

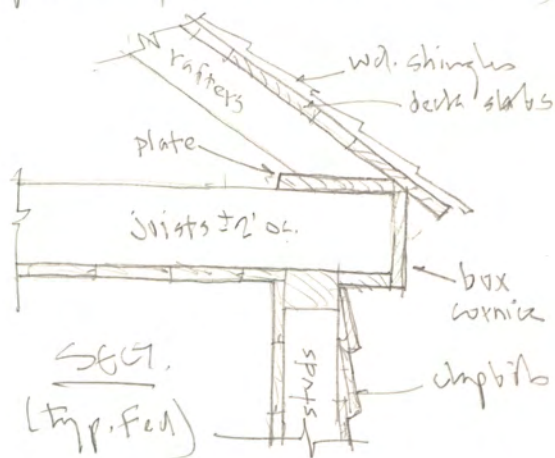
LOG BARU  
1818 Clifton

HOUSE  
ATTIC

N  
↓



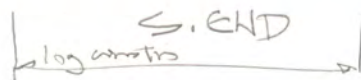
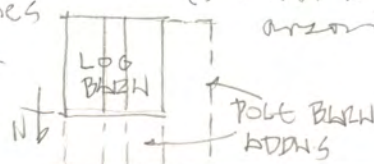
Roof framing (All hem = unskel)





Detail at ridge, N →  
E. end

1818 Clopton Place Log Barn  
1978 photos H.P. Jones  
Madison Co. AL  
(burned 1982,  
 arson)



N. End, W. bay → N



E. Bay

↕ N



E. Bay

Nax

# Off-the-Road History... County Project Finds Old Buildings

By LANE LAMBERT  
Times Staff Writer

*documented  
1980*

The Kelly Home on Jeff Road reflects a series of styles — a small original log structure was built, then enlarged, then bricked over. (Like most of the antebellums, the bricks were hand-pressed.) A porch and columns were added still later.

All the antebellum houses qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, Ms. Sockwell said, but have not been nominated for lack of a detailed architectural analysis. That, she added, would require a separate project and grant.

THE LOG HOUSES, on the other hand, were the product of individual needs and personal carpentry. Most are the two-section "dog trot" houses of a style that was still widely seen in the rural South just a few decades ago.

A number of those, including the Gov. Moore homestead, would be good sites for archaeological digs, Ms. Sockwell said.

"A lot of them are going fast," she added.

Photographs, architectural descriptions and other information are on file in the county historical department. Ms. Sockwell's watercolors of some of the sites are on display in the Courthouse.

Several log structures in Sharon Johnston Park were moved there for preservation as a result of the project.

All were located by a search of library and Courthouse records, a TARCOG survey, on-the-road scouting, and even word of mouth — the owners of some old sites or neighbors sometimes told Ms. Sockwell and Stubno where other nearby old homes were.

"We took some old county maps and followed the original roads," Ms. Sockwell explained. "We found quite a few like that, including the Clopton house."

No county in the United States, she noted, has ever conducted a thorough survey of its antebellum structures and sites.

Paid for by a federal arts and humanities grant, the project was begun in July 1978 and completed in January 1980. Ms. Sockwell and Stubno were hired as Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) employees.

"The project has an intrinsic value that is incalculable, because the focus was on the rural areas for the first time," Record commented. "It is a permanent record that local historians will be able to make use of in the future."

The old two-story frame homestead in east Madison County stood in disrepair, long overgrown with vines and weeds. The owner was ready to tear it down and make other uses of the tract.

But in 1979, in the course of a county historical project, the house on Homer Nance Road was identified as William H. Clopton's, built in 1818, while northern Alabama was still part of the Mississippi Territory.

The owner seemed impressed enough: She told Helen H. Sockwell, the director of the federally funded program, that she'd spare the house and make some renovations to preserve it.

The "Clopton place" was one of some 400 houses and other buildings in the county that were located and recorded as a result of the \$35,000 project, which was completed in early 1980.

Ms. Sockwell's recently publicized "rock sculptures" at Sharon Johnston Park were fashioned during the very last phase of the 18-month effort. But former County Commission Chairman James Record, now the county historian called those works "a very minor part of the whole project — incidental."

