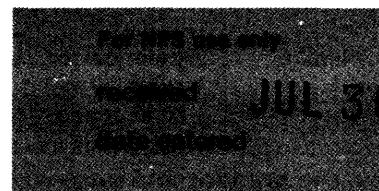


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Possum Poke

and/or common same

2. Location

US 82

~~street & number Northeast corner of Poulan city limits,
north of U. S. Highway 82~~

N/A not for publication

city, town Poulan

vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

2nd

state Georgia

code 013

county Worth

code 321

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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"/> N/A 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Regents, University System of Georgia
Frank C. Dunham, Vice Chancellor for Facilities

street & number 244 Washington Street, S.W.

city, town Atlanta

N/A vicinity of

state GA 30334

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Worth County Courthouse

city, town Sylvester

state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records None

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Possum Poke is an early 20th Century hunting camp that consists of two dwelling houses on a dirt lane with various outbuildings between them. "Big Poke" is a plantation plain style house, while "Little Poke" is influenced by the Bungalow movement. All buildings are wood frame with metal roofs and shiplap siding. Both of the main houses have been covered with vinyl siding. Possum Poke is a very unpretentious collection of buildings, none of which display extensive detailing or ornamentation.

Big Poke is a two story frame house built in 1905 out of uncured pine. It has a gable roof, shiplap siding covered with vinyl siding, and is designed on the basic rectangular floor plan with an ell addition. The front porch has chamfered square columns on low bases and a simple, new railing. The porch has a channel metal roof. The windows are double hung with two over two panes. The interior is sheathed in horizontal board siding. These boards are wide downstairs and cover the walls, floors and ceilings. Those upstairs are narrow. There are also simple window and doorway surrounds. The doors are four panel doors. There is a brick fireplace in the north room and a wooden one with half columns in the south room. The south room also has a four-lamp kerosene chandelier. The doors and windows contain their original locks. The house is filled with memorabilia.

The first floor contains two large rooms separated by a steep stairway. Behind these main rooms are a bathroom and kitchen. Separated from the kitchen by a breezeway are two servant rooms. The second floor is reached by the stairway and contains four identical bedrooms. Each contains a rope attached to the wall to serve as a fire escape. The lighting consists of exposed light bulbs dangling from the ceiling on drop wires.

Little Poke is a one story frame house that is three rooms deep with a side addition (c. 1950) consisting of a kitchen, bath and office. The house has a gable roof, shiplap siding that has been covered with vinyl siding, and rests on a brick pier foundation. The house has a basic rectangular plan and is very unpretentious. There is a wire fence gate leading to the house. The windows are one over one panes and are double hung with plain board surrounds. There is a striated brick fireplace in the front room which was Governor Osborn's study. There are plasterboard walls and ceilings and narrow board floors. The doors have simple horizontal panels and there is a pull-down stairs for entrance to the attic. There is a latticed back porch and simple boxed eaves that were covered over by the new siding.

There are several outbuildings as shown on the enclosed Sketch Map. The majority of the outbuildings are one story, wood frame buildings with shiplap siding and corner boards. The roofs are sheet metal painted green. They have stuccoed brick foundations. The barn-garage, chicken house and smoke house all have flush wood siding. The banana house (attached to the barn-garage) has two glass walls. Also on the property are a flagpole and memorials to Governor Chase Osborn (who is actually buried in Michigan) and his widow who still resides on the property.

(CONTINUED)

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Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 2

Possum Poke is situated in the woods in a very natural setting. The underbrush is kept out but trees and shrubs are allowed to grow in their natural state. The landscape is informal and contains pecan trees, dogwood and holly trees as well as bushes and shrubs all surrounded by a stand of pine trees on a level terrain. The wooded site is much as it always has been at the hunting camp setting. It is only a short distance north of U.S. highway 82 and just inside the city limits of the small town of Poulan.

