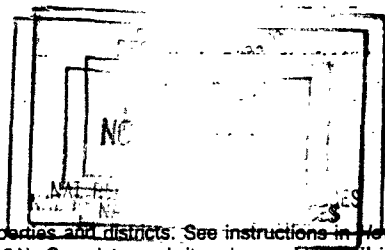


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Giles, Janice Holt and Henry, Log House

other names/site number AD-15 Giles House at Spout Springs

2. Location

street & number 302 Spout Springs Road N/A not for publication

city or town Knifley vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Adair code 001 zip code 42753

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

David L. Morgan, SHPO and

Executive Director 9-17-97

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State of 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 official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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:) _____

Janice Holt Giles house

Adair County, Ky.

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

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

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling (Giles House), Trade/professional (Giles House), Domestic/secondary structure (Becky House)

WORK IN PROGRESS, Social/clubhouse/literary, Social/civic/non-profit facility, WORK IN PROGRESS, Commerce, specialty store, gift shop

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Log house with weatherboard

foundation CONCRETE, walls WOOD: Log, Weatherboard, roof TIN, other BRICK, Limestone

Narrative Description

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

WOOD

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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Literature

Period of Significance

1957-1967

Significant Dates

1957-58 (house under construction)

1967 (house moved)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Giles, Janice Holt

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Giles, Janice Holt (designer)

Giles, Henry (designer and builder)

See continuation sheet 8-1

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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:

Western Kentucky University

Janice Holt Giles house

Adair County, Ky.

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10.187

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A:1 Zone 16 Easting 664460 Northing 4119240 Knifley Quad C:3 Zone 16 Easting 664270 Northing 4118880
B:2 Zone 16 Easting 664360 Northing 4118820
4 See continuation sheet

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregg Swem, board member
organization Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles Foundation, Inc. date 7-7-97
street & number 1568 Cherokee Road telephone (502) 451-5516
city or town Louisville state Ky. zip code 40205

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles Foundation, Inc.
street & number P.O. Box 932 telephone (502) 465-6104
city or town Columbia state Ky. zip code 42728

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

Adair County, KY

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles House (AD-15) is located on Spout Springs Road, just off State Highway 76, in Adair County, Kentucky, six miles from the village of Knifley and 18 miles from the county seat of Columbia. The 1-1/2-story poplar log and weatherboard building, originally built in 1957-58, was moved 1,200 feet northeast to its present location in 1967 when it was determined that it lay in the floodplain of the nearby Green River; a new dam was being added 25 miles downstream.

It sits on 10.187 acres, flanked on the east by a half-acre pond and surrounded by wooded hills. As one approaches the house by car, the house is dramatically reflected in the large pond.

The house originally sat on the west side of Spout Springs Branch, nestled among sycamore trees, but was relocated to the east side of the creek and a little to the north in 1967. But it remained on the same 70-acre parcel which the couple bought when they moved to Spout Springs to build their log house 10 years before. The move was accomplished with I-beams, hydraulic jacks, dolly wheels and a bulldozer (Around Our House, pp. 328-330).

Logs are notched at the ends and laid in an overlapping and interlocking pattern. Mortar was used for chinking. The logs for the house came from a Green River fishing camp which originally had been a church and from three other 19th century buildings in the area (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 62-78, 99-100, 111, 137).

At its original site, the house featured a limestone fireplace and chimney which had to be dismantled when the building was moved. A new chimney of limestone on the bottom and brick on the top replaced the earlier one, and the fireplace was rebuilt with various kinds of stone. The materials came from nearby houses being torn down.

The house's original foundation was concrete and concrete blocks with a natural rock outer shell and pillars. A new foundation of concrete blocks was laid after the house had been brought to its new site (Around Our House, pp. 316-318, 331-338; A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 122-126).

"The house is built in the shape of a slightly inebriated T," said the Gileses in A Little Better than Plumb: The Biography of a House, the book about the building of the house which the couple designed. At the top of the T are the living room and master bedroom measuring 42' X 18' overall. Adjoining this is a 20' X 20' mid-section, not of logs but of board-and-batten construction, in which are a bathroom, entrance hall, Mrs.

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

Section number 7 Page 2

Adair County, KY

Giles' study/spare bedroom and dining room. The timber for this part of the house came from trees on the Giles farm as did lumber for all sills and plates in the house. A kitchen of logs is 18' X 20' and attached to the northeast end of the board-and-batten middle portion.

There are three sloping, low-ceiling bedrooms upstairs--one over the master bedroom and the other two over the kitchen--and a gallery looking out over the living room leading to the front upstairs bedroom.

Rooms downstairs are 9' tall. Heavy hand-hewn beams are visible in the kitchen. Poplar cupboards and beams in the kitchen were salvaged from a Giles family house, built ca. 1850 (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 65-67, 112-113).

The exposed logs were painted ivory after the move to lighten up the inside of the house. Janice Giles remarked that the paint helped bring out the grain in the logs (Around Our House, pp. 341, 343).