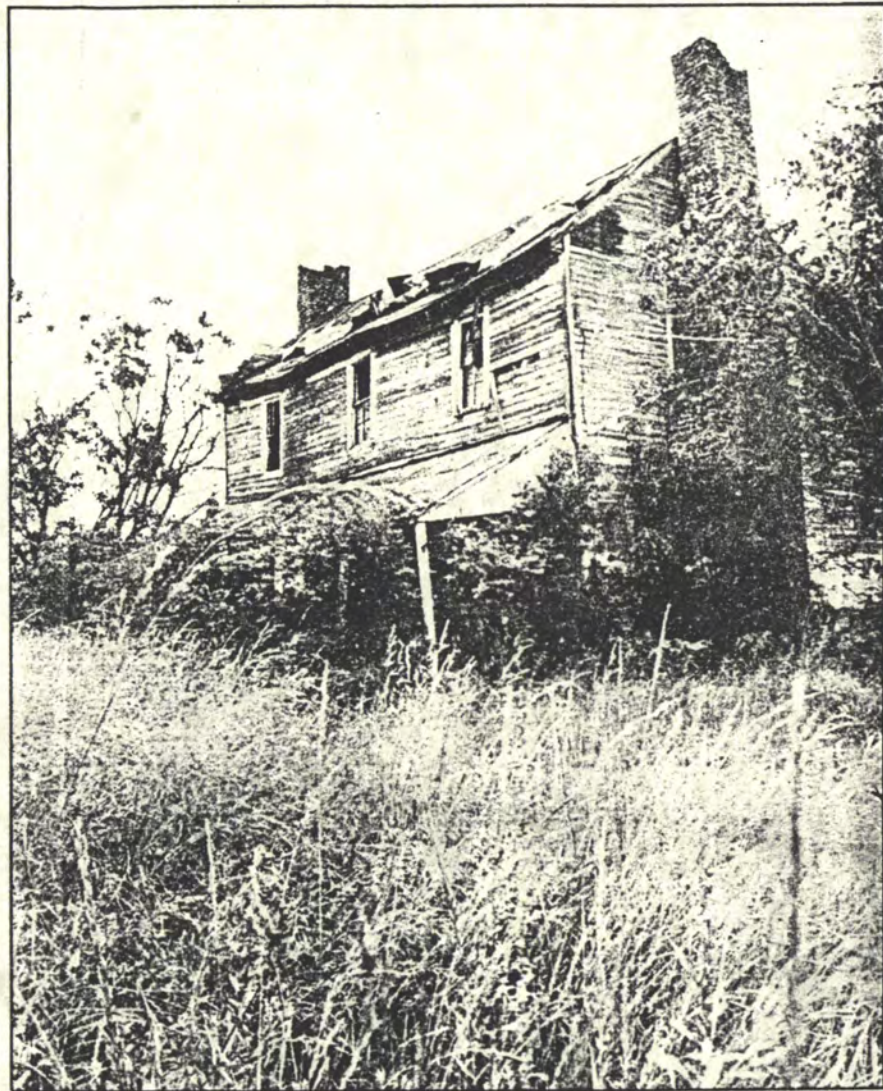
LOG HOMES, mansions, a mill, a smokehouse — and the homestead of a governor — were identified, described and photographed by Ms. Sockwell and her assistant, Bill Stubno.

Among them: the Bone-Wilbourn Mansion on Hurricane Creek Road, a brick house built about 1826 by James McCartney; the Kelly Mansion on Jeff Road; the Buzbin Home in Ryland; the Sublett log home on Moontown Road; Butler Mill on Butler Mill Road; an 1818 smokehouse at a Bob Wade Lane residence, and Gov. Gabriel Moore's burned homestead northwest of Huntsville.

More than 30 large antebellum homes and some 70 flat-cut log cabins — some 150 years old, some still occupied — were located throughout the county's rural sections. One antebellum church was also identified — Staline Methodist, which dates from the early 1800s.

At least one rarity turned up: The Clopton home, according to Ms. Sockwell, was built from a plan prevalent in Virginia in the 17th century.

"There are very few of that style in Alabama," she said.



Clopton Home, Built in 1818, Will Be Saved Following Discovery of Importance

(Times Photo by Dave Dieler)

*burned 1982*

8959

*"Av. Times" about 1980*

*documented in 1980*