

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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 James B. Simmons House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 130 ~~West~~ Tugalo Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Toccoa

N/A vicinity of

~~congressional district~~

state Georgia

code 013

county

Stephens

code 257

3. Classification

Category

district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

public
 private
 both

Public Acquisition

N/A in process
 being considered

Status

occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress
Accessible
 yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military
 museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other:

4. Owner of Property

name William and Kenneth Spires

street & number 130 West Tugalo Street

city, town Toccoa

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia 30577

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Stephens County Courthouse

city, town Toccoa

state Georgia 30577

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:

title Stephens County, Georgia

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977

federal state county local

depository for survey records
Historic Preservation Section
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta

state Georgia 30334

7. Description

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

The James B. Simmons House is a two-story frame Queen-Anne and Neo-Classical styled residence located on two city lots in Toccoa, Georgia. The structure was built by E.L. Prater for James B. Simmons in 1903.

The exterior of the structure contains a variety of wall surfaces: a brick foundation, horizontal weather boards on the main and second floors, terra cotta detailing in panels, and vertical boards in projecting bays. The structure also contains a variety of window forms: straight-topped, round-arched, and oval-shaped. A one-story porch of Neo-Classical styling is supported by Ionic columns and wraps around three sides of the structure. This porch, once rounded at its northwestern corner, was altered to its existing rectangular shape in the 1970's. This alteration appears to be the only major change made to the structure. An outstanding feature of the house are the decorative bays and projecting walls. The most elaborate bay located on the west facade extends from the dining room and contains four windows topped by stained glass transoms. A bannister is located above this bay and encircles a recessed bay with three windows. The roof is slate and is hipped with high and multiple pitches. The roof overhang is slight. Four tall chimneys project from each corner and are detailed with molded brick.

The structure is built on an irregular plan. Oak paneling and woodwork is used throughout the house. At the entrance a large room, sometimes called a living hall, is paneled in oak with oak pilasters and Ionic columns. The front door is made of leaded glass. This hall has an impressive brick fireplace with an arched opening trimmed in terra cotta. Fireplaces in the parlor and dining room are also elaborately carved. From the hall, a staircase rises to the second floor. A large arched and stained glass window and two leaded glass windows light the double landing stairs. In addition to the hall, parlor, and dining room, there are two bedrooms with bath, a kitchen, and a conservatory on the first floor. The second floor contains four bedrooms with two baths and a sleeping porch.

The landscape surrounding the residence is simple. The 100' x 100' lot is grassed with several hardwood trees. A retaining wall of brick and stone has been built around three sides of the lot. The lot is adjacent to Toccoa's business district with the 1906 Stephens County Courthouse directly across the street.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history