There are a pair of upstairs windows on three of the house's gables. An old stained-glass window was installed in the main bathroom in the middle section of the house (Elizabeth M. Hancock letter, 6/19/1996--Hancock is the daughter of Janice Holt Giles).

The house at its original location along Spout Springs Branch had a pump room 10' X 14' attached to the west of the kitchen. The original pump room was removed and replaced with a larger one (14' X 18') with bath when the house was moved; it is located at the rear of the house, off the kitchen, where a back stoop had been (Around Our House, pp. 314-315, 336). After the move, a garage was added to the northeast side of the pump room (Elizabeth M. Hancock letter, 6/19/1996).

The move, which took place on Sept. 14, 1967, and its preparation are recorded in the Gileses' book Around Our House. After the move, Janice Giles voiced her approval of the new site. "Artistically the house is in its exact position. The length of it runs with the hollow and the length of the hills. The mass of the house is precisely where it should be, and the trees in the background soften the whole site beautifully. Actually, in its present location the house is much more beautiful and I couldn't be happier about it (Around Our House, p. 331)."

The original house had no porches, although there was a stone patio about 8' X 16' at the door to the entrance hall. After the relocation, the patio was changed to a porch with concrete floor to take advantage of the pond 15 yards away. It is about 38' long, running the whole length of the mid-section of the house and along the kitchen.

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

Adair County, KY

Section number 7 Page 3

At its new location, a 42' long porch with plank floor was added along the entire southwestern side of the house, and a door from this porch to the living room was installed.

A back porch with plank floor was added off the kitchen on the northwestern side, and a small porch was attached to the master bedroom (Elizabeth M. Hancock letter, 6/19/1996).

The 10,000 shingle boards rived out by Henry's father, Frank Giles, which were initially put on the roof of the house had to be replaced after the move (A Little Better than Plumb, p. 138). The roof leaked and so the entire house from porches to garage has a tin roof.

The house and yard were cleared of trash and unwanted vegetation in the summer and fall of 1996. Some temporary rethinking of the logs has been done. And the roof has been tacked and patched. But because of lack of use, neglect and the weather much remains to be done to put the house in good repair. The unsafe porches need to be stabilized, wood throughout the house should be treated for pest control, gutters are needed, further rethinking and repair to exposed walls should be done, the upstairs north window needs attention, and total rewiring of the house is in order. Plans have been made to continue the repairs in the spring and summer of 1997 (Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles Foundation, Inc. Newsletter, January 1997).

A modest one-story, white frame building known as the Becky House, which stands to the north of the log house, was used as a musical hideaway/clubhouse by Henry Giles. It is situated on the same 10.187 acres of land as the main house, all of which is proposed for the nomination (Dianne Watkins interview, 8/8/1996).

Another building associated with the Gileses is the Spout Springs Schoolhouse, just to the north of the Becky House. Before constructing the log house, the couple thought they wanted to make it their permanent home (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 38-39, 44). The white frame building served as their temporary residence in 1967 during the moving of the log home (Around Our House, pp. 315, 340-343).

On May 30, 1949, the Gileses moved to the ridge above the valley where the log house would be built. This was Janice Giles' first home in Adair County. The house, recorded in 40 Acres and No Mule, was about 20 years old when the couple moved there. "It was a thin, spindling house, fifteen by thirty feet. It had two rooms downstairs, and one big room upstairs which had never been finished." Each of the rooms downstairs had an outside front door and a window. A stoop covered the kitchen

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

Section number 7 Page 4

Adair County, KY

door leading to the backyard. Henry Giles built the large fieldstone chimney on the house; the rock came from chimneys of abandoned houses in the area; it still stands (40 Acres and No Mule, pp. 52-55, 215-218). T.J. Giles is the current owner of this house.

In 1953, the Gileses moved nearby to a 106-acre farm, also on the ridge, known as the Felix Price place. A square weatherboard building with four rooms downstairs, each 15' X 15', and two full-sized bedrooms upstairs, the house is surrounded by pastures and woods (Around Our House, p. 22). The couple remained at this working farm until 1957 when they moved to the valley to begin building the log home (Guide to Janice Holt Giles Collection, chronology pp.). This property is now owned by William and Sharon Greer.

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Giles, Edgar (builder)

Spires, Joe (builder)

Giles, Frank (builder)

Dismantling and rebuilding:

Giles, Henry

Giles, Clyde

Melton, Douglas

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House
Adair County, KY

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles House (AD-15) in Adair County, Kentucky, meets National Register eligibility criterion B--a building associated with the life of a significant person. Because the house was built in 1958, and moved in 1967, its significance is justified so the property meets criteria considerations B and G. Janice Holt Giles was a writer of historical fiction dealing with pioneer Kentucky and with westward migration in America occurring in the late 18th and 19th centuries. She also wrote fiction and non-fiction about rural northern Adair County, her husband Henry's home, which became her home for the last 30 years of her life. Whether it was words or logs, she stitched together "facts" of the past to create a new-old story. The Area of Significance in which Janice Holt Giles made substantial contributions is literature. Because Janice Holt Giles is a writer of relatively recent vintage, the scholarly work is also new. This nomination makes additional efforts to clarify that scholarly appraisal of her work.

