NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

318

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any 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.

RECEIVED 2280
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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: **Ford, Hezekiah House**
Other names/site number: **Ford-Countess House; Countess House**
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: **920 Countess Road**
City or town: **Huntsville** State: **AL** County: **Madison**
Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [x]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this **x** 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property **x** meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** **x** **statewide** ___**local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___**A** ___**B** **x** **C** ___**D**

Lee Anne Wofford /Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer 5/5/14

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Alabama Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall 6.13.14

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [x]

Public – Local [ ]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) [x]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EARLY REPUBLIC/ Federal

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation:	Stone
Walls:	Brick
Roof:	Metal
Other:	Wood

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Hezekiah Ford House (constructed c. 1820) is a brick, four bay wide I-house displaying vernacular Federal details. The gable-roofed main block features two rooms over two rooms, all of approximately equal size [photos 1-2]. The brick wing extending off the northeast corner of the rear elevation originally comprised only one room. Circa 1845, this wing apparently was enlarged through the addition of another room and an entire gable-roofed second story (this will be explained more fully in the narrative description) which then gave the house a decidedly L-shaped configuration [photos 3-5]. A deteriorating roof has led to severe water damage in the second story of the main block. Other damage includes large cracks in interior, load-bearing walls and the loss of bricks at the upper portion of the chimneys. Nevertheless, the house retains historic integrity.

The Hezekiah Ford House is located on a narrow, deep lot of approximately seven acres that extends south from Countess Road. The house faces south and historically overlooked a road that is no longer extant. To its southwest (and across the historic road) sits a one room schoolhouse that is believed to date from the mid-nineteenth century and is somewhat hidden by vegetation [photos 47-48]. A cinder block well house is located just northwest of the house [photo 49]. The surrounding area is still predominantly rural in character with agricultural fields extending out from the Ford House in all directions. However, the house lies just a few miles outside the incorporation limits of Huntsville and development is encroaching upon this bucolic area from all directions.

Narrative Description

The Hezekiah Ford House is a four by one bay, brick I house with a rear wing that rests on a limestone block foundation and is crowned by a low pitch side gable roof clad in standing seam metal. Each side elevation has an exterior brick chimney. The brick wall treatment is set in a common bond. Originally there was a one-room wing off the northeast corner of the rear elevation. Circa 1845, this wing was expanded by the additions of another room off its rear elevation and a full second story with gable roof. This later construction is indicated by the less ruddy color of the bricks comprising the second story of the wing [photo 3] and the original spaced decking on a triangular portion of the main block's roof that is still encased in the attic of the wing expansion. This addition probably was undertaken by Hezekiah's brother, John Ford who inherited the property in 1844 and then moved into the house with his wife and several children.

Above the door and window openings are gauged and rubbed brick radiating voussoirs forming flat arches [photo 6]. The first story window openings are slightly larger than those on the second story. There is a variety of window styles, but the overwhelming majority are 2/2 double hung sash. Originally, the windows of the main block and the one-room wing would have been 12/12 double hung sash. This was not only a common feature of Federal style houses in north Alabama, but the proportions of the window openings themselves also indicate this configuration.

Facing south, the façade reveals two centrally placed door openings that each contains a pair of wooden doors with fielded panels. The door arrangement is flanked on either side by a two-over-two, double-hung wood sash window. This sash type is repeated in four systematically placed window openings located along the second story. Attached to the façade is a shed roof that once covered a full-width porch. The porch roof is supported by three wood posts that rest on a low wall composed of concrete blocks. The original porch deck is no longer extant and has been replaced by a smaller raised wood platform, which provides access to the façade doors. The rest of the area under this porch roof serves as a carport. Decorative post brackets consistent with Folk Victorian style architecture suggests that the porch was added to the house in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century [photos 1-2].

Located on the northern end of the east (side) elevation along the rear wing is a small shed roofed, frame addition that serves as a sunroom. It is believed to have been added to the house c. 1950. The addition includes a central door that is flanked to the south by a single window and a pair of windows to the north that contain horizontal two-over-two, double-hung wood sashes. This sash type is repeated on a pair of windows located on the north elevation of the addition. Patched joist pockets and the remains of a roof line just above the shed extension provide evidence that an earlier porch had been attached here. Fenestration along the east elevation of the wing consists of a single window on the first story and two second story windows that contain two-over-two, double-hung wood sashes. The west elevation of the main block is highlighted by an exterior end brick chimney [photo 3].