The only major changes to the property have been the rebuilding of "Little Poke" after the 1934 fire and the addition of vinyl siding to Big Poke and Little Poke in 1981. The new siding has not damaged the original siding and does not significantly change the appearance of the structures.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Historic Preservation Section has determined that the photographs taken in August, 1981 still represent the character and appearance of the property. No significant changes have been made since that date.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1905 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Possum Poke is significant in the architectural, conservation and political history of Georgia and the United States. Architecturally, the design of the Possum Poke complex reflects the simple tastes and closeness to nature desired by its owner-builder, Governor Chase S. Osborn (1860-1949) of Michigan. "Big Poke," although a 20th Century building, reflects the antebellum style known as Plantation Plain. "Little Poke" reflects a style more in keeping with the 1930's when it was rebuilt. The governor is known to have liked camping retreats and owned several in Michigan, in which state he made his permanent residence during the early twentieth century. According to his widow he liked the rustic, simplistic styling and accoutrements that are maintained today at Possum Poke. In the history of conservation, the site is significant because it reflects Governor Osborn's interest in conservation during his years of public service until his death in 1949. The hunting camp was established at Possum Poke at a time when rustic camps like it were in vogue at a national level as a reflection of the beginning of the conservation movement. The site is significant in politics and government because it is associated with Governor Chase S. Osborn of Michigan. It was here that the governor came seasonally with several of his colleagues to discuss his progressive political beliefs. According to the Dictionary of American Biography, Osborn was elected as a reform governor and succeeded in getting many changes enacted in Michigan during his one term, including a presidential primary and a workmen's compensation act. Due to his successes, he has had a lasting effect in Michigan's history. He was considered liberal, and a Progressive Republican. His later interests included science, folklore and travel and were the subjects of many of his books. Many were written with Stellanova Osborn, who, as his widow, has continued working toward the same ideals. One of their last causes together was the establishment of an international union of parliamentary democracies, which Mrs. Osborn has continued to champion. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Possum Poke in Possum Lane had its origins in the first decade of the Twentieth Century as a hunting camp for a small group of northerners who liked to spend part of the winter months in South Georgia. Among these men were Chase Salmon Osborn, a Michigan politician who became governor of that state in 1911. The group purchased one acre of land in 1905 and thereon erected their "Hunter's Lodge" ("Big Poke"). About five individuals were involved in this venture, and were represented by De Forest Payne, of Detroit, Michigan as trustee.

In 1909 Osborn bought an adjacent tract of ten acres where he erected a smaller hunting lodge of his own. In 1920, he completely bought out the other partners in the original hunting camp. The following quote is taken from the History of Worth County, Georgia, by Lillie Martin Grubbs:

"To be a bit independent of the camp I bought a few acres and built a camp on a smaller scale for my own use and also set out pecan trees."

(CONTINUED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 15 acres

Quadrangle name Sylvester, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>13</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
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D			
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is marked on the enclosed tax map and is all that remains associated with Possum Poke and all that was transferred to the current owner in 1966 by Mrs. CHase S. Osborn.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
-------	------------	------	--------	------

state		code	county	code
-------	--	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. Historian

Historic Preservation Section

organization Ga Department of Natural Resources date June 18, 1982

street & number 270 Washington Street telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA

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 Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7/26/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Alvin Lyon date 8/26/82
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

"Having seen all the earth and having wintered in California and Florida and on the Riviera and in Egypt and in the South Seas and, in fact, every place thought to be attractive in the winter, it is easy to discover the advantages and attractiveness of South Georgia. First of these are the people... If there is an inhibition in South Georgia I have not discovered it in forty years of contact... In addition to this there is none of the mongrel mob that crowds into and flourishes in places cheaply popular... I found a great reason for its social superiority came from the fact that it is largely peopled from North Carolina... It so happens that even they are improved by transporting to Georgia, just as in the Yankee... One cannot phrase the loveliness of Worth County without exhausting both language and space."

Possum Poke has two houses and several outbuildings. The larger house, "Big Poke" was built in 1905 by the hunter's club and was later used by Osborn to house his guests while at Possum Poke. Osborn bought this house and the land it is on in 1920. A smaller house, "Little Poke" was actually used as living quarters by Osborn while in Georgia. The original "Little Poke," a one-story "concrete stone" building with a tile roof, built in 1909, was burned and replaced by the present structure in 1934. The governor died at Possum Poke in 1949. The property then passed to his second wife, Stellanova Brunt Osborn who continues to occupy the premises on a seasonal basis. In 1966, however, the property was deeded to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College at Tifton, Georgia, which institution presently owns the property as a unit of the University System of Georgia.

Chase Salmon Osborn (1860-1949) was a native of Indiana and was born in the sparsely populated area around Wabash. At age six his family moved to LaFayette, Indiana for better educational opportunities. Osborn's parents were ardent abolitionists, and named their son after an admired Ohio statesman, Salmon P. Chase. Although Osborn attended Purdue University, he did not finish, returning home to aid his family.