Specific dates 1903 **Builder/Architect** E.L.Prater

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Simmons House is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, and local history. In architecture, the Simmons House is a combination of styles and an intact example of designs which were popular at the turn-of-the-century. The structure is a combination of Queen Anne and Neo-Classical design. The majority of the features on the exterior—asymmetrical massing, variety of wall surfaces and window shapes, tall chimneys of molded brick, projecting walls and bays, and the irregular plan of the interior—are elements of Queen Anne design. Neo-Classical inspiration is seen in the wrap-around porch supported by Ionic columns and the classical detailing on the interior. The structure is also significant in architecture due to its association with E.L. Prater (1872-1950), a local craftsman and the builder of the structure. Prater was a master builder in the Georgia Mountains area. His commissions include private residences as well as public structures. In his building career, he constructed the Walters-Davis House (1906) and the Stephens County Jail in Toccoa, a bank in Taylorsville, and Candler Street School (1911) in Gainesville. The Simmons House is the earliest structure known to have been built by Prater. In terms of commerce and local history, the structure is significant due to its association with James Ballenger and Antionette Moseley Simmons. James B. Simmons (1867-1928), who came to Toccoa in 1876, became one of Toccoa's most influential citizens. He was a pioneer in banking, in the mercantile business, and in the manufacturing of furniture. In the publication Men of Mark in Georgia, Simmons was called one of Toccoa's most valuable citizens. Antionette Simmons, wife of J.B. Simmons, was also a prominent figure in Toccoa. She was a leader in the Methodist Church of Toccoa in Sunday School and Missionary Society activities and was also one of the organizing members of the Toccoa Women's Club. These areas of significance support property eligibility under the National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Stephens County was established in 1905 from land formerly in Habersham and Franklin Counties, and Toccoa, which had been chartered in 1873, was selected as the county seat. James Ballenger Simmons (1862-1928), who was born in Rabun County, came to Toccoa in 1876 at the age of 14, apparently seeking his fortune in the newly-created town. After arriving in Toccoa, he found a job in a department store and in a year he became a full time clerk. At the age of 21, he went into business for himself and established the Simmons Mercantile Store, a business which operated for twenty years. Mr. Simmons also entered the furniture business. Timber was plentiful so that the manufacture of kitchen safes and cupboards by the Simmons' company was a success. By 1893, Mr. Simmons owned two furniture factories in Toccoa and eventually expanded his factories into Atlanta, Hartwell, and Rome. In addition to his furniture holdings, Mr. Simmons organized the first bank of Toccoa - the Farmers and Merchants Bank - and served as the bank's first president. He was also involved in a number of other activities within the community.

Mr. Simmons built two homes in Toccoa, both of which still stand. The first, a Victorian cottage, was built around 1884. His second house, which is the structure proposed for listing, was labeled as a mansion by the townspeople. This large two-story asymmetrical Victorian house is located at the corner of Tugalo and Alexander Streets on Lots 9 and 10 of Block 27.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Toccoa, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>2816</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>3828</u>	<u>800</u>	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing				Zone	Easting	Northing		
C						D					
E						F					
G						H					

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of the nominated property is marked on the enclosed tax map from the Stephens County Tax Assessors Office. It is all the owners own at this location and constitutes the historic yard associated with the house.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	(1) Dale Jaeger, Preservation Planner		
	(2) Kathryn C. Trogdon, County Historian		
organization	(1) Georgia Mountains APDC	date	February 18, 1983
	(2) Stephens County Historical Society		
street & number	(1) P. O. Box 1720	telephone	(1) 404-536-3431
	(2) 326 East Doyle Street		(2) 404-886-6748
city or town	(1) Gainesville	state	(1) Georgia 30503
	(2) Toccoa		(2) Georgia 30577

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 2/25/83

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the
<i>J. Melvina Byers</i>	National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>4/7/83</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

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Lot 9 was one of the earliest lots to be purchased in the town of Toccoa. This lot was bought from the town's founders - Doyle, Sage, and Alexander - by Alfred Price in 1873. Price constructed his residence on this lot. In 1893, Price sold Lot 9 and his residence, referred to in the deed as "the house where Price now lives," to A.Y. Davis and Robert Davis. Davis and Davis sold Lot 9 to James B. Simmons in 1900. The Price home was apparently still standing at the time of this purchase since the deed notes that the property is "known as the Alfred Price house and lot."

According to Mrs. J.B. Bond, the daughter of James B. Simmons, her father had planned to construct the second family residence in a rural setting but due to objections from his wife, who was afraid to live in an isolated area, the house was built in a location adjoining the town center. The house, planned for the more spacious country acreage, was apparently too large for one lot so it was necessary for Simmons to purchase the adjoining lot. This lot, Lot 10 in Block 27, was purchased by Simmons from W.C. Mason in 1903. In that same year, the Price house was apparently torn down and the large Victorian residence constructed by E.L. Prater, a local craftsman, hired by Simmons. Simmons was also the owner of Lot 5 in Block 27 which contained a barn, accessible from Lots 9 and 10 by an alley that was located in the middle of the block. Lot 5 was eventually sold and the barn apparently demolished. Lots 9 and 10 with the Victorian residence remained in the ownership of the Simmons family until the daughter sold the property in 1975. The structure was converted to law offices, a use which continues into the present. The county courthouse, built in 1906, is located across Tugalo Street from the Simmons residence. Other structures adjacent to the Simmons residence are of later construction, making the Stephens County Courthouse and the Simmons residence surviving elements from the early twentieth century.

