

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Urguhart House

other name/site number: Same

2. Location

street & number: 8042 Pulaski Pike

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Huntsville

vicinity: X

state: X county: Madison

code: 089

zip code: 35773

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of 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 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Thomas Oakes

1-2-92

Signature of certifying official

Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

~~Entered in the~~
National Register.

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

Melrose Byers 2/3/92

 determined eligible for the
National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC
AGRICULTURE

Sub: Single dwelling

Current : VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

FEDERAL

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation Stone roof Metal
walls weatherboard other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1813 - 1926

Significant Dates: c. 1813-30 1870 1926

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- 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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 6 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	16	533200	3856280	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries of the Urganhart House, Huntsville vicinity, are outlined on the attached vicinity map. These boundaries are contained within the legal description of the property which is described as:

"All of that part of Section 21, Township 2, South, Range 1 West, Madison County, Alabama and being a part of that 105-acre tract of land conveyed by deed to Adrian V. Clark and Verna Lee Clark as recorded in Deed Book 292, Page 51 in the Office of the Judge of the Probate Court of Madison County, Alabama..."

The complete legal description is elaborated in the attachment.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the house, barn, privy, and garage that constituted the farm buildings surviving from the c. 1929 period.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Harvie P. Jones, FAIA; Jennifer Bryant/AHC Summer Intern Reviewer

Organization: Historic Huntsville Foundation Date: February 20, 1991

Street & Number: P.O. Box 780 Telephone: 205/536-3631

City or Town: Huntsville State: AL ZIP: 35804

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Urguhart House

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The Urguhart House is a 19th-century, one and one-half story, log dogtrot located on rolling farmland a few miles outside of Huntsville. It has an ell-plan with a center hall, a side-oriented gable roof, modern weatherboards, three chimneys and 20th century porches. The site also contains a privy, a garage, a 1926 gabled barn and a spring 500 feet away from the house.

Southeast Pen:

The architectural evidence indicates that the southeast pen was constructed first followed by the southwest pen, the west-central room, the kitchen, and then the porches. The southeast pen logs have exposed mortises for ceiling joists at about seven feet above the floor, a common height for log cabins of an early date or temporary nature. This seems to indicate that the southeast pen was built first, perhaps by Allen Urguhart when he bought this land in 1813, as the southwest pen has a ceiling of about 8`3". Probably before 1835 or so, but still in the Federal Period, the ceiling joists of the original southeast pen were raised to about 9`2". At this time, major improvements were made which included the addition of Federal-style detailing to the original primitive southeast pen. Molded and beaded chairrails were installed as a continuous member with the window sills, in the Federal Period manner. A top-beaded baseboard was also added. Diagonal split-oak lath was nailed over the logs and hair-reinforced plaster was applied. A fairly elaborate Federal-style mantel was installed. The south wall had 6/6 sashes with muntins and beaded trim of the typical Federal Period profiles. The present early 19th-century ell stair fits the raised ceiling; therefore, it must have been built, or rebuilt, at this time of improvement. The Federal Period board-and-batten door to the closet beneath the stair retains its wood-and-metal "stock-lock" and cast-iron butt hinges. The north, west and south doors were kept at their original height of 5`10", but they were neatly trimmed with beaded face trim and elaborate molded backbands of a Federal Period profile (as were the windows). The end result of these improvements was a Federal-style room that compared favorably in trim and features with more ambitious houses of the period. The "cabin" features that remained were the exposed beaded ceiling beams of about 3 x 6 3/4", the boxed-in ell stair, and board-and-batten doors. (See the attached sheet for the Federal-style moldings and trim in this room.)

The first floor joists of the southeast pen are apparently puncheons, based on the one end that is visible near the southeast chimney. This is typical of early log cabins. The early 19th-century ceiling joists and planks are covered with later narrow planking and gypsum board in the log pens. The wide plank ceiling at the dogtrot could be original since most dogtrots observed have plank ceilings and no exposed joists.

Southwest pen:

The southwest pen, also of log construction, was an addition, along with the dogtrot. Its ceiling is about 8`3" high. However, since the southeast pen floor is about 8 inches above the southwest pen floor, the loft floors would have originally aligned with each other. The southeast loft floor is now about 18 inches higher than the loft floor of the dogtrot and southwest pen. Since the original mantel, windows, door and trim were remodeled out of the southwest pen from c. 1920s-1960s, the room is more difficult to date. The ell stair remains, and is detailed similarly to the Federal Period stair in the southeast wing. There are also exposed heavy wood

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ceiling joists (about 3 x 6 1/2") that are roughly planed to shape, but with crude chamfers instead of the usual early 19th-century beading. The exposed wide ceiling boards above the joists (the loft flooring) are beaded, however, in typical Federal Period fashion. The flooring and joists of the southwest pen are 20th century, but the original wide 5/4 inch heart-pine flooring remains at the southeast pen, all three loft spaces, and at the west-central room.

Lofts:

The three loft rooms are all lined with wide beaded planks of 7/8 inch x 8 to 10 inches. The floors are of 5/4 planks without tongue-and-groove and are about 8 inches in width. The two stairwells show no traces (mortises) of ever having balustrades. The door frame in the southwest loft is beaded in typical early 19th-century fashion. The door is now gone. The four windows are also missing except for one 20th-century replacement which is not sized for the opening height.

West-central room:

The architectural evidence in the west-central room coupled with Johnson family traditions indicate a probable construction date of c. 1860-70s. It is wood frame with thick rotary-sawn studs of about 2 1/2 x 4 inches. The earliest datable rotary-sawn lumber in other Madison County buildings is the First Presbyterian Church, M & C R.R. Depot, ca. 1859. Other clues indicate that this is a technically transitional structure (i.e. most likely 1870s). These are holdover items typical of antebellum construction such as: rafters of about 3 x 4 1/2 inches, 4 x 8 ceiling joists, hewn and sash-sawn floor joists of about the same size, and wide heart-pine 5/4 floor boards. The northeast door is draw-knife beaded board-and-batten, typical of the Federal Period, but it may have been relocated from an earlier room in the house. Its trim is also beaded, typical of the Federal Period. The mantel in this room is a simple Greek Revival type such as those frequently found in houses of the 1860-70 period. In sum, the thick rotary-sawn studs combined with hewn and sash-sawn thick rafters and joists are a combination seen in other buildings here usually of the decade after the Civil War. The mantel design seems to support this.

Northwest room:

The kitchen, or northwest room, appears to be 1915-30 because of its bungalow sashes (4/1 lights), narrow flooring, and stud and clapboard walls.

Back porch:

Based on its construction, the back porch also appears to be early 20th century. The floor-boards run lengthwise across the porch and could not drain water off as built; therefore, it was built to be enclosed as it is now with a continuous strip of small windows. Perhaps it was intended as a sleeping porch when those were in vogue in the 1920s. As mentioned above, 1920s sashes are also found at the kitchen addition and as replacements in the southwest pen.

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Front porch:

The front porch is a 20th-century addition with a concrete floor, 2 x 6 rafters and 1 x 6 decking. Since the clapboards at the house front are heavily weathered, there apparently was not a front porch until the mid-20th century. The clapboards are attached with modern wire nails and are thinly sawn and thus probably date from the early 20th century.

Chimneys:

The exterior end southeast and southwest chimneys are constructed of roughly-chiseled ashlar limestone up to the bottom of the chimney-shoulders and the shoulders and stacks are brick. There are two courses of projecting bricks at the bottom of the shoulder corbels, an almost universal Federal Period detail. The southeast chimney stack appears to be of original bricks. The southwest stack has been rebuilt using a type of red brick first made in Madison County in about 1948.

This type of chimney is widely found in rural, early 19th-century houses in this area. Because of this wide application, the bricks are not a later patchwork to a stone chimney. The logic was apparently to use the free on-site stone on the lower thick half of the chimney where less chiseling and lifting was required, and to use brick on the thinner, high stack.

Roofs:

The roofs of the log pens are framed with rafters of about 3x5 inches and about 30 inches on centers. The ridges have no "ridge-boards," but the rafters are half-lapped and pegged, all typical of early 19th-century construction.

The roof decking at the west-central room (probably c. 1870s) is about 20 inches wide "slab" planks with the bark still on the edges. The roof deck boards on the log houses are about half this width, have sawn edges, and are replacements. They have shingle-nail holes, but not enough for 160 years or so of roofing.

The present roof is modern 5-rib galvanized sheets, plus earlier corrugated ("sine-wave") sheets.

Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made around the Urguhart House, the potential for significant subsurface cultural remains is high. Early homesteads were sited within a constellation of dependencies and activity areas such as kitchens, wells, etc. Although these structures are no longer standing, the buried portion may contain significant information that may be important in interpreting the entire property.

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Criterion C (Architecture)

The Urguhart House is a fine and intact representation of an early 19th-century one-story log dogtrot. There are few examples of these once common buildings left in the area and those that do exist are quickly disappearing. Just in Madison and Limestone counties alone, 20 log houses have been lost in the past 15 years. The Urguhart House also exemplifies the pioneers' attempts in later years to improve the primitive cabins by applying Federal-style trim and moldings and adding rooms and porches. Most of these changes, including the mantels, materials, hardware, and overall form, are still visible.

Historical Summary

A 162.53 acre tract of land located four miles west of Meridianville was transferred to Allen Urguhart on December 2, 1813. It is this land on which the present house is located. Allen Urguhart was appointed a Justice of the Peace in July 1819 and served briefly before resigning on April 20, 1820. In the 1830 census, he is listed as the head of a household containing: 1 white male 15-20 years of age, 1 white male 30-40 years of age, 1 white female 30-40 years of age and 9 slaves.¹ There were no free blacks on the premises. A deed book belonging to W. Jefferson Green shows Allen Urguhart's wife as Margaret.

Some time after 1830, when a daughter, Mary A. (July 18, 1830 - September 5, 1905), was born in Fayette County, Tennessee, the land was acquired by Robert Strong. He and his wife, Lucy Douglas, had seven children. Mary A. Strong received the land, containing 345 acres which embraced the homestead and a mill site, as her inheritance along with a cow, a horse and slaves upon her father's death in 1856. The estate was settled after the Civil War, July 26, 1873 by which time the slaves were free.² Mary married William T. Johnson.³

On May 1, 1887, W. T. and Mary A. Johnson deeded 125 acres to Henry Jackson Johnson, an unmarried man who lost the land in 1893 when it foreclosed and was sold to Vincent Nicholas Robilliard. Johnson had mortgaged the land for \$500.00 to Robilliard five years earlier. Robilliard and his wife, Amelia Victoria, sold the 125 acres to J. C. Edgell and her husband George S. Edgell for \$400.00. On January 30, 1904, the Edgells sold the land back to H. J. Johnson. On November 22, 1905, H. J. Johnson sold one-half undivided interest in the property to Stonewall Jackson Johnson, his brother. H. J. and his wife, Mary Brooks Johnson, raised five children on the farm. When H. J. died in 1928, the oldest son, Henry, undertook the task of helping his mother provide for the four younger children. Uncle Jack made his home with the family until his death in 1942. He left his interest in the property with his nephew, Henry. When Mary Brooks Johnson died in 1956, the old homeplace became a retreat for her children.⁴

In September 1960, Adrian and Verna Lee Clark with their five children purchased the house and its 105 acres. The Clarks built a smaller fireplace into the opening of the large fireplace in the southwest pen, added a bathroom under the back porch roof and a hot water heater. They lived there for two years until a new house was constructed in the woods on the hill west, northwest of the original homestead.

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The James Clark family (no relation) moved into the house in 1962 and farmed the land raising primarily cotton and strawberries for the next eleven years. After moving in 1973, the house was only used once a year for a Halloween party complete with square dancing, hay rides, and music. The last party was held in 1981.

The house has seen many years of disuse which, at least, has substantially preserved its 1920s appearance. The current owner hopes to preserve and restore the house.

The Dogtrot House

The Urguhart House is a fine and intact representation of an early "Dogtrot" - a popular building type which dotted the rural landscape throughout the 19th and early 20th century. Constructed by early settlers of all socioeconomic backgrounds, the dogtrot house probably originated on the post-Revolutionary Kentucky and Tennessee frontier, although open-hall log houses were also known as far east as the upper Carolina Piedmont.⁵ Providing much needed ventilation during the hot summer months, this house type is characterized by its open-ended passage - the "dogtrot" - which is flanked by two rooms ("pens") and connected by a common roof. Exterior end chimneys were frequently located at the gable ends. To create additional space, an ell, a sleeping loft (usually accessible by a small inside corner stair or a stair in the dogtrot passage) or a full second-story was added.⁶ The dogtrot plan was also a means of enlarging an existing one-room cabin: another "pen" was constructed approximately eight-to-twelve feet from the original structure and then roofed over and floored to become the breezeway or dogtrot passage. Numerous open-hall houses in Alabama evolved in this manner.

Later, dogtrots were "improved" by enclosing the passage itself at either end by wide double doors. Many of the log dogtrots were weatherboarded and even remodeled into rather sophisticated dwellings, as exemplified by the Robert Jenkins House near Alpine and the now ruinous Bird House near Courtland. These buildings were not only covered over with clapboard, but also replete with Federal- or Greek Revival-style trim including plaster interior walls, chairrails, a balustraded stair, and simple Adamesque mantelpieces.⁷ Early 20th-century dogtrots were sometimes adorned with gingerbread trim.