Not until 1887 did Osborn ever live in Michigan. His first trek from home was to Chicago where he held various odd jobs including a position at the Chicago Tribune. After being layed off in 1879 he went to Wisconsin, where he continued in newspaper work. By 1881 he was a reporter for Milwaukee's Evening Wisconsin. It was here that he married Lillian Jones who bore his six children.

In about 1883 he and his wife moved to Florence, Wisconsin. There, he was introduced to politics, ran his first newspaper, first prospected for iron, and first became enthralled with the wild northwoods country.

Selling out his business in Florence, and making a substantial profit, Osborn took his family back to Milwaukee. Soon, however, they moved to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan where he took up permanent residence. Again he became involved in the newspaper business and eventually gained full control of the Sault News.

(CONTINUED)

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Osborn's political career began to expand while in Sault St. Marie. In 1890, he was appointed Postmaster, although he lost the job in 1893 when Democratic President Grover Cleveland took office for the second time. In 1895, the governor of Michigan appointed him as the State Game and Fish Warden. This was politically useful for Osborn's future, as in 1896 he attempted unsuccessfully to gain the Congressional Seat from his district. In 1899 the Governor appointed him as State Railroad Commissioner, a post for which he had to move to Lansing. In 1901 Osborn had to give up the Sault News, although he soon went into a partnership for the Saginaw Courier Herald. In 1900, Osborn sought the Republican nomination for the Michigan governorship, again unsuccessfully.

As side interests, Osborn was involved in the development of iron fields (which proved to be very profitable), extensive world traveling, and hunting.

It was this last mentioned interest that brought him to Georgia with a small group of friends who came on seasonal hunting trips.

Continuing his political interests, Osborn served in 1908 as the Chairman of the Michigan delegation to the Republican National Convention. He served also as a delegate to the National Conservation Congress and was appointed to the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan.

In 1909, Osborn announced his intention to run for governor. His Progressive Republican platform included stricter child and female labor laws, modest conservation measures, increased state regulation of business, clean and efficient state government, improved primary laws, and a workman's compensation act. He easily won the primary and went on to take the state. On January 1, 1911 he took office. While in office, Osborn was successful in achieving most of the items included in his platform. In addition, he was able to secure tax legislation that gave more power to the state tax commission, improved school laws, reorganized the National Guard, and made it possible for Michigan voters to vote on women's suffrage.

After the expiration of Governor Osborn's term he continued his interest in political and civic activity. In 1914 he ran again for the governorship, and though winning the Republican primary, the office went to the incumbent due to the Republican split by the Bull Moose Party. On various occasions he considered running for other offices including President of the United States, U.S. Senator, and Vice-President, although nothing ever materialized of these ambitions. His two last most significant accomplishments were the securing of Isle Royal for a National Park, and agitation for a bridge to connect the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan. The latter was not accomplished during his lifetime.

In his later years, Governor Osborn preferred living primitively at his camps at Duck Island, Michigan and Worth County, Georgia. His philosophy is quoted as follows. "I laugh at everything that is funny, enjoy the sky, study the winds and

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weather, know the birds and flowers and bugs and rocks and stars somewhat, love my friends, and work sixteen hours a day." On April 11, 1949 he died at Possum Poke in Worth County, Georgia.

Stella Brunt (1894 -) was an honors student at the University of Michigan when she met the governor. In 1931 he adopted her and for the next eighteen years, assisted in his writing, including her "A Tale of Possum Poke in Possum Lane." It was at this time that she changed her first name to "Stellanova." Osborne later separated from his first wife, who died in 1948. In order to best carry on his ideals and prestige, the Governor and his adopted daughter were married at Possum Poke in April, 1949, one week before Osborn's death. Since that time, Mrs. Osborn has steadfastly crusaded for the formation of an Atlantic Union. Quoting her late husband, the thesis behind her never-ending pursuit of this union is this:

"If ever the great masses of people in the world who are living under despots are organized under despotism, the self-governing peoples, who are in a hopeless minority, will be forced to unite for self-preservation."

According to Mrs. Osborn, the only remaining place specifically associated with Governor Chase S. Osborn in the United States, that is left intact, is Possum Poke in Possum Lane, Worth County, Georgia.

