

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 22 1984
date entered SEP 20 1984

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

1. Name

historic Blackburn House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5 m. w of Athens, AL at NE corner US 72 and Co. 43 NA not for publication

city, town Athens, AL NA vicinity of 5th congressional district

state Alabama code 01 county Limestone code 083

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Eli Mastich

street & number Route 5, Box 608A

city, town Athens NA vicinity of state Alabama 35611

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Limestone County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Athens state Alabama 35611

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?, yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Blackburn house is located approximately five miles west of Athens, Alabama at the N.E. corner of the intersection of U.S. Highway 72 and Limestone County Road 43. Court-house records indicate that the house was probably built shortly after 1873 and the architectural evidence supports this in both design and construction details.

The house is virtually unaltered. It is a one and one-half story 3-bay gable-ended six-room center hall clapboarded house of "saltbox" configuration with well-proportioned simplified Italianate hip-roofed portico with chamfered-edge square wood columns and bracketed capitals. A later makeshift back porch has recently been removed. There are four rooms on the main floor and two rooms on the second floor directly over the downstairs front rooms. The unbracketed, steeply-pitched roof eaves overhang on all four sides, and have barge-boarded gables and boxed soffits which are parallel with the roof plane in the manner of many latter 19th century houses of this type.

Windows primarily are 2/2, the most common latter-19th century type, and there are no traces of blind hinges. The 2/2 sashes are vertical sliders (no ropes or weights) with the top halves secured by metal pins in holes in the jambs. The two small 4-light attic sashes pivot horizontally to ventilate the attic. The similar 2-light sash in the upper stair hall was probably pivoted, but now has added inside stops to fix it shut.

In typical 19th century fashion, the exposure dimensions of the clapboarding varies randomly by an inch or more. Uniformity of clapboard exposure was not considered in the 19th century to be important by many, based on an examination of numerous examples.

The present roof is painted modern galvanized iron sheets, but the attic shows evidence in the roof-deck boards of an original wood shingle roof by its multitude of cut shingle-nails and widely spaced deck-boards.

All framing and lath observed was rotary-sawn, as would be expected by 1873 or after. The house has recently been raised several inches and a new foundation of concrete and concrete masonry units installed under it in order to separate the floor joists from the soil (crawl spaces were frequently not provided in the 19th century) and to strengthen the house.

The front four rooms are 15 feet square. The rear rooms about 13 1/2 feet by 15. The first floor ceiling is about 9 feet 8 inches high, and the second floor ceiling is very low - 7 feet 2 inches - as they were in many 19th century country houses.

The first floor northeast room was, based on the architectural evidence, the original kitchen. Interior kitchens were rare in the South before the Civil War, but quickly became the norm after the war. The kitchen still contains its original built-in cabinet, its originality indicated by the fact that there are no lath or plaster traces on the studs behind the cabinet, and the cabinet doors show jack-plane smoothing marks indicating hand-finishing of a type which quickly became obsolete after the Civil War. This cabinet also is quite similar in design to contemporary kitchen cabinets such as shown in plate 118 (dated 1876) in the book "Americans at Home" by William Seale entitled "Method of Arranging a Kitchen." The kitchen has an adjoining original pantry with wood shelving that appears very old and may be original.

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All interior and exterior door and window trim consists of plain, flat boards about 3 inches wide. The outside window trim is capped by an approximate 1 inch ledge. Baseboards at the first floor are approximately 5/4 inches by 7 1/4 inches and 4 inches at the second floor and are set prior to plastering, as is all the trim, typical of 19th century practice and contrary to 20th century practice. There are no shoe-moulds at the second floor baseboards, as was typical. The top inch or so of the first floor baseboards is slightly beveled. Floors are original pine about 5/4 inches by 3 inches (1st floor) and 5/4 x 4 inches (2nd floor), T & G, set directly on the joists without a subfloor (typical 19th century practice).

The original mantels remain in the two west rooms and the S.E. room on the main floor. They are of simplified Italianate design, two having a flat-arch architrave and the other having only chamfered-edge pilasters. The mantel-shelf on all mantels has rounded ends and a heavy cyma-reversa mould under the shelf. The mantel at the S.E. room (dining) is the most elaborate, having cutouts in its pilasters of a rectangle topped by slightly narrower arches in addition to the flat-arch architrave. The two upstairs rooms have only stove-thimbles. Both of the internal chimneys have been removed but are to be rebuilt. A photograph exists showing the brick-hearth pattern which is typical of the 19th century (the long dimension of the bricks follows the three edges of the hearth, turning 90 degrees at the two corners). The kitchen had a stove-thimble most recently, and by 1873 it is likely that it originally had a stove rather than a cooking fireplace.

The second floor S.E. room has four metal hooks screwed into the ceiling joists for supporting a quilting frame free of the floor, a detail noted in other 19th century North Alabama houses.

All doors are four-panel (typical of the period), some with heavy Italianate panel-moulds, with elaborate Victorian cast-iron hinges and cast-iron rimlocks. The rimlock at the double front door has a cast-on patent date of 1863. The original rimlock at the 1st floor S.W. parlor has the initials "BLW" cast into its iron box (the lock was lifted off to verify its originality). The rimlocks have ceramic knobs of white or brown. At least one of the rimlocks is a later replacement, based on paint traces and screw holes. The entry doors are topped by a 4-light transom.

The main floor S.E. room (dining) retains a large piece of what appears to be original wallpaper (the plaster contains no paint film traces and the wallpaper is on the bottom of other layers of paper). The pattern consists of diagonal rows of floral cartouches with Baroque-influenced curvilinear forms and small fleur-de-lys centers. Its character is similar to 1860-70 wallpaper patterns illustrated in the book "Wallpaper in America" (Catherine Lynn), plates 71, 15-6, 15-7 and 15-24.

The stair newel is a heavy square wood post with chamfered edges and a square necked cap. Balusters are small rectangular sections and rails are round - holdover details from the early 19th century and not usual by the 1870s, when turned balusters and moulded rail shapes were usual. The tread-ends are plain, with scrolls.

The 1st floor S.W. parlor has apparently original cupboards built into the east side of the chimney. Its small doors are similar to those on the original kitchen cabinet.

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(11/78)

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The 2nd floor S.W. bedroom has two original triangular wooden shelves built into the plaster in the S.W. corner of the room. The shelves are approximately one foot deep at the diagonal.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1873 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecture: The Blackburn House is a fine and extremely well-preserved example of a story-and-a-half "Saltbox" type house and has a nicely proportioned Italianate portico. Constructed around 1873 by Edward Alexander Blackburn (1840–1899), the house serves as the center of the small community of Blackburn, which grew up around it.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Axford, Faye. The Lure and Lore of Limestone County. 1978: Portals Press, Tuscaloosa, AL.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.37 acres

Quadrangle name Ripley, Ala.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	9	5	0	2	0	3	8	4	9	8	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mr. & Mrs. Eli Mastich (owners)

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 15, 1984

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

Entered in the National Register

date

9-20-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Beginning at the Southeast Corner of Section 9, Township 3 South, Range 5 West, said point being the Center Line of U. S. Highway 72, thence run due North and along the East Boundary of said Section 9 for a distance of 303.5 feet to a point, thence run due West for a distance of 198.0 feet to a point; thence run due South for a distance of 303.5 feet to the Center Line of said U. S. Highway 72, thence run East and along U. S. Highway 72 for a distance of 198.0 feet to the True Point of Beginning, said tract containing 1.37 acres more or less and being subject to one half the right of way of U. S. Highway 72 and that portion being used for Blackburn Road lying on the West side thereof.