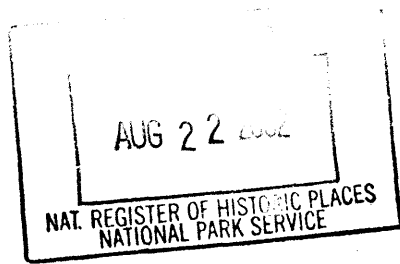


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1069

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic Name Johnson, Samuel, House

Other Names/Site Number N/A

2. Location

Street & Number Shelley Hughes Road Not for Publication N/A City or Town N/A Vicinity Buhl
State Alabama Code AL County Tuscaloosa Code 125 Zip Code 35446

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant locally statewide X locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

July 31, 2002
Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or 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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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): _____

Edouard R. Beall 10/4/02

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/Not in use Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Dogtrot

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Brick</u>
roof	<u>Metal</u>
walls	<u>Wood, weatherboard</u>
other	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>

Narrative Description: See continuation sheets.

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.) N/A

- 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. 1845

Significant Dates c. 1845

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See 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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: _____

Johnson, Samuel, House
Name of Property

Tuscaloosa County, AL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
16 0430925 3682050

Verbal Boundary Description
See continuation sheets.

Boundary Justification
See continuation sheets.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title Kristen E. Janowski, Cultural Resources Analyst; David B. Schneider, Consultant; Christy Anderson AHC Reviewer

Organization Office of Archaeological Services; private consultant Date September 30, 2001

Street & Number 13075 Moundville Archaeological Park; 411 E. 6th St. Telephone 205.371.2266/256-225-2361

City or Town Moundville; Anniston State AL Zip Code 35474; 36207

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Jeffrey R. and Susanne Mills Isbell

street & number 12792 Shelly Hughes Rd telephone 205.339.7165

city or town Buhl state AL zip code 35446-9164

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Section 7

Page 1

Samuel Johnson House

Tuscaloosa County, AL

Description

The Samuel Johnson House, on Shelley Hughes Road near Buhl, in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama is a locally significant example of a mid to late-nineteenth century dogtrot. The building is located in a rural area, northeast of the town of Buhl in northern Tuscaloosa County. This one-story, wood-frame dwelling features hand-hewn beams, rear and front cabinet rooms, and an open breezeway, or dogtrot. It retains much of its original fabric, including foundation, floors, ceilings, windows, and most of its doors and door hardware. It features a combination of hand-hewn and mill-cut joists and rafters with cut nails as fasteners. The building measures approximately 46 feet by 34 feet, with a height of roughly 17 feet. The dogtrot is currently uninhabited, yet the property owners recently cleared vegetation from the yard and erected a barbed-wire fence around it and have plans to renovate it.

The front elevation is the eastern side. Stairs once led up to the breezeway, but no longer exist. On the porch, flanking the side of the stairs, are two rectangular wood supports. These are adjacent to open-rail balustrades that meet with the cabinet rooms. The porch is inset under an integral roof. Weatherboarding covers the exterior. There is a symmetrical placement of two 6/6 double-hung sash windows on the eastern façade.

The northern elevation has weatherboard siding. It is evident where a centrally located exterior chimney once stood, as the replacement weatherboarding is wider than the surrounding planks. The original chimneys were brick and mud and they were made by slaves. Over time, they separated from the house and fell (Personal communication 2001). There is an aperture for smoke for the pot-belly stove inside. Flanking the chimney space are two 6/6 double-hung sash windows with an additional 6/6 double-hung sash window on the western side.

The western elevation has weatherboard siding and one 6/6 double-hung sash window on the northern half. There are two wood supports in the center of the breezeway. The western façade lacks the balustrade of the front.

The southern elevation is weatherboarded and has a place where a chimney once stood. Like the northern side, it is evident via the larger weatherboards that were used to fill the gap. Flanking the chimney space are two 6/6 double-hung sash windows, and two slightly smaller ones flank them.

The building is covered with a side-gable, spraddle roof of corrugated metal. There are cornice returns on both the northern and southern elevations, and fascia appears to have been added at the roof line.