Giles was born in 1905 in Altus, Arkansas and grew up in Arkansas and Oklahoma where her parents taught school in the old Choctaw nation. After a first marriage which ended in divorce in 1939, Giles moved to Kentucky with her only child Elizabeth. When her father died, she returned to Arkansas but moved back to Kentucky in 1941 when she became secretary to the dean of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Giles met husband-to-be Henry Giles on a bus trip from Kentucky to Texas in 1943. The couple were married in 1945. After World War II, Giles continued to work for the Presbyterian seminary but also began writing. In 1949, the year Giles and her husband moved from Louisville to a small farm in Adair County, her first novel The Enduring Hills (1950) was accepted for publication and along with two other novels--Miss Willie (1951) and Tara's Healing (1952)--made up the Piney Ridge Trilogy. These three works drew on the people and culture of Giles' new home in south-central Kentucky. Giles wrote four novels dealing with early Kentucky history--The Kentuckians (1953), Hannah Fowler (1956), The Believers (1957) and The Land Beyond the Mountains (1958). After 1958, novels such as Johnny Osage (1960), Savanna (1961), Voyage to Santa Fe (1962) and Six-Horse Hitch (1969) dealt with the American frontier of Arkansas, Oklahoma and beyond.

In 1957-58, Giles and her husband purchased several old log structures to use in

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House
Adair County, KY

building a house on 70 acres in Spout Springs Hollow, just below the ridge where they had lived on two other farms. They moved into the house in August 1958 and in A Little Better than Plumb (1963) described the experience of building the house. In 1967 the house was moved 1,200 feet because of the construction of a flood control dam on the upper Green River. This relocation was recounted in the couple's Around Our House (1971).

Giles wrote 24 books, several of which were co-authored by her husband Henry. More than half of her works were written at the log house. She died in 1979 and is buried in Caldwell Chapel Cemetery near her home in Adair County (The Kentucky Encyclopedia--a comprehensive reference work about the people, places, things and events of the state--p. 374; Guide to Janice Holt Giles Collection, chronology pp.).

Before building the log house, Giles and her husband lived principally on two nearby ridge farms, where she wrote such books as 40 Acres and No Mule (1952), a non-fiction account of her new life at a small, hardscrabble farm where she learned about the people and their customs in the neighborhood, and The Plum Thicket (1954), a provocative, fictionalized reminiscence of her grandparents' home in Arkansas (Guide to Janice Holt Giles Collection, chronology pp.; The Plum Thicket, Foreword).

Although the Gileses lived on the 40-acre parcel and a larger 106-acre farm known as the Felix Price place for about eight years, these properties are not being nominated because they were looked on as temporary way stations to the permanent log home the author always wanted (Around Our House, pp. 20-23). It was Giles' love of the past that drew her both to log buildings and to writing about Kentucky's and America's frontier history.

Early in her career, Giles drew up a master plan which she discussed with her editor and agent. She explained that

the continental destiny of the United States had long intrigued me and that in a series of novels, some ten or twelve in number I thought, I could trace the westward expansion of our country in such a way as to make history more interesting for the general reader, and hopefully, more useful to the students of American history. The two greatest acts of American history, once the Revolutionary War made us a nation, have been the Civil War and the opening of the West. They are the only truly romantic periods of American history. I wanted to deal with the opening of the West in such a

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

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way as to make it vivid, real, dramatic and so authentic it could be taught as history.

I proposed to create several families to carry the generations forward, as happened in real life and history, until the nation was spanned and the United States stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from one ocean to the other (Around Our House, pp. 8-9).

Giles succeeded in this plan, completing a total of nine historical novels. By the time she had finished Six-Horse Hitch, she had indeed taken her cast of characters from coast to coast.

"Her commitment to historical accuracy in her novels is revealed through her own voluminous shorthand and typewritten notes resulting from the reading of numerous diaries, narratives, and journals in libraries and archives across the state. She also spent many hours examining microfilms of the Draper collection, which contained depositions and original stories of early Kentucky settlers, and she relied heavily on the bibliography and doctoral dissertation of Charles G. Talbert's 'The Life and Times of Benjamin Logan,'" writes Giles scholar Dianne Watkins (Hannah Fowler, Foreword). Logan was an important Kentucky frontiersman, soldier and legislator (The Kentucky Encyclopedia, pp. 566-567).

