

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUN 27 1985

date entered JUL 25 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Smith - Harris House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number County Road 207

N/A not for publication

city, town Vesta

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

code 013

county Oglethorpe

code 221

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name John B. McClatchey

street & number 3377 Ridgewood Road N.W.

city, town Atlanta

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Oglethorpe County Courthouse

city, town Lexington

state Georgia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic Structures Field Survey

Oglethorpe County

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta

state Georgia

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Smith-Harris House, constructed in 1839, is a two-story, clapboard, plantation-plain-type structure with a one-story wing addition, outbuildings, and a family cemetery. The property is situated on a county road in a rural setting about a mile and a half west of the small community of Vesta, Georgia.

The main house sits on a granite foundation and has a sheet-metal roof, front shed porch with balustrade, rear shed addition, six-over-six windows, and two brick-and-granite chimneys. A one-story clapboard kitchen addition, constructed in 1879, has a sheet-metal roof, front and rear porches, and a chimney, and is attached to the east side of the house. The plan of the main house is two rooms over two with two rear shed rooms. The east addition consists of two rooms connected to the main house by a covered passageway. Significant interior features include original hand-planed plank walls, chair rails, horizontal tongue-and-groove walls, base boards, carved mantels, hand pegged windows, wide ceiling and floor boards locks and hand-planed two-panel doors. The beams under the house are hand hewn and pegged. Electricity and plumbing were added in 1941.

Outbuildings include a well, garage, log smokehouse, outhouse, corn crib, and three barns. The property is informally landscaped with oak, walnut, and pecan trees, shrubbery, a scuppernong arbor, and rose bushes. Other landscaping features include low granite walls around the house, a circular driveway, and a terraced front yard. An open field surrounds the grove of trees beyond the house. The family cemetery is located to the east of the house, and a slave cemetery is located about 200 yards to the east of the family cemetery. The site of the Old Post Road between Lexington and Elberton is located to the north of the property.

The National Register boundary is based on the current legal boundary description and includes the house, outbuildings, cemeteries, landscape features, and representative acreage.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local history
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

**Specific dates** 1839 - 1934      **Builder/Architect** Kit Taylor

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Smith - Harris House is significant in the areas of agriculture, architecture, exploration/settlement, landscape architecture, and local history.

In terms of agriculture, the property is important for its use as a mid-19th- and early 20th-century cotton plantation and working farm in rural northeast Georgia. Crops which were grown included cotton, wheat, corn, oats, field peas, and garden vegetables. There was also an herb garden which consisted of sage, mint, thyme, parsley, garlic, calamus root, and horse radish. It is a good representative example of the kind of moderately sized farms that characterized Georgia's piedmont region in the 19th century.

In the area of architecture, the Smith-Harris House is significant as a good example of a plantation plain-type structure with outbuildings that was common in northeast Georgia in the mid-19th century. It also illustrates the use of local building techniques and materials, such as hand hewn and pegged beams in the foundation and hand planed plank walls in the interior.

The property is important in the area of exploration/settlement for its association with Joseph Smith, an early settler who purchased several hundred acres in rural Oglethorpe County in 1838 and developed a cotton plantation and working farm for his family. Joseph Smith hired a free black named Kit Taylor to build a house on the land he had bought and chose a site on the edge of the property by the road that stage coaches used between Elberton and Lexington.

In terms of landscape architecture, the property is significant for its informally planted oak, walnut, and pecan trees, scuppernong arbor, rose bushes, shrubbery, and unusual low granite walls. Other landscaping features include a driveway, located on the west side of the property and a semi-circular drive in front of the house, and a driveway extending to the southeast beyond the house towards the barns. These landscape features represent an unusually well preserved example of the kind of historic informal landscaping associated with rural farms in Georgia's piedmont.

The Smith-Harris House is important in the area of local history for its association with the Joseph Smith and George Harris families and their descendants who have owned and lived on the property from 1838-1983. Joseph Smith (1811-1871) was born in Oglethorpe County, Georgia and married Martha E. Crook (1820-1881) in 1838, and they had nine children. Joseph Smith was a farmer and owned two slaves in 1840. A free black man, Kit Taylor, built their home around 1839. Joseph and Martha lived on the property until their deaths and are buried in the family cemetery just east of the house. It is believed that John Wade Smith (1841-1884), their eldest son, took charge of the family farm after his father's death in 1871. George Harris (1854-1896), husband of Martha Janie Smith (1856-1925), youngest daughter of Joseph and Martha Smith, bought the house and 500 acres in 1881 from the estate. George and Martha Janie Harris had ten children. Their son, George Grady Harris bought the house in 1920 and lived there until he died. The property remained in the family until 1983.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

McClatchey, John C. "Smith-Harris House-Historic Property Information Form", July 1983. (On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources).

