

Lassiter Homeplace

Autauga County, Alabama

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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):

Ma J. Minner 7/17/97

Ma J. Minner Signature of Keeper 7/17/97 Date of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
	<u>1</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<u>0</u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
	<u>Secondary structure: garage</u>
	<u>Secondary structure: pumphouse</u>
<u>LANDSCAPE</u>	<u>Fence</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
	<u>Secondary structure: shed</u>
	<u>garage</u>
	<u>pumphouse</u>
	<u>well house</u>
<u>LANDSCAPE</u>	<u>Fence</u>
<u>VACANT: Not in use</u>	

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-House with shed extensions

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

roof METAL: Tin

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

other _____

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

See attached Continuation Sheets.

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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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1825

c. 1925

c. 1946

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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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Linda Nelson and Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewer

organization FuturePast date December 8, 1996

street & number 4700 Seventh Court South telephone (205) 592-6610

city or town Birmingham state AL zip code 35222
=====

Additional Documentation
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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)
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Property Owner
=====

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

name George E. Treadwell Jr.

street & number P.O. Box DDD telephone (703) 944-3762

city or town Emory state VA zip code 24327
=====

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Lassiter Homeplace
Autauga County, Alabama

Narrative Description:

The Lassiter Homeplace is a c. 1825 I-house with front and rear shed extensions, located in the Mulberry Community in the vicinity of old Statesville, west of Autaugaville in Autauga County. It faces south from a landscaped yard on the edge of the farm's 376 acres, and is visible from County Route 15, which then curves around behind it. There are five outbuildings and one ancillary structure to the side and rear of the house, with a curving drive approaching the front under large pecan trees. (While 376 acres still comprise the farm and are associated with the house, only the immediate yard area and outbuildings around the house are being nominated.)

The house is clad in its original lapped weatherboard; the roof is tin shingle on the front slope and standing seam on the rear, with shallow, plain eaves. The foundation is brick infill between the original brick piers. Extensions front and rear run the full width of the house. On the front there are two shed rooms flanking an open center porch or loggia, now screened. On the rear it appears likely that the pattern of projecting rooms flanking an open porch was repeated; the entire back shed extension has now been enclosed, and a more recent addition (probably 1960s) beyond the present kitchen (formerly the pantry) on the northwest side extends to the rear for about one third of the width of the house. The main first-floor windows front and sides are 9-over-6 double-hung sash; all other primary windows are 6-over-6, including the ones defining the three upper bays of the house. There is some glazing of more recent vintage, almost certainly dating from around 1925, in the windows now flanking the single, 15-light front door. It is not possible to say for certain whether this central hallway was originally an open dogtrot or was closed off by double doors with transom above, as at the rear; however, physical evidence suggests an open breezeway as the strongest possibility. Changes to the front were most likely part of a number of alterations made in the mid-1920s (see below).

The exterior brick end chimneys are intact, although one has separated slightly from the house. These chimneys, though early, are not the original ones; this is indicated by ghosts on the weatherboard of earlier, wider chimneys. The breakaway upper stacks, though characteristic of 18th and early 19th century southeastern architecture, were evidently rebuilt and the chimneys narrowed at some point. Their corbeled brick bases are characteristic of building in this region of Alabama.¹ An interior ghost outline indicates the former presence of a fireplace on the east rear side, so it appears likely that smaller chimneys served the rear shed rooms in earlier

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times. A single side door into this same east rear room is still intact, but its outer steps have been removed and it is no longer used.

Exterior details indicating the Atlantic seaboard origins of this house type include the crown molding under the soffit, which is finished off four inches or so before it reaches the corners of the house; this is a feature of 18th-Century Chesapeake vernacular architecture that carried over to early 19th-Century Alabama. Other holdover 18th-Century features are beaded cornerboards and raised, or bolection, moldings around the outer edge of the exterior window facings.¹

Except for the screening of the front porch (probably in the 1950s based on photographic evidence), the house's exterior appearance has remained largely unchanged through the years. An early 20th-century photograph shows it unpainted and still with the open loggia-like porch in front, and the foundation not yet filled in. In its essentials, however, it remains much as it was.

