

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Catron, Minatree, House

other names/site number Minatree Acres

2. Location

street & number 1/10 mi. w. of jct. U.S. 24 & Co. Rd. 110 [n/a] not for publication

city or town Lexington [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Lafayette code 107 zip code 64096

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered
significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Claire F. Blackwell
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

5 October 1992
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] 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

See continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing.

Antebellum Resources of Johnson,
Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties,
Missouri

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

GREEK REVIVAL

Materials

foundation Brick
walls Brick

roof Metal
other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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

Areas of Significance

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

ca. 1843

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN/Catron, Christopher, Jr.,
and Catron, Minatree

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 431010 4336870

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Maserang/Historic Preservation Coordinator

organization Pioneer Trails Regional Council date March 31, 1996

street & number 122 Hout Street telephone 816/747-2294

city or town Warrensburg state Missouri zip code 64093

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert Catron

street & number 1226 W. 56th Street telephone _____

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64113

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The Minatree Catron House, U.S. Highway 24 and Lafayette County Road 110, near Lexington, Missouri, is a brick, central passage, vernacular Greek Revival I-House with an ell (see MPS cover document, "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri: Associated Property Types: Greek Revival I-Houses, Central Passage Subtype"). The five-bay primary elevation is dominated by a two-story pedimented portico supported by square brick columns, exemplifying the full-height entry porch subtype as described by McAlester and McAlester.¹ Upper and lower entrances are transomed and flanked with sidelights, and the brick porch columns are repeated as engaged pilasters. Although needing rehabilitation, the circa 1843 Minatree Catron House is an outstanding local example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture as produced on the Missouri frontier by transplanted agriculturalists from the Upland South, and it retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting and location. Antebellum outbuildings which once included a slave house are gone but the property remains within an agricultural setting.

The L-shaped Minatree Catron House rests on its original brick foundation on the north side of U.S. Highway 24, where the road follows the route of the old Santa Fe Trail between Lexington and Dover (Dover Road). The south-oriented house is approximately five miles east of Lexington.

Dimensions of the symmetrical main block are 50 feet across the front by 20 feet deep, with two windows flanking a central entrance on both floors. A one-story ell attached to the left (west) rear of the main block is 18 feet wide and 32 feet deep. The portico, which is 16 feet wide, extends 12 feet from the main block. The soft, homemade brick is laid in a common bond. Exterior walls of the main block are between 13 and 14 inches thick. The building has a weathered coating of light gray paint.

Integral chimneys of shaped masonry project from both ends of the gable roof. An exterior masonry chimney with a tapering upper segment is at the rear of the ell, where the kitchen was located. Typical for the style, there is minimal front and rear overhang and in this example the roof terminates flush with the side walls. Frieze bands beneath the front and rear cornice are plain. The entire house is roofed with seamed metal consisting of corrugated as well as smooth sheets.

The pedimented two-story portico is supported by square, 21-inch Doric columns made of the same soft brick as the rest of the house. This is somewhat uncommon: Wood appears to have been a much more prevalent choice for porch columns on local Greek Revival houses. Bases are absent and the brick simply continues below ground level. Plain capitals have been fashioned from mitered wood moldings. At some point, the original balustrade on the upper porch deck was replaced with a beadboard railing. Beadboard also covers the ceiling of the pedimented top. The lower porch deck has a simple stick railing. The present lower porch floor consists of concrete slabs.

Load-bearing square timbers set flush in the brick walls serve as lintels for door and window openings. The frontispiece both upstairs and downstairs consists of a simple pilastered entablature with full lights. Upstairs, the transom is narrower but otherwise is identical to the downstairs unit, with six oblong panes. Sidelights consist of single, narrow rectangular panes above small panels. Windows are double-hung units with either 6/6 or 6/1 lights. Lugsills are wood. Original fenestration is largely intact although a Victorian oriel window in the west wall of the ell is an obvious, probably turn-of-the-century, modification.

The floor plan and interior woodwork are typical of the basic Upland South I-House. There are two more or

¹McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p. 179.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

less similar rooms at opposite ends of the main block and two bedrooms directly above, separated by a hallway containing a two-flight staircase. An ell contains a dining room directly behind the main block and a kitchen at the rear end. Interior woodwork includes shouldered architraves above door and window openings in the main block, wide baseboards, and pilaster mantels. Pilaster mantels are intact in the dining room and upstairs bedrooms, but mantels in the east and west parlors have been altered. A brick fireplace is in the kitchen. The central hallway contains a right-hand, free-standing, two-flight staircase with a walnut balustrade and tapering round newel post. Decorative scrollwork is present on the curving string of the staircase.

