

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Whitaker-Motlow House  
other names/site number NA

**2. Location**

street & number 740 Lynchburg Hwy NA  not for publication  
city or town Mulberry NA  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Lincoln code 103 zip code 37359

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
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 Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
2	1	structures
		objects
4	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-Single dwelling

Domestic-Secondary Structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-Single dwelling

Domestic-Secondary Structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt shingles

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**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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** N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1846-1909  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1846; 1909  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical 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):** N/A

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Lincoln County Archives, Fayetteville Public Library

Whitaker-Motlow House  
Name of Property

Lincoln County Tennessee  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 29 acres Mulberry 80 NW

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>551753</u>	<u>3898453</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>551897</u>	<u>3897919</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>551910</u>	<u>3898428</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>551622</u>	<u>3897925</u>

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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Jillian Rael  
organization NA date April 28, 2011  
street & number P.O. Box 72 telephone 931-307-9255  
city or town Mulberry state TN zip code 37359

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**Additional Documentation**

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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

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**Property Owner**

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

name Maria (Micky) Maroney  
street & number 740 Lynchburg Hwy telephone 931-433-6779  
city or town Mulberry state TN zip code 37359

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

## Description

Constructed circa 1846, the Whitaker-Motlow House is a two story brick I-house with elements of Greek Revival and Italianate design. Located in rural Lincoln County, the house is on State Highway 50 between the towns of Fayetteville and Lynchburg (in neighboring Moore County). A tornado in 1909 severely damaged the second story and the house was substantially rebuilt soon after. A small addition was constructed on the north (rear) elevation in 1960. The gable roof building has decorative pilasters and paired four-over-four double-hung windows flanked by shutters. A two story pedimented portico covers double-leaf entries on the first and second stories. The interior of the Whitaker-Motlow House is characterized by a central hall and stair, which on both floors is flanked by large, open rooms. The floors are constructed of heart of pine boards, the majority of which are original. Situated on a twenty-nine acre lot, the house is surrounded by a combination of cleared agricultural fields and wooded areas. The property also includes historic stone walls, smoke house, well, and cistern.

The house has a central hall plan in the main section and a two story rear ell with three rooms on each floor. The Whitaker-Motlow House rests upon a brick foundation that reaches five or more feet into the ground, and the interior and exterior walls are also brick. Around the entire exterior, the bottom portions of brick have been covered by stucco. The low pitch gable roofs are sheathed with asphalt shingles and there are decorative dentils and brackets. Leading up to the façade are replacement steps and knee walls. The original wood steps and knee walls were replaced by brick sometime before the current ownership. The house features four interior brick chimneys. The low-pitched roof also features roof ridge decorations and finials, which are likely the result of the reconstruction of the upper level of the house after the 1909 tornado. The south façade of the Whitaker-Motlow House features a running bond brick pattern on the first story and common bond on the second story. The north, east, and west elevations of the building consist of a common bond brick pattern.

The most prominent feature of the south façade is the two story, one bay pedimented portico. Large rectangular fluted wood columns with molded wood capitals and bases support the pediment. Molded trim and dentils are seen on the cornice of the portico and the façade of the house. The raking cornice of the pediment has sawn wood brackets. Below the portico there are double-leaf doors that lead into both stories of the house. The first floor entry is through circa 1840s glass and wood double-leaf doors. Multi-light transoms and sidelights surround the entry. Dentil molding and an unusual sawn "floral/leaf/scroll" design outlines the door surrounds. (See figure 3.) A cantilevered balcony with sawn wood balustrade is located at the second floor level. As on the first floor, there is a double-leaf door with an elaborate surround. Paired four-over-four double-hung windows flank the portico on both stories. The windows have a simple wood cornice and wood shutters. Brick pilasters with brick capitals are located at the corners of the façade and flank the entry. A circa 1905 photo shows the façade to be much as it is today although there would have been major rebuilding after the 1909 tornado. (See figures 1 and 2)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

The gable roof part of the west elevation has the sawn wood brackets found on the façade. Paired windows on each story of this section are exactly like those on the façade. A brick pilaster delineates this section from the rear ell. North of the pilaster is the west elevation porch. Stone steps lead to the one bay, one story flat roof porch. Behind the porch is a historic wood double-leaf door flanked by paired columns and capped with a transom window and a simple entablature. The entry to the second story is the same. Three additional pilasters delineate the two remaining bays and the edge of the west elevation. Windows on both stories of this elevation are circa 1910 replacements. The four-over-four double-hung windows are smaller than the historic windows throughout the house and are topped by blind panels. A post tornado photo shows that this part of the house received much damage.

The rear or north elevation reveals the gable end of the ell, the rear of the main house, and the 1960s addition. The gable end of the ell is decorated with the same sawn brackets, dentil molding, and molded wood trim found on the other gables of the house and there are no openings on this part of the elevation. A small one story shed roof porch is found on the east side of the rear ell. This porch wraps around to include a small portion of the rear, or north, elevation of the main house. The porch historically included the entire north end of the main house; however, a portion was removed in order to accommodate the 1960s addition. This portion of the house contains six-over-six double-hung windows, as well as three four-over-four double-hung windows. Moreover, door facing north is constructed of wood and glass pane windows and leads into the interior "mud room." The 1960s addition retains the character of the main house, and was constructed in order to install a bathroom on the second story. The first level of the addition contains an office space. One wall of the addition faces east; however, the addition extends to the north. The addition features a shed roof, replicated dentil trim, and two small double-hung windows which face north.

