

# JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

5 May 96 Harvie P. Jones, F.A.I.A.

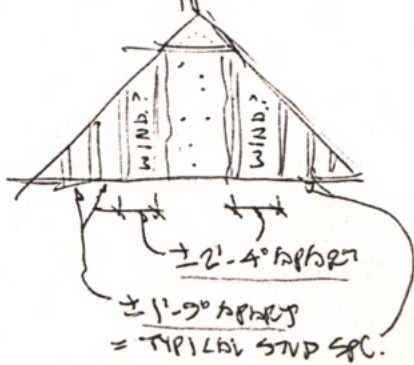
AHC - Mount

Bob Gamble

re - c. 1818 Murphy 1/2

Bob - I notice that in the loft  
rms. the studs are under-angled

by the chimney, which may  
indicate the former location of  
small windows - a typical  
arrangement.



Need to look for  
traces at the site

104 Jefferson Street  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801  
Telephone 205/539-0764  
Fax 205/534-2289

CFD





F. LAWRENCE OAKS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF ALABAMA  
**ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

468 South Perry Street  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900



TELEPHONE NUMBER  
242-3184

2 July 1996

Mr. Kim Prichard  
Manager, Environment and Energy  
Trico Steel Company  
701 Bank Street N.W.  
Decatur, Alabama 35601

Dear Kim:

The Alabama Historical Commission has prepared the enclosed stabilization plan and cost estimate for the Dr. William Murphey House near Decatur. In earlier meetings held to discuss the future of the historic property, Larry Oaks, Executive Director of the Alabama Historical Commission, committed the use of the Commission's preservation carpentry crew to undertake stabilization and mothballing of the Dr. Murphey House. Since this commitment was made, funding cuts have forced the Commission to down-size the preservation carpentry team which maintains house museums and other properties under our care. We are very much committed to the Dr. Murphey House stabilization project, but because of the cutback it will be late August or early September before our crew can get to work on it. At that time, we project that it will take two to three days to accomplish "mothballing" of the house.

We appreciate your willingness to work with the Alabama Historical Commission and your agreement to underwrite the cost for materials to stabilize the Dr. Murphey House. Over the years, significant historic properties have greatly benefitted from the public/private partnership between private corporations and the Alabama Historical Commission. Hopefully, once the clean-up/stabilization is complete, the house will be able to survive until a permanent preservation plan can be devised. Meanwhile, we hope that Trico Steel Company will consider possible adaptive re-use for this early and important dwelling, such as a welcome center, that would preserve the house for the education and enjoyment of future generations of Alabamians.

As soon as a more definitive time can be scheduled for the mothballing, we will be in touch. In the meantime, we would welcome and appreciate your comments on the stabilization plan and cost estimate. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Most sincerely,

*Copy*  
Robert Gamble  
Senior Architectural Historian

Edward Hooker  
Preservation Architect

cc: Bill Wiley, Trico Steel Company  
Annette Philpot, Decatur Main Street  
Charles Tichy, TVA



July 1996  
by Al. Hilt, Commission  
Ed Hooker Arch. on  
5/2/96

# General Stabilization Plan

for the

## Dr. William E. Murphey House

Trinity Vicinity, Morgan County

### General Materials List

In places where the weatherboarding is either damaged or missing, heavy-duty building paper should be placed over the exposed timbers and attached with roofing nails. Later, when weatherboards are replaced, the building paper may remain as a protective layer.

Replacement wood used to cover sills, soffit and fascia should be treated lumber (most common size 1x6)

Window and door openings should be filled in with plywood. Window infill should be custom cut to fit each opening, and should have pre-drilled ventilation holes  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter. Exterior doors that are still usable shall be adapted and secured. Doors that are deteriorated/damaged to the point of no longer serving their purpose shall be removed and stored with the other salvaged building materials. New temporary doors of plywood shall be attached with operable hinges and should have padlocks and hasps so the whole building can be secured. These doors should also have ventilation similar to the window openings.

Replacement roofing should be 5 v crimp tin. New ridge cap on wing needed. Possibly even coat existing tin with topcoat or similar material to fill any nail holes.

### Most Immediate Threat

#### TERMITES!!!

Under the main block, the joists are in pretty good shape. Three joists, numbers 6, 7 and 10 (beginning from the left side of the front facade) appear to have been previously damaged by termites.

The rear sill under the main block (measuring roughly 12" x 12") was sistered with another piece of lumber (approximately 5" x 12") in order to attach the wing. Currently termites have destroyed a great deal of the material at this connection, in a path about 6-8 feet long. Their trails (tunnels) are visible, and apparently the stone pier located halfway under the sill has been the direct path from the nest to the feeding site. Also, a few of the joists closest to the sill under the wing appear to have just been attacked. This is one of the first things to deal with. Treatment of the affected areas, as well as beginning a routine maintenance of the entire house.