The north (rear) elevation of the main block includes a door topped by a transom that contains an operable two-light wood sash. Located west of the door is a two-over-two, double-hung wood sash window. This sash type is repeated on two second story windows. This door is accessed by a shed roof porch featuring wood posts with decorative brackets and provides entry to the west room of the main block.

As previously mentioned, the rear elevation is dominated by a c.1845 wing, which features a gable roof covered with standing seam metal, an interior and an exterior brick chimney, and a limestone block foundation. The west elevation of the ell is marked by a door and a window opening containing two-over-two, double-hung wood sashes. This sash type is repeated on two second story windows. Patched joist pockets and the faded outline of porch columns suggest that an L-shaped porch wrapped around the west elevation of the wing and the north elevation of the west room of the main block [photo 5]. The north (rear) elevation of the wing includes an exterior end brick chimney that is flanked to the east by a first story window opening covered with a plywood sheet and a second story window that contains four-over-four, double-hung wood sashes. Located at the attic level are two square window openings with four-light casement wood sashes that flank the chimney. Positioned west of the chimney is a shed extension with a door that provides access to the cellar [photo 4].

The interior of the main block exhibits a two-over-two room plan and retains many original Federal style features. The interior plan of the first floor is formed by a centrally placed brick wall that runs the depth of the main block and includes a central doorway allowing access between the two downstairs rooms. The doorway has a deep paneled reveal and simple, molded wood surrounds in both rooms along with a Cross-and-Bible door with six fielded panels [photo 13]. Both the first floor rooms of the main block feature plaster walls, wood floors, baseboards, chair rails, door and window casings and Federal style fireplaces. Both fireplaces feature diagonally reeded bands above the opening and just below the mantel shelf which delineate a paneled central tablet flanked by end blocks. On the west room's fireplace, the end blocks display fielded panels and molded pilasters flank the opening [photo 12]. The fireplace in the east room features paneled pilasters as well as paneled end blocks [photo 14]. Fireplace openings throughout the house were sealed, probably in the early twentieth century, to accommodate a coal-fired heating stove.

In the northeast corner of the west room, a single-leaf door (probably a turn-of-the-20th-century addition) provides access to the rear porch [photo 9].

Situated in the northwest corner of the east room is an open-string, dogleg staircase with a landing that provides access to the second story of the main block. Overall the staircase is composed of square balusters and a rounded handrail. The initial run of the staircase is highlighted by wood panels and decorative scrollwork on the stringers. Located at the base of the staircase is a small opening with a multi-paneled wood door that provides access to a storage closet. The staircase appears to have been altered at a later date as a multi-panel wood door is situated at the foot of the landing and a partition wall composed of vertical wood boards conceals the upper run of the staircase [photos 15, 18-19, 30].

The second floor of the main block includes a central landing that is flanked to the east and west by rooms that likely served as bedrooms [photo 31, 36]. As with the first floor, interior architectural details found in each room of the second story include plaster walls, wood floors, baseboards, chair rails and door/window casings as well as fireplaces.

The east bedroom was originally open to the stairwell but at some point a thin partition wall composed of vertical wood boards closed it off. A thin Cross-and-Bible door in this wall provides entry into the room from the landing. The fireplace in this room has a less refined design than the fireplaces in the downstairs rooms. A molded surround defines the opening which is topped by a frieze and cornice [photos 37-39].

The doorway into the west bedroom features a Cross-and-Bible door with fielded panels set within a simple, molded surround. This room's fireplace is similar in design to the one across the landing but also features reeded banding below the mantel shelf [photos 32-36].

