

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received **JUL 14 1980**
date entered **SEP 17 1980**

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

1. Name

historic McGehee-Stringfellow House (Abraham McGehee House)
and/or common Stringfellow House

2. Location

NW of Greensboro on SR 30
street & number W. side of Hale County 30, approx. 1.1 m. N of Alabama 41 intersection S. 33 T21 R4E not for publication
city, town Greensboro vic. vicinity of congressional district 7
state Alabama code 01 county Hale code 065

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name MacMillan-Bloedel, Inc. (site) W. P. Howell (house)
street & number Alabama Highway 5 Mount Herman Community, Greensboro 36746
city, town Marion vic. vicinity of state 36756

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Probate Office, Hale County Courthouse
street & number _____
city, town Greensboro state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date _____ federal state county local
depository for survey records _____
city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 McGehee-Stringfellow House is a small structure, the main block measuring only 32 feet across and 20 feet deep, and resting on a three-foot brick foundation. To the rear was a one-story frame service wing, removed in the spring of 1980. This wing appears to have dated from around the turn of the century, although it may have replaced an earlier extension joined either directly to the house or connected by means of an open breezeway.

Brick exterior walls are approximately 14 inches thick and are buttressed at either end by hipped chimneys unusual in that they have sloped weatherings instead of the stepped weatherings more prevalent in Alabama. The outer courses of wedge-shaped brick composing the slopes have fallen away, so that from the ground the chimneys appear to be stepped. The house is covered by a gabled roof.

Formerly, there was a full-length one-story shed porch across the front. This was torn away in April 1980. The exposed sub-structure, including a hand-hewn and morticed summer beam as well as a mortice-and-tenoned roof structure, indicates that the porch was early if not original--although the superstructure itself was of fairly modern vintage. Two side-by-side front doors surmounted by narrow four-light transoms open respectively into each of the two main lower rooms. To the left of the door opening into the great room, or "hall," is a single window. First floor windows throughout are filled with nine-over-nine sashing; those of the second floor with six-over-six.

The ornate wooden cornice terminating the slope of the roof immediately above the second story is composed of three main elements: a range of unusual open-work modillions terminating in a double scroll or volute, with wide molding above and below. The upper or crownmolding is embellished by a band of applied and pierced ovoid-like cut-work instead of the expected denticulation. The raking fascia or tapered rakeboards at each gable end are enhanced by pseudo-denticulation.

The larger of the two rooms on the first floor measures 15 1/2 by 19 feet, while the smaller room--or "parlor"--to the north is roughly 14 by 19 feet. Between the two rooms is a frame stud partition with chairrail. The plaster above and below the chairrail has been placed by wallboard. The ornate mantelpieces once in three of the four rooms have been removed, although the six-panel "Cross-and-Bible" doors and the chairrail survive.

Between the two lower rooms, an enclosed stairway with winders at the bottom rises from the larger room to the upper floor--ascending, however, directly into the chamber above the parlor. The stairwell in the upper room is enclosed by a plain wooden balustrade abutting against a wooden cupboard or closet, itself of early origin.

Last used as a tenant house, the house now stands unoccupied, its windows broken, its appendages destroyed, and its interior partially stripped. Still, the roof remains intact and the house is structurally sound except for a fissure which has developed in the north wall, above the secondary doorway in the gable end.

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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1824-1831 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This is an outstanding example of early 19th-century brick construction in an area where the overwhelming preference in rural architecture especially was for wood. More importantly, the house represents the carryover into frontier Alabama of archaic, essentially late 18th-century Georgian forms--although the house chronologically falls within the Federal period. Thus it expresses not only the innate architectural conservatism of the rural South; it also indicates the cultural lag which existed between the seaboard South and the newly-opened lands to the west. Like other dwellings within this category, the house was in many respects "old-fashioned" when built, and stands in odd juxtaposition not only to the Greek Revival houses which suffused the same region a few years later, but even to more sophisticated and recognizably Federal-style houses such as the Johnston-Torbert residence and "Brick Spring" (the Patrick May House) in nearby Greensboro. Stylistically, it anticipates the latter structures. Although long overlooked, it is, from an architectural point of view, one of the most significant early dwellings in the Warrior-Tombigbee basin.