# Front Elevation (looking North)

## General

stabilize porch

remove debris from fallen porch and fallen weatherboards

store all material assessed to be of historic significance inside house

cut tree limbs

limb tree as to remove all branched actually touching the house. It is important to leave the trees - they are blocking wind, rain and sun from further deteriorating the front facade.

## Foundation

Stone piers across the front appear to be in good condition

## Wall plane

patch skirt board area where porch connections are no longer  
joist connections are exposed

place plywood inside window openings - fasten with wood screws

engineer some kind of front door replacement (probably a sheet of plywood)

be able to secure the house with padlock

## Roof

left corner - major soffit, roof and facade damage.

sister 1x6 to soffit and patch tin roof



# East Elevation (looking West)

## Foundation

piers appear to be in good shape

## Wall Plane

half-timber construction exposed; window missing from rough opening between left corner and window, approximately 30% of the weatherboarding is missing, starting at the exposed sill, around the window, and in the gable

above exterior door at line with soffit of wing, two sections of weatherboard are missing, exposing the studs

on wing, area where door patched (infilled) has boards missing

## Roof

left corner (front elevation right corner) tin turned up, damage to fascia and soffit (from tree limb) sister new 1x6 to fascia to attach tin patch



# North Elevation (looking South)

## General

original stone chimney removed & replaced by slender concrete block & brick flue  
rear porch has fallen; debris needs to be removed and material deemed to be of  
historic significance should be stored in house

## Foundation

all piers appear to be in good shape; right corner pier new concrete block  
skirt board where porch has fallen needs to be patched - joist at sill connections  
exposed  
sill in gabled wing end has been replaced with built-up members, now in bad shape  
due to being exposed

## Walls

approximately 55% - 60% of the weatherboarding is gone; two exposed window  
openings  
damage and deterioration to both left and right corners at soffit; roofing material  
turned up; new wood should be sistered in place and then tin roof patched (serious-  
looking water damage to flooring in upstairs half story  
window openings in gable end need to be boarded up  
door and window opening in main block need to be secured - door in pretty bad  
shape, but window just needs sheet of plywood (existing - but not original - sash)

## Roof

tin turned up at both corners  
approximately 10'-12' of the ridge cap missing  
check connection at valleys

# West Elevation (looking East)

## General

remove debris from collapsed porch  
store any material deemed to be historic in house

## Foundation

pier at left corner of main block needs to be relieved of duty - stone has buckled, and new temporary piers to either side at 90 degree angles should be added until original corner pier is repaired.  
skirt board area where porch has fallen needs to be patched - joist at sill condition exposed  
main block on left side of chimney, sill has fallen to the ground  
main block on right side of chimney, sill is exposed and partially deteriorated at chimney end

## Walls

weatherboards on wing appear to be in good shape  
problem is with gabled end of main block - approximately 45%-55% of the weatherboards are missing, causing a great deal of the half-timber construction to be exposed to the elements  
doorway cut from window in wing needs to be boarded up  
window openings in main block need to be boarded up

## Roof

corner of wing, including soffit, fascia and tin are deteriorated/missing  
good deal of reconstruction required to assure tin patches to hold  
left and right corners of gable on main block are missing/bent back



# Cost Estimate

## Materials

asphalt felt	15 lb	3 rolls @ \$23/roll	\$69.00
nails	25 lbs	@ \$1/lb.	25.00
tin	10 sheets 8'long @ \$1.75 lin. ft.		140.00
ridge cap	12"x10' @ \$2.05 lin. ft.		20.50
wood screws	5 lbs	@ \$3.49	17.45
plywood	15 sheets 4x8x 1/2 @ \$12 per sheet		180.00
wood -	2 - 2x12x10' @ \$12.80 each		25.60
	10 - 1x6x10' siding @ \$4 each		40.00
concrete block	50 8x8x16 @ \$.82		41.00
sheet metal	10' @ 5.58 per lin. ft.		55.80
		Subtotal:	\$573.35

## Labor

Carpenter labor will be supplied by the Alabama Historical Commission.  
Per Diem for a crew of three preservation carpenters and one supervisor at a rate of \$50 per person per day totals \$800.

**Total Labor and Materials** **\$1,373.35**

(At the end of the project a detailed expense summary will be submitted to Trico Steel Co.)

13 Aug 86  
**JONES & HERRIN**

Architecture/Interior Design

AJC

Harvie P. Jones, FAIA

Mort.

Bob Gamble

Bob - here is revised  
sketch of additions here.

It appears to me

that \$100,000 to \$150,000  
would completely restore the

ext. of the Murphy here.

