

1480

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Newton, Rev. Thomas, House

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: Route 2, Highway 441

not for publication: NA

city/town: Ashville

vicinity: X

state: AL County: St. Clair

code: 115

zip code: 35953

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

[Handwritten Signature]

8-20-91

Signature of certifying official

Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)

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

Patrick Andrews 10/11/91

 other (explain):

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

Current : VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER; _____

Other Description: Vernacular/Dogtrot

Materials: foundation Stone roof Metal
walls Log other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Early Settlement
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c.1817-20 _____

Significant Dates: c. 1817-20 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Ash, John and Newton, Thomas/Builders

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

X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>16</u>	<u>563520</u>	<u>373420</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

An imaginary line was drawn to extend 20` north, south, east and west of the Rev. Thomas Newton House, which is located in the SW Quarter of the SW Quarter lying South of U.S. Highway #411, Section 35, Township 14 South, Range 3 East, Ashville, Alabama, as recorded in the St. Clair County Tax Assessor's office, Ashville, Alabama.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

The boundaries of the property were delineated to include a 20` radius around the Rev. Thomas Newton House, Ashville vicinity. The parcel of land is located in the SW Quarter of the SW Quarter lying South of U.S. Highway #411, Section 35, Township 14 South, Range 3 East, as recorded in the St. Clair County Tax Assessor's office, Ashville, Alabama.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Melanie A. Betz, Cultural Resources Coordinator

Organization: Alabama Historical Commission Date: May 8, 1991

Street & Number: 725 Monroe Street Telephone: 205/242-3184

City or Town: Montgomery State: AL ZIP: 36130

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Section number 7 Description Rev. Thomas Newton House Page #1

Situated on "Beaver Creek Mountain" overlooking expansive wheat fields, the Rev. Thomas Newton House is a one-story, rectangular dogtrot resting on stone piers and constructed of handhewn logs with dovetailed ends. The house, which is crowned by a gable roof supported by pegged log rafters, measures approximately 46` X 16`, has a sandstone chimney and two rooms (pens) flanking an open breezeway passage which measures approximately 9` X 16`. Separate doors (now removed) lead to each of the rooms. Fenestration includes rectangular windows on the east and west facades flanking the chimneys. The house has a sleeping loft which originally was accessible by a ladder leading from the east room. A large hole underneath the western room may have been used for storing fruits and vegetables. Despite its deteriorated condition, the Newton House has retained its original integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Archaeological Component:

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made around the Newton House, the potential for significant subsurface cultural remains is high. Early homesteads were sited within a constellation of dependencies and activity areas such as kitchens, wells, etc. Although these structures are no longer standing, the buried portion may contain significant information that may be important in interpreting the entire property.

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Section number 8 Significance

Rev. Thomas Newton House

Page #1

CRITERION A (EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT):

The Rev. Thomas Newton House, located near Ashville, reflects the early settlement of St. Clair County. During the late 18th century, Thomas Newton, his wife, daughter, and son-in-law, John Ash, and other family members left York County, North Carolina, to settle in Clark County, Georgia. They traveled to St. Clair County, Alabama, in the fall of 1817 where they decided to settle permanently in the Beaver Valley Mountain region which later became known as "Newton's Spring." After 1817, Thomas Newton and John Ash constructed a log dogtrot which survives today and is reputed to be the oldest recorded building in the county. (1)

CRITERION C (ARCHITECTURE):

The Thomas Newton House, located near Ashville, is a fine and intact example of an early one-story log dogtrot. Although in a deteriorated condition, the Newton House, which was constructed after 1817, has retained most of its original features including its overall shape and form, its 9` X 16` open dogtrot passage, its handhewn logs with dovetailed ends, its sandstone chimney, log floors, pegged log rafters, and some interior door and window surrounds.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

During the late 18th Century, the Reverend Thomas Newton, a Presbyterian Minister, and his wife, Margaret Newton Ash, left York County, North Carolina, with their daughter, Margaret Newton Ash, and her husband, John Ash. The families lived for some time in Franklin County and at Athens in Clark County, Georgia, before coming to Alabama in the fall of 1817.(2) Taking the Beaver Valley Road, also known as Old Montevallo Road, leading from the town of Ashville to Odenville, they stopped and made camp in the valley near the area which later became known as Newton's Spring, St. Clair County. While camped in the Beaver Valley location, the 3-year-old granddaughter of the Newton's, Betsy Ash, was killed after falling off a horse and then buried in a marked grave (this grave became the first burial in the Newton and Ash family cemetery).(3) After deciding to settle in this area, Thomas Newton and John Ash built a log dogtrot where both families resided until another house was constructed a few miles away for John Ash and his family.

