

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1213  
JUL 31 1989

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Jim Smith House  
other names/site number

**2. Location**

street & number Route 3, Toombs County Road #18  
city, town Lyons (x) vicinity of  
county Toombs code GA 279  
state Georgia code GA zip code 30436

(n/a) not for publication

**3. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

**Category of Property**

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

**Number of Resources within Property:**

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	0	1
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	1

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

7/27/89  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

entered in the National Register

Shelores Dyer

8/31/89

( ) determined eligible for the National Register

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register

( ) removed from the National Register

( ) other, explain:

( ) see continuation sheet

for

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

## 6. Function or Use

---

### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling

---

## 7. Description

---

### Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival

### Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	wood
roof	asphalt
other	

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Jim Smith House is a two-story, wood-framed, vernacular Greek Revival farmhouse constructed c. 1860. James Henry (Jim) Smith (1828-1899) was a successful farmer who owned up to 4,100 acres, grew a variety of crops, raised livestock, and owned a small sawmill and gristmill. The Smith House was moved approximately 1.5 miles from its original location in 1984 to avoid demolition. The new site is very similar to the original and was historically part of Smith's land. A recent rehabilitation of the historic house and the addition of a new rear wing has placed the house back into service.

The historic farmhouse has a two-story full-length porch included under the main roof and supported by six square wooden posts. A cantilevered balcony at the second floor is almost the length of the porch. The front facade is five bays wide with a centered entrance and is faced with flush siding, while the other three facades are weatherboarded. The roof is side-gabled with pedimented gable ends. The three exterior brick end chimneys were rebuilt and maintain the original corbelled cap design. The main first floor entrance has a transom and sidelights divided by pilasters and topped with a simple entablature. The second story central doorway is modestly detailed with sidelights. The front porch and second story balcony retain the six-inch heart-pine, tongue and groove flooring. Lattice balustrades highlight both porch and balcony levels. The windows are six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash with plain window surrounds. The house also features a full third story attic with gable end sash windows. The structural system of the house features a heavy timber frame with hand hewn mortised and pegged sills. The house was placed upon a new brick foundation.

On each floor, the interior plan is a central hall with two rooms on either side. This plan has remained unchanged except for the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 7**

---

addition of baths and closets in the smaller rear rooms. Interior window and door moldings, baseboards, wood floors, mantels, and the stairway remain intact. The interior flooring is six-inch wide heart-pine floor boards. The house retained the four original wooden fireplace mantels with plain pilasters. Other original interior details include simple molded door and window surrounds, four-paneled wood doors, nine-and-a-half inch baseboards with beaded edges, hand-hewn stair rails and sills, and decorative turned newel posts.

The new rear addition includes the kitchen and family room and is one-story, weatherboarded, and has one-over-one window sashes to distinguish it as a new addition. No outbuildings associated with the historic house are present at the new location. The house is located on a slight rise in the terrain and is set back within a nonhistoric pecan grove approximately 530' from Toombs County Road #18. Flat cultivated fields are located to the rear of the building.

---

**8. Statement of Significance**

---

**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally     statewide     locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A     B     C     D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**     N/A

A     B     C     D     E     F     G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

architecture

**Period of Significance:**

c. 1860

**Significant Dates:**

c. 1860

**Significant Person(s):**

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation:**

n/a

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

n/a

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

---

**Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:**

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Jim Smith House is an excellent example of the c. 1860 farmhouse of a successful farmer in rural southwest Georgia during the latter half of the 19th century. It is unusual for its large size for this part of the state during this period. The house is significant in the area of architecture as a fine-quality vernacular farmhouse with Greek Revival stylistic influence seen in the two-story porch with posts, the entrances with transom and sidelights, and the symmetry of the front facade and floor plan. The recent rehabilitation retained a large majority of original materials and replaced in kind where necessary. The main first floor entrance has a transom and sidelights divided by pilasters and topped with a simple entablature. The flooring is made from rough sawn heart-pine boards. The entire house retains the original mantels, window and door surrounds, four-paneled wood doors, nine-and-a-half inch baseboards, newel posts and a hand-hewn stair rails and sills. The house show the typical use of mortise-and-tenon frame construction. The building's interior plan is the same for both floors with a central hall and two rooms on either side. Changes to the house include the addition of baths and closets in the smaller rear rooms. The three gabled brick end chimneys were reconstructed using the original pattern for the corbelled caps. The new one-story rear addition added extra living space to the historic house.