Watkins, whose critical biography of Janice Holt Giles will be published in 1998 by the University Press of Kentucky, is the editor of Hello, Janice: The Wartime Letters of Henry Giles. She is the former education curator of the Kentucky Museum at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green where Giles' papers are housed (Wade Hall interview, 6/26/1997--Hall, professor emeritus of English at Bellarmine College in Louisville, is an authority on Kentucky literature).

"At this point Giles began her career as a historical novelist...she has a knack for telling a story, portrays her characters well, excels in depicting the life of the times, and is historically accurate," said William S. Ward (A Literary History of Kentucky, p. 274). Ward, who died in the early 1990s, was chairman of the English department at the University of Kentucky (Wade Hall interview, 6/26/1997). His A Literary History of Kentucky is "the definitive study of the state's literature (The Kentucky Encyclopedia, p. 562)."

To Joan McGrath, it is Giles' regional focus that makes her writing memorable. "It is impossible to think of Janice Holt Giles's work without envisioning her own

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

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particular part of the world. A regional writer in the best sense, her novels project the spirit of the pioneers who first tamed the rugged forest country of Kentucky and the westward wilderness," McGrath said. "Giles is a writer who knows her subject and her setting absolutely (Twentieth-Century Romance and Historical Writers, pp. 270-271)."

Twentieth-Century Romance and Historical Writers lists more than 400 authors from popular romance novelists such as Barbara Cartland to Pulitzer Prize winners such as Robert Penn Warren "who have employed historical settings in their work (Guide to Reference Books, p. 501)."

Historian Thomas D. Clark, of Lexington, Kentucky, who has read Giles' books "with great interest," feels that the author "became atuned to the land and folk mores of her section of Kentucky. She had remarkable ability to get inside the soul of both the land and its occupants. In this sense, and particularly this sense, she made an important contribution to an understanding of a part of Kentucky which has not always fared as perhaps it should in the historical writings about the state (Thomas D. Clark letter, 2/16/1997)." Run Me a River, a novel about steamboating on the Green River during the Civil War, and The Believers, a novel set in the early South Union Shaker colony in Logan County, are two works that shed light on parts of Kentucky often overlooked in historical writings.

Clark, Historian Laureate of Kentucky, is the author of many books on Southern and American history. While at the University of Kentucky, where he chaired the history department, he started the university's Special Collections library. He was also the principal figure behind the founding of the state archives in Frankfort. He served as managing editor of the Journal of Southern History for four years and was chief editor of two multi-volume publications, Travels in the Old South and Travels in the New South. "His works...reveal a universality that has made him not a regional specialist but an American historian of the first rank." He has also taught at Harvard, Duke, Chicago, Stanford and Indiana (The Kentucky Encyclopedia, pp. 196-197).

Betty Layman Receveur, of Louisville, author of such works as Sable Flanagan and Oh, Kentucky!, thinks Giles has been "a seminal influence on a great many of us who came later. I think she was one who pulled me to historical fiction--an early influence on my efforts as a writer. I was reading her before I was a published writer. I have had people compare my books favorably to hers and I was very pleased. I remember one person saying to me, 'I was so glad to find your books because you continue in that tradition (Betty Layman Receveur interview, 2/13/1997).'"

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Giles' books sold well and continue to do so almost 20 years after her death. The University Press of Kentucky has reissued many of her titles and collectors seek earlier editions in second-hand book shops. Larry Dean, the owner of Legacy Books in Louisville and an antiquarian book dealer since 1970, often receives requests from customers for Giles' books (Larry Dean interview, 10/22/1996).

The author pointed out that in 1970, 17 years after publication, The Kentuckians, about the Western pioneers of the 1770s, was "still in print and its total sales have been 342,902."

The Land Beyond the Mountains, a novel about the Kentucky statehood conventions and General James Wilkinson's treasonable efforts to put Kentucky into the Spanish empire, was a Family Book Club selection "and my unbroken record of book clubs remained unbroken. The book had a decent final sale, in all editions, of 190,281 and it is today in its seventh printing," Giles proudly noted some years after its initial publication.

Johnny Osage, a novel which looks at the Osage Indian culture of Arkansas and Oklahoma, sold 503,000 copies. "...The Believers has outpaced Johnny Osage, but not by much, only some 20,000 copies," she added, making it the best sale--counting all editions, including book clubs--of any book she had ever written. Another southwestern novel, Savanna, was chosen for the "book club system and it had a nice sale of 325,598 copies altogether." Voyage to Santa Fe, which focuses on the long journey from Three Forks in Indian Territory to the far Southwest, was "again a Beecroft book club selection and outsold Savanna by almost 50,000 copies. It had a remarkable sale of 325,598 hard cover copies," the author pointed out (Around Our House, pp. 42, 217, 231, 246-247).

Despite such impressive figures, the realization that she was writing for a general audience rather than a strictly literary one hurt the author's pride. After finishing Hannah Fowler in the mid-1950s and acknowledging that "writing is the most important fact of my life," she had reservations about her profession (Around Our House, p. 93). "I have done a very beautiful book and I know it, but at what a cost!...I am depressed about it, not only because it is in a field which has no critical respect, historical fiction, but because as written by a woman, the book will gain still less critical respect. It is difficult to pay this kind of price for good writing which will not fall in the field of literature (Around Our House, p. 107)."

