

APPLICATION FOR A
HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION
 CITY OF PLATTEVILLE, WISCONSIN



General Information (please type or print clearly)

	Owner	Applicant/Agent
Name	Grant County Historical Society	Laurie Graney (Board Member)
Address	129 E. Maple Street Lancaster, WI 53813	7313 State Road 80 PO Box 240 Platteville, WI 53818
Phone	608-723-4925	608-642-0464
Fax		
Email	historicalsociety@tds.net	lgraney@yahoo.com

Signature The undersigned person hereby petitions the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Platteville, Wisconsin, to designate the property described below as a Historic Structure or Site.

Name: Laurie Graney Date: 8/9/2023

The above person is the: Property Owner Agent for the Owner Applicant

- I wish to nominate this property because: (check one or more boxes)
- I wish to protect the property.
 - This property is threatened with demolition or destruction.
 - This property has historic significance.
 - This property has been owned or occupied by a prominent or significant person(s).

Property Information

Address of Property: 460 W. Madison Street Platteville, WI
 Present Use of Property: Museum

If known, provide the following information:

Historic Name of Property: Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage
 Name of Architect: Unknown
 Other properties in Platteville designed by Architect: _____

Name of Builder: _____
 Other properties in Platteville constructed by Builder: _____

Date of Construction: 1838-1839
 Type and/or Style of Architecture: Virginia Tidewater

Significance of the property: Why do you think the property is historically significant? (Please check all of the boxes below that apply).

The property illustrates an important aspect of local history through its:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic history. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural history. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social or political history. | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation history. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial or commercial history. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Property is tied to the first settlers of Platteville. (Rountree family)</u> |

The property is directly associated with a person or persons who made important contributions to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural history. | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial or commercial history. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social or political history. | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation history. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>The City of Platteville being platted.</u> | |

The property is architecturally or artistically distinctive because it:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is an important example of an architectural style. | <u>Only home in Wisconsin and in the Midwest of the Virginia Tidewater design.</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is an unusual or important kind of building or structure. | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has an unusual method of construction. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is an important work of art. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is the work of an important architect or master builder. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

The property was identified in the Historic Architectural Survey Intensive Report for Platteville:

- 1983 Survey
- 2005 Survey

What do you know about the history of the property? Please provide as much information as possible that will indicate why the property is important. (For statements of historical fact, please indicate your sources of information. Keep in mind that the evaluation may depend solely on the information you submit.)

See attachments:

1. Copy of the original deed.
2. Wisconsin Magazine of History - Pages 393-407.
"A Virginia House In Wisconsin"
Published by Wisconsin State Historical Society 1947.
3. National and State Historical Record from
Wisconsin State Historical Society & National Register of Historic Places
4. Current brochure for the Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage.
Published by the Grant County Historical Society.
5. Location map.
6. Photos
7. Proposed narrative for Wisconsin State Historical Marker
(Written by UW-Platteville archivist James Hibbard.)

Attach additional pages, if necessary.

Known alterations or additions made since this structure was built: (please check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building additions. | <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement siding/residing. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Removal of porches/ portions of structure. | <input type="checkbox"/> Removal of decorative details. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moved from its original location.
(if moved, why, from where and when) | <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement of doors and/or windows. |

The dates of major alterations or additions were 1998 or 1999 and after 2015.

Briefly describe any changes checked above.

A Jeffris Foundation grant was received in 1998 or 1999. The grant was used to replace the cedar shake roof. This maintenance work was done under the Secretary of Interior Standards.

The front porch was replaced sometime after 2015. (1900 era photo attached.)

Sources of Information: Please list, or attach photocopies, of the sources of information that were used to determine the historical significance of the property.

Images of America - Platteville by James Hibbard
Wisconsin State Historical Society
Grant County Historical Society
National Register of Historic Places database

Photographs. Please submit clear, recent photographs that show all sides of the exterior of the structure and all associated accessory buildings that will be considered for designation. Provide copies of any historic photos of the building or property that are available.

Map. Please draw, or provide a copy of, a map of the property. Include all structures, adjoining streets, and other major features. Photographs of the building should be keyed to this sketch.

This completed form and any related documentation should be submitted to:

City of Platteville Historic Preservation Commission
75 N. Bonson Street
Platteville, WI 53818

Questions may be directed to:

City of Platteville, Department of Community Planning & Development at 608-348-9741

Note: Financial assistance, in the form of tax credits, may be available for approved rehabilitation work on properties that meet State and National criteria. For more information, contact Jim Sewell from the Wisconsin Historical Society at 608-264-6490, or jasewell@whs.wisc.edu.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Form Submitted: _____ File Number: _____
Historic Preservation Commission Action & Date: _____

This Indenture, made and entered into this *twenty fifth*

day of *October* in the year of our Lord, one thousand, eight hundred and *thirty eight* of the County of

BETWEEN *Samuel Mitchell Sr.* and *Territory* of *Wisconsin* of the first part, and *Geo H Rountree* of the County of *Grant* and *Territory* of *Wisconsin* of the second part, **Witnesseth:**

That the said *Samuel Mitchell Sr.* the party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of *fifty dollars* Dollars, in hand paid by the said *Geo H Rountree* the party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, bargained, sold, remised, released, and forever quitclaimed, and by these presents DOTI grant, bargain, sell, remise, release and forever quitclaim unto the said

Geo H Rountree his heirs and assigns, a certain tract of Land, or Lot of ground, lying and being in *the County and Territory aforesaid* in the form following. (to wit) *beginning at a stake thirty three chains East 2 1/2 days South of the north most corner of section No fifteen in Township three north of Range one west thence south Eighteen days West to a stake fifty chains thence East 18 days South sixty two chains to a stake, thence South 18 days East fifty chains to a stake thence West Eighteen days South to the place of beginning being forty acres situated in or on pt. of Sec 15 - T. 3 N. R. 1 W. S. 10 in said Township*

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the aforesaid tract of land, or parcel of ground, together with all and singular, the rights, profits, tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise thereunto appertaining, to the only proper use, benefit and behoof of the said *Geo H Rountree* his heirs and assigns forever: And the said *Samuel Mitchell Sr.* doth covenant to and with the said *Geo H Rountree*

the party of the second part, that he will forever WARRANT and DEFEND the said tract of land or Lot of ground, from the claim of the said *Samuel Mitchell Sr.* his heirs and assigns, and against the claim or claims of any other person whomsoever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the said *Samuel Mitchell Sr. and Ellenor Mitchell his wife.* hath hereto set their hands and seals the day and year first above mentioned, in presence of

James Shulby *Sam Mitchell*
Alvin McQueen *Ellenor M Mitchell*

Wisconsin Territory---County of Grant

THIS day personally appeared before the undersigned an acting Justice of the Peace in and for said County, *Samuel Mitchell Sr.*

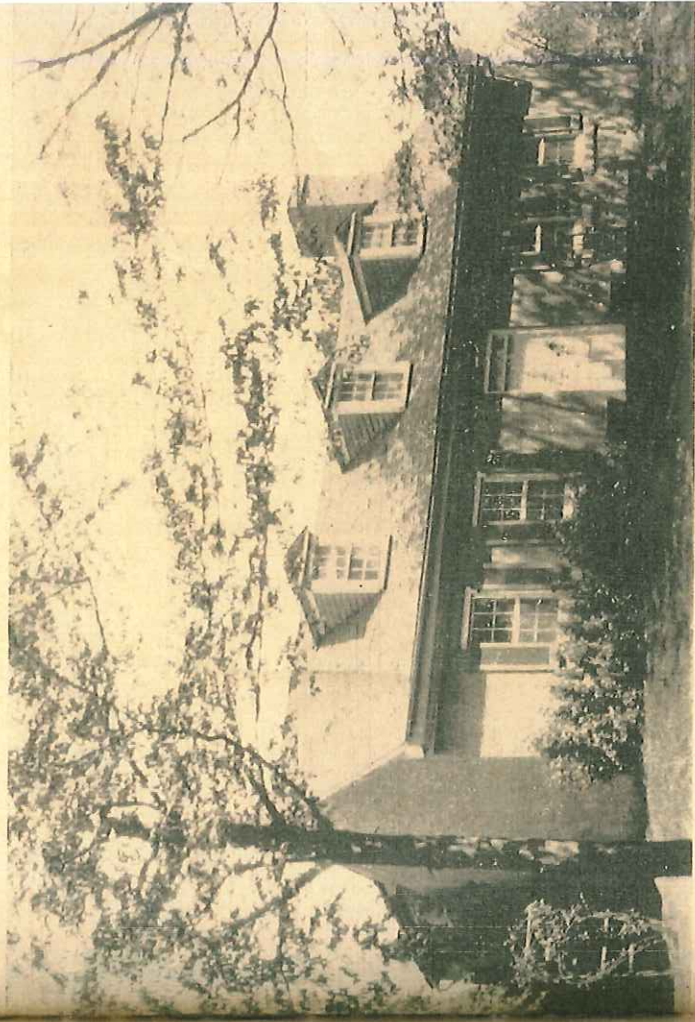
who is personally known to me to be the identical person who signed the foregoing deed of conveyance, and who then acknowledged, that he signed the same, freely, voluntarily, and of his own free will and accord, for the purposes therein mentioned.

And *Ellenor M Mitchell* wife of the said *Samuel Mitchell Sr.* having been by me made acquainted with the contents of said deed, and being by me examined separately and apart from her said husband, acknowledged that she had executed the same and relinquished her dower to the land and tenements therein conveyed, voluntarily, freely, and without compulsion of her said husband.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name, and affixed my seal of J. P. at *Platteville* this *twenty fifth* day of *October* A. D. 1838
James Shulby J.P.

1947
1961

WISCONSIN MAGAZINE *of* HISTORY



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WISCONSIN MAGAZINE of HISTORY

CLIFFORD L. LORD, Editor

LILLIAN KRUEGER, Associate Editor

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THE COVER

MITCHELL-ROUNTREE HOUSE, PLATTEVILLE. A shadow pattern, as delicate as fine lace, adds charm to the pictured old stone house which has stood "by the side of the road" since Wisconsin's territorial days. When Professor John Kienitz, the author of "A Virginia House in Wisconsin," saw the picture, he exclaimed "That's Virginia!" Harking back to Colonial-day architecture, it is a proud competitor among the State's historical houses.

for new furnishings is going to be spent from that fund while your present director is in office.

Now your director is not trying to refurbish the offices just to dress them up for the benefit of the incumbents. He does, however, believe strongly in the importance of first impressions. The new member, the potential donor, any member of the general public who sees a down-at-the-heels main office is apt to think the organization is in the same condition. That is the impression we mean to avoid. A few hundred dollars would make all the difference in the world. Is there a donor in the house?

THE SUMMER SEASON is again upon us and irresistibly turns our thoughts to the many special observances and celebrations we Badgers stage each summer. The annual opening of the Villa Louis at Prairie du Chien, May 23-25, brought out *Summer Festivals* not only the customary hirsute adornments to the male faces of the city but a record crowd for the usual gala festivities. Good as this show has always been, it seems to get better each year.