Contemporary county records indicate that the house was built for Abraham McGehee some time between 1824 and 1831. In separate transactions on December 24, 1823, and May 8, 1824, the house site was acquired in two parcels by McGehee from the Federal government. Seven years after the second purchase, on March 15, 1831, McGehee sold the entire tract--some 560 acres--and all the "appurtenances thereunto," to Enoch Stringfellow. The stylistic quality of the house and the price paid--\$2500 at a time when the red sandy land of this vicinity sold for as little as a dollar or two an acre--suggest that the present dwelling was then standing.

The ninth son of Micajah and Ann (Scott) McGehee, Abraham McGehee belonged to a family that achieved considerable prominence in the Deep South during the ante-bellum period. An older brother, Abner McGehee, was a leading citizen of early Montgomery.

And for much of the detail in his historical romance, *So Red the Rose*, the 20th century novelist Stark Young drew on the saga of the McGehee family and specifically the life of Abraham McGehee's uncle, Judge Edward McGehee of Mississippi.

Following the Revolution, the McGehee family had emigrated with their kin and connections--the Bibbs, the Gilmers, and the Meriwethers--from Virginia to the Broad River area of Piedmont Georgia. Micajah McGehee, formerly of Prince Edward County, Virginia, reportedly built the first substantial house and brought into the Broad River area the first carriage. Three decades later, most of his offspring moved to the new states of Alabama and Mississippi--Abraham McGehee coming to Greene (now Hale) County. In fact, if a prototype form for the brick dwelling now standing is to be sought, it may be found in the upper Piedmont of Georgia and neighboring South Carolina, a region which is itself largely a cultural extension of the central Virginia and North Carolina Piedmont. The plan of the McGehee-Stringfellow House is rooted in 17th and

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gamble, Robert S. Personal collection of architectural drawings, notes, photos. Greene County Probate Records (including early Hale County records). Greene County Courthouse, Eutaw, Alabama

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property one acre
Alabama Highway Dept. Hale County Scale 1" is 2 miles
Latitude 32° 45' 07" Longitude 87° 40' 41"

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert S. Gamble, Architectural Historican
organization _____ date June 23, 1980
street & number 818 Johnston Street, S. E. telephone (205) 353-8652
city or town Decatur state Alabama 35601

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Milo B. Howard Jr.

title SHPO date July 1, 1980

For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>W. Ray Luce</u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>9/17/80</u>
Attest: <u>Carl Bulnie</u> Chief of Registration	date <u>9/15/80</u>

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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18th century vernacular practice and is a plan ultimately traceable to medieval England. It is a modified hall-and-parlor arrangement consisting of two disequal-sized rooms on each floor. Unlike the "textbook" examples of this arrangement in such 17th-century Chesapeake region houses as Bacon's Castle (c. 1676) near Williamsburg or St. Andrew's (the Daniel Clocker House) at St. Mary's City, of c. 1658, the plan is here tempered by the addition of a second entrance door instead of the usual single entry--centrally placed--into the larger room or "hall." This modification of the original hall-and-parlor plan appears to have been a development of the lower South Atlantic seaboard, from which it was carried into Alabama.

The facade represents a compromise between utility and the penchant for symmetry and balance which remained a skilled craftsman's cardinal stylistic rubric in the early 19th century. At first glance, the three bays above and below appear to be evenly spaced--the only note of "unbalance" being the obvious insertion of a second doorway from the porch into the parlor. Actually, however, the middle bays--both the door below and the corresponding window above--are slightly off-center, while the righthand or northern bays are spaced approximately two feet farther from the corner of the house than the lefthand bays. The facade brickwork is laid in the decorative Flemish bond pattern. But perhaps the most notable exterior feature is the modillioned wooden cornice, surprisingly ornate in so simple a dwelling. In the manner characteristic, again, of many 18th-century Chesapeake region houses, the rakeboard at each gable end is slightly flared at the bottom and--in a rather novel twist--accented by a narrow band of denticulation.

All in all, the house attains a monumentality and dignity singular for such a small-scale structure. The forthright, unostentatious internal arrangement apparently answered--at the same time--the needs of a practical and outdoors-oriented agrarian existence. In these qualities, the house is probably a far more accurate reflection of the planter-mind of the Old South than the grandly-scaled confections that have captured the popular fancy.

