old house considerably - in appearance, if not structurally. The separate kitchen was removed. Porches and rooms were added, including one of Fort Gibson's earliest bathrooms. Scott lived in the house nine years. (When he moved out, interestingly enough, he took with him his bath tub and lavatory!)

Allen Isom bought the property Nov. 15, 1918, for \$1,000. He made minor changes in the house in 1930. His widow lived there until moving to a local nursing home in 1976. The house is now owned by her daughter. Comfortably modern in appearance inside and out, it nevertheless retains the sturdy hand-crafted integrity of its original hand-hewn log and fieldstone construction. By reason of this craftsmanship (cf. No. 7), its age and apparently continual occupancy, and the importance of the Ross family in the history of the Cherokee Nation, the Seawell-Ross-Isom is considered eminently deserving of National Register recognition.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE OKLAHOMA

Date Entered JAN 30 1978

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Henry Post Air Field, U.S. Army	Fort Sill Comanche County
St. Joseph's Cathedral	Oklahoma City Oklahoma County
Fox Hotel	Laverne Harper County
Seawall-Ross-Isom House	Fort Gibson Muskogee County

Also Notified

Hon. Deway F. Bartlett  
Hon. Henry L. Ballman  
Hon. Tom Stued  
Hon. Mickey Edwards  
Hon. Glenn English  
Hon. Ted Risenhoover

Mr. Leo H. Price, Department of the Army  
Mr. Francis B. Rocha, Director, Real Property  
and Natural Resources Division

Regional Director, Southwest Region

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Dr. Harry L. Deupree  
235 Pasteur Building  
1111 North Lee  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73103

2/3/78

Mott/Js

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