There are many similar, worthwhile events in Wisconsin each summer. On the more serious side there is *Schub* Sunday at Hol-landtown on June 15; the *Welsh Gymnastic Games*, August 24; the *Belgian Kermis* or thanksgiving day, August 31; the famous *Wilhelm Tell* pageant at New Glarus on Labor Day weekend. We celebrate the usufruct of the good earth with such gala holidays as the Hungarian Harvest Festival on August 10, the Strawberry Festival at Bayfield and Cherry Harvest Time in Door County in July or the Rutabaga Festival and the Cranberry Festival in early September at Cumberland and Wisconsin Rapids. And then there are aesthetic treats which require no formal celebration, such as the cherry blossom week of Sturgeon Bay or the apple blossom week of Gays Mills in late May or early June. Our out-of-state tourists go many miles to see these spectacles, to revel in them and to refresh their appreciation of the eternal roots of this great land of ours. But do as many Badgers attend as should? The deep and abiding pleasures of living in Wisconsin are many, and these are among the joys which we all should experience and treasure.

A Virginia House in Wisconsin

By JOHN F. KIENITZ

FOR THOSE who love old houses and their story as it unfolds from early colonial times to the settlement of the Middle and Far West, few experiences can be so gratifying, surely, as a visit to the Mitchell-Rountree house. It is located on State Highway 81 on the outskirts of the city of Platteville in Grant County. In Wisconsin this dwelling is unique as a relatively fine example of a small-house type, commonly seen in Virginia. It is remarkably like houses in that state which are fashioned of local limestone found throughout the lower Shenandoah Valley.

Formal papers and studies concerned with the early history of Platteville do not appreciate the real, though small, place which this house has in the history of the evolution of American homes. Yet, what may well be the oldest house in Virginia springs from the same English building practice which seems still to operate in the Wisconsin house. In Tidewater Virginia on Lynnhaven Bay is the Adam Thororoughgood house. This is a small, story-and-a-half structure of Virginia brick and dates from the first half of the seventeenth century. It, too, has gable-end chimney stacks, a central entrance door, and three dormers across the front. Its

JOHN F. KIENITZ, a member of the Art History staff of the University of Wisconsin, finds perpetual delight in writing on the subject of architecture. This article is a careful study of the historic Mitchell-Rountree house at Platteville, still in excellent condition. Professor Kienitz' story familiarizes the readers with another landmark in southern Wisconsin, found in the region of Pendarvis, Trelawny, and Polperro, the Mineral Point Cornish houses, delightfully described in this Magazine (June, 1946) by Robert M. Neal. From time to time "house stories" will be printed especially for those who thrive on architectural morsels.

This paper is made possible by grants in aid of research which have been allotted to Professor Kienitz by the Faculty Research Committee of the University of Wisconsin and the University Committee administering the University's Rockefeller Grant to Promote Wisconsin Studies.

builder was Adam Thoroughgood who came to the New World in 1621 as a boy of fifteen. He came to Virginia as an indentured servant, but his enterprise was such that he soon became wealthy and independent, a man whose character counted for much in the development of the community. His little house reminds us of an old belief that is current in Virginia: if a Virginian had two chimneys to his house, he deserved to be called Major; if four, Colonel was automatically placed before his name.

The leading contemporary student of Virginia architecture is Thomas Tileston Waterman. In the preliminary chapter of his recent *Mansions of Virginia* Mr. Waterman points out that the main entrance door of the Thoroughgood house which now opens on a central hall originally led directly into the living room half of the house.¹ This ties the Thoroughgood house closely to the old English arrangement of the small rustic home. The Mitchell-Rountree dwelling shares in a comparable and later stage of development after English practice.

The Platteville house has been occupied for many years by Miss Laura Rountree, great-granddaughter of its original owner and the man responsible for its Virginia style, the Rev. Samuel Mitchell (1764-1855).² Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky share in the background of the families most intimately associated with this house.

Samuel Mitchell's father was James Mitchell who married Molly Pryor Berry (1730-1804). She had first been married to a Major William Berry of Gloucester, Virginia, and their two daughters were Nancy and Prudence. James and Molly Mitchell's third son was Samuel, who built this stone house in Platteville.³

Samuel Mitchell married Eleanor Thomas of Frederick, Maryland, in Orange County, Virginia. She was the daughter of Francis

¹Mr. Waterman's volume was published at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1945. See pp. 3-17.

²Miss Rountree has in her possession a typewritten record that includes what is supposed to be an accurate genealogy. It contains errors which probably represent faulty copying of old handwritten notes tracing the origins of the Mitchell and related families.

³This family history was copied by Samuel's brother James, who got his facts from the family Bible. James Mitchell's genealogical notes were published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 7:76 (July, 1899). James writes, somewhat obscurely: "Grandmother's father, Colonel Samuel Pryor's parents were from England, and had settled in Caroline County, Virginia."

Thomas (1743-1835) and Grace Metcalf (1741-1829). Thomas, a prominent and affluent man, lived outside Frederick on his estate "Montevue," and fathered seven children. Mary Grace, daughter of Samuel and Eleanor, married John Hawkins Rountree.⁴ Since the Mitchell-Rountree house has a superior style which may be credited to the finer plane of material comfort enjoyed by these families in Virginia and Maryland, the Mitchell forebears are alluded to briefly.

"Montevue" was later occupied by one of Maryland's more picturesque governors. He was another Francis Thomas (1799-1876), the son of John Thomas (1767-1849) and the grandson of Francis and Grace Metcalf Thomas. The Wisconsin house has associations not only with the famous Thomases of "Montevue," but it has other ties with greatness.

It may be well to note that there is in Fredericksburg, Virginia, a building of considerable historical importance which though built of wood closely resembles the Mitchell-Rountree house. This is the "Rising Sun Tavern" whose builder was Charles, brother of George Washington. It was illustrious as a hostelry in the years between 1760 and 1776 when it was operated by Hugh Weedon who was destined to win fame in the Revolutionary War. Like the Platteville structure, it belongs to the story-and-a-half type. It has its central entry, a high basement, two windows to each side of the centered door, three dormer windows across the sloping half-story, and prominent gable-end chimneys built within the body of the wall.

In Maryland one of the oldest houses in the Tidewater region is "Cartagena," on Saint Marys River, off the Potomac. Built probably in the early years of the eighteenth century it is the work of one William Hebb whose initials are prominently displayed on the main front of this brick house in letters about three feet high, formed of black brick headers. "Cartagena," or "Haton's Corbett," as it is now called, is a story-and-a-half house graced by two dormers. It has a central entry. Two windows break into the main front, one for each of the main rooms. The chimney

⁴This family history is taken from Lawrence B. Thomas' *The Thomas Book* (New York, 1896).

stacks clear the roof strongly and rise from the squat body of a wide gable end, reminiscent of the Mitchell-Rountree house.

In 1780 Samuel Mitchell, a boy of sixteen, was seeing meritorious service in the Revolutionary War. He was a dispatch-bearer for General Daniel Morgan with whom he saw action in the North Carolina campaigns against notorious Colonel Tarleton. In 1781 he was with Washington's army at the surrender of Yorktown. He was memorable in his time for putting patriotism above profit.

Salem, Virginia, is mentioned as the place from which the Samuel Mitchells started on their long trek down the Ohio River and on to Illinois.⁵ The only Salem in Virginia appears to be located in Fauquier County. Its name was changed to Marshall. Orange and Fauquier counties both show stone construction of story-and-a-half dwellings approximating that of the Mitchell-Rountree house.

Whatever their home county may have been, when they reached Illinois, the Mitchells made house first of all at Lebanon. Then in turn they went to Belleville, Hillsboro, and finally to Galena. It was at Galena, Illinois, that their daughter Mary Grace married John Rountree, of Virginia and Kentucky ancestry, on August 7, 1828. And his own early dwelling in this state, according to the recollections of his younger contemporaries, took the shape of a double-log cabin known as the "Kentucky type." To students of our Southern home styles such a cabin is more delightfully known as the "dog-" or "possum-trot" cabin. The first houses built in Madison and in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, were modified examples of this double-log cabin construction in which the schedule calls for two cabins separated and connected by means of an open or closed central entrance hall. The Fond du Lac example had for its center a fine inset portico like those seen in the South.

The Samuel Mitchells left Galena and came to Platteville in 1836. Their first home was a frame house on Main Street. They built the buff-colored stone house which is the subject of this

⁵ Miss Rountree's typescript names Salem as the place of departure.

paper about 1837. Family tradition claims that they built it on a scale smaller than that to which they had been accustomed to in Virginia and Maryland since their sons and daughters had married and there was no need for a large dwelling. However that may be, the house as built can take its place with popular small Virginia houses. In earlier history one finds that story-and-a-half houses were not uncommon in rural England proper.

To begin with, there is the plan itself. In a modest way, and with the exception sometimes of the wing or ell that makes a third room on the main floor, this plan goes back to certain early English thatched cottages made up of two rooms with a door to each room. We know something about them from actual specifications left by builders working in the years around 1300.⁶ A cottage like this could be divided either into hall-bower and stable or into hall and bower. In the latter event, stabling of the stock was done under a separate roof. The hall referred to here is a hall in the medieval sense; it was the room-of-all-work of the house. In seventeenth century New England it means the kitchen of the house. The bower was the women's quarters and sleeping room. As Chaucer informs us in his *Nonnes Preestes* tale:

Ful sooty was hir bower and eek hir hallie

In the New World a development from this small cottage comes early to Virginia. The Adam Thoroughgood house, mentioned earlier, is a good example of the change. It reminds us of the medieval nature of the building tradition with which the colonists were at home. Other examples in Virginia have been photographed and measured by architects associated with the Williamsburg restoration. Related to the Mitchell-Rountree plan is the plan of the Tabb house in York County, Virginia, dating from shortly after 1700, which is made of brick because the accessibility and worth of local clay were early known to the settlers. Its plan is like the greater part of the Wisconsin house plan. A central entrance hall cuts all the way through from front to rear. Gable-end chimneys are built up within the body of the wall. The

⁶ The plans and elevations of these simple cottages have been published by the medievalist, G. G. Coulton, in his *The Medieval Village* (London, 1925), 99.

chimney comes up flush with the surface of the outer wall, and so the chimney breast projects deeply into each room. In the Tabb house this inward thrust allows wall closets to be set against the end wall on each side of the central fireplace.

The Warburton house in James City County, Virginia, dates from around 1680. It, too, has come under the scrutiny of the architects of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc. In plan it is like the Tabb house. But it calls for wall closets at both of the chimney ends. Brick is once more the material of construction.