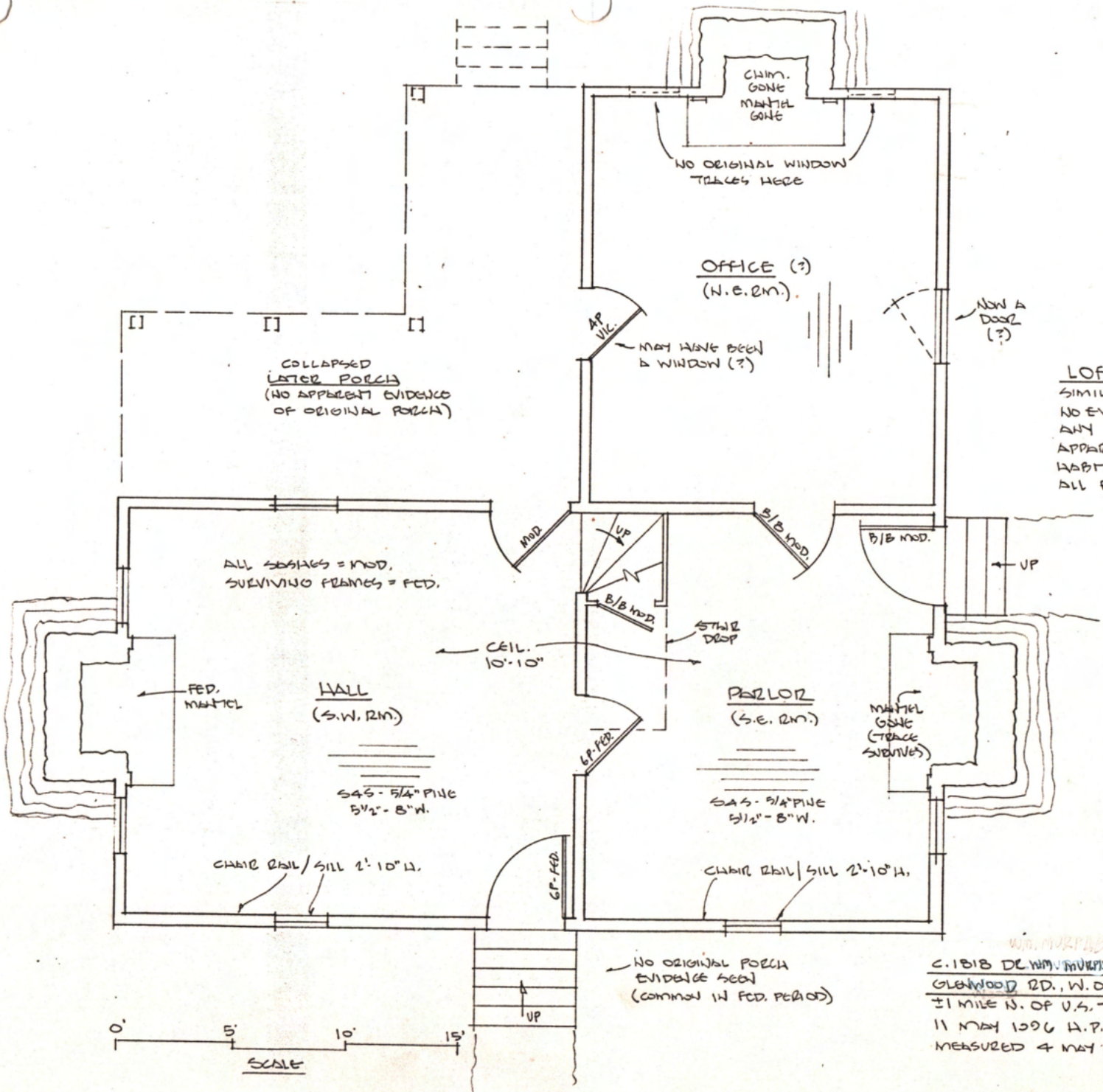
The complete int. & ext.  
restor. of the c.1640 Manor  
here was \$150,000 in 1994-5.

H. Jones

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Fax 205/534-2289

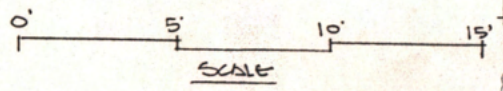
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LOFT-  
SIMILAR PLAN.  
NO EVIDENCE OF  
ANY WINDOWS.  
APPARENTLY NOT  
HABITABLE SPACE.  
ALL FLOORED.

W.M. MURPHY  
C. 1818 DE WM. MURPHY HOUSE  
GLENWOOD RD., W. OF DECATUR, AL.  
± 1 MILE N. OF U.S. 72 AET.  
11 MAY 1906 H.P. JONES P.A.I.A.  
MEASURED 4 MAY '96 H.P.J.





Long - abandoned, used for hay store.  
Dotted resty. except to  
arrange resty. by hand  
only, TRICO Steel Co.