Interior walls are plaster over brick. Most of the old wallpaper has been removed. Ceilings are plaster over hickory laths. Rafters are said to be sycamore. Floor joists are made of walnut.² On the first floor, hardwood flooring has been installed over the original pine boards. The front door stoop is a thick walnut plank.

The east parlor, 18 1/2 feet wide and 17 1/2 feet deep, is a foot wider than the west parlor. The ell is entered from a wide passageway at the rear of the west parlor. The back wall of the east parlor contains an entrance where a one-story porch was removed from the rear of the main block, probably in the 1960s. Both parlors contain brick fireplace surrounds which are replacements for the original wooden pilaster mantels. Original mantel shelves are still used, however. Presses in the west parlor apparently have been altered. The water-damaged floor of the east parlor has been removed, exposing native walnut log floor joists. Also revealed are pipes which are part of the central heating or water systems installed when the house was remodeled in circa 1918.³

Upstairs, the more expensive enframements with "Greek ears" which are used on the first floor are continued in the hallway. Inside the bedrooms, however, door and window surrounds are topped with simple pediment-shaped boards. Curvilinear moldings are under the window sills. Original pilaster mantels are intact in the bedrooms, but they are smaller than those on the main floor. Adjacent to the mantel in the west bedroom is a built-in press, with upper and lower compartments.

Decades-old additions include a small porch toward the rear of the ell on the west side, and a wood-sided bathroom addition in the angle between the main block and the ell.

An old concrete sidewalk leads southward from the portico to concrete steps at the property line above the highway right-of-way. The sidewalk also curves around the west side of the house. At least three wells are on the property. Cedar trees are south of the house, in the front yard. A family burial ground is west of the house. No antebellum outbuildings are extant. Slave-related properties originally included five log slave cabins and a brick slave house.⁴

Present outbuildings are not antebellum but some are of sufficient age to enhance rather than detract from the agricultural setting of the nominated property. If the period of significance for agriculture is developed in the cover document to include the early 20th century, a transverse frame barn and a center-drive granary may be eligible.

²Catron, Bess Davis, "Minatree Acres," A History of Homes: A Collection of Historical Sketches of the Slusher Community (Slusher Homemakers Club, 1936), p. 37.

³Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963), p. 93.

⁴Catron, Bessie D., op cit., p. 37, and Manuscript Census, Slave Schedules, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1860.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

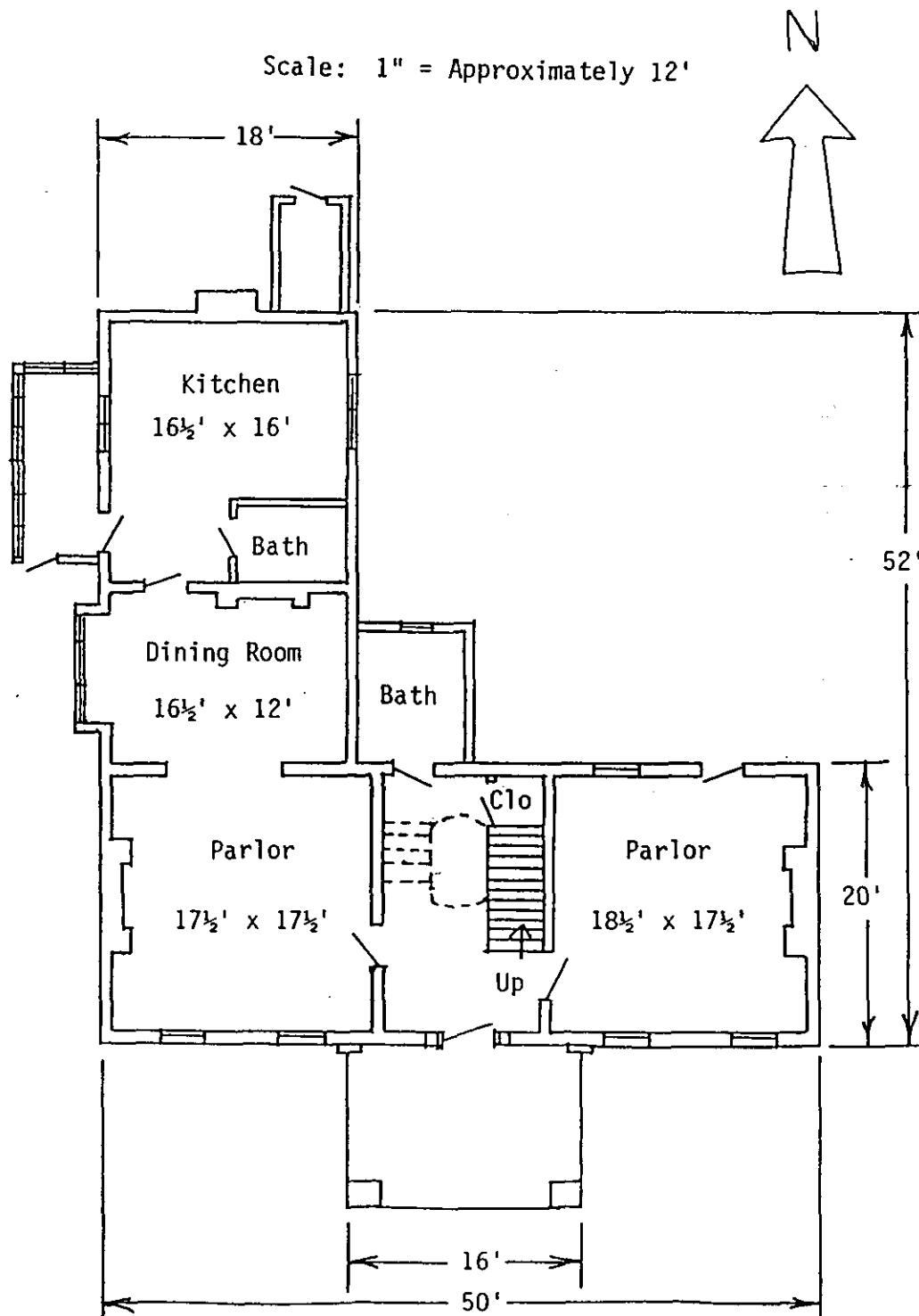
Section 7 Page 3

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

First Floor Plan

Scale: 1" = Approximately 12'



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The Minatree Catron House, U.S. Highway 24 at County Road 110, Lafayette County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in the areas of AGRICULTURE and ARCHITECTURE. Built in circa 1843, the Catron House is associated with the local development of a plantation lifestyle by migrating Southerners who settled in the Missouri River Valley in the decades preceding the Civil War (see MPS cover document, "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri: The Development of Plantations, 1830s-1860s, and Agriculture and the Hemp Culture, 1830s-1860s"). The Catron House is significant under Criterion A for agriculture as the only extant building of a documented antebellum hemp plantation, of which it was the center. The building, a brick I-House with a full-height portico of a locally uncommon design, is significant under Criterion C as an impressive local example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture as interpreted on the frontier of western Missouri (see MPS cover document, "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, and Saline Counties, Missouri: Associated Property Types: Greek Revival I-Houses, Central Passage Subtype"). The stylistic elements of these properties, often crafted under challenging conditions, represent an attempt by their builders to remain identified with the Southern culture of their past where Greek Revival mansions were the homes of the aristocracy. The Catron House retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location and setting.

Located in the heart of Lafayette County's prime hemp growing region, Minatree Catron's plantation was only three miles from Lexington, a major port on the Missouri River where hemp factories as well as warehouses competed for business from the area's hemp farmers. Catron perhaps exemplified the more successful slaveowning plantation owners in Missouri's Little Dixie.⁵ While committing heavily to hemp, and investing heavily in slaves, Catron greatly expanded his farm's overall productivity and size between 1850-60. Catron's farm consisted of 225 improved and 275 unimproved acres in 1850. Six hundred acres were available for farming by 1860, after the clearing of much of his timbered land and the purchase of additional acreage; 70 acres were unimproved. The farm's cash value doubled during this period, from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Catron engaged in diversified agriculture while also cultivating large amounts of hemp. Catron harvested 18 tons of dew-rotted hemp in 1850, a fairly substantial amount for that year, and 34 tons a decade later. Thirty-four tons, while surpassed by some of the larger plantations, was a prodigious amount of hemp compared with the production of most other local growers. Much of the labor necessary for harvesting this labor-intensive crop was provided by slaves: 20 in 1850, and 30 in 1860. In 1850 in addition to hemp, Catron's plantation produced 3,000 bushels of corn, 500 bushels of wheat, 300 bushels of oats, 90 bushels of potatoes, 15 tons of hay, 160 pounds of beeswax and honey, 500 pounds of butter, 60 pounds of wool and orchard products valued at \$50. Catron owned 30 beef cattle, 35 sheep, 100 swine and 13 cows. Draft animals consisted of 6 oxen, a mule and 15 horses. The livestock were valued at \$1,200.