As early as 1656 John Hammond found a wood house of this story-and-a-half type in Virginia territory and he found it attractive as we know from his *Leab and Rachel*:

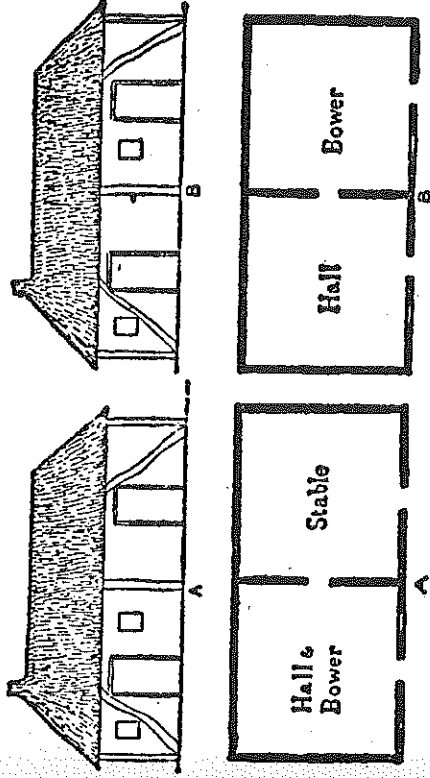
Pleasant in their building, which although for most part they are but one story besides the loft, and built of wood, yet contrived so delightfull, that your ordinary houses in England are not so handsome, for usually the rooms are large, daubed and whitelimed, glazed and flowered, and if not glazed windows, shutters which are made very pritty and convenient.⁷

The Tabb, Warburton, Thoroughgood, and Mitchell-Rountree plans suggest the main lines of a medieval house plan mentioned by Sidney Oldall Addy in his *Evolution of the English House*, 1898. When he examined "Kensworth" in Hertfordshire, Mr. Addy found a plan that called, in its own larger size of course, for a division of the manor into three clearly separated parts. At one end of this lateral spread was the medieval hall. At the other was the bower. Between the two came the "house." In this scheme "house" means no more and no less than our central entrance hall. And *domus*, its medieval Latin tag, is shown by Mr. Addy to have been another name for "entrance hall" or "entry." Anciently, too, in England such a centralized entry was called the "floor" or "threshold." Threshold as attached to an English house means "threshing-floor" because it indicates the floor in this central entry used for threshing. Naturally they built in terms of their daily life. So now when we step into the central entry of colonial American houses generally and the

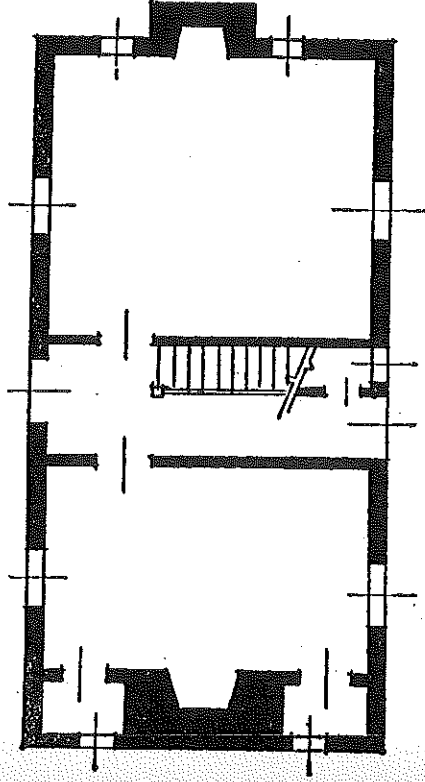
⁷ C. C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), 297-98. The Hammond pamphlet was published in London, 1656.

Mitchell-Rountree house in particular, we are moving most truly across the threshold.

It is possible to show additional constructive connections of the



English Thatched Cottage: Elevation and Alternative Plan, ca. 1300. Courtesy of Professor G. G. Coulton, Cambridge, England.



Tabb House: Plan, 1700 ft., York County, Virginia. Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated.

Mitchell-Rountree house with homes in Virginia. The Platteville house may be not unfavorably related to such dwellings of the story-and-a-half type as are illustrated in John W. Wayland's

Historic Homes of Northern Virginia. Allowing for the inevitable changes in size and detail, the Wisconsin house resembles superficially the limestone retreats (O happy word in this connection!) of Generals Horatio Gates and Charles Lee. Home of the former was "Traveler's Rest," just one mile west of Kearneysville in Jefferson County, West Virginia. When the General acquired this property in 1763, his farm lay within the limits of Frederick County, Virginia. His neighbor and friend and fellow sharer in grief was General Lee. He lived in "Leetown," some six miles west of Charles Town, West Virginia. In its original length, something like one half its present spread, "Leetown" is roughly like the Mitchell-Rountree house. Further illustrations in Mr. Wayland's book make it clear that our house looks very much like the story-an-a-half wings usually attached to the central two-story blocks of the more ambitious dwellings in the lower Shenandoah Valley.

When it comes to the most famous of Virginia plantation homes, the stately mansions of the Tidewater region, it will be seen that their wings or separate and secondary buildings design like the Mitchell-Rountree structure. And in Richmond there is still a small stone cottage which is erroneously associated with Edgar Allan Poe. It is linked to the tradition from which the Platteville house comes.

Given his varied Virginia background it is perhaps not unwise for us to assume that for the style and plan of this house, the Rev. Samuel Mitchell is chiefly responsible. His enthusiasm and understanding of the style of the South must have been shared by his Maryland wife. Construction is supposed to have been under the supervision of John Rountree. And the actual work is credited to a certain Mr. Cooper whom we can identify further only as the father of G. T. Cooper, with the help of an anonymous contribution to the Platteville *Grant County News*, May 27, 1932. From the same source we learn that in 1836 John Rountree sold forty acres of land including the two acres on which this stone house stands to his father-in-law for \$50, with a warranty deed

dated October 27, 1836. Samuel Mitchell held the land until 1852 when he sold it to William McCord for \$2,100. McCord in 1854 sold the forty acres "including the stone house" to John Rountree and his wife. It ought to be mentioned in passing that our anonymous historian of the *Grant County News* saw this dwelling with its fireplaces (one to each of five rooms) as obviously built in the "southern style."

The local historian, J. H. Lewis, writing in the *Fennimore Times* for September 28, 1927, overpraises the Mitchell-Rountree house a bit as a "typically southern mansion." He feels, too, its "peculiarly English architecture." He describes it as built of Galena limestone. The architects who surveyed and drew this house in 1934 for inclusion in the Wisconsin section of the Historic American Buildings Survey also see the material as limestone.⁸ According to Ernest F. Bean, State geologist, in a verbal communication to this author, Galena limestone is not a true limestone. It must be listed as a dolomite. Wisconsin is fortunate in its regional variety of rock. This is why the buff-colored stone used in the Platteville house has been carefully identified.

It was the belief of the architects who prepared this house for the Historic American Buildings Survey that it was much more closely in harmony with Virginia ideas of comfort than one would guess even at the present time when so much else about the house reflects the spirit and letter of the South. According to their written report as deposited in the Library of Congress, an independent kitchen building once stood about fifty feet north of the house. And they report Negro servants' cabins placed another hundred feet farther back.

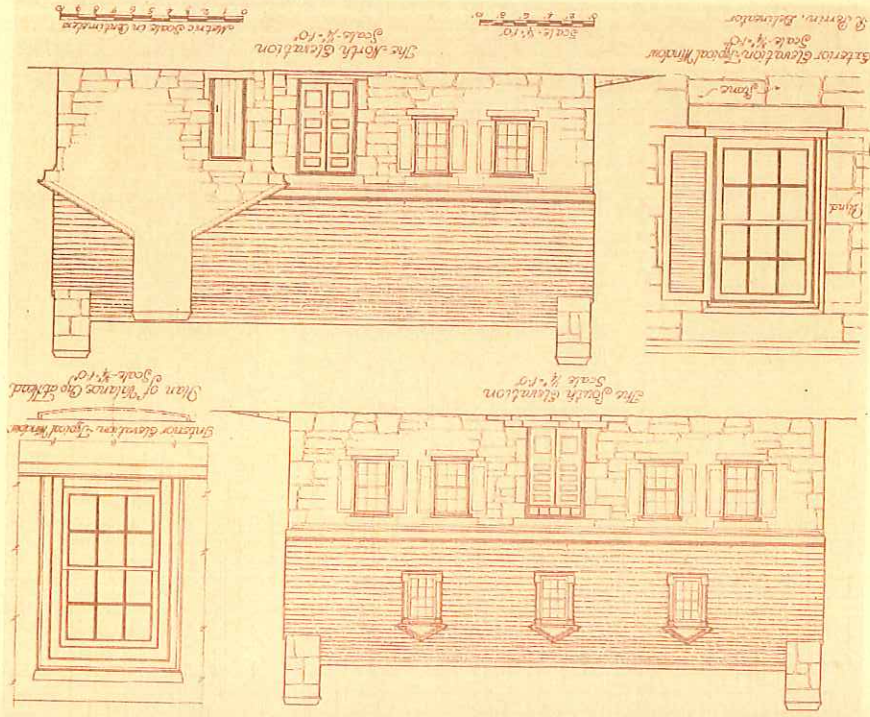
The dining room ell is thought of in this record as joined by means of a covered flagstone walk (a part of which still remains), to this isolated kitchen. We are asked to believe that Negro servants, in the manner of those employed at Mount Vernon

⁸ Ernest R. Buckley, another State geologist, made a report on the *Building and Ornamental Stones of Wisconsin, 1898*. He writes that when the rock is essentially pure calcium carbonate, it must be classed as limestone. If it is composed in the main of calcium-magnesium carbonate, it is dolomite. Another kind of mixture produced dolomitic or magnesian limestone.

and elsewhere in the South, carried foods over this walk from kitchen to dining room for the gustatory edification of all concerned. And we are told that these platters and dishes were introduced into the dining room ell through an opening cut in the wall. Unfortunately for these hard-working and reliable architects and much to my own confusion and chagrin, Miss Laura Rountree is positive that this covered walk, ceremonial service, and independent kitchen are purest fiction. The writer knows of no physical evidence to support the architects' point of view. We must let Miss Rountree have her say because her affection for, and understanding of, this house are greater than that of the rest of us put together. Yet it must be said for those who made the survey that they are hardly the men who would have spun their reconstruction out of thin air. They must have had sound reason for seeing the situation as they did.

As it stands, the dining room would make an ideal kitchen were it not for the unbearable heat that went with cooking in open fireplaces in the warmer seasons. Perhaps this ell was only the winter kitchen. Fireplace heat forced many earlier colonists and settlers, no matter their origins or location, to do their summer cooking in kitchens placed at a comfortable distance from the house. Summer kitchens in separate buildings are definitely not limited to the South. They were to be found among the Dutch of New York. They appear in New England. Pennsylvania Germans found a place for them. And the wife of the homesteader on the Middle Western and Far Western frontier often did her cooking on hot days over an open fire a little away from the threshold of her rude cabin.

The walls of the house are laid up in thick lime bond in random width, unevenly-coursed blocks of rough-dressed, buff-colored dolomite. Exterior corners and the wall next to the central entrance are reinforced with quoins of the same material. These are larger-sized stones. They are placed in what approximates vertical and horizontal alternation in loose equivalents of old English practice which may go back to Saxon construction in wood. Rough-faced



stone sills and caps are very boldly projected from the wall to mark and secure the base and head of the set-in pine window frames. All external wood trim including the blinds is pine. It is remarkable for the consistency with which it is kept in scale as a decorous complement to the stone. A solid plate ties the stone wall to the slight eave that is shaped with a classically profiled cornice board and bed moulding. The lowest member of the cornice trim rests securely as a pure white band on the tops of the stone window lintels. All of this detail is calculated in advance. There is nothing makeshift about it. It suggests nothing of the structural crudities we sometimes expect on the frontier. It is worthy of Virginia itself.

