

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry House

AND/OR COMMON

J.L.M. Curry House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER Highway 21, about 3 miles east from the center of Talladega

CITY, TOWN

Talladega

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Third

STATE

Alabama

CODE

01

COUNTY

Talladega

CODE

121

**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 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"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. George W. Smelley

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Rte. 1

CITY, TOWN

Talladega

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Talladega County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Talladega

STATE

Alabama

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_ FEDERAL    \_\_ STATE    \_\_ COUNTY    \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The J.L.M. Curry house is a small, sturdy frame structure located in the midst of a large active farm. It was situated on a rise, with a commanding view of the cabins, fields and pastures of the plantation, as well as the mountains of northwest Alabama which surround Talladega. The exact age of the house is not known, but J.L.M. Curry's brother, Jackson, built the house and he moved to the area about 1850. March 4, 1847, Jabez L.M. Curry married Ann Alexander Bowie in Talladega, and when his brother offered his house for sale, Jabez Curry purchased it, since it was more convenient to his law office than his own home.

A wide columned porch extends across the entire front facade and around the east and west sides of the house, to and in front of, the wings. Where the porch ends at the wings on each side, a flight of stairs lead to the ground and there is a stairway to the front door as well. The most curious exterior feature of the house is the roof, which appears flat, but actually has a succession of gables, which have been boxed-in on the front and sides to make a squared-off roofline. This high horizontal piece across the top of the columned porch suggests an attempt at Greek Revival styling, very much in vogue for plantation houses of the period. The front door is framed by a transom and sidelights and the frame of the door, as well as the windows along the porch have some simple fluted molding with rosetted corners.

However, the rear of the house, from the point where the porch ends at the wings north, the character of the house changes almost completely. From this point the gable of the roof is exposed, as is the high red brick basement, there is no detailing around the windows and doors, and there are several additions to the original structure; one is a porch which encloses the back door at the center, and there are two additions on the west used for the kitchen.

The original section of the house has a central hall plan and is T-shaped. In the front portion are two 18 x 20' rooms, with back-to-back fireplaces, on each side of the hall. At the north end of the house are two smaller rooms on each side, which project out on each side of the house to form the small wings. The rooms of the west wing were J.L.M. Curry's office and the walls were once lined with bookshelves.

The kitchen addition was constructed to the north of this west wing. Prior to this the cooking was done in the basement. Like the exterior, the interior of the house has very little decoration. Dark wood trim, fireplaces in all the original rooms and some early Victorian-style furnishings maintain a sense of its mid-nineteenth century character. The nicest features are the simply designed, carved wooden mantel-pieces. The basic floor plan of the house remains intact, except for the addition of a bathroom at the north end of the central hall.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1850-1865 (period of residence) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Jabez Lamar **Monroe** Curry, politician, diplomat, and educator, was the key figure in the development of public education in the Southern States during the latter part of the 19th century. An enthusiastic advocate of universal education, Curry, through his work as agent for the George Peabody Education Fund and the John F. Slater Fund for the education of Negroes, did more than any other one man to encourage the expansion and improvement of the public school system and the establishment of training schools for teachers throughout the South. He was also largely responsible for convincing Southern legislators of the states' responsibility for public education.

Curry lived in this house from about 1850 until December 1865 when he became president of Howard College in Marion, Alabama. During his years of residence here Curry was involved in the turmoil of pre-Civil War politics at the State and national level, and he returned here after resigning from his seat in the Congress to cast his fortunes with the Confederacy.

### Biography

Born in Lincoln County, Georgia in 1825, Curry was 13 when his family moved to Talladega County, Alabama. The next year Curry entered Franklin College (now the University of Georgia) from which he graduated in 1843. From 1843 until 1845 he attended Harvard Law School. In 1845, he returned to Alabama, was admitted to the bar, and practiced law in Talladega County. In 1846 he served in the Mexican War.

Following this, he became in turn; a member of the Alabama legislature for three separate terms, 1847, 1853, and 1855; a member of the Congress, 1857-61; a member of the Confederate Congress, 1861-63 and 1864; a lieutenant-colonel in the Confederate Army, 1864-65; president of Howard College, Alabama, 1866-68; and professor of English philosophy and constitutional and international law at Richmond College (now the University of Richmond), 1868-81. Later he served as U.S. minister to Spain, 1885-88, and special ambassador to the coronation of King Alfonso XIII of Spain in 1902.