Four-over-four double-hung windows flanked by shutters are located on the gable end of the east elevation. Brick pilasters define the corners and dentil and molded trim are seen below the eaves. North of this, the two story 1960s addition is visible, with two small double-hung windows. Two solid wood doors are located on the rear ell and face east. These doors lead into the kitchen and dining room, which is currently used as a spare room for storage.

The first floor entry hall has wall board walls and ceiling, circa 1846 heart of pine wood floors, wood baseboards, and a staircase. The circa 1870s open-well staircase features turned wood balusters, sawn wood scrolls on the string, and newel post with chamfered corners and an ornamental newel cap.<sup>1</sup> The north end of the central hall has double-leaf paneled wood doors with a shouldered architrave surround. These lead to the north facing rear porch/mud room and 1960s addition office space. The office space features modern wood flooring and door. The entry hall is flanked on each side by two parlors. Single-leaf paneled wood doors lead to the parlors and a very small closet built by the current owner.

<sup>1</sup> It is believed that this staircase was redesigned in the 1870s by Bob Motlow's daughter, whose husband bought the house in 1877. Her husband was R.A. Rees. John was his cousin and the land/house was deeded to them both. This was the opinion given to the current owner by restoration architect Harvey Jones of Huntsville, AL.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

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The east parlor features the same wall board walls and ceiling found in the central hall and throughout the house. The floors are also of circa 1846 heart of pine wood. Wood baseboards, designed by the current owner, are found throughout the room's perimeter. The original baseboards had been removed by previous owners, and the current design was installed during rehabilitation in the 1990s. Separating the wall from the ceiling is cove molding, also designed by the current owner, and installed during the rehabilitation of the house. Again, the original molding was removed by previous owners, and was replaced by this current design in order to reclaim the original character of the house. In 1998, the hearth in the east parlor was repaired and re-bricked. The original hearth had collapsed, and the repairs incorporated the original brick as much as possible. The mantel piece within the east parlor is not original; however, it is the only replacement mantel found throughout the house. The wood mantel has a simple mantel shelf, plain frieze, and is flanked by pilasters with molded capitals and bases. The current owner had it custom made to match the other mantels found throughout the house. Like the door casings, window casings are wood with a shouldered architrave.

The west parlor is identical in design to the east parlor, featuring the same cove molding and baseboards. In 1998, like the east parlor hearth, the west parlor hearth also endured repair and rehabilitation. The hearth brick had sunk, requiring it to be re-bricked. The mantel piece in the west parlor is original. However, it is within this room that many of the original heart of pine floors were not recovered. Instead, replacements were installed in 2001. These replacement boards are also of heart of pine. Window casings are wood with shouldered architraves. The west parlor also features an original closet located on the eastern wall. To the north of the room, an original wood door leads to the hall separating the main portion of the house and the rear ell. This hallway has not been restored features both carpet and pressboard flooring. A simple wood staircase on the eastern end of the hall leads to the upstairs landing, with the west bedroom on one side and the rear ell on the north. The western portion of the first story hall leads to the small west facing porch.

The first story of the rear ell consists of a small bathroom, built at an unknown time, located beneath a staircase; the current kitchen; and an additional room that likely served as the dining room. During previous ownership, the rear ell underwent extensive redecorating, resulting in the current aesthetic. The walls and ceiling are covered by barn wood, believed to have been taken from a barn that once stood on the property. The floors are covered in carpet; however, it is unknown what type of flooring is underneath the carpet. A large brick fireplace stands at the north end of the kitchen. The hearth has been bricked in, and a large wood burning stove stands in front. The small bathroom connects the kitchen to the hallway leading to the west parlor, and also features barn wood sheathed walls and pressed board flooring.

The upstairs landing of the main house is similar to the central entry hall down stairs, featuring circa 1846 heart of pine floors and wood trim. The balustrade continues to the second floor and contains the same sawn scrollwork, turned balusters, and a landing newel. The top landing leads to the original double-leaf paneled wood balcony door which features clear glass transom lights.

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Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

Door casings are paneled but do not have the shouldered architrave like those on the main floor. Flanking the east and west sides of the hall are two bedrooms.

The east bedroom features circa 1846 heart of pine floors and the same re-designed cove molding and baseboards found in the downstairs parlors. The mantel in the east bedroom is original, as are the hearth and entry door. The mantel matches the mantels on the first floor. A closet is located on the west wall, and is original to the house. A door at the north end of the room leads to the 1960s addition bathroom, which features wood flooring in the walkway/closet and tile in the bathroom.

The west bedroom is the same as the east bedroom, featuring the original circa 1846 heart of pine flooring, redesigned baseboards and cove molding. Here too, the mantel and fireplace hearth are original, as are the entry door and closet. Like the parlor below it, the west bedroom features an original door leading to the hallway connecting the main house to the rear ell. This hallway consists of the west porch on one side and the staircase on the east side. The north end of the room leads to the rear ell rooms.

The second story of the rear ell consists of a long hallway with rooms along the eastern side. The first room is a small bathroom. The remaining two rooms are now used for storage, but would have historically served as bedrooms. The hallway and bedrooms feature wood paneled walls and carpeted floors. The bathroom floors are linoleum. Although now covered by wood panels, the north end room likely once featured a fireplace. An indentation in the wall directly above the hearth in the kitchen below indicates that a fireplace was once present.

