

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Murphey-Jennings House

and/or common Smith Murphey House

## 2. Location

street & number 307 Walnut Street N/A not for publication

city, town Sumner N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Mississippi code 28 county Tallahatchie code 135

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. A. William Vowell, Jr.

street & number 307 Walnut Street

city, town Sumner N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk

street & number Tallahatchie County Courthouse

city, town Sumner state Mississippi

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located along Cassidy Bayou, a picturesque creek lined with cypress trees, the Murphey-Jennings House occupies a flat tree-shaded site on one of the two residential streets flanking the course of the bayou. Facing east, the house is approximately in the center of casually landscaped grounds containing several mature trees.

The two-and-a-half-story house is transitional Colonial Revival in style, retaining some Queen Anne features. Although the corner tower, the projecting bays with canted corners, and the roof cresting are among the building's Queen Anne elements, the dominant massiveness and simplicity of forms and details are clearly in the Colonial Revival tradition, as is the prominent Tuscan columned porch. The house is of special interest in showing a skillful change from the Queen Anne to the Colonial Revival style.

The building is covered with narrow clapboards and has a hipped roof of asphalt singles. Along with Palladian windows in the north, east, and south gables, there are one-over-one windows on the first and second floors. An interior chimney is located on the south side of the house. In addition to a one-story east (front) porch with Tuscan columns, which partially wraps around the north and south facades, there is a simple two-story west (rear) porch.

On the interior, four rooms flank a central hall on each floor. Each of the rooms has a three-sided projecting bay. The northeast room on the first floor has a fine painted floral ceiling and cornice, which are original to the house. The dining room still has the oak paneling and heraldic cartouches from the time the building was constructed. There is a rear kitchen on the first floor adjacent to the back porch above which is a bedroom and sleeping porch. The house retains all of its original hardware, lighting fixtures, doors, mantles, and other woodwork.

There are an early garage, utility house, and coal house to the northwest of the main house. They are simple, adjoining buildings of no architectural significance.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**      1904                      **Builder/Architect**      Frank R. McGeoy (Memphis)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Murphey-Jennings House is an outstanding Colonial Revival building constructed in 1904 for a wealthy local planter, Smith Murphey II, and later was the home of a regionally prominent philanthropist, Hugh Jackson Jennings. The house is relatively unaltered from its original appearance on both the exterior and interior, retaining almost all of its original decorative details and fixtures, including painted ceilings, paneling, chandeliers, and bathrooms. The building is an excellent document of the daily life of a wealthy early-twentieth-century planter and businessman. The high degree of its preservation and architectural sophistication is exceptional in the Delta region of Mississippi, an area not developed until the turn-of-the-century. The architect of the house, Frank R. McGeoy, was a popular residential architect in Memphis from 1890 to 1907.

In late 1904 two days before the family was scheduled to move into the house, Smith Murphey was killed in an undisclosed dispute with an acquaintance. By the age of twenty-eight, he had acquired over six thousand acres of arable land and owned a profitable store on Summer's court square. In 1912 Mrs. Murphey was married to Hugh Jackson Jennings of Water Valley, Mississippi. He and his family were important planters interested and active in several humanitarian projects, being one of the founders and benefactors of the Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, now one of the world's largest private hospitals. The philanthropic activities of Jennings in Memphis and his involvement in the family furniture business there required a special daily stop by the Illinois Central Railroad at the end of Jennings' yard.

After Hugh Jackson Jennings death in 1921, Mrs. Jennings remained in the house until her death in 1962. The Murphey-Jennings House is now undergoing a careful restoration by its current owners, Mr. and Mrs. A. William Vowell.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Deforce, Jim. Interview, Brandon, Mississippi, April 10, 1981.

Groner, John. Interview, Memphis, Tennessee, September 1980.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.12 acres

Quadrangle name Sumner, MS

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

A 

115	7430510	37614215
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing	

C 

--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--

E 

--	--	--	--

F 

--	--	--	--

G 

--	--	--	--

H 

--	--	--	--

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property occupies Lot Thirteen (13) in Block "O" of the H.M. Thayer Survey of the Town of Sumner. The lot is approximately 214' x 235' (see survey map). The property boundaries contain only the original lot for the house.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mr. and Mrs. A. William Vowell

organization N/A

date May 1981

street & number 307 Walnut Street

telephone 601-375-8927

city or town Sumner

state Mississippi

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 9, 1982

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Murphey-Jennings House  
CONTINUATION SHEET Sumner, Mississippi IEM NUMBER 9 & 11 PAGE 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Herndon, Joseph L. "Architects in Tennessee Until 1930.  
A Dictionary." Masters thesis, Columbia 1975.

