

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Louisiana
COUNTY:	Natchitoches
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Bayou Folk Museum ***CLOUTIER, ALEXIS, House**

AND/OR HISTORIC: Kate Chopin House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Main Street (La. Hwy. No. 495)

CITY OR TOWN: Cloutierville CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5th - Otto Passman

STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22 COUNTY: Natchitoches CODE: 069

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Mildred L. McCoy

STREET AND NUMBER: General Delivery

CITY OR TOWN: Cloutierville STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Natchitoches Parish Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Church Street

CITY OR TOWN: Natchitoches STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

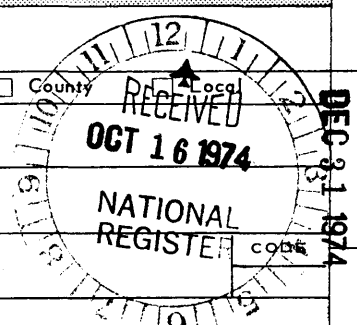
TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bayou Folk Museum complex consists of a two story raised Louisiana cottage with attic and three more recent structures, a blacksmith shop, a doctor's office and restroom facilities for tourists. All are on property acquired by Alexis Cloutier in the late 1700's by Spanish Land Grant No. B 1701. It is believed that what is now called the Kate Chopin House was constructed by Cloutier in the early 1800's as a home on this tract and was clearly indicated on a map placed on record with the State Land Office in 1813.

The Kate Chopin House is a raised Louisiana cottage with the lower story of brick and the upper of heart cypress mortised with pegs. The lower floor, now covered with concrete, was originally dirt. The interior walls of the upper story are of bousillage (mud and Spanish moss reinforced with wooden pegs) which have been covered with plywood. The wainscoting upstairs is original, as are the French doors onto the front porch and many of the window panes.

The building has no central hall. All rooms open onto the front or back gallery, although the second story back gallery has been enclosed. Seven pillars support the first floor galleries - brick in the front and wood in the back - while only six wooden posts support the upper front gallery and its wooden balustrade. The fancy woodwork adorning the columns in the rear of the building was moved here from a local store. Front and rear galleries also contain wooden staircases to the upper floor.

Two large front rooms are located on each floor separated by a double fireplace. Three smaller rooms are across the back of the first floor. The back of the second floor is divided in two and includes the stairway to the attic. The upper back gallery has been enclosed and divided into three rooms.

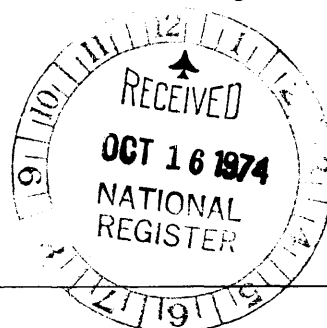
The original wooden shingle roof has been covered by metal. All of the doors and windows on the front and sides of the house have solid wooden shutters copied from four sets, complete with hardware, found in the attic. The structure is presently painted white with green shutters.

Brick sidewalks connect the different buildings in the complex. The blacksmith shop, directly behind the house, was constructed from logs from a century-old barn on a nearby plantation. The structure was redesigned when it was moved to the Museum complex and now contains a collection of agricultural tools.

To the left of the blacksmith shop is a doctor's office which was built down the street from the complex in the early 1930's and moved to its present location in 1938. Used as a doctor's office until the late 1950's, it is a three room clapboard structure with each small room directly behind the other and a front porch. It presently houses a collection of furnishings and equipment from area doctors.

Restroom facilities are in a modern building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kate Chopin House represents an important chapter in the history of the little French community of Cloutierville because it was, in the early 1800's, the home of Alexis Cloutier for whom the community was named. It was also the home of Kate Chopin, the American author of Creole stories, and is the only residence of hers that remains intact within the United States.

The building is an example of the high basement type of architecture prevalent in Louisiana in the late 1700's and early 1800's, with a brick lower story and a bousillage second story. It is located on property acquired by Alexis Cloutier in the late 1700's and is thought to have been built by him in the early 1800's. Cloutier had come to the Cane River region with his brother-in-law named LeCompte to farm. His property eventually included almost the entire section in which Cloutierville is located and a portion of another section below that community then known as Riviere Aux Cannes. By 1816 he had donated the land upon which the community's small frame church was constructed.

In 1822, Riviere Aux Cannes became Cloutierville. Shortly thereafter, Cloutier led a movement to divide Natchitoches Parish and to make Cloutierville the parish seat of the new parish. He petitioned the legislature and incorporated the town. He was so sure the petition would be granted that he donated more land for a civic building, but the new parish was never formed. Cloutier later sold the land intended for the civic building in separate lots.

Oscar and Kate O'Flaherty Chopin and their 6 children moved into the house in early 1880. Chopin had bought the house at a sheriff's sale after he was sent to Cloutierville to manage plantation property on both sides of the Cane River. Oscar and Kate were distant cousins, and had settled in New Orleans where Oscar went into the brokerage business. When this failed, he was sent to Cloutierville by his father. His brother was also sent to manage property further downriver near the community now known as Chopin. Oscar died in 1882, and in 1883 Kate returned to her native St. Louis. She retained her memories of the history, folklore, and lifestyles of the Cane River area and recorded them in her short stories, one collection of which, Bayou Folk, published in 1894, serves as the focal point of the museum complex.

Today the house serves as a museum for a collection of furniture and furnishings of mixed periods which were found in the middleclass and poorer homes along the Cane River after the Civil War. There are also mementoes of the religious, social, and school life of the area.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of N. W. IA. Southern Pub. Co. Nashville and Chicago (1890) p. 317 - p. 333
 Portre-Smith - Natchitoches-Up to Date Oldest Town In La. Dameron-Pierson Co., Ltd. New Orleans, (1936) pp. 203-209
 Daniel Rankin - Kate Chopin and Her Creole Stories - University of Penn. Press, Philadelphia (1932) pp. 98-104, pp. 130-140
 Per Seyersted - Kate Chopin Biography - L. S. U. Press - Baton Rouge, La. (1970) pp. 43-47
 L. R. Whipple - Library of Southern Literature - Vol. II - Martin-Hoyt Co., New Orleans, Atlanta, Dallas, (1970) pp. 863-890

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

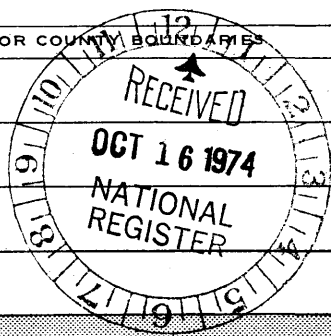
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		31° 32' 22"	92° 55' 06"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
 15/507800
 3489350

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mildred L. McCoy - Owner operator

ORGANIZATION: Bayou Folk Museum DATE: July 20, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: General Delivery

CITY OR TOWN: Cloutierville STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Jay R. Brown
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
 Director, Department of Art,
 Historical and Cultural Preservation

Date: October 9, 1974

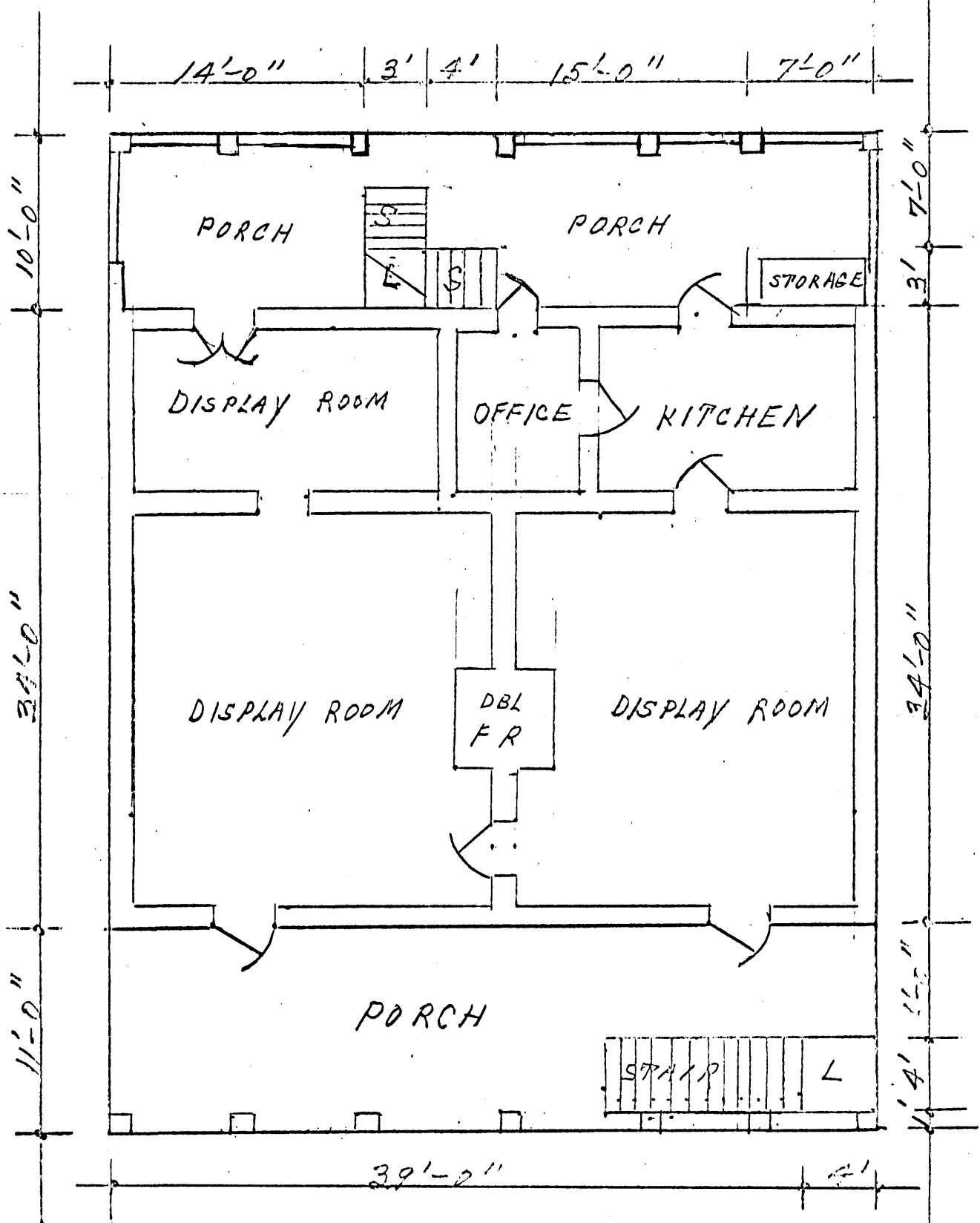
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AK Marlowe
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/31/74