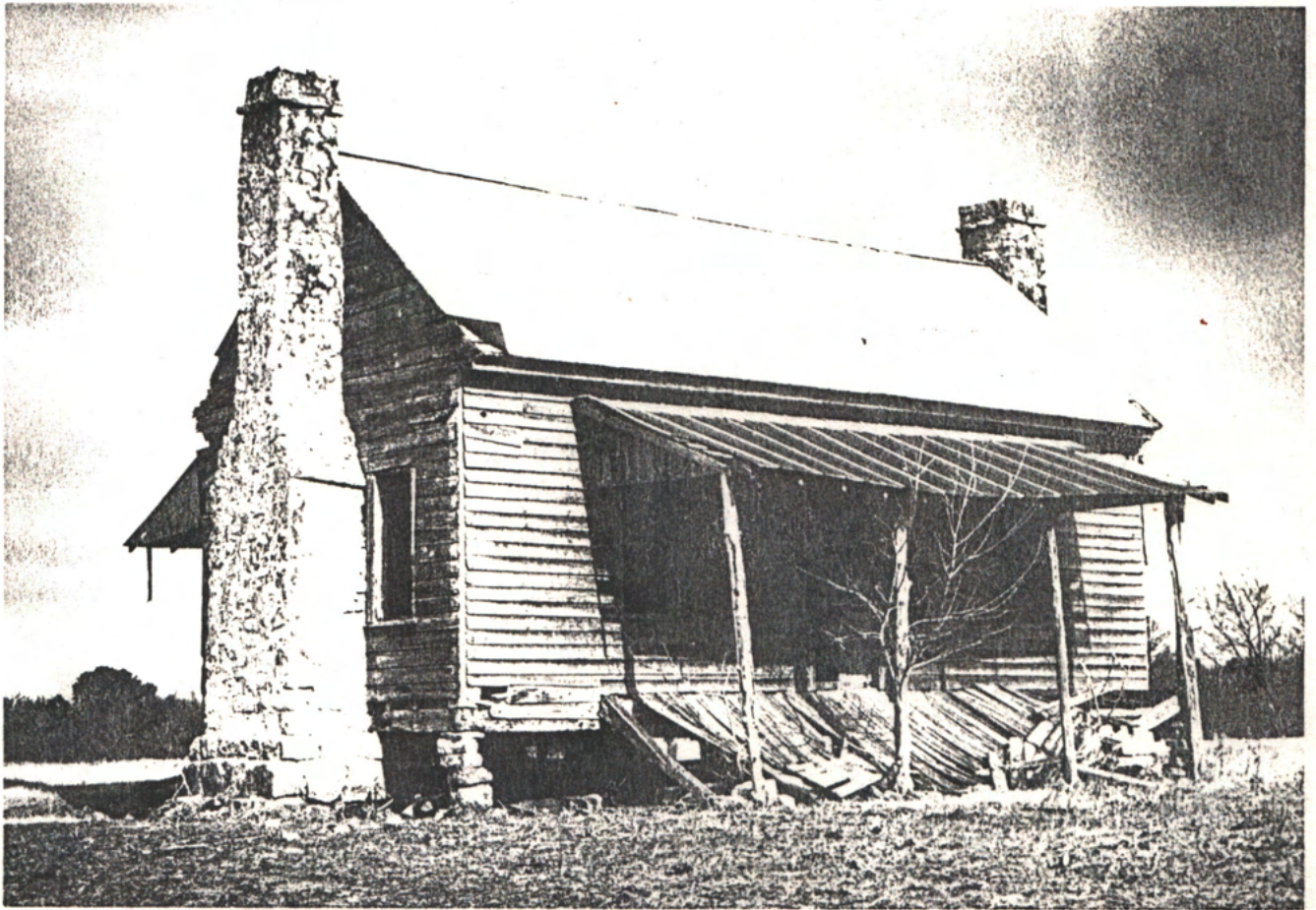
WILLIAM  
MURPHY  
CIRCA 1818 DR. MURPHY HOUSE. RESTORED VIEW TRACED OVER 1996 PHOTOGRAPH  
GLENWOOD ROAD, WEST OF DECATUR, AL. ± 1 MILE N. OF AL. U.S. 72  
11 MAY 1996 HERVIC P. JONES, F.D.I.A. (KUNTSVILLE, AL.)  
N.E. WINDOW & OUTBUILDINGS ARE CONJECTURAL, TO BE VERIFIED ON-SITE



±150 photos & notes. photos by H. Jones, May 1996

4

Historic Architecture in Alabama (Robt Gamble)



