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64-HANNIBAL,
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Robert Masterson House
Hannibal Vicinity
Marion County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1865

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROBERT MASTERSON HOUSE

(HABS No. MO-1865)

- Location: Northwest of Hannibal, Hannibal vicinity, Marion County, Missouri
- Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hare, Quincy, Illinois
- Significance: House is a significant regional example of an early Georgian floor plan rare in Missouri. Most of the original structure and interior woodwork still exist. Robert Masterson, the builder of the house, played a picturesque part in the early settlement of the area. Local tradition suggests that the Masterson house is the oldest in the area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1820-1840
2. Original owner: Robert Masterson
3. Alterations: At some point a recessed porch at the rear of the house was framed in. The room extends roughly seventeen feet into the center of the house, and retains its original plastered walls with chair rails, baseboards, and paneled doorways surrounded by bull's-eye architraves.

- B. Historical Context: Robert Masterson built the structure during the early days of settlement in the Hannibal area. Masterson owned slaves while living on the property, and pursued the trades of gunsmith, trader, and farmer. His farm, like many others of the era, supported a somewhat diverse range of crops and products.

Masterson died at age 74 in 1864; his wife outlived him by many years. After her death, the farm changed hands many times. In 1982, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hare purchased the house, at which time it still had neither plumbing nor electrical wiring. The Hares intended at that time to introduce these modern conveniences and restore the house.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Masterson house represents a very old Georgian floor plan type, with four rooms arranged symmetrically around a central hallway. It is a story and a half cottage more similar to Tidewater precedents than to other structures in the area.
2. Condition of fabric: Restored

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Walls: Native limestone; primary (east) facade is coursed ashlar; other three facades are ashlar and rubble.
2. Porches: The east front contains a small portico-like porch in the center of the structure. The overhang shelters plastered walls which contain coat pegs set into boards on either side of the doorway.
3. Chimneys: The Masterson house has four chimneys; both the north and south end of the house have symmetrically paired end-wall chimneys.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doors and windows: The north and south elevations do not have any openings. The east facade contains the main entrance, which is flanked by two windows evenly spaced on either side. The west facade also contains five bays, but in the second bay from the northwest corner there is a door. The central portion of the rear facade also contains a door and window as the result of later alterations.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: House has a gable roof recently surfaced with wood shingles.
 - b. Dormers: The east slope of the roof has two dormers; the west, three.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Cellar: Mostly unexcavated except for a partial cellar at the northeast end of the house.
 - b. First floor: Plan is four rooms arranged around a central hallway, which measures roughly eleven feet wide and seventeen feet, ten inches long.
 - c. Upper floor: Partitioned into four small rooms around a hall.

2. Stairway: House contains a single-run staircase which rises ten steps, then curves at the top.
3. Flooring: Random-width oak.
4. Decorative features and trim: Decorative woodwork is walnut. Scrolled brackets decorate the open string and the frieze of the staircase. Round, slender balusters support an unpainted round bannister. All doors on the first floor are six panel, surrounded by bull's-eye molded architraves resting on baseboard blocks. Most reveals have paneling.