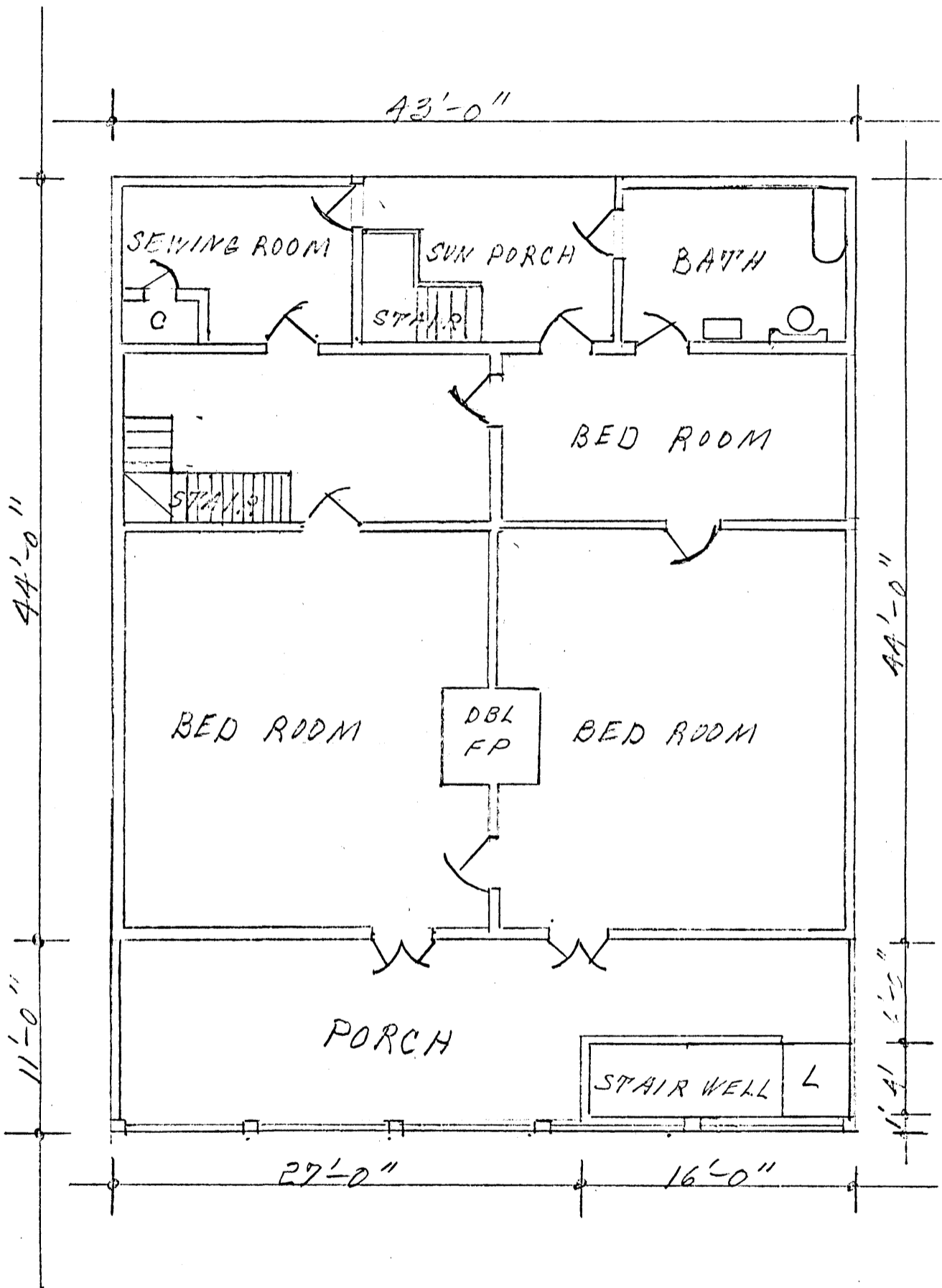
ATTEST:
Ronald M. Benney
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 12/31/74