**National Register Criteria**

The property meets Criteria C because the Jim Smith House is a rare and impressive example of a rural antebellum Greek Revival house found in south Georgia. The c. 1860s house is a vernacular adaptation of the Greek Revival and displays a symmetrical facade, classic columns, full-length, two-story porch, gable roof, sidelights, transom and attenuated pilasters. The house embodies many fine characteristics of American antebellum craftsmanship including original mantels, heart-pine flooring, and hand-hewn sills.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

Consideration B: In order to avoid demolition, the Jim Smith House was moved in 1984 to a similar setting approximately 1.5 miles from its original location. The house is significant primarily for its architectural value and care has been taken to retain the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with the house. The new location was originally part of the Jim Smith

National Register of Historic Places  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

---

property. Moreover, it is virtually identical to the original site in that the house is situated on a low rise of ground bordered on three sides by lower-lying terrain, it is setback some distance from a rural road, and it is oriented toward the road. The surrounding land--rural and agricultural--is identical. A freestanding historic kitchen associated with the house at its original location (photograph 12) could not be moved or rehabilitated because of its severely deteriorated structural system; it has been abandoned at the original site.

**Period of significance (justification, if applicable)**

c. 1860 - estimated building date of the house

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

James Henry Smith (Jim H.) was born in Tattnall County, Georgia on February 8, 1828. He was the son of James "Henry" and Temperance Gilford Smith, both of whom were North Carolina natives. Jim Smith was listed at the age of twenty-two as a farmer (like his father) in the 1850 Census. Also in 1850, Smith is believed to have acquired 325 acres in Tattnall County which included the future site of his house. The 325 acre tract appears to have been a portion of the original 1,000 acres granted to Henry Smith by Governor Charles McDonald in 1840. Tattnall County tax records dating from the late 1850s indicate that Smith was quite a prosperous farmer. By 1859, he owned 1,297 acres of pine in Tattnall County worth \$1,300 and four slaves valued at \$2,600. His whole property was worth \$5,212.

The construction date of the Jim Smith House remains uncertain, although physical evidence suggests the structure was built shortly before the Civil War. According to family tradition, the house is believed to have been built prior to or soon after Smith's marriage to sixteen year old Caroline Matilda Mattox on November 15, 1860. Tax records for the period show fluctuations in the value of Smith's whole property as well as the amount of his indebtedness. Miss Julia Rogers, who was married to Clifford (a grandson of Jim Smith), maintains that the house was built during the 1860s or no later than 1870 because her grandmother taught Lenora, Jim Smith's eldest daughter, piano there beginning in 1874. And as Miss Julia observed, the Smiths probably would not have had a "fine piano like that in an unfinished house." Another account credits John T. Manning as the builder. He is supposed to have begun the house in 1873, but due to his drinking problem, the project took three years to complete at a cost of about \$2,000. Since Manning is listed in the 1860 Census for Tattnall County as a thirty year old Irish immigrant carpenter, it

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8**

---

does appear possible that he could have built the Jim Smith House. He continued to live in the county until at least 1880.

Jim and Carolina Smith had eleven children, all of whom are said to have been raised in the house. They were as follows: Lenora (1861-1902), Jeanette Viola (1863-1944), Luray (1865-1931), Henrietta (c. 1867-unknown), Edkins Rebecca called Okie (1870-1953), Minnie (1873-1960), Effie H. (1875-1897), James Henry (1878-1947), Cosby Mattox (1881-1953), Houston Tattnall (1885-1963), and Carrie P. (1888-1918). In addition, Jim's mother, Temperance Smith, several nieces, nephews, grandchildren, boarders, servants, and others appear to have lived with the Smiths at various times.

