

CLAIBORNE ROBINSON HOUSE
North Mulberry-Oregon Street Neighborhood
113 North Mulberry Street
Georgetown
Scott County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-221

HABS

KY-221

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
100 Alabama St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CLAIBORNE ROBINSON HOUSE

HABS No. KY-221

North Mulberry-Oregon Street Neighborhood
Location: 113 North Mulberry Street
Georgetown, Kentucky
Scott county, Kentucky

U.S.G.S. topographic quadrangle: Georgetown (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates:
16.712800.4231580

Present Owner: Georgetown Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency

Present Occupant: vacant

Present Use: none (scheduled for demolition)

Statement of Significance: The Claiborne Robinson house is an example of a turn-of-the-century residence built for African-American citizens in a small southern city. Its shotgun plan is typical of houses built on narrow urban lots by or for working-class families, often of African-American ethnicity. Its original owner, a white woman with considerable rental property, was largely responsible for the development of the small neighborhood in which this house is located as a small African-American community occupied largely by renters. Thus, this site is an example of a specific ethnic and urban settlement pattern for the late 19th-early 20th century.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** circa 1895-1901 (lot was sold to Cantrill in 1895; house shown on 1901 Sanborn insurance map)

2. **Architect/Builder:** unknown; house constructed under the ownership of either Claiborne Robinson or Mary Cecil Cantrill.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:**

1842 deed, recorded in Volume R, p. 401, Particular Baptist Church to George L. Vallandingham. This deed refers to subsequent sale of property to Robert Garlick, and then to Mark Kershaw.

1859 deed, recorded in Volume 4, p. 535, Mark and Elizabeth Kershaw to Betsey Robinson, "a free woman of color".

1894 deed, March 10, 1894, recorded in Volume 29, p. 59. Betsey Robinson to Claiborne Robinson.

1895 deed, March 23, 1895, recorded in Volume 29, p. 406, Claiborne Robinson to Mary C. Cantrill.

1903 deed, January 1, 1903, recorded in Volume 35, p. 340, James E. and Mary C. Cantrill to George V. Payne, Trustee of Mary C. Cantrill.

1925 deed, November 16, 1925, recorded in Volume 54, p. 597, W. R. Hall et al. to Trustees, Wesley Chapel M. E. Church.

1929 deed, December 28, 1929, recorded in Volume 58, p. 131, Trustees, Wesley Chapel M.E. Church to E. B. and Bettie W. Davis.

1946 deed, August 17, 1946, recorded in Volume 72, p. 351, Betty W. Davis et al. to Cecil and Mamie Scott.

1990 deed, August 31, 1990, recorded in Volume 186, p. 222, Cecil Scott to Georgetown Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency.

4. **Alterations and additions:** none

B. Historical Context: The Claiborne Robinson house has served as a rental property for all or most of its uselife. The land on which it stands originally belonged to Betsey Robinson, a "free woman of color", who lived next door but apparently never built a house on this part of her lot. She deeded the lot on which this house stands to her son, Claiborne, in 1894, as an advance on his inheritance. He sold the lot in 1895 to Mary Cecil Cantrill, a white businesswoman who owned most of the property in the small surrounding neighborhood. Mrs. Cantrill acquired the remainder of Betsey Robinson's land from her heirs after she died in 1896. The houses standing on the Robinson property and adjacent tracts on Oregon Street and Post Office Alley encompassed the bulk of this small neighborhood and were all rentals.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement: The Claiborne Robinson house is a one story, shed-roofed, vernacular shotgun dwelling with clapboard siding, having an irregular two-bay front with parapet. The house is very simple with a wood cornice and chamfered porch posts comprising spare design details. The angle of the roof creates a one-and-a-half story elevation in the front that decreases to a single story in the rear. Only the first floor was finished for occupancy.

1. Architectural character: This house merits recording because it is an example of a subtype of the shotgun house plan, frequently associated with 19th and 20th century African-American working-class neighborhoods. Its shed roof treatment is a less common variant of the classic gable-roofed shotgun house.

2. Condition of fabric: poor

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 16' by 40', excluding porch.

