

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94001545

Date Listed: 1/17/95

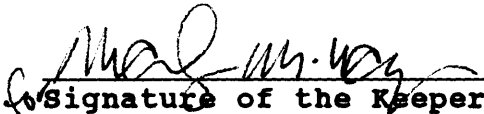
**Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Property Name**

**Marion
County**

**ALABAMA
State**

Multiple Name

This property is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

1/18/95
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 5

This amendment clarifies the count as listed. The non-contributing building is the Law Office, moved to the site in 1960. The contributing objects are the four wells and the outdoor fireplace.

This information was confirmed by the Alabama SHPO (1/18/95)

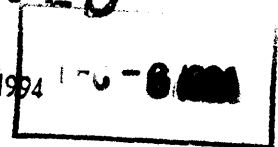
DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1545
OWNER objection

RECEIVED

JUL 25 1994 170-6111



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Ala. Historical Commission INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fite, Ernest Baxter, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Corner of Jackson Military Rd. and Thomas St. N/A not for publication
(No number designation)

city or town Hamilton N/A vicinity

state Alabama code AL county Marion code 093 zip code 35570

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11/29/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
11/17/95
Entered in the National Register 8/28/97

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Name of Property

Marion Co., AL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
5		objects
6	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

ORIGINAL SUBMISSION

RECEIVED

JUL 25 1994

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

JAN 7 4 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

Ala. Historical Commission

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1. Name of Property

historic name Fite, Ernest Baxter, House

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(No number designation)

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state Alabama code AL county Marion code 093 zip code 35570

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Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State of Federal agency and bureau

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Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature] 11/29/94

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Name of Property

Marion Co., AL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
5		objects
6	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT
other WOOD
CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Name of Property

Marion Co., AL
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1928

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carter, Weatherly (Architect)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Fite Family Archive

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Name of Property

Marion Co., AL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	408565	3777270
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	408665	3777330

3	16	408700	3777060
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	16	408560	3777100

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Mayhall

organization Marion County Historical Society date 6 May 1994

street & number P.O. Box 516 telephone (205)921-7507

city or town Hamilton, state AL zip code 35570

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

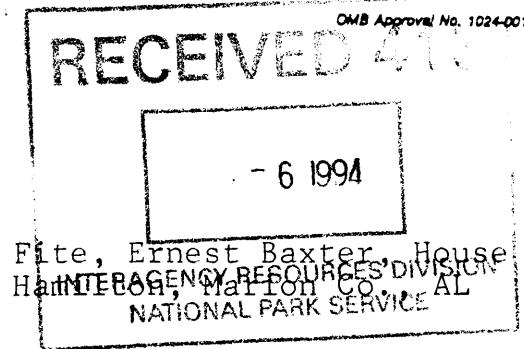
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



#7 Architectural Description

The Ernest Baxter Fite house is a two-story, brick, family home located at the intersection of the Military Road and Thomas Street in Hamilton, Alabama. After its construction in 1927-28 by Montgomery architect Weatherly Carter for the Fites, a Marion County family, the house was continuously used as a residence until 1968, and used on and off until 1984 (Caroline Fite Mixon, interview, November 29, 1992).

Designed and built on a Colonial plan, the sixteen-room house remained the largest and most elegant in the city for many years. An 1880s frame law office measuring 14'x 36' was the office from which three generations of Fites practiced law. The structure sat on court square in downtown Hamilton until 1960, when, due to new downtown building codes which prevented repairs on such structures, it was moved unchanged to the house site (Fite Family Archives). The former office now sits in a wooded lot on the 9-acre house site. Since its relocation has been used for storage by the family.

The east-facing house is built on an irregular L-shaped plan, approximately 69 by 48 feet, including a portico with monumental, 2-story Doric columns. The foundation is of brick. The brick house contains many large windows with limestone lintels, and three doorways with the same feature. The eaves feature dentils. The hip roof was originally of slate, but now of asphalt shingle. One window at the front of the house was ordered filled in by the owner while the house was being built. A balustrade across the top of the front portico has been removed due to weathering (Caroline Fite Mixon, interview, November 29, 1992).