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date entered

Continuation sheet Major Biographical Item number 9 Page 2
References

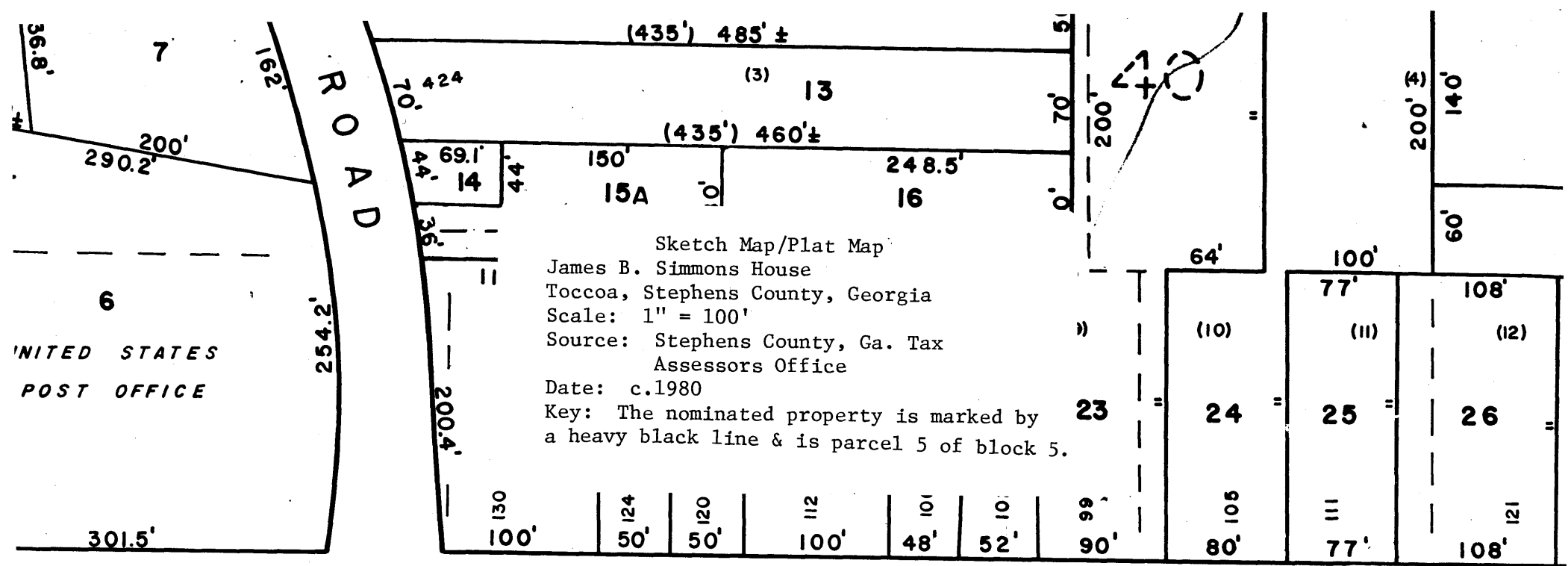
Deeds, Stephens County Courthouse, Toccoa, Georgia.

Draft nomination prepared by Mrs. Kathryn C. Trogdon.