Original finishes in the interior are pine floors, wide-board horizontal tongue-and-groove paneling, handsomely molded chairrails and dados, and 3-foot-wide covenant, or cross-and-bible, doors. On no fewer than nine of these doors are the original Carpenter and Co. box locks. In the central hallway and flanking main rooms the floors have been overlaid with hardwood; the walls of the hallway have been paneled, and in the main bedroom they have been plastered and in other rooms papered. These changes date from 1946, when the Treadwell family moved into the house. Also from that period come the addition of doors connecting the main rooms to the front shed rooms. Other, earlier (c. 1925) alterations include enclosure of the back porch and accompanying changes of doors to windows and vice versa: the window onto the porch from the living room was converted to a door, and other original windows onto the porch were moved to the exterior of the enclosure. Also, a former door from the porch to the breezeway (to a detached kitchen) is now a window. The original double rear door with transom is now interior between the hall and enclosed back porch, which is now the dining room. The sheetrocked ceilings are about 9' in the main house and somewhat lower in the back section, where they have been overlaid with fibreboard panels. The end fireplaces with simple Federal mantels and later tiled surrounds are intact but not in use and sealed, and gas heaters have been placed on the hearths. There is a possibility that the mantels were based on designs from Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion* or earlier *Country Builder's Assistant* (first edition 1797).¹

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It is in the front shed rooms that one most feels the original house. The tongue-and-groove paneling has been papered but not sheetrocked, and it is visible where the paper has been torn away. The original dado is also intact in these rooms. The pine floors here have not been overlaid with hardwood as in the main hall and rooms.

The upstairs rooms are accessible by an enclosed stair up from the front of the hallway, which is a straight run with winders at the bottom. They were finished (i.e., paneled, ceiled, and bath added) in their present condition about 1957 for the present owner, George Treadwell Jr. This space is comprised of one large room, encompassing the stairwell, and one smaller one, each room with a fireplace and mantel with cornice, like the downstairs fireplaces sealed and unused. A small bath was also built into the space. The horizontal tongue-and-groove paneling is unpainted and of a rich color; the ceiling is laid in.

The Lassiter Homeplace is situated in the center of a clearing bounded on the north and east by a wooded ridge and on the south and west by Autauga County Road 15. The clearing is further defined by a historic fence line that runs along the southern and western borders of the house yard to the wooded ridge. Within this house yard are five outbuildings, which along with the fence make up a total of six ancillary resources historically associated with the house. These are:

1. A circa 1946 one-and-a-half-storey frame garage clad in asbestos shingles on a concrete block foundation, its asymmetrical side-gabled roof covered with corrugated tin. The front side of the roof is pitched more steeply than the back side. The garage doors are a pair of original diagonal-plank sliding ones. (C)
2. A circa 1957 one-storey concrete block shed and workshop (formerly a vehicle shed) with a standing seam side-gabled roof. (NC, due to age).
3. A circa 1957 one-storey block well house with corrugated metal shed roof (NC, due to age).
4. A circa 1925 chicken house with circa 1946 alterations. This one-storey outbuilding contains a poured concrete foundation, walls originally clad in tongue-and-groove lapboard but now covered with c. 1946 asbestos shingles, a gabled roof covered with corrugated tin, and exposed eaves. The broad-pitched gable front contains an original plank door flanked by fixed four-light windows. (NC, due to its agricultural nature).

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5. A circa 1946 pumphouse with a concrete block foundation, horizontal plank walls covered by asbestos shingles, and a flat standing seam metal roof. (C)
6. A circa 1946 woven net wire fence that runs along the southern and western edges of the clearing and thereby defines the edges of the house yard. (C)

Archeological Component:

Although there has been no formal archaeological investigation of these grounds, it is possible that remains of earlier outbuildings and other artifacts of the farm's life might be found. Local hearsay suggests the presence of abandoned structures in the nearby wooded area behind the house, apparently once part of the original yard.