And yet through the years, Giles' work has been taken seriously by critics.

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Giles, Janice and Henry, Log House

Adair County, KY

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Reviewing Hannah Fowler in 1956, Charlotte Capers wrote in The New York Times, "Devotees of early Americana will be fascinated with accounts of life in the Kentucky country in the days of Daniel Boone (Book Review Digest 1956, p. 361)." Speaking of the marriage between Hannah Fowler and her mate Tice, another observer noted more than 30 years later that in "Giles's hands this oddly arranged marriage of convenience becomes one of the deepest and most touching, if most understated, love stories of the frontier (Twentieth-Century Romance and Historical Writers, pp. 270-271)."

Of The Land Beyond the Mountains, John Clagett in Saturday Review said, "Characterization is excellent, and the background and flavor of the times are given with an intriguing mixture of feminine sensitivity and male saltiness. [It] is an entertaining book, as well as an historically valid statement of the author's faith in the essential decency and worth of man (Book Review Digest 1959, p. 406)."

Despite the encouragement of her long-time publisher Houghton Mifflin, Giles tended to underestimate her considerable talents and her respected medium. "I am not an intellectual. I realize I shall become known, with some contempt perhaps, as a writer of historical novels and dismissed. But I choose this anyway, for I love history and I know I can do this kind of novel well... (Around Our House, pp. 145-146)."

Yet it was the author's faithfulness to the past that was bringing her fame. "A novelist doesn't have to be entirely authentic with his facts. He can take a good deal of leeway, but I never have. I never have felt it necessary," she said (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 169-170).

Readable, adventurous and factual, her historical works had caught the attention of the educational world as a promising learning tool. In the mid-1960s, the Paperback Library bought her entire historical series, putting it within reach of small libraries such as school libraries with small budgets. "I learned for the first time that most high schools across the entire country made use of this historical series, usually in the third year, when American history was required as a study," she said.

"The series provided excellent supplementary reading, for I never falsified history. My research was so accurate that even the weather could be depended on to be precisely as described in any given month, or even on any given day (Around Our House, p. 296)."

If Giles' writing focused on history, her domestic proclivities were also tied to the romantic past. In the 1950s, after living on two ridge farms and having her fill of feeding livestock and tending tobacco, Giles began to long anew for "the two things I had had a

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yearning for most of my life, a log house and a body of water.

"I was born with one foot in the past and a log house is to me the most beautiful structure man ever built. I never saw one that I didn't envy the owner and want to pick it up and bring it home with me. For years I had hoped that some day we could build one ourselves. The time seemed approaching (A Little Better than Plumb, p. 15)."

But first the couple had to find some land with a stream running through it. They purchased 70 acres on Spout Springs Branch which flows into Green River. "I have used this branch in many books, The Enduring Hills, Miss Willie, and others, but perhaps most notably in Land Beyond the Mountains where my imagination harnessed it to a mill wheel, dammed it to make a millpond in which tragedy occurred. I never weary of it and I count it one of the blessings of my life that any hour of the day I can look out the windows and watch its waters race by (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 43-44)."

Writing in a Campbellsville (Ky.) News-Journal column in the 1950s, Giles emphasized that the house of her dreams "must be a log house, for this is a country of hills and woods and beautiful trees. The first homes in this land of Kentucky were of logs. They somehow are peculiarly a Kentucky-type house (Around Our House, p. 25)."

In August 1957, the couple began to draw up "tentative plans for the house we meant to build and to look about us for the sets of old logs we would need (A Little Better than Plumb, p. 45)."

Giles had an affinity with old logs and their history. "I wished, many times, looking at these old log houses that I hadn't been so imaginative. The life they had once pulsed with pressed in hard on me and I was continually being hurt by their abandonment. I never looked at one without thinking about the births and deaths, the laughter and tears, the griefs and joys the old log walls had witnessed. Touching a pale, ancient log, feeling it solid beneath my hand, I sensed its contact with life, its mute testimony. It had survived, in most instances, the human hands that had hewed it."

The couple finally came up with a 1-1/2-story, T-shaped house with logs notched at the ends and laid in an overlapping and interlocking pattern. The goal was "a lovely, charming, rambling old log house right under the sycamores on the banks of Spout Springs Branch (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 18, 77, 112-113)."

They found a log fishing camp that had originally been an African-American church in Taylor County before being moved to a Green River site. It would become the couple's living room. Other logs came from nearby houses and barns. Mortar was used for chinking.

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"I learned a strange thing when our house was finished and we had moved into it. Logs a hundred and fifty years old are still alive. They aren't dead. They are a little restless and they move slightly and they speak...To me they are friendly sounds as if the logs were putting their heads together and talking over old times, exchanging reminiscences, brooding over us perhaps...."