Following Enoch Stringfellow's death in 1839, his widow apparently continued to reside in the brick house which was the center of their farming activities. The 1856 Snedecor Directory for Greene County, and the accompanying map, indicate that MacDonald Stringfellow--a son of Enoch--was then living in the house. He is listed as a "planter" of the Hollow Square precinct.

Unoccupied for several years, the house and surrounding acreage have been acquired by the MacMillan-Bloedel corporation, a Canadian-based paper company. This company has sold demolition rights to the house itself to W. P. Howell of Mount Herman, Alabama.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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57 17 0

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Saunders, James E. Early Settlers of Alabama. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969 (reprint of 1899 edition published at New Orleans), 448-54.
Snedecor, James. Snedecor's Greene County Directory, 1856 (also Snedecor map of Greene County).

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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DATE ENTERED 7/17/80

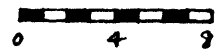
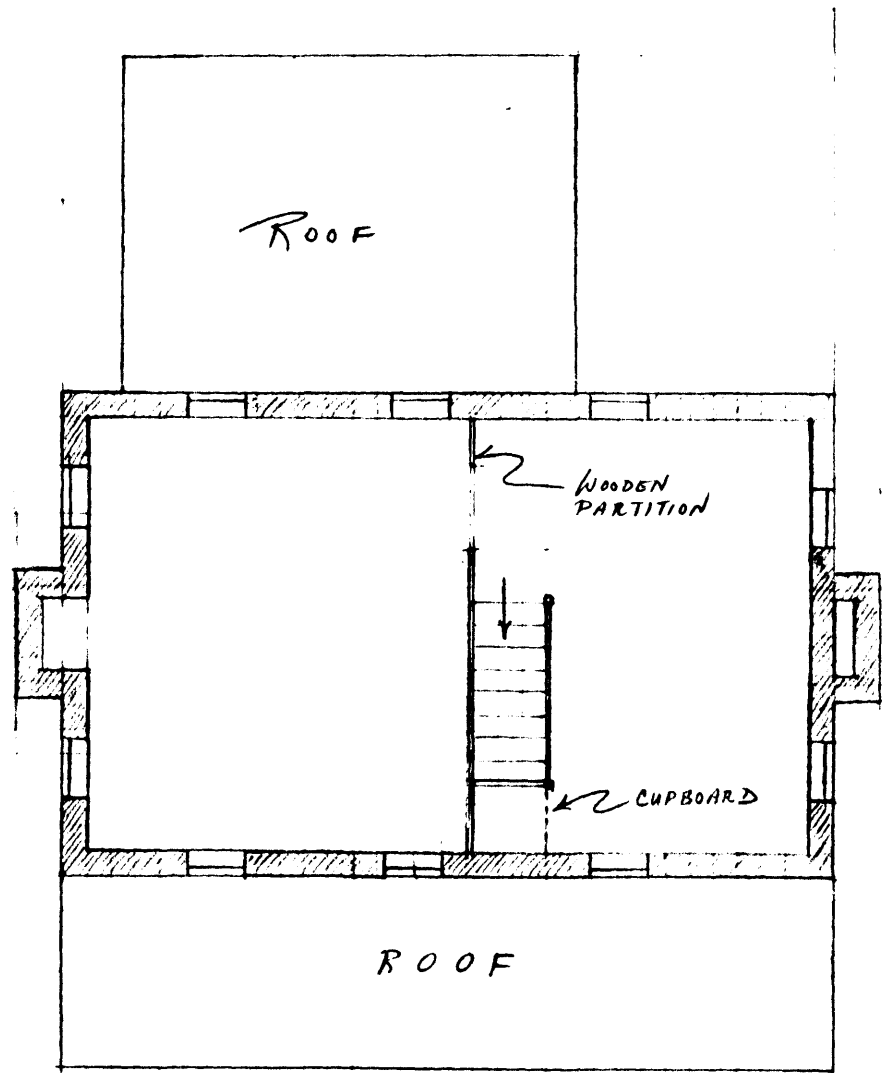
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Beginning at Latitude 32° 40' 41" proceed due South 105 feet to a point, the true point of beginning; thence due east 105 feet to a point; thence due north 210 feet to a point; thence due west 210 feet to a point; thence due south 210 feet to a point; thence due east 105 feet to the true point of beginning.