The flat surface purities of this wood are in excellent contrast with the rough-textured walls of stone. Framing of the main entrance door is unusual because it calls for no sidelights. The door is topped with a transom window of five lights. These lights and the sunk panels of the double door echo the correct smallness of the windows and dormers with their twelve lights.

The house is very favorably situated on a prepared terrace or flattened knoll about sixty feet above the Lancaster Road. It faces south. Its walls vary in thickness from 18 to 24 inches. The exterior was covered in 1861 with a brown stucco which was raked to look like regularly coursed ashlar. Whatever the interior finish of these walls may have been, it must have been improperly done or deteriorated through the action of time. At any rate Miss Rountree reports considerable "sweating" of the stone and staining of the wall. This fault has been checked and apparently eliminated with the help of our more scientific modern finishes and paints.

The thickness of the stone wall helps, nevertheless, to keep the house comfortably cool in summer and warm in winter. The superior position of the house on its knoll cooperates with open hall doors to send cooling currents through it like those which are so welcome in Virginia. All of the interior trim in the major items is pine, enameled ivory. Both floors are of random width

ash plank, sawn. Floor boards are from 4 to 12 inches wide. Stair treads in the hall are ash. The risers are pine. Long, inch-square sticks of maple are the balusters. They have only their slenderness as decoration. Maple is also used for the moulded handrail and slender vase-shaped newel post. This newel joins to handrail by wooden pegs. The hall on the first floor is 7 feet, 9½ inches wide while the hall above is about 12 feet. In this size the central hall makes a comfortable division in a house the overall length of which across the front is 46 feet, 2 inches.

The double-door of entry opens directly on the hall. As we enter, the stairs are to the left and rear. The ascent starts at the farther end. The enclosed stair block is covered with horizontal sheathing of pine boards. Its front has a door opening to the cellar stairs. This cellar is a most welcome surprise. It is dug under only the two front rooms and hall. When we examined it, a thaw had set in with considerable melting of snow. But the cellar was dry and wholesome. Area windows in the gable ends give tolerable light and ventilation. And the long run of joists placed from front to rear as support for the main floor is an ideal of what joist construction should be. I was unable to determine of what wood they are made. And it is idle to guess. I had no rule with me to measure them by. In their years of service these good 2 by 8's have hardened into something as fused and indestructible as iron. They are still in prime condition. Because this house is so skillfully placed in relation to grade and ground levels, the cellar, unbroken by any partitions, remains a healthy and pure space. Its construction is further earnest of the building integrity of the frontier. Originally the cellar had an earth floor. I looked in vain over the end walls for some sign that a fireplace was once broken into them. We looked for such evidence of a cellar fireplace because it would have argued the use of at least part of the cellar as a kitchen. Finding no such indication, we take the present dining room ell with its own massive fireplace, in size the most imposing in the house, for the original combination kitchen and dining room.

As we enter the house a pine door on the left leads to the

most fully developed architectural interior here. It is the living room; it approximates a 15-foot square. The fireplace wall is to the west. It marks the most handsomely finished decorative sequence to be found in the house. The fireplace has a stone-flagged hearth. For its opening there is a mildly classic surround. There is no overmantel. The trim stops with a full enablature. The pilasters framing the fireplace opening are too shallow and quite ordinary in silhouette. They are made from thin pine boards in a vague recollection of what such pilasters used to be. In this shape and depth they do not count as strongly in the composition as they should. Smaller details of this frame are better done. The west wall is finished to each side of the fireplace and from floor to ceiling with two closets or cupboards of very useful, generous depth.

From this living room we go to the door in the north wall opening on the dining room ell. The ell is two steps down from the level of the living room. In England and in the American colonies generally this difference in floor levels originally meant that the one part of the house was built later than the other. But it soon became the practice to build immediately rooms at more than one level. When differences in floor level exist, we get a satisfying addition to the esthetic pleasures of the house. The change brought about in the "feel" of a home is all on the side of charm. To this truth Frank Lloyd Wright could testify. Never in his long career has he been willing to do without a variety of levels and heights. They make for a fine change of pace, creating pleasant rhythms for the house.

It is plain from the wall construction of the ell that it has always been part of this house. Incidentally a piece of furniture preserved in this ell should interest readers who know something of the style phases in the nineteenth century which bring from the East furniture fashions most wonderfully out of keeping with the log cabins that received them. In this dining room is what I should call a console-bureau. Miss Rountree says that it was once part of the furnishings in the John Rountree log cabin.

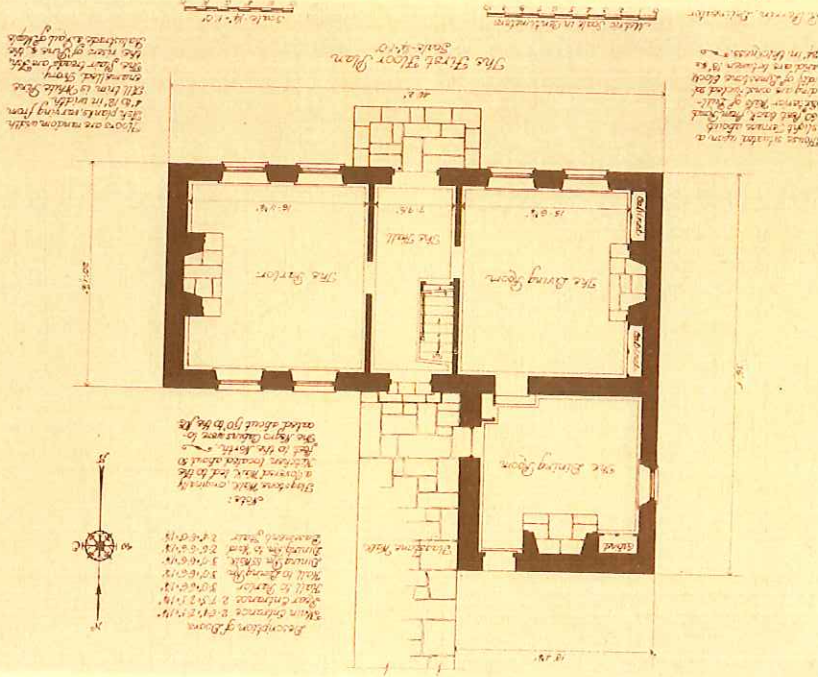
What is so remarkable, you wonder, about this relic of the past? Simply this. It is a perfect example of the furniture illustrated in what students of American style know to be the first "completely illustrated furniture style book" ever published in the United States. The book in question dates from 1840. It was published in Baltimore. It is titled *The Cabinet Makers' Assistant*. Its somewhat immodest aim was figuratively "to embrace the most modern style of cabinet furniture." John Hall, architect and draughtsman, was its author. Unkind critics, too, used to feeding on the attractions of Chippendale and Sheraton will try to convince you that all furniture based on Hall's models "shrieks its own agony to all observers." What Hall is responsible for in his designs seems to me to be a vulgarization of the French Empire style, German Biedermeier, and perhaps a misreading of some of the heavier aspects of American Duncan Phyfe style. Whatever the origins of this Mitchell-Rountree bureau (and it may well have come from other sources of style), the fact remains that furniture like this will also be found in such early Wisconsin buildings as Fort Howard hospital in Green Bay and the Dousman house (Villa Louis) in Prairie du Chien. From the point of view of style this furniture is in its better pieces not bad at all, once one grows accustomed to its robust swells and contours. Like the pioneer who anchored it in his home, it was hard to budge and was obviously made to last to eternity. At its worst, it is only fair to say, this furniture has as little character as a woman in slacks.

The parlor is the room on the right of the hall. Except for the absence of wall closets it matches the living room. Its windows, framed as they are close to the exterior surface of the wall, show deep reveals and end in a deep shelf. The scale of the thinly-muntined lights being so small and their design being so strictly conceived, we experience a paradoxical esthetic effect: the visitor is charmed by the pervading domesticity of these small lights and he is pleased by the chaste style which joins them rationally to the rest of the room. The chimney block stands out from the central part of the gable wall. On the long walls to front and rear the windows are let into the wall with equal depth. The contrast is pleasant.

Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

MITCHELL-ROUNTREE HOUSE

First Floor Plan



Wall treatment in the parlor follows the usual practice in this house. The pine trim is limited to a base board with a quarter-round. And there is a hardly perceptible moulding strip serving as cornice. Paint covers the rest of the wall. The fireplaces have been boarded up, but their quality is apparent in the drawings made for the survey. In this matter of fireplaces our Wisconsin house has a great deal more than many of its type. The number of fireplaces as well as their design reflects a life of more than ordinary comforts. Usually in these constructions bedrooms had no other system of heating than some Good Samaritan's warming pans. Here each bedroom has a fireplace. Changes dating from 1894 added a third bedroom directly over the ell at a level lower than that of the front bedrooms, and also broke a double dormer over the rear slope of the original bedroom to the right.

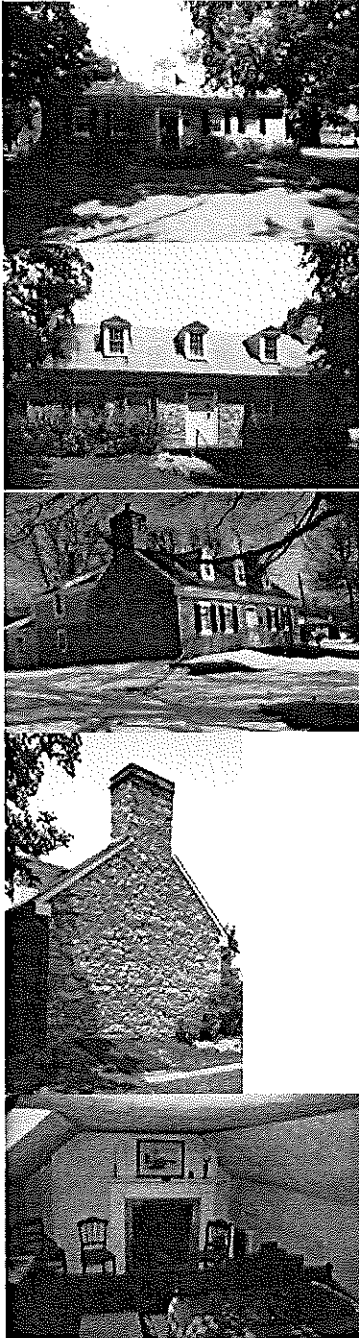
Dormers call to mind the three which punctuate the front half-story. Each of these is framed in the classic language of the Virginia eighteenth century. Each has a full pedimented head. So that a structure which once crowned the temples of the Greeks now enlivens a useful window on the frontier. These dormers are little masterpieces of the joiner's art. There are none finer in Wisconsin.