While gathering logs, they recycled fieldstone chimneys in the neighborhood to make their own chimney. Ax-marked beams in the kitchen were also salvaged from an earlier building. The middle board-and-batten section of the house was constructed of lumber cut from the Gileses' land (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 65-68, 77, 104, 111).

"But I don't want a new house. It would have no echoes of life in its walls," Giles said. "I suppose I simply like old things--old homes, old furniture and, in many ways, old people. Life has mellowed them all."

Even though Giles had strong sentiments about antiquities, the long-awaited domicile wasn't to be a complete return to pioneer days. Modern conveniences such as bathrooms and an up-to-date kitchen weren't shunned--not after eight years in homes with no running water (Around Our House, pp. 23, 213).

The three builders were Henry Giles, his cousin Edgar Giles and neighbor Joe Spires (A Little Better than Plumb, p. 101). While the house was under construction, the couple temporarily lived in a farmhouse on the site which was later dismantled and Giles' grandsons came for their annual summer visit in the midst of all the confusion (Around Our House, p. 212).

"The fall rains were coming on, now, and we were hurrying to get the roof on. Under a roof much inside work could continue through the winter. Mister G.'s [Giles'] father had finished riving out the ten thousand shingleboards and they had been trucked down to the house where they were stacked in a shed. Now came more advice. 'You have to put a board roof on in the dark of the moon.'" The complications that ensued as the builders tried to sidestep the folk tradition are summed up in Giles' words: "...if the moon causes the tides there is no good reason why it shouldn't make shingleboards curl...If it took all winter it would just have to take all winter. There was no use battling the power of the moon (A Little Better than Plumb pp. 138, 149)."

The first work that Giles wrote in the new log house was Johnny Osage. "So far as I know, Johnny Osage was the first book outside of textbook histories to deal with [the Osage] Indian wars, and much more immediately and fully at that," she said. But the book was written during the couple's first winter in their new log home, before it was

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insulated and without central heat. Moreover, the author was not well that winter.

"I remember writing Johnny Osage in great physical discomfort, my legs wrapped in a blanket, a small electric heater at my feet, and my hands so cold I could barely type. This did not affect the writing, nor did it turn me against my home," she said.

"Occasionally self-pity got the best of me and I wrote with tears running down my cheeks--but I wrote and wrote and wrote (Around Our House, pp. 231-232)."

It was in her long sought-after house at Spout Springs where she struggled against the elements and sickness that Giles produced such descriptive passages as:

A few families of white settlers battered at the gates and were admitted and given shelter. There was a stir of excitement just as the sun went down when Etienne Vaugine came paddling a piroque around the bend of the Poteau River with several rafts of Osages trying to intercept him. They could see the halfbreed hunter bent over his paddle looking back over his shoulder, desperately trying to outrun the Indians. Bradford ordered the matches lit again and the six-pounders swiveled to cover the man. The Osages yelled and shrieked contemptuously but they gave over the chase (Johnny Osage, p.92).

The success of the book enabled the Gileses to install proper insulation and a good heating system. And perhaps most importantly, the novel "won me my first true national and international fame," Giles reflected (Around Our House, pp. 231-232).

"Johnny Osage is historical fiction of a high order of excellence--reminiscent, indeed, of Conrad Richter's [critically acclaimed American historical novelist] novels," wrote V.P. Hass in the Chicago Sunday Tribune (Book Review Digest 1960, pp. 526-527).

As early as 1961 when the Gileses were putting the finishing touches on the house, they began to hear news about a proposed dam on the Green River. Before long they realized their new home was in jeopardy (A Little Better than Plumb, pp. 255-265). Some six years later, the 75-ton house was moved to safety 1,200 feet up the hollow.

Before the house could be moved, the chimney had to be dismantled, the pump room removed and a few close trees cleared (Around Our House, p. 314).

Sept. 14, 1967 was moving day. "The log house at Spout Springs, made famous throughout the world by the book A Little Better than Plumb, has a new location," the

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Adair County News reported. "Janice and Henry Giles, who co-authored the book about the trials and tribulations they had in locating the ancient logs from which to construct the eight-room log house, and then the actual construction, were just too attached to it to either move away from it or tear it down...When the house had completed its journey...the chinking between the logs was not even cracked...The actual journey had only taken about an hour and a half."

At its former location, the house faced east and sat beside a creek. At its new site, it faces southeast and is situated about 15 yards from an enlarged pond.

After the move, Janice Giles noted with relief that the location couldn't be better. "Artistically the house is in its exact position. The length of it runs with the hollow and the length of the hills. The mass of the house is precisely where it should be, and the trees in the background soften the whole site beautifully. Actually, in its present location the house is much more beautiful and I couldn't be happier about it," she said (Around Our House, pp. 328-331).