The dogtrot rests on a pier foundation consisting of bricks, stones, and logs. Floor joists and seals are both hand-hewn and mill-cut lumber. In the northeast and southwest corners PVC piping is visible under the house.

The dogtrot is three rooms deep and three rooms wide. The center room is the open breezeway. The open breezeway runs the depth of the house (approximately 34 feet) and the width varies from roughly 22 feet at the eastern end to 14 feet at the western side. The walls are weatherboarded, and the floor and ceiling are wood planks.

The four front and rear rooms are cabinet rooms. The four-panel wood doors throughout the house are fastened with mortises and tenons. They feature the original hardware.

The northeast cabinet room served as a bathroom and measures approximately 12 feet by 8 feet. It includes a toilet in its southeast corner and a shower stall on the northern wall. Evidence of a sink exists in the southwest corner of the room. Plumbing was installed in the 1960s. There is a window on the eastern wall. The ceiling and floor consists of wood planks, while the walls are flushboard. There are two doorways, one on the southern side that leads to the exterior, and one on the western wall leading into another room.

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Samuel Johnson House
Tuscaloosa County, AL

The southeast cabinet room most likely served as a bedroom or storage room. It is currently littered with trash, including old books and records. Two walls are covered in vertical wood paneling and the floor is of wood planks. There are 6/6 double-hung sash windows on both the southern and eastern walls. Only one door leads into this room and it is from the breezeway. Like the northern front room, it measures approximately 12 feet by 8 feet.

The northern central room may have served as a parlor and/or bedroom. The floor and ceiling are wood planking, and the walls are covered in flushboard. Three doors lead into this room, one each on the east, west, and south sides. The southern door opens to the breezeway, while the others open to flanking rooms. The northern wall features two 6/6 double-hung sash windows flanking a central fireplace that has been boarded up. The plain wood mantel still remains. In place of the hearth is a potbelly stove whose pipe extends up the wall and exits at the top level of the windows. The room measures approximately 16 feet by 18 feet.

The southern center room has a wood plank floor and ceiling and flushboard walls. In the center of the south wall is the footprint of a fireplace. All the bricks have been removed, and the wall has been boarded up with flushboards. Flanking the fireplace are 6/6 double-hung sash windows. Only one door opens into this room, and this is located on the northern side and leads to the breezeway. This room is the same size as its northern counterpart, 16 feet by 18 feet.

The northwest cabinet room was most likely a bedroom. Like the other rooms, it has wood planking for its floor and ceiling, and flushboard on the walls. Its one window is on the northern wall. There are doors located on both the eastern and southern walls. This room was most likely used for storage or as a bedroom and it measures about 16 feet by 11 feet.

The southwest cabinet room served as possibly a pantry. It has a wood plank floor and flushboard walls. The ceiling is no longer there, and instead the beams are exposed. There are 6/6 double-hung sash windows on both the western and southern walls. The pantry has only one door, on the northern side, which leads onto the breezeway. Cabinets still remain on the eastern wall. The room measures roughly 16 feet by 11 feet.

The farm complex historically included agricultural and domestic outbuildings including a barn, crib, detached kitchen, an ancillary dwelling and several slave or tenant houses. Only the foundations of the kitchen remain, vestiges of the remaining buildings have been lost to regrading and cultivation. A substantial log structure with flanking outsheds and a central passage, the barn was located to the southeast of the house in what is now an open pasture. Probably built about the same time as the house, the barn was demolished in the late 1940s after it was damaged by a storm. The land surrounding the house was traditionally cleared and consisted of swept sand with little vegetation.

The dogtrot sits in a rural area, which is showing signs of new development. The area immediately around the house is enclosed in a barbed wire fence. The land enclosed in the fence is irregularly shaped, and the total measurement of the fence measures approximately 474 feet in circumference. This plot is part of the 320 acres of land that make up the property included in this nomination.

Adjacent to the property is a house of new construction. Cellular towers are visible from the front yard. Yet there is still enough open fields in the area to discern its original setting. The fields behind the house are currently pastureland for cattle. The slightly rolling hills are relict agricultural fields. The house is set on a slight rise.

