

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic James H. Bibb House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 11 Allen Street NA not for publication

city, town Madison NA vicinity of congressional district 5th

state Alabama code 01 county Madison code 089

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

4. Owner of Property

name Philip S. and Anna L. Whatley

street & number 11 Allen Street

city, town Madison NA vicinity of state Alabama 35758

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Record Office

street & number Madison County Courthouse

city, town Huntsville state Alabama

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bibb House is a square, one-story Greek Revival dwelling of frame construction located in the town of Madison. Twentieth century additions include a bedroom and porch wing on the north side and a porch and garage on the west. A number of minor alterations have not diminished the impact of the Greek Revival styling (nor disrupted the central hall layout) since the effect of the architecture derives from the understated but massive handling of its spaces and elements, the majority of which remain intact.

* * * * *

The Bibb House is a late Greek Revival dwelling of austere but impressive design. It was constructed in 1867 (the land was purchased in 1866 by James H. Bibb) and no architect or builder has been identified. The house is a square, fifty feet on a side, topped by a pyramidal roof of moderate pitch. A twelve-foot deep, flat-roofed porch extends across the front facade. The foundation consisted originally of two-foot high brick piers, but a later brick infill has converted it to a solid foundation wall creating an enclosed crawl space. The walls are framed with cedar timbers notched together and faced on the exterior with poplar clapboards. The asphalt-shingled roof is a symmetrical pyramid with boxed eaves of moderate extension on all four sides; four stuccoed brick chimneys pierce the roof.

The roof of the front porch abuts the house immediately beneath the frieze board and also displays boxed eaves. The front edge of this porch is supported on six square box columns; the pilasters at either end have been removed because of decay which was causing deterioration of the wall where they were attached. This porch apparently dates from the twentieth century; however, a 1913 photograph of the house reveals an identical porch indicating that the present porch is probably a reconstruction of the original wooden porch. The present owners plan to make needed repairs to the porch and restore the pilasters

Each exterior wall of the house was divided into three bays with the middle opening on the front and back being an exterior door from the central hallway. All exterior frames are composed of plain flat boards, butted at the corners. The windows are double-hung but each sash now contains a single pane of float glass. The front entry features a single door framed by sidelights and a wide toplight. The door and sidelights are each filled with a single pane of beveled glass--an early twentieth century alteration--while the transom contains two lights of translucent pattern glass, also a later addition. The rear entry is less altered and retains its four-pane toplight of clear glass above double-leaf doors, each with a single light. There are no sidelights on the rear entry.

An enclosed porch with shed roof across the back of the house is of indeterminate age; the northern end was removed when the garage was constructed. This twentieth-century garage abuts the west wall of the house, but the owners intend to move it away from the house, which would reopen the window in the northwest bedroom.

An addition consisting of one bedroom, a bath, and a porch was constructed on the north wall of the house during the early years of this century. This wing, also of frame construction with clapboard siding, has a gabled roof which extends over the porch. At some point, this porch was enclosed, but the present owners have reopened it and are making structural repairs. A small, exterior, brick chimney pierces the eaves at the gable peak; the foundations are of brick. The windows closely replicate those of the main house; one door provides access to the porch while a second opens onto the front of the house.

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The interior plan of the Bibb house is identical on either side of a twelve-foot wide hallway that bisects the house. Each side is three rooms deep with the front parlors being the largest (19' x 20') and the middle rooms the smallest (19' x 13'); the ceilings are twelve-feet high. The six fireplaces (one of which has been removed) are vented by four interior chimneys; the mantelpieces are of simple Greek Revival design and become progressively plainer toward the rear of the house, except in the south front parlor where a tall Victorian mantel with overmirror has been installed. The doorways are trimmed with flat, butted boards edged with quarter-round molding on the hall side only; and the doors are all two-paneled, with the panels being flat on one side and raised on the other. The original box locks are still in use. The hallway is divided by pocket doors, also of Greek Revival design, with each having four full vertical panels. The baseboards consist of a simple massive board fourteen inches tall having no moldings, although the three northern rooms now have lower baseboards identical to those in the addition, and presumably they were installed when the addition was constructed. The walls are of plaster over lath, but some of the ceilings were sheet-rocked after an attic fire resulted in water damage. The flooring is later tongue and groove oak. A bath has been added in a corner of the northwest bedroom. The addition is finished with typical bungalow-style trim and doors and the ceiling is decorated with a grid of box beams.