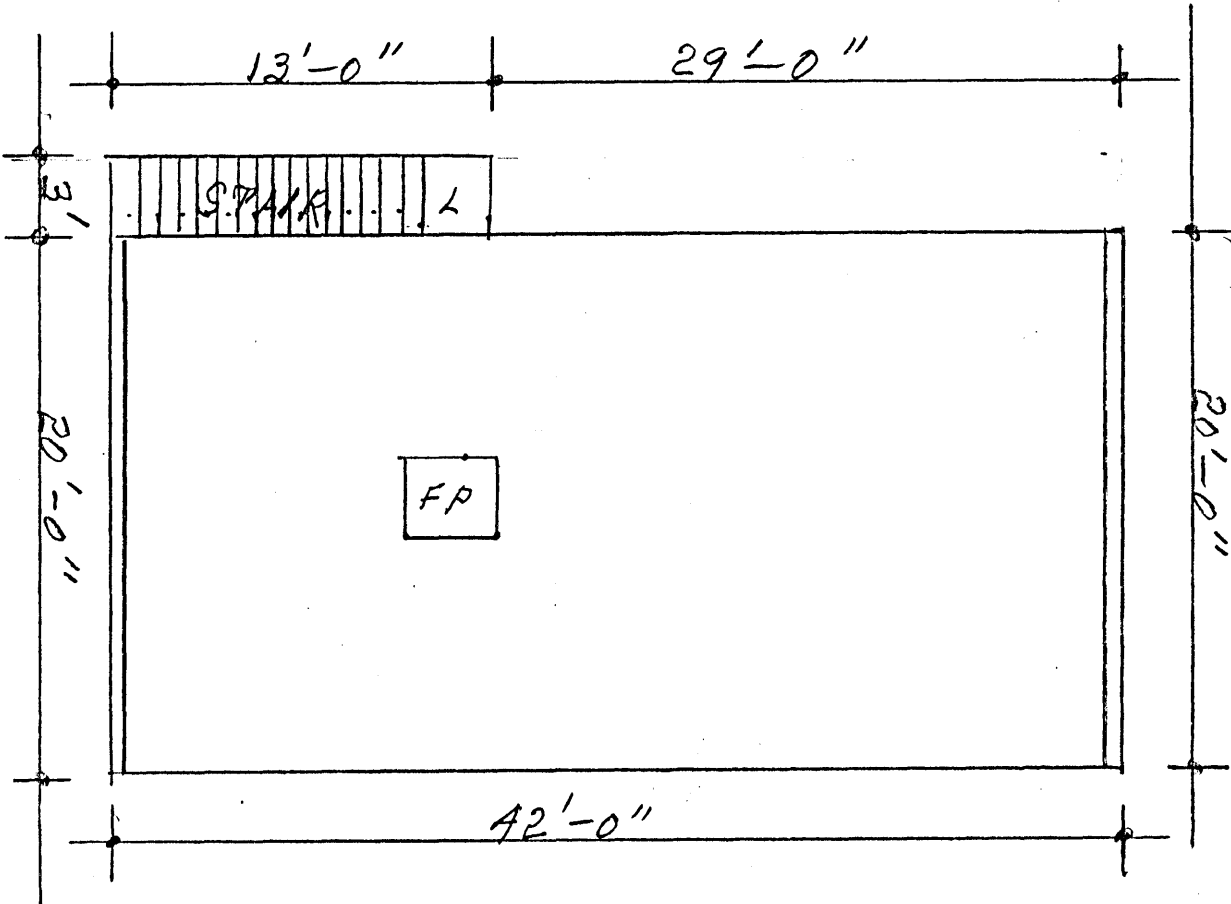


1ST FLOOR MAIN BUILDING

SCALE 1/8" = 1'

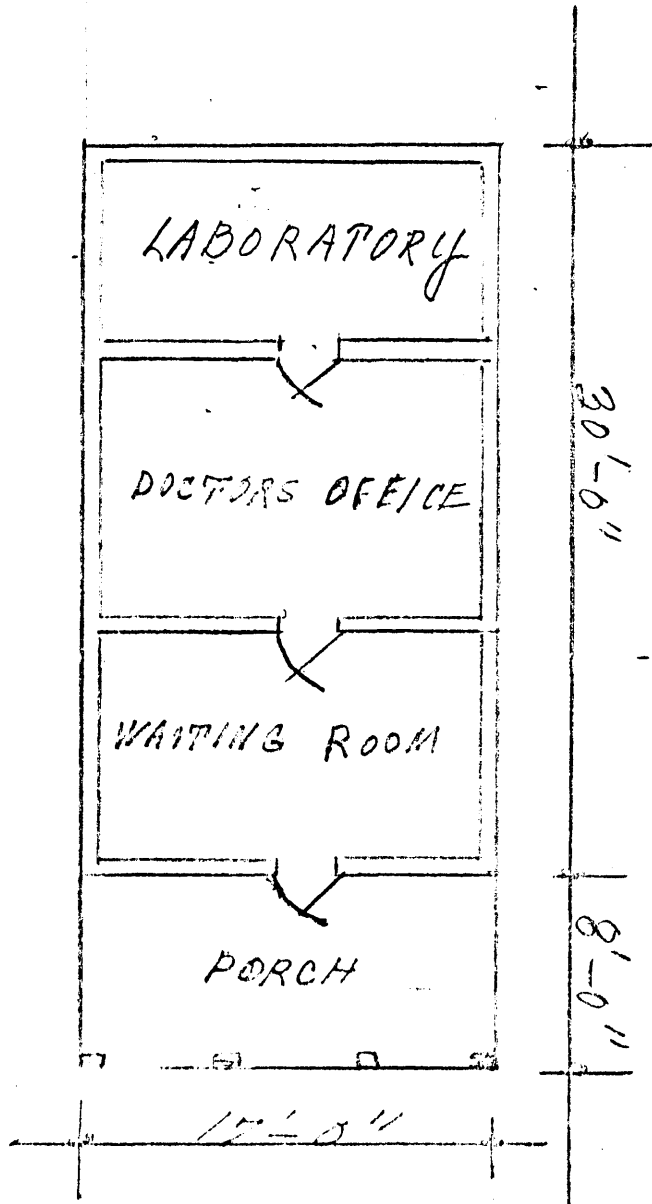


2ND FLOOR MAIN BUILDING
SCALE 1/8" = 1'