Exactly how and to what extent the War Between the States affected Jim Smith and his young family is uncertain. Smith was not among the first company from Tattnall County that went to war, and as far as is known, he did not fight. Tax records indicated, however, that he retained ownership of about 1,200 acres of pine land throughout the war. In addition, Smith owned five slaves from 1861 to 1863, and by 1864, he had acquired a sixth slave. While there are not detailed agricultural records for the period, Smith did own forty sheep in 1864, and his whole property that year was valued at \$24,914 in Confederate money.

During the immediate post war years when land was inexpensive, Smith acquired almost 1,600 acres which more than doubled his holdings. In 1868, he owned 2,807 acres of land valued at \$1,000, the same value given to his 1,218 acres the previous year.

According to the 1870 U.S. Census Agricultural Schedule, Jim Smith's large holdings consisted of sixty improved acres, 740 acres in timber, and 2,000 other unimproved acres, and his farm was valued at \$800. He also had \$2,000 worth of livestock including two horses, one mule, thirty milk cows, three working oxen, one hundred other cattle, 390 sheep, and fifty swine. Smith grew Indian corn, oats, rice, and sweet potatoes in 1869.

The 1870s appear to have been an economically prosperous decade for the Jim Smith family. Smith's actual acreage fluctuated from a high in 1874 of 3,875 acres down to 3,569 acres in 1877. The value of his whole property peaked at \$5,100 in 1874, including \$125 worth of household and kitchen furniture. By 1877, the last year for which county tax records are available on Smith, he was assessed for \$2,500 worth of livestock, household and kitchen furniture valued at \$200, \$200 worth of "tools, law or library books and pictures," or a total whole property value of \$4,800.



**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8**

---

A comparison of the U.S. Census Agricultural Schedules for 1870 and 1880 provides additional evidence of Jim Smith's success as a farmer and businessman. In 1880, he owned a total of 4,100 acres (4,000 acres of timber and 100 acres tilled) as compared to 2,800 acres in 1870. During the same period, his farm more than doubled in value from \$800 to \$2,000 while his livestock increased in worth by twenty-five percent to \$2,500. The type and quantity of livestock remained relatively consistent except for a substantial increase in the number of sheep, up from 390 in 1870 to 568 in 1880. Sheep had apparently become an important source of income for Jim Smith with 1,200 pounds of fleece shorn in the spring of 1880. By 1879, Smith was also raising poultry. His 110 head of poultry of different varieties produced fifty dozen eggs that year. To protect his large investment in livestock, Smith spend \$75 on building and repairing fences in 1879.

Jim Smith was still growing Indian corn, oats, and sweet potatoes in 1879; however, he harvested each in much larger quantities than reported in the 1870 record. The fact that he spent \$180 on fertilizer in 1879 may have been partly responsible, although it is also likely that he planted more of each crop. While there is not record that Smith planted rice in 1879, he did harvest a small amount of cotton--three bales--and produced 120 gallons of molasses.

At the time of his death in 1899, Smith also owned a sawmill and gristmill. Little is known about these mills, except that Smith is supposed to have floated cut timber down the nearby Altamaha River.

In addition, Smith may have engaged in small scale silk production. There is no record of this; however, it is known that fifteen to eighteen huge mulberry trees were growing southwest of the house in the 1920s. While the making of silk is not remembered, several silk pieces made on the property were still in existence in the 1920s.

Jim and Caroline Smith were known for their hospitality. They enjoyed company and had frequent parties, beginning with a housewarming dance and candy pull. The latter is said to have discolored the snow white walls, some of which were later papered or painted. In addition, friends from Uvalda would often spend the night on their way to court in Reidsville. The Smith's active social life is further suggested by the presence of a 3,000 pound grand piano, believed to be the first piano in Tattnall County. Family tradition has it, too, that the third floor attic was planned as a dance hall, but was never finished due to Jim Smith's death.

Jim H. Smith died from a broken neck incurred in a wagon accident while en route to one of his mills in April 1899. His estate was

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8

---

appraised at \$8,083.60 excluding the house, sawmill, and gristmill. At the time of his death, he owned 3,800 acres in Tattnall County as well as assorted livestock including six hundred sheep. Caroline received twelve months support for herself and three minor children which included all the household and kitchen furniture, certain livestock, and farm equipment worth \$193.35 and \$606.65 in cash. On January 2, 1900, 2,675 3/4 acres of land were sold at public auction. Eight of the eleven heirs received shares of an additional 1,548 acres on October 31, 1900.