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Samuel Johnson House

Tuscaloosa County, AL

Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made around the Samuel Johnson House, the potential for significant cultural remains is high. Polly Mills, one of Johnson's grandchildren who was born in the house, stated numerous buildings were once associated with this house, though none exist today. Included in these buildings were a detached kitchen, a smokehouse, barn, a corncrib, and a smokehouse. Also, there were slave dwellings/tenant houses located throughout the property. Although these structures are no longer standing, subsurface remains may contain significant information that may be important in interpreting the history of the entire property.

Statement of Significance

Built circa 1845, the Samuel Johnson House is recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places based on Criterion C in the area of architecture. The Samuel Johnson House is a locally significant example of a second generation dogtrot, and it retains its historic materials and workmanship, as represented in its hand-hewn and mill-cut joists, studs, sills, and rafters, as well as mill-cut weatherboards. The dogtrot is one of a few remaining examples in Tuscaloosa County. Once a common fixture in rural areas, most dogtrots have perished from neglect, intentional demolition, or vandalism. Others have been modified beyond recognition.

This structure and its surrounding lands represents the plantation and tenant farming era of Alabama's history. The Johnson plantation once occupied 1,200 acres of land and grew cotton and corn. After the Civil War, it followed the norm of the south with a transition to tenant farming. While there has been some modifications to the landscape, including the selling off of the land and modern houses and structures being built, the dogtrot is still in its original agricultural setting.

The dogtrot form is a very important vernacular type in Alabama. Transplanted to the state by settlers from Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Carolinas in the early-nineteenth century, the dogtrot came to dominate the housing stock of the common man. Typically associated with subsistence farming, the dogtrot was not excluded from plantation and town settings. The characteristic open breezeway of this house type represents a significant adaptation to the heat and humidity of the south, as it "answered superbly as a breeze-swept, yet sheltered and semi-private outdoor living and working space for hot summer months"(Gamble 1987). According to architectural historian Eugene Wilson (1975), first-generation dogtrots in Alabama were built between 1800 and 1840 using hand-hewn timbers fastened together with notched ends. Second-generation dogtrots, which were built between 1840 and 1880, represent a transition from log to wood frame construction with log walls, weatherboard cladding, metal hardware, and nails. Third-generation dogtrots have frameworks of mill-cut lumber fastened together with nails and mill-cut siding. Attesting to the popularity and longevity of the dogtrot form, third-generation dogtrots continued to be built into the early-twentieth century.

Unlike most surviving dogtrots in the state, the Samuel Johnson House features a rare example of an open breezeway, or dogtrot. This is a reflection of the building's retention of its historic functions, technologies, and aesthetics. Most dogtrots were enclosed to increase interior space in response to growing families and/or the conversion of the dwelling to electric or gas heating and air units.

The Samuel Johnson House features what amounts to a rare solution to the need for additional interior space in Tuscaloosa County, mid-nineteenth century vernacular dwellings. The east and west sides of the dwelling each have two cabinet rooms. These cabinets, or shed rooms, add four rooms to the two-room core of the dogtrot. The cabinet rooms of the Samuel Johnson House are similar in design to those of an I-house in nearby Romulus. Together, these houses represent a very small minority in Tuscaloosa County that feature these elements.

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Samuel Johnson House

Tuscaloosa County, AL

Although the dogtrot is currently uninhabited and is beginning to show signs of disrepair—the ceiling is missing in one room and a small number of weatherboards are beginning to separate from the exterior framing—overall, it is excellent shape, and its owners intend to begin repairing it soon (Personal Communication 2001). It retains its integrity of workmanship and material, including its original flooring, siding, mantels, framing, doors, and windows. Additionally, the characteristic floor plan with its open dogtrot and flanking rooms remains intact. The dogtrot has some modern improvements such as electricity which was installed in the 1940s or 1950s and plumbing which was installed in the 1960s (Personal Communication 2001). For all intents and purposes, the Samuel Johnson House remains very much a second generation dogtrot of the mid-nineteenth century, as it looks very much like it did when it was built over one hundred and fifty years ago.

