

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Ash, John, House

other name/site number: Rowan House, Coker House, Rickles House

2. Location

street & number: Route 2, Highway 441

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Ashville

vicinity: X

state: AL County: St. Clair

code: 115

zip code: 35953

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</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.

8-20-91

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

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Alabama Byrum 10/1/91 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):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current : VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation Stone roof Shingle
walls Frame 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: local

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c.1820-30

Significant Dates : c.1820-30

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

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

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>16</u>	<u>564620</u>	<u>3736800</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

An imaginary line was drawn to extend 40` north, 100` south, 40` east and 40` west of the John Ash House, which is located in the West 1/2 of the NE quarter lying North of U.S. Highway #411, Section 35, Township 14 South, Range 3 East, Ashville, Alabama, as recorded in the St. Clair County Tax Assessor's office, Ashville, Alabama.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundaries of the property were delineated to include the John Ash House and the land 40` north, 100` south (which extends the property approximately to U.S. Highway #411), 40` east and 40` west of the house. This parcel of land is located in the West 1/2 of the NE quarter lying North of U.S. Highway #411, Section 35, Township 14 South, Range 3 East, Ashville, Alabama, as recorded in the St. Clair County Tax Assessor's office, Ashville, Alabama.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Melanie A. Betz, Cultural Resources Coordinator

Organization: Alabama Historical Commission Date: May 8, 1991

Street & Number: 725 Monroe Street Telephone: 205/242-3184

City or Town: Montgomery State: AL ZIP: 36130

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Description John Ash House Page #1

Situated on a gently sloping hill, the John Ash House is a two-story log building now covered with frame siding. The original portion of the house measures approximately 44' X 18' with a large one-story addition extending to the rear approximately 36'. A centrally located front door is flanked by two sidelights. Doors also lead to each of the pens. According to Mattie Lou Crow, descendent of the Ash family, the house may have been constructed as a one-story log dogtrot with two rooms ("pens") flanking the open passageway.(1) Evidence of the dogtrot opening is visible around the front and rear entranceways. Each gable end displays return cornices and brick chimneys flanked by 4/4 sash rectangular windows. The east chimney may have been replaced. Extending the length of the front facade is a large porch, possibly added during the early 20th century. A pedimented gable is centrally located in the attic level of the front facade.

On the interior, an enclosed staircase leads to the upper level which consists of two rooms and a central hall. Under the stairs is a closet door which reveals the log construction. The walls and floors of the front rooms and hall are of wide hand-planed boards. Simple mantels are located in the two original front rooms and one of the added rooms to the rear. The later addition includes three rooms and a rear porch formed by a slope in the roof. A brick chimney projects from the east facade of the later addition.

Most of the original outbuildings, including the original barn and smoke house, are no longer standing. A well surrounded by a stone structure (contributing) is included within the boundaries of the nominated property. A modern farm implement shed and a c.1920 storage barn in very poor condition are not included within the boundaries.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPONENT:

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Significance

John Ash House

Page #1

CRITERION C (ARCHITECTURE):

Significant in the area of architecture, the John Ash House, located outside of Ashville, is a good and intact representation of an early settlers' house in St. Clair County. The house was constructed after 1820 as a one-story log dwelling consisting of two rooms, a sleeping loft, and a central passage that may originally have been an open dogtrot.(1) Paneling removed from one of these rooms, as well as an unfinished closet under the stairway, reveal the original log construction of the house. At an early date (possibly by around 1830 or so), the Ash House was enlarged with the addition of three rooms to the rear and a full second floor over the original log dwelling, and remodeled with the addition of frame siding, return cornices at the gable ends, and a central pedimented gable displaying decorative shingles. A large porch extending the length of the front facade may have been added during the early 20th century. The house today has retained many of its original features including its overall shape and form, early frame siding, its brick chimneys and return cornices at the gable ends, its pedimented cornice, and many interior features including three simple mantels, wide-planed boards in the front rooms and hall, and the enclosed stairs leading to the second level.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

John Ash, who was born on November 30, 1783, and died on April 1, 1872, left York County, North Carolina, for Georgia during the late 1700s with his wife, Margaret M. Newton Ash (1792-1855), and their family, which included Margaret's parents, the Reverend Thomas Newton and his wife, Ann. The family first lived in Franklin County and then at Athens, Clark County, Georgia, before venturing west to Alabama.(2) The Ash family set up camp in a location near what is today called the Upper Beaver Valley Road (or the Old Montevallo Road) leading from Ashville to Odenville. According to family tradition, the family decided to settle permanently in the region after one of the Ash daughters died as a result of falling off a horse. She was buried in a location which became the Newton-Ash cemetery.(3) A small marble tombstone (-now broken-) marked this grave with the inscription: "Betsy Ann Ash, 1814-1817".