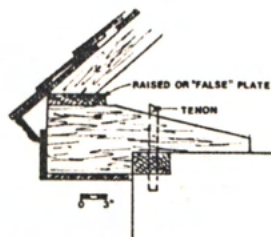
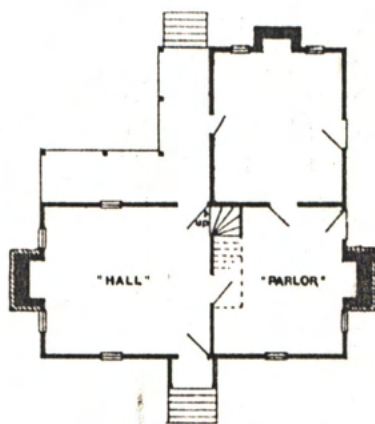
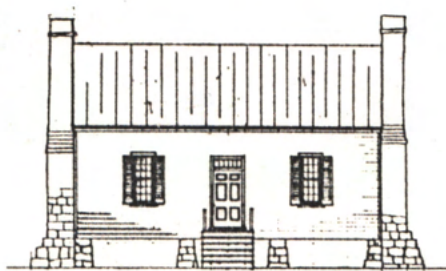
1. Dr. William Murphey house, Morgan County. Just an abandoned farmhouse to the untrained eye, this 160-year-old dwelling near Decatur is the kind of unprepossessing structure often overlooked for the architectural and social history it represents. Actually, as the conjectural restoration drawing (opposite, top) shows, the house expresses with unusual clarity the architectural carry-over that occurred on the early Alabama frontier. Rural folkways were conservative and changed but slowly. Hence this house, though chronologically belonging to the 1800s, would have been perfectly at home in colonial Virginia, Maryland, or the Carolinas as a humble reflection of high-style Georgian tendencies, filtered down to the level of folk building.

and detail—we recognize familiar national stylistic currents. They do not surprise or puzzle us. Rather, they conform to an anticipated pattern in the sequence of American high styles.

But what about a tumbledown farmhouse [1] having few if any earmarks of accepted “style,” a building in whose lines we nevertheless sense some guiding architectural principle, some forgotten tradition that governed its basic form and layout? If such a structure cannot glibly be inserted into a generalized and preestablished category, neither can it be dismissed. Indeed, as an artifact of *social* history—hinting at the origins of local settlement, the methods of a local builder, or a certain peculiarity of lifestyle—“maverick” buildings of this nature may be more significant than the urbane but predictable embodiment in another structure of the latest architectural fashion from the East.

It follows, then, that the building art in early Alabama must be considered from multiple vantage points, with a sharp eye for the exceptional patterns as well as the anticipated ones. Improved commu-





The ball-and-parlor plan (middle) of the Murphey house is likewise a colonial hold-over, traceable all the way back to medieval England and seldom seen in Alabama.

Bottom: Another rare feature linking the house to colonial antecedents is the raised or "false" plate, which receives the rafters of the roof at the eaves line. Even the rough stone pier-foundation, in lieu of a more refined one of brick or dressed ashlar, represents a reversion to very early practice in English North America. With the massive demographic shifts that began to depopulate some areas of rural Alabama in the 1960s, countless small yet highly significant buildings of this sort are disappearing—for the most part inadequately recorded. (Author's collection.)

nications and the ever more pervasive influence of popular magazines, mass-produced building components, and advances in building technology—not to mention the enhanced professional role of the architect himself—combined to dissolve regionalism and draw American architecture of all types into a common stream around the close of the last century. Except in the more isolated parts of the state, this was as true in Alabama as elsewhere. A new Alabama farmhouse of 1910 was likely to be nearly identical to its counterparts in Kansas or Nebraska. The trend was, of course, much more evident in urban areas. A wide-eaved, Craftsman-style bungalow erected in Birmingham or Montgomery at the beginning of World War I might as easily have been in Duluth or Portland. "The traveler through the South today," concluded *The Architectural Record* in July 1911, "finds less than he expected . . . of local color. . . . Upon the whole the modern Southern house is simply the modern American house."

Through most of the previous century, however, those structures in Alabama and the South that had mirrored national trends of taste were but a minority at one end of an architectural spectrum. At the other end of the same spectrum flourished, simultaneously, several distinct regional modes of building. In between lay numerous other structures influenced by both extremes—folk habit on the one hand, the latest academic fashion on the other. And imposing themselves on even the most ambitious building schemes were powerful social, economic, and geographical constraints that encouraged some tendencies while limiting others.

Foremost among these constraints, perhaps, was the reality of an overwhelmingly rural and semifrontier society, a fact again and again commented upon by travelers from Europe and the Northeast. To be sure, Mobile—Alabama's antebellum metropolis and only port—had by 1860 attained a population of nearly thirty thousand, a fair-sized city according to American standards of the day. But inland for hundreds of square miles, forest, farm, and plantation held sway. Montgomery [2], the state capital and next largest "city" after Mobile, counted fewer than 9,000 people, over half of whom were slaves. Next came the larger market towns—Huntsville, Selma, Tuscaloosa, Eufaula—none with a population above 4,000, of which, again, a large percentage were slaves. Most other Alabamians black and white, roughly 900,000 souls altogether, lived on farms and plantations concentrated along several major rivers: the Alabama and the Tennessee, the Tombigbee, the Black Warrior, the Coosa, the Tallapoosa, and the Chattahoochee. In the northcentral and extreme southern portions of the state, lonely stretches of rocky upland or dense "piney woods" remained a near wilderness. More than half the state's land area, in fact, still lay in the public domain according to the 1850 census.



## EASEMENT DONATION HELPS ASSURE HOUSE'S SURVIVAL

Bill and Beth Campbell have lived in Northport only a year. But on May 17 the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) and Northport townspeople recognized the Campbells for their role in preserving the Walter Maxwell House, one of the city's best-known landmark residences.



