

Johnson-Rawlinson House
Pineflat community, Autauga County
Location: N half of Sec. 11, Range 16 E, Township 19 N

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Built by James Lafayette Johnson, a Confederate veteran, ca 1867-70. Johnson began to purchase farmland in Section 11 in 1855. By January of 1860 he owned 280 acres. [Autauga Co Tractbook: A&H].

Born in Alabama about 1824, Johnson married Mary Lewis of Autauga County. By June 1860 Johnson was farming the sandy-clay Piedmont soil of the Pineflat area with his widowed mother-in-law, Martha Lewis. At that time the census taker listed Johnson, his 26 year-old wife and their 7 children (ages nine and younger) as living with Mrs. Lewis. (The Lewis house still stands on present Ben Gibbons III place near the Johnson-Rawlinson residence.) With five slaves plus real and personal property valued at \$5200 in 1860, the Lewis family was well above the average Alabama household in wealth. The 1860 agricultural census lists Johnson as farming 145 acres, 45 of them "improved." He owned 1 horse, 3 cows and 7 other head of cattle, and had produced that year 60 bushels of corn and 4 bales of cotton. He himself held only two slaves: a 14 year-old girl and an 8 year-old boy. [1860 Census, Autauga Co., population schedule, p. 1; agricultural census, p. 5].

During Civil War, James Johnson served with Confederate forces on the Alabama-Tennessee line. He got leave, came home and was ordered to report back to South Carolina -- traveling by horseback to Notasulga, and from there by rail to Carolina. He arrived just as the war ended, so he returned to Alabama. [Telephone interview, Ben Gibbons, Sr., Deatsville, May 1996]

Between 1867 and 1870 according to family tradition, Johnson erected residence today known as Johnson-Rawlinson house on his own farm half a mile southwest of his mother-in-law's home. As built, present four-room dwelling supplemented by separate structure containing dining room and kitchen and linked to main house by breezeway. There were also log barns and outbuildings. Became one of largest farmers in area during late 19 C. Died about 1905, followed by his wife 2 years later. Buried in cemetery at nearby Pineflat Presbyterian Church. Heirs to farm sold it ca 1950 to Rawlinson family. [Gibbons interview]

In 1995, entire farm purchase by Jeff and Melody Moncrief to be subdivided into large residential lots. Owners have informally agreed, if buyer can be found, to sell house and 10 acres under restoration covenant.

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SIGNIFICANCE: Local/ Architecture

In a rural, upland farming area where log domestic construction prevailed through the mid-19th century, the Johnson-Rawlinson house represents the beginnings of mass transition to framed dwellings. This, in turn, resulted from an increasingly sophisticated economic and transportational infrastructure -- a growth that proceeded in this area despite the general social and political upheaval of the Reconstruction era. Yeoman farmers like James Johnson had greater access to market than ever before, while building materials from outside the immediate area became ever more affordable and readily available with the gradual extension of a rail line through the area -- the North and South Alabama (later the L&N) -- immediately after the Civil War.

It is also a rare surviving example in rural Autauga County of Reconstruction-era middle-class domestic architecture. Its front porch design, with cantilevered overhang carried on chamfered posts, is likewise an ingenious functional response to local climatic conditions. The attention given this feature in a dwelling of relatively modest proportions reiterates the idea of the porch as one of the icons of early southern material culture.

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DESCRIPTION

A single story, asymmetrical house of framed construction, facing due N.

House originally sheathed in board and batten (horizontal weatherboarding replaced sheathing on front elevation ca 1900). Perimeter foundation consists of a mixture of fieldstone and brick piers, with stump piers underneath. A gable roof with intersecting cross gable at W end; 2 interior brick chimneys. 9/9 windows (replaced mid 20 C). Porches front and rear, abutting projecting E pavilion and extending W to end of house (rear porch later enclosed as kitchen and dining area). Originally a covered breezeway linked W end of back porch with 2-room building at rear containing dining room and kitchen.

