

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 26 1983

date entered SEP 22 1983

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

1. Name

historic William B. Wills House

and/or common Sipsey

2. Location

street & number 108 Ashby Drive

N/A not for publication

city, town Eutaw

N/A vicinity of

state Alabama code 01 county Greene

code 063

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 checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input 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 Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Griess

street & number P. O. Box 528

city, town Eutaw

N/A vicinity of

state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Greene County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Eutaw

state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1970-1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery

state Alabama

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date 1978
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William B. Wills House is a one story, frame cottage resting on a high brick foundation with a diamond-latticed pattern. The original portion of the house (see floor plan) is L-shaped with a combination gabled and hipped roof. Center front and center side pedimented porticos cover entrances with nicely detailed Greek Revival doors. The original fluted and tapered Doric columns were replaced with reproduction columns lacking the refinement and detail of the originals. The ceilings of the porticos retain the elaborate panels and the cornice (which continues around the house) has guttae and regulae. The rear of the house has a full L-shaped covered gallery with reproduction Tuscan posts. Siding is of clapboard, except where the face of the building is protected by porticoes or a gallery.

The interior of the house consists of two front rooms bisected by a front hall and a rear dining L separated from the front rooms by a transverse hall. Interior trim is very elaborate. Doors and panels below the windows are grained in curly Maple design with a rust-colored banding inside each panel. The door and window moldings are very high-styled and chairrailing exists in all of the rooms. Only one original mantel remains--it is pilastered and has a full entablature.

## Alterations and additions:

The relocation of the house onto a lot with a steep rear slope allowed for the addition of a two-story wing on the rear which does not intrude on the house from any public view. Several small alterations were made to the original portions of the house. They include: the enclosure of a portion of the rear gallery to create a bath for one of the front rooms, the removal of original plaster and the replacement of the original columns. Only one original mantel survived; mantels from another house in the area were acquired to replace the missing ones.

# 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. 1835      **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The William B. Wills House is architecturally significant as a very good example of an early Greek Revival cottage with exceptionally fine woodwork. The house features elaborately carved Greek Keys in the underpanels of the sidelights, guttae and regula on an encircling cornice and paneled ceilings on the front and side porticos. The interior woodwork reflects hold-over influences from the Federal period with chair-rails in the original rooms and bullseye door and window trim in some of the rooms.

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*

The structure has been moved from its original location 17 miles northwest of Eutaw. The new location matches the old in slope. The house was moved because the current owners were unable to purchase the land it was located on and the previous owners were allowing the house to deteriorate. Had the house remained on its original location, it would have been demolished by neglect. The relocation of the house on its new site has not adversely affected any other historic properties. The new setting, while decidedly less rural than the earlier one, is on the edge of a small town.

The house maintains its original appearance, but has lost its original portico columns (two of the originals are in storage) and its original mantels.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Greene County Probate Records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 2.03

Quadrangle name Eutaw

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	4	1	6	2	0	0	3	6	3	4	5	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

TAX MAP: 35-18-08-33-1-4-2; 36/.2" on Ashby Circle, 245' on Colonial Drive.  
See attached may with blue line. Includes house and lot.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen L. Mertins, National Register Coordinator

organization Alabama Historical Commission date July 15, 1983

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 832-6621

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

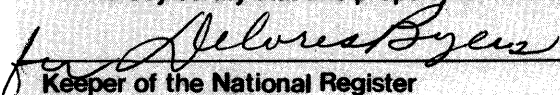
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 15, 1983

For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/22/83

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

Original owner: As specified hertofore, the original owner of the house was William B. Wills. Neither his date nor place of birth is known, but documentation of his arrival in Greene County, Alabama, in 1828 from South Carolina can be verified from the original Land Grants from the Government and from the 1830 Census. Most information concerning Wills is set forth in his nuncupative will, that is, his oral will declared at the time of his death before witnesses and which was subsequently reduced to writing. Wills was shot approximately one mile from the house site at the time that he gave his will, being unable to travel back to his home. The circumstances surrounding his death have not been determined. In said will there is a complete accounting of his debts and a complete inventory of all his property, real, personal and mixed, with descriptions of same. In this documentation it indicates that Wills was a planter, that he owned 63 slaves, that he had a brick kiln and blacksmith operation on his plantation and that he raised racing quarter horses. Further, the will indicates that he left a widow, Elizabeth M. Wills, who was formerly Elizabeth M. Kilpatrick. Although the 1830 Census documents several children of Wills, his particular will file does not have any inclusion concerning same. It may be presumed then, that these children predeceased Wills. After his death in June 20, 1840, his widow, Elizabeth M. Wills, took title to the property.

Subsequent Owners:

1. Elizabeth M. Wills (1840-1849). Little is known about the widow of William B. Wills. As stated hertofore her maiden name was Kilpatrick and that her parents were William and Mary Kilpatrick and there is some suggestion that she was from Mississippi. At present, the verification of this has not been determined. Elizabeth Wills expired in 1851, failing to have remarried, and leaving no surviving children.

2. William Horton (1849-1851). William Horton purchased the property from Elizabeth M. Wills. He, by occupation, was a planter. Though little is known about Horton, it has been determined that he was married to Marcia Horton and that he had 12 children.

3. Henry G. Jones (1851-1868). Jones was a cotton planter as indicated in the voter's list of the county. He was married to Sara Jones and had three children, Thomas Kennedy, Mary, and Martha.