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Statement of Significance:

Criterion C: Architecture

The Lassiter Homeplace is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C: Architecture. This is a good and particularly intact example of an I-house with shed extensions, a distinctive Southern variant of the generic North American I-house. This type of house-- usually rural-- is common to the South Atlantic states, especially the Carolinas and Georgia; it came south with the migration from the seaboard states and is of very early date, its original portions usually having been built in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. There are relatively few examples as far south as Alabama; currently, there are no more than about 50 examples surviving in the State.²

The I-house type, i.e., one room deep and two storeys high, had variants as time went on that enlarged the available living and working space in the original house. The shed extensions, or "outshuts," were common across both front and back and displayed various combinations with open porches; as in the case of the Treadwell house, these often were internally connected to the main house only in later years. As noted above, the shed rooms were commonly intended to serve as sleeping rooms for travelers or preachers, thus earning the nick name of "prophet's chamber" or "stranger's room." As these hospitable uses declined, the rooms were joined to the house for the family's purposes. The Lassiter-Treadwell house is also typical in the development of the front loggia porch, now screened, and the enclosed rear sheds across the width of the house.

An interesting comparison of the Treadwell House can be made with the Sadler House in Bessemer, Alabama (NR 4/23/75, Jefferson County), which began as a storey-and-a-half log house about 1818 and finished about 1830 with an open dogtrot hallway between the two-storey halves.³ The Sadler House also has a single "prophet's chamber" on the front and an enclosed back porch. Sadler has been frozen in time as a dogtrot and has become a house museum, providing an invaluable example of an earlier version of what the Treadwell House used to be. In the Mulberry vicinity itself, the nearby Benjamin Underwood House is one of similar vintage and design, although now relocated and altered.

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The Lassiter Homeplace, therefore, represents in its location an example of post-Colonial vernacular architectural practices transplanted to the old southwestern frontier and the Cotton States of the Deep South. Changes to the house have been largely cosmetic on the exterior, and it retains essentially its original materials and appearance. Inside it has been updated by applied materials such as wallpaper and hardwood flooring, but the original spatial configuration remains intact in the main house.

Historic Summary:

The exact construction date of this house is not known, but it is surmised that it was built about 1825 based on the evidence of its construction history. Local anecdote, presently unsubstantiated by written material, says that it was built in 1821 by either (1) a Dr. William Smith, who had a clinic for a time in nearby Statesville⁴, or (2) Major Thomas Stone, who was prominent as a businessman and merchant in the Statesville area through at least the 1820s.⁵ What we do know is that Thomas Stone sold the property to Jeremiah and Nancy Lassiter in July of 1846, according to the deed⁶, at which time the acreage of the property was 1,074 1/2 acres. It has stayed in that family, descending down through female inheritors, until the present time.

The Lassiters' oldest daughter Elizabeth Ann Whetstone appears to have had to buy the property on the Courthouse steps for \$1,500 in 1874, following her mother's death, as part of the administration of her father's estate. The administrator was empowered to "sell the lands for distribution among those entitled,"⁷ suggesting that other siblings or parties purchased acreage but not the homeplace. Courthouse records indicate that the present acreage of the property associated with the house was determined at that time.

After Mrs. Whetstone's death her second husband, Mr. White, continued to live in the house, although it never became his property. In 1897 it was deeded to the Whetstones' daughter, Mary Ann (Mrs. Baker) Parker; she died in 1906 but Mr. Parker continued to live in the house until his death in 1923. At this point the one male inheritor appears, the Parkers' son Leonard Peyton Parker, who died in 1936. His widow Tilly Bates Parker then sold the house to her sister-in-law, Annie Lee Parker, who with her husband Carlton C. Jones

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were the present owner's grandparents.⁸ Annie Lee was the oldest daughter of Baker and Mary Ann Parker, and is said to have been among the first class at the University of Alabama that graduated women. The Jones' daughter Minnie Evelyn and her husband George E. Treadwell moved into the house in 1946, at which time the present owner says it "was in very bad repair."⁹

For the developmental history of the house, see the above description of physical appearance.

All of the outbuildings now in the immediate yard are of mid-20th-century construction or later, with the exception of the c. 1925 chicken house. The yard was at one time more extensive but has now gone to woods. The earliest available photograph, dating from the tenancy of the Baker Parkers in the early years of the present century, shows the yard to be without grass and with a stubble growth, a wide dirt path leading to the front door and with the open foundation unmasked by shrubbery. The 1946 or later photograph shows a grass yard and unpaved drive circling in front of the house. The pecan trees are here fully grown. Another picture from the 1950s shows part of the yard planted with borders, and there is shrubbery around the filled foundations of the house. Today the shrubbery remains, as does the grass, but the present yard has no other plantings, and the drive does not circle but winds to the west side of the house toward the garage.