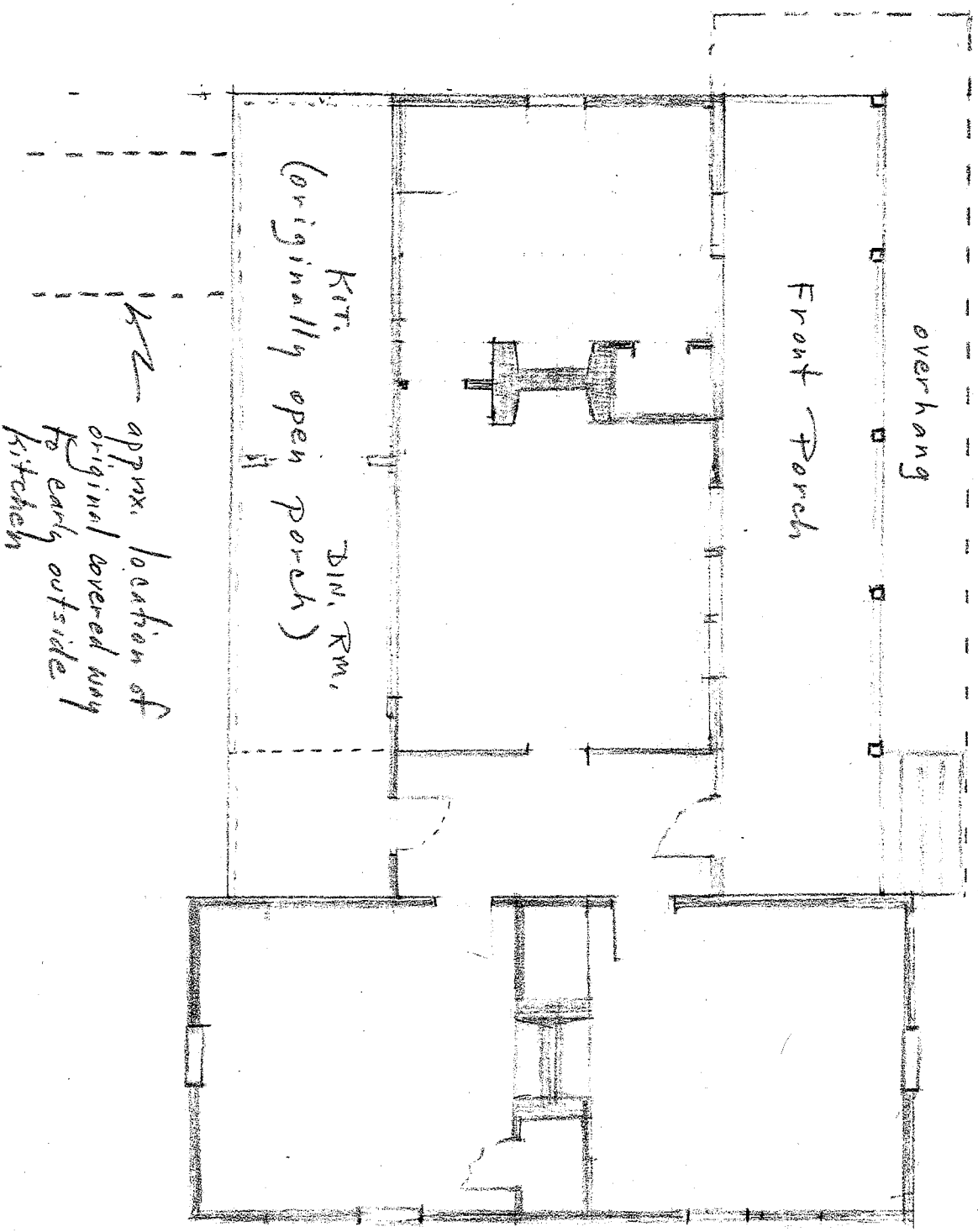
Most distinctive feature is overhanging front porch, cantilevered and braced so as to extend several feet beyond porch itself. Latticed railing links 4 chamfered posts carrying porch roof.

Inside: lateral "T" plan, with pair of rooms on E side of what was originally a through-hall forming cross-bar of "T," while pair of rooms on W forms stem. Each pair of rooms served by back-to-back fireplaces. Original 4-panel doors in major areas, with batten doors at closets and at rear of W room. Two original mantelpieces (W room and SE room) evince a vernacular Greek Revival design, while two others (central parlor and NE room) date from ca 1900. Original pine floor is pine tongue and groove. Interior seems to have been sheathed originally with 4-6" flush boarding; some interior finish replaced by narrow early 20 C tongue and groove. Wood shake roof replaced early 20 C by metal seam roof.

