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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Fisher, John P., House

Other Name/Site Number: Moats House / AS 0021

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2. Location

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Street & Number: W. of Co. Rd. 50; just N. of State Hwy. 278

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Portland

Vicinity: X

State: AR County: Ashley Code: AR 003 Zip Code: 71633

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. _____ See continuation sheet

Cathryn A. Slater _____ August 11, 1995
Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper Date
of Action

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
Current : Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival

Materials: foundation Brick roof Asphalt
walls Vinyl other Wood, Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary

Located on the west bank of Bayou Bartholomew near Portland, the Fisher House is an antebellum, Greek Revival-styled, two-story I house with a two-story, projecting-gable front porch.

Elaboration

Located on the west bank of Bayou Bartholomew about a mile west of Portland, the John P. Fisher House is a Greek Revival-styled, two-story, I-house residence believed to have been constructed c. 1850. The braced frame is pegged together with virgin cypress lumber with hand-hewn sills, measuring approximately 12" X 18" and forty-two feet in length, that rest upon brick piers of later, manufactured brick. The cypress weatherboard, which may have been produced at the Culpeper mill near Portland, is fastened with square nails. Unfortunately, vinyl siding of approximately the same width as the historic weatherboard has recently been applied over the entire house. The gable roof is covered with green composition shingles, and both gable ends contain a centered chimney of manufactured brick that dates at least to the 1930's. The original brick chimneys were probably either made on site or from an early kiln that was known to be nearby.

The front, or eastern, elevation is dominated by the two-story, projecting-gable porch. The porch is supported by four tapered square wood columns with separate columns for the second story. Both first and second-story porches are accentuated by a simple stick balustrade. The impressive front entrance extends nearly the width of the porch. It originally consisted of double-leaf wood panelled doors with a twelve-pane transom and eight-pane, double-

width sidelights. The front doors were replaced with a single door after the Hollands purchased the house in 1954. Upstairs, the original double-leaf wood porch doors, each with two vertical panels, remain and are flanked by similar sidelights. There is no transom, however, due to the space constrictions. The pediment is enclosed by a boxed cornice and clad with flush siding (now covered with lapped vinyl siding).

Fenestration for this elevation is symmetrically arranged into four ranks with the first-story windows taller in height. All of the windows are double-hung with a one-over-one sash. A photograph taken before the artificial siding was applied reveals two-over-two windows with the exception of an upper six-pane sash present on one of the second story windows. It is probable that the original windows had a nine-over-nine sash configuration on the first story with shorter six-over-six units utilized on the second story. The original green-painted cypress shutters remain on the first story windows

The northern and southern gable ends each contain four windows with one placed to either side of the chimney per floor. An additional one-over-one window is positioned at each end of an enclosed, single-story shed that extends across the rear, or western, elevation of the house. This elevation is fenestrated by four one-over-one windows (two single and a pair) at the northern half of the shed. The southern half of the elevation is composed of a shed addition or extension that is of indeterminate age and containing several small windows and a single-leaf door. Light is admitted into the two second-story rooms on the western elevation through four small one-over-one windows.

The interior retains much of the original fabric including many of the original doors and moldings. The entrance hall, which is sided with flush boarding, features the original straight staircase along the northern wall. The staircase has a simple yet elegant newel post and a stick balustrade similar to the one on the porch. Interestingly, the interior ceilings are probably only ten feet high on the first floor and much shorter on the second story. Although the northern room mantel has been removed, the southern mantel remains and is a typically simple Greek Revival-style piece. The entrance hall also features a transomed entry, minus the double-leaf doors, that leads into the rear room that was probably an open porch when originally constructed.

Apparently there were numerous outbuildings associated with the residence during the historic period including a separate kitchen, smokehouse, storage building, a cotton gin, grist mill, blacksmith shop, and slave quarters. Today, only two historic log outbuildings remain. The building believed to have been the smokehouse is located nearest the house and is southwest of the southwest corner. It is basically a ruin with a collapsed roof and three walls somewhat standing. The cypress logs range from twelve to fourteen inches in width and approximately eighteen feet in length. The storage house is sited behind the smokehouse to the west and is also eighteen feet long, but with logs up to twenty inches in width. This gable-roof structure is entered by a single-leaf door on the northern elevation and is still sound.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1850

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Summary

The Fisher House is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best extant representative of antebellum Greek Revival-style architecture in Ashley County.

