

According to an article by Ed Peters, in an article in *The Redstone Rocket* dated September 7, 1983, a time when the arsenal was evaluating its historic structures, “old records show that J.B. Harris in 1927 combined two existing buildings, possibly slave quarters, to form the bungalow-type house.” Architectural historians contracted by the Army confirmed that one part of the house was built of hand-hewn logs that probably date back prior to the Civil War, and one of its chimneys is probably of the same era.

The house was reportedly built by J.B. Harris, probably by virtue of it being on his property. However, Sam Harris Jr., who was born in the house, said his father, Sam Harris Sr., built the house. He remembers it being said that the house was built around a log cabin or two. Juanita Lassiter, who married J.B.’s grandson, also said Sam Harris Sr. built the house, saying her husband’s grandfather (J.B.) “acted more as an overseer because of his age at the time.” Since Sam Harris, born in 1892, and would later have a son he would name Sam, he is referred to as Sam Harris Sr. Sam Harris Sr. raised his family in the Harris house. It was renovated in 1938 with the addition of new siding and porches.

Details about the Harris house are on file at Redstone Arsenal. Designated as Building 8012 by the Army. In 1984, the Army conducted an Historic American Buildings Survey and the structure was classified as a Category III historic property in accordance with Army regulation 420-4.

The Harris House still stands in its original location on Redstone Arsenal. The Army had the house evaluated by architectural historians to determine its historical significance; it was categorized as Class III, the lowest category of structure eligible for nomination to the NRHP. The house was found to be locally unique to its historic era thus it contributed to the understanding of pre-military land use. The Harris House was considered distinctive because at the time it was one of the three remaining pre-Army structures. However, of the other two, the Chaney House (renamed the Goddard house by the Army) was no longer in its original location (see the Chaney section), and the Lee House, which was later owned by the Harris family, was partially razed and moved from the arsenal by a civilian buyer. The architectural review of the Harris House and a record of changes made to it by the Army are on file at the arsenal.

THE HARRIS FAMILY AND THEIR LIFE ON THE FARM

Sam Harris Jr. (born in 1930), the grandson of J.B. and Martha Rogers Harris, with his wife and his son present, was first visited by the researcher on January 28, 2001. He said his grandparents had six daughters, including one set of twins, and one son, Sam. The girls were Orpy, Lupo, Mary (married a Lassiter), Lizzie, Ruth, Etta, and Della. The latter two were the twins. In 2005, when the researcher visited the home of Sam Jr. for the second time, his wife and son, as well as his sister, Corrine Shovelton and her husband were present. The following family diagram was drawn with the assistance of Corrine: