UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

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2.	Historical Drive-By Tour 1972 Clay County Historical So Liberty, Missouri,	ciety					
		ITEM NUMBER	11	PAGE	1		

2. Mr. James M. Denny
Section Chief, Nominations-Survey (State contact person)
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

June 28, 1978 314/751-4096

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

XEXCELLENT

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED
__RUINS

__UNEXPOSED

_UNALTERED

__XORIGINAL SITE
__MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two story residence sits on a rectangular, sloping site, fronting on South Leonard Street and parallel with Groom Street, on the north. The property is above grade. The house is based on a T-shape plan, with an irregular rear extension. The residence is constructed of red brick, laid in stretcher bond, with frequent use of molded brick. The rubble stone foundation of the house is not visible from the exterior. A concrete block foundation is used for the more recent rear extension. The rear extensions are of frame construction. Wood is utilized for the trim, cornice, window framing, doors, lattice work under the veranda, and bay window. The wood trim of the house has been painted pale yellow. The frame additions to the house are painted reddish-brown.

Front (east) facade

The main facade of the house, facing east, is distinguished by a five-sided projection from the main rectangular block of the residence, with an encircling veranda on both the first and second floors. This veranda is further distinguished by a rather elaborate decorative scroll-cut frieze and lath-turned wood balustrades. This elevated veranda is approached in the center and on the north and south sides by a series of steps, and is supported by short brick piers. The space between the piers is filled with lattice work. The floors of the veranda are of wood, painted gray. There are three entrance doors to the house opening off this veranda, one on each side, facing east. These doors are also repeated on the second story. The third entrance door is on the north side of the polygonal extension, facing north.

North facade

The north facade features a wood bay window that extends through the second floor. Each level of this window features paired windows on the north panel, and single narrow windows on the side panels. The windows are one-over-one light, double sash windows. A small patio area is located between the brick portion of the residence and the more recent frame addition. A door to the rear extension opens from the patio area.

South facade

A recessed cellar door is located at the junction of the veranda and the rectangular block of the house. An entrance to the kitchen is located in the frame addition, just west of the brick portion of the house.

East facade

The east facade of the house is comprised of the rear brick wall of the rectangular portion of the house and the two frame additions. The first frame extension immediately joins the brick portion of the house. The date of its construction is unknown. However, the basic design and similarity in chimney treatment would indicate that this was either part of the original design, or added rather early in the history of the house.

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 1

Roof

The rectangular brick portion of the residence features a hip roof. The polygonal veranda extension has a gable roof with a triangular termination on the east. The earlier portion of the rear extension has a saltbox roof, while the later addition has a gable roof. All are covered with asbestos shingles. The over-hanging cornice of the residence is supported with decorative, paired brackets.

Doors

The doors opening on to the veranda, on both the first and second floors, are multi-paneled, with raised panels, applied decorative wood molding, and are surmounted with transoms. The main entrance door, facing north, has a single light in the upper panel. The panels and molding of this door have been high-lighted with gold paint. The upper panel light in some of the other doors is surrounded with small square of colored art glass, forming a surrounding frame. The doors on the upper veranda are set into radiating brick voussoirs, cut into the cornice, and have no transoms.

Windows

The windows of the brick portion of the house are narrow, rectangular, and set into segmental arched radiating brick voussoirs. The top of the arch of the first floor windows of the veranda have been filled with wood panels. The windows feature stone lugsills. The windows are one-over-one light, double hung, sash windows. The windows of the veranda are distinguished with stone keystones, with an incised fleur-de-lis design. The bay window on the north features narrow arched one-over-one light, double hung, sash windows. Decorative bands of scroll-cut ornamental wood work are located in panels beneath the windows. The frame portion of the residence features irregularly placed rectangular and square windows.

Chimney

The house has two brick chimneys, one in the middle of the house, where the porch extension meets the rear extension. The second chimney is located in the frame extension closest to the brick portion of the house. Both chimney stacks feature corbelled terminations.

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

DATE ENTERED

Interior

The original kitchen of the house was in the basement, under the parlor, where the wood burning fireplace still exists. The interior of the residence has been renovated and is in good condition.

Decorative features

Decorative features of the residence include the following:

- 1) scroll-cut and lathe-turned wood detailing.
- 2) molded brick, used to create rounded curves, rather than right angles on the exterior of the polygonal veranda.
- 3) decorative, bracketed cornice.
- 4) stone incised fleur-de-lis keystones.
- 5) wrought iron hitching post in front of the residence.
- 6) wrought iron fence along north edge of property.