Taken as a whole the Mitchell-Rountree house is in good condition. There has been considerable deterioration of the stone, and this is especially true in the lower reaches of the gable ends. This stone weathers badly without protection. And it has to be bedded as in quarry if it is to last as this stone has lasted. At the present time the dwelling, which has never been exposed to central heating, is warmed by an old-fashioned stove placed in the living room. This room is Miss Rountree's pleasant refuge over the winter months. After a visit with her, one gathers that her heart's desire would be realized if there were perpetual summer in Wisconsin. She feels that in the summer season the beauty of her home matches nature's. This house and its occupant remind us that in the United States beauty has always been synonymous with character.

NATIONAL OR STATE REGISTERS RECORD

Jewett and Lancaster Sts.

National or State Register of Historic Places



Historic Name: **Mitchell-Rountree House**

Reference Number: **72000052**

NAMES

Location (Address): **Jewett and Lancaster Sts.**

County: **Grant**

City/Village: **Platteville**

Township:

PROPERTY LOCATION

SUMMARY

Period of Significance: **1825-1849**

Area of Significance: **Architecture**

Applicable Criteria: **Architecture/Engineering**

Historic Use: **Domestic: Single Dwelling**

Architectural Style: **Colonial**

Architectural Style: **Other**

Resource Type: **Building**

Architect: **Rountree, John H.**

PROPERTY FEATURES

Historic Status: **Listed in the National Register**

Historic Status: **Listed in the State Register**

National Register Listing Date: **02/23/1972**

State Register Listing Date: **01/01/1989**

DESIGNATIONS

Number of Contributing Buildings: **1**

Number of Contributing Sites: **0**

Number of Contributing Structures: **0**

Number of Contributing Objects: **0**

Number of Non-Contributing Sites: **0**

Number of Non-Contributing Structures: **0**

Number of Non-Contributing Objects: **0**

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

**National Register and State Register of Historic Places, State
Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison,
Wisconsin**

RECORD LOCATION

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Grant	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 23 1972

1. NAME	
COMMON: Mitchell-Rountree House	Congressmen to be notified: Sen. William Proxmire
AND/OR HISTORIC: Stone Cottage	Sen. Gaylord A. Nelson Rep. Vernon W. Thomson

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Jewett Street at Lancaster Street (State Highway 81)			
CITY OR TOWN: Platteville			
STATE Wisconsin	CODE 53818	COUNTY: Grant	CODE 043

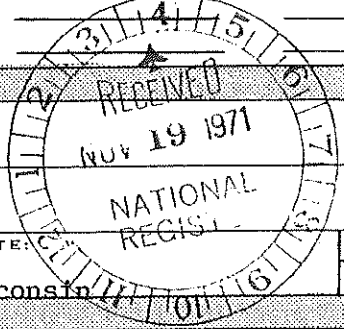
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Grant County Historical Society			
STREET AND NUMBER: % Mr. John Kujawa, President 244 West Pine Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Lancaster	STATE: Wisconsin	CODE 55	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Grant County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Lancaster	STATE: Wisconsin	CODE 55	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1934	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Wisconsin
COUNTY: Grant
ENTRY NUMBER FEB 23 1972
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1837, the Mitchell-Rountree House is a small rectangular 1 1/2-story stone cottage with a single story ell at the left rear side. The ell is the kitchen-dining room, which leads off the living room and is two steps lower than the first floor level of the main house, making this an early version indeed of the split-level house of today. There are five rooms and a central hall, with openings to the living room at the left and parlor at the right. At the left rear side of the hall is a stairway to the second floor hallway from which a bedroom leads off on either side. Each of the five rooms has its own fireplace. Both floors are of the original sawed ash planking with boards varying in width from four to twelve inches.

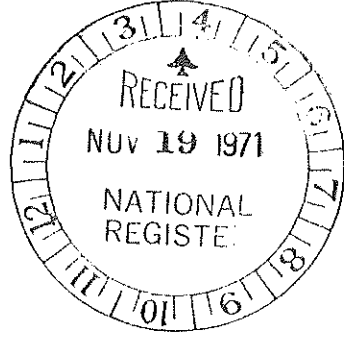
Exterior walls are of native buff dolomite laid random ashlar and vary from 12" to 18" in thickness. "The stone was fitted very closely, and in some places mud joints were used instead of mortar."¹ At the corners and at the door openings are quoins of larger stones oriented so that their placement is alternately horizontal and vertical. At the gable ends of both the house and the ell, massive "chimneys are built into the body of the wall,"² as frequently seen in the Federal style of Colonial architecture.

There are three small roof dormers in the front half-story, each with a full pedimented head. Dormers are sided with clapboards. All windows are six-pane double-hung sash, and those on the front and rear sides have stone lintels and sills, plain frames, and louvered shutters. There are no gable end windows. The front entry is a plain frame opening with paneled double doors. There are no sidelights, but there is a five pane transom above. The doors have a single square panel below the knob level and four tiers of single, narrow, horizontal panels above.

In 1861 the house was covered with "a brown stucco which was raked to look like regularly coursed ashlar,"³ and this remained on the house for more than a hundred years. Within the past decade, however, the stucco has been removed and the exterior walls restored to their original state, giving the stone no protection against the weather but greatly enhancing the charm of the small cottage.

Tradition has it that there was originally a separate kitchen in back of the house, from which the prepared food was carried into the dining ell. Except for a continuation of the flagstone walk extending from the rear of the house into the back yard, there are no visible remains to substantiate this, but it is accepted as probably true.

1. Perrin, Historic Wisconsin Buildings, 85
2. Kienitz, 397
3. Ibid., 403



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

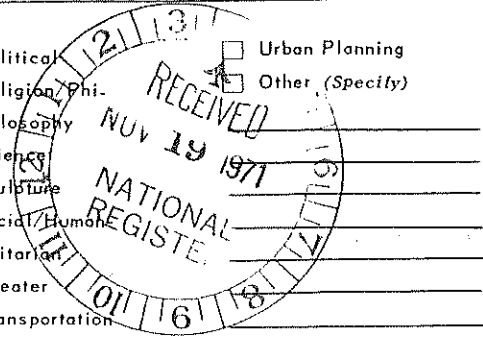
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1837

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

After stating that, "Unquestionably some of the most perfect stonework to be found anywhere in the United States is that of southwestern Wisconsin," Perrin says, "At Platteville, the Mitchell-Rountree house has been a landmark since 1837 when it was built..."¹ This house, in addition to being one of the outstanding landmarks in Wisconsin's architectural heritage, is a quite unique structure in a particular line of architectural evolution.

The Mitchell-Rountree house was built for the Reverend Samuel Mitchell, who was born in Virginia, served in the Revolutionary War, and came to Platteville, Wisconsin in 1836, having earlier lived in Maryland and Kentucky. The Mitchells lived briefly in a frame house before building their now much-acclaimed stone cottage. "Family tradition claims that they built it on a scale smaller than that to which they had been accustomed to in Virginia and Maryland since their sons and daughters had married and there was no need for a large dwelling. However that may be, the house as built can take its place with popular small Virginia houses. In earlier history one finds that story-and-a-half houses were not uncommon in rural England proper."²

Apparently Wisconsin's sole example of its kind, the Mitchell-Rountree house is of Tidewater, Virginia Colonial design, architecturally of the small lineage as the Adam Thoroughgood house in Tidewater, the Tabb house in York County, and the Warburton house in James City County, Virginia, the latter three all dating to the late 17th century with the Tabb house the latest, having been built in 1700. These houses, in turn, appear to be American Colonial adaptations of a design common in English cottages which can be traced back to the general plan of thatched cottages of c. 1300.³ Virginia seems to have been the area in which this type of house was most common, following the basic pattern of having 1 1/2 stories, dormers on the front half of the roof, a central hall from front to rear with one or two rooms on either side, and at least a partial basement. Gable end chimneys were built into the walls and each room in the house had a fireplace. When more space was needed, the solution was to add a wing or an ell. All such houses had a certain attractiveness, and while they were built of either wood or brick in Virginia, the availability of stone in southwestern Wisconsin led to its use in building the Mitchell-Rountree house and the stone only enhanced the beauty of the already eye-catching simple, charming design which has attracted the interest of both architects and historians of architecture.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kienitz, John F., "A Virginia House in Wisconsin," Wisconsin Magazine of History, 30:292-407, 1947.
 Newcomb, Rexford, Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1950, 128.
 Perrin, Richard W. E., Historic Wisconsin Architecture, Wisconsin Chapter, American Institute of Architects, Milwaukee, 1960, 26.
 Perrin, Richard, W.E., Historic Wisconsin Buildings, Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, 1962, 84-85.

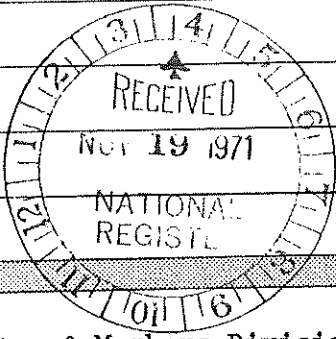
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 42	44	29
NE	° ' "	° ' "		W 90	28	57
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.25

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: August 17, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin 53706 CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name James Morton Smith
 Title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin
 Date NOV 12 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Walt A. Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

FEB 23 1972

Date _____

ATTEST:
Appadford
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date February 2, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Wisconsin	
COUNTY	
Grant	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 23	1972

(Number all entries)

MITCHELL-ROUNTREE HOUSE

8.

A daughter of the Mitchells married Major John H. Rountree, who is credited with being the actual builder of the house and who later acquired it for himself. Until recently the house was occupied by the late Miss Laura Rountree, a direct descendant of the builder. It is now the property of the Grant County Historical Society, which has restored it, furnished it with authentic period pieces and makes it accessible to the public during the summer months.