After 1817, John Ash and his father-in-law, the Reverend Thomas Newton, built a log dogtrot a few miles southeast. Both the Newton and Ash families resided here until John Ash's new house was completed two miles away.(4) The new house begun as a two-room log building with flanking end chimneys, a central hall and a sleeping loft. According to Mattie Lou Crowe, descendent of the Ash family, the central hall may have been an open dogtrot at one time.(5) This may have been constructed as early as 1820.(6) As the family grew (-the Ash's raised eight daughters and four sons to maturity-), the house was enlarged. Three large rooms were built to the rear, and two rooms and a central hall were added to the second level above the original log building. The entire house was then covered over with frame siding. During the early 20th century, a large porch extending the length of the front facade was added. The house remained in the Ash family until c. 1948 when it was purchased by the Rickles Family.(7)

The original owner of the house, John Ash, was a successful planter, prominent local politician, and founder of the community of Ashville which bears his name. He purchased land in 1820, 1834, and 1839 and established a successful working farm until his death in 1873.(8) John Ash was a county judge from November 20, 1819, to January 1, 1821, and then later was a member of the State Senate from 1825-27, 1832-34, and 1844-46. (9) In 1921, John Ash, along with John Massey,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Significance

John Ash House

Page #2

John Cunningham, Joel Chandler, and George Shortwell, was appointed to be on a commission to build a courthouse and jail for St. Clair County, which had been created as a county in 1818. (10) Temporary log buildings were erected and used for several years until brick buildings replaced them. In 1844, the present courthouse was constructed.(11) In recognition of his efforts to establish the community, the new county seat, Ashville, was named after him.

1
Information from Mattie Lou Crow, descendent of the Ash family, September 1990.

2
Information from Mattie Lou Crow, September 1990, and the Ash Family Bible, presently in the possession of John Ash's great-grandson, James Ash Scoggins, Birmingham.

3
Information from Mattie Lou Crow and the Newton-Ash Cemetery markers.

4
The Reverend Thomas Newton and his wife, Ann Martin Newton, resided in the original log dogtrot (now known as the "Newton Log House") after John Ash and his family moved to their new residence.

5
Information from Mattie Lou Crow.

6
Information from St. Clair County Tract Books, Ashville, indicate that John Ash entered land in 1820. Family tradition maintains that the house was constructed sometime after 1818.

7
John and Margaret Ash's daughter, Ada Caroline Ash Rowan, inherited the house with her husband, John Rowan. The property remained in the family until c. 1948 when it was purchased by the Rickles family. The present owner, Charles Shaw, is a descendent of the Rickles. Information from Gerald Coker, descendent of John Ash, May 1991.

8
St. Clair County Tract Book, 1820, 1834, 1839, Ashville, Alabama.

9
Information from the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Information compiled by Mattie Lou Crowe, September 1991.

10
Owen, Thomas McAdory, History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Volume 1. (The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), page 61.

11
County records dating back as early as 1820 survive today and are stored in the 1848 courthouse.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Bibliographical References

John Ash House

Page #1

Ash Family Bible.

Crowe, Mattie Lou. Unpublished manuscript, September 1990.

Gamble, Robert. The Alabama Catalog. (Historic American Buildings Survey). A Guide to the Early Architecture of the State. (The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1987).

A Historic Site Survey of Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties. Prepared by the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission, (A.H. Cather Publishing Co., Inc., Birmingham, Alabama, 1975).

Oral Interview, Gerald Coker, descendent of John Ash, May 13, 1991.

Owen, Thomas McAdory, History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Volume 1. (The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921).

St. Clair County Tract Books, 1820, 1834, 1839, St. Clair County Courthouse, Ashville, Alabama.

Wilson, Eugene M. Alabama Folk Houses. (Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, Alabama, 1975).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number photographs

John Ash House

Page #1

NAME John Ash House

LOCATION: Ashville (vicinty), Alabama

PHOTOGRAPHER: Melanie Betz

DATE: May 1991

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Alabama Historical Commission

PHOTO #1: Front Facade, Looking Northwest

PHOTO #2: Front and Side Facades, Looking West

PHOTO #3: Side Facades, Looking Northeast

PHOTO #4: Rear Facade, Looking South

PHOTO #5: Interior, Closet Under Stairs

PHOTO #6: Interior, Stairs

PHOTO #7: Stone Well, Looking Northwest