

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

For NPS use only  
received FEB 27 1985  
date entered MAR 28 1985

1. Name

historic Dickson, James, House

and/or common Sparks House

2. Location

street & number Lower Lick Creek Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Linden

X vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state Tennessee

code

047

county

Perry

code 135

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ms. Jessie S. Walker

street & number 2049 Oaktimber

city, town Kirkwood

N/A vicinity of

state Missouri 63122

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Perry County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Linden

state Tennessee 37096

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

## 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 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

Situated on the Lower Lick Creek Road in Perry County, Tennessee, three miles east of the Tennessee River and ten miles west of the county seat of Linden, the James Dickson House is one of the oldest houses in the county. The two-story house is of braced-frame construction, assembled with wooden pegs and covered with poplar weatherboard siding. The house, which local accounts date back to at least 1819, is a rare example of this early type of construction in the remote and sparsely settled southern Middle Tennessee county of Perry. Many details of construction can be discerned including joists and beams hewn with a broadaxe and smoothed with an adze, rabbetted-panel doors, pegged floorboards, walls, and ceilings, and floor joists of debarked poplar logs. Simple mantels of plain board construction, topped with heavy molded cornices are prominent interior design features. Located on its original site and surrounded by a number of original outbuildings, the James Dickson House has retained much of its architectural integrity.

The house is built around a braced frame of heavy wooden timbers, joined at the corners with mortise and tenon joints and braced with struts and wind braces. It rests on a cut-stone foundation and is topped with a side gable roof that was originally covered with cypress shakes but is now covered with tin roofing. The 4" x4" roof rafters are not connected at the top by a ridgepole but are instead lap-jointed, pegged together, and covered by wide roof boards. The house originally consisted of one large room on each floor (with the second story used as the sleeping area) but these were divided by wooden panel partitions long ago. A two-story ell addition with one-story shed galleries extending along the sides was added to the house in about 1930.

Facing north towards the Lower Lick Creek Road, the front elevation is three bays wide and arranged around a central entrance. The entry is particularly interesting, being a four-paneled door decorated with stained graining of highest quality work and surrounded by a carved and incised architrave. A central two-story pedimented portico, of later construction, extends from this point. It is supported by two square wooden posts with molded capitals and features a second-story balcony. Sawn wood trim, including vergeboards, brackets, and balustrades with sawn balusters delineate this section of the facade. Windows on the front are 1/1 double-hung sash. The east and west sides are plain gable ends with gable returns and corbeled cut-stone exterior chimneys on heavy fieldstone bases. The chimney on the east end is constructed of small rectangular dressed stone blocks.

The two-story ell addition that was extended from the rear about fifty years ago rests on raised stone piers and features one-story shed galleries supported by lathe-turned porch posts along both sides and paneled wooden doors. The rear gable end is plain but for two 4/4 sash windows and gable returns while an interior brick flue rises from the center of the ell. A large dining room and kitchen on the first floor and two large rooms on the second story comprise the interior of this section of the house. All rooms in this section are of simple construction with minimal decoration. Floors are of pine, laid north-south, walls are of mixed plaster and sheetrock construction, and windows are double-hung sash with 2/2 or 4/4 lights and plain surrounds.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered MAR 28 1985

Continuation sheet Dickson, James, House Item number 7 Page 2

The log smokehouse is located some forty feet off the house's southwest corner. The single-pen structure is constructed of cedar logs, joined at the corners with dovetail notching and topped with a corrugated tin roof. A small batten door on the north or front side is the only entrance. The smokehouse may have been constructed from the old detached kitchen which was removed when the rear ell section was added to the main house.

A log corncrib is located approximately thirty yards behind the house. The single-pen structure is constructed of very large cedar logs and features an entrance with a vertical-batten door on the west end. It has been altered by the addition of a larger gable roof, open on the north side, to serve as a tractor shed and is in very deteriorated condition.