Alterations

- 1) Brick carriage house, demolished, date unknown. 1
- 2) Frame kitchen, pantry, and enclosed back porch, added, date unknown, but probably very early.
- 3) Kitchen enlarged to incorporate the back porch, between 1961-1970.2
- 4) Additional frame extension, c. 1962-1963.3

Condition

The residence is in a good state of repair.

Site

The house sits back approximately forty feet from South Leonard Street. Residential structures are located to the north, south, and west. Commercial property is located to the east. Other structures on the property include on open, roofed double car port, southwest of the house.

Present Status

The property is currently in use as a single-family residence. There are currently no redevelopment plans or threats of demolition.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. Correspondence with Helen Jeffrey, 22 March 1978.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Ibid.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	XCOMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
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_1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
_1600-1699	X.ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
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c. 1889

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Neither the date of construction nor the history of the Clinton Residence, 404 South Leonard Street, Liberty, Missouri are well documented, but the architectural character of the residence and the unusual design features make it one of the most significant residential structures in Liberty.

The brick, two story house, a carpenter's vernacular structure, is related to the Octagon Mode, popularized in the 1850-60's by Orson Fowler's book, A Home for All or the Gravel Wall and Octagonal Mode of Building, first published in 1848. The residence is related to Southern architecture, reflecting the origin of many early Clay County settlers.

HISTORIC DATA

A lengthy abstract for the property exists, but because of its complexity and the lack of other documentation, very little in the way of concrete historical fact about the house is available. The land the residence rests on was opened for settlement by refuges of the New Madrid earthquake in 1819. Early abstract entries refer in general to approximately fifty acres of land and specific mention of this property cannot be ascertained. Numerous transfers of the property occured from 1819 to 1891 and several times the property was involved in litigation.

A temporary, but significant, boom in real estate sales in all of Clay County and in Liberty occured in 1889. This surely affected the property, but in what specific way, one can only surmise - most likely in its value and ownership. The boom ended shortly after it had started, causing financial distress for a number of people and a resultant decline in property prices.³

The location of the property was originally south of the Liberty city limits, on the important road leading from Liberty to the Liberty Landing on the Missouri River.4

In January of 1887, Captain John Groom purchased a portion of land from A.S. Brown that included this property. Groom, a prominent Clay Countian, who had served the county both as Collector of Revenue and Sheriff, laid his purchase out in lots and offered them for sale. The plat for Groom's

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

addition to the city was filed on January 12, 1887. Among the early purchasers of the property were his son, his son-in-law, and James T. Riley, a Liberty furniture dealer. The property becomes easier to trace in the abstract, following the filing of the plat with specific lot numbers.

The house sits on lots 46 and 47 of Groom's Addition, and lot 45 is included in the property, serving as the spacious backyard. Thus, one can assume that as long as the lots were being sold separately, the house had not yet been constructed. Groom sold lots 45 and 46 to Charles Mosby in February of 1887. The first time lots 46 and 47 were purchased jointly was in 1889 when Leroy Curry bought them from John Dorsey, who had purchased them at different times. Nancy Clinton then bought lots 46 and 47 from Curry in 1891 and the following year purchased lot 45 from James T. Riley. Nancy Clinton was the first person to hold the property for any length of time and for years the residence was known locally as the "Clinton place." Since the lots weren't sold jointly until 1889, it seems likely that this is the approximate date of the house. It also seems apparent from the purchase price, that a house was on the property when it was purchased by Nancy Clinton. She paid \$3000 for lots 46 and 47 in March, 1891 and only \$325 for lot 45, in October, 1892.