Historical Background

Agriculture was the backbone of Alabama economy from the state's inception to the end of World War II. After the War of 1812, white settlers began emigrating from the Carolinas and mid-Atlantic states to Alabama in search of fertile soils for growing cotton and bringing with them slave labor and the plantation system. It was during this time that this parcel of land was first deeded to William Prude of South Carolina. Prude, was deeded the western half of the southeast quarter section of section 25, township 20 south, range 12 west by the United States government in 1832. He subsequently sold it to Samuel Johnson in 1844. While records do not precisely document the construction of the house, physical and stylistic evidence indicate that it was built circa 1845. The property has been in possession of the Johnson family since the mid-nineteenth century.

In the 1840s, Samuel Johnson purchased the property and, with slave labor, established a plantation. The 1850 federal census lists Samuel Johnson as a farmer aged sixty-eight living with his wife Sarah and four of their eight children. The agricultural census of that year lists his holdings as follows: 200 acres of improved land and 640 acres of unimproved lands with a cash value of \$1,500; farm implements and machinery valued at \$300; two mules, seven milch cows, five working oxen, twenty other cattle, forty sheep, and one hundred swine valued at \$800; along with 1,500 bushels of Indian corn, fifty bushels of oats, one hundred bushels each of peas and beans and sweet potatoes, two tons of hay and smaller amounts of wheat and butter; three bales of ginned cotton, no rice and no tobacco. In the slave census for that year, Samuel Johnson is listed as owning twenty slaves ranging in age from two to forty-four and including a dozen males. A mulatto female was recorded as a "fugitive from state."

Samuel Johnson died in 1851 and the appraisal of his estate listed approximately thirty slaves and an additional \$11,381.25 of other possessions. After Johnson's death, his sons David Alexander Johnson (1823-?) and James Milton Johnson (1833-?) assumed the responsibility of operating the farm. James married Margaret Finley in 1852 and according to family tradition the couple resided in the house with David and their mother. The 1860 agricultural census lists David A. Johnson with 175 acres of improved land and 825 acres of unimproved land valued at \$1,500 and the slave census indicates that he owned twenty-eight slaves. James Johnson is recorded with twenty acres of improved land valued at \$700 and with three slaves.

Following the Civil War, tenant farming replaced slave labor. It was suited to the state's lack of capital and skilled people who knew farming and little else, but had no money to invest in land or equipment. The landowners were required to supply the worker with a share of the crop rather than wages. Former slaves had no where to go and they stayed on at the farm, continuing to work for a share of the crop in return for a place to live and make a living. After the war David and James Johnson continued to farm the property "with the few Negroes who stayed on as sharecroppers" and also a few white sharecroppers, "but much of the land had to be let go to woods." David Johnson died circa 1873 and 740 acres of his property including the house site was sold to his brother Samuel S. Johnson for one dollar per acre. Samuel Johnson transferred title to James M. Johnson in 1889.

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Samuel Johnson House
Tuscaloosa County, AL

James Johnson's family included a daughter, Sally, born while he was away during the war, and four sons: David, born 1865; John Finley, born 1868; Samuel Aldophus, born 1871; and William Crawford (1879-1949). Deed records indicate that in 1890, Mrs. Margaret Finley Johnson purchased the land from the State of Alabama Auditor for \$80.70, the cost of the fees. She purchased approximately 130 acres. William Crawford Johnson later acquired the property, resided in the farmhouse with his wife Nora Hodge (1883-1932) and continued to operate the farm. During this period farming operations were generally limited to the raising of milk cows, the production of corn for food and cattle feed and the growing and processing of sugar. William's brother John, who never married, also lived in the house and "farmed and planted a large orchard with very fine peaches...apples, pears, figs, grapes, cherries and scuppernongs."

At the turn of the twentieth century, several factors altered Alabama's agriculture. First, crop diversification was promoted. The boll weevil made cotton a riskier crop, and it was discovered that beef, forest and poultry products could surpass cotton in market value. Second, mechanization of cotton production ensued, and western states soon surpassed the south in cotton production. Finally, the migration of blacks from rural to urban areas helped move the region from labor-intensive to capital-intensive agriculture (Cox 2001).