Most dogtrots were one- or one-and-a-half stories; the two-story or double dogtrots that were constructed on rare occasions were symbols of affluence on the early Alabama frontier.⁸ Throughout central and southern Alabama, both log and frame dogtrots were constructed.⁹ One rare surviving early example of a frame dogtrot is the Lucas Tavern, originally located near Mount Meigs, but moved in 1979 to Montgomery's North Hull Street Historic District.

1. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830.
2. Family files of Huntsville Madison County Public Library.
3. Marriage Book III
4. Henry Jackson Johnson, interview with author. 12 January 1991.

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Urguhart House Page #3

5. Gamble, Robert, The Alabama Catalog (Historic American Buildings Survey). A Guide to the Early Architecture of the State. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1987, p. 27.
6. Wilson, Eugene M., Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, 1975, p. 25.
7. Gamble, p. 27.
8. Ibid., p. 26.
9. Ibid., p. 27.

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Urguhart House Page #1

Abstract of Title Lands of Adrian V. and Verna Lee Clark 181013
F 691 Rev 3-50 Ala-Miss #1 105 acres of captioned property
F 620 Rev 2-52 Township 3 Range 1W Section 21.

Cemeteries of Madison County, Alabama Vol. 11. Huntsville: Johnson Historical Publications,
1978.

Family files of Huntsville Madison County Public Library.

Fifth Census of the United States, 1830.

Gamble, Robert. The Alabama Catalog. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1987.

Green, W. Jefferson. Deed Book O, p. 578.

Johnson, Henry Jackson. Interview with author. 12 January 1991.

Marriage Book III

Powell, Nellie White Johnson. Interview with author. 13 January 1991.

Taylor's History of Madison County.

Valley Leaves Special Edition. 1969, vol. 4.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number photo-
graphs Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS:

c.1813 ALLEN URGUHART HOUSE
PULASKI PIKE AND ROUTT ROAD
MADISON COUNTY, ALABAMA
HARVIE P. JONES, FAIA, PHOTOGRAPHER (DECEMBER 1990)
NEGATIVES - ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, MONTGOMERY, AL.

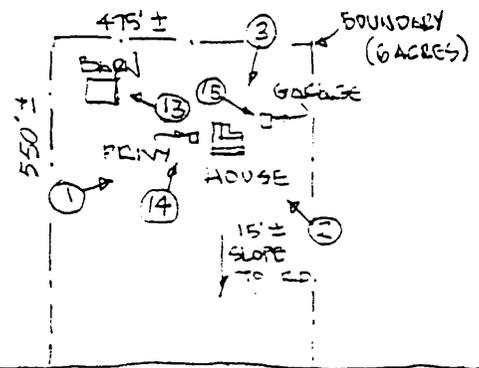
1. House and privy looking ENE.
2. House looking NNW.
3. House looking SSW.
4. Exterior closeup view of sash holdpens, forged pin, carved holdopen. Looking NE.
5. Dogtrot, looking N. to rear sleeping porch.
6. S.E. pen, Federal Period mantel, Victorian coal-grate, Federal 3/6 sash, Federal lath and plaster at right. Looking N.
7. S.E. pen, Federal Period mantel. Victorian beaded dado. Looking E.
8. S.E. pen, Federal Period chair rail, sash frames, door frames, base and plaster remnant. Victorian replacement door. Sash at lower left is Greek Revival. Note mortises for original low ceiling. Federal Period beaded joists remain above the later plank ceiling. Looking S.
9. S.E. pen, Federal Period stair, door frames plus "stock-lock" at closet below stair. Federal Period chair rail, lath and plaster remnants. Three larger doors are Victorian board-and-batten replacements in Federal Period frames and trim. Looking NW.
10. S.W. pen, Federal Period stair. Walls and ceiling joists covered with modern fiber-board. Joists were originally exposed, with an exposed beaded wide-plank ceiling above the joists. Floor on this pen is 20th century wood replacement. Stair door is Victorian board-and-batten replacement. Two large door frames are 20th century. Looking E.
11. West-central room. Late Greek-Revival style mantel. Relocated board-and-batten hand-planed beaded-board door at right. Looking NNW.
12. East loft. Federal Period beaded wide-plank ceiling and walls. Federal Period flooring about 8 inches wide, no tongue-and-groove. Looking E.
13. Barn, built 1926 per Henry Johnson's recollection. Looking WNW. Pole construction, plank walls with gaps for ventilation. Galv. roof.
14. Privy. Probably 1920-40 (?). Looking NNE.
15. Garage, probably 1920-1940 (?).

PULASKI PIKE
TONEY
MONTICELLO

CENTER OF SECTION 21
T. 2 S., R. 1 W.