Back downstairs, access to the rear wing of the house is provided via a doorway in the north wall of the east room (next to the staircase). The deep, paneled reveal of the doorway contains a Cross-and-Bible door with fielded panels [photos 19, 23-24]. Like the rooms in the main block, this one features wood floors, baseboards, chair rails, door/window casings, and plaster walls [photo 20]. In addition, the room has a fireplace on its north wall. Similar in design to the one in the east room, this fireplace also has paneled pilasters flanking the opening and paneled end blocks with a paneled central tablet. Just below the mantel shelf, however, there is a diagonal reeded band [photo 21]. Situated in the southeast corner of this room is an enclosed box staircase that leads to the wing's second story. Access to the staircase is through a Cross-and-Bible door with fielded panels. An additional multi-panel wood door is located underneath the staircase, providing access to a storage closet [photos 22-23]. It is apparent that this staircase is an early addition rather than original construction because it obscures the corner of the door reveal between this room and the east front room [photo 22].

The second story of the rear wing and its half story attic comprise a major component of the c. 1845 expansion. Based on architectural evidence, it appears that this story originally was divided into two large rooms by a wall and an enclosed box staircase leading to the attic [photos 43, 45]. These rooms also feature wood floors, baseboards and chair rails, door/window casings

and plaster walls. The staircase is located in the southeast corner of the north room between the chimney extrusion (originally an exterior chimney) and the east wall of the house [photo 45]. Storage space is located beneath the stairs. Within a decade or so, the south room was partitioned off into a hall and a small room [photo 40]. The thin partition wall between these two areas contains a thin Greek Revival style door with two long, fielded panels. The small room has no fireplace [photos 41-42]. The north room has a fireplace on its north wall (the rear wall of the wing). Molded pilasters flank the opening and above are plain end blocks, a paneled central tablet and a mantel shelf [photos 44, 46].

The staircase in the north room leads to the wing's unfinished attic. In this space where the roof for the wing meets the roof of the main block can be found a section of the original (or very early) spaced decking for the latter roof. Furthermore, the beams that support the wing's roof are lap jointed at the ridge line, negating the need for a ridge pole. The butt joint decking of the wing's roof is a later alteration. Originally, this roof also would have had spaced decking.

Returning to the first floor, directly behind the room of the original wing is another large room that was converted into a kitchen sometime in the twentieth century. This kitchen room was also likely added to the house in c. 1845. It is appointed with wood baseboards, chair rails, door/window casings, and plaster walls. Its wooden floor is covered with linoleum.

The kitchen is accessed through a doorway next to the fireplace on the north wall of the original "wing" room [photo 20]. This wall probably was originally an exterior wall. Here the chimney extrudes deeply into the kitchen yet contains no fireplace, as if it had been an exterior chimney prior to the c. 1845 expansion of the house. The space between the chimney and the west wall of the kitchen was enclosed with beaded board at a much later period to create a pantry [photo 25].

The wall directly across the room from this one (the rear wall of the wing) features a fireplace with fluted pilasters flanking the opening, a paneled central tablet flanked by end blocks (each accented by an incised diamond shape) and a mantel shelf [photo 27].

Along the east wall of the kitchen can be found cabinetry and a sink [photo 26]. A Cross-and-Bible door on this wall leads to the ca. 1950 shed roofed addition that contains a full bathroom, a closet, and a sunroom. This addition features horizontal wood paneling, molded door/window casings, and a carpeted wooden floor [photos 28-29].

Located southwest of the house is a mid-nineteenth-century gable-front building. According to Robert Gamble, Senior Architectural Historian at the AHC and the property owner, Andy Duke, it served as a school [photos 47-48]. The building probably was constructed c. 1845, a year after John Ford inherited the house and came to reside there with his large family. Ford's brother, Hezekiah and sister-in-law Nancy, only had two children, one of whom died quite young. Consequently, it is unlikely that they constructed this schoolhouse.

The schoolhouse was constructed of logs but clad with weatherboard. It features a roof covered with standing seam metal and a stone pier foundation. Partial concealment by mature vegetation prevented a full assessment of each elevation. The façade reveals a first story door opening and

loft opening in the half-story that is concealed by wood doors. The former school building is a contributing resource.

Northwest of the house is a concrete block well house that probably was built c. 1920 [photo 49]. In the 1910s and 1920s, farmers were being encouraged to make their own concrete blocks and to use them in the construction of their outbuildings. The structure is covered in vegetation, preventing a more detailed description.