The 1850 agricultural census from Autauga County shows that Nancy Lassiter's farm produced 2,000 bushels of Indian corn and 200 bushels of oats. Farm animals were listed as 40 swine, eight mulch cows and eight "other cattle."¹⁰ At some point the acreage was primarily converted to cotton; according to the present owner, George E. Treadwell Jr., up until 1946, when his family moved in, the farm had been devoted to raising cotton. From 1946 until the senior Treadwell's death in 1976, it supported beef cattle. Reverting to leased management after 1976, the land returned to cotton farming and is still in that status today. There are also 81 acres in timber that are part of the Conservation Reserve Program. Mrs. Treadwell Sr. continued to live in the house after Mr. Treadwell's death until about 1988.¹¹ George Treadwell Jr. now lives in Virginia but hopes to keep the house as a residence, with easements guaranteeing its permanent relationship to the landscape.

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Autauga County, Alabama

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Notes:

¹Much of the description of the house and justification of the period of construction is derived from the education gained by following Robert Gamble around the house and listening to him talk about it.

²Discussion of the development of the I-house with extensions is based largely on the unpublished work of Robert Gamble, "I House With Sheds," Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, 1988.

³Robert D. Parker & James A. Canevaro, *Teacher's Guide to West Jefferson Pioneer Homes*, West Jefferson County Historical Society, 1982.

⁴Personal communication from present tenant Mr. Leo Brewer.

⁵Major Stone's construction of the house is reported by local historian Robin Wood; reference to the Major's association with Statesville is from Gray's book on Autauga County history.

⁶All Autauga County Courthouse records from the collection of the owner, George E. Treadwell Jr.

⁷From 1874 Transfer of Title, notes from Title Abstract. Owner's collection, see Note 6.

⁸For much of the inheritance history of the property I am indebted not only to material in the hands of Mr. George Treadwell Jr. but information from his aunt, Mae Whetstone Dickerson, which was communicated to me by Mrs. Milton Johnson of Selma, a local historian.

⁹Letter of George E. Treadwell Jr. to Robert Gamble of the Alabama Historical Commission, January 9, 1988.

¹⁰Agricultural Census of Autauga County, 1850, Autaugaville, Mulberry Beat. Birmingham Public Library.

¹¹Personal communication, George E. Treadwell Jr.

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Bibliography

Autauga County, Agricultural Census, 1850. Birmingham Public Library.

Robert Gamble, "I-House With Sheds," unpublished monograph, Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, 1988.

Daniel S. Gray (compiler), *Autauga County: The First Hundred Years 1818-1918*, Autauga County-Prattville (Alabama) Public Library, 1972.

Robert D. Parker and James A. Canevaro, *Teacher's Guide to West Jefferson Pioneer Homes*, West Jefferson County Historical Society, 1982.

Papers and documents from the title abstract of the property, in the possession of George E. Treadwell Jr.

Personal interviews with Mr. Treadwell, Robert Gamble, and telephone conversation with Mrs. Milton Johnson of Selma, a local historian of Autauga County and the Selma area.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the nominated property are defined as approximately the acre of cleared yard bounded on the north and east by a wooded ridge and on the west and south by the historic fence line as defined on the accompanying 1" = 200'-scale base map.

Justification of Boundary Description:

These boundaries encompass the house itself and all ancillary buildings and structures that have been historically associated with the house.

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 Photographs Autauga County, Alabama
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Description of Photographs:

1. Approaching house on drive, from S. (LN 1994)
2. Front of house, from S. (RG 1991)
3. Front and east side of house, from SE. (RG 1991)
4. Front and west side of house, from SW. (RG 1991)
5. Rear of house, from N. (RG 1991)
6. East side of house, from E. (RG 1991)
7. Entrance, screened porch and front door, from S. (LN 1994)
8. Interior, central hall looking toward rear, from S. (RG 1991)
9. Living room to west of hallway: door to front room on right, hall door on left, from NW. (RG 1991)
10. Rear porch, enclosed, used as dining room (door from central hall at center of picture), from W. (RG 1991)
11. Base of stair to upper rooms, from front of central hall, from WNW. (EAB 1993)
12. Prophet's chamber, detail: door connecting to hallway, also showing paneling and dado, from E. (EAB 1993)
13. Prophet's chamber, detail: door on right is to east main room. From E. (EAB 1993)
14. Original Carpenter & Co. box lock; there are nine in the house. (EAB 1993)
15. Living room mantel, detail, from E. (RG 1991)
16. Same mantel detail, from E. (EAB 1993)
17. Second-storey interior showing stairwell, balustrade, and east bedroom, from W. (RG 1991)
18. View across front yard toward east, showing well house and corner of shed. East front outshut at left of photo. (LN 1994)
19. Garage, from SE. (LN 1994)
20. Vehicle shed and shop, from S. (LN 1994)
21. Chicken house, east of house, from WNW. (RG 1991)
22. Pumphouse, from SW. (LN 1996)
23. Front of house and garage as seen from County Road 15, from S. (LN, Feb '95) Shot to reproduce view in 24 below.