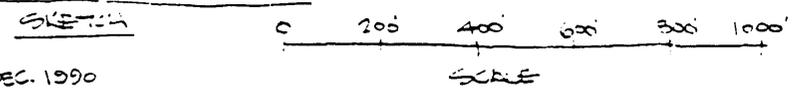
300
PIKE

300
PIKE



ROUTE RD.

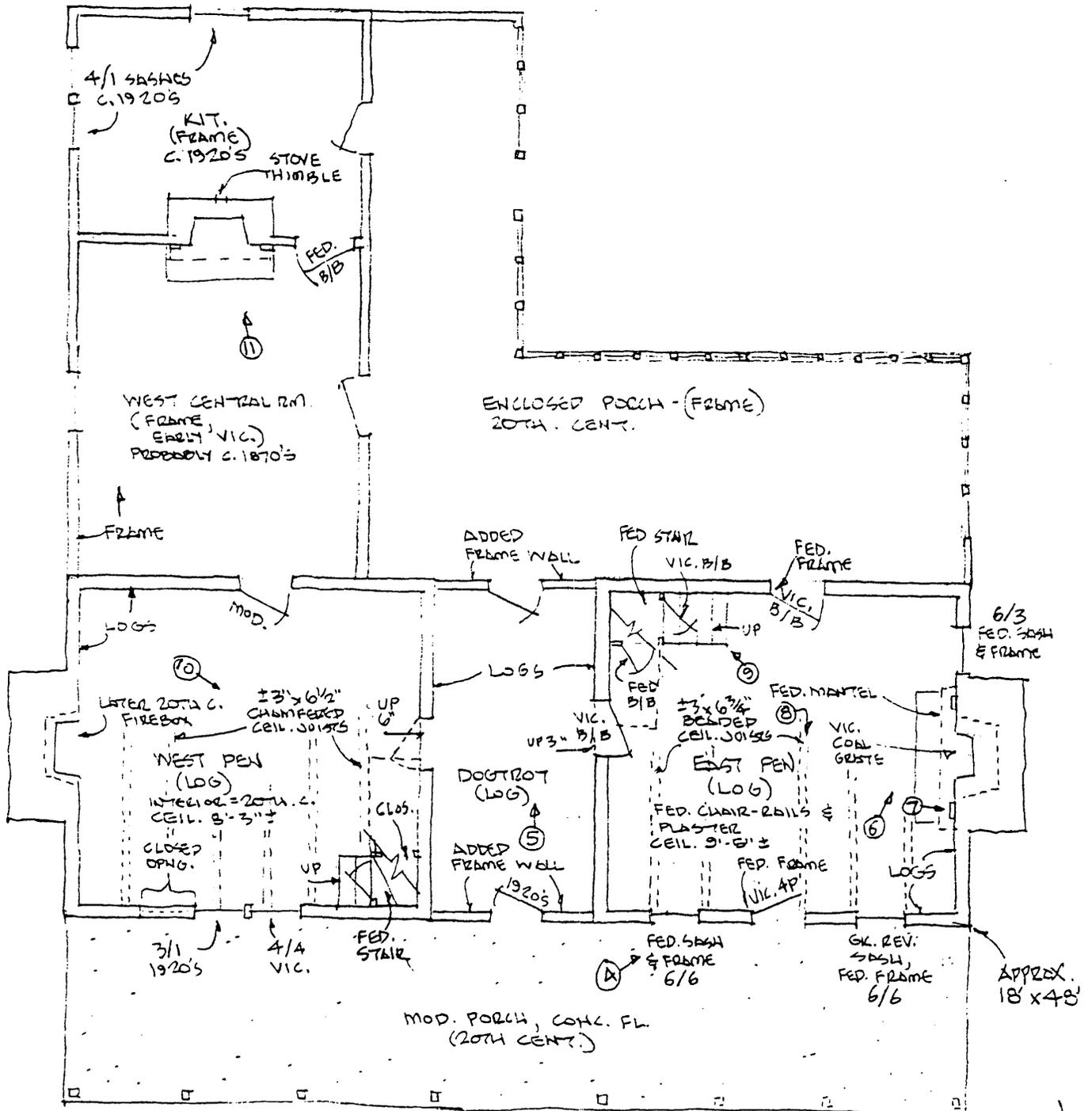
ALLEN URGUBART LOG HOUSE
VICINITY MAP



DEC. 1890
H. JONES, F.A.M.