By 1860 most of these numbers, as well as those for hemp, had increased significantly: 5,000 bushels of corn, 650 bushels of wheat, 400 bushels of oats, 175 bushels of potatoes, 25 tons of hay, along with 400 pounds of butter and 150 pounds of wool. Catron's herd of beef cattle now totaled 65, and he had 110 sheep, 250 swine, 25 cows, 8 oxen, 15 horses and 14 mules.⁶ The additional mules probably were used for clearing land and expanding agricultural production but it is also possible that Catron had developed an interest in mule breeding.

⁵"Little Dixie" is a slaveholding belt consisting of seven counties bordering the Missouri River: Lafayette, Saline, Boone, Callaway, Clay, Cooper and Howard.

⁶Manuscript Census, Agriculture, Lafayette County, Missouri, 1850 and 1860.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The Catron family was relatively small. In 1850, the family consisted of Minatree, his wife Martha, and their two children, Henry and Evelyn. By 1860, Evelyn was no longer living at home but an "overseer," Loch Terhune, had been hired to manage the farm.⁷ Much of the labor for operating the plantation was provided by the Catron's slaves (20 in 1850, 30 in 1860). The slaves lived in five log cabins and a larger brick unit which housed two families and contained a smokehouse.

The Minatree Catron House is a good local version of vernacular Greek Revival architecture as interpreted in Missouri's Little Dixie by migrating agriculturalists from the Upland South. Although the Catron House is a relatively threadbare example in which only the basic classical features are emphasized, a strong Greek Revival statement is made. Too, the Catron House is one of only a few local Greek Revival buildings with full-height porticos, while the uncommon use of soft brick instead of wood for the towering columns further enhances its architectural significance. In circa 1843, slaves are said to have fired the soft brick for its construction in a nearby kiln.⁸ The former plantation house was erected by members of the extended Catron family, which originally came to Lafayette County from Virginia and Tennessee in 1818.

According to family history, Minatree Catron's brother, Christopher Catron Jr., was instrumental in constructing not only the Minatree Catron House but other Dover Road homes as well. The Catrons fabricated many of their own tools to work the native walnut, hickory, sycamore and other woods used in erecting their vernacular dwellings. Except for the interior trim (primarily pine) which was shipped from St. Louis, virtually everything else made of wood was sawn, split, hewn, notched and smoothed by hand on the premises. The slaves who fired the bricks undoubtedly provided much labor, but the Catrons probably did the actual setting of bricks and carpentry. Christopher Jr. was "of a mechanical bent and burnt the brick for his house and laid it himself." Another brother, John, had learned the trade of bricklaying by spending two years apprenticed to a bricklayer.⁹

Minatree Catron's house, apparently the only full-blown central passage I-House constructed locally by the family, was larger and more pretentious than those of his brothers. The others, known as Clara Vista and the Catron-Lichte House, both razed, were double-pen I-Houses. Their parents originally lived in a log house upon settling in Lafayette County.

Minatree Catron was one of five children of Christopher and Euphamie Catron, who came to Lafayette County in 1818. The Catrons were of German descent and Minatree's mother was Welsh, but they were born in Virginia. Minatree and his wife Martha were born in Tennessee. The elder Catron, who built the family's original log house, is said to have broken the first prairie soil in Lafayette County but he died the next year, 1819, at the age of 33.¹⁰

Politically, Minatree Catron was almost certainly a Democrat like brother John Catron. Whether Minatree supported the strong pro-slavery wing of John C. Breckinridge or moderate Stephen A. Douglas in the 1860 election is unknown. But in the second year of the Civil War, perhaps due to the loss of his approximately 30

⁷Missouri Seventh and Eighth Censuses, Population and Slave Schedules.

⁸Catron, Bess Davis, op cit., p. 36.

⁹Fulbright, Edna Frey, "Clara Vista," A History of Homes: A Collection of Historical Sketches of Slusher Community, op cit., pp. 73-77; Portrait and Biographical Record of Lafayette and Saline Counties (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1893), pp. 551-552.

¹⁰Catron, Bess Davis, op cit., pp. 36-38.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

slaves and consequently much of his fortune, and also afflicted with typhoid fever, Minatree Catron drowned himself, according to family history, in the Missouri River. The date was August 12, 1862.¹¹

The slave houses and other antebellum outbuildings are gone but the Catron House, a significant local property which once was the center of an antebellum hemp plantation operated by slaves, remains strongly evocative of its historic past. However, leaks in the main roof need immediate attention if the Catron House is to survive. Also present are a few agricultural outbuildings which, while not part of the antebellum plantation context, are sufficiently old to enhance the agricultural flavor of the setting.