2. Foundations: stone piers with stone perimeter infill under the living area; concrete block rear porch foundation; front porch supported by stone pads.

3. Walls: sawn wood frame; dimensional lumber.

4. Structural system, framing: assumed to be ballooned framing.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: A full, shed-roofed front porch extends across the front facade. It is supported by three chamfered, square posts, has a wood floor and measures 14' 6" by 6'. The rear shed porch measures 8' 2" by 5' 5" and is attached to the southwest corner of the building.

6. Chimneys: A brick chimney is located on the south side of the house between the first and second rooms. A brick flue is in the south wall of the rear room.

7. Openings: (By elevations)
The two-bay front (east) elevation features a four panel door with the upper two panels replaced with glass panes, and a 6/6 sash window; each with simple board trim. The front door is offset to the interior doors.

The south side wall features irregular three bay fenestration of two 6/6 sash and one vertical 3/3 sash windows. Two brick flues extend through the roof.

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The west rear elevation has two irregular bays, a vertical 3/6 sash (altered window) and a four panel door (like the front entry with no glass).

The north side wall has two irregular window bays of 6/6 sash.

8. Roof and cornice: shed type; unknown covering; slightly projecting molded wood cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The front room measures 15' by 14' 3". A chimney is in the southwest corner of this room. The middle room is L-shaped owing to a small room (5' 7" by 5') in its northwest corner. A chimney is located in the southeast corner of the larger room. The rear room measures 15' by 9' 10" and opens onto the back porch.

2. Flooring: pine tongue and groove strip flooring.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: original plaster walls with various patch materials; tongue and groove painted pine wainscot in rear room.

4. Openings: four panel interior doors like exterior examples.

5. Decorative features and trim: The interior features molded baseboard trim, and a molded door surround with bullseye corner blocks. A painted cast iron mantle is set diagonally in the front room and has a curved shelf, curvilinear panels and a centered shield-type ornament above a curved firebox opening. A bracketed mantel shelf hangs in the center room over the fireplace opening that has been covered over.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The house is located on the west side of North Mulberry Street and fronts east.

2. Historic landscape design: none

3. Outbuildings: none

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: none

B. Early views: none

C. Interviews: none

D. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Scott county deed books and circuit court records (see Section I.3); Ann Bolton Bevins, 1989, INVOLVEMENT OF BLACKS IN SCOTT COUNTY COMMERCE DURING THE POSTBELLUM PERIOD (1865-1918). Manuscript on file, Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

2. Secondary and published sources: none known

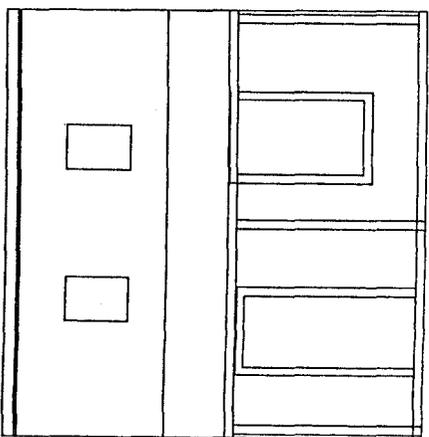
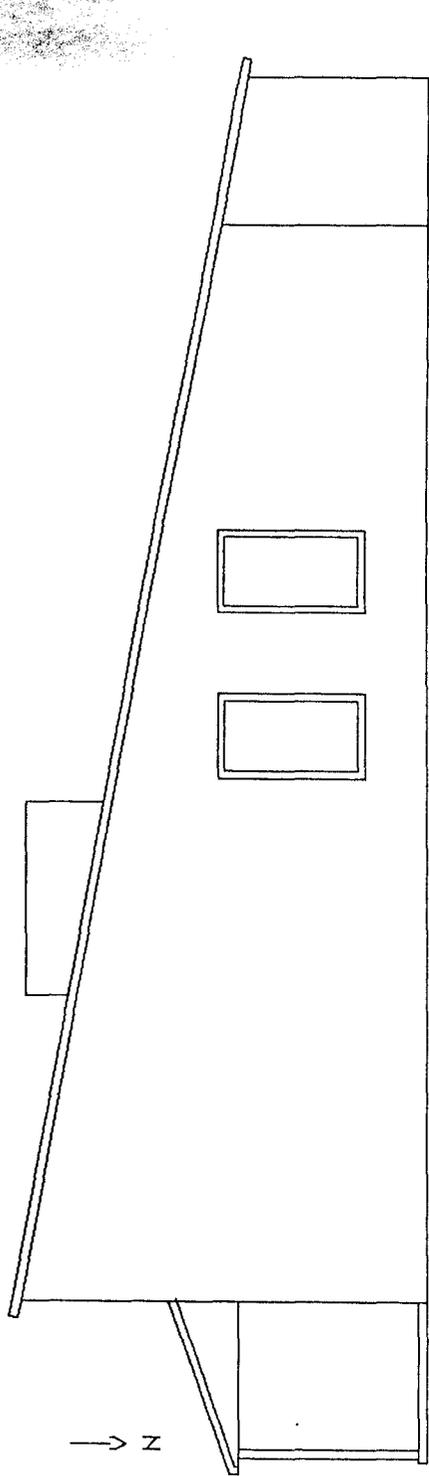
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The HABS documentation of this and other buildings is being performed to comply with the requirements of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Georgetown and the Kentucky Heritage Council. The City of Georgetown received a CDBG grant to acquire these buildings in order to demolish them, owing to their poor condition and because they are unsuitable for rehabilitation and reuse. The MOA required that the structures be documented according to HABS criteria and accepted by HABS prior to demolition.

