

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

For NPS use only

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

received MAY 28 1986

date entered JUN 26 1986

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

**1. Name**

historic Keith, Alexander H., House

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 110 Keith Lane N/A \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Athens N/A \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county McMinn code 107

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 Mr. and Mrs. Ray Plemons

street & number Mt. Verd Road

city, town Athens N/A \_\_\_ vicinity of state Tennessee

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. McMinn County Courthouse, Register of Deeds Office

street & number Jackson Street Square

city, town Athens state Tennessee

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date N/A N/A \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 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 Alexander H. Keith House nomination consists of two contributing resources: the residence and a brick smokehouse. The Keith House is a large, two story Greek Revival house with a two story pedimented portico that dominates the front facade.

The Keith House sits on the west side of Keith Lane on the edge of Athens, Tennessee a short distance south of the intersection of Keith Lane and Madison Avenue (State Route 2). Although residential development has occurred on both of these streets, the house is surrounded on three sides by over 90 acres of undeveloped land which is part of the family estate. A degree of privacy is afforded the house by the mature oak and pine trees scattered across the front of the property. A service drive runs from Keith Avenue along the north side of the house while a circular drive provides access to the front. Although the grounds show signs of neglect, traces of formal landscaping are still visible in the large boxwoods and other shrubs which grow near the house.

This two-story five bay house was built of handmade brick laid in Common Bond set on a brick foundation. There is a full basement beneath the house. The original 6/6 double hung wooden windows have wooden sills on all four elevations. Flat wooden lintels occur on all except the rear and south elevations. Windows on these two sides have simple brick lintels. The main portion of the house has wooden shutters on all windows except the west elevation. Two offset interior end chimneys are located on the north elevation and a single interior end chimney on the south elevation is offset toward the facade (east elevation). The classic Greek Revival wooden frieze and projecting cornice extend around the entire perimeter of the main portion of the house. The low hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

Attached to the sun room and the north end of the west wall of the main portion of the house is a one-story service ell. The ell has a central interior chimney and a gable roof with asbestos shingles. The foundation is brick and there is a crawlspace under the butler's pantry and kitchen. A shed porch runs the length of the ell on the south elevation. This porch has square vernacular Doric columns and pilasters. When the original ell was torn down and the present one constructed in 1936, the original brick was used to cover the wooden framing on the north side while the outer wall of the south side was stuccoed. A one and one-half story three car garage with a hip roof was added to the west end of the ell at the same time.

The east (front) elevation is dominated by a full-height entry porch which extends 3/5 the length of the facade. The pedimented portico, added in 1936, has a row of dentils on the horizontal and raking cornice. The dentils are repeated on the cornice of the entablature below. Below the cornice is a molded frieze and architrave. In the center of the portico's gable end is an ocular window with radiating muntins. The window is trimmed with a plain circular band set with keystones. The portico is supported by four Tuscan columns and two vernacular Tuscan pilasters. The central entry enframingent is a simple entablature with square vernacular Doric columns. The recessed single pegged four-panel door is framed by fluted vernacular Doric pilasters and four light sidelights with recessed aprons. This enframingent and doorway is duplicated on the second story door which opens onto the small balcony.

In the center of the north elevation is a small one-story porch with two pairs of Doric columns and two square Doric pilasters. The entablature around the porch is identical to the cornice and frieze under the eaves. The narrow door has a three light recessed transom and the same wooden lintel as the windows. This door is flanked by two 6/6 windows on the

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lower story. The second story has three evenly spaced 6/6 windows. The two chimneys on this elevation are offset to either side of the middle upper story window.

The north elevation of the ell has four 6/6 windows with flat brick sills and wooden lintels. In the laundry room between the second and third windows is a six-panel door with a three light recessed transom and wooden lintel. A short set of brick steps extends from this door down to ground level. Immediately east of these steps, another short flight of steps leads to a door which opens onto the crawlspace under the ell.

The north elevation of the garage has a single 6/6 double hung window with a wooden lintel and brick sill. The west elevation has three short 6/6 double hung windows above the three overhead doors. These windows have no lintels or sills.

The west elevation of the main portion of the house has five 6/6 windows on the upper story with wooden sills and flat brick lintels. There is only one 6/6 double hung window on the lower story. It opens onto the one story frame sun room. This room extends approximately 2/5 the length of the house. It has a brick foundation and five 6/6 double hung windows with wooden sills. The exterior wall finish is wide flush horizontal board. The low half hip roof has asphalt shingles.

The south elevation of the garage duplicates the north elevation with a single centered 6/6 double hung window. The south elevation of the ell has three six-panel doors opening onto the porch from the sun room, laundry room, and garage. All have three light recessed transoms. The three 6/6 double hung windows on this side of the ell have simple wooden trim.

The south elevation of the main portion of the house has six 6/6 double hung windows, three on each story. These windows have wooden sills and flat brick lintels. A small greenhouse dating to at least the 1860s is attached to the house and centered between the front two windows to take advantage of the heat from the single chimney on this elevation.

The main portion of the house has a central hall with four rooms on each floor. All the floors are pine and with the exception of a small amount of ceramic tile in the bathrooms, all walls and ceilings are plaster. Wainscoting and wallpaper are the only decorative treatments used on walls. Wainscoting is used on both upper and lower halls and the dining room walls. The doors in the main portion of the house are the original four panel, pegged doors. The doors and windows have identical shouldered architraves with applied molding trim. The first floor windows all have paneled aprons under them. The interior doors on the lower level have recessed, three light transoms while the doors on the second floor have recessed blind transoms. The architraves on the second floor doors are the same as on the first, but the window trim is much simpler. A linen cabinet on the second floor projects out onto the hallway and the trim mimics that of the bedroom doors.

Located on opposite sides of the foyer are twin parlors, each with a fireplace on the outside wall. The mantels are original and Greek Revival in style. The mantel in the north parlor has shouldered architrave trim similar to the doors and windows. A projecting mantelshelf rests on several bands of molded trim. The mantel in the south parlor has

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fluted Doric pilasters and a projecting mantelshelf supported by a molded cornice. Both fireplaces have marble surrounds and hearths.

The rear room on the south side of the hall has been slightly altered by the installation of a closet and bath. The windows in this room remain unaltered. The dining room is the rear room on the north side of the hall and features built-in shelves on the north wall. The service ell is attached to the west wall of the dining room and a door provides access to the adjoining butler's pantry. At the far west end of the lower hall a door opens onto the sun room. This door originally opened onto the rear porch.

Another example of fine nineteenth century carpentry include the handcarved pegged cherry handrail on the hall staircase. The open well two run single landing staircase runs up the north wall of the hall to the second floor. Behind the stairs is a door leading to the basement. The second floor contains four bedrooms, two baths, and two storage rooms. The rear bedroom on the north originally had a fireplace but it has been sealed and plastered over. The **front** bedrooms on both sides of the house have their original mantels which are plain pilasters and entablature surrounds with projecting mantelshelves.

When the house was renovated in 1936, modern plumbing fixtures were installed in what originally were changing rooms between the bedrooms on both sides of the hall. Unaltered storage rooms adjacent to each bath are accessible from one of the bedrooms on each side of the hall. The installation of these baths did not alter the placement of either walls, doors, or windows and did not alter the architectural integrity of these rooms. At the east end of the upstairs hall is the door which opens onto the balcony on the east elevation.

The service ell contains a butler's pantry, kitchen, laundry room, and maid's room. The interior of these rooms provides a sharp contrast to the interior of the rest of the house. Interior doors have no transoms. Plain trim surrounds the doors and windows. The wooden floors in the butler's pantry and kitchen are covered with linoleum while the laundry room floor is poured concrete. The maid's room has a hardwood floor, a small bath, and a built-in closet. The fireplace in what is now the laundry room was sealed when the ell was rebuilt.

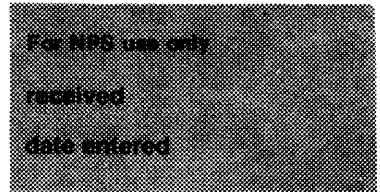
Until 1936, the porch on the east elevation was a one story flat roofed structure extending 3/5 the length of the facade. The square vernacular Doric columns and the rail and balustrades were used on the porch of the ell when it was rebuilt and to construct a small balcony on the second story of the facade. Crab Orchard stone was used on the floor of both porches and the sunroom.

Although there have been external as well as internal changes to the Keith House, they have been done with sensitivity to the original integrity of the house. Inside and out, the Keith House remains an excellent example of residential Greek Revival architecture.

The other contributing building to this nomination is a one story brick smokehouse. It sits on the north side of the service drive adjacent to the garage. The handmade brick is laid in Stretcher Bond with spaces left between several of the upper courses of brick to provide ventilation. In addition, small rectangular vents have been installed on each

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elevation. The only door is on the south elevation. This smokehouse appears to be contemporary with the house due to the handmade bricks and soft limestone mortar. The hip roof has asbestos shingles and was probably put on during the 1936 renovation of the property. The interior of this building was inaccessible.

## 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 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 checked="" 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** 1858-1936      **Builder/Architect** Thomas Crutchfield

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Keith House is being nominated under National Register criteria B and C for its local historical and architectural significance. The house is important for its association with the Keith family, one of the first to settle in McMinn County, Tennessee. Architecturally, the house is significant as a residential example of architect/builder Thomas Crutchfield's work in the Greek Revival style. Although the house has undergone some 20th century changes, it retains its original integrity and massing. Interior details such as doors, woodwork, molding, and fireplace mantels remain intact as does the floor-plan and walls of the main portion of the house. The rebuilding of the service ell in 1936 replicated the original in location, exterior material, and function. The replacement of the porch on the front elevation executed the original plans. These changes have not adversely affected the architectural integrity of the house and in the 50 years which have passed, they have acquired their own significance.

Alexander H. Keith was the son of a prominent early settler to McMinn County, Judge Charles Fleming Keith. Born in Virginia in 1781, C.F. Keith was a close relative of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall. Keith was a practicing attorney in Jefferson County in the early 1800's and was an active participant in the early sessions of the Tennessee legislature. He was also instrumental in the purchase of the Hiwassee District from the Cherokee. As payment for laying this land off in sections, the U.S. Government awarded Keith a land grant a short distance northeast of Athens on Oostenaula Creek.

Alexander Hume Keith married Sarah Ann Fore in 1841. Sarah Ann was the daughter of Dr. Augustine and Nancy Fore. Dr. Fore, a physician was one of the first settlers to McMinn County. The Fores migrated from Jefferson County, Kentucky c.1835 and built a frame house adjacent to the present site of the Keith House. Nancy Fore is responsible for the first Methodist Church in the area. Dr. Fore died in 1840.

Alexander H. and Sarah Ann Keith lived with Mrs. Fore until the Fore frame house was destroyed by fire in 1856. Keith hired Virginia architect and builder Thomas Crutchfield to build a new brick house adjacent to the ruins of the Fore home.

Thomas Crutchfield was born in Virginia to Robert and Mary Nuckols Crutchfield. He worked for a Botetourt County, Virginia carpenter, builder, and brickmason named Samuel Cleague from whom he learned the building trade. In 1820 Thomas married Samuel's daughter, Sarah. Three years later the two families left Virginia and headed for the Hiwassee District of East Tennessee. Along the way, they built brick houses for prosperous farmers. After settling in McMinn County, Tennessee, Cleague retired to take up farming and Thomas formed a partnership with Cleague's sons, David and Alexander.