After their purchase of the Whitaker-Motlow House in 1987, the current owners began work on rehabilitating the house. It was during this time that preservation precautions were also taken. As such, some of the original floor joists were sistered with metal beams in order to ensure the stability of the house. Original materials were kept and incorporated as much as possible. Replacement wood can be found only in small areas throughout the house such as where window casings had rotted. The molding and baseboards found within the downstairs parlors and upstairs bedrooms are not original, but were designed by using the original molding and baseboards found in the downstairs entry hall. The heart of pine floors are original throughout except in the west parlor. Here, some of the wood was not salvageable and was therefore replaced by re-milled heart of pine flooring from another building.

Cistern. Situated at the northeast corner of the Whitaker-Motlow house is a cistern made from cut limestone. Enclosing the cistern is a gazebo made of wood trellis walls and a wood framed roof. The roof is covered in red tin shingles and cut limestone steps lead into the gazebo. The construction date of the cistern is unknown; however, it resembles the cistern found on John Whitaker's property, which was built after the Civil War, as a fire destroyed the original house and property. The gazebo is late nineteenth-early twentieth century. (contributing)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

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Smokehouse. East of the house stands the smokehouse. It is not definitively known if this is the original 1840s smokehouse, but a photo from the 1940s reveals its presence in the exact current location. A 1905 photo shows a smokehouse very close to the current location; however, possible distortion in the photo prevents definitively identifying the exact location. The south wall of the smokehouse is shared with an adjoining shed. The construction date of this addition is unknown, and no historic photographs show it standing. The smokehouse is a one story, front-gabled building with weatherboard siding and a stone foundation. A single leaf door is on the west façade. The current roof is sheathed in metal. The adjoining shed has a garage door opening (no door) no door and possesses a flat roof also covered by metal. The walls are of artificial siding. (contributing)

Barn. To the rear of the smokehouse is a non-contributing barn. The construction date of this barn is unknown, and no historic photographs have been found that indicate its presence historically. The lower portion of the barn has been covered in fiberglass, while the upper portions are of wood. (non-contributing)

Stone walls. The immediate area surrounding the house is almost entirely enclosed by a rock wall, which consists of stacked field stones. However, the front portion of this fence facing the highway has been reworked with cut stone and cement, decorative entry markers. The dates for the stone fence are unknown; however, they are presumed to be original to the property, and likely built by slaves circa 1846. The dating of the cut stone portion of the fence is circa 1900. (contributing)

Well and well house. The original well was dug at the southeast corner of the lot, and was discovered after the Maroneys purchased the house and land. The well had no covering, so as a safety precaution the owners built a small well house with a stone base and a round roof sheathed in red asphalt shingles. It is unknown if the well was ever actually used or for how long. (non-contributing)

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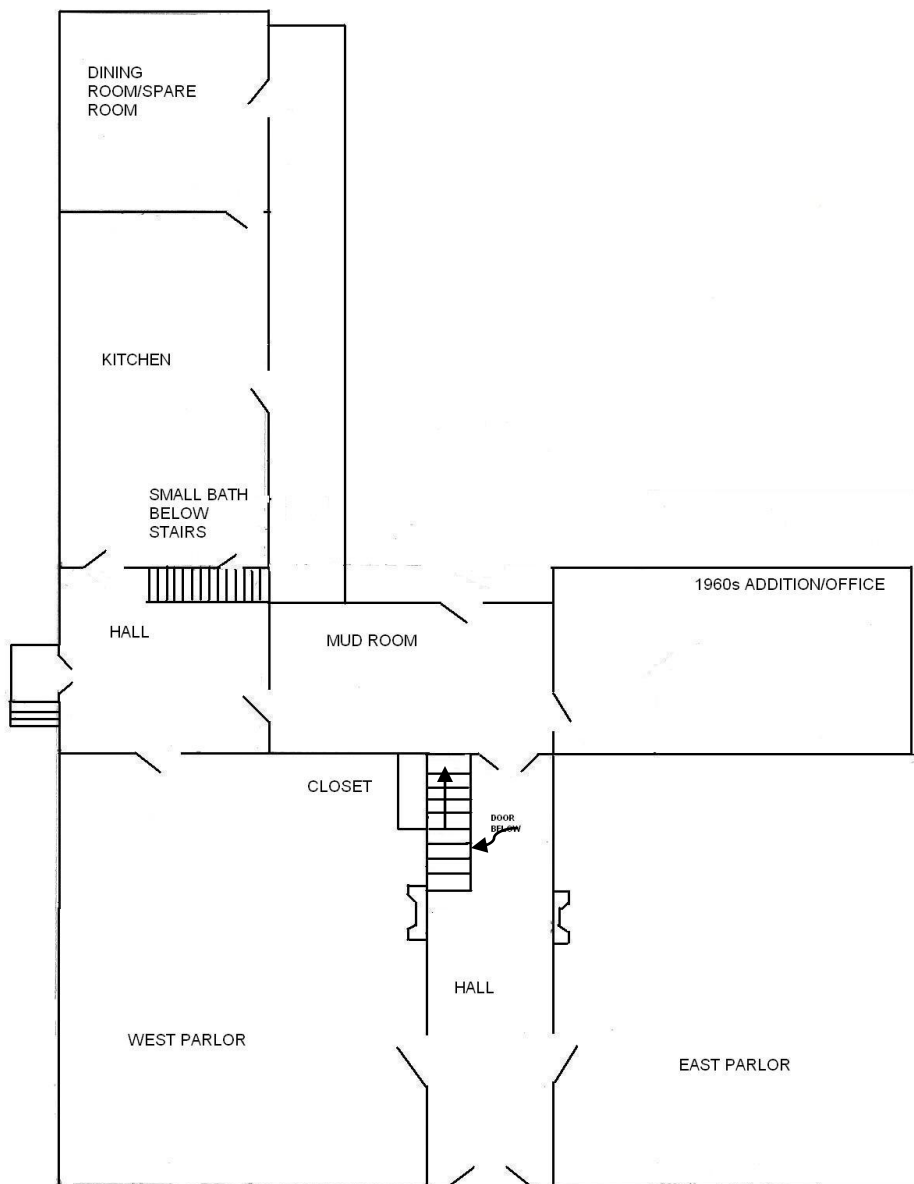
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