4. Thomas Kennedy Jones (1868-1930). Jones remained a batchelor for his life. His primary occupation was that of a planter. As a graduate of the University of Alabama Cadet Corps he served in the Calvary in the Civil War. In 1930 he died intestate and the property was thereafter sold at public auction.

5. Katie Poynor (1930-1977). Ms. Poynor was Thomas Kennedy Jones' niece. When the property was sold at public outcry in 1930, she was deemed the high bidder.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

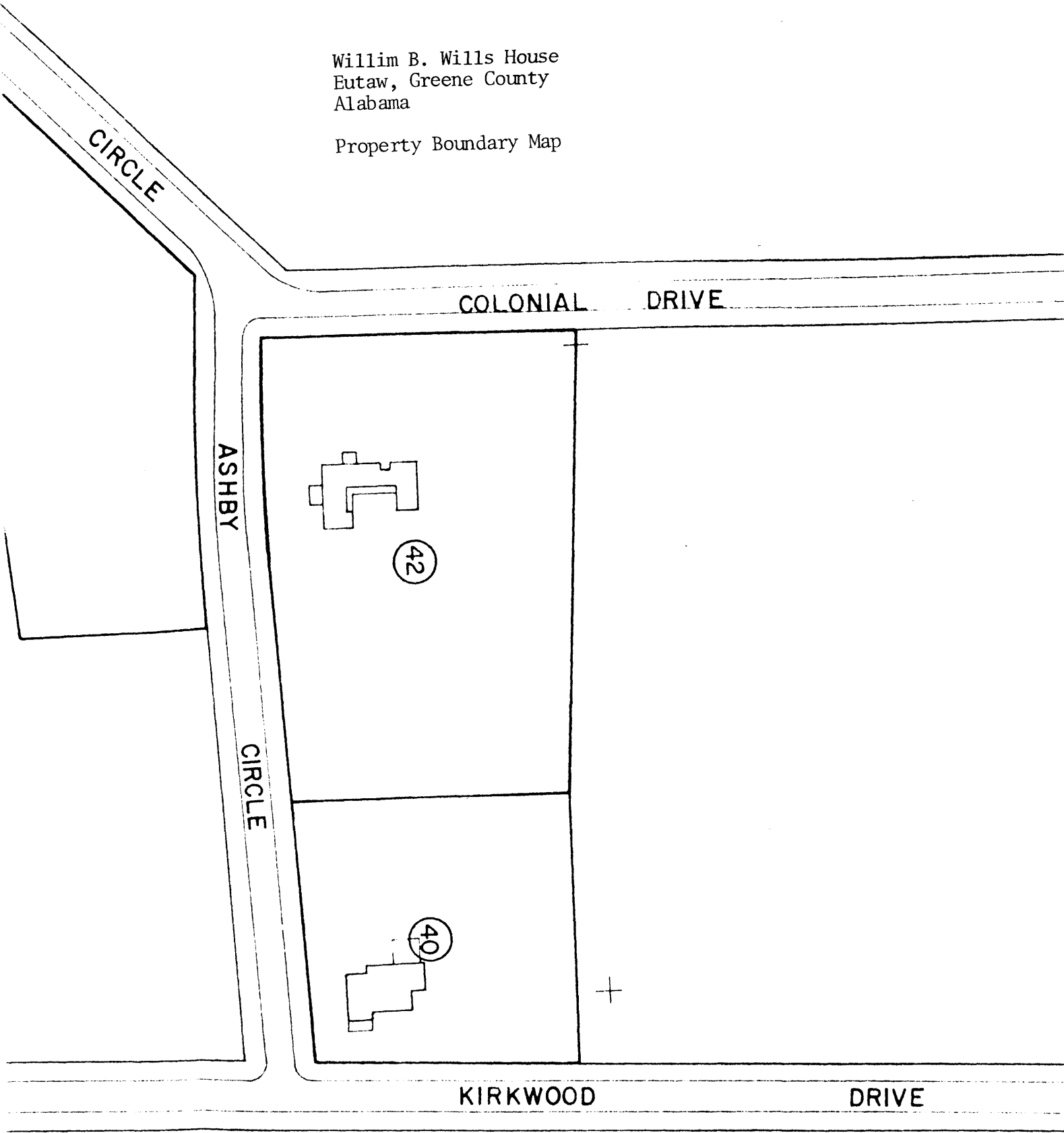
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Although the property was not occupied by Ms. Poynor, it was rented off and on through the years. At her death, her will designated Virginia Summerville as her Executrix and it was through her that the current owners purchased the house for purposes of being moved.

6. Walter and Patricia Griess (1977-present). The estate of Katie Poynor had numerous heirs to the subject property. The current owner attempted to negotiate a purchase of the house and some acreage, but was unsuccessful in doing so. In the winter of 1977, it was agreed between the said Executrix and the current owner that the house would be sold on the condition that it would be moved off the property in Pleasant Ridge. The house was moved in the spring of 1978 and has been undergoing restoration since. The current owners established residency in Greene County in January, 1977. Mr. Griess is practicing law in Eutaw, the County Seat, and Mrs. Griess assumed the responsibilities of the restoration project, subsequently has taken on other restoration projects in the community, and has assumed the position of President of the Greene County Historical Society.

Willim B. Wills House  
Eutaw, Greene County  
Alabama

Property Boundary Map



*Boundary map*

SOLOMAN STRE