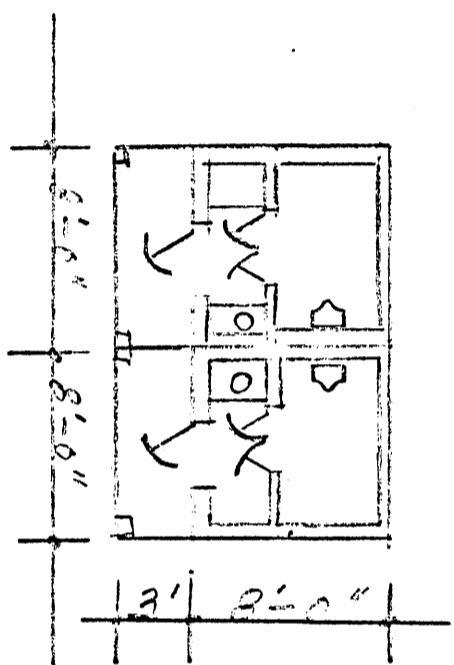
ATTIC MAIN BUILDING

SCALE $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'



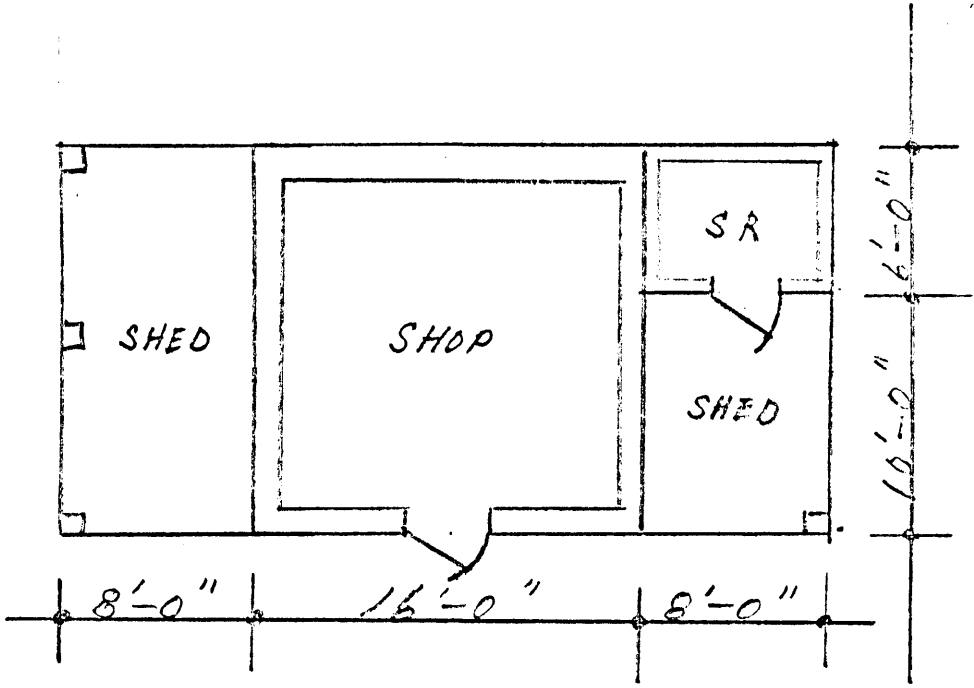
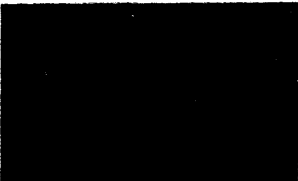
DOCTORS OFFICE

SCALE $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$



REST ROOMS.

SCALE $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$



BLACK SMITH SHOP

SCALE $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$