Sketch plan first floor

not to scale



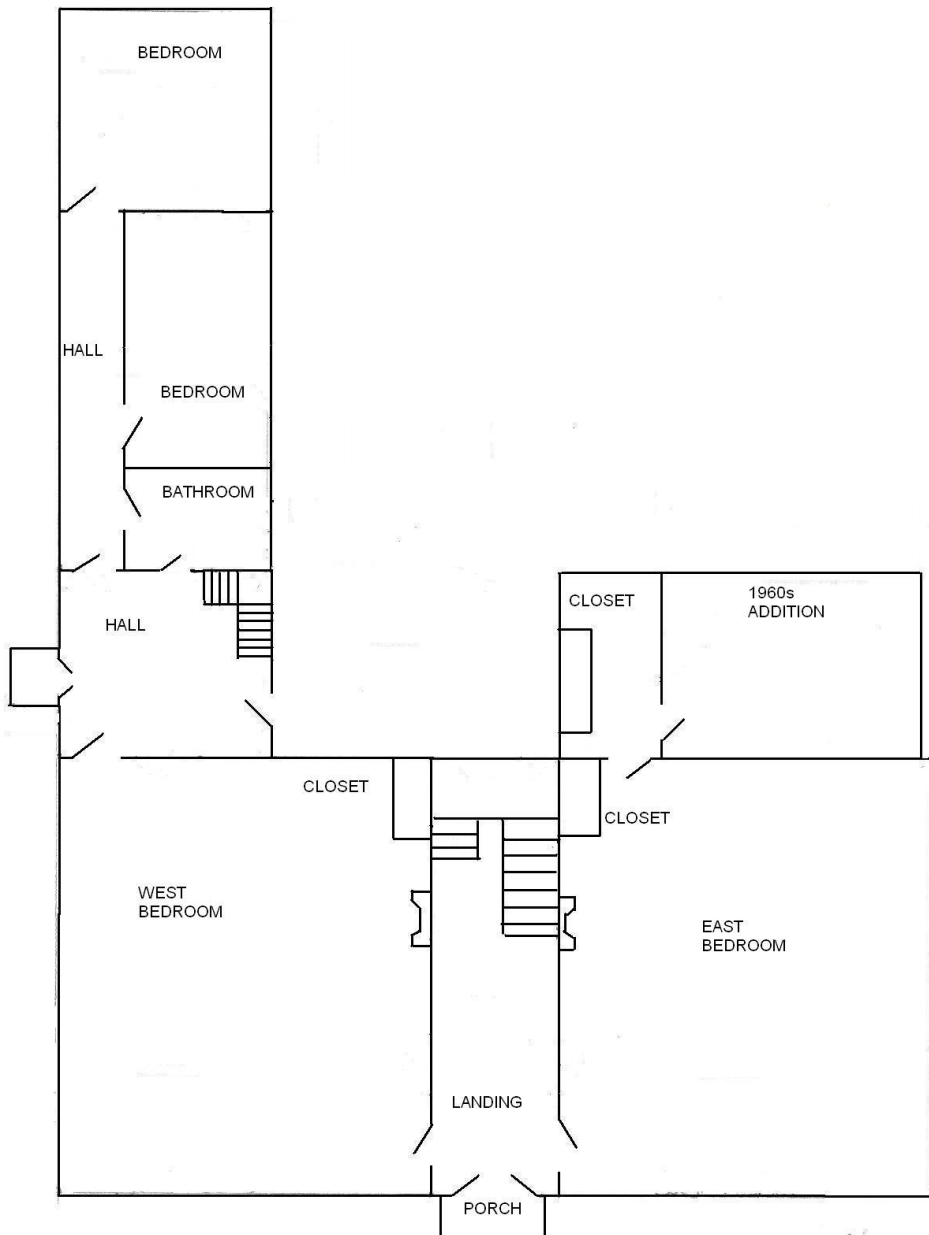
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