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 97 acres, approximately

Quadrangle name Vesta, Ga.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7
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3	1	9	0	0	0
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3	7	5	8	1	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	7
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3	1	9	4	4	0
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3	7	5	7	7	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	7
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3	1	8	3	3	0
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3	7	5	7	9	7	0
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D 

1	7
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3	1	8	2	2	0
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3	7	5	8	4	2	0
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E 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property coincides with current legal description, outlined on enclosed property map, and is justified in Section 7.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrea Niles, Survey and Research Specialist

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date 6-6-85

street & number 270 Washington Street S.W. telephone (404)656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/11/85

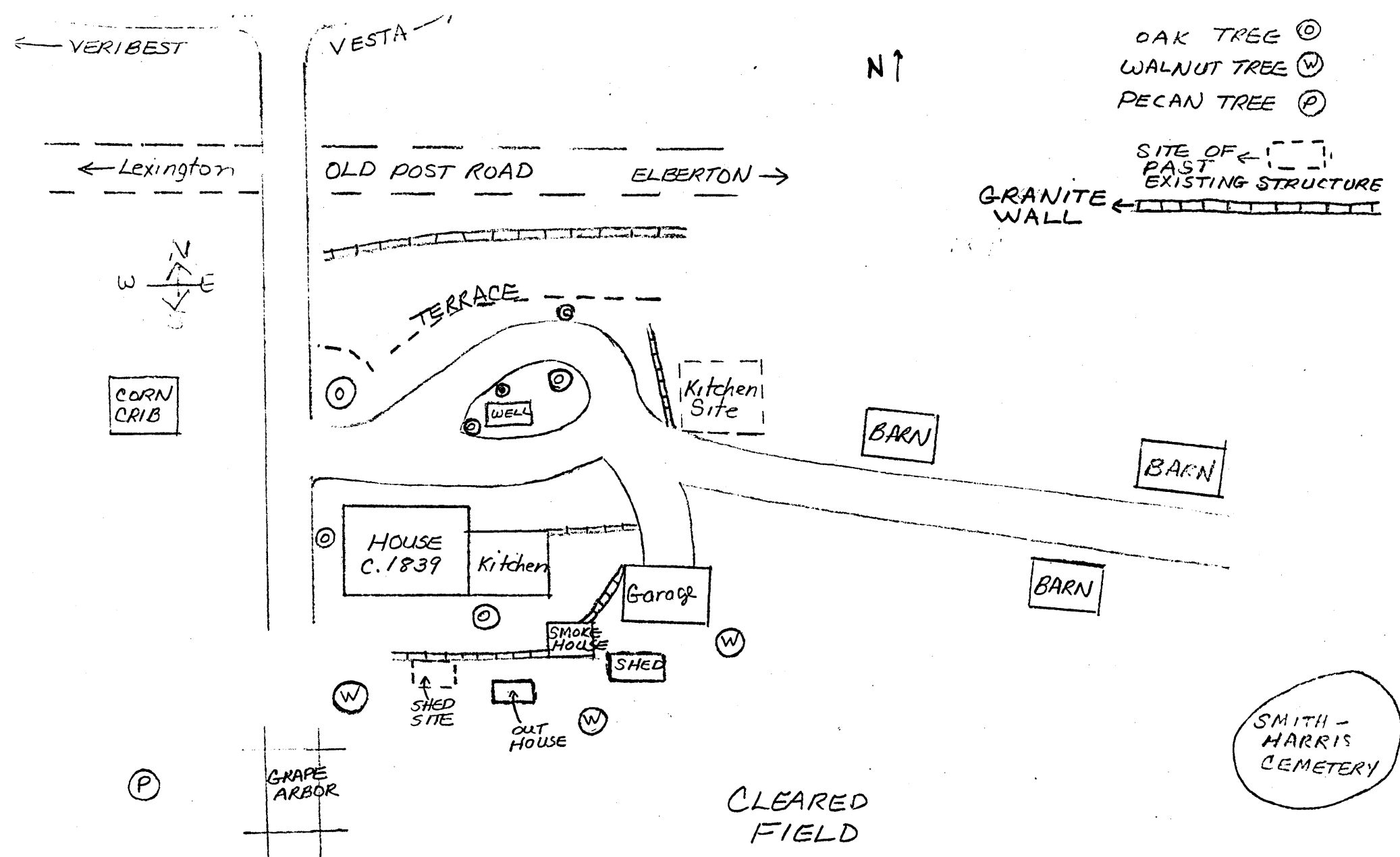
### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*for [Signature]*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 7-25-85

Attest: Chief of Registration date



SMITH-HARRIS FARM  
 OGLETHORPE COUNTY, GA.  
 SKETCH MAP IV G.1.  
 NOVEMBER 1983  
 JOHN R. MALATCHEV, OWNER

Smith-Harris House  
 Vesta vicinity, Oglethorpe Co., Ga.