MEASURED MAY 1978
by Robert S. Gamble

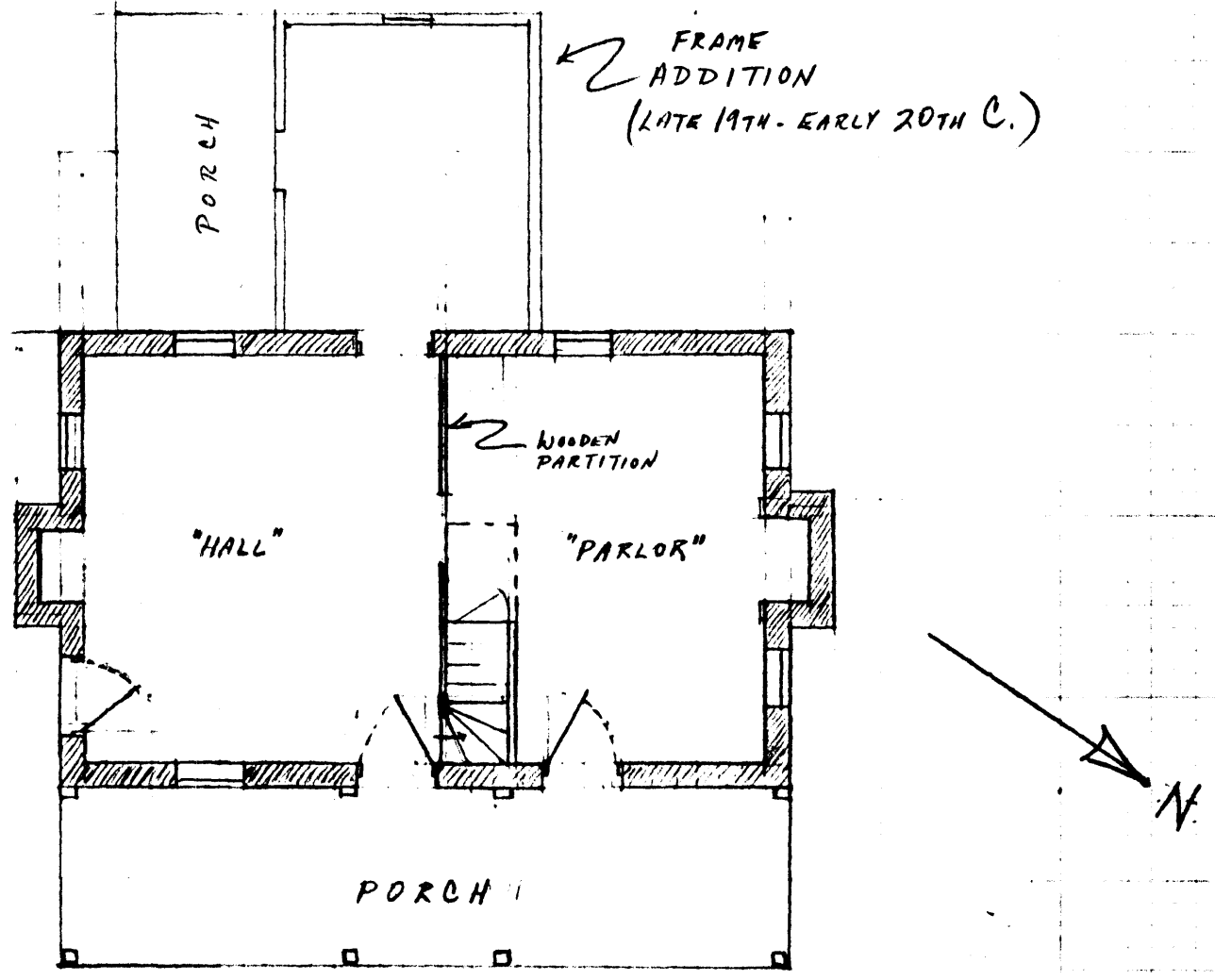
McGEEH-STRINGFELLOW HOUSE
GREENSBORO V,



JUL 14 1980

MEASURED MAY 1978
by Robert S. Gamble

McGENEE-STRINGFELLOW HOUSE
36746
W. P. Howell, Mount Herman
(bet. G'boro & B'hm) \$1200
right to demolish 624-7266
MacMillan-Bloedell Inc. Hwy 5
Marion 36756
(Canadian firm) 683-6316



JUL 14 1980