Sketch plan second floor not to scale



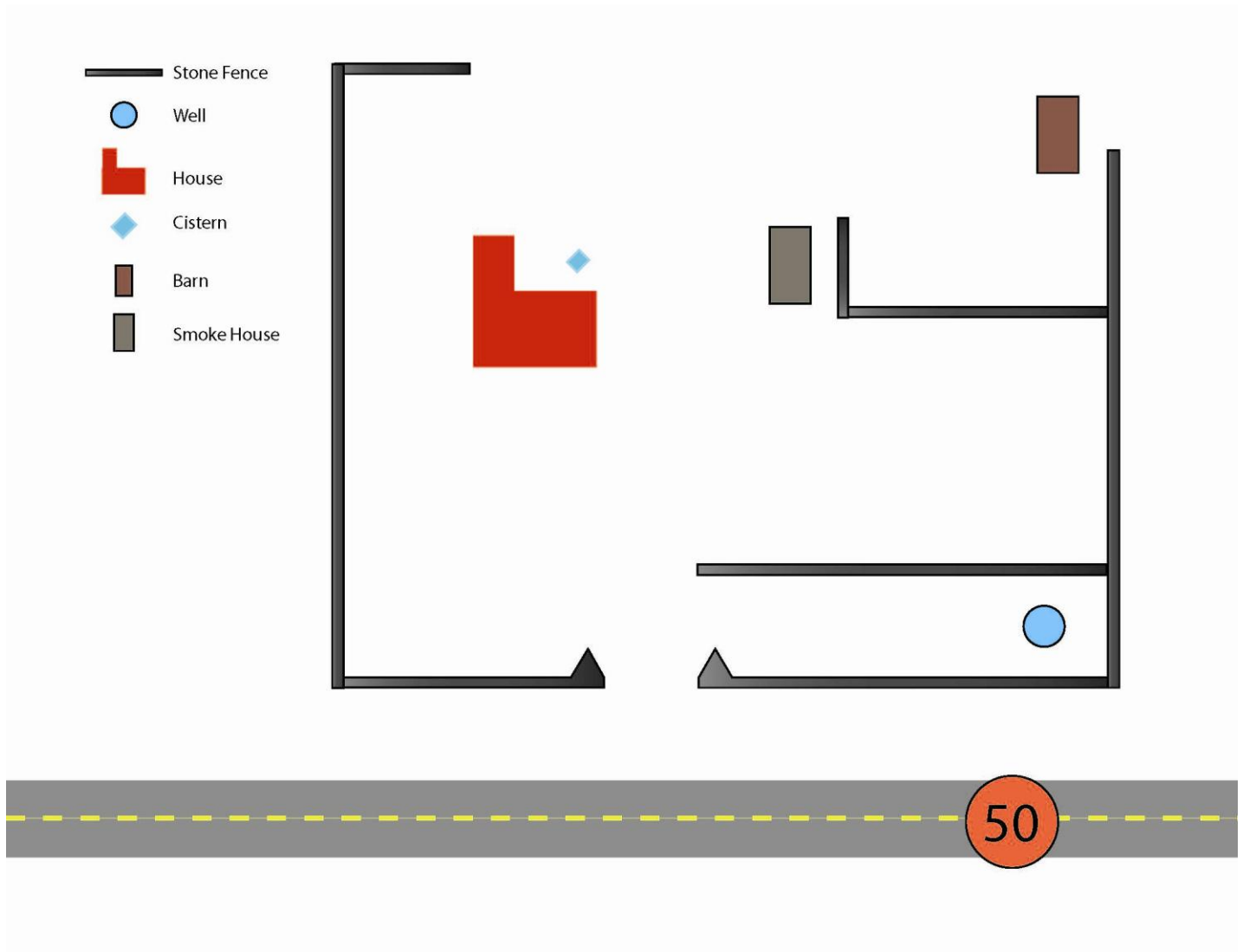
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

Site plan



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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Whitaker-Motlow House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C for its local significance in architecture. Originally constructed circa 1846 with elements of Greek Revival and Italianate design, the house was substantially rebuilt in the same styles after a 1909 tornado. Character defining features of the house include the one bay, two story portico with bracketed pediment, paired multi-light windows with shutters, brick pilasters, and the main entry with transom and sidelights. These are all principal components of Greek Revival and Italianate design. Inside, the house features elements from the 1840s and the circa 1909 rebuilding. Photos from the 1909 tornado reveal that the top story endured the most damage. It is this top story that features circa 1909 era replacement building elements, while the bottom story likely retained much of its original character and structure. Although there have been some changes to the house, it retains its architectural integrity.

Background

The land upon which the Whitaker-Motlow House stands was purchased by John "Peg-leg" Whitaker in 1809. His property originally consisted of some 1,155 acres and was purchased from Thomas Eastland.<sup>2</sup> John was born in Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1760, and migrated to Tennessee between 1809 and 1810. However, before arriving in Mulberry, he and his family first moved from North Carolina to Fayette County, Kentucky in 1784.<sup>3</sup> When the Whitakers arrived in Tennessee, there was little in the way of towns or settlements. He was influential in the establishment of the county seat of Fayetteville.<sup>4</sup> He was appointed to a committee that located and purchased the 100 acres that was used to establish the town, and served as one of the original sixteen justices of the peace.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to his noted activities in Fayetteville, John Whitaker helped to create the community of Mulberry. When the Whitakers arrived in what later became the village of Mulberry, the area was essentially unsettled and only later evolved into a thriving community. Upon his arrival, Whitaker established the Ball Fork Baptist Church, which seems to be the first documented sign of an attempt at communal organization. Moreover, early settler Peter Ingle, "established a trading post

<sup>2</sup> The Historical Records Survey Transcription Unit, *Bedford County, Tennessee General Index to Deeds, vol. 1 1808-1840*, (Nashville: The Historical Records Survey, 1940), 432. The actual copy of the deed is located in the Bedford County *Deed Book A*, 383. At the time of John's purchase, the land he bought was located in Bedford County; however, within the same year Lincoln County was established.