Just as Giles' fans from near and far used to appear on her doorstep, eager to see the log house after its construction (Around Our House, pp. 247-248), it is hoped that readers of her works in the years to come will want to visit her home at Spout Springs. The Janice Holt Giles Society aims to turn the log building--a symbol of her writing and love of history--into a literary/educational center which will allow visitors to learn about her life.

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Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The Giles House at Spout Springs, along with the Becky House, sits on 10.187 acres of land, all of which is proposed for nomination. That acreage is depicted on the property map from the Adair Co. Property Valuation Assessment Office, map 97, parcel #25.

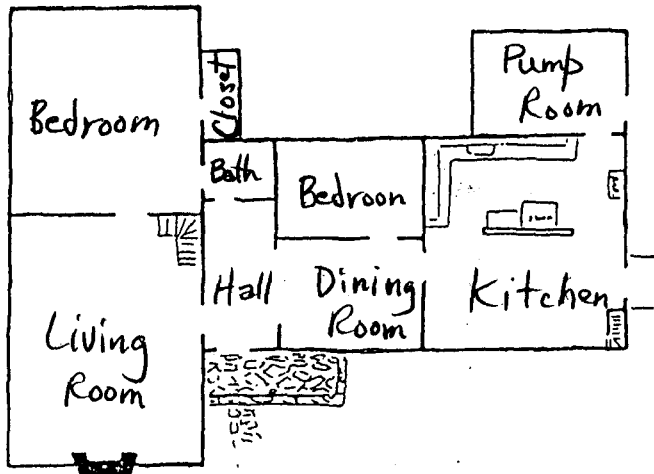
Verbal Boundary Justification

Parcels of the original 70 acres owned by the Gileses had been previously sold when the Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles Foundation, Inc. purchased the 10.187 acres of land in 1996. The 10.187 acres contains the significant resource, the house, and an adequate acreage to represent the historic significance of the important persons.

instincts are too often near the miraculous for my comfort.

Nothing else was standing still while sewer lines and the well were being dug. Oh, my, no! So many other things were going on that if I needed six hands and two more sets of brains to keep abreast at the time, the art of writing would have to develop a new dimension to deal adequately with them now.

To simplify, you may assume that the sewer lines and the well got dug. I had now to lay out Mrs. G.'s houseplan on



the most solid ground to be found and yet avoid the "dreen" in back, the trees on all sides, and the creek in front. It wasn't easy. This was the situation:

As can be seen, I was caught between a rock and a hard place and if anybody thinks I could have cut down the sycamore or the box elder he couldn't be more wrong. I hinted

at cutting the box elder and the anguish went up more than I could hear it again.

The trouble was that I was so wonderful in so many ways, so naïve and ignorant, and you want her to be at least. When she was cut, that they felt a sense of unreality that led me to cutting one of the box elders.

I have tried plumbing for many years, and I know well when I have done as she occasionally can do is make a joined wails.

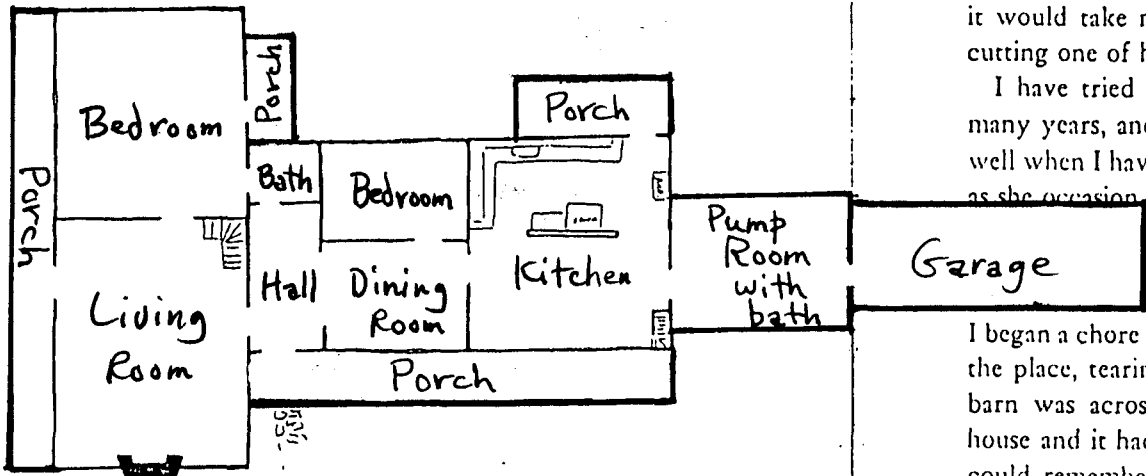
About the same time I began a chore work on the place, tearing down the barn was across the house and it had been there could remember the danger of the vines covered in vines. I was held up by the workmen with their timbers and the head. The vines