Nancy Clinton was born in County Cavan, Ireland around 1825. At an early age her family moved to the United States and settled in St. Louis. There she married John Clinton, a native of County Borough, Ireland. In 1851 the couple moved to Clay County and lived in Liberty for about three years. They then moved to a farm in Minnaville, southwest of Liberty, where John Clinton died in 1875. The couple had five In the 1880 census, Nancy Clinton was still listed in the Gallatin Township, Minnaville's location, and was listed as a widow. Her sons Thomas and George, living with her, were listed as farmers.8 In March of 1887 Nancy Clinton sold 280 acres to J.J. Stogdale for \$28,000.9 Evidently she retained some acreage or purchased another farm, for in 1891 the Liberty Tribune advertised a farm sale at her residence six miles southwest of Liberty. Included in the sale were farm machinery, over 80 head of cattle and 100 stock hogs. 10. A month following this sale, she purchased the property in Groom's Addition. The 1900 census lists Nancy Clinton, living on Leonard Street, as a landlady and her children, living with her (Thomas and Mary) as capitalists. 11 Neither Thomas nor Mary married. Both were known as money-lenders. 12 When Nancy Clinton died in August of 1903 she was described as "...holding the love and esteem of all who knew her, and noted for her kindness of heart and charitable deeds...". 13 Unfortunately her will didn't provide for the disposal of the house. After lengthy Form No. 10-300a "
(Rev. 10-74)

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

DATE ENTERED

litigation, it was decided to sell the house to the highest bidder, dividing the profit among the heirs. Mary Ann Clinton, Nancy's daughter, purchased the residence on the Clay County Court House steps in February, 1907. 14

Little is known about the years Mary Ann Clinton owned the house. She was somewhat of an eccentric and a recluse, with a reputation of being very shrewd with money. 15 When Mary Ann Clinton died in 1938, her will left everthing to her neices and nephews, the children of her deceased brother, George Clinton. Litigation again ensued, with the settlement finally in favor of one of the nephews, George W. Clinton. The house had stood vacant for some time after Mary Clinton's death. A realty firm, comprised of several members of the Clinton family took over management of the property. 16 Sometime in the 1940's the Clintons did some modernization of the house - replastering, installing plumbing and heating, and placing a small kitchen upstairs. Although rented out sometimes, the residence remained in the Clinton family until it was sold in 1961 to Mr. and Mrs. John Jeffrey. in turn sold it to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolf Eskridge, in 1970.17 Mr. and Mrs. Eskridge have named the residence "Belle" Maison."

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

The settlers of Clay County and Liberty were mostly Southerners - from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland and South Carolina. Many of the citizens were slave holders and during the Civil War, the overwhelming sympathy was with the South. 18

Greek Revival style architecture, which in the deep South "...reigned practically unchallenged until the Civil War..." was transferred to those states settled by emigrants with Southern backgrounds. 19 Several structures in Liberty reflect this Southern heritage, such as the Darius Gitting residence of 1868 at 143 S. Leonard, the 1859 Lightburne Mansion, located at 307 N. Water, and the Madison Miller house, built in the 1840's, at 124 N. Gallatin. 20

The Clinton Residence also has a strong tie to Southern precedents. The residence is almost identical in style and materials to the Rhea-Diehl residence in Jonesboro, Tennessee which dates from the period of 1865-1896. 21 Although the architect or builder of the house in Tennessee is also unknown, it seems very likely that the design could have been transfered to Liberty at a later date, and with some modifications, in several ways: 1) it is remotely possible that the

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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houses might have been constructed by the same person; 2) the builder of the Clinton residence could have known the Tennessee house; and 3) most likely, the house is from a design in an architectural pattern book, popular in the 1870 and 1880's.

The form of the Clinton house is related to the Octagon Mode, popularized by Orson Fowler's book, A Home For All or the Gravel Wall and Octagonal Mode of Building. 22 Fowler was not the first to utilize circular and polygonal shapes for rooms and bays in houses, but he devised a complex theory and rational for the construction of houses based on an octagonal plan, emphasizing the practical and economic advantages. Contemporary writers of architectural pattern books drew from his ideas, modified his concepts, and included polygonal plans of their own. 23

Plans based on the octagonal mode were especially suitable to warm climates Fowler's theories contained elements of interest to Southern builders - such as open, center stairways, raised platforms, and superimposed porches The pure octagonal form, as promoted by Fowler, was rarely realized in the South. More commonly modifications were utilized, such as the addition of polygonal forms to existing rectangular structures or the amassing of polygonal forms to create a structure.²⁴

The Clinton residence consists of a two story polygonal wing, attached to a rectangular wing. The encircling, two story veranda, raised porch, and entrances that provide cross ventilation reflect the Southern heritage.

The architect and builder of the house are unknown. Local history, which has not been verified, relates that the brick for the residence was burned locally at the Liberty Steam Brick Works, located south of the residence, and owned by James Cockrell.²⁵

The survey of Missouri's historic sties is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan." The Clinton residence is, therefore, being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Architecture" and "Urban Design."

