

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0678562

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 6 1979  
MAY 7 1979  
DATE ENTERED

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** Sun Bright

HISTORIC (Catts, Sidney Johnston, House) (8W1 96)

AND/OR COMMON Sun Bright (1890-1922)

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 606 Live Oak Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN DeFuniak Springs

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT First

VICINITY OF

STATE Florida

CODE 12

COUNTY Walton

CODE 131

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mike E. Rollins

STREET & NUMBER 606 Live Oak Avenue

CITY, TOWN DeFuniak Springs

VICINITY OF

STATE Florida 32433

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Walton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN DeFuniak Springs

STATE Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sidney Johnston Catts House is situated on a slight rise adjacent to Highway 331 and the main line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. Originally, a circular drive through a magnolia grove led to the house from the east. When route 331 was constructed along the east property line much of the grove was lost to the road right-of-way.<sup>1</sup>

Until 1954,<sup>2</sup> the Catts house stood largely unaltered; however, a change in ownership and subsequent subdivision of the house into several apartments resulted in some major changes. Presently, there are two-story galleries on the east, south (entrance) and west facades. That on the south is covered by the projecting jerkin head gable of the main roof while those on the east and west sides have simple shed roofs. A faceted conical roof caps the 3½ story octagonal tower which is located on the southeast corner. The galleries are supported by square posts and have simple railings with square pailings. Originally, the house was surrounded on the east, south and west sides with a covered veranda having turned posts, flat-sawn brackets and balustrade and a spindel frieze. Portions of the second story deck were covered by projecting gables or hip roofs with comparable wood detailing. Originally, this veranda was entered from the south-east corner, the location of the tower; however, today, with the verandas reduced, each is approached individually.

The fenestration is irregular with respect to stories and sides. On the south (entrance) facade, double entrance doors with glazed transom sash are centered between tripartite windows. The second story on this facade is divided into five bays, one being a door providing access to the second story gallery. The house has a steeply pitched roof with jerkin head gables on both the east and south facades. The ridges were originally covered with sheet metal cresting while the tower had a cast iron filigree cresting. Each of the major gables has a small, square window with glazed lobes. Small one-story wings project from the north (rear) facade and an exterior wooden stairway (for access to second floor apartment) is located to the rear of the west gallery.

The interior remained unaltered through the Catts' ownership.<sup>3</sup> A formal parlor, informal parlor, dining room and kitchen were located on the east side of the first floor; rooms on the west included a library and three bedrooms. A bathroom was located at the end of the first floor hall. Four additional bedrooms, a sewing room, a storage room, a bathroom and one large unfinished room were located on the second floor. The attic is unfinished and there is evidence of fire damage which occurred sometime in the 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Catts Cawthon and Lillian Hollestelle, personal communications with Linda V. Ellsworth, June 13, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      circa 1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is significant as the home of Sidney Johnston Catts (Governor of Florida, 1917-1921) from 1924 until his death in 1936. Although the house remained in the family until 1954, it ceased being used as the family residence when Mrs. Catts died in 1949. Architecturally, it is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Style and was built when DeFuniak Springs was being developed as a Chautauqua retreat by the Lake DeFuniak Land Company.

Sidney Johnston Catts, born on July 31, 1863, was raised on the family plantation near Pleasant Hill, Alabama. Catts attended Alabama Polytechnical Institute (now Auburn University), 1877-1880; Howard College, 1880-81; and Cumberland University, where he received an LL.B. degree in 1882.<sup>1</sup> In 1886, Catts became a "born-again Baptist" and served as the minister for several country churches.