Floor plan 1957-58
Giles House at Spout Springs

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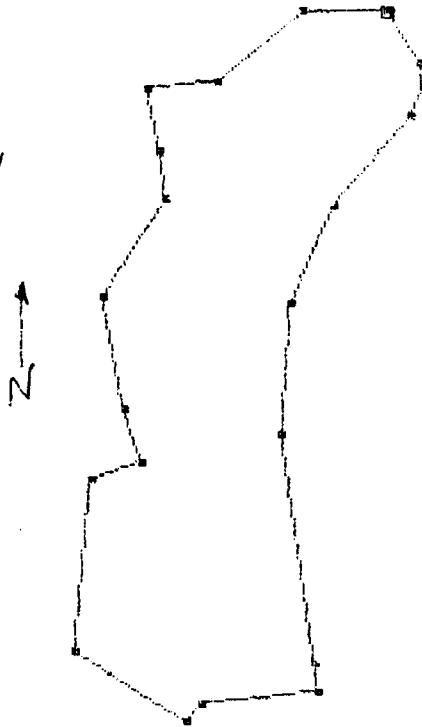
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head. The vine.

Floor plan after the move in 1967
Giles House at Spout Springs
Additions in red

Plat map from
 PVA Office
 (Adair County Property
 Valuation Assessor)

for Janice Holt Giles
 and Henry Giles House
 Adair Co., KY

Referenced in Verbal
 Boundary Description



H giles	 AREA CLOSING ERROR ..
Scale : 330 ft/in		Acres : 10.187	Bearing: S81.1318W
North Shift: +0		Sq. Feet : 443737	Feet : 0.35
East Shift : +0		Sq. Meters: 41224.3	Meters : 0.108
DMS Rotated: +000.0000		Perimeter : 3478.63	Precision: 1/9820

1. S33.27E 115.29	16. N32.07E 213.73
2. S03.26E 45.68	17. N06.42W 87.97
3. S21.46W 57.97	18. N11.08W 115.16
4. S41.27W 216.72	19. N82.44E 130.22
5. S22.58W 192.24	20. N50.42E 198.18
6. S04.35W 243.86	21. N88.59E 152.49
7. S08.20E 430.20	
8. S07.23E 50.48	
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11. N57.11W 244.72	
12. N05.32E 315.50	
13. N71.41E 98.05	
14. N18.51W 102.50	
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4124
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Janice Holt and
Henry Giles Log
House
Adair Co., KY
All points zone 16
12'30" Easting / North
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C: 664 270 / 4118 820

Neatsville

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Photographic Identification

Photos 1-12:

1. Giles, Janice Holt and Henry, Log House
2. Adair County, KY
3. George R. Kolbenschlag, photographer
4. 1996
5. Photographer's possession: 320 Young Street, Columbia, KY 42728

Photo 13:

1. Giles, Janice Holt and Henry, Log House
2. Adair County, KY
3. Unknown
4. 1963
5. The Courier-Journal newspaper, 525 W. Broadway, Louisville, KY 40202

Photo 14:

1. Home of Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles from 1949 to 1953. The 40 Acres and No Mule farm on the ridge north of Spout Springs
2. Adair County, KY
3. George R. Kolbenschlag, photographer
4. 1997
5. Photographer's possession: 320 Young Street, Columbia, KY 42728

Photo 15:

1. Home of Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles from 1953 to 1957. The 106-acre farm known as the Felix Price place on the ridge north of Spout Springs
2. Adair County, KY
3. George R. Kolbenschlag, photographer
4. 1997
5. Photographer's possession: 320 Young Street, Columbia, KY 42728

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Photographic Identification

- Photo 1: 6. Camera faces southeast, view of house with garage left
- Photo 2: 6. Camera faces south, view of house and branch with garage left
- Photo 3: 6. Camera faces south, view of house with garage in foreground
- Photo 4: 6. Camera faces northwest, view of house from pond
- Photo 5: 6. Camera faces north, view of house with living room chimney and pond porch
- Photo 6: 6. Camera faces southeast, view of west gable
- Photo 7: 6. Camera faces northwest, view of porch off of living room
- Photo 8: 6. Camera faces south, view of pond porch
- Photo 9: 6. Camera faces north, view of pond porch
- Photo 10: 6. Camera faces northwest, view of living room and door to master bedroom, with steps leading to gallery and bedroom above
- Photo 11: 6. Camera faces southwest, view of dining room in foreground, hall in middle and living room in background
- Photo 12: 6. Camera faces northwest, view of kitchen
- Photo 13: 6. Camera faces northwest, view of living room chimney and east gable with kitchen on right. Janice Holt Giles, left, and editor Anne Barrett holding original drawings for A Little Better than Plumb
- Photo 14: 6. Camera faces north, view of house on the 40 Acres and No Mule farm on the ridge north of Spout Springs. Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles lived here 1949-1953
- Photo 15: 6. Camera faces west, view of house on the 106-acre farm on the ridge north of Spout Springs. Janice Holt Giles and Henry Giles lived here 1953-1957