Caroline Smith petitioned the court for a dower on February 13, 1900 which was granted on April 3, 1900. This apparently gave her possession of the house and 349 acres, more or less, where she lived until her death twenty-eight years later. Caroline's invalid daughter, Okie, continued to live with her mother, as did a grandchild, Henrietta Long. When Henrietta married, she moved away, only to return in the 1920s with her children, Winifred, Jim H., Victor, and Rebecca. They lived at the family homeplace until the estate was settled in 1933. In addition to family members, there were always servants, including some former slaves, as long as Caroline lived.

"Miss Caroline" as she was called by friends and neighbors, continued to be known for her hospitality during the years after her husband's death. Her home was the gathering place for the neighborhood young people, and she had a reputation for never turning anyone, even strangers, away. According to one account, an elderly man from Connecticut took refuge with the Smiths during a heavy sleet storm in January, 1922. He was supposedly a rather cantankerous man who hated children, but he did recane the family's chairs during the week he stayed with them. It is also recalled that each year gypsies were allowed to camp under the mulberry trees southwest of the house.

The third floor of the Jim Smith House is believed to have served as the meeting place for the Inman Creek Masonic Lodge #491 from its organization in 1916 until it moved to nearby Johnson Corner in 1920. Although the residence is not mentioned specifically in the lodge's early meeting minutes, H. T. Smith, one of Jim Smith's sons, was a charter member. It is also said that the KKK met there at one time.

Jim Smith's grandchildren spent many hours together playing at the homeplace. The surviving grandchildren recall going under the cottonseed house to hunt eggs, having to retrieve balls from the large prickly pear hedges on each side of the front gate, and being forbidden from playing in the third story attic. They were warned that a mean billy goat lived up there who might hurt them.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8**

---

Subsequently, most strange noises were attributed to the "goat" on the third floor.

Caroline Smith died at home from pneumonia in November, 1928 at the age of eighty-four. She was described in her obituary as "one of the most lovable women of her community" and her thoughtfulness was noted with the observation that "[she] was never so happy when she was doing something for others."

Hoke Smith, the son of Jim H. Smith, Jr., bought out each one-eleventh share of the estate beginning in the late 1920s, but did not take possession of the house. Through the years, various tenants have occupied the residence. Misses Clio and Clina Carr, sisters who taught a nearby Yancy School, were the first permanent boarders, living in the two front rooms on the second floor from 1920 to 1924. Also during the 1920s, Ernest and Abby Stroud lived behind the main house in the old kitchen and dining room. Other tenants included black tenant farmers Ceeley and Luke Sharpe (c. 1935) and the Charlie Hart family (1939-1940s). During the 1940s and/or 1950s, Willie White stored tobacco on the second floor, built a covered walkway to connect the detached kitchen/dining room with the main house (possibly to replace an earlier breezeway), and removed the plaster from the first floor walls. The last occupants, Arnold and Laura Burnett, lived in the house from the late 1950s or early 1960s to about 1971. The structure has remained vacant ever since.

Horace Sanders, the husband of Lucy Smith (daughter of Jim H. Smith, Jr.) purchased the property from Hoke Smith in 1959. Sanders sold the house to Robert S. and Gail R. Clark in January, 1984, but refused to sell and land. As a result, the Jim Smith House was moved to a new site in a pecan grove approximately one and one-half miles away in September, 1984. The current site passed out of direct family ownership for a number of years, but was part of the estate of Jim H. Smith, Sr. which was granted to his daughter Luray Sharpe on December 11, 1900. Luray Sharpe was conveyed the property to her daughter-in-law, Ellen M. Sharpe, on October 25, 1930. Ellen gave it to her daughter, Luray, on April 12, 1941. On August 15, 1945, T. Toss Sharpe (Ellen's husband and Luray's father) sold the land to A. S. Clark. Robert O. Clark purchased one-half interest in the property in 1947. He acquired the remaining one-half interest on April 24, 1973 and then sold it to his son, Robert Smith Clark, and daughter-in-law, Gail R. Clark, on September 3, 1979. Robert S. Clark is the great grandson of Jim H. and Caroline M. Smith.