The Bibb house is sited atop a slight rise just west of the center of old Madison, which it faces. The property is bounded on the south and east by streets and on the north by a vacant lot; the main line of the Southern Railway runs just south of the house. A set of carriage steps survives in the front yard, and a concrete water trough and a cistern are located north of the house.

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/ 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1867 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James H. Bibb house attains architectural significance through its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics associated with Greek Revival residential construction. Its individual distinction derives from its uncommon pyramidal roof and its late construction date, which demonstrates the persistence of the Greek Revival as a favored style of domestic architecture. This significance is further enhanced by its status as the oldest known house in Madison and also the only remaining example in the Greek Revival style.

The house is locally significant as the home of James H. Bibb, an early settler and major landholder in Madison Station, who was instrumental in gaining incorporation for the town of Madison and subsequently served as a member of the town's first elected council.

The Bibb house possesses integrity through the retention of those elements that define the Greek Revival style including the organization of its spaces, its proportions, and its ornamentation. It further demonstrates integrity of location, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

* * * * * * *

The James H. Bibb house is a fine example of a Greek Revival dwelling displaying a central hall layout with three rooms on each side and simple but massive Greek Revival detailing in the mantels, doors, and trim. Only the replacement of one mantel, a slight alteration of the front entry, and the installation of modern glass in the windows detract from its strong Greek Revival character. The bedroom addition was executed with detailing typical of the bungalow period, but this wing is exterior to the main body of the house so that its intrusion is minimal.

Although there were undoubtedly other Greek Revival dwellings dating from the antebellum period in the immediate vicinity of Madison, these either have not survived or have been sufficiently modernized to make their identification difficult without extensive research. Because development of Madison only began in 1866, the majority of the town's earliest structures reflect the new Victorian styling. It is not known why Bibb preferred to build in the pre-war style while his neighbors were embracing the more picturesque designs of the later nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the Bibb house stands today at the west end of the main street as a unique representative of the community's earliest days.

Madison, Alabama began as a stop on the Memphis & Charleston Railroad and was first called Madison Station. The railroad erected a wooden freight house there in 1856, which was destroyed during the Civil War; but in 1866 the depot was rebuilt, and the land around it was surveyed, platted, and the lots sold at public auction. With the establishment of several mercantile firms the same year, the community began to take shape, and just three years later a group of Madison Station residents petitioned to incorporate the town as Madison. James H. Bibb, who owned over 300 acres west of the depot, figured prominently in this move and was elected to the first city council in 1869. However, he died the following year at the age of 44 leaving a widow and six children.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Madison Centennial Historical Record, Madison, Al., October 1969.
 Madison County Probate Court Records
 Madison County Chancery Court Records

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 1.2

Quadrangle name Greenbrier, AL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	2	2	5	5	5	3	8	3	8	7	8	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 Lot 13, Moore Subdivision, Madison.
 North 116.4' along Allen Street, west 263.8', south 223' to Palmer Road, east 328' along Palmer Road to beginning.

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

state	code	county	code
NA			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Bayer / Planner and Ellen Mertins, Alabama Historical Commission

organization Huntsville Planning Dept. date 16 November 1983

street & number P. O. Box 308 telephone 205-532-7353 & 205 261-3184

city or town Huntsville 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 7, 1984