Archaeology Component

While no archaeological survey has been undertaken on this property, the possibility of subsurface remains that would help us understand and interpret the history of this site remains high.

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.
- [x] 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
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
c. 1820, c. 1845

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Ford, Hezekiah
Ford, John

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Hezekiah Ford House has statewide significance under **Criterion C: Architecture**. This brick I-house, one of only a handful in Alabama dating from the early settlement period, features a vernacular interpretation of the Federal style in both its exterior features and interior woodwork. It represents how prosperous yeoman farmers on the Alabama frontier aspired to emulate the aesthetics of the planter elite who so dominated the political, social and cultural arenas in the state's early period.

Two dates constitute the period of significance for the Ford House. The first is c. 1820, which corresponds to the date Hezekiah Ford received a patent on land in section 32, Township 2 South, Range 1 East. This would be a likely construction date for his house.* John Ford, Hezekiah's brother, inherited the house from his sister-in-law Nancy (whose husband Hezekiah and two sons had predeceased her) after she passed away in 1844. John and his wife Marianne had at least five, and possibly six, children at the time and probably enlarged the rear wing from one story to two stories to accommodate their growing family. Therefore, the second date in the period of significance is c. 1845.

*An alleged construction date of 1818 is etched into the façade of the house [photo 7]. This date, which is crudely etched into an easily accessible brick, could have been carved there at any time.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C: Architecture

The Hezekiah Ford House is one of only a handful of brick I-houses dating from Alabama's early settlement period that is still extant. The few such houses that do survive are found in the areas of the Old Southwest frontier initially settled by Anglo-Americans. These regions include the Great Bend of the Tennessee River near Huntsville, the Black Belt prairie between the Warrior and Tombigbee Rivers in west Alabama and the area around Montgomery in the south central part of the state. In terms of their building typology and architectural elements, they demonstrate the cultural baggage these pioneering families brought with them from the Atlantic seaboard states extending from the Chesapeake Bay area down to Georgia. Of these houses, the Hezekiah Ford House retains the most integrity. Its core is very intact. The original two over two room floor plan with a one room wing is still discernible and the house retains its finely executed Federal style woodwork as well as its window openings with their gauged and rubbed flat arches.

Like thousands of other settlers pouring into the Old Southwest, Hezekiah Ford hailed from Southside Virginia. He came with some resources as he was able to purchase a quarter section of land as early as 1813 and extended his holdings in 1815 and again in 1832. Ford occupied a

middling position in northern Alabama's frontier society which is reflected in the architecture of his house.

Hezekiah Ford's situation was certainly not dire like that of the poor whites streaming westward who often squatted on land, hoping to survive until their first crop came in. But neither was he a member of the planter elite, those descendents of prominent and wealthy families in the seaboard states who comprised a self-proclaimed aristocracy. These fortunate few migrated into Alabama with money, slaves and herds of livestock. As members (either through blood or marriage) of the Pope, Bibb, Walker, Watkins, McGehee, Taliaferro, Gilmer, Jordan, Moore, Meriwether and other such families, they immediately dominated the upper echelons of frontier society. Like Ford, they originated from Virginia or were only a generation or two removed from the Old Dominion state.

Architectural historian Barbara Mooney Burlison in her book *Prodigy Houses of Virginia: Architecture and the Native Elite* (UVa Press, 2008) observed how Virginia's colonial planter aristocracy chose "to . . . provide themselves with grand houses . . . . the owners of these mansions advanced grand claims to social and political prestige." Burlison points out the "intensely personal" relationship between the inhabitants and the ambitious houses many of the planter gentry aspired to in colonial Virginia. Such houses, she suggests, represented "a vision of privilege through birth." They were "instruments" which served to "authenticate power and legitimize an assumption of superiority"; they were "architectural gestures" in which the planter was willing to invest in order to maintain prestige and proclaim his anointed place -- by power alone if not by birth -- in the social order. This expression of prestige and status through architecture also held true for the children and grandchildren of those colonial planters who headed west in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of Alabama's raw cotton frontier, just as in rural Virginia, such houses stood boldly amidst a sea of humbler dwellings to assert the social superiority of their inhabitants.