A third outbuilding, a small barn of board-and-batten frame construction, is located twenty-five feet behind the corncrib. The small structure apparently dates from the early part of the twentieth century and features batten doors and window shutters, an open central section, a side-gable tin roof, and a rear shed section. The structure is in fair shape.

The Dickson House and its outbuildings are located on the south side of the Lower Lick Creek Road, in the midst of a large lot shadowed by mature poplars, maples, and other hardwoods. The property is surrounded by large cornfields occupying the rich bottom land along Lick Creek.

## 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 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** ca. 1819

**Builder/Architect** James Dickson

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

The James Dickson House on Lower Lick Creek in western Perry County, Tennessee, is nominated under National Register criterion C for its local architectural significance. The finely crafted two-story frame house is one of the earliest surviving structures in rural Perry County and is significant because of its braced-frame construction. Hand hewn joists and beams, mortise and tenon joints, struts and wind braces are all discernable. In addition, grained doors, a marbled fireplace and ornamental woodwork accentuate the overall appearance of the building.

The house was probably built before 1820 by James Dickson, who was listed that year in the decennial census as living on the property with a wife and daughter. According to local tradition and substantiated by neighborhood residents, the first county court of Perry County met here the first Monday in January 1820, following the creation of the county by the Tennessee General Assembly late in the previous year. Supposedly, the house was chosen as being the only house in the county with glass windows at the time. (Other local accounts state that the court first met at the home of a lawyer named Barry on Tom's Creek, later the N. S. Horner Place.) James Dickson was one of the first magistrates of the newly created county.

At the time the court first met, Perry County included lands on both sides of the Tennessee River, including most of what is now Decatur County on the western bank. The court may have considered the Dickson House (or the Barry house) too isolated to serve as a county seat since in 1821 it was moved to Perryville, where it remained until 1846.

Late in the nineteenth century the house and property were acquired by the Ledbetter family of Perry County. A daughter, Minerva Ledbetter, married Jessie Sparks and continued to live at the house until her death in 1942. The house is still known locally as the old Sparks place, after J. Kent Sparks, a local favorite and member of the Tennessee General Assembly, and the last member of the family to reside in the house. The house is still owned by his descendants, but now serves as a weekend retreat and fishing camp.

Architecturally, the house is distinguished by its heavy-timber braced-frame construction and wooden peg assembly. Characterized by fine craftsmanship and detailing without the need for elaborate ornamentation, the James Dickson House is an asset to the cultural resources of Perry County. Fine cut-stone chimneys, a two-story center portico with intricate sawn trim, and interior features that include a marbled mantel and grained door are excellent features of the house.

The house is located on a large lot shaded by mature oaks and poplars and is surrounded by a number of original outbuildings, including a log smokehouse and corncrib, all included in the nomination. The house and outbuildings have retained most of their architectural integrity.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Pete. "In 1820, 1st Court Met Here." Buffalo River Review, 2 August 1982.  
 Census Records, Perry County, 1820 and 1830.  
 Hudson, Dorothy. Interview, summer 1984.  
 Tiller, Jessie Ruth. Interview, summer 1984.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property four acres

Quadrangle name Pine View, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	4	1	3	1	1	0	3	9	4	9	6	7	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** The property nominated is a four-acre lot approximately rectangular in shape that is bounded on the north by the Lower Lick Creek Road, and on the east, south, and north by fence lines of adjacent property. It includes land historically associated with the house.