ALLEN URGUBART BOUGHT S.W. QTR. OF SECT. 21, T. 2, R. 1 W.
ON DEC. 2, 1813 (ABSTRACT) MADISON CO., IA.
MARY A. JOHNSON ACQUIRED THIS FARM IN JULY 1873 FROM
ROBERT H. WILSON (ABSTRACT - DEED BOOK U-U, PG. 629)

NOTE: B/B = BOARD & BATTEN DOOR

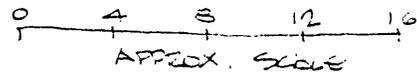


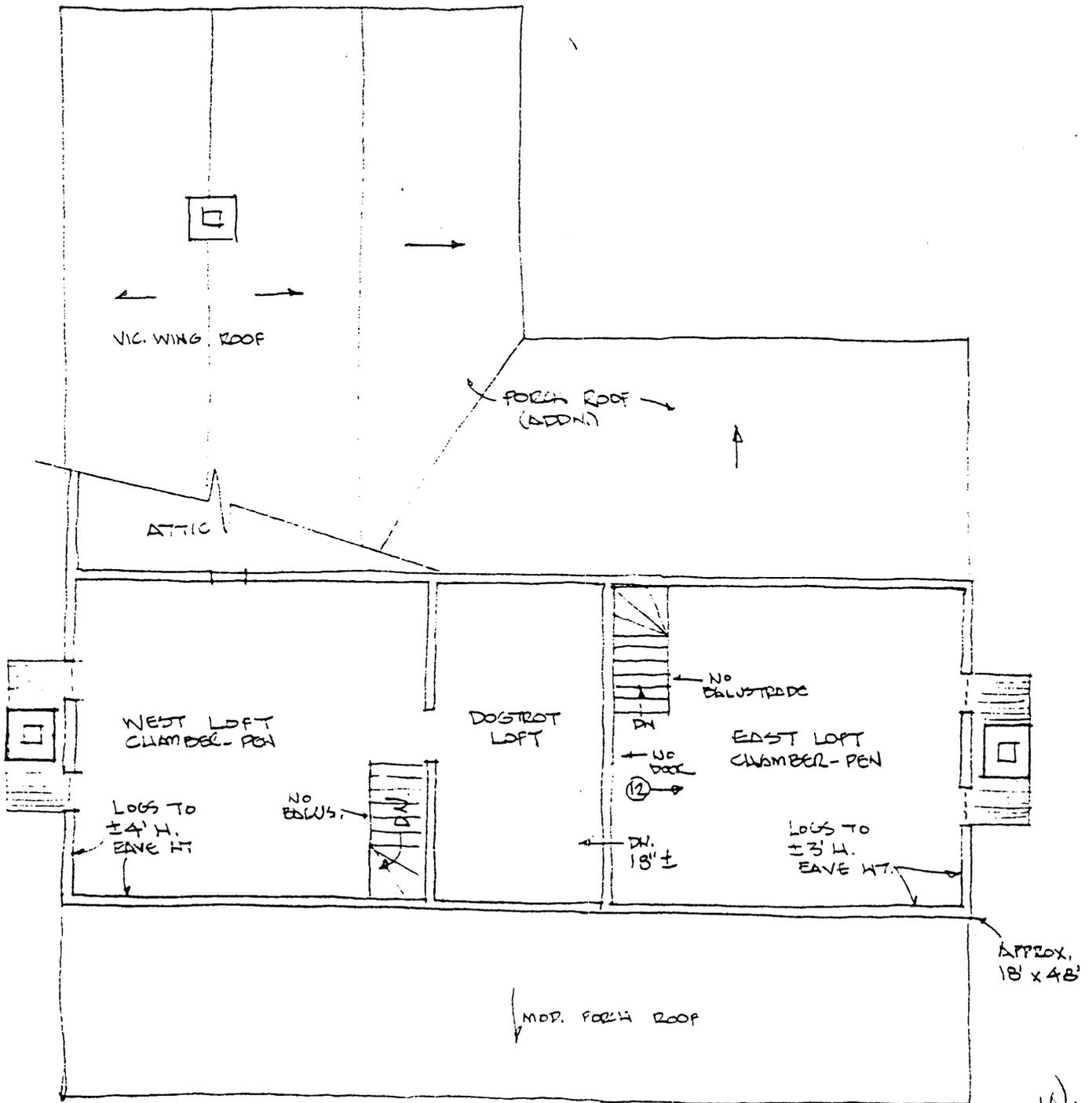
FIRST FLOOR SKETCH PLAN

ALEX URGUHART - MARY JOHNSON

LOG HOUSE - FEDERAL PERIOD, + VIC. N.W. WINGS.

PULASKI PIKE & 20TH RD., NARISCHKE CO., ILL., DEC. 1900, H. JONES, F.A.I.A.