-
1. Perrin, Historic Wisconsin Buildings, 84-85
 2. Kienitz, 397
 3. Ibid., 397-399



Mitchell-Lountree House Grant

Wisc

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REGISTERED NUMBER: FEB 23 1972

RECEIVED
NOV 19 1971
NATIONAL REGISTER

REVIEW

HISTORIAN

ARCHITECT

KEEPER

WRITER/EDITOR

CHIEF, OHP

MEMORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

HABS

OKing, Sables 4/25/72

OK Chambers 1-26-72

OK 1/17/72

OK 2-23+

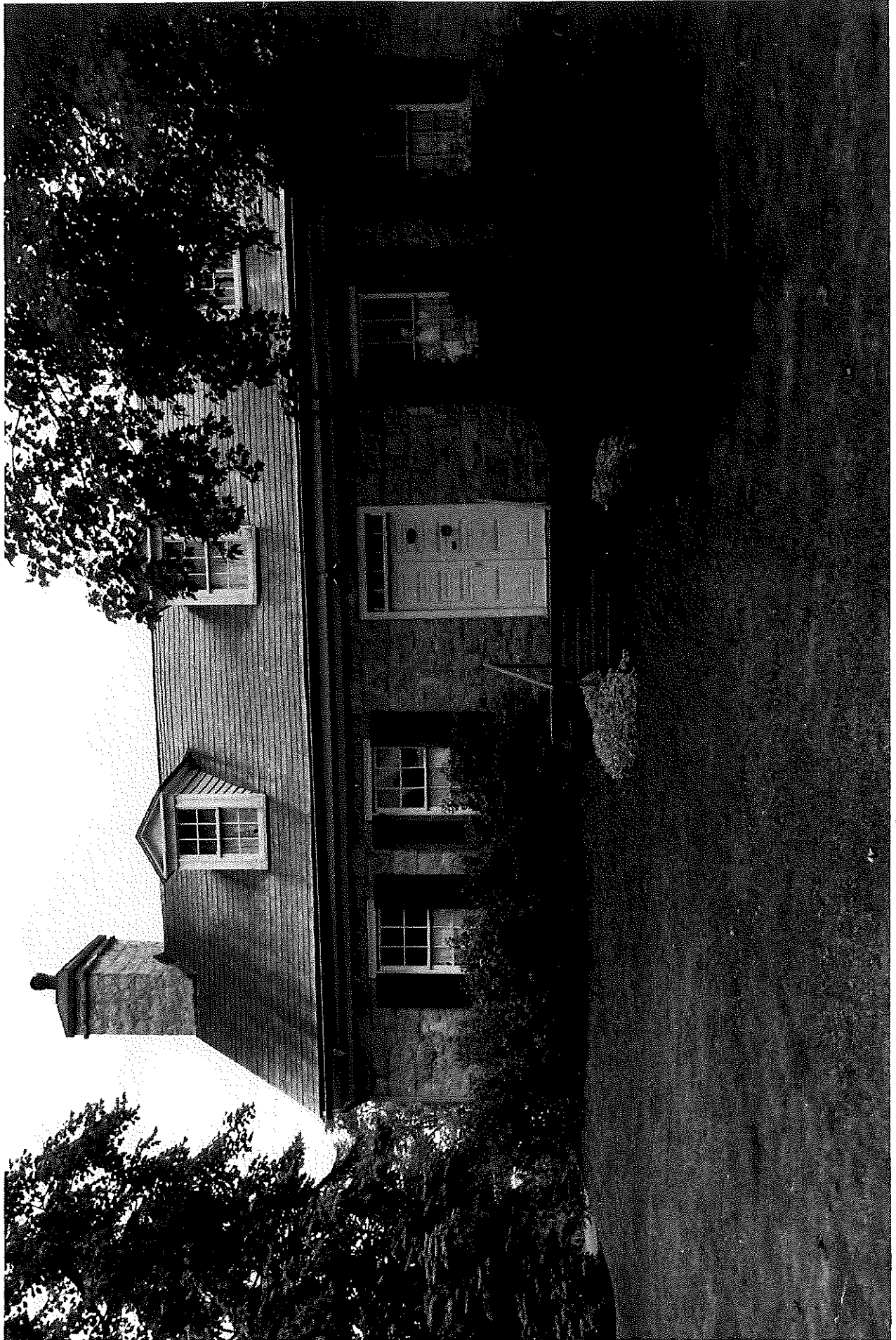
OK 2/2/72

Federal Register Entry 4-4-72 Annual Edition Entry

Logged FEB 23 1972 Card FEB 23 1972

COMMENTS: WORKING NUMBER: 11.19.71.5

William W. Thomson



Mitchell-Rountree House, Platteville, Wis., July 30, 1971. South Elevation

Photo by D. N. Anderson
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

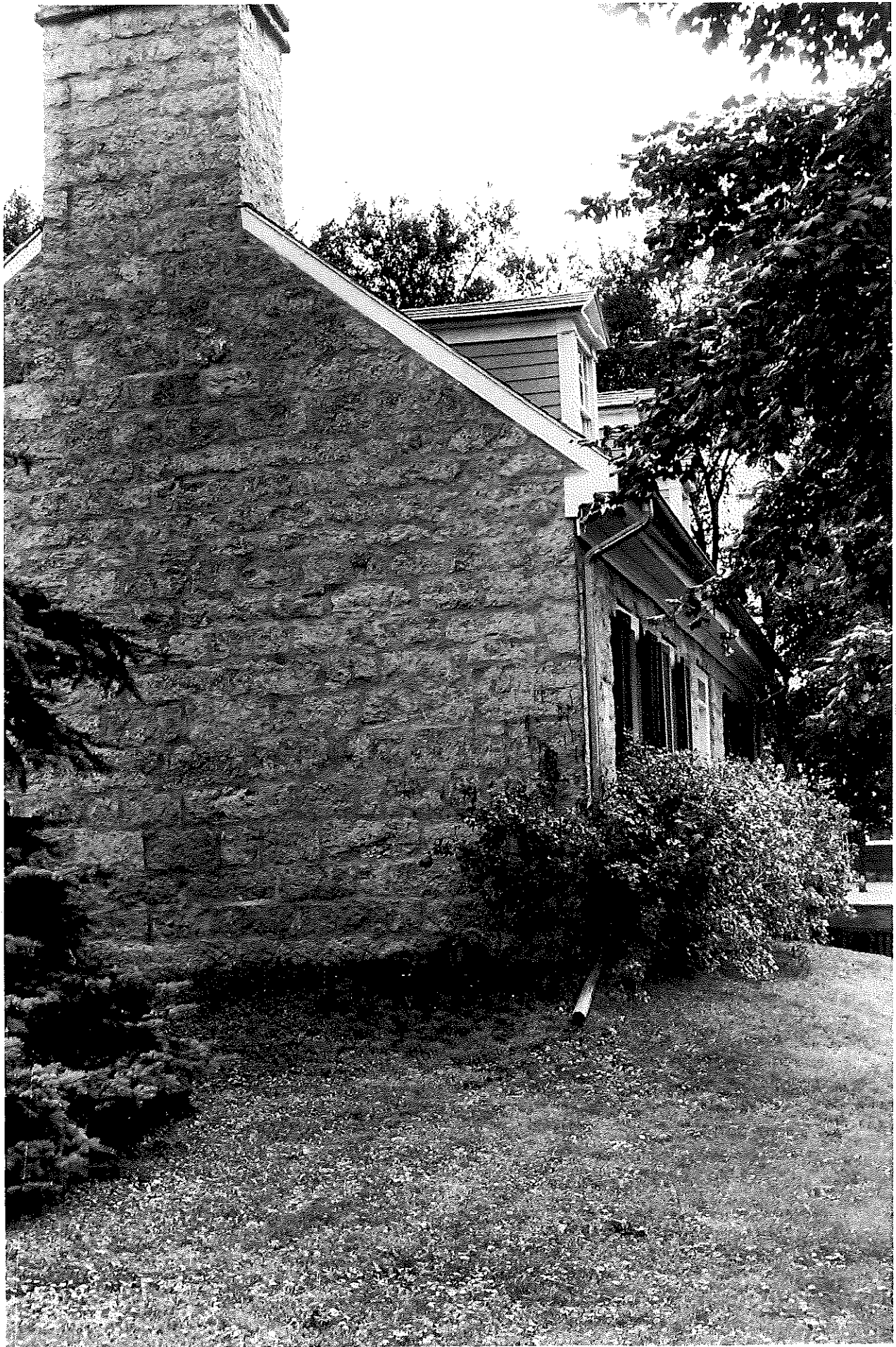
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2-23-72
 Title: Mitchell - Rountree
House
 Loc. Grant Co, Wis.
South elevation



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

66



Mitchell-Rountree House, Platteville, Wis., July 30, 1971. Wall and chimney detail, west gable end.

Photo by D. N. Anderson
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

NPS Number: 2-23-72

Title: Mitchell - Rountree

House

Grant Co, Wisconsin

Loc. well and chimney
detail, west gable end



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(2)

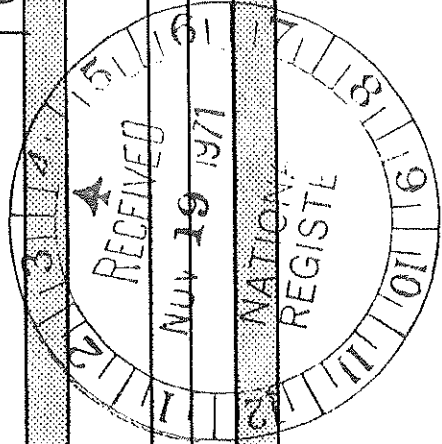
Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

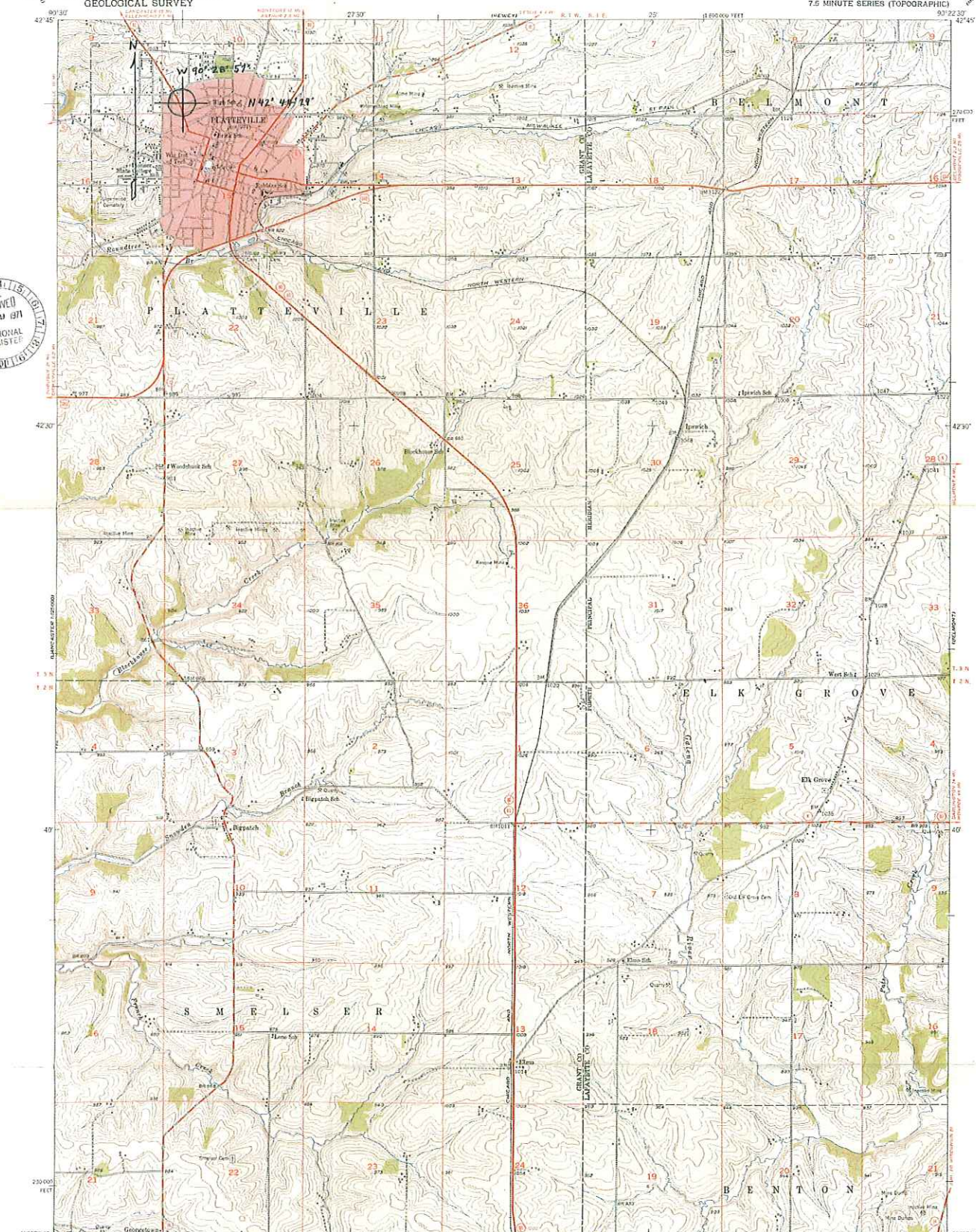
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Wisconsin	
COUNTY Grant	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 23 1972	
1. NAME	
COMMON:	Mitchell-Rountree House
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Stone Cottage
2. LOCATION	
STREET AND NUMBER: Jewett Street at Lancaster Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Platteville	
STATE:	WISCONSIN
CODE	COUNTY:
55	Grant
CODE	
	043
3. MAP REFERENCE	
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 7½' Quadrangle: Platteville, Wis.	
SCALE:	1:24000
DATE:	1952
4. REQUIREMENTS	
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS	
1. Property boundaries where required.	
2. North arrow.	
3. Latitude and longitude reference.	