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

FOOTNOTES

- 1. Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780. A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge, Massachusettes: M.I.T. Press, 1969),pp. 85-86.
- 2. Abstract of Property, 404 S. Leonard, Liberty, Missouri.
- 3. Don M. Jackson and Jack B. Wymore, The Heritage of Liberty (Liberty: R.C. Printing Service, 1976), pp. 31-32.
- 4. An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri (Philadelphia: Edward Brothers, 1877).
- 5. Liberty Advance, 21 Jan. 1887, p. 3 and "Capt. John S. Groom," Liberty Tribune, 11 Jan. 1901, p. 1.
- 6. Abstract of Property.
- 7. "Tribune Pencilings," Liberty Tribune, 28 August 1903, p. 3.
- 8. Missouri Census for 1880, Clay County. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Room.
- 9. "Some Sales," <u>Liberty Tribune</u>, 20 May 1887, p. 1.
- 10. "Public Sale of Property," Liberty Tribune, 13 Feb. 1891, p. 2.
- 11. Missouri Census for 1900, Clay County. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Room.
- 12. Interview with John Wymore, 14 Nov. 1977.
- 13. Liberty Advance, 28 August 1903, p. 3.
- 14. Abstract of Property.
- 15. Correspondence with Helen Jeffrey, 22 March 1978.
- 16. Abstract of Property.
- 17. Correspondence with Helen Jeffrey, 22 March 1978.

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DATE ENTERED

CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 5

- 18. Howard Conard, editor. Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri (St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1901) Vol. II, PP. 18-22.
- 19. Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780, p. 46.
- 20. <u>Historical Drive-By Tour</u> (Liberty: Clay County Historical Society, 1972).
- 21. Correspondence with The Jonesborough Civic Trust for Historic Restoration and Preservation, Jonesboro, Tennessee, William E. Kennedy, Chairman, 11 April 1978.
- 22. Orson S. Fowler, A Home for All or the Gravel Wall and Octagonal Mode of Building (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1854).
- 23. Walter Creese, "Fowler and the Domestic Octagon," Art Bulletin 28(June 1946) pp. 89-102.
- 24. Clay Lancaster, "Some Octagonal Forms in Southern Architecture," Art Bulletin 28(June 1946)pp. 103-111.
- 25. Interview with Mrs. A. B. Cotton, 1 Feb. 1978 and <u>Liberty Tribune</u>, 13 May 1887, p. 3.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri. Philadelphia: Edward Brothers, 1877.

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CLINTON RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

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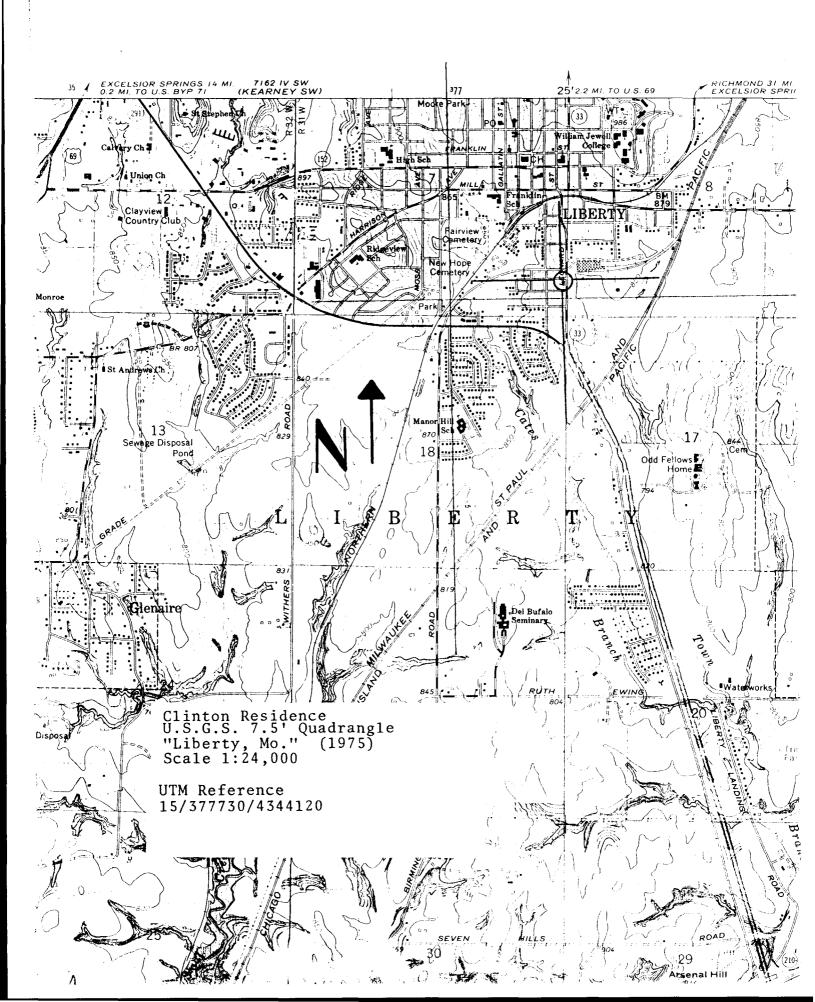
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CLINTON HOUSE