Historic Photographs

24. Same view as #23, photographed in the 1940s.
25. House photographed in 1950s: porch is screened.
26. Baker Parker and dogs in front of house, circa 1920.

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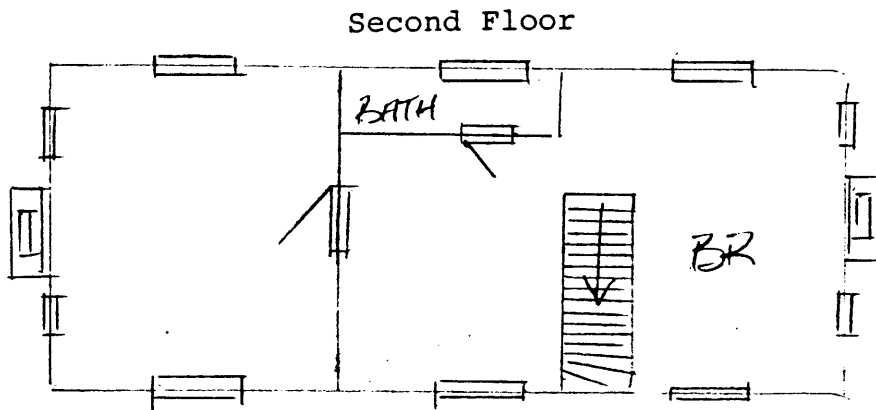
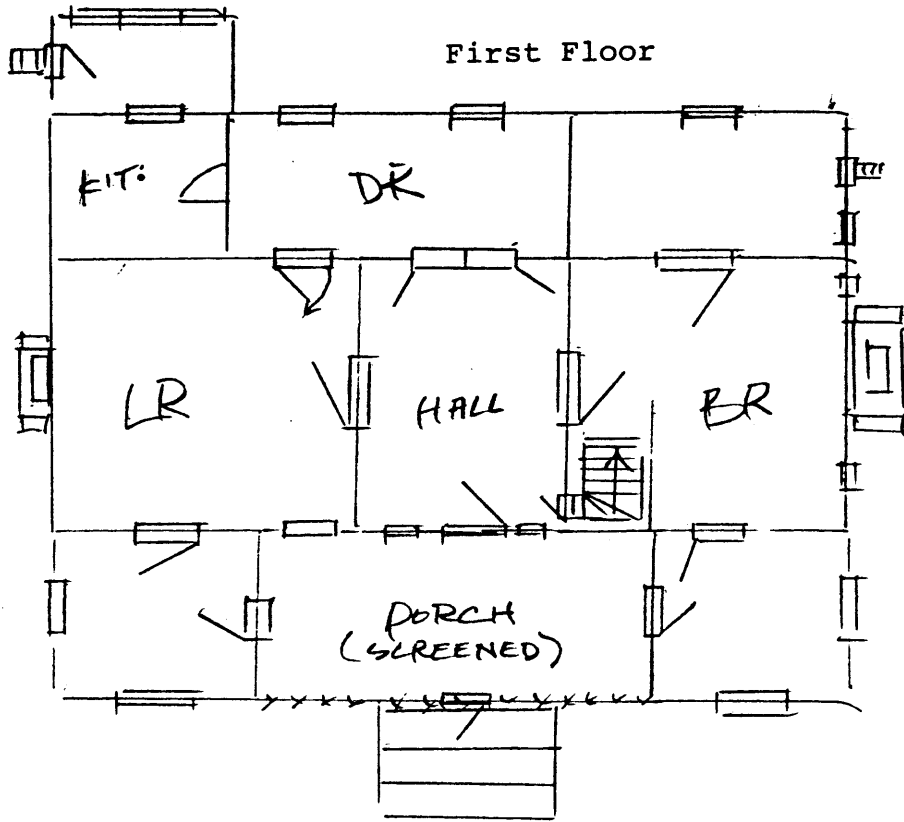
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Photographs

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Photographs, continued:

RG: Robert Gamble; EAB: Elizabeth Brown; LN: Linda Nelson. Other than LN photographs, all negatives are at the Alabama Historical Commission. Historic photographs are in the collection of the owner and his family.