¹¹Portrait and Biographical Record of Lafayette and Saline Counties. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1893, pp. 551-552; Catron, Bess Davis, op cit., p. 37; Catron, Robert Catron, telephone interview, October 10, 1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9.10 Page 7

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

Catron, Robert (great-grandson of Minatree Catron). Telephone interview with Roger Maserang, Show-Me Regional Planning Commission/Pioneer Trails Regional Council. October 10, 1995.

Missouri Historic Inventory Survey Form No. 69, "Catron House." Lafayette County Survey, December 1988. Copy in Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, MO.

Slusher Homemakers Club, A History of Homes: A Collection of Historical Sketches of Slusher Community, 1936. (Various contributors. Typewritten and mimeographed.)

(For additional bibliographic information, see MPA cover document "Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri.")

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Lafayette County road 110 and U.S. Highway 24, proceed north eighty feet to the north edge of the right-of-way of Highway 24 to the point of beginning; then proceed north 200 feet; then proceed west 262.5 feet; then proceed south 150 feet to the north edge of the right-of-way of Highway 24; then proceed east along the north right-of-way of Highway 24 to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary has been drawn to include only the Minatree Catron House and its immediate surroundings; it excludes a number of agricultural buildings and a mobile home to the north of the house which do not relate to the areas or period of significance and the adjacent farmland, much of which was part of the original farmstead but which has been converted to modern practices of cultivation and processing and no longer retains integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photographs Page 8

Catron, Minatree, House
Lafayette County, MO

Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, MPS

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Catron, Minatree, House

Lexington vicinity, Lafayette County, Missouri

Date photographed: November 1995

Photographer: Roger Maserang

Negative Location: Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Program

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City, MO 65102

#1: View from south

#2: View from west

#3: View from southeast

#4: View from north

#5: Pedimented portico, view from south

#6: Detail of upstairs entrance

#7: View from portico upper deck, facing south

#8: Staircase in hallway, facing north

#9: East parlor facing southeast

#10: Detail of walnut joists, facing west

#11: West parlor, facing west

#12: Mantel in dining room, facing northwest

#13: Upstairs hallway, facing south

#14: Doorway to west bedroom, facing west

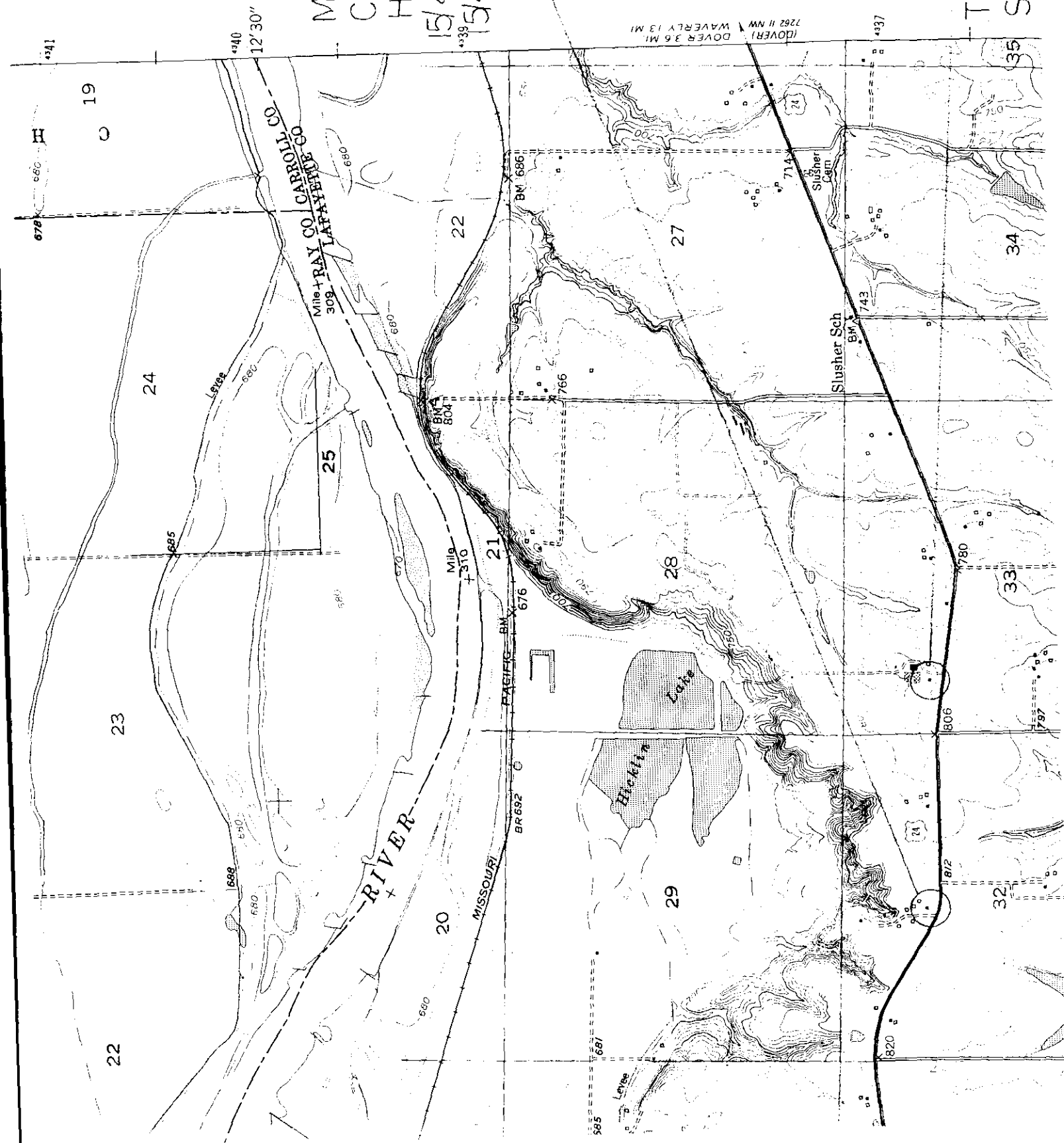
#15: Mantel in west bedroom, facing west