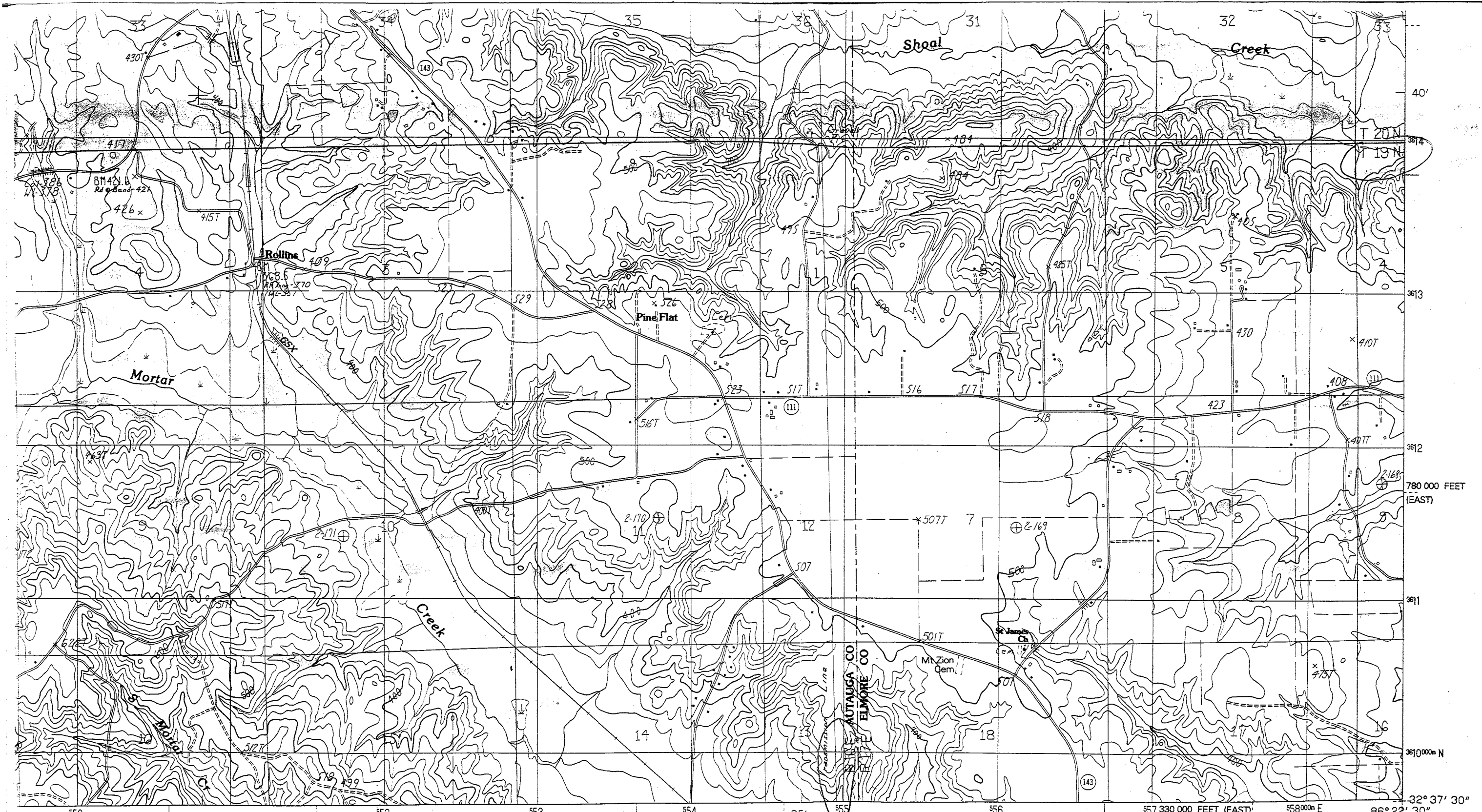
Changes to original structure include replacement of original 9/9 windows and front door. Also enclosure of rear porch to create kitchen, small dining area, and bath. A triple window has replaced original two front windows of parlor (central room); likewise, broad dining room door inserted into rear wall of parlor.

Outbuildings include covered wellhouse at SW corner of house and large 20 C metal barn to S (rear).

N
A

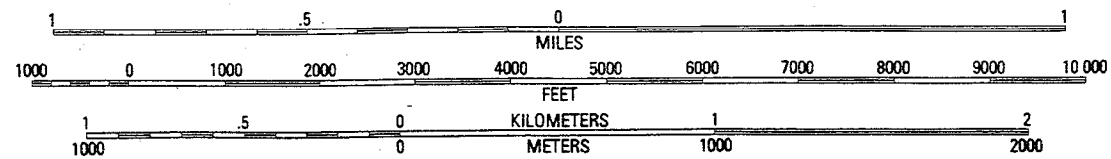


Johnson - Paulinson House (c. 1869-70)
Pineflat - Antelope County



SCALE 1:24 000

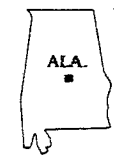
INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1987



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 FOOT
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST FOOT
To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

- ROAD LEGEND
- Improved Road
 - Unimproved Road
 - Trail
 - Interstate Route
 - U.S. Route
 - State Route

1	2	3	1 Clanton East
			2 Mitchell Dam
			3 Richville
4		5	4 White City
			5 Holtville
			6 Old Kingston
6	7	8	7 Deatsville
			8 Elmore

MARBURY, ALABAMA
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1987

PROVISIONAL MAP
reduced from original
manuscript drawings. Information
shown as of date of

*R16E
T19N
N 1/2 4 Sec. 11*