COUNTY:

LOCATION:

OWNER: ADDRESS:

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED (AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

404 South Leonard Street Liberty Mr. and Mrs. Rudolf Eskridge 404 S. Leonard St. Liberty, Mo.

July 14, 1978

August 3, 1978

November 22, 1978

requested 1-10.79

Clinton Residence Liberty, Missouri photographer: Sherry Piland Fall 1977 East facade of residence; view looking west.



Clinton Residence Liberty, Missouri #2 photographer: Sherry Piland Fall 1977

Veranda door, north. View looking south.



Clinton Residence Liberty, Missouri photographer: Sherry Piland Fall 1977 West facade of residence. View looking southeast.

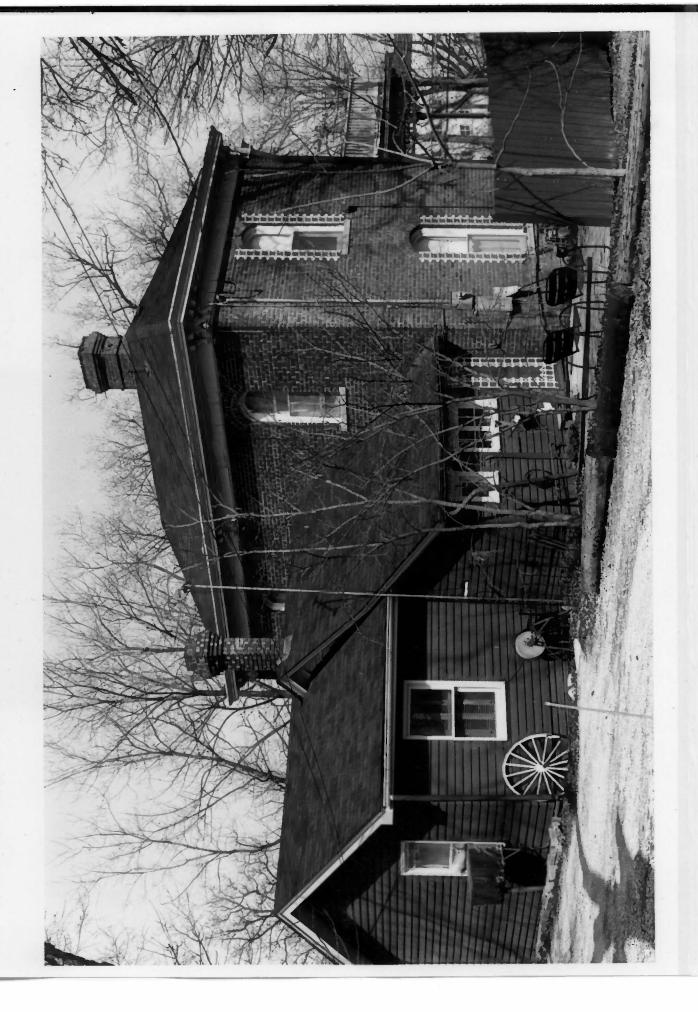


Clinton Residence Liberty, Missouri photographer: Sherry Piland Fall 1977

#4

Southwest corner of residence. Frame additions on left; west and south facades on right. View looking northeast.

17



Clinton Residence Liberty, Missouri #5 photographer: Sherry Piland June 1978

Bay window on north facade; view looking southwest.