#16: View from south

Circa 1940

Photographer unknown

THOMAS
SHELBY

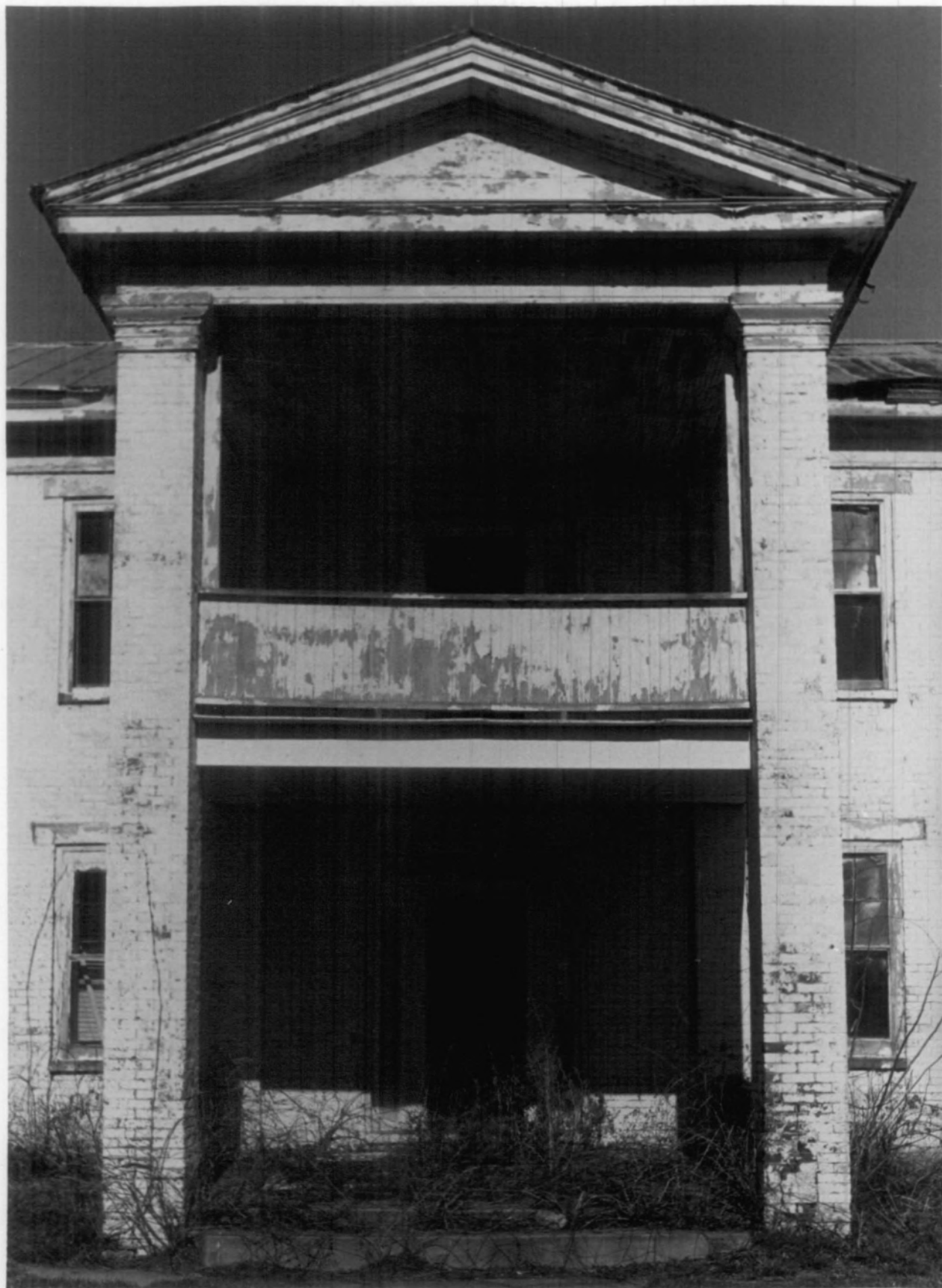












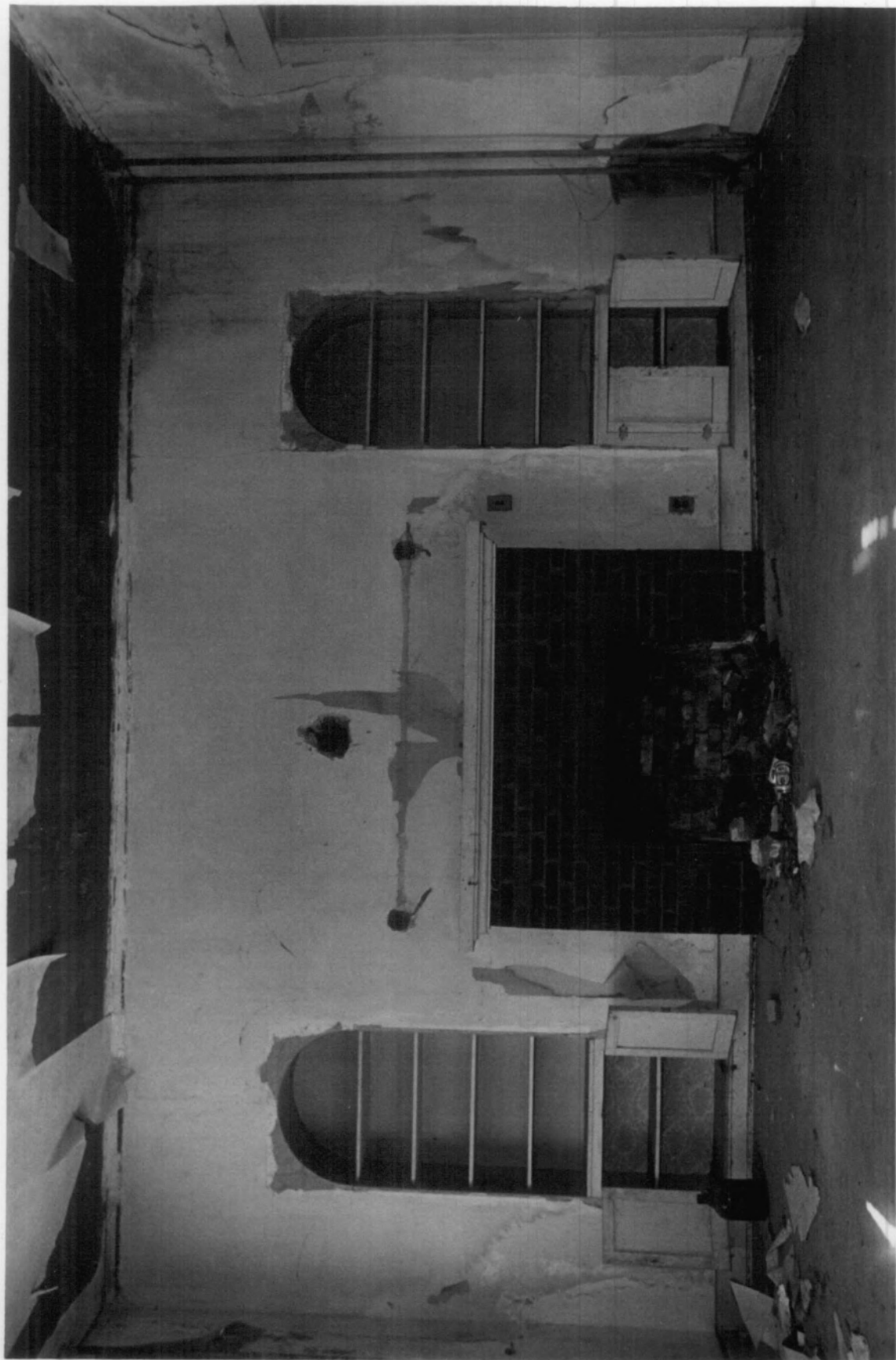