The Clarks are currently working with preservation architect Brad Smith on the rehabilitation of the Jim Smith House. Plans include

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

---

adding a compatibly designed addition onto the rear of the house to provide extra living space for the family.

In August, 1986, the Jim Smith House survived a devastating thunderstorm, believed to have spawned a tornado, which uprooted a number of pecan trees and destroyed chicken houses and other assorted storage sheds located southwest of the residence. Fortunately, the house escaped virtually unharmed. The owners have recently planted pecan trees to replace those which were destroyed as well as those which have been removed from the grove through the years.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources**

The Jim Smith House is classified as a contributing building. The surrounding pecan grove is classified as a noncontributing site because it was not historically associated with this particular house. The nomination as a whole is classified as "building," even though the nominated property contains contributing and noncontributing resources, because the noncontributing resource is ancillary to the main historic resource--the house.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

---

Brown, Robin. "Historic Property Information Form. Jim Smith House."  
1987 (on file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources).

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) 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:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- ( ) Other State Agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

---

**10. Geographical Data**

---

**Acreage of Property** 4 acres

**UTM References**

A) Zone 17 Easting 381700 Northing 3542860

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is described by a heavy black line on the enclosed plat map of the Jim Smith house.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary follows the current legal boundaries of the property. It is marked on the enclosed plat map. The boundaries establish a convenient management unit under single ownership and encompass sufficient representation of land to establish a setting similar to the original site.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

**name/title** Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher  
**organization** Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** 404-656-2840 **date** 7/14/89

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ PHOTOGRAPHS \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

---

**JIM SMITH HOUSE**

Lyons, Toombs County, Georgia

Photographer: James R. Lockhart

Negative: Filed with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Date photographed: October 1988

**Description:**

1 of 12: Front view of Jim Smith House from the county road; photographer facing north.

2 of 12: Southwest corner of Jim Smith House; photographer facing northeast.

3 of 12: Southeast corner of Jim Smith House; photographer facing northwest.

4 of 12: West facade of Jim Smith House with rear addition; photographer facing east.

5 of 12: Front facade, second floor cantilevered balcony; photographer facing east.

6 of 12: Front entrance central hall and stairway; photographer facing north.

7 of 12: First floor Master bedroom, original fireplace mantel and pine floors; photographer facing southwest.