The house contains a small basement room; first-story rooms including a sun room, bedroom, bathroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, breakfast room, entrance hall, and dividing stairway; and second-story rooms including five bedrooms, a sleeping porch, and two bathrooms. Floors are of oak, the walls and the 10-12' ceilings of plaster. There are four fireplaces, one with a limestone mantel in the living room, the others with brick and wood mantels located in bedrooms. Double arched doorways lead from the largest room in the house, the 28'x 18' living room, into the sun room. A grand staircase at the rear of the entrance hall ascends to a landing where it splits and continues up both sides of the hall. Many large windows light

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Hamilton, Marion Co., AL

Section number 7 Page 2

the house. Wide beveled crown molding decorates the living room, entrance hall, sun room, and dining room. Chandeliers in the living room and dining room were removed by family members when the house ceased to be occupied. A few of the steam radiators were also removed.

The only changes to the house are those cited above. Its roof is less than ten years old, and careful observation has shown the house to be structurally sound.

The Law Office is a white clapboard shotgun structure with a gable roof. Its two rooms, roughly equal in size, each contain a fireplace. The architecture is of a type common in Marion County in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

Features of the landscape which survive include 2 garden pools, an outdoor fireplace, 4 wells, and the perennial remnants of a flower garden. These features are contemporary to the house, and have remained unchanged except for natural growth. A frame garage which stood behind the house has not survived.

The nine-acre setting of the house remains undisturbed by other development. A wooded lot now surrounds the buildings, as it has from the beginning. This site keeps the house in its proper historic setting, since it was cultivated or kept by the family as garden, yard, or wooded lot.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Hamilton, Marion Co., AL

Section number 8 Page 3

#8 Statement of Significance

Architectural Significance:

The Ernest B. Fite House, constructed in 1927-1928, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Designed by Montgomery architect Weatherly Carter, the house is one of the finest articulations of the Colonial Revival style in Marion County. It is a prominent landmark in the small community of Hamilton. The house is historically associated with the Fite family. Ernest Baxter Fite and his son Rankin Fite were locally prominent attorneys and also served in the state legislature (History of Marion County, Marion County Teachers, 1959).

The Colonial Revival style in America was popular for residential architecture from 1880 to 1955. However, the style really caught on in the 1890s. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 introduced colonial inspired architecture to the nation. This architecture was a reaction to the excesses of Victorian design and fulfilled Americans' desire for a style of architecture that symbolized their patriotism and hearkened back to their past (McAlester 1984:321 & Flaherty, Jan. 1978:1,8).

The Ernest B. Fite House is a significant example of how a national trend in domestic design was interpreted in Alabama in the 1920s. It retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Historical Summary:

The Ernest Baxter Fite house and law office in Hamilton, Alabama, are located very near the earliest known court site in present Marion County, Alabama, which dates from the 1820s (Dr. John Allman, interview, April 19, 1994). A 16-acre parcel of a quarter-section purchased from the federal government in 1820 became the Fite estate (Marion County Deed Book 236, page 746).

Bloomer Rankin Fite moved to Hamilton, Alabama, in 1886 and began the practice of law. He purchased a frame law office in downtown Hamilton in 1896 and practiced from it until his death in 1919. His son, Ernest Baxter Fite (1882-1954), also a lawyer, used the office throughout his career, and for a time shared the office with his brother, who was also a lawyer (Fite Family Archives).

Ernest Baxter Fite served in the Alabama State Senate 1911-

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetFite, Ernest Baxter, House
Hamilton, Marion Co., ALSection number 8 Page 4

1915, and in the Alabama House of Representatives 1915-1935. He was a long-time president of the Marion County Banking Company, and an original owner of Hamilton's first radio station. Ernest Baxter Fite, along with two brothers, is listed in the Dictionary of Alabama Biography. It was Ernest Baxter Fite who contracted to build the Fite house in 1927-28 (Marion County News, June 20, 1958).

The highest achievement in this political family came with Ernest Baxter Fite's son Rankin Fite (1916-1980), a local lawyer, World War II veteran, and state legislator. Rankin Fite was elected to the Alabama state senate in 1946. From 1950 until 1974, with the exception of one term, he served in the Alabama House of Representatives. He is the only man in Alabama history who served two terms as Speaker of the House. He also served one term as Speaker Pro-tempore, and one term as Chairman of the House Rules Committee. At different times during his legislative career, newsmen voted him "Most Outstanding Freshman Senator," "Most Effective Member of the House of Representatives," and "Best Orator in the Senate" (Journal-Record, November 13, 1980).