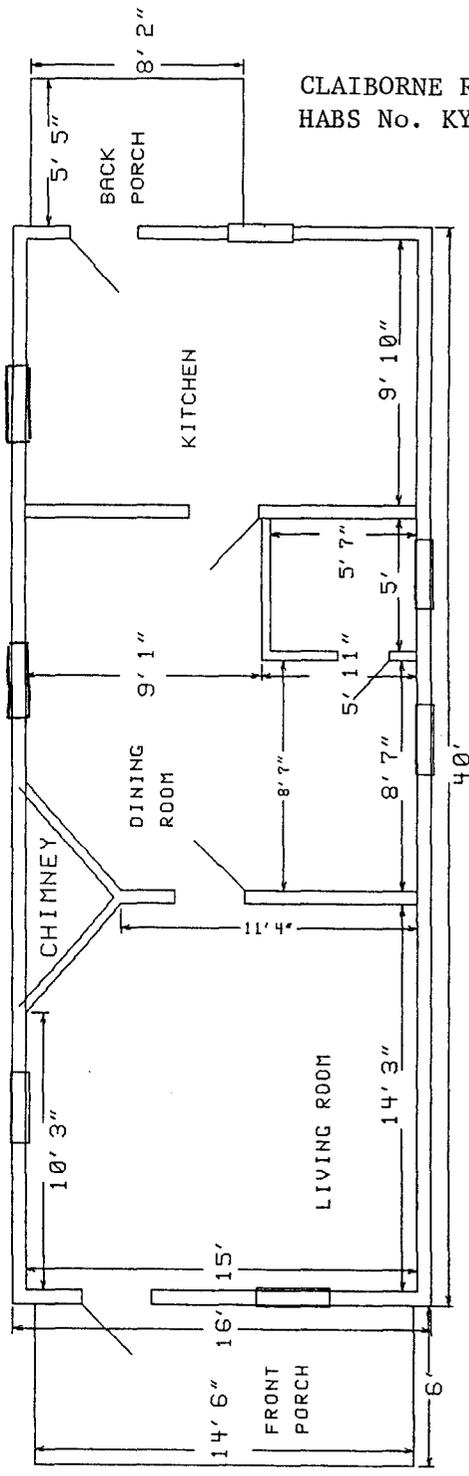
The following people and firms contributed to the documentation effort:

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Date: November 15, 1991



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113 N. MULBERRY
 GEORGETOWN, KY
 JUNE 24, 1991

SCALE
 — = 1'
 — = 5'
 — = 10'