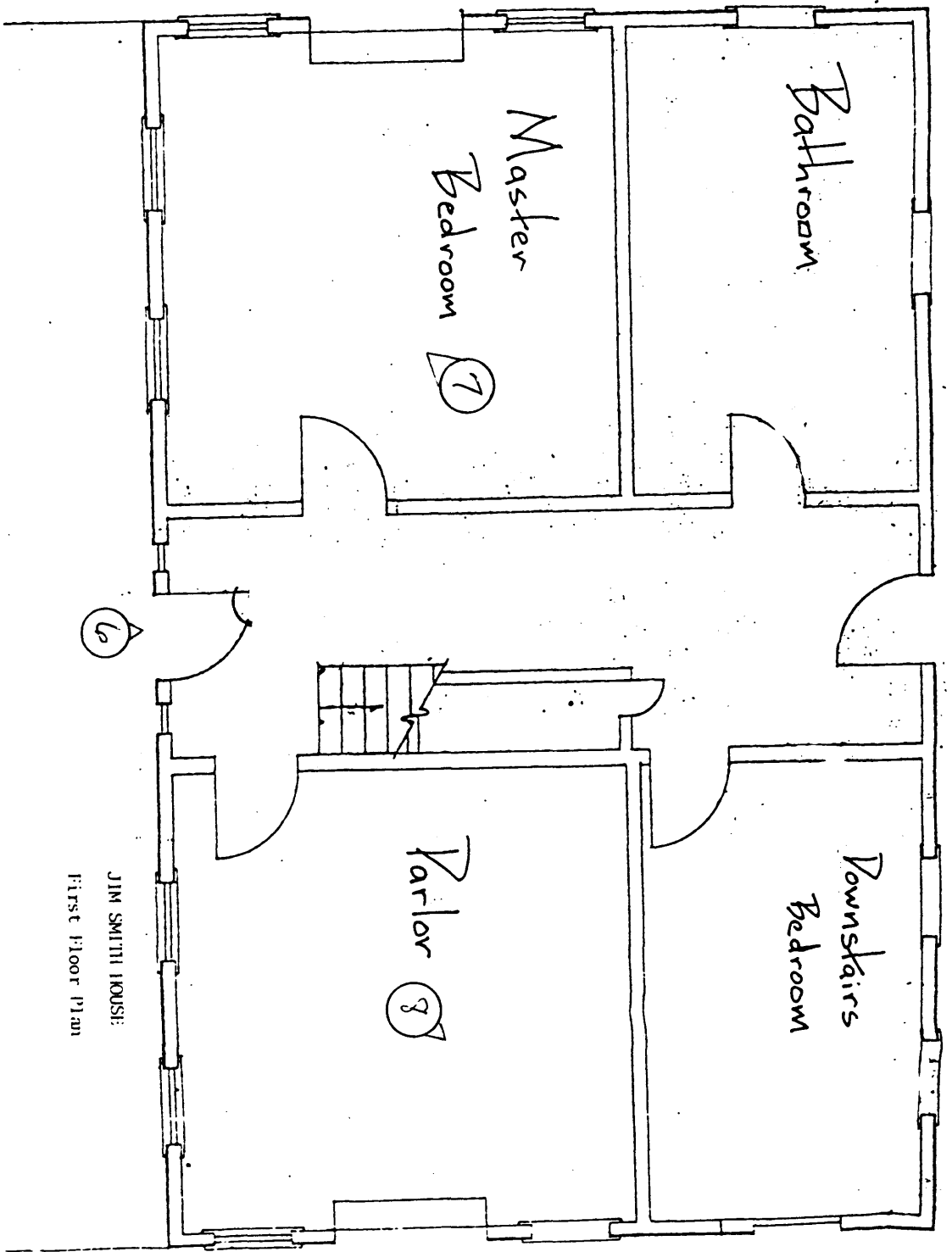
8 of 12: First floor parlor, original fireplace mantel and pine floors; photographer facing northeast.

9 of 12: Second floor landing and balustrade; photographer facing south.

10 of 12: Second floor bedroom, original fireplace mantel and pine floors; photographer facing northeast.

11 of 12: Second floor bedroom, original fireplace mantel and pine floor; photographer facing southwest.

12 of 12: Original site of the Jim Smith House, original detached kitchen remains; photographer facing northwest.



JIM SMITH HOUSE:  
First Floor Plan

SKETCH MAP - FIRST FLOOR PLANS

Jim Smith House, Lyons, Toombs County, GA

Key: Room usage is labeled on the plan.