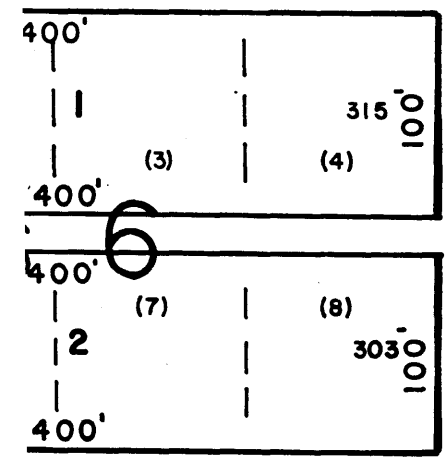
Interview with Mrs. J.B. Bond (daughter of James B. Simmons), Toccoa, Georgia.

Claude W. Bond, "James Ballenger Simmons," Men of Mark in Georgia, Vol. 5, Atlanta, Georgia, 1910.

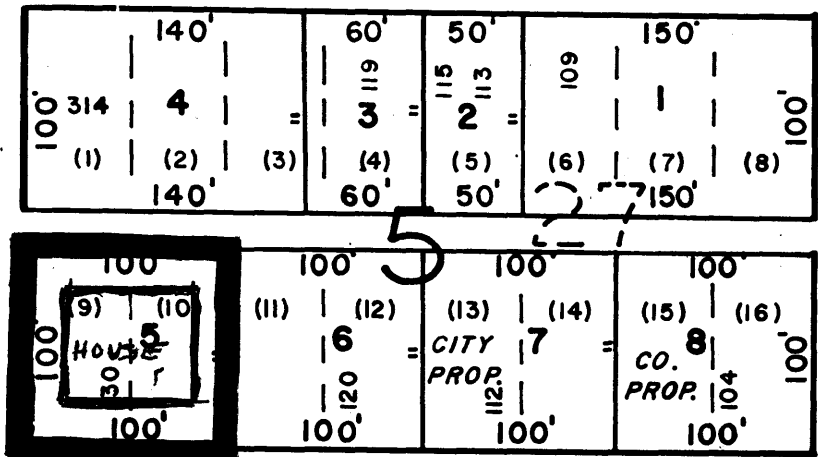
Trogdon, Kathryn C., The History of Stephens County, Georgia, Toccoa, Georgia: Toccoa Woman's Club, Inc., 1973.



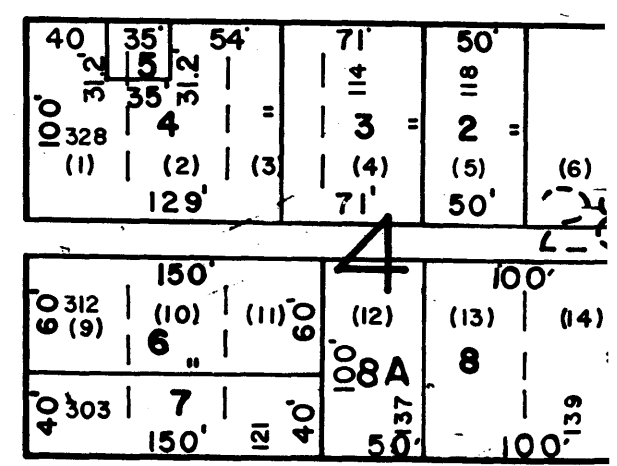
SAVANNAH STREET



N. ALEXANDER ST.



SAGE ST.