Sketch Map

Showing relative locations of house,  
 outbuildings, sites of former structures,  
 cemetery, and landscape features


(not to scale)

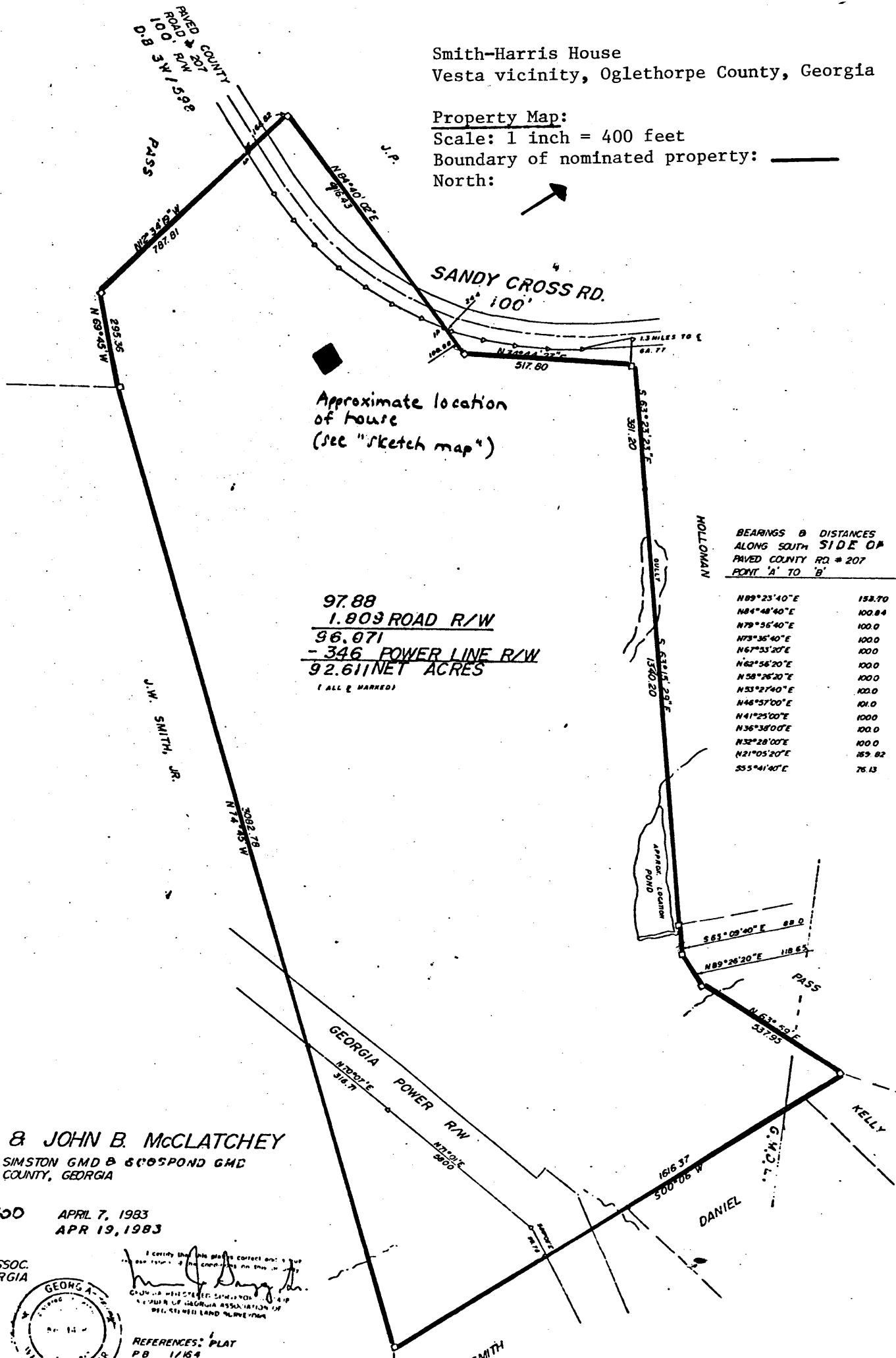
Smith-Harris House  
Vesta vicinity, Oglethorpe County, Georgia

Property Map:

Scale: 1 inch = 400 feet

Boundary of nominated property: \_\_\_\_\_

North: 



97.88  
1.803 ROAD R/W  
96.071  
- 346 POWER LINE R/W  
92.611 NET ACRES  
(ALL E MARKED)

BEARINGS & DISTANCES ALONG SOUTH SIDE OF PAVED COUNTY RD # 207 POINT 'A' TO 'B'	
N89°23'40"E	158.70
N84°48'40"E	100.84
N79°56'40"E	100.0
N73°35'40"E	100.0
N67°53'20"E	100.0
N62°56'20"E	100.0
N58°26'20"E	100.0
N53°27'40"E	100.0
N46°57'00"E	101.0
N41°25'00"E	100.0
N36°38'00"E	100.0
N32°28'00"E	100.0
N21°05'20"E	159.82
S55°41'40"E	76.13

SURVEY FOR  
**CAROL J. & JOHN B. McCLATCHY**  
LOCATED IN SIMSTON GMD & SCOSPOND GMD  
OGLETHORPE COUNTY, GEORGIA

SCALE: 1" = 400  
APRIL 7, 1983  
APR 19, 1983

SURVEYED BY  
GREGG & ASSOC.  
MONROE, GEORGIA



I certify that this plan is correct and that I am a duly licensed surveyor in the State of Georgia.  
*Gregg & Assoc.*  
MEMBER OF THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS

REFERENCES: PLAT  
PB 17164  
OGLETHORPE CO CLERK'S OFFICE