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


 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
 National Register

date 4/12/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

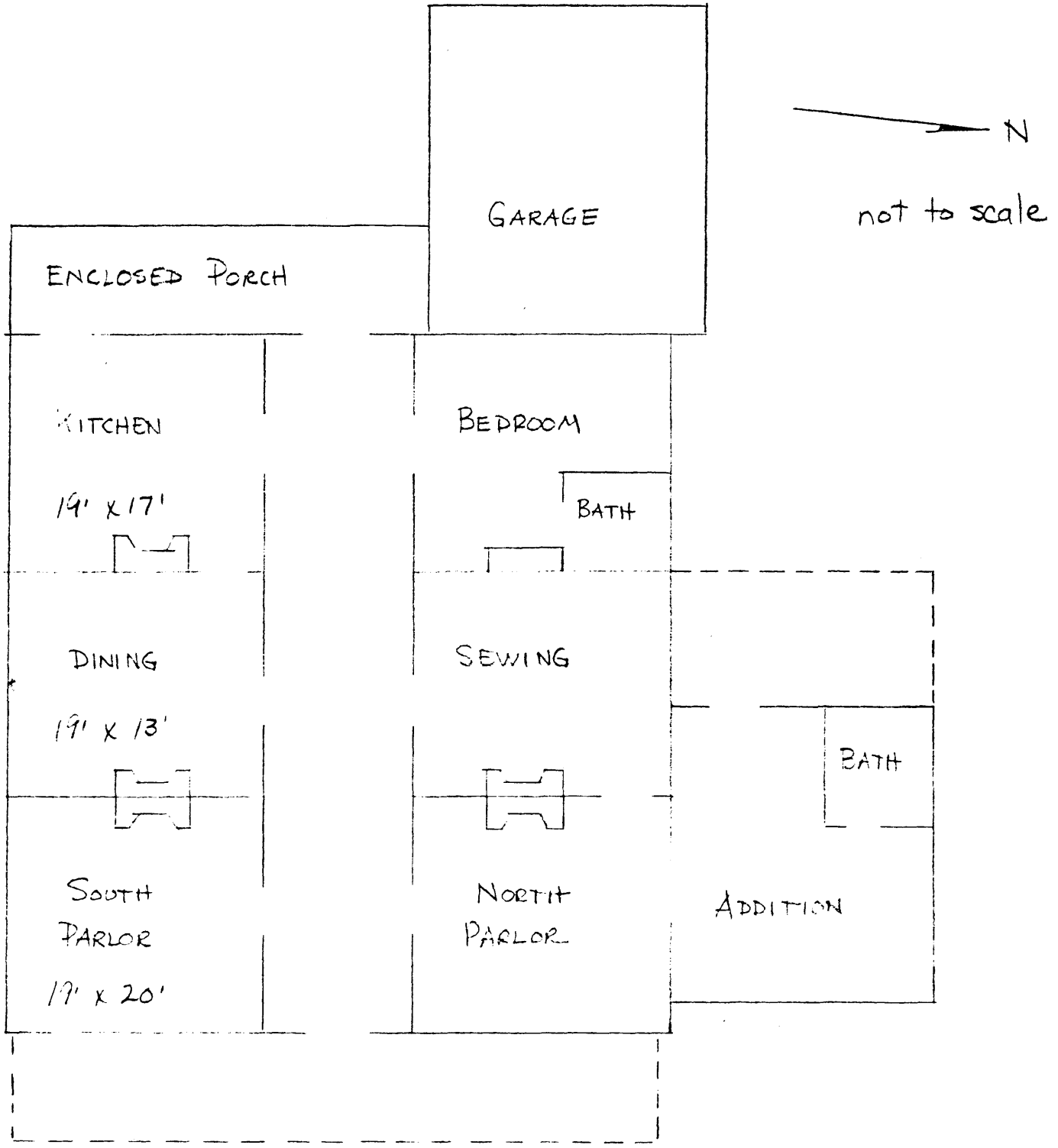
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James H. Bibb was the last of ten children of the Reverend James Bibb and Sally Alford, natives of Amherst County, Virginia who moved to the Huntsville area prior to his birth in 1826. In 1855 James H. married Laura Dillard and they had two children before her death in 1859. The following year he married Rebecca F. Robinson of Limestone County and they had four children. In 1866 James H. began purchasing land around Madison Station including a tract of some 300 acres containing a dwelling where the Bibb family briefly resided. In the same year Bibb opened a mercantile business in Madison selling all manner of goods. By the spring of 1868 he had completed construction of a new dwelling--the property being nominated--and was occupying it with his family. Approximately 220 of his acres were cleared land, and of this, Bibb rented out half and cultivated the other half himself, growing corn and cotton. Bibb was also in partnership with three other local men to operate a steam-powered grist mill in Madison.

James H. Bibb is buried in the Dillard-Bibb cemetery (which at the time was located on his plantation) with his first wife and an infant son by his second wife. He was a descendent of the Bibb family of Virginia which also produced Alabama's first two governors--William Wyatt Bibb and Thomas Bibb, the latter being the owner of Belle Mina plantation in Limestone County. James H. Bibb appeared to have been destined to play a prominent role in Madison's early development and to become one of its more influential personages before his early death. Not even his mercantile business was fated to continue because his will stipulated that it be liquidated at the end of 1870. Only his house and his gravestone remain to remind us of the aspirations of one of Madison's first leaders.



JAMES H. BIBB HOUSE
MADISON, AL