Morrow, William. Interview, Jackson, Mississippi, April 1979, 1980.

Murphey, Smith, IV. Interview, Sumner, Mississippi, November, 1979, 1980.

McGeoy, Frank R. Specifications for a Residence in Sumner, Mississippi for  
Mr. Smith Murphey May, 1904.

11. FORM PREPARED BY:

Lloyd Ostby

4028 Faxon Avenue

Memphis, Tennessee 38122

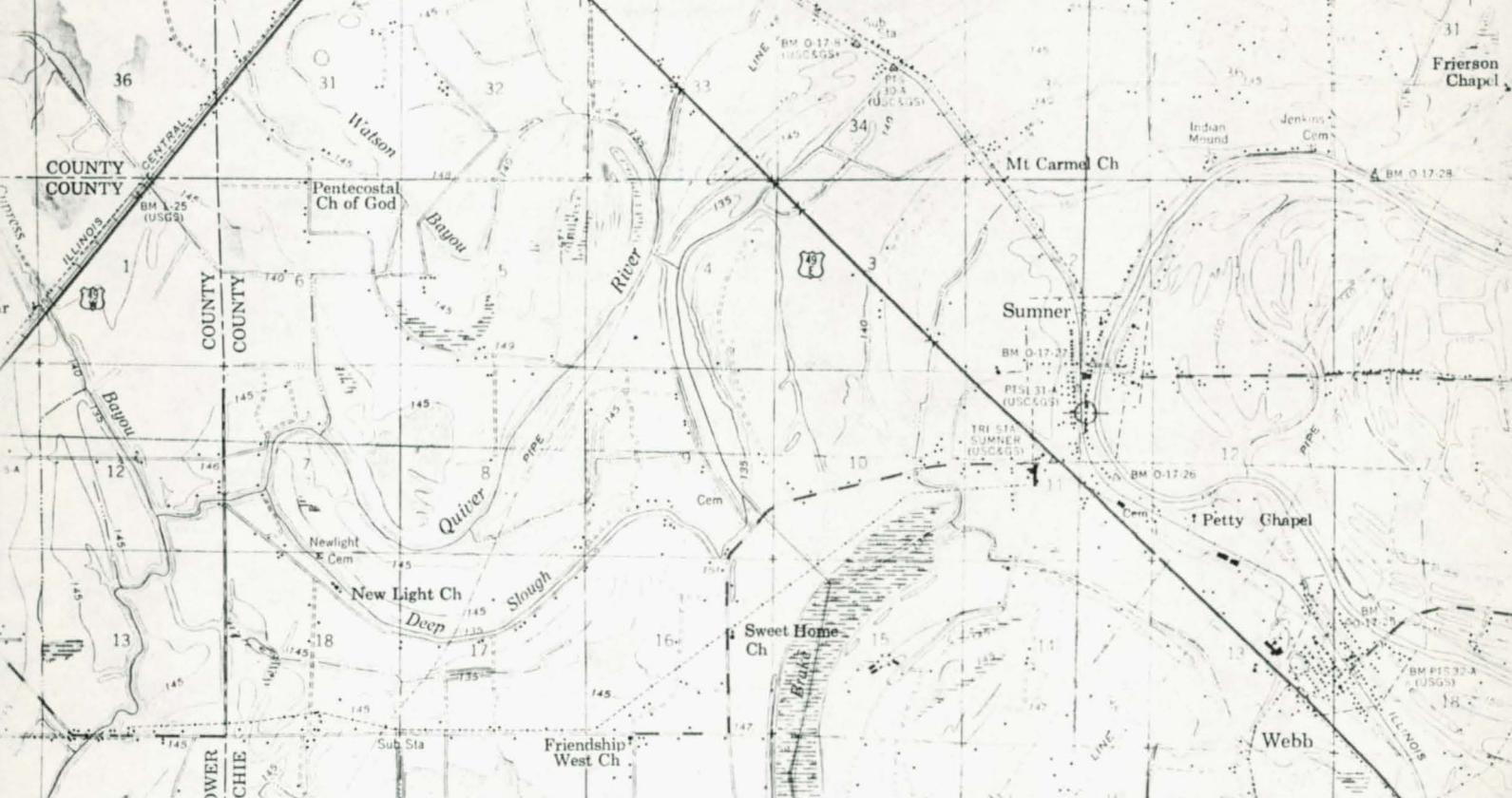
May 1981

901-528-2834 (work)

458-8735 (home)