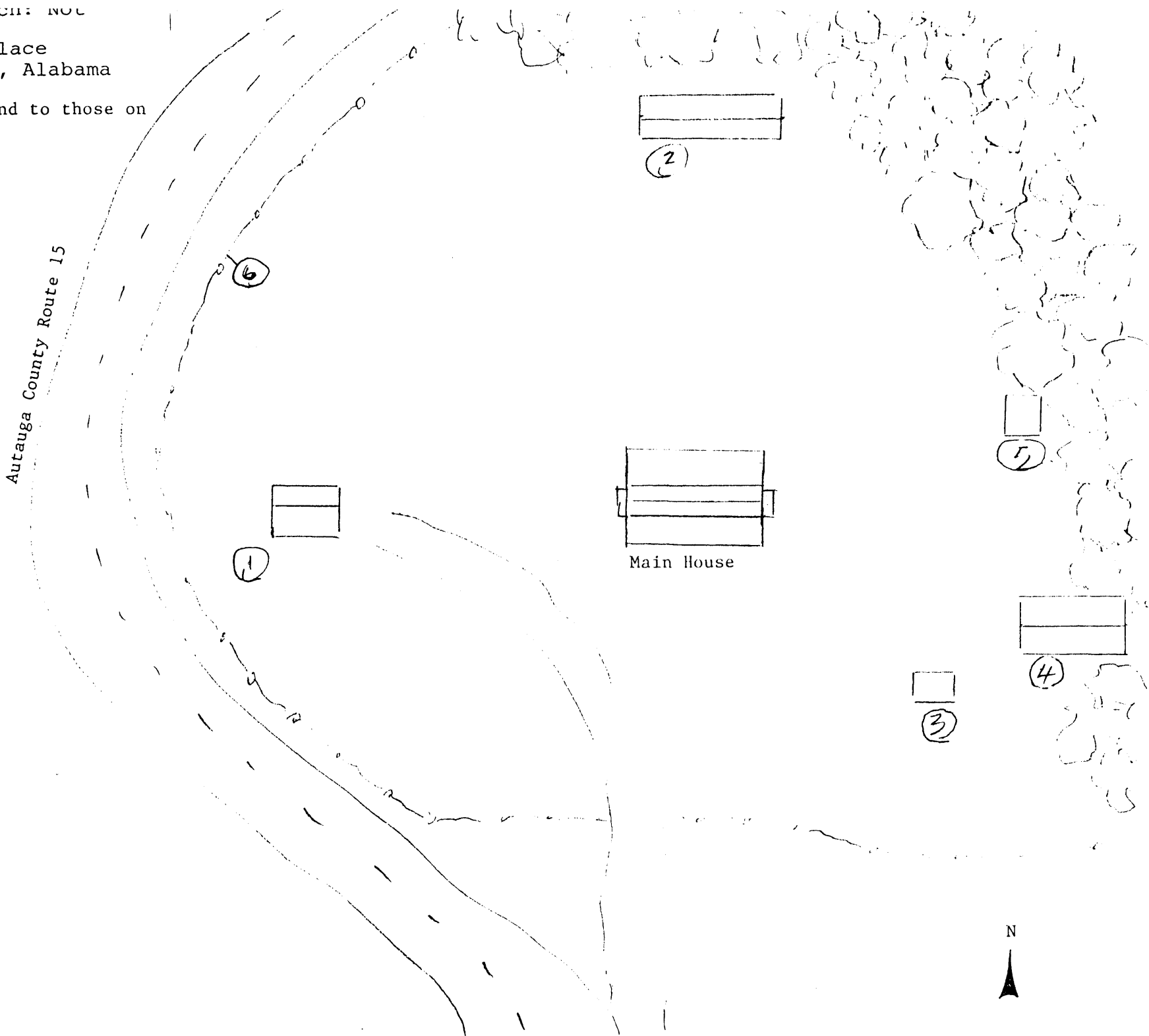


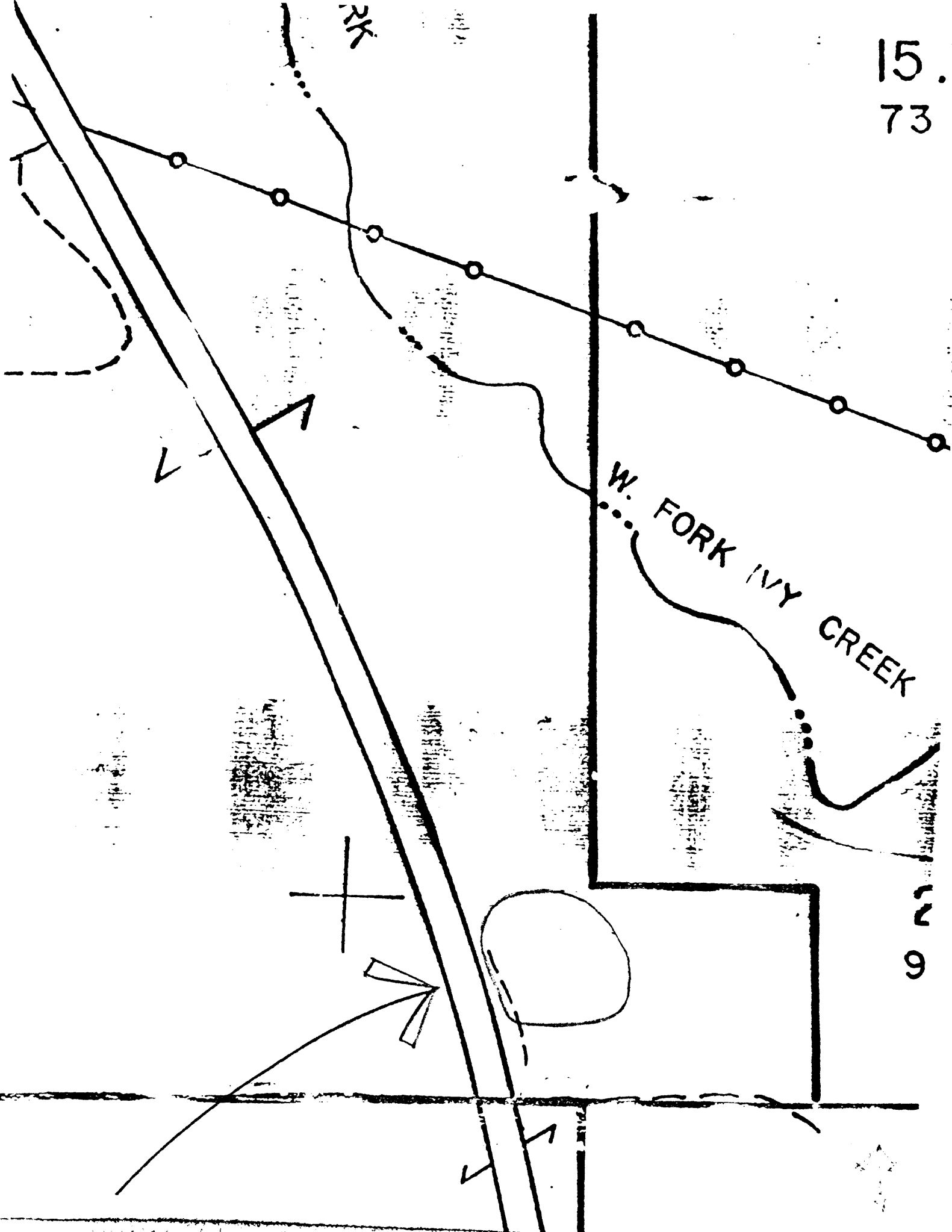
General floor plans (not to scale)
 Lassiter Homeplace (Treadwell House)
 Autauga County, Alabama

Property sketch: NOT
to scale
Lassiter Homeplace
Autauga County, Alabama

Numbers correspond to those on
nomination form.

Autauga County Route 15





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