Beth and Bill Campbell, owners of the Walter Maxwell House in Northport.

To help assure the Maxwell House will be around for future generations to see and enjoy, the Campbells donated a historic preservation easement to the Alabama Historical Commission.

An easement is a legal tool for giving one party, in this case the Historical Commission, certain regulatory rights over property owned by another party. Although an easement may be modified if necessary, it "runs with the deed," requiring present and future owners to abide by its terms.

In the case of a landmark structure, an easement is a means of assuring the architectural and historical qualities making the structure significant will be preserved even though it remains in private ownership and continues to be bought and sold.

"Public money and local historical groups cannot possibly take care of every worthy old building," said Robert Gamble, AHC senior architectural historian. "An easement is a tool through which people who have spent their own time and money restoring and maintaining a landmark can know the structure will be protected and enjoyed even after they are out of the picture."

Over the years, owners of a handful of landmark sites and structures have donated easements to the Alabama Historical Commission. But compared to other southern states, such as North Carolina and Virginia, Alabama has not used the easement process to its full potential. "Preservation easements are a novel idea to most folks," said Gamble, "and naturally they're a little suspicious at first."

Built at the turn of the century, the Walter Maxwell House was purchased by the Campbells in May 1995. They immediately began extensive refurbishing.

Under the terms of the easement, the house cannot be demolished. Also, any

future work on the exterior and grounds of the house will be carried out in consultation with the Historical Commission staff to assure retention of basic historical and architectural characteristics.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 as part of the Northport Historic District, the Maxwell House occupies a key site along Main Avenue. "If the house was lost or mutilated by bad remodeling, the negative visual impact on the historic district would be very noticeable," said Gamble. Nondescript parking lots and apartment complexes have already eroded part of the district's distinctive character.

One other Northport landmark, the c. 1835 Shirley-Harper-Christian House, is currently under protective easement. Marvin Harper, owner of the house, donated the easement to the Historical Commission several years ago. In fact, it was Harper who brought the easement possibility to the Campbells' attention.

A letter of appreciation from Larry Oaks, AHC executive director, was presented to the Campbells on May 17 as part of the activities commemorating Northport's 125th anniversary as an incorporated community. Commending the Campbells, who are originally from Tennessee, for their efforts to preserve Northport's heritage, Gamble remarked "maybe their good example will inspire other landmark owners to consider an easement donation as a means of preserving Alabama's heritage."

## CLANTON BOY SCOUTS CLEAN UP ELM BLUFF

Elm Bluff, once one of Alabama's Greek Revival-style showplaces, is undergoing further stabilization measures thanks to a Clanton Boy Scout



Clanton Boy Scouts, under the leadership of Kirk Stokes, and members of the Elm Bluff Hunt Club helped stabilize the Greek Revival-style house by boarding windows and clearing the grounds.

Troop and Troop Leader Kirk Stokes.

Stokes, a Clanton Chevrolet dealer, is president of the Elm Bluff Hunt Club which leases the wooded Dallas County property where the c. 1845 Elm Bluff mansion stands. Looking

for a troop project, he contacted the Alabama Historical Commission.

The AHC staff suggested his scouts consider doing work on the long-abandoned Elm Bluff plantation house. The scouts worked with AHC staff member Ed Hooker in developing a plan which included cleanup of the house and grounds, clearing away brush, and boarding up the doors and windows. (Emergency roof repair was undertaken several years ago helping the mansion to come through Hurricane Opal unscathed.)

Once the plan was drawn, a generous anonymous donation from a Dallas County resident assured money for plywood, nails, and other materials. On Saturday, June 8, Kirk Stokes and his Boy Scouts assisted by Ed Hooker "mothballed" this notable Alabama landmark with hopes it can someday be rehabilitated.

Last year Boy Scouts in Selma helped with a similar effort involving the city's historic Plattenburg house. "Efforts like these are a creative and economical grassroots way we in the public sector can work with Alabamians to help safeguard our heritage," said Bob Gamble, AHC architectural historian. "Hopefully, too, the work of Clanton's Kirk Stokes and his Boy Scout Troop have bought several more years for a stately old Alabama house."

## STABILIZATION PLANNED FOR WILLIAM MURPHEY HOUSE

AHC preservation architect Ed Hooker and AHC interns Patrick McIntyre and Nancy Cox traveled to Morgan County recently to begin efforts to stabilize the William Murphey House located west of Decatur. According to architectural historian Bob Gamble, the house is the finest example of Virginia Tidewater construction in Alabama.

The Historical Commission is working with Trico Steel Company, owners of the house and land, to stabilize and "mothball" the house to prevent further deterioration.

Dr. William Murphey moved his family to Alabama from North Carolina about 1820. The house, built as the center of the farm, was inhabited until the early 1960s.