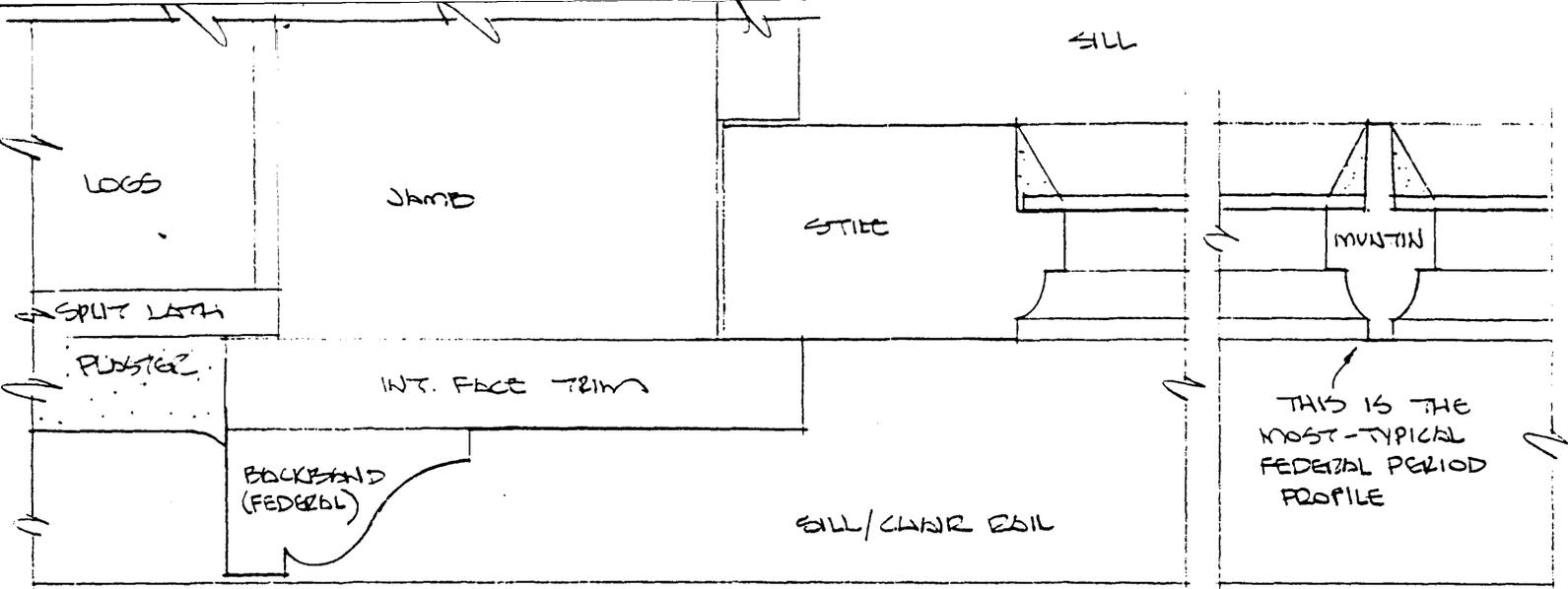


SECOND FLOOR SKETCH PLAN

ALEX VROUWART - MARY JOHNSON

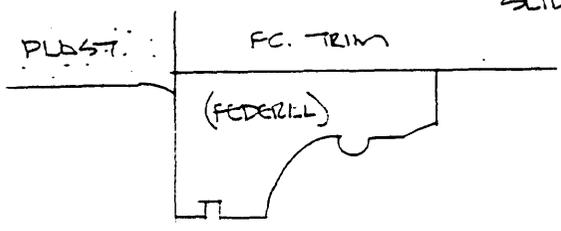
LOG HOUSE - FEDERAL PERIOD - W. N. W. WING

PULASKI PILE & ROUTE RD. MADISON CO. ALA. DEC 30 H. JONES, F.A.S.A.

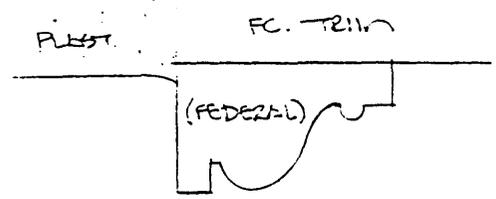


SASH JAMB - S. WALL, WEST SASH (FEDERAL)