<sup>3</sup> Helen C. and Timothy R. Marsh, *Cemetery Records of Lincoln-Moore Counties of Tennessee* (Shelbyville: Marsh Historical Publications, 1983), 265. Migration dates were obtained from Gwen Coble Whitaker's, *Whitaker: A Line from Pleasant Garden* (Lewisburg: Self-Published, 1991), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Goodspeed, *The Goodspeed Histories of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore Counties of Tennessee*, (Columbia: Woodward & Stinson Printing Co., 1886), 768.

<sup>5</sup> Marsh, Helen C. and Timothy R. *In the Beginning: Lincoln County Tennessee 1809*. Self-published with processing and copying by Marsha Marsh McFaden, 1993, 4.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10Whitaker-Motlow House  
Lincoln County, Tennessee

nearby and thus the social life of the early pioneers was centered around this area.”<sup>6</sup> Lincoln County in general was growing and by 1822 a road was constructed that eventually connected nearby towns of Fayetteville with Lynchburg, which ran directly through Mulberry, and Shelbyville.<sup>7</sup>

It was during this time that a school was erected in the community and served as an emblem of pride for well over a century. In the section of her book about Mulberry, Elaine Owens Dickey states:

Although Mulberry first took on the physical properties of a village in 1840, at least ten years before that time there had been a school established there known as the Mulberry Academy. This school became noted for its outstanding educational program. It later became known as the Mulberry Male and Female Academy. The school continued its splendid academic reputation and was reorganized as the Mulberry Training School for boys and girls around the turn of the century. The school building at the time cost \$4,000 and was one of the largest in the county.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from the community school, churches of varying denominations represented another dominant aspect in Mulberry. Around 1840, three years after John Whitaker’s death, the Ball Fork Baptist Church burned, and the religious and trade center moved one mile west to the current center of Mulberry. The congregation rebuilt the Ball Fork Baptist Church in close proximity to the school. Soon after, other churches were built and established at the town center including the Methodist, the Cumberland Presbyterian, and Christian churches.<sup>9</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century business was booming in Mulberry. According to *The Pictorial History of Lincoln County*, the community boasted, “five general stores which had clothes, shoes, cloth, farm equipment, seeds and salt in addition to groceries. The village had two blacksmith shops, two wood workshops [sic], a furniture maker, an eating place, an undertaker, and a bank.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Mulberry had three physicians working during the mid-century.<sup>11</sup> According to Goodspeed, “in the year 1858, Fayetteville was connected with the main line of the

<sup>6</sup> The Bi-Centennial Book Committee of Lincoln County, ed., *A Pictorial History of Lincoln County Tennessee*, (Waynesville: County Heritage Inc., 2009), 442.

<sup>7</sup> Goodspeed, *The Goodspeed Histories of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore Counties of Tennessee*, 772.

<sup>8</sup> Elaine Owens Dickey, *Lincoln County: A Tribute to Our Past*, (Fayetteville: Dickey Publications, 1977), 113.

<sup>9</sup> The Bi-Centennial Book Committee of Lincoln County, *A Pictorial History of Lincoln County Tennessee*, 442. The Ball Fork Baptist Church has been renamed the Mulberry Baptist Church. The Presbyterian Church building was taken over by the Methodist congregation, and although the Christian Church is no longer standing, the Church of Christ now stands on the town square.

<sup>10</sup> The Bi-Centennial Book Committee of Lincoln County, *A Pictorial History of Lincoln County Tennessee*, 442.

<sup>11</sup> Dickey, *Lincoln County*, 113-114.

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Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad by the branch built from Decherd to Fayetteville,” adding to the growth and prosperity of the community.<sup>12</sup>

Whitaker-Motlow House

It was within the context of this booming economy, John Whitaker’s youngest son, Newton Whitaker, established his farmstead, which consisted of 213 acres. Newton purchased this acreage from his father’s estate in 1837 for \$2,600.<sup>13</sup> Three years later, the 1840 census showed that Newton was listed for the first time as head of household, indicating that he had by that point left his mother’s home and was living independently with his wife, Frances Ann Jeffries, whom he married in 1835.<sup>14</sup> A documented construction date of the Whitaker-Motlow House has not been found; therefore, the assumed date of circa 1846 is based on tax records. The earliest tax records still in existence for Newton Whitaker date to 1846, and at that time his 213 acres were worth \$2,000 overall. The remnants of Newton’s tax records indicate a jump in property value higher than the passage of time would indicate, reaching its height in 1849, indicating that the house was likely built during this three year period.

Few details are known about Newton Whitaker; however, his elegant yet functional house seems to have fit his lifestyle and social class. Newton was born in 1816 and was the youngest of the family.<sup>15</sup> He was, according to his headstone, a member of the Freemasons. According to the *Fayetteville Observer*, Newton was chosen as the local delegate to the Whig Party convention held in Shelbyville, Tennessee in 1852.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, the Tennessee General Assembly appointed Newton to the board of commissioners for the Central Union Railroad. The proposed line would connect the Nashville and Chattanooga railways with the Memphis and Charleston railway in or near Huntsville or Decatur, Alabama.<sup>17</sup> Two years later, Newton was named in the establishment of the Shelbyville Bank of Tennessee as a supervisor over the subscriptions of

<sup>12</sup> Goodspeed, *The Goodspeed Histories of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore Counties*, 772. The town of Decherd lies within Franklin County, about 36 miles from Fayetteville. On page 769, Goodspeed notes that in 1883 the population of Lincoln County was 10,788 “free white persons” and by 1880 it had risen to 26,960.