Hezekiah Ford had neither the wealth nor the pedigree to be a member of northern Alabama's planter elite. Nevertheless, his two-story, brick house with its beautifully carved Federal style woodwork, also visually expressed his status within the frontier society he inhabited as well as, perhaps, his aspirations. Ford could have chosen to build a log cabin or a simple, wood frame structure but that would have identified him with his poorer white neighbors. Instead, he chose to emulate as best he could the architectural aesthetics of his "betters" thereby aligning himself to a certain degree (architecturally if not actually) with the local power structure.

Narrative History

Migrating from Cumberland County in the piedmont region of Virginia, Hezekiah Ford (1776-1839) arrived in northern Alabama by 1817, the year he married Nancy N. Vining in Madison County[1]. Shortly thereafter, Ford established his plantation a few miles outside the fledgling community of Huntsville and built his house.[2] Throughout the nineteenth century, the house and property remained associated with the Ford family and functioned as a cotton plantation.

Based on the available documentary evidence, Hezekiah and Nancy had two sons: William T. (1819-1828) and Hezekiah W. (1824-1841).[3] Ford's motivation to settle in Madison County became the subject of controversy after his death in 1839, as Ford's first wife in Virginia contested the transfer of his estate to Nancy N. Ford.[4] According to the court ruling, Hezekiah Ford was initially married in Virginia in 1797.[5] The case does not identify the name of Ford's first wife, who argued that Ford abandoned her without cause and that she was entitled to his estate claiming dower rights to the property in Madison County. Ultimately, the court ruled in favor of Nancy N. Ford, who retained ownership of the property until her death in 1844.[6]

Following the death of Nancy N. Ford, the house fell under the ownership of John Ford, Hezekiah's brother. Although John died in 1849, the property continued to function as a significant plantation under the ownership of his wife, Marianne.[7] At the time of the 1850 census, the value of the Ford property is listed as $40,000. Other persons identified as living in the Ford household in 1850 include Marianne's four daughters: Missouri age 21, Lucilla age 19, Marianna age 17, and Laura age 15. In addition, Marianne's three sons, John age 9, William age 6, and Robert age 4 are identified.[8] Slave schedules for the 1850 census do not identify any slaves directly connected to the Ford property, however, ten years later, the 1860 census attributes 69 slaves under Marianne Ford.[9] In addition, the slave schedules indicate that 12 slave houses were also located on the property.[10]

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[1] Ibid.; Ancestry.com, *Ford Cemetery*, 2012, accessed on May 26, 2013, http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/43508273/photo/uM7EQvzIFv0z1tcMv2qqCJUWMUZBhbxsIXJw!tZ8e7HZNlUbQz0_hfj9VmujcK6T.

[2] Madison County Land Office, *Certificate of the Register of the Land Office in Huntsville to Hezekia Ford.*

[3] Ancestry.com, *Ford Cemetery.*

[4] Collier, Henry W., Henry Goldthwaithe, John J. Ormond, Matthew W. Lindsay, and James B. Wallace, "Ford v. Ford et al.s", in *Reports of Cases at Law and in Equity Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Alabama: During June Term, 1842, and Part of January Term, 1843* (Tuscaloosa, AL, R.A. Eaton printer, 1843), pp. 142-148.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Collier, et al., "Ford v. Ford et al.s", in *Reports of Cases at Law and in Equity Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Alabama: During June Term, 1842, and Part of January Term, 1843*; Ancestry.com, *Ford Cemetery.*

[7] Ancestry.com, *1850 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Slave Schedules*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010).

[10] Ibid.