John Ash became a prominent planter in St. Clair County as well as a leading local politician and founder of the town of Ashville.(4) Thomas Newton became the minister for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church located at Odenville.(5) It is not known how long the Rev. and Mrs. Newton continued to live in the original log dogtrot, but the property remained in the family throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Today, the Newton log dogtrot is reputed to be the oldest surviving building in St. Clair County.(6) Although it has been abandoned for many years the house is almost completely intact and appearing as it did during the early 19th century.

THE DOGTROT HOUSE:

The Newton House is a fine and intact representation of an early "Dogtrot" - a popular building type which dotted the rural landscape throughout the 19th and early 20th century. Constructed by early settlers of all socioeconomic backgrounds, the dogtrot house probably originated on the post-Revolutionary Kentucky and Tennessee frontier, although open-hall log houses were also known as far east as the upper Carolina Piedmont. (7)

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Section number 8 Historical Summary

Rev. Thomas Newton House

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Providing much needed ventilation during the hot summer months, this house type is characterized by its open-ended passage - the "dogtrot" - which is flanked by two rooms ("pens") and connected by a common roof. Exterior end chimneys were frequently located at the gable ends. To create additional space, an ell, a sleeping loft (- usually accessible by a small inside corner stair, or a stair in the dogtrot passage-) or a full second-story was added. (8) The dogtrot plan was also a means of enlarging an existing one-room cabin: another "pen" was constructed approximately eight-to-twelve feet from the original structure and then roofed over and floored to become the breezeway or dogtrot passage. Numerous open-hall houses in Alabama evolved in this manner.

Later, dogtrots were "improved" by enclosing the passage itself at either end by wide double doors. Many of the log dogtrots were weatherboarded and even remodeled into rather sophisticated dwellings, as exemplified in the Robert Jenkins house near Alpine and the now-ruinous Bird House near Courtland. These buildings were not only covered over with clapboard, but also replete with Federal or Greek Revival-style trim including plaster interior walls, chairrails, a balustraded stair, and simple Adamesque mantelpieces. (9) Early 20th-century dogtrots were sometimes adorned with gingerbread trim.

Most dogtrots were one- or one-and-a-half stories; the two-story or double dogtrots that were constructed on rare occasions were symbols of affluence on the early Alabama frontier.(10) Throughout central and southern Alabama, both log and frame dogtrots were constructed.(11) One good early example of a frame dogtrot is the Rose House, originally located near Rockford, but moved in 1988 to Montgomery's North Hull Street Historic District.

1

A Historic Site Survey of Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties.
Prepared by the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission, A.H. Cather Publishing Co., Inc., Birmingham, Alabama, 1975, pg. 42.

2

Unpublished Manuscript, Mattie Lou Crow, October 1990, n.p.

3

Mattie Lou Crow, October 1990.

4

Owen, Thomas McAdory. History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Volume 1.
The S. J. Clark Publishing Company, Chicago, 1921, pg. 61.

5

Mattie Lou Crow, October 1990.

6

A Historic Site Survey..., pg. 42.

7

Gamble, Robert, The Alabama Catalog (Historic American Buildings Survey). A Guide to the Early Architecture of the State. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1987, pg. 27.

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8

Wilson, Eugene M. Alabama Folk Houses. Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery,
Alabama, 1975, pg. 25.

9

Gamble, pg. 27.

10

Gamble, pg. 26.

11

Gamble, pg. 27.

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Section number 9 Bibliographical References

Rev. Thomas Newton House

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Crowe, Mattie Lou, Unpublished Manuscript, October 1990.

Gamble, Robert. The Alabama Catalog. (Historic American Buildings Survey). A Guide to the Early Architecture of the State. (The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1987).

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Section number Photographs

Thomas Newton House

Page #1

Rev. Thomas Newton House, Ashville vic., St. Clair County
Photographs #1-2 taken by David Harris, October 1990
Photographs #3-6 taken by Melanie Betz, May 1991
All negatives located at the Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, Alabama

Photo #1: Facade looking North

Photo #2: Facade looking Northwest

Photo #3: Facade looking Southwest

Photo #4: Side Facade, looking West

Photo #5: Detail of Notching

Photo #6: Interior, View from West Pen (-showing door surround-) looing through Dogtrot
Passage into East Pen