<sup>13</sup> Land sale deed, Estate of John Whitaker to Newton Whitaker. *Deed Book K-1*: 529, Lincoln County Archives, Fayetteville, TN.

<sup>14</sup> Helen C. and Timothy R. Marsh, *Lincoln County TN Official Marriage Records 1838-1880* (Self-published, 1974), 185. The Marshes listed Frances Ann as having the last name of Wynn; however, Gwen Coble Whitaker lists her surname as Jefferies, and it is unclear which is correct.

<sup>15</sup> Newton’s year of birth was obtained from his headstone in the Mulberry Cemetery. It is also listed as 1816 in Helen and Timothy Marsh’s, *Cemetery Records of Lincoln-Moore Counties of Tennessee*, (Shelbyville: Marsh Historical Publications, 1983), 265.

<sup>16</sup> “Looking Backward,” *The Fayetteville Observer*, June 17, 1916. During this time, the local newspaper regularly published excerpts from earlier papers. This particular reprinted article entitled, “Whig Meeting,” was taken from the June 17, 1852, edition of the *Fayetteville Observer*.

<sup>17</sup> *Acts of the State of Tennessee Passed at the First Session of the Twenty-Ninth General Assembly for the Years 1851-52*, (Nashville: Bang & McKennis Printers, 1852), 310-313.

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stock for the Mulberry community.<sup>18</sup> Newton Whitaker seems have also successfully run a farm. According to the inventory taken at the time of his death in 1878, Newton was in possession of 30.5 bushels of wheat and twenty-four barrels of corn, in addition to several pieces of farming equipment.<sup>19</sup>

Newton Whitaker's house is primarily Greek Revival in style but it has later Italianate details. The most identifying features are consistent with the Greek Revival style that dominated Southern architecture from about 1830 to 1860. As is typical of the style, the house features a wide cornice line that is accentuated by a band of trim divided into two parts. The most prominent feature of the house is the one bay, two story entry porch which consists of a pediment supported by large, square columns at the front, and brick pilasters at the back. This façade pattern is seen often in Middle Tennessee I-houses. These square columns present on homes such as Newton's are typical vernacular variances that were less costly to construct than the round columns with more elaborate capitals. Like many Greek Revival houses in the South, the Whitaker House is side-gabled. Both the main entry door and that of the upper balcony feature full transom and sidelights, that consist of narrow, rectangular panes of glass, which in this case are colored in a deep red.

Newton resided in his elegant brick house until 1877 when he sold it, along with about one hundred acres to his son-in-law R.A. Rees and his cousin John Rees for \$9,345. The house was once again sold in 1903 to Robert (Bob) Lee Motlow. (See figure 1.) A circa 1905 photo shows that sawn wood brackets were on the house, updating it with Italianate details. A promotional section of May 1904 *Lincoln County News* called Mulberry "one of the best and most thriving towns in Lincoln County."<sup>20</sup> The paper noted that there were three general merchants, two blacksmiths, a roller mill, post office, and four churches. A few years after Bob Motlow took ownership, a massive tornado devastated the house in 1909.

The 1909 tornado brought overwhelming destruction to the house, ripping away about two-thirds of the second story, although part of the façade remained intact. Motlow was able to rebuild the house close to its original design. He reportedly hired a construction crew out of Nashville, Tennessee, and had the men camp on the property until the house was rebuilt.<sup>21</sup> According to Bob Motlow's daughter, during reconstruction, he replaced the long wooden panels in the front door with long panes of glass.<sup>22</sup> The only real indication of reconstruction is seen in the brick variances found on the upper portions of the exterior walls. (See figure 2.)

<sup>18</sup> *Acts of the State of Tennessee Passed at the Thirtieth General Assembly for the Years 1853-54*, (Nashville: McKennie & Brown Book and Job Printers, True Whig Office, 1854), 352-353.

A copy of the original inventory list is in the possession of the owner. Newton listed himself as a farmer in the census from 1840 until 1870.

<sup>20</sup> "Mulberry-A Thriving and Prosperous Little Village in the Northeastern Part of Lincoln County" in *The Lincoln County News, Illustrated Magazine Edition*, May 1904, 41.

<sup>21</sup> "Work of the Winds: Mulberry is Visited by a Most Destructive Cyclone," *The Fayetteville Observer*, October 21, 1909. According to this article, the tornado struck Mr. Motlow's property on October 14, 1909 and states, "Mr. R.L. Motlow [Robert Lee] sustained a greater property loss than any sufferer from the storm."

<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Maroney, personal communication, 2010.

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Later in his life, Bob Motlow lost much of his fortune, and as seen in a 1940s or 1950s era photo, the house was in need of repair. Motlow lived in the house until his death in 1959. During the 1960s and 1970s, two different owners made changes to the house. These ultimately resulted in only minor aesthetic alterations to the house. During the 1960s a small addition was constructed on the rear east elevation of the house, which accommodated an upper story bathroom and a first floor office area. The owners responsible for this addition took great pains to ensure that the original character of the house remained intact. Before being purchased by the current owners, the house had stood vacant for roughly a decade.