Elaboration

The John P. Fisher House is located on the west bank of Bayou Bartholomew just west of Portland in Ashley County, which was organized as the fifty-third county (from part of Drew County) on November 30, 1848. Although the exact date of construction is not known, the house is believed to have been constructed c. 1850. A 1939 *Morehouse Enterprise* newspaper article featuring the house, which is the only known history of the house, suggested at the time that the house was 100 years old. It is recorded that John P. Fisher was one of 282 taxpayers in Ashley County in 1849, and he is listed as having eighteen slaves and 655.4 acres in the Trafalgar and Boydell communities, which is north of present-day Portland. Fisher is also known to have served on the Ashley County Petit Jury in 1850.

The first settlement in the area was located near the Fisher House and known as Alligator Bluff. Built along the east bank of Bayou Bartholomew, Alligator Bluff was centered around a ferry, at some point known as Holloway's Ferry, that was advantageously situated on the road from Hamburg into Chicot County. Sometime before the Civil War, Alligator Bluff became known as Portland, and a post office by that name opened on August 10, 1857 with Robert F. Hazzard as postmaster. The current town, however, is located about a mile east of Bayou Bartholomew and is a product of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railroad, which extended about through Ashley County in 1892.

Little is known about the Fisher family. Their family cemetery, a few hundred yards south of the house, has long since been plowed under, although the 1939 newspaper article mentions the markers of John P. Fisher, John P. Fisher, Jr., and Kate Fisher who died in 1834. Apparently Fisher owned a substantial plantation with the remains of slave quarters, a cotton gin, a grist mill, and a blacksmith shop still present in 1939. A Fisher is listed as one of the sixty-seven men organized in Portland of Company A of the 3rd Regiment, Arkansas Infantry, Confederate Army. After the Fisher family, Colonel Sam Bell acquired the property and the house was "a show place and a center of community and social activity." Bell and his business partner, Rolfe, lost the property apparently through foreclosure to the New Orleans firm of Juerice and Galice.

After being held briefly by another New Orleans concern, the house and land were purchased by Noah Moats around 1874. Moats' daughter, Miss Battie Holloway Moats (also spelled Bettie Holloway), was considered "the belle of the county." She married Allen Lindsey of Portland and had one son. After Allen Lindsey's death, Battie married James Bain, a Portland planter and merchant, in 1887 and had three children. At this time, the plantation consisted of 1300 acres and was divided between the Lindsey and Bain heirs upon the death of Mr. and Mrs. Bain with Jimmy Bain receiving the house.

One of the younger Bain's plantation managers, George Trimm, later resided in the house along with his brother, Percy, and his family. The Trimm's were still residing at the property at the time of the 1939 newspaper article. In 1954, the Bain heirs sold the house and property to William P. and Bertie Holland, who still live in the house.

Despite the recent application of vinyl siding and other various alterations that have occurred in its approximately 145-year lifespan, the Fisher House is locally significant under Criterion C by virtue of being the only surviving example of an antebellum Greek Revival-style residence in Ashley County. Although the architectural record from antebellum Ashley County is scant, there were probably few similarly styled residences constructed with the majority of structures being of a more vernacular, single-story type. The Fisher House is certainly distinctive in its singularity today.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Etheridge, Y. W. *History of Ashley County, Arkansas*. Arkansas Historical Series, No. 8. Van Buren, Arkansas: *The Press-Argus*, 1959.

"100 Year Old House Has Seen Many Changes." *Morehouse Enterprise*. April 27, 1937.

The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

Information submitted by Robert D. Pugh. November, 1994 and May, 1995.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Approximately two

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>636230</u>	<u>3678490</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the western edge of County Rd. 50 and a line formed by, yet twenty feet from, the northern elevation of the house, proceed southwesterly along said line to its junction with a line formed by, yet ten feet from, the western elevation of the storage building; thence proceed southeasterly along said line to its intersection with a line formed by, yet fifteen feet from, the southern elevation of the storage building; thence proceed northeasterly along said line to its junction with the western edge of Co. Rd. 50; thence proceed northwesterly along the road to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes the historic house, the remains of the smokehouse, the storage building, and property associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: August 7, 1995