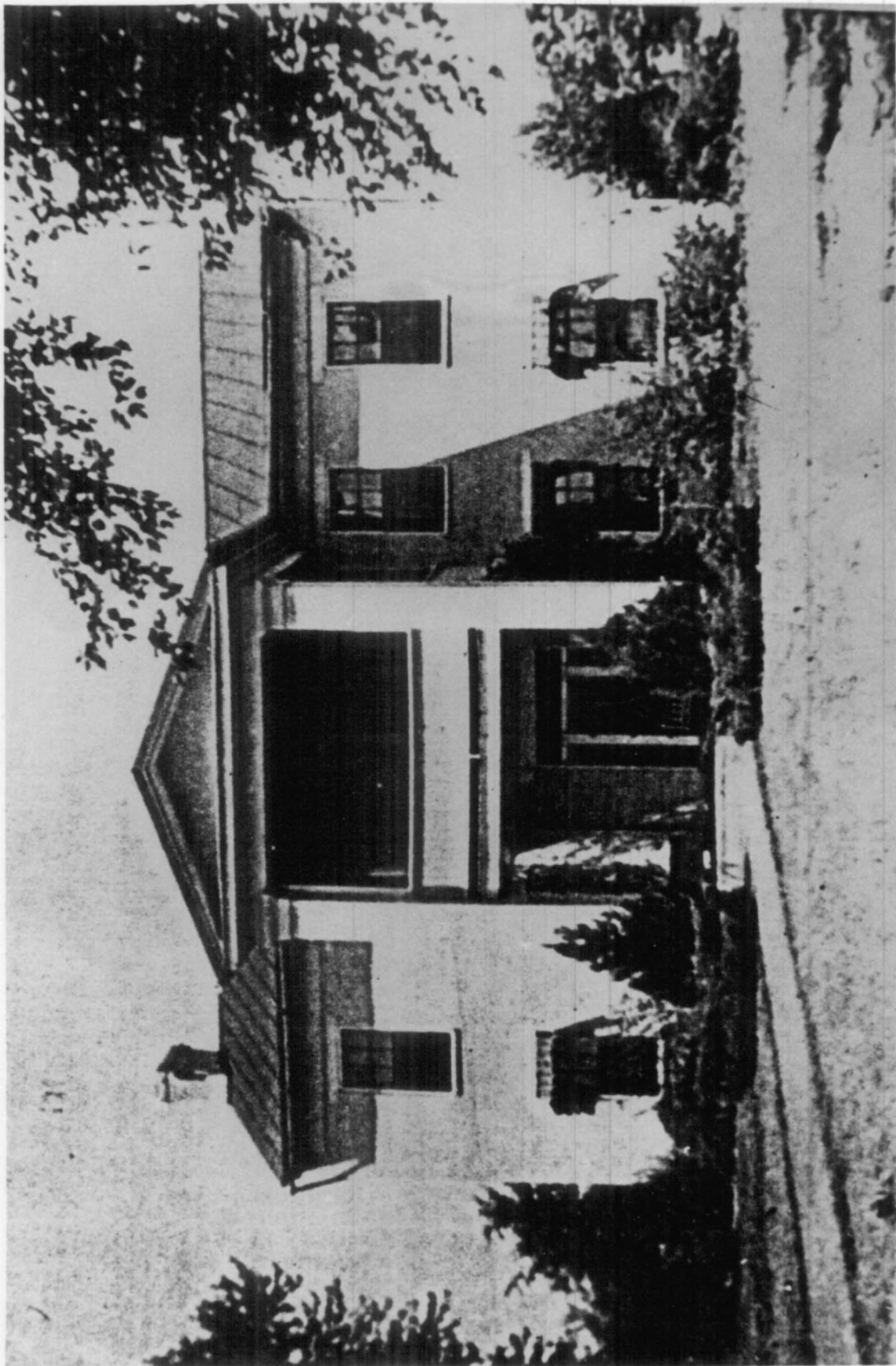












EXTRA
PHOTOS