By the 1830's Crutchfield was one of the most popular builders in the state. He reportedly built at least eight East Tennessee county courthouses (including McMinn), the early buildings of East Tennessee University, and was instrumental in the erection of the city of Chattanooga during the 1840s.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.3 acres

Quadrangle name Athens, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	1	6	4	9	0	3	9	2	4	0	0	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gail L. Guymon

organization N/A

date February 12, 1986

street & number 10916 Concord Woods Drive

telephone (615) 966-4307

city or town Knoxville

state Tennessee 37922

# 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.

Deputy  
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hoyer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/23/86

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

for Allores Byen  
Keeper of the National Register

National Register date 6-26-86

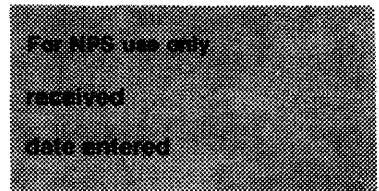
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Thomas and Sarah had three sons who became well-known in local politics. John Crutchfield carried on his father's trade as a builder in Jacksonville, Alabama.

Construction on the Keith House began in 1858 and according to family history, was designed to have the full height entry porch and columns which were not put on until the 20th century. Before the porch was completed, the Civil War was raging and soldiers supposedly burned the massive columns for fuel. A photograph of the house taken after the war shows the house with a modest one story porch which remained until 1936.

Alexander H. Keith farmed over 300 acres while SarahAnn was actively involved with the Methodist Church. They often shared their new home with young, unmarried Methodist ministers for the duration of their pastorate. In 1874, the Keiths donated a sum of money to replace the original log church (built by Sarah's mother, Nancy Fore) with one of brick. Alexander H. Keith died on December 31, 1876. In 1904, Sarah donated land for the construction of a parsonage and was instrumental in providing a home for the ministers. Sarah Keith died on April 3, 1913.

Ownership of the house passed to one of their sons, Alexander M. Keith and his wife, who were living with Sarah at the time of her death. Alexander and Louise Keith had three children who lived to adulthood: Marshall, Alexander, and Catherine. Alexander M. Keith died in 1933 following surgery and his wife passed away the following year. They were buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery in Athens.

Marshall J. Keith and his wife, Gertrude, lived at the Keith House for several years while their house was being built. After the death of his mother, Marshall bought out the interests of his brother and sister although Catherine continued to live with them in the house.

When Marshall and Gertrude took possession of the house, the porch and rear ell were badly deteriorated and the interior needed to be modernized. Marshall hired a descendant of Thomas Crutchfield to oversee the work to make certain the architectural integrity of the house was respected.

The rear ell and porch were torn down and the sunroom and new service ell built in their place. The original brick was used to rebuild the ell. A garage was added to the west end of the ell. The entry porch on the facade was removed and the columns and rails were used on the balcony on the facade and the porch on the ell. Inside, modern plumbing was installed in the changing rooms between the upstairs bedrooms and one of the downstairs rooms. A furnace was also added. Presumably, the two fireplaces upstairs were also enclosed at this time for reasons unknown.

Out of gratitude for their many years of support, the church was renamed the Keith Memorial United Methodist Church in 1939. Marshall served as Chairman of the Athens Utilities Board, Director of the First National Bank and Athens Savings and Loan and established the Athens Motor Company. He also donated land to the Methodist Church from the family farm. After Marshall's death, Gertrude and Catherine continued to share the house. After Catherine's death, Gertrude lived alone until failing health recently forced her to move to a nursing home. Several years ago she donated a tract of land adjacent to the house to the city of



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Athens for the construction of a new junior high school.

Historically, the Keith House has long been associated with one of the earliest families who settled in McMinn County. Each generation of the Keith family has made substantial contributions to the growth of Athens and the quality of life there.

The Keith House is architecturally significant as a residential example of Thomas Crutchfield's work, as a mid-nineteenth century upper class planter's home, and as a house which is clearly Greek Revival in style. According to Patrick, "There is a relative scarcity of residential examples belonging unambiguously to the Greek Revival..." (1981:129). Even though changes were made in 1936, they do not adversely affect the architectural integrity.

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Memphis.

