

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 12 1984
date entered AUG 9 1984

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

1. Name

historic Pitts' Folly

and/or common Pitts' Folly

2. Location

street & number Old Cahaba Road

NA not for publication

city, town Uniontown

NA vicinity of

7th congressional district

state Alabama

code 01

county Perry

code 105

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 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Pitts' Folly Trust

street & number P. O. Box 506

city, town Uniontown

NA vicinity of

state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Perry County Courthouse

street & number Washington Street

city, town Marion

state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title HABS

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1935-1936

federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington

state D.C.

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Pitts' Folly is a two-story, wood frame Greek Revival plantation house built between 1852 and 1853. The floor plan consists of a central hallway with two rooms on either side of the hallway, both upstairs and downstairs. The front rooms on both floors measure 20' x 20' square, and the two rooms on both floors towards the rear of the house measure 16' x 20'. The house has a semiperepteral colonnade with nine severely plain Doric pillars across the front and five down the east side of the house. This colonnade measures 52' across the front and 36' down the side. A cantilevered balcony, ten feet wide, runs the full length across the front and down the east side of the house, and a flat parapeted roof extends over the portico. The plain, massive Doric pillars were constructed of brick and covered with a stucco composition made from molasses, sand and horsehair. Two small Doric columns made from walnut cut from the plantation and finished, flank the recessed main entrance. The main stairway rises in a continuous sweep along one side of the central hallway. The underside of the stairway is enclosed and has been used as a storage closet. The treads of the stairs are made from oak and the handrail, which is walnut, is shaped in a cylindrical form and ends in the spiral cap of the newel post. Thin balusters, arranged in a circle, form the base of the newel post and continue up, two per tread. A second stairway, partially enclosed in a central wall of the house, curves up to the second floor bedroom. The attic stairs, with an enclosed upper portion, ascend from this same room in a straight sweep. The ceilings of the rooms on the first floor are finished plaster, while the ceilings of the second floor rooms are wood planking as specified in the 1851 agreement between P. H. Pitts and B. F. Parsons. All windows are double hung with nine over nine sashes. In the parlor are "jib" doors which are panels below the windows that open out onto the porch. Additions to the house have been confined to the rear of the house and a section of the rear of the east porch and balcony. These include two kitchens and several bathrooms. Located near the rear of the house are the laundry/kitchen building, the original well and cooler building, which was used to store perishable goods. The cooler constructed in July 1860 was a room carved out of limerock twenty feet below ground level and covered by a small building.

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 1852–1853 **Builder/Architect** B. F. Parsons

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criterion C - Architecture

Architecturally, Pitts' Folly, with its semiperepteral colonnade of severely plain Doric pillars represents an unusual vernacular interpretation of Greek Revival design. The house was designed by B. F. Parsons, a Massachusetts-born architect/builder, who worked in Perry County and the surrounding area. Other buildings known or believed to be the work of Parsons, such as the Dayton Methodist Church in Marengo County and the Ford and Cocke-Crenshaw houses near Marion, reflect the same austere approach to the Greek Revival: heavy pillars in which conventional classical proportions have been discarded for a heavier, more masculine effect; plain ponderous cornices; and an overall simplicity and rectilinearity of form.

* * * * *

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 9.6

Quadrangle name Uniontown West, Ala.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	5	2	2	4	0	3	5	8	9	6	8	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

See continuation sheet

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rose Scott Long and Michael Bailey

organization Alabama Historical Commission date 2/8/84

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205 261-3184


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

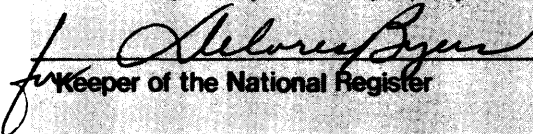
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7-3-84

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 8/9/84

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

Historical Summary
Pitts' Folly

Pitts' Folly, a Greek revival plantation house, was built by B. F. Parsons for Philip Henry Pitts, a planter in Perry and Marengo counties of West Central Alabama. Pitts emigrated to Alabama from Tappahanock on the Rappahanock River in Essex County, Virginia along with his father, Thomas Daniel Pitts, and his family. On January 15, 1840 Philip Henry Pitts married Margaret Mary Davidson who was originally from Davidson, Mecklenberg County, North Carolina.