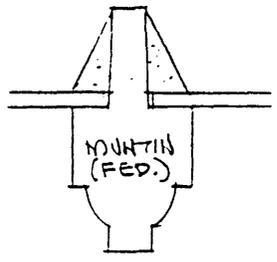
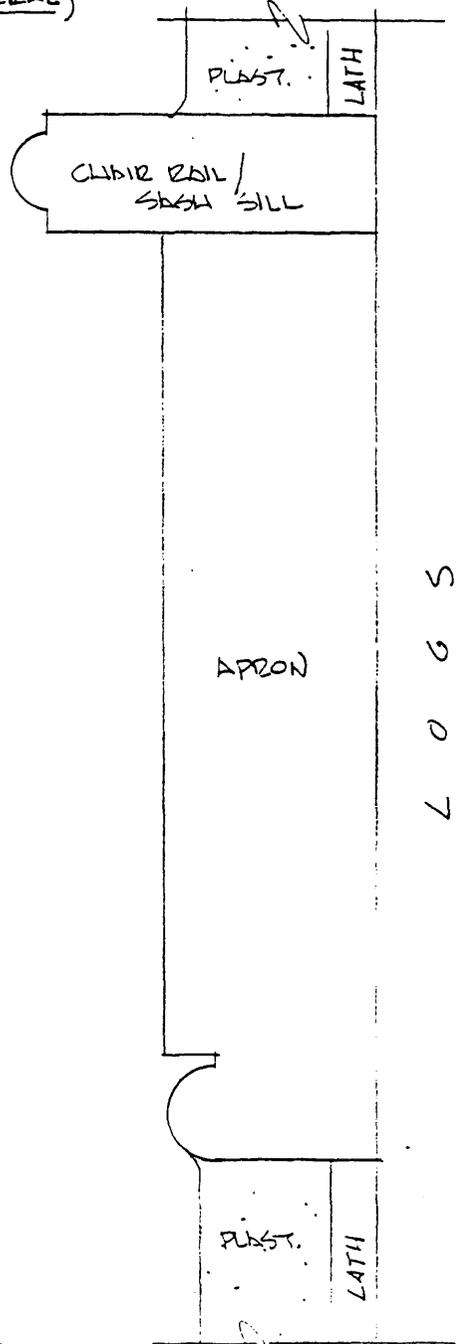
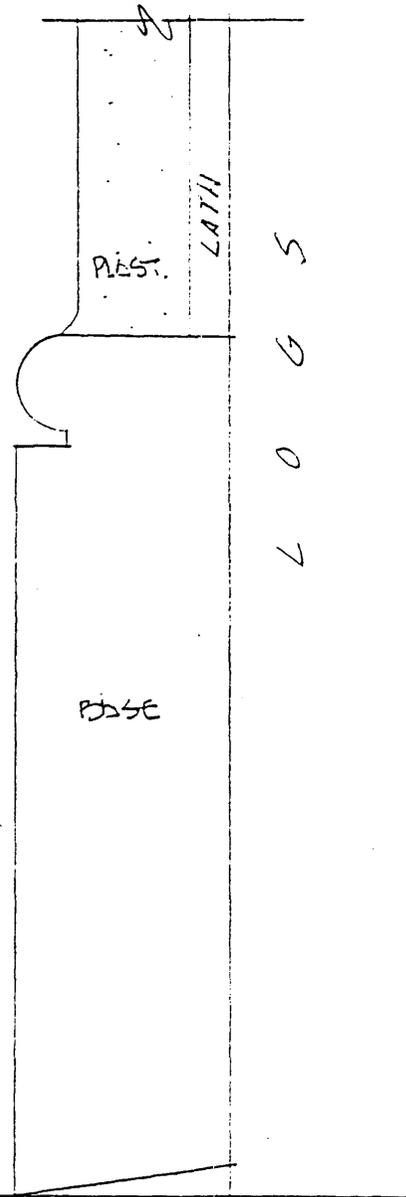
6/6 TOP SASHES FIXED, BOTTOM SASH SLIDES UP AGAINST IT (NO PARTING BEAD) = TYPICAL OF 1800 - 1870 ±



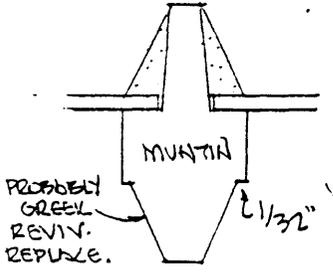
BACKBAND - S. DOOR, N. DOOR, S. WALL EASTERN SASH



BACKBAND - FEDERAL CLOS. DOOR TO UNDER STAIR



EAST SASH 3/6



SOUTH WALL E. LONGER SASH (TOP SASH - 20TH. CENTURY) 6/6

ALLEN URGHART
LOG HSE. - PULASKI PK.
S.E. PEN (FEDERAL PERIOD) FULL-SIZE SCRIBED MOUNTS
ANDRE P. JONES, FAIA
JUL. 1, 1991

5/4 PINE FL. BASE

CHAIR RAIL / SASH SILL