Before his death, Governor Osborn offered the tract to the State of Georgia's park system in 1947 with a life estate for himself. This never was finalized. In 1966 his widow transferred the fifteen acres to the State of Georgia through a donation to the University System of Georgia. It was to be maintained by Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, a unit of that system. In 1974 commemorative markers were dedicated at Possum Poke to mark the 25th Anniversary of the death of Governor Osborn. "Osborn Memorial Day" was held on May 7, 1979 honoring Governor and Mrs. Osborn.

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Continuation sheet

Bibliography

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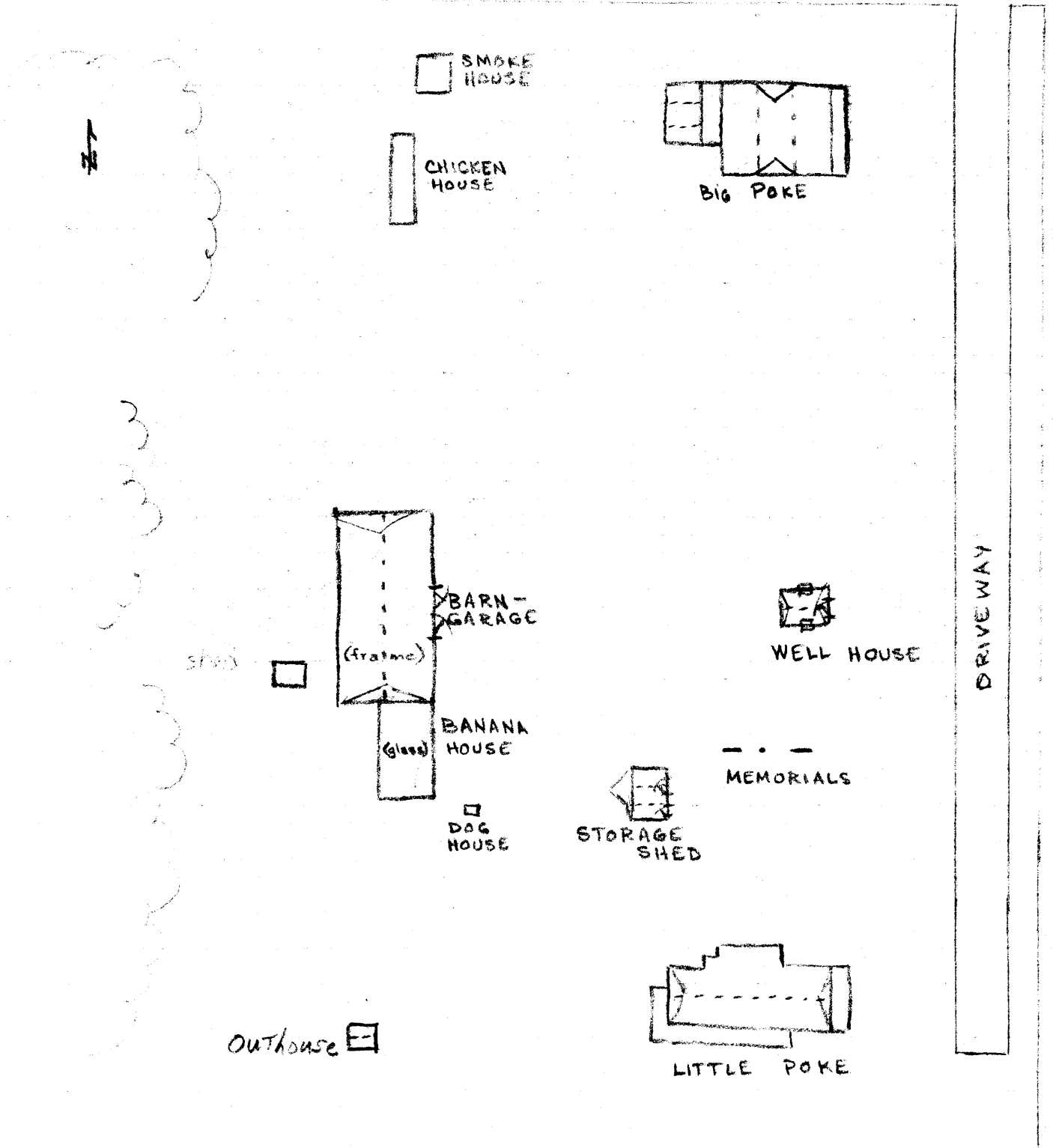
National Register Information Form by Erick D. Montgomery, 1981.