Fite was the primary figure both in the introduction of the significant Trade School and Junior College Bills, in some of the earliest recruitment of large industry to Hamilton and Marion County. As a result of his efforts, Marion County became the only county in the South which had a unique Industrial Development Amendment, which could enable cities in the county to float general obligation bonds to finance buildings for new industries. At the time of Fite's death, 18 new industries had been financed under this amendment (Journal-Record, November 13, 1980).

Fite was a member of the State Board of Education for two terms, and of the State Oil and Gas Board for one term. He served on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project (1957-1971), and as its Chairman (1963). He was secretary and attorney for the Northwest Alabama Gas District (Fite Family Archives).

Fite served as vice-president of Marion County Banking Company during his father's presidency, and later as president himself.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Hamilton, Marion Co., AL

Section number 9 Page 5

Major Bibliographical References

Allman, John, Ph.D., Professor of History, Troy State University, and Marion County Historian. Interviewed 19 April, 1994.

History of Marion County, Marion County Teachers, 1959.

Fite Family Archives, including letters, newspaper clippings, and state legislative publications, Caroline Fite Mixon House, Thomas Street, Hamilton, Alabama.

Fite Family Interviews: Caroline Fite Mixon, Jane Fite Thomas, Minnie Fite Mattes (daughters of Ernest B. Fite). Interviewed November 29, 1992 in Hamilton, Alabama.

Flaherty, Carolyn. "The Colonial Revival House." The Old-House Journal 6 (January 1978):1,8-10.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

Marion County Land Records, Probate Judge's Office, Hamilton, Alabama.

Marion County Newspapers, especially Marion County News, June 20, 1958, and Journal-Record, November 13, 1980.

Marion County Tax Assessor's Records, Tax Assessor's Office, Hamilton, Alabama.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
Hamilton, Marion Co., AL

Section number 10 Page 6

Verbal Boundary Description

"A parcel containing 9.1 acres in the SE 1/4 of NE 1/4, Section 3, Township 11 South, Range 14 West.

"Beginning at the intersection of the south line of the Northeast 1/4 and the west line of Highway 78, thence northwesterly 1,082 feet, southwesterly 482 feet, southwesterly 78 feet to the east line of the Southeast 1/4 of the Northeast 1/4. Southeasterly 830 feet to the south line of the Northeast 1/4, then east 318 feet to the point of beginning."

(Marion County Tax Locator Map 49-16-02-03-1-000, Parcel 61, Marion County Tax Assessor's Office, Marion County Courthouse, Hamilton, Alabama).

Boundary Justification

Although Ernest B. Fite originally purchased 16 acres for his house site, the 9 acres being nominated are those that are currently associated with the property.

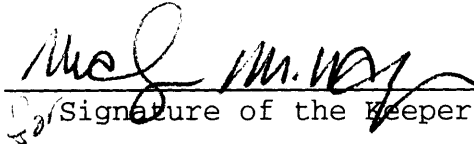
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

Fite, Ernest Baxter, House
ALABAMA, Marion

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


Signature of the Keeper

8/28/97
Date of Action



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

*Renewed
of
own obj*



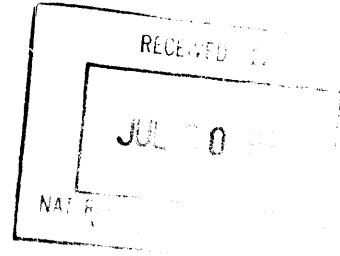
F. LAWRENCE OAKS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

94-1545

TELEPHONE NUMBER
334-242-3184

July 16, 1997

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



Dear Carol:

I am writing in regard to listing the Ernest Fite House, Hamilton, Marion County, Alabama on the National Register of Historic Places. It was determined eligible by the National Park Service on January 17, 1995, but not officially listed due to owner objection.

Community Bank has now acquired the property and would like to take advantage of the Investment Tax Credits. As the current owner, the bank wishes to list the Ernest Fite House on the National Register. I am recommending that the Fite House now be listed. Accompanying this letter is a notarized letter from Mark O. South, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Community Bank, also requesting that the property be officially listed.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please call our staff historian, Susan Enzweiler.

Sincerely,

F. Lawrence Oaks
State Historic Preservation Officer

FLO/sme