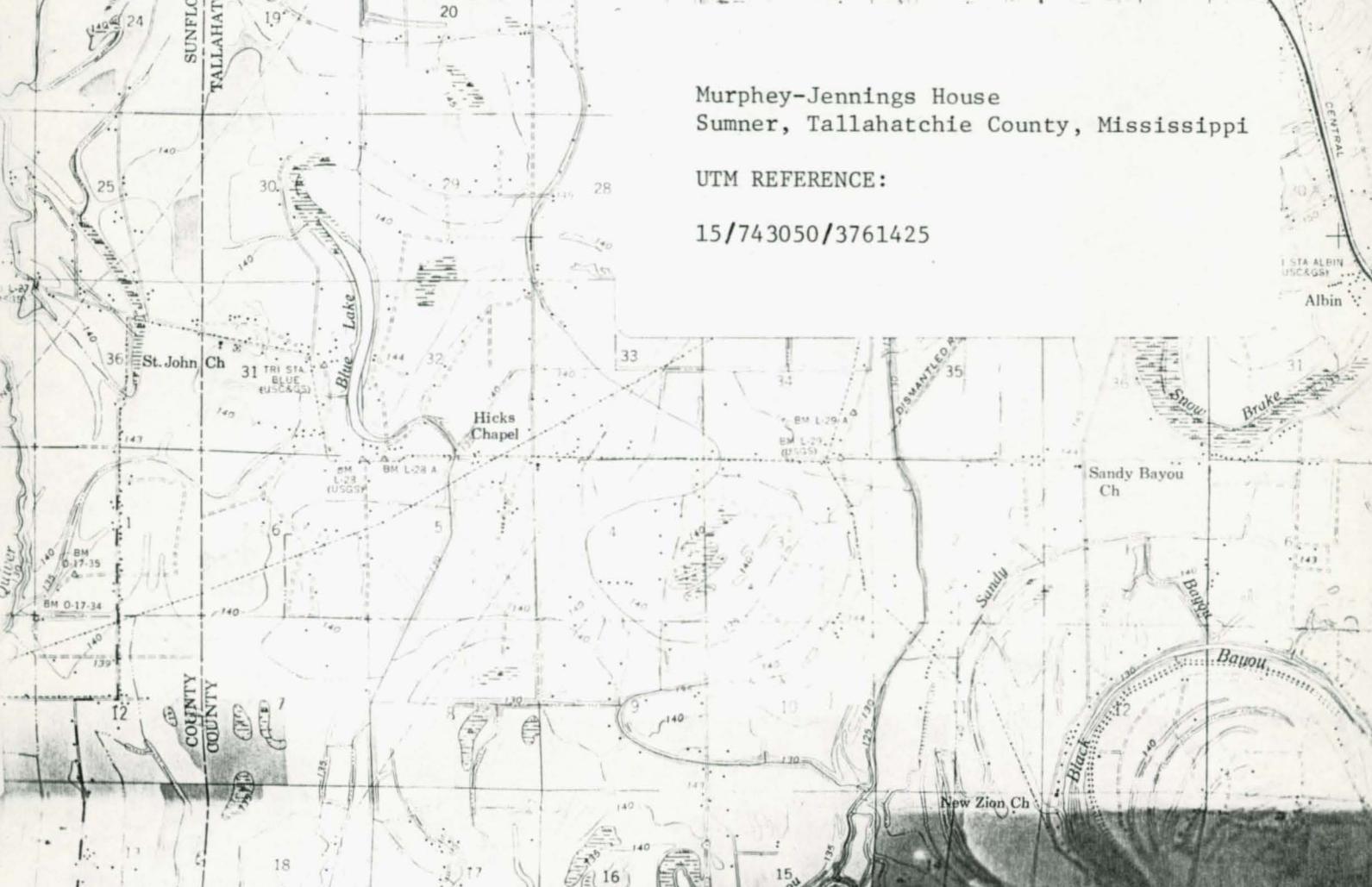
INTERIOR  
EY

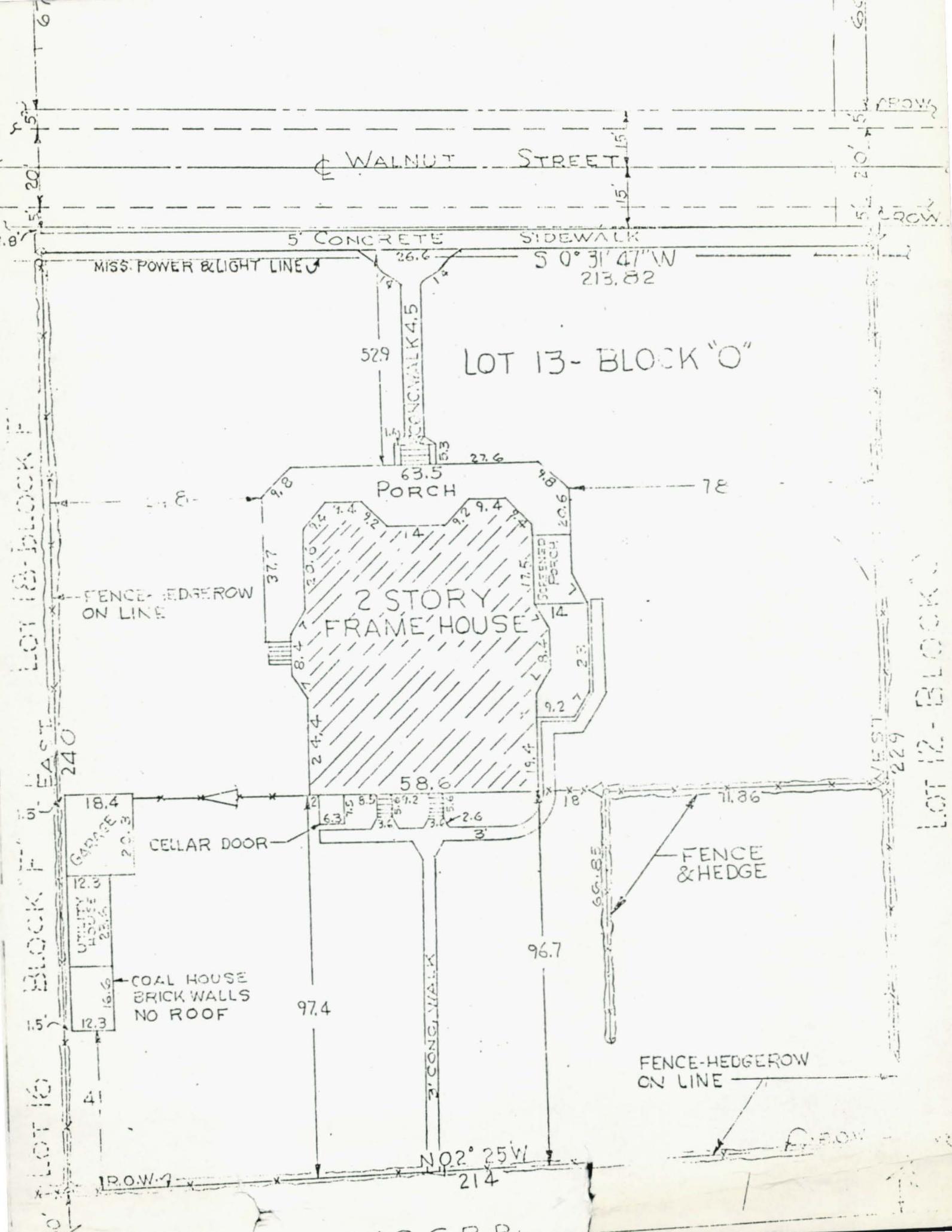
V 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 (TUTWILER) 43 44 45 46  
TUTWILER 1 MI TUTWILER 1/2 MI R 2 W 2952 III



Murphey-Jennings House  
Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

UTM REFERENCE:  
15/743050/3761425





LOT 13- BLOCK "O"

WALNUT STREET

5' CONCRETE SIDEWALK

MISS. POWER & LIGHT LINE

S 0° 31' 47" W  
213.82

52.9

CONCRETE WALK 4.5

PORCH

2 STORY  
FRAME HOUSE

FENCE-HEDGEROW  
ON LINE

FENCE  
& HEDGE

CELLAR DOOR

COAL HOUSE  
BRICK WALLS  
NO ROOF

GARAGE

UTILITY  
HOUSE

FENCE-HEDGEROW  
ON LINE

N 02° 25' W  
214

I.C.G.P.R.

LOT 18- BLOCK F

BLOCK F EAST

LOT 16

LOT 12- BLOCK C

R.O.W.

R.O.W.



Murphey-Jennings House

307 Walnut

Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

PHOTOGRAPHER: Lloyd Ostby

DATE: September 1980

NEGATIVE: A. William Vowell, Jr.

Sumner, MS

East elevation, facing west

1 of 2



Murphey-Jennings House

307 Walnut

Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

PHOTOGRAPHER: Lloyd Ostby

DATE: September 1980

NEGATIVE: A. William Vowell, Jr.

Sumner, MS

Northeast elevation, facing southwest

2 of 2



Murphey-Jennings House

307 Walnut

Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

PHOTOGRAPHER: Unknown

DATE: Early twentieth century

NEGATIVE: Unknown

East elevation, facing west