In both the 1860 population and slave schedules, Marianne Ford is identified as "Mrs. M. Ford", with the population census identifying her as having been born in Virginia.[11] At the onset of the Civil War, the value of the Ford Plantation is listed at $34,890, a decrease of over $7,000 from 1850. By 1860, Marianne's daughters Lucilla, Marianna, and Laura were married and had moved out of the household.[12] This left four children: Missouri, John, William, and Fulton remaining with Marianne Ford. [13] An indication of the family's wealth is revealed in the 1860 census as all four children are credited with a personal estate valued at $25,000 each.[14]

During the period after the Civil War, the former plantation house was owned by Marianne Ford's son, John, and subsequently by his wife Lucy following his death in the late nineteenth century.[15] Census records identify both John and Lucy as farmers whose household included African-Americans as cooks, farm laborers, and servants.[16]

In 1904, Lucy Ford sold the house and its associated 280 acres to James W. Burcum.[17] Census records suggest that Burcum migrated from Iowa and continued to farm the former Ford property.[18] Burcum's household included his wife Julia, his son Lester, his daughters Birtha and Verney, and his sister-in-law Myrtle E. Taylor.[19] The Burcum family's ownership of the house lasted less than ten years, as it was sold to Stephen H. Countess of Tuscaloosa in 1911.[20] The Ford family's legacy of ownership of the property is reflected in the deed transfer, as it refers to the house as "the old Ford Residence".[21]

The purchase of the Ford House and adjoining 280 acres by Countess initiated an 85 year period of ownership by the family. Madison County tax records show that the property was owned by Stephen H. Countess from 1911 to 1928.[22] Ownership then transferred to Countess' son, Tenedor who held the house until 1941. For reasons unknown, Mary E. Countess, the wife of Stephen H. Countess, acquired the property in 1941 and held title until 1950. Between 1950 and 1979, Mary Countess' son, Salas S. Countess is identified as the owner. In 1979, the property was transferred

[11] Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009a); Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Slave Schedules*.
[12] Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census.*
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville, AL, Deed Book 91, p. 557.
[16] Ancestry.com, *1900 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2004); Ancestry.com, *1880 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010a).
[17] Madison County Probate Court Office, Deed Book 91, p. 557.
[18] Ancestry.com, *1910 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006).
[19] Ibid.
[20] Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville, AL, Deed Book 104, p. 581.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ancestry.com, *1920 United States Federal Census*, accessed on May 26, 2013 (Provo, UT, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010b).

to Salas Countess' wife, Louise T. Countess following his death. In 1996, the estate of Louise T. Countess sold the property to the current owners Andy and Mary Beatrice Countess Duke.[23]

As with the Ford and Burcum families, the Countesses farmed the adjoining acreage throughout the twentieth-century. Although the Ford-Countess House has not been occupied since 1995, the surrounding farmland once owned by Hezekiah Ford is still used for the production of cotton by the Duke family.

[23] Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville, AL, Deed Book 880, p. 802.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Duke, Andy
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Madison County Land Office
1819 *Certificate of the Register of the Land Office in Huntsville to Hezekiah Ford.* Manuscript on file, Madison County Property Assessor's Office, Huntsville.

Madison County Register of Deeds Office
1904 Deed Transfer from Lucy J. Ford to James W. Burcum. Deed Book 91, p. 557. Document on file, Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville.

1911 Deed Transfer from James W. and Julia E. Burcum to Stephen H. Countess. Deed Book 104, p. 581. Document on file, Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville.

1996 Deed Transfer from the Estate of Louise T. Countess to Andy and Mary Duke. Deed Book 880, p. 802. Document on file, Madison County Probate Court Office, Huntsville.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ 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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency

____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Huntsville Site #25

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.34

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.821731 Longitude: 86.549389
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Parcel #08-09-32-0-001-050.000 as described in Deed Book 880, page 802 in the Madison County Probate Judge's office. The legal description for this parcel is as follows: "All that part of the Southeast quarter of Section 32, Township2 South, Range 1 East of the Huntsville Meridian, Madison County, Alabama. Particularly described as commencing at a P. K. nail found purported as the center of the East boundary of said Section 32, said point being at or near the centerline intersection of Countess Road and Baltimore Hill Road; thence along Countess Road South 88 degrees 03 minutes 16 seconds West 3812.23 feet to a P. K. nail and the point of beginning. Thence from the point of beginning and leaving said road South 01 degree 44 minutes 47 seconds East 1328.23 feet to a ¾ inch crimped pipe; thence South 88 degrees 08 minutes 47 seconds West 240.85 feet to a 5/8 inch capped rebar stamped 'McElroy No. 15920'; thence North 01 degree 44 minutes 47 seconds West 1327.84 feet to a P. K. nail in said Countess Road; thence along said road North 88 degrees 03 minutes 16 seconds East 240.85 feet to the point of beginning and containing 7.343 acres, more or less."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These are the boundaries currently associated with the property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ted Karpynec/ Sr. Preservation Planner; Susan Enzweiler/AHC NR Coordinator & Robert Gamble/AHC Senior Architectural Historian
organization: Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research; Alabama Historical Commission
street & number: 2211 Seminole Drive, Suite 302; 468 S. Perry St.
city or town: Huntsville; Montgomery state: AL zip code: 35805; 36104
e-mail tkarpynec@tvaresearch.com; susan.enzweiler@preserveala.org
telephone: 256.705.45454; 334.230-2644
date: May 25, 2013; March 16, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Hezekiah Ford House

City or Vicinity: Huntsville

County: Madison State: AL

Photographer: Ted Karpynec

Date Photographed: April 30, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 49, House, south façade, camera facing north

2 of 49, House, south façade and east elevation, camera facing northwest

3 of 49, House, east elevation, camera facing west

4 of 49, House, north elevation of rear ell, camera facing south

5 of 49, House, west elevation, camera facing east

6 of 49, House, south façade doors, camera facing north

7 of 49, House, "1818" inscription on facade, camera facing north

8 of 49, House, interior, front west room, camera facing northwest

9 of 49, House, interior, front west room, camera facing northeast

10 of 49, House, interior, front west room exterior doors, camera facing southeast

11 of 49, House, interior, front west room, camera facing southwest

12 of 49, House, interior, front west room fireplace detail, camera facing northwest

13 of 49, House, interior, doorway between east & west front rooms, camera facing Northwest

14 of 49, House, interior, front east room fireplace, camera facing northeast

15 of 49, House, interior, front east room staircase, camera facing northwest

16 of 49, House, interior, front east room, camera facing east

17 of 49, House, interior, front east room, camera facing southwest

18 of 49, House, interior, front east room staircase detail, camera facing northwest

19 of 49, House, interior, front east room, camera facing northeast

20 of 49, House interior, original wing room, camera facing north

21 of 49, House, interior, original wing room fireplace, camera facing northwest

22 of 49, House, interior, original wing room box staircase, camera facing southeast

23 of 49, House, interior, original wing room box staircase storage closet, camera facing east

24 of 49, House, interior, original wing room door to east room, camera facing south

25 of 49, House, interior, kitchen, camera facing southwest

26 of 49, House, interior, kitchen, camera facing east

27 of 49, House, interior, kitchen fireplace, camera facing northwest

28 of 49, House, interior, Ca. 1950 shed addition, camera facing south

29 of 49, House, interior, Ca. 1950 shed addition, camera facing north

30 of 49, House, interior, main block staircase to second floor, camera facing north

31 of 49, House, interior, second floor landing, camera facing west

32 of 49, House, interior, west bedroom, camera facing northwest

33 of 49, House, interior, west bedroom, camera facing northeast

34 of 49, House, interior, west bedroom, camera facing southeast

35 of 49, House, interior, west bedroom fireplace, camera facing west

36 of 49, House, interior, west bedroom door, camera facing east

37 of 49, House, interior, east bedroom, camera facing southwest

38 of 49, House, interior, east bedroom, camera facing northeast

39 of 49, House, interior, east bedroom, camera facing northwest

40 of 49, House, interior, rear ell second floor hallway, camera facing northwest

41 of 49, House, interior, rear ell second floor bedroom, camera facing northwest

42 of 49, House, interior, rear ell second floor bedroom, camera facing southwest

43 of 49, House, interior, rear ell north room, camera facing southwest

44 of 49, House, interior, rear ell north room, camera facing northeast

45 of 49, House, interior, rear ell north room, camera facing southeast

46 of 49, House, interior, rear ell north room fireplace, camera facing north

47 of 49, School building, north façade, camera facing south

48 of 49, School building, north façade and east elevation, camera facing southwest