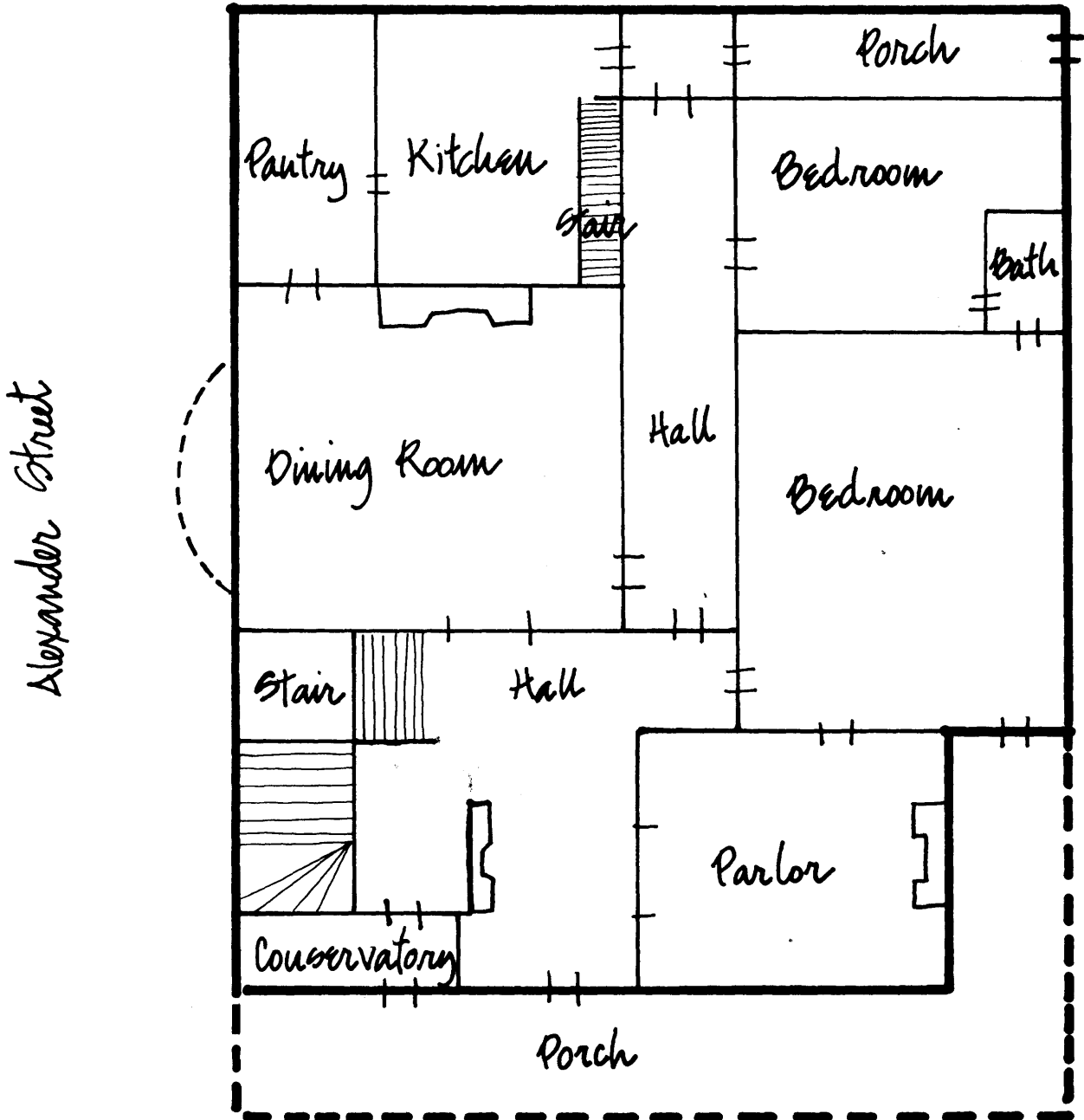
West TUGALOO STREET

Notary Public, Stephens County, Georgia
 My Commission Expires June 16, 1982
Grace S. Smith

N.

SKETCH MAP/FLOOR PLANS

James B. Simmons House
Toccoa, Stephens County, Georgia
Scale: Unknown
Date: c. 1981
Source: Drawn by Dale Jaeger
Key: First Floor