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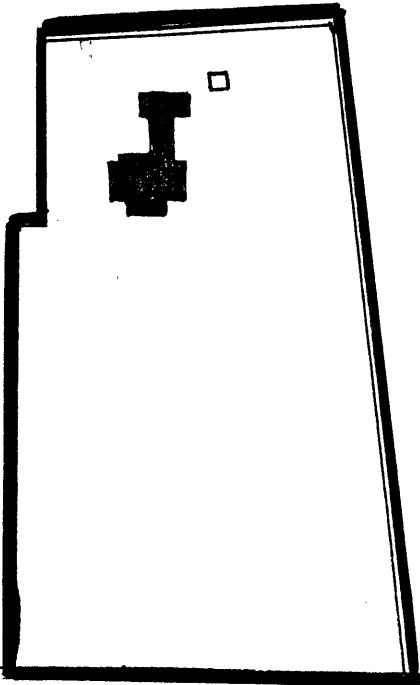
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Begin at an iron pin on the western side of Keith Lane, said point being south 3 degrees, 15 minutes west 280.9 feet more or less from the intersection with the right of way of Madison Avenue; thence north 85 degrees 54 minutes east 386 feet to an iron pin; thence north 00 degrees 7 minutes east 231.3 feet to a wooden fence post, thence north 87 degrees 3 minutes west 154.2 feet to a wooden fence post; thence north 2 degrees 40 minutes east 21.1 feet to a wooden fence post; thence north 86 degrees 45 minutes west 216 feet to an iron pin; thence south 3 degrees 15 minutes west 300.6 feet to the point of beginning.

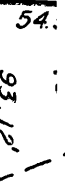
The boundaries of the nominated property contain 2.3 acres and include a sufficient amount of land to protect the historical and architectural integrity of the Keith House and its contributing structure.



KEITH AVE.

5	120	25
24	143	23
22		
21	20	143
19		
16	15	144
17		
14		
11	12	145
8	7	145
6	4	146
3	25	42
1	146	

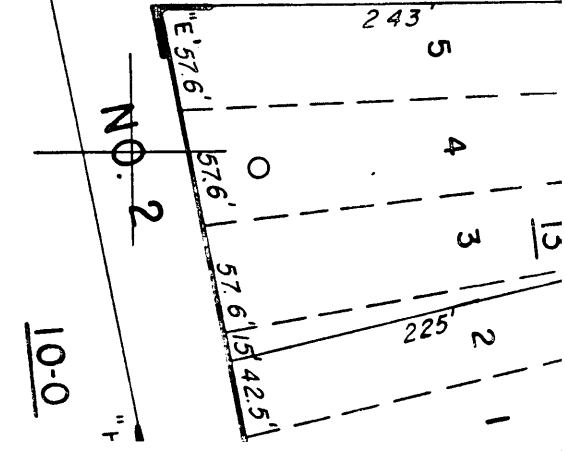
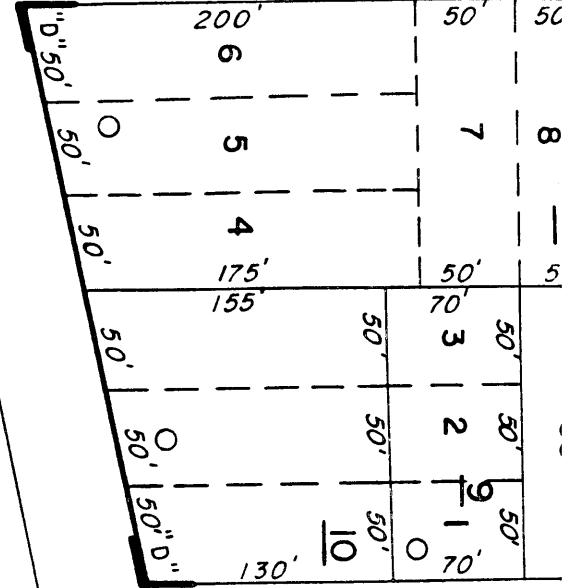
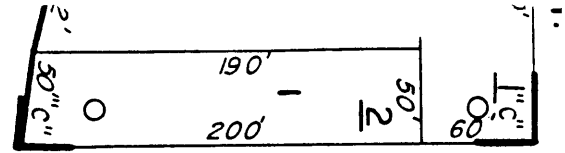
VIRGI



Keith, Alexander H., House  
110 Keith Lane  
Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee

TAX MAP 1" = 100'

HWY.



10-0