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

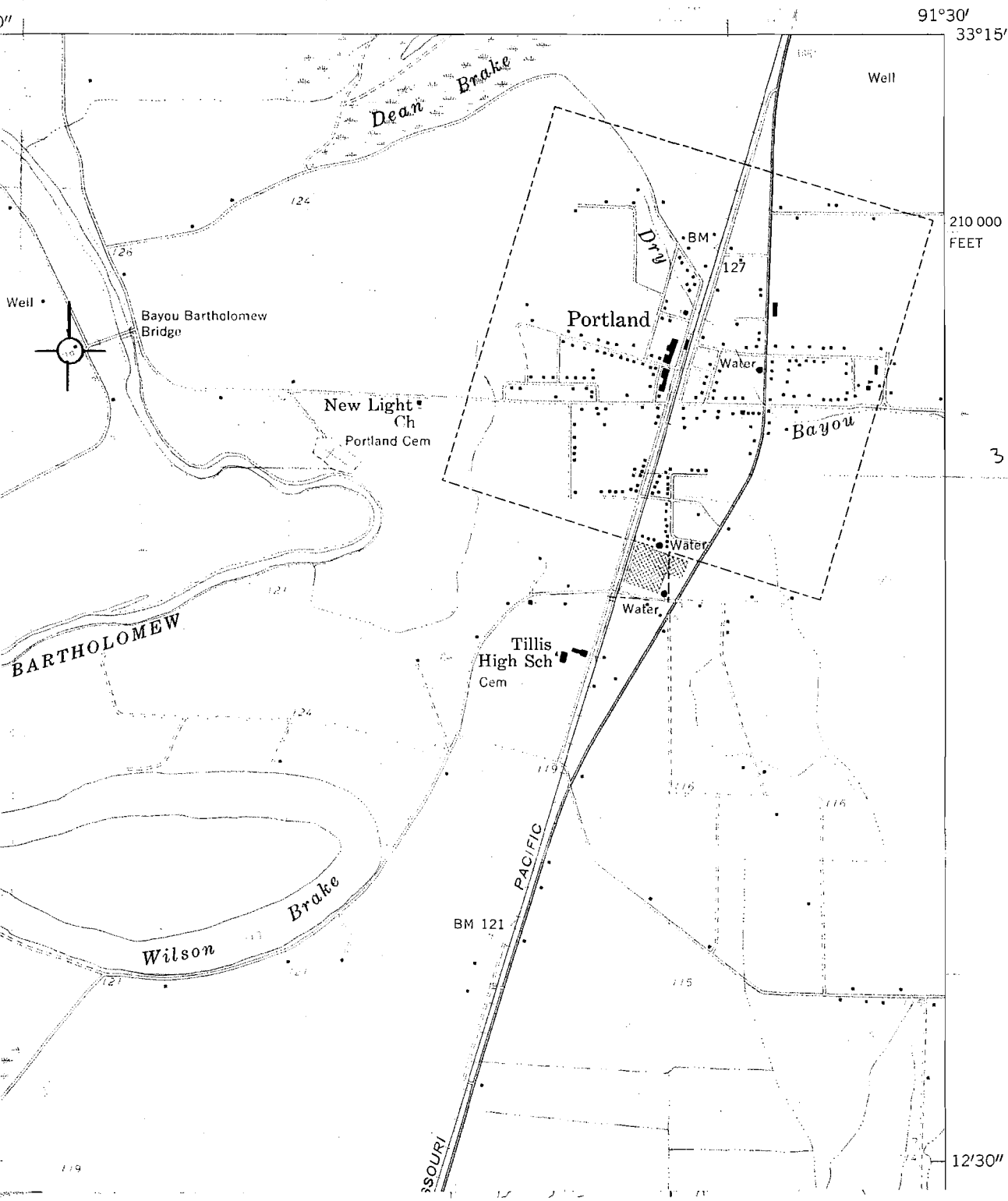


Fisher, John P., House
Portland vic., Ashley Co., Ark.

UTM: 15/636230/3678490

PORTLAND QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS—ASHLEY CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 WILMOT 15' QUADRANGLE

7750 IV
(LAKE VILLAGE)
1:62,500



91°30'
33°15'

210 000
FEET

3678

12'30"