His major contribution to history, however, was made as administrator of two large educational endowments. In 1881 he was selected as general agent for the George Peabody Education Fund, a fund of over two million dollars which the great philanthropist established in 1867 for the purpose of promoting "intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwest States.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Branche, Birmingham, editor, Historic Homes of Alabama and Their Traditions, (Birmingham, Ala., 1935).  
 Olderman, E.A., and A.C. Gordon, J.L.M. Curry: A Biography, (1911).  
Alabama; A Guide to the Deep South, compiled by Workers of the Work Writers Project, (New York, 1941).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 760.51  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	16	59	04	50	37	02	70	00	B	16	59	04	50	37	01	40	00
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	16	58	71	50	37	01	40	00	D	16	58	71	50	37	02	70	00

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Curry House was once the center of a 1,100 acres plantation, including numerous outbuildings. Today the main house and the outside kitchen are the last of the original structures remaining on the still active 760acre farm. The landmark boundary includes the entire working farm. See continuation sheet.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ 1965  
 Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project; original report, Horace J. Sheely,  
 ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY OR TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

# 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.

Landmark DEC 21 1965  
 Designated: \_\_\_\_\_  
 date

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Boundary Certified:  
Henry Tomer  
 Oct. 2, 1978

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

DATE 4/29/79  
 DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET J.L.M. Curry House TEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 2

The unusually large brick for the raised basement were made on the plantation. Underneath the north section of the house are several rooms, with brick floors and walls. One has a big hearth and was used as the kitchen, the others were sleeping quarters.

The old outside kitchen, a weathered clapboarded building, is located just north of the house. The rectangular building, currently used for storage, has two rooms with a central chimney and large fireplaces.

The present owner's family has lived in the house and operated the farm for four generations.

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CONTINUATION SHEET J.L.M. Curry House TEM NUMBER #8 PAGE 2

Nine years later Curry also became agent for the John F. Slater Fund, a million dollar endowment established in 1882 for uplifting the "lately emancipated population of the Southern states, and their posterity by conferring on them the blessing of Christian education." Thus to Curry's able and energetic leadership came the means by which to foster educational progress in the South. Highly successful in this task, Curry continued to administer both funds until his death in 1903.

Four major achievements are credited to his administration of these endowments: State normal schools for both white and Negro in 12 of the Southern states; a system of public schools in the cities and small towns throughout the South; the grounding in the minds of legislators of their responsibility for adequate rural schools; and a body of educational literature, composed of 40 reports and 10 published addresses.

In 1898, Curry helped to organize the Conference for Education in the South, and in 1899 he was elected president of the Conference. An address that Curry made to the Conference forcefully presented the need for universal education, and the Conference henceforth adopted as its aim the training of both whites and Negroes throughout the South. In 1901, to carry out its programs, the Conference set up the Southern Educational Board with Curry as its supervising director. This Board's activities were endowed by George Peabody, who guaranteed funds of \$40,000 a year for the first two years of operation.

Before Curry's death, he had the satisfaction of seeing the establishment of the General Education Board which, in a sense, was an outgrowth of the Southern Educational Board and the culmination of Curry's work in behalf of universal education. The General Board, founded and endowed by John D. Rockefeller, Sr., in 1902, was incorporated by an act of Congress on January 12, 1903. Its purpose was the promotion of education in the United States "without distinction of race, sex, or creed."

\*\*\*This biography taken from the original report, 1965.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

10

PAGE

1

The following is the legal description of the J. L.M. Curry house as shown on the assesment records:

South-half of South-half of Section 18, Township 18, Range 6

South-half of Southwest Quarter of Section 17, Township 18 , Range 6

Southeast Quarter of Section 17, Township, Township 18, Range 6

Northeast Quarter of Section 19, Township 18, Range 6

Northwest Quarter of Section 20, Township 18, Range 6

North-half of Northeast Quarter of Section 20

Total acreage 760.51