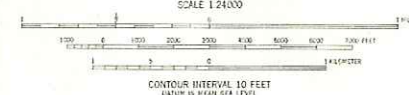
S T R U C T I O N S

Michael R. ...
44° 28' 57" N
92° 28' 57" W



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Compiled by BECS and UIC:MS
Topography from aerial photographs by multistereo methods
Aerial photographs taken 1951. Field check 1952
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system,
south zone.
Red S&L indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown.

REPRODUCTION OF THIS MAP IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW, TITLE 16, U.S.C., SECTION 1052.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route

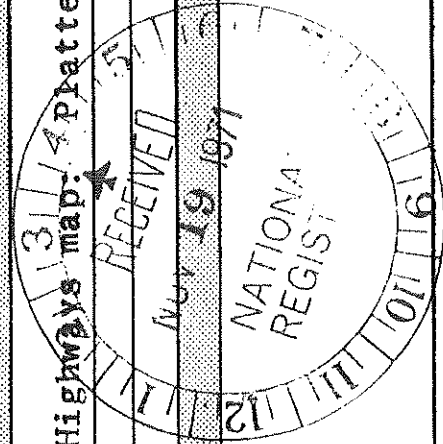
THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
AND BY THE WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON 6, WISCONSIN
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PLATTEVILLE, WIS.
14297-5-W3022-517-5
1952

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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STATE:	CODE 55	COUNTY:	CODE 043
Wisconsin Grant			
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, Div. of Highways map: 4 Pratteville			
SCALE:	1:12000		
DATE:	1966, corrected to 1/1/70		
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
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S T R U C T I O N S I N S T R U C T I O N S

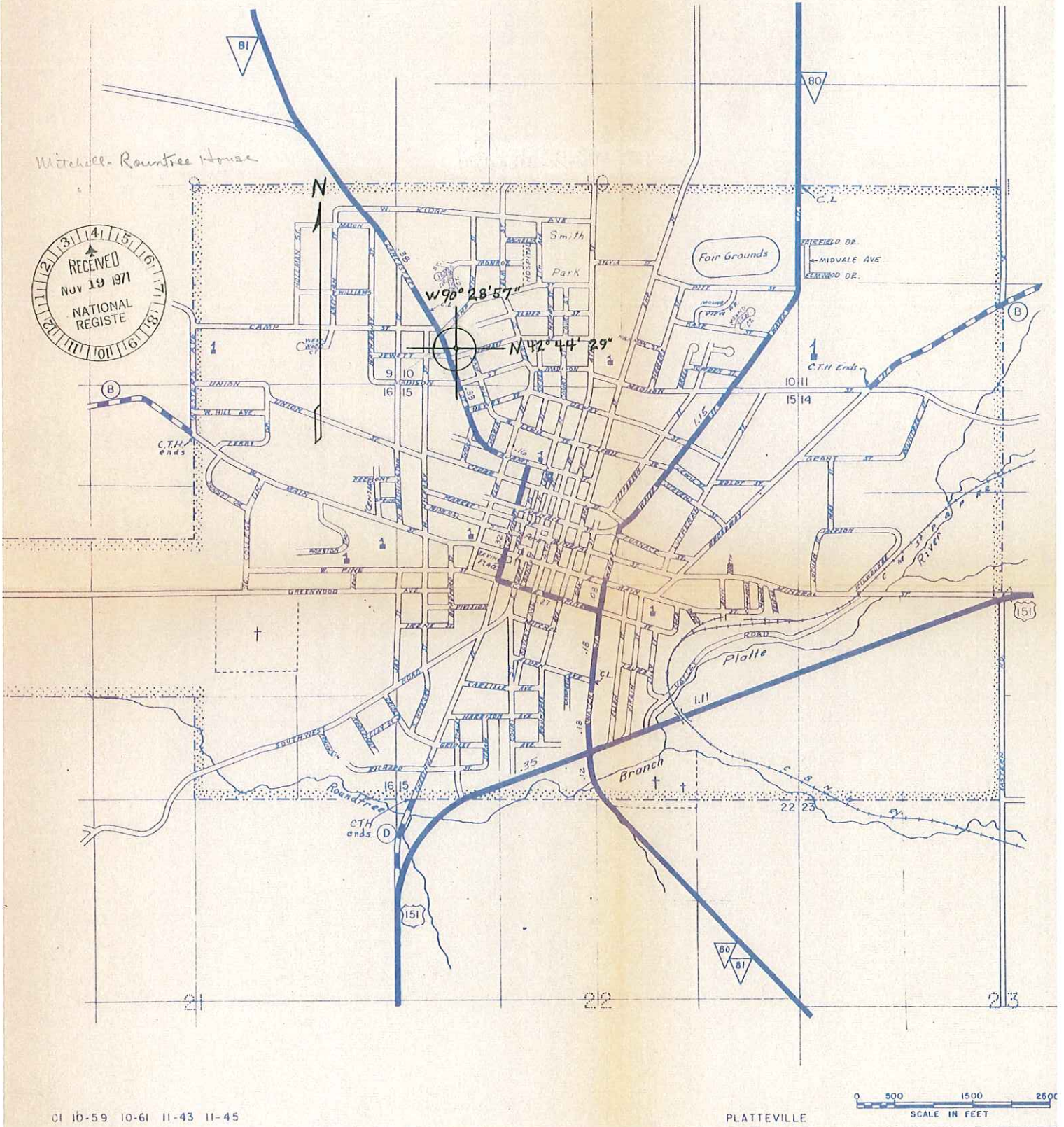
DATE OF LAST CORR.	STATE TRUNKS	CONN. STREETS	COUNTY TRUNKS	LOCAL STREETS
1-1-70	2.14	2.49	0.40	35.26
1-1-				
1-1-66	2.71	1.92	0.40	34.21
1-1-67	2.71	1.92	0.40	34.58
1-1-68	2.71	1.92	0.40	34.82
1-1-69	2.71	1.92	0.40	35.08

CITY OF
PLATTEVILLE 357

CERTIFIED AS CORRECT:

TOWN: PLATTEVILLE
COUNTY: GRANT
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Division of Highways

CITY CLERK



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE WISCONSIN

Date Entered FEB 23 1972

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Darwin (Lowell) House	Wauwatosa Milwaukee County
Church (Benjamin) House	Milwaukee Milwaukee County
Chapel of St. Mary the Virgin	Nashotah Waukesha County
Bradley (Harold C.) House	Madison Dane County
First Kindergarten	Watertown Jefferson County
St. John Chrysostom Church	Delafield Waukesha County
St. Augustine Church	New Diggings (Benton P.O.) Lafayette County
Mitchell-Bountree House	Flatteville Grant County
Hawks Inn	Delafield Waukesha County

Also Notified

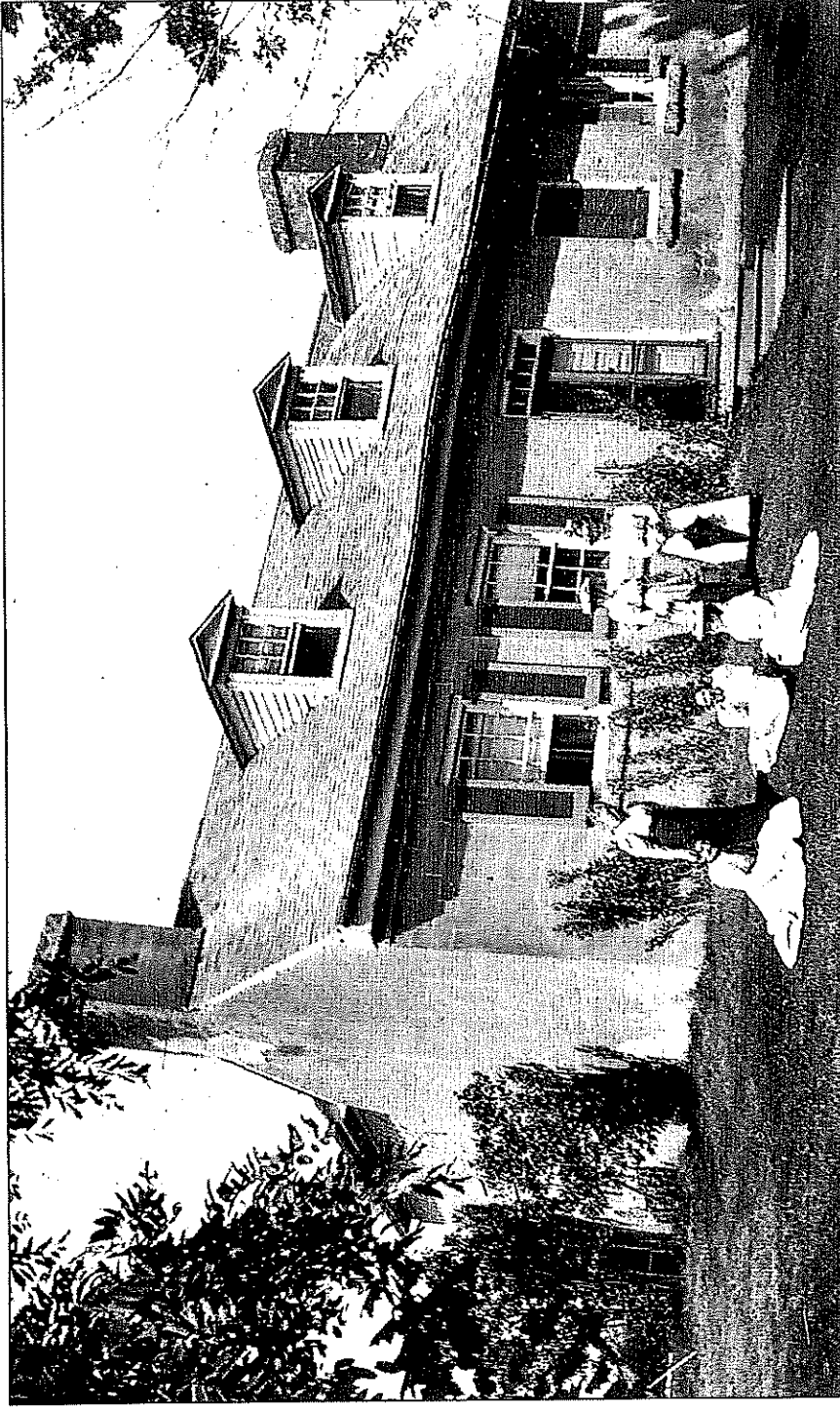
Hon. William Proxmire	State Liaison Officer
Hon. Gaylord Nelson	Mr. James Morton Smith
Hon. Glenn R. Davis	Director
Hon. Henry S. Reuss	State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Hon. Robert W. LaSota	216 State Street
Hon. Vernon W. Thomson	Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Director, Northeast Region