The house is featured in the book *Silent in the Land* co-authored by Gamble. In overall form this modest house is essentially an 18th-century Colonial dwelling transplanted from the Atlantic seaboard to 19th-century Alabama. Distant ancestors are the sturdy, braced-frame story-and-a-half cottages erected in the 1600s by the English settlers of Jamestown and the



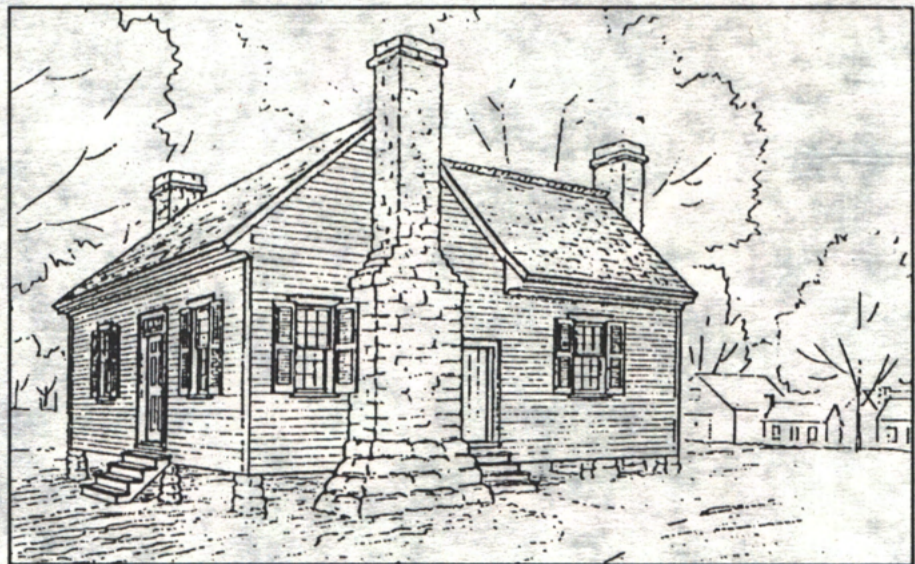
The William Murphey House today.

Chesapeake/Albemarle region of Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. Beyond North America, the form can be traced back to late medieval England and the pitched-roof dwellings of the British yeomanry.

It typifies the smaller homes of Virginia and Carolina-born planters who settled the cottonlands of the Tennessee River Valley about 1818. A much later, makeshift porch conceals the facade's symmetry. Beyond the center paneled door lies a rare hall-and-parlor layout, another Colonial holdover feature where a single large room is abutted to one side by a smaller chamber, the parlor.

Both rooms once had chairrails and simple Adamesque mantelpieces. Between the two rooms, an enclosed stairway twists to the half story above. A third chamber, probably used for dining in the beginning, occupies a rear wing directly behind the parlor, so that the house forms an L-shape.

Imagine the house painted white, with green louvered shutters and minus the present porch, and what emerges is a rustic Deep South version of the famous "Williamsburg cottage."



Restored view of the William Murphey House by Huntsville restoration architect Harvie Jones.