49 of 49, Concrete block outbuilding, south and east elevations, camera facing northwest

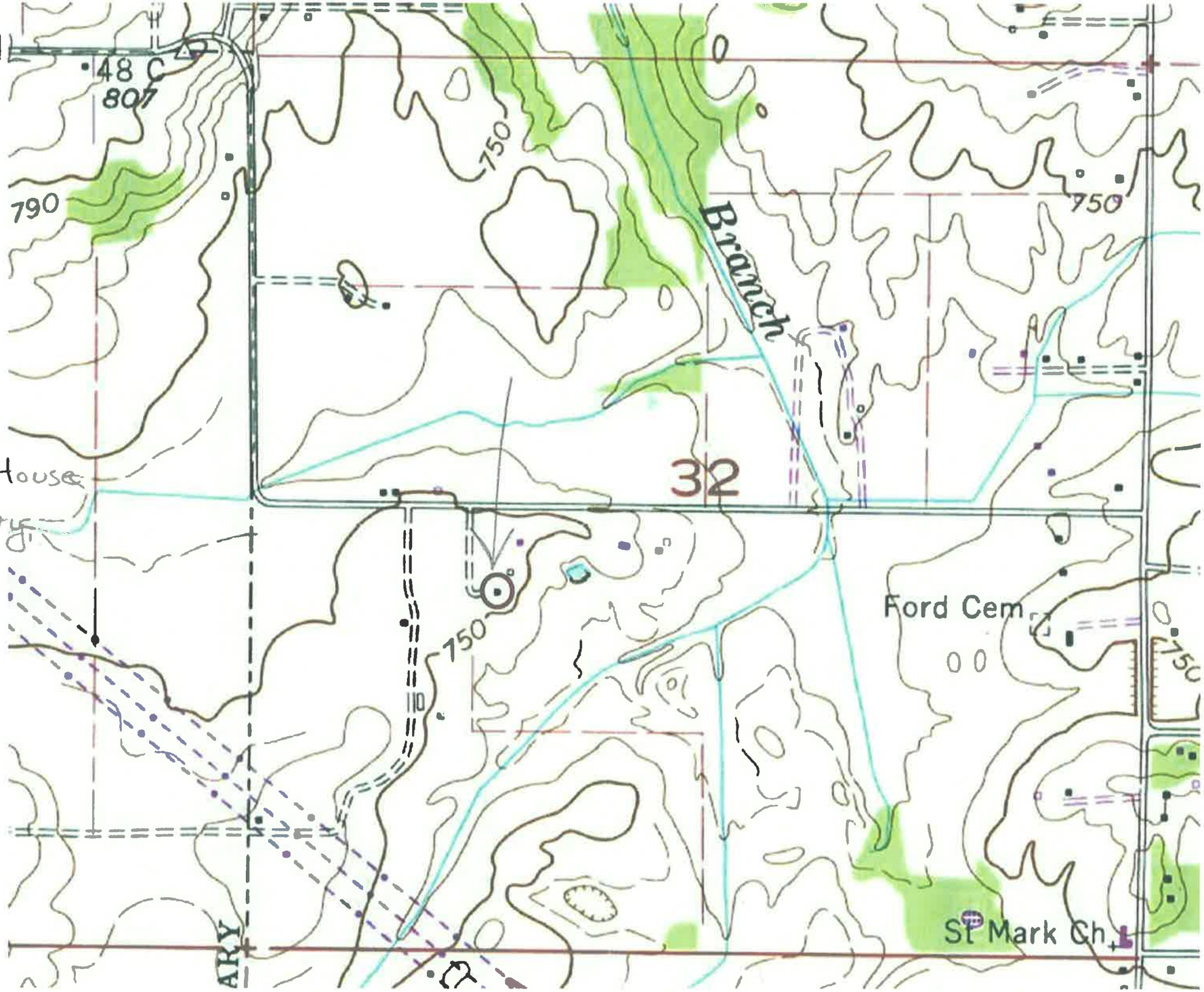
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Meridianville, AL
USGS map

Lat:
34.821731

Long:
86.549389

Hezekiah Ford House
Madison County
Alabama



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