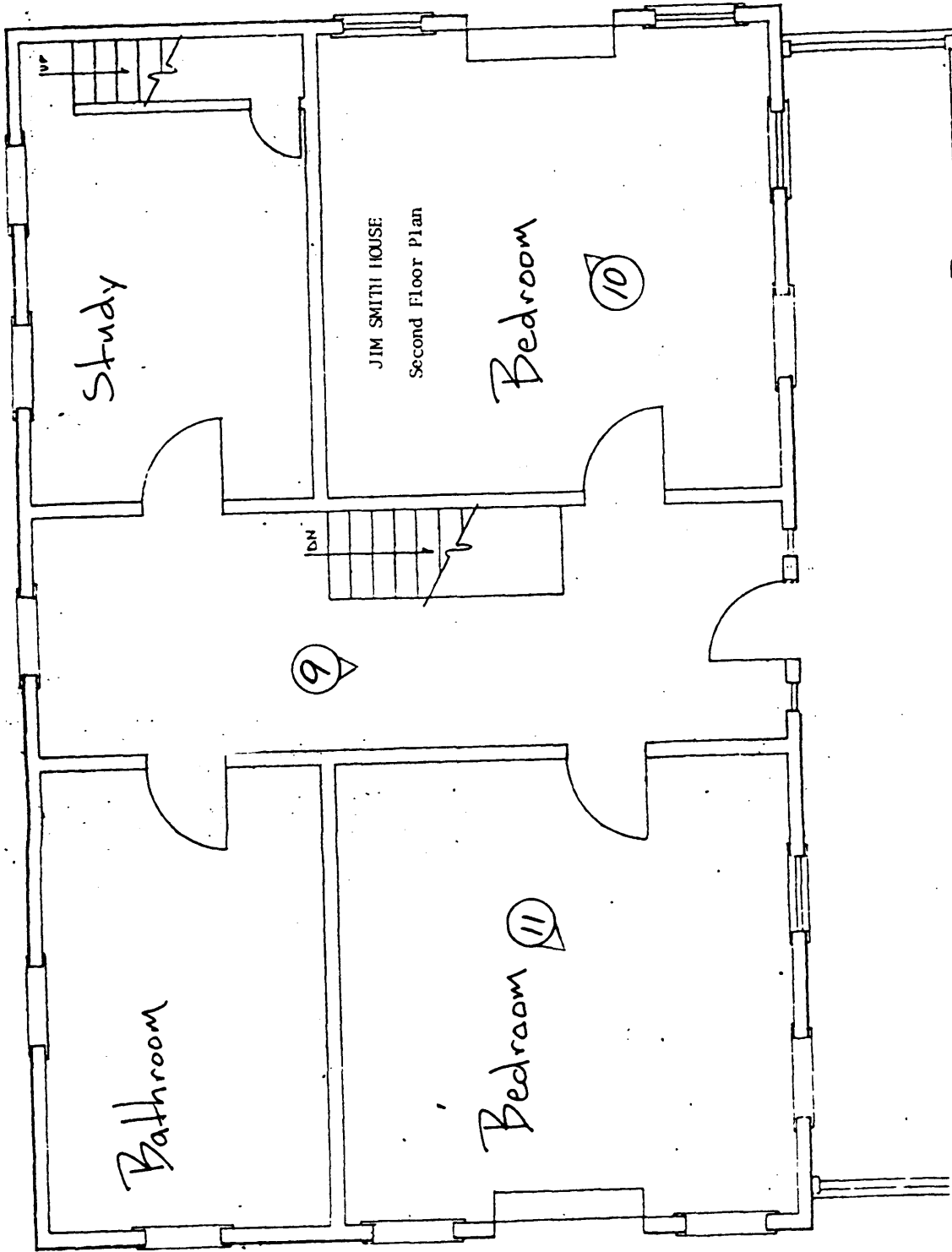
Scale: not to scale

Photos: locations indicated by numbers

③



N



SKETCH MAP - SECOND FLOOR PLANS  
 Jim Smith House, Lyons, Toombs County, GA

Key: Room usage is labeled on the plan.

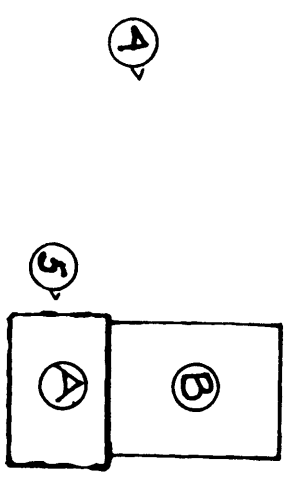
Scale: not to scale

Photos: locations indicated by numbers

3

CULTIVATED FIELD

N



②

③

Peck  
Grave

①

DIRT ROAD

JIM SMITH HOUSE

KEY:

Ⓐ - House (c. 1860)

Ⓑ - New Addition

SKETCH MAP - SITE PLAN  
Jim Smith House, Lyons, Toombs County, GA


Scale: not to scale


Photos: locations indicated by numbers

③

Jim Smith House - Plat Map  
Lyons, Toombs County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 400'

Boundary = 

North: 

12 116 AC.

13 396 AC.