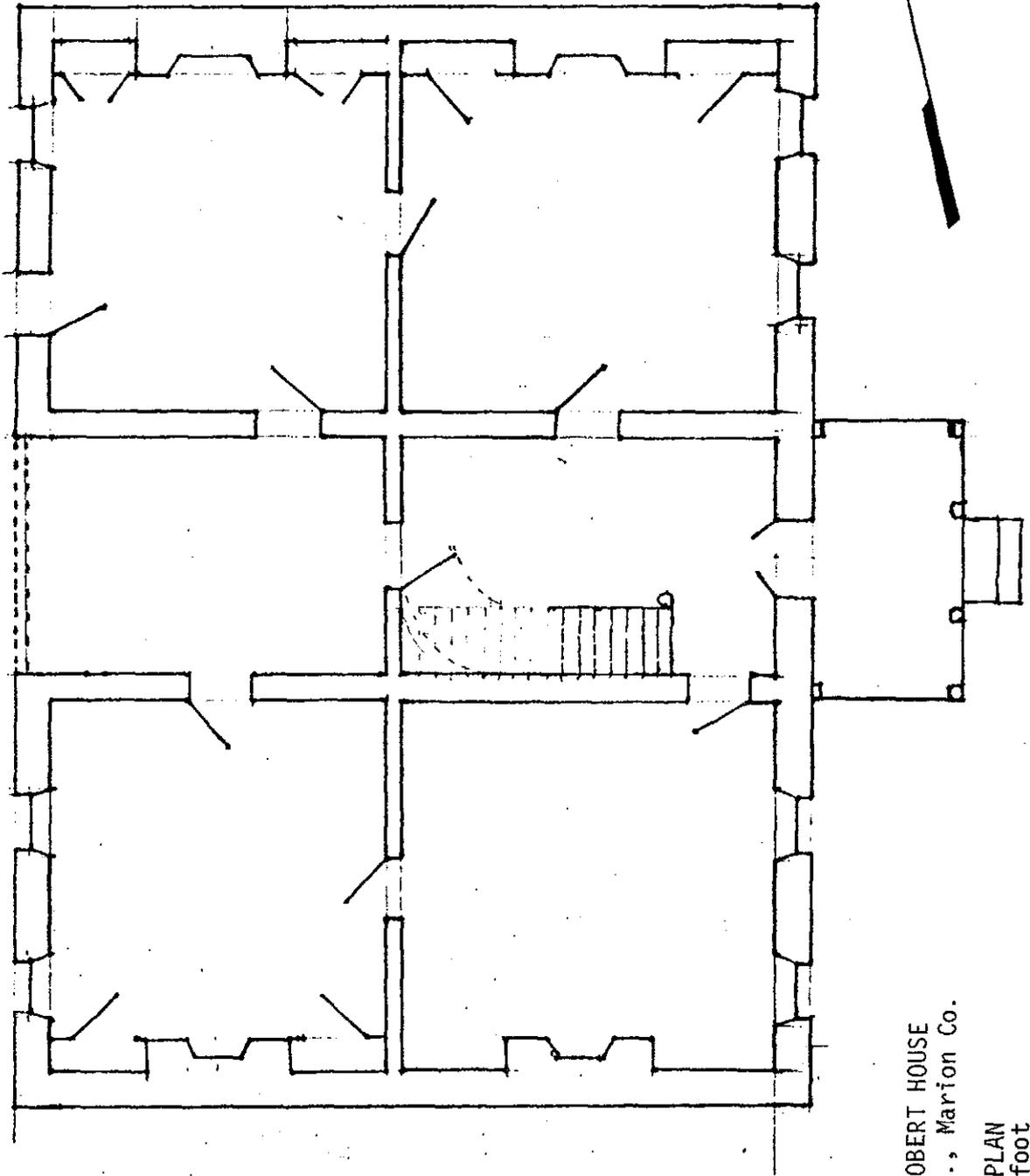
The southwest room contains the fanciest trim around windows, including bull's-eye surrounds and panels underneath. In the northwest room, the windows lack panels, having instead only the chair rails for sills. Windows in the two rooms on the north half of the house have simple architrave bands. The same molding surrounds the closet and cupboard doors of these two rooms, as well as the doors leading into the rooms on the front of the house.

Mantlepieces in the four ground-floor rooms differ; all designs derive from Georgian precedents. The mantels consist of panelling and applied molding.

PART III. SOURCE OF INFORMATION

National Register of Historic Places nomination form, "Robert Masterson House," compiled by James M. Denny, October, 1983.

Prepared by: Robert Buerglener
Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
July 13, 1988



Courtesy of the National Register of Historic Places

MASTERSON, ROBERT HOUSE
Hannibal vic., Marion Co.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/8 in. = 1 foot

1304

ADDENDUM TO
ROBERT MASTERSON HOUSE
Hannibal Vicinity
Marion County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1865

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