HR

NRowland:mm

2/15/72



In 1837, Major Rountree's parents-in-law, Reverend Samuel and Eleanor Mitchell, also arrived in Platteville. Upon arrival, they constructed this limestone house, called the Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage (shown here c. 1900). The house's Colonial tidewater architectural style was derived from the Mitchell's places of origin—Samuel from Virginia and Eleanor from Maryland. Located at the northeast corner of Madison and Lancaster Streets, it is Platteville's oldest surviving building. The Grant County Historical Society conducts tours of it. (Courtesy of Grant County Historical Society, hereafter GCHS.)

boat sank. The sideboard was brought up from the river bottom, placed on an ox cart and taken to his log cabin. From there it was moved to their brick home and in 1890, placed in Stone Cottage.

KITCHEN

In the 1890 remodeling this kitchen and adjoining wood shed were added.

A collection of cooking, cleaning and laundry items used by the Rountree family are on display.



Major John H. & Mrs. Rountree

PORTRAITS, PAINTINGS & PHOTOGRAPHS

Entrance Hall

Right side:

Rev. Samuel Mitchell

Eleanor Thomas Mitchell (2nd) wife

(Laura's grandparents)

Major John H. Rountree

Lydia Hart Southworth Rountree (2nd) wife

(Laura's grandparents)

Left side:

Hiram Rountree

Sophia Aspinwall Rountree

(Laura's parents)

Parlor

Over fireplace: Ellen Mitchell Gridley (great-aunt)

To right of fireplace: painting by Mary Aspinwall (aunt)

Upper painting on rice paper: Purchased by Major

Rountree in New York City

Lower painting: unidentified

Painting by John Aspinwall (uncle)

Over organ: Rev. Joseph Aspinwall (Laura's grand-

father, pastor of the First Methodist Church in

Platteville-1859-1860

Over desk: Engraving published in 1863 (a gift to Hiram)

Painting by Bertha Rountree (sister)

Over sofa: Sylvester Gridley, husband of Ellen

(great-uncle)

Photograph: Lydia Hart Southworth Rountree

(Laura's grandmother)

Painting by Mary Aspinwall (aunt)

Sitting Room

All paintings by Laura Rountree

Photograph: Laura Rountree

East Bedroom

Sampler: by Mrs. Dyer

West Bedroom

Over fireplace: painting by Laura Rountree

North Bedroom

Over fireplace: painting by Laura Rountree, "Pansies"

Painting by Mary Aspinwall (aunt)

Engraving owned by William McCord, left in the cottage

when he sold it in 1854

GRANT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

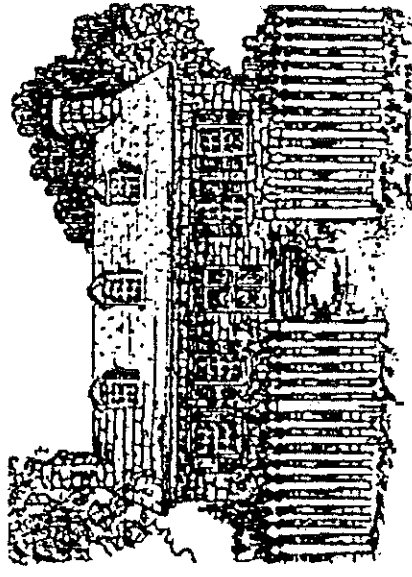
Cunningham Museum

Lancaster, WI 53033

Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage

Platteville WI 53181

MITCHELL-ROUNTREE



STONE COTTAGE

PLATTEVILLE, WISCONSIN

GRANT COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STONE COTTAGE HISTORY

The Stone Cottage was constructed in 1837 as a retirement home for Rev. Samuel Mitchell and his wife, Eleanor. The cottage is architecturally significant as an early stone Virginia Tidewater house. There were five rooms in the original cottage; parlor, sitting room and dining room on the ground floor with two bedrooms on the second floor. One of its main features is a central hall called a breezeway. Each room has a fireplace to heat the house in the winter.

The walls are of buff limestone in fairly large blocks, fitted closely together and in some places, mud joints were used instead of mortar. The house has been a landmark since it was built and perhaps the only example of this style to be found in Wisconsin.

Rev. Mitchell lived in the cottage until he sold it (1852) and moved to Missouri. William McCord owned it for two years and then sold it to Major John H. Rountree founder of Platteville. Major Rountree's first wife was Mary Grace Mitchell, the daughter of Rev. Samuel Mitchell.

When Major Rountree's son, Hiram, married, the cottage was given to him and his bride Sophia Aspinwall as a wedding gift. Hiram and Sophia raised four daughters, Eleanor, Laura, Bertha and Mary in the cottage. In 1890, to accommodate the needs of their adult children, a bedroom and closets were built as a second floor over the one story dining room ell.

This is the Rountree family that lived in the cottage until marriage or death took them away. Laura was the only daughter not to marry and spent her 95 years in the cottage surrounded by an accumulation of family possessions which, even in her lifetime, were historically important.

ENTRANCE HALL

In summer doors at both ends could be opened and let in cool breezes.

Pictures on the left are Rev. Samuel Mitchell and 2nd wife Eleanor Thomas.

Major John H. Rountree and 2nd wife, Lydia Southworth.

On the right side, Hiram Rountree and wife, Sophia Aspinwall.

PARLOR

The arrangement of furnishings approximate an 1898 photograph. Note the five piece sofa and chairs upholstered with a fabric made of horse hair and still remains in good condition though more than a hundred years old.

The foot stool in front of the fireplace belonged to Major Rountree, the needlepoint cover was made in the 1860's by Lydia Southworth Rountree, Laura's grandmother.

SITTING ROOM

This room is less formal and is where the family relaxed, pursued their hobbies and interests. The original built in cupboards on each side of the fireplace gives a colonial feel to the room. Placement of some furnishings are according to an 1898 photograph.

All the art work was done by Laura Rountree and exhibits the extent of her talent. The oak slant top desk is where Laura kept her important papers and documents.

EAST BEDROOM

A 1898 photograph indicates the location of some furnishings.

Heat was provided by the fireplace and the floor register. Heat from the room below passed through the open register.

Note the quilt on the bed and sampler over the fireplace, both were made by Mrs. Dyer who lived with Rev. and Mrs. Mitchell, in 1839, her first home in America.

WEST BEDROOM

The same method of heating was used including a floor register.

Painting over the fireplace was done by Laura.

The quilt on the bed is another example of the Rountree women's stitchery.

NORTH BEDROOM

This large and cheerful room and closet were added in the 1890 remodeling. Note the trapunto spread, padded quilting raised the design from the background. Quilts are examples of the Rountree women's handiwork.

Tumbling block quilt on the table was started by Sophia, Laura's mother. She died of pneumonia in 1911, before completing the quilt.

The crocheted cover on the chamber pot was called a "silencer" for obvious reasons. Painting of "Pansies" by Laura.

DRESS CASE: black and red dress and blue dress are wedding dresses (1868) of Sophia, Laura's mother.

White wedding dress and shoes (1902) and beige dress were worn by Mary Rountree Evans.

DINING ROOM

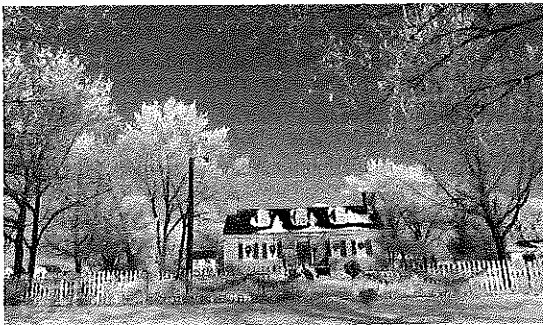
This room was used as a dining room until Laura's later years when it was also used during the winter months as a kitchen.

The mahogany sideboard was brought to Platteville by Major Rountree for his bride, Mary Grace Mitchell. During its trip up the Mississippi to the Galena River, the

Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage



Imagery ©2023 CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies, USDA/FPAC/GEO, Map data ©2023 100 ft



Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage

4.4 ★★★★★ (19)

Museum

Overview

Reviews

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Nearby



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Share

Quaint home dating to the 1830s with a garden & period furnishings, open on weekends.

📍 460 W Madison St, Platteville, WI 53818

🕒 Closed · Opens 10 AM Sat

🌐 grantcountyhistory.org

☎️ (608) 723-4925

📍 PGR9+94 Platteville, Wisconsin

📱 Send to your phone

Mitchell Rountree Stone Cottage, Platteville, WI



Front view (South facing)



Side view, (East, southeast facing)



East view



North, northeast view



North, northwest view



West, southwest view

Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage

The Mitchell-Rountree Stone Cottage was built in 1838-1839 for Revolutionary War veteran and Methodist minister Samuel Mitchell, Sr., and his wife, Eleanor. The Mitchells, Virginians, had the house built in the Virginia Tidewater style: a central hall bordered by a parlor and a drawing room with a dining room ell in the rear. Several members of the Mitchell family lived with them in the house, including their widowed daughter Ellen A. Gridley, her daughters, and Henry Christopher, a former slave freed by Samuel (an abolitionist). In 1854, John H. Rountree, the Mitchells' son-in-law, purchased the Stone Cottage, which he referred to as the stone house. Used as a school in the 1850s, from 1869 onward, Rountree's son Hiram and his wife, Sophia Aspinwall Rountree, lived in the Stone Cottage and farmed its 40 acres, raising hogs. They had four daughters: Nellie, Laura, Bertha, and Mary. In 1894, the four daughters purchased the house from the John H. Rountree estate. Both Bertha and Mary's weddings occurred inside the house in 1902. Laura, who conducted piano lessons in the house, donated the Stone Cottage to the Grant County Historical Society in 1959.

26 lines at 46 spaces or less; 191 Words

April 28, 2023