Biographical sketches on Governor Chase S. Osborn from National Cyclopedia of American Biography, and the Dictionary of American Biography.

Osborn, Chase S. "Why I Live in Georgia" in GEORGIA, July, 1926 p. 9.

Interviews with Mrs. Chase S. Osborn at Possum Poke. 1981.

LANE



ALL OUT BUILDINGS ARE FRAME

SKETCH MAP

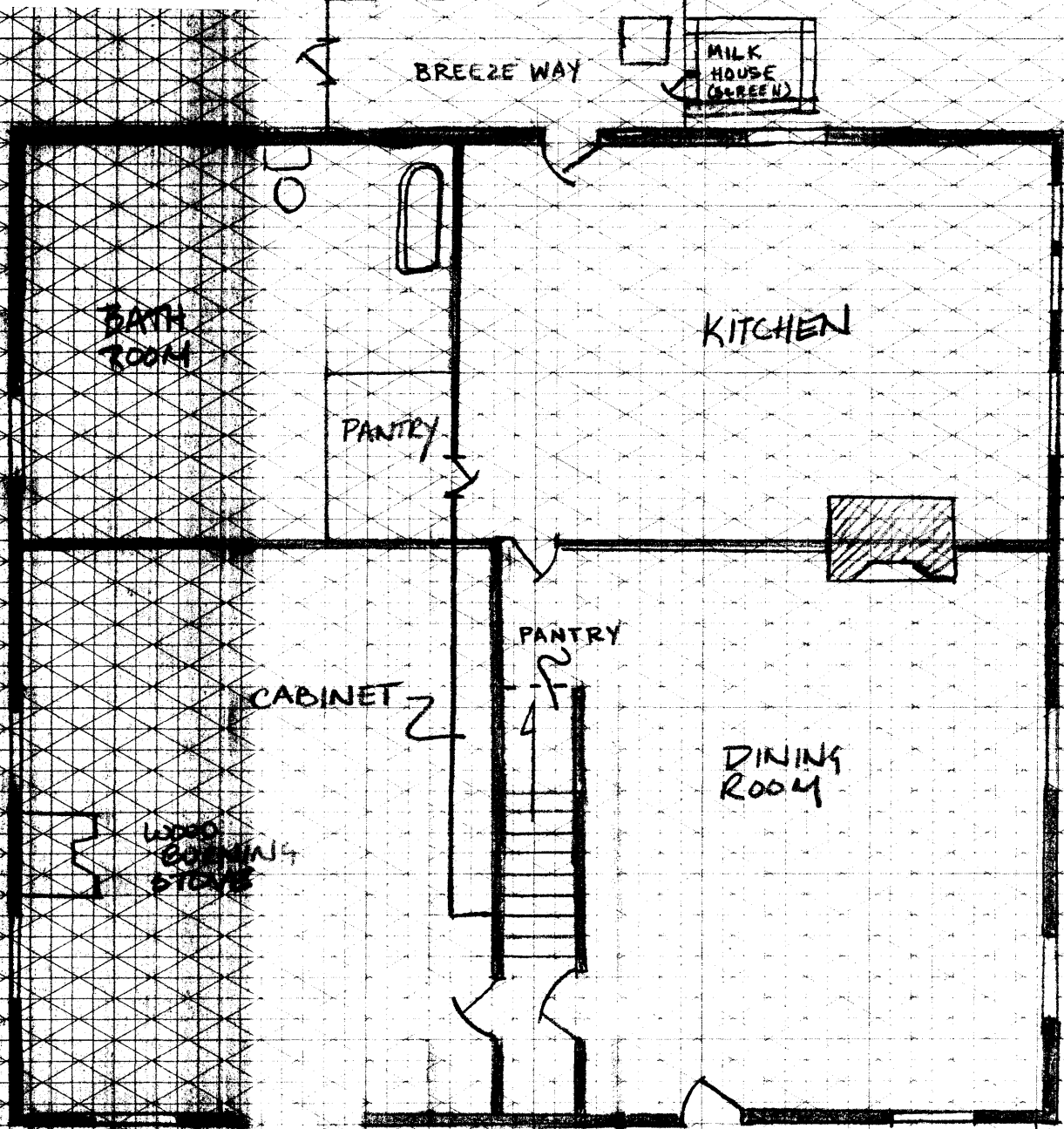
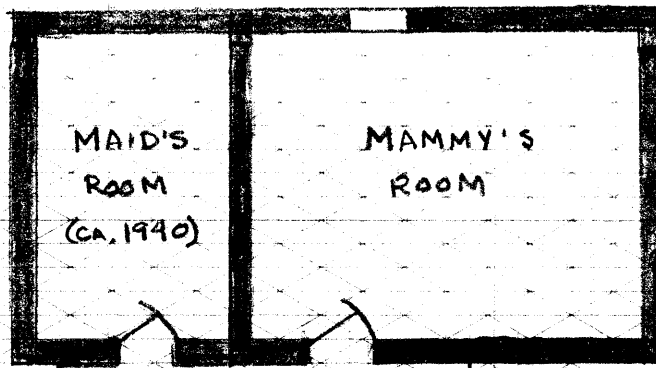
POSSUM POKE
Near Poulan, Worth County, Georgia