In 1987, the Whitaker-Motlow House was purchased by the current owner, Maria Maroney, and her late husband, Carl Maroney. Since that time, the house has undergone rehabilitation on both the exterior and interior. Throughout the project, the owners have kept any and all of the usable and salvageable original materials. However, the only surviving documentation of the home's appearance dates from the Motlow era of ownership and is photographic. Therefore, the Maroneys primarily restored the exterior of the house to match these photos. Interior rehabilitation focused on repairing and securing the house. For example, the hearths contained within both the east and west parlors required re-bricking due to their collapse. During the project, the original floors were removed, cataloged and stored in order to sister the original joists with steel beams for added security. Throughout the house, pieces of rotted wood window casings were replaced as needed. The downstairs parlors and upstairs bedrooms had lost the baseboards and moldings. Using the existing moldings and baseboards within the central entry hall as templates, the Maroneys designed and custom-made moldings and baseboards for these rooms.

Work on the front, interior portion of the house has been completed. Moreover, rehabilitation on the exterior of the house is complete except for the west-facing porch. The interior of the rear ell portion of the house has yet to be addressed, and still bears the aesthetic remnants of work performed by previous owners. These redecoration projects attempted during the 1970s strived for a more rustic look, leaving the interior walls covered in a rough, barn-like wood and shag carpet.

The Whitaker-Motlow House is a good local example of a 1840s Greek Revival I-house with later detailing. There are at least two other nineteenth century houses in the area that are listed in the National Register and the nominated property compares favorably with them. There is an 1825 two-story brick I house with a one-bay pedimented portico called the Childress House (NR 2/25/82). Located about nine miles west of the county seat of Fayetteville, the house has a wider portico bay with paired columns, but it is similar in form to this house. The Harris-Holden House is a circa 1860 I-house with a portico like the Childress House. This house is frame and is outside of Howell in Lincoln County. It was listed in the National Register on 3/19/75.

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## Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The nominated property is all of Parcel 043 009.01.

The boundaries reflect the acreage currently owned by Maria Maroney that contains the Whitaker-Motlow House, the contributing stone fence, smokehouse, cistern, and non-contributing agricultural barn and well.



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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos by: Jillian Rael

Date: July 11, 2011

Digital Image: Tennessee Historical Commission

Photo No. 1 of 31: South façade, facing north

Photo No. 2 of 31: East elevation, facing west, showing cistern and 1960s addition.

Photo No. 3 of 31: Rear porch, facing southwest, showing porch, cistern, and north portion of addition.

Photo No. 4 of 31: North elevation, facing south, showing gable end of rear ell.

Photo No. 5 of 31: West elevation, facing southeast

Photo No. 6 of 31: Close-up view of west porch, facing east/northeast.

Photo No. 7 of 31: Interior, east parlor, facing west

Photo No. 8 of 31: Interior, west parlor, facing west

Photo No. 9 of 31: Interior, central entry hall, facing north/northwest. Note closet beneath stairs and doors.

Photo No. 10 of 31: Interior, second floor landing, facing south.

Photo No. 11 of 31: Interior, east bedroom, facing east.

Photo No. 12 of 31: Interior, upstairs bathroom, 1960s addition, facing east

Photo No. 13 of 31: Interior, west bedroom, facing northwest.

Photo No. 14 of 31: Interior, second floor hall between west bedroom and rear ell, facing northwest.

Photo No. 15 of 31: Interior, view of upstairs rear ell hallway, facing north

Photo No. 16 of 31: Interior, bathroom, upstairs ell, facing east

Photo No. 17 of 31: Interior, bedroom, upstairs ell, facing east

Photo No. 18 of 31: Interior end bedroom of upstairs ell, facing north.

Photo No. 19 of 31: Interior, view of downstairs hall between west parlor and rear ell, view looking down from hallway stairs, facing west.

Photo No. 20 of 31: Interior, view of bathroom between kitchen and downstairs hall between west parlor and rear ell, facing north.

Photo No. 21 of 31: Interior, view of kitchen, close up of mantel piece and old fireplace, view north/northeast.

Photo No. 22 of 31: Interior, view of dining room, view southwest.

Photo No. 23 of 31: Interior, downstairs office space, 1960s addition, facing east.

Photo No. 24 of 31: Interior, "mud room" located between outside north facing rear porch and central entry hall. View of east facing wall and entry door to hall separating the rear ell and west parlor. Facing west/southwest.

Photo No. 25 of 31: Exterior of cistern, facing south/southeast.

Photo No. 26 of 31: Interior of cistern, facing east.

Photo No. 27 of 31: View of smokehouse (left) and shed addition, facing east.

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Photo No. 28 of 31: View of stone fence enclosing property, facing east/northeast.

Photo No. 29 of 31: View of cut stone portion of stone fence and entry markers, facing south/southeast.

Photo No. 30 of 31: Non-contributing barn, facing east.

Photo No. 31 of 31: View of Whitaker-Motlow House facing west/northwest, showing cistern, smokehouse, and portion of stone fence.

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Figure 1. Circa 1905 photo of house.



Figure 2. Post tornado photo of house, side elevation.

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Figure 3. Detail of entry design.