Catts' Florida career began in 1911 when he moved his family to DeFuniak Springs, where he served as minister for the First Baptist Church. In 1914, after a dispute with his congregation, Catts resigned his pastorate and turned to the insurance business and to politics.<sup>2</sup>

In 1916, after being a resident of Florida for only five years, Catts ran for the state governorship using the campaign slogan that the only three friends a Florida cracker could rely on were Sears-Roebuck, the Lord Jesus, and Sidney J. Catts. Catts was the first gubernatorial candidate in Florida to use an automobile, a Model T Ford, during his campaign and to use a loud speaker system.<sup>3</sup> This technologically advanced approach allowed Catts to reach more isolated rural areas, those not serviced by the railroads, and to attract crowds in the areas where he stopped. After a controversial campaign, Catts was inaugurated as the twenty-second governor on January 2, 1917.

Catts' governorship proved to be as controversial as his campaign. Balanced against his blatant anti-Catholicism, racism, and use of the spoils system was a program that incorporated a variety of progressive features, including pro-labor reforms, termination of convict leasing, improved education, prison reform, and better care of the mentally ill. Wayne Flynt described Catts' widespread appeal as a Populist: "Catts became a surrogate for populism come to Florida two decades late. He provided a voice for the inarticulate 'unwashed' against the carefully manicured and properly pedigreed."<sup>4</sup>

(See continuation sheet)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	5,8,4	<sup>100</sup> 1,8,0	3,3	9,8	6,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The east 130.0 feet of block 1874, and the West half of 14th Street, lying East of Block 1874 according to the Plat of the Vicinity of DeFuniak Springs

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dan G. Deibler, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION	DATE
Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management	October 5, 1978
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
Department of State, The Capitol	(904) 487-2333
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Tallahassee	Florida 32304

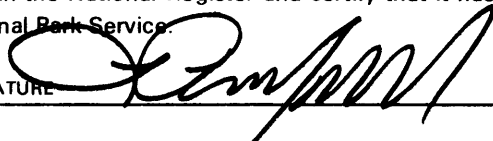
## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

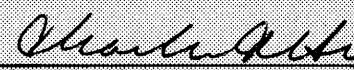


TITLE

DATE 2/26/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST: <u>Bill Labovich</u> KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <u>5-7-79</u> COMPILED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE <u>May 3, 1979</u>
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After leaving office in 1921, Catts investigated business possibilities in Georgia and the North, faced several legal suits in Florida, and, eventually, returned to DeFuniak Springs. Catts moved into the house at 606 Live Oak Street in 1924 and lived there until his death in 1936.<sup>5</sup>

The Catts' House appears to have been built by 1890 on property sold to Vashti F. Banfill in 1886 by the Lake deFuniak Land Company, the Chautauqua's development branch. In 1890, Banfill sold the property to a Dr. Sherman for \$3,200 (indicating that a house was on the site).<sup>6</sup> Sherman is said to have moved to DeFuniak Springs because of the Chautauqua.<sup>7</sup> In 1908, Sherman sold the property to Pauline L. Beville. The McCaskill Development Company and J.D. and Grace Raborn, successively, owned the property before Mrs. Catts purchased the house and land in 1922.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne Flynt, Cracker Messiah: Governor Sidney J. Catts of Florida, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univeristy Press, 1977), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 336; Ruth Catts Cawthon, personal interview by Linda V. Ellsworth, June 13, 1978.

<sup>6</sup>Walton County, Florida, Deed Records, Bood 2, p. 136. Located in Walton County Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>7</sup>Ruth Catts Cawthon, personal interview.

<sup>8</sup>Walton County, Florida, Deed Records, Book 5, p. 204; Book 24, p. 608; Book 59, p. 291 and Book 135, p. 63.

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Cawthon, Mrs. Ruth Catts. Personal interview by Linda V. Ellsworth, DeFuniak Springs, Florida, June 13, 1978.

(Continued)

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ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Hollestelle, Mrs. Lillian. Personal interview by Linda V. Ellsworth, DeFuniak Springs, Florida, June 13, 1978.

Flynt, Wayne. Cracker Messiah: Governor Sidney J. Catts of Florida. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.

Tebeau, Charlton. A History of Florida. Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971.

Walton County, Florida. Deed Records. Books 2, 5, 24, 59, and 135. Located in the Walton County Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.