Tuscaloosa County saw a steady increase in farms from the end of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The 1890 US Census reports that there were 2,483 farms in Tuscaloosa County. By 1910, the number had grown to 4,715, and in 1935 there were 5,297. The number dropped by 1950 to 4,127. The size of farms decreased over the same period of time. In 1890, the average farm size was 122 acres. It reached its lowest in 1935 at 71 acres, and then increased to 95.2 acres by 1950. This increase in farm numbers but decrease in acreage was due to parents dividing their farms amongst multiple heirs. The Johnson farm originally was 1,200 acres and maintained most of its acreage through time. It was divided for heirs in 1956, and currently the family owns 320 acres of the original land.

The chief crops in that area of the state were cotton and corn. They were also the primary crops of the Johnson plantation in the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Hay, wheat, oats, sugar, cane, sorghum, wheat, cowpeas, peanuts, potatoes, peaches and melons were grown on a smaller scale to meet local demand (USDA 1917). Agriculture continued on the Johnson land until the early 1900s. It was replaced with animal husbandry, and currently the former cropland is now pastureland for Brahma cattle.

In the 1920s agricultural prices began to drop. In the 1930s, the New Deal encouraged farmers to reduce commodities. Farmers did this in part by lowering the acreage planted. The Federal Government encouraged a mechanization of farming, which led to a greater crop yield on less acreage. Mechanization spread across the southern farms until it became the norm by the end of the decade. When World War II arrived, people fled to the city to work in factories, and farms had to be run with fewer people yet still produce enough to support war-time America.

When W.C. Johnson died on October 29, 1949, he left the land to his six children. The land was divided up at this time and much of it was sold. After John's death in 1956 the orchards were abandoned. One of the children, Margaret Polly Mills (or Margaret J. or just Polly Mills), kept 320 acres and held onto the land until 1992, when she sold approximately 26 acres of land to William Lester Mills for \$10,000.

William Lester Mills sold the property to its current owners, Jeffrey R. and Susanne Mills Isbell in March of 1997. It was a sale of approximately five acres of land that the house stands on. While the property is divided up amongst family, it still is all retained by the same family and many of them live on it still. Polly Mills lives around the corner from the house that she was born in and grew up in, and her granddaughter, Susanne Mills Isbell also lives in the area.

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Samuel Johnson House

Tuscaloosa County, AL

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Section 10, photos

Page 7

Samuel Johnson House

Tuscaloosa County, AL

Verbal Boundary Description

The Samuel Johnson House is located in the of NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 25, T20S, R12W on the Lake Lurleen, Alabama topographic map. It lies south of Shelly Hughes Road and north of Sipse Valley Road, near Buhl. The property adjacent to the house is enclosed with a barbed wire fence of approximately 474 feet in circumference. See accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was chosen to include the area adjacent to the house and which is already enclosed by a barbed wire fence.

Photograph Log

The following information is the same for each photograph:

Name of photographer: Kristen E. Janowski

Dates of Photographs: June 25, 2001, September 18, 2001, October 10, 2001

Location of Original Negatives:

Alabama Historical Commission

468 South Perry Street

Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

- Photograph 1. Eastern elevation.
- Photograph 2. Northern elevation.
- Photograph 3. Western elevation.
- Photograph 4. Southern elevation.
- Photograph 5. Foundation piers of log and stones.
- Photograph 6. Breezeway of house, looking west.
- Photograph 7. Original door and its hardware.
- Photograph 8. Northeast cabinet room; bathroom commode.
- Photograph 9. Northeast cabinet room; shower stall.
- Photograph 10. Southeast cabinet room.
- Photograph 11. North central room.
- Photograph 12. North central room.
- Photograph 13. South central room.
- Photograph 14. Northwest cabinet room.
- Photograph 15. Southwest cabinet room, the kitchen.
- Photograph 16. Southwest cabinet room, exposed ceiling rafters.