On December 10, 1851 Pitts signed an agreement with B. F. Parsons, an architect from Marion, Alabama. According to the agreement with Parsons, the main body of the house was to be:

"Fifty-two (52) feet long by thirty-six (36) feet wide with a back porch or shed ten feet wide to extend the whole length of the fifty-two (52) feet, with six pillars or columns to support the same -- also with a ten (10) foot double Piazza or Gallery to extend the whole length of the fifty-two (52) feet in front; also the whole length of the thirty-six (36) feet on the east side or end of the house --"

The main body of the house was a central hall design, the hall twelve feet wide, with four rooms downstairs. The two rooms at the front of the house were twenty feet square while the two at the rear 16 x 20 feet with ceilings for the first floor twelve feet in height. The second floor rooms had the same dimensions as the first floor rooms except for eleven foot ceilings on the upper floor.

Parsons was contracted to do all wood work including making all the blinds and providing all the hardware such as locks and latches. All rooms throughout the house were plastered, except for the ceilings of the second floor rooms, which Pitts agreed to have done himself. Parsons was not to perform any of the brick work included in the house but was to give advice on or oversee the work. Pitts was responsible for housing all black workers involved in the major construction of the house but not for any worker hired by Parsons to do small jobs at the site. Parsons was to receive from Pitts \$1600 dollars if all work was acceptable and completed within a reasonable amount of time. Parsons was to use \$55 dollars a month of the \$1600 dollars to hire two black workmen, Dick and Cyrus, for the period of time starting from December 5, 1851 til it took to complete the work on the house. Parsons was to receive half of the remaining sum in cash and the balance plus interest twelve months after the completion of the house.

Pitts kept an extensive diary and made the following entry into it: "On Friday, February 27, 1852, I commenced raising my new house in Uniontown." Another diary entry states that the house was completed and occupied by the Pitts family in April 1853.

After the house was completed there were several additions to the original house. The first addition was a bath that was added to the rear porch. Later a kitchen and several bathrooms were added in stages to the rear of the house. Another addition consisting of another kitchen and bath enclosed a portion of the east porch.

Pitts' Folly has stayed in the Pitts family and has passed down through succeeding generations. The house is now owned and occupied by the great-great-granddaughter of Philip Henry Pitts, Kitty Grey Pharr Long.

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

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

- 1) Hammond, Richard, Ante-Bellum Mansions of Alabama
1951, Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc.
- 2) Diary and Account Book, September 1850 - April 1853, and
- 3) Diary, January 1860 - January 1863 of Philip Henry Pitts
Originals on File in Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill, NC
- 4) Agreement Between B. F. Parsons and P. H. Pitts, December 1, 1851
Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
- 5) Early Courthouses of Alabama Prior to 1860, Edited by the National Society of the
Colonial Dames of America in the State of Alabama. 1960, Jordan Printing Company,
Mobile

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

From the NE corner of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 18, Township 17 North, Range 6 East, run south 1 degree east for a distance of 102 feet to an iron pipe on the south ROW line of Cahaba paved road (FAS 291) which is the point of beginning; thence continue south 1 degree east for a distance of 498 feet to an iron pipe; thence run south 89 degrees west for a distance of 630 feet to an iron pipe; thence run north 1 degree west for a distance of 600' to an iron pipe; thence run north 89 degrees east for a distance of 260 feet to an iron pipe; thence run north one degree for distance of 210 feet to an iron pipe; thence run south 82 degrees east for a distance of 30 feet to an iron pipe of the south ROW of said paved road; thence run south 51 degrees east along south ROW line of said road for a distance of 475 feet to the point of beginning and ending and containing 9.6 acres and lying in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ and NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$, all in Section 18, Township 17 North, Range 6 East, Uniontown, Perry County, Alabama.