Scale: None
Source: Drawn by Erick D. Montgomery
Date: c. 1981

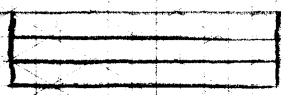
Key: All features included within the nominated property are drawn on the map and labelled.

POSSUM POKE
Near Poulan, Worth County
Georgia

Scale: Not Identified
Source: Drawn by Laurie
Faulk/Erick Montgomery
Date: 1981
Key: "Big Poke" First floor



1ST FLOOR FLOOR PLAN



FLOOR PLANS

POSSUM POKE

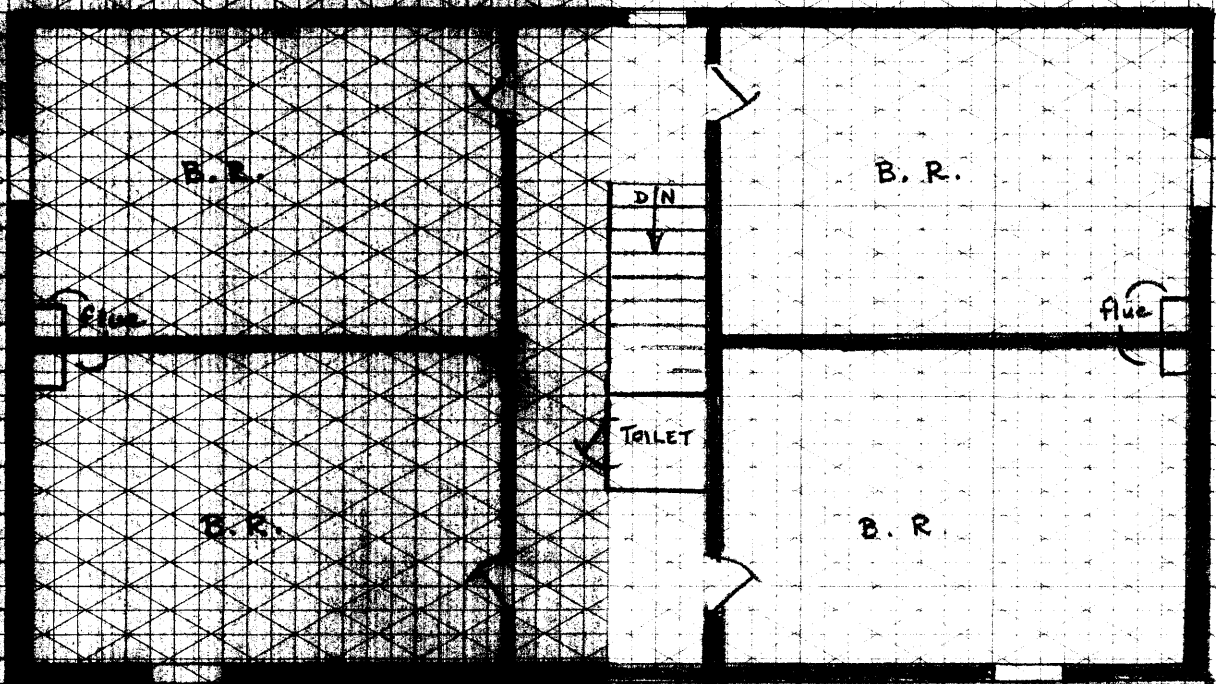
Near Poulan, Worth County, Georgia

Scale: None identified