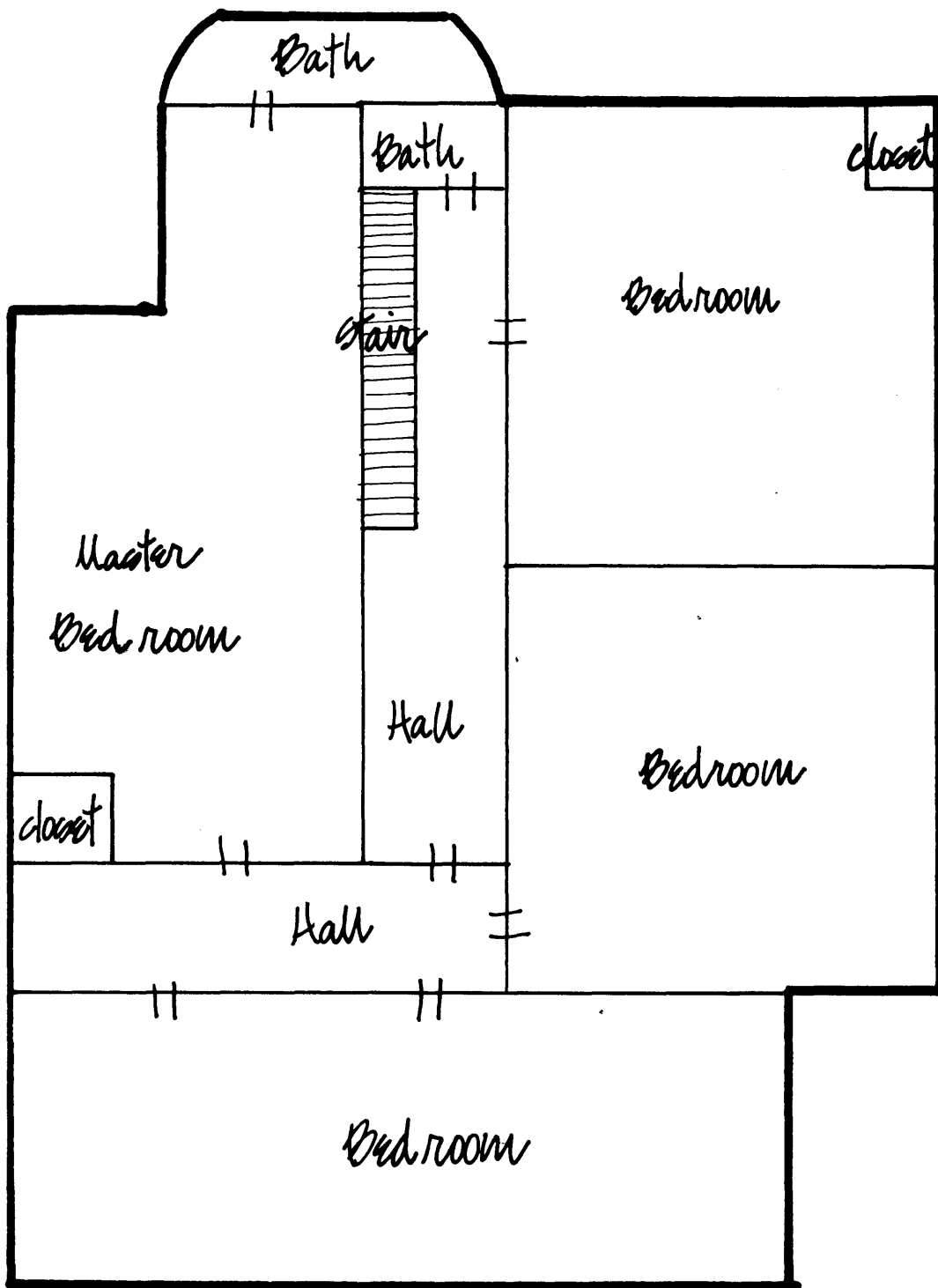
Simmons House
Toccoa, Ga.

NORTH FIRST FLOOR

Tugalo Street

SKETCH MAP/FLOOR PLANS

James B. Simmons House
Toccoa, Stephens County, Georgia
Scale: Unknown
Date: c. 1981
Source: Drawn by Dale Jaeger
Key: Second Floor



Simmons House
Toccoa, Ga.

▲ NORTH SECOND FLOOR