### 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 Richard Quin, Regional Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central Tennessee Development District date October 31, 1984

street & number P. O. Box 1346 telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38402-1346

## 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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Haysen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/14/85

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 3-28-85

Keeper of the National Register

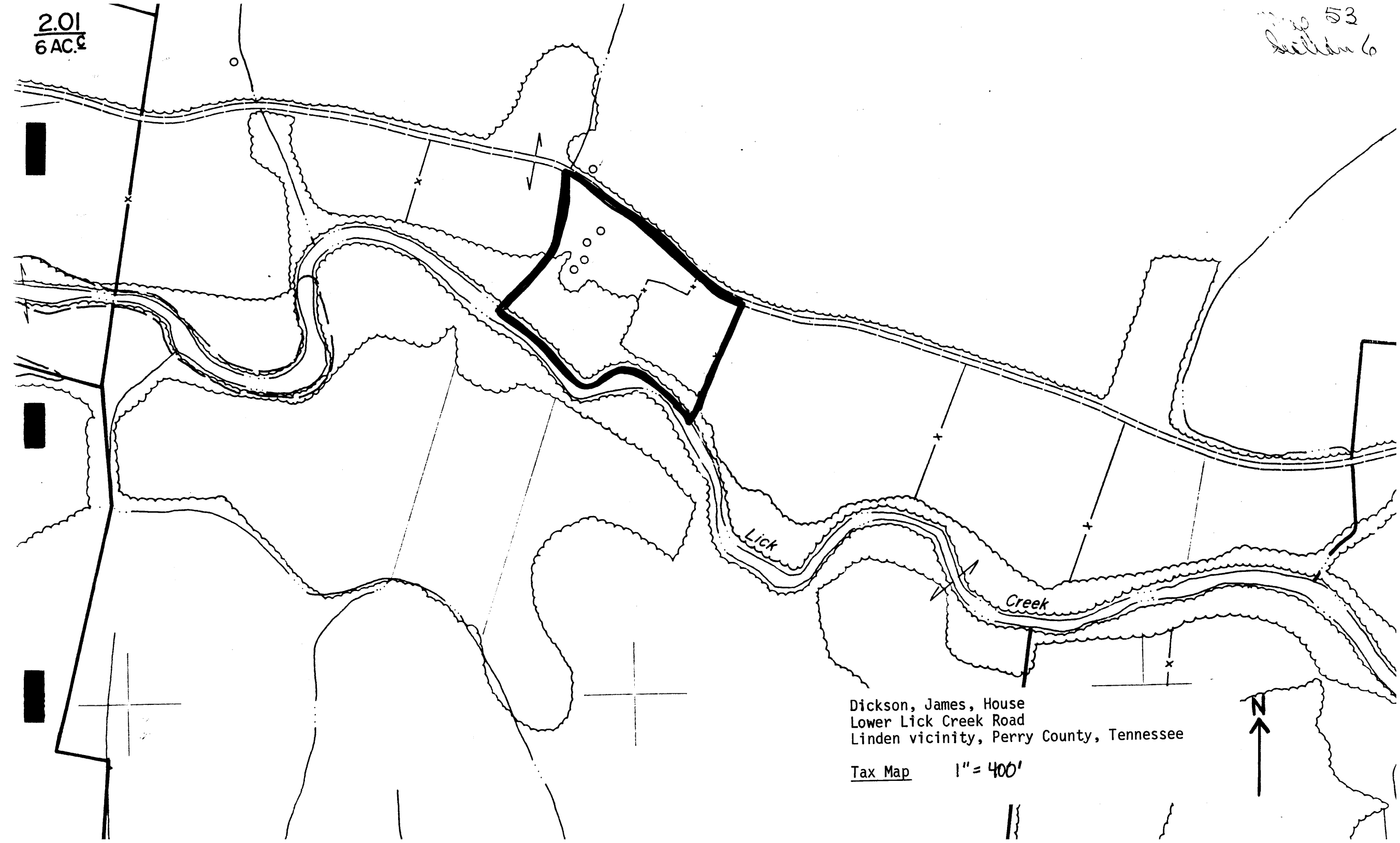
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

2.01  
6 AC.±

Map 53  
Section 6



Dickson, James, House  
Lower Lick Creek Road  
Linden vicinity, Perry County, Tennessee

Tax Map 1" = 400'