Source: Drawn by Laurie Faulk/Erick Montgomery

Date: 1981

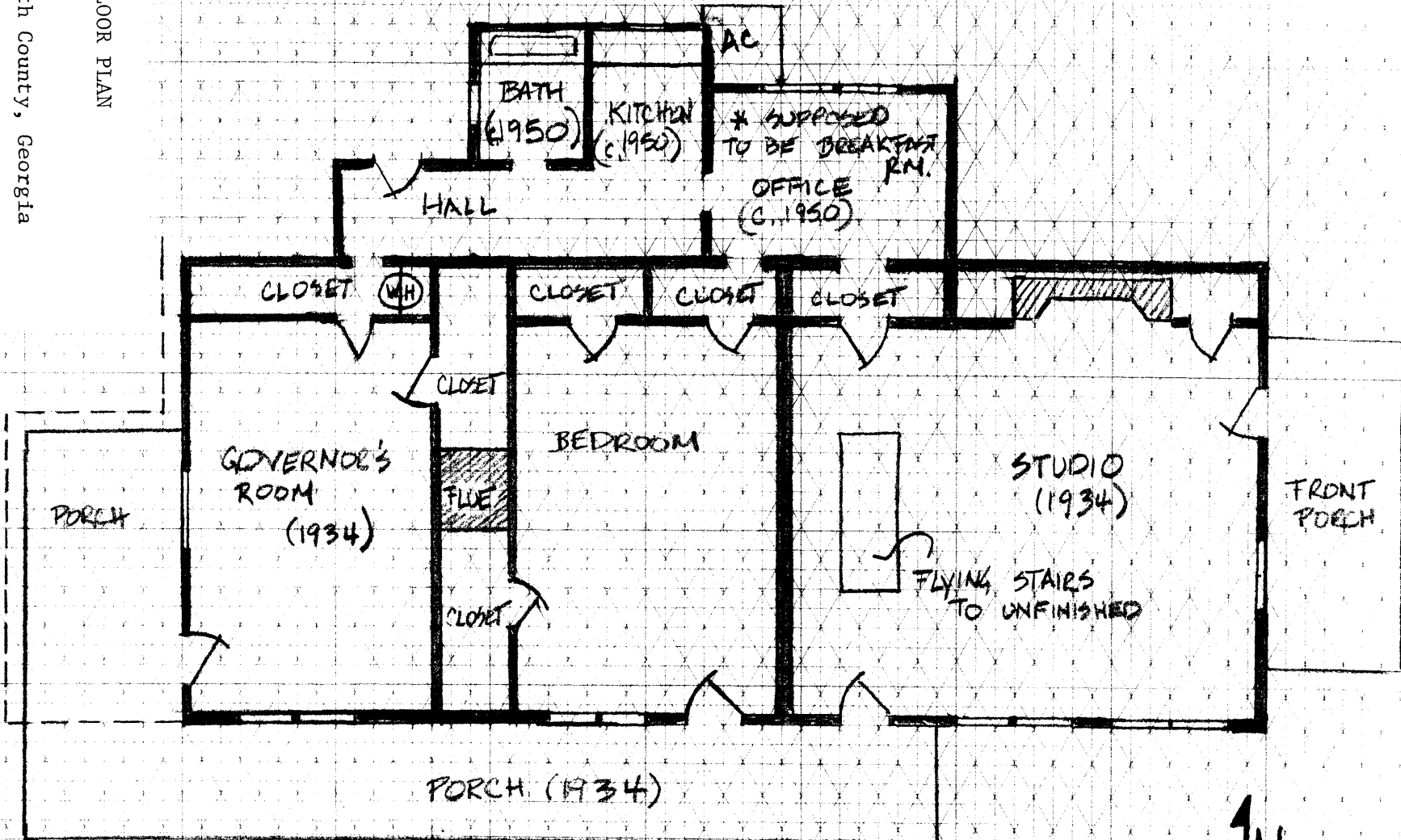
Key: "Big Poke"
Second Floor



FLOOR PLAN

POSSUM POKE
Near Poulan, Worth County, Georgia

Scale: None
Source: Drawn by Laurie Faulk/Erlick Mont-
gomery
Date: 1981
Key: Little Poke





TAX MAP

POSSUM POKE
Near Poulon, North County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 600'

Source: North County Tax Assessors Office
Map 97 Parcel 6.

Date: c. 1980

Key: The nominated property is marked by
a wide black and white line.