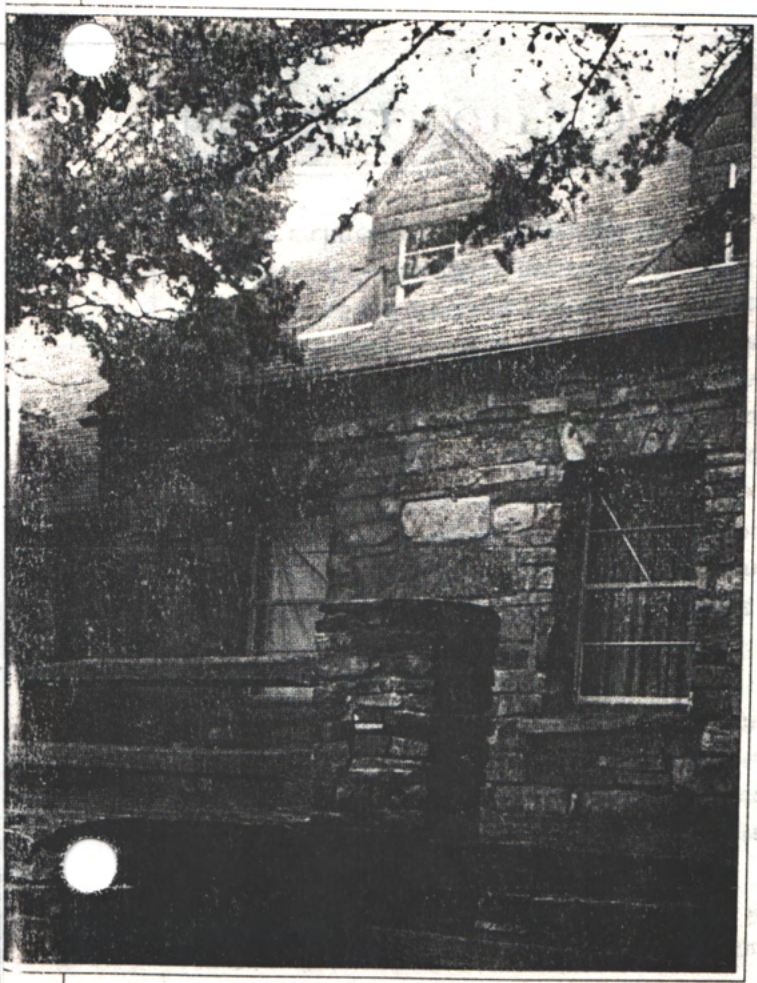
"Al Worthy" FAM 96

### BALD ROCK LODGE AND WPA ARCHITECTURE

**THREAT:** *Deterioration, inappropriate remodeling*

THE DEPRESSION ERA witnessed a flowering of recreation-related public architecture supported by the federal government's Works Projects Administration (WPA). Cheaha State Park's ensemble of rustic, native stone buildings—a lodge, observation tower, cabins, and swimming pavilion—is perhaps Alabama's premier collection of WPA "playtime" architecture. While many of the Cheaha structures are still used, all have suffered from poorly conceived retrofitting and from general neglect.

*Bald Rock Lodge and other WPA-built stone structures at Cheaha State Park are among Alabama's finest examples of 1930s depression-era architecture. All are suffering from neglect. (Photograph by Anderson Scott)*



The plight of Alabama's state parks has received considerable publicity recently, but the architectural and historic aspects of parks like Cheaha have been ignored.

### ORIGINAL DALLAS ACADEMY

SELMA

**THREAT:** *Demolition by neglect*

THIS SIMPLE MASONRY STRUCTURE, erected c. 1844, shares with Mobile's Barton Academy and Athens State College's Founders Hall the distinction of being one of the three oldest documented school buildings in Alabama. Though remodeled in the 1920s, including the addition of a bungalow-style porch, the dignified original character of the academy building is still evident in its tall, many-paned windows and pleasing proportions. As an artifact, it is a rare tangible link with early educational efforts in the state.

The Reeves family, owners of the building, recently allowed the Selma-Dallas County Preservation Society to clean up the overgrown grounds and board up gaping doors and windows. The structure's historical significance makes the building eligible for rehabilitation tax credits, but no one has yet come forward to reclaim this notable landmark as part of Selma's distinguished past.

### DR. WILLIAM MURPHEY HOUSE

MORGAN COUNTY

**THREAT:** *Encroaching industrial development*

PROBABLY THE OLDEST framed structure in Morgan County, the long-abandoned Murphey House is described by Dr. Carl Lounsbury, Architectural Historian for Colonial Williamsburg, as "a rare and early example of the Virginia house-type transplanted to the Deep South." Writes Lounsbury, "It would take little imagination to picture the Murphey house lining the streets of Williamsburg."

Wishing to preserve their social status and the Atlantic coast cultural traditions, the Murpheys built what is essentially an eighteenth-century Tidewater-type house in nineteenth-century Alabama. The house dates from around 1820 and reflects the lifestyle of a moderately

JFH Arch - AU  
drawn restor. studies

over



wealthy planter family on Alabama's cotton frontier far more accurately than does the white-columned image of Southern mythology.

Three spacious high-ceilinged rooms, neatly trimmed with Federal-style woodwork, accommodated most household activities except for cooking. A separate kitchen was but one of a brood of outbuildings that clustered around the main house in the manner typical of most plantation complexes. Only the main dwelling survives today. But the immediately surrounding area—where barns, a kitchen, smokehouse, stables, and slave quarters once stood—could yield interesting archaeological data about everyday life in early Alabama.

Recently acquired by Trico Steel Company, the rolling farmland where the Murphey house stands is slated for industrial development. Trico's CEO, Bill Wiley, has indicated a willingness to cooperate with preservationists to save the house and is helping to finance interim stabilization work. But the fate of this rare vestige of early Alabama domestic architecture remains up in the air.

## ELLICOTT STONE MOBILE COUNTY

**THREATS:** *Erosion and vandalism*

IN 1796, AS A RESULT of the Treaty of San Lorenzo el Real, also known as the Pinckney Treaty, President George Washington appointed Maj. Andrew Ellicott, astronomer and surveyor, to survey and mark the "line of demarcation" establishing the boundary between the Mississippi Territory (including what is now Alabama) and Spanish West Florida. In 1799 Major Ellicott marked the boundary at the 31st parallel of North latitude with what is known today as the Ellicott Stone. This historic monolith, an irregular piece of brown ferruginous sandstone, is inscribed on the north side "U.S. Lat. 31 1799" and on the south side "Dominos de S.M.C. CAROLUS IV. Lat. 31 1799" (Dominion of his Catholic Majesty Charles IV).

The stone—the only known stone monument set by Ellicott during his 1797-1800 survey—is recognized by the Alabama Society of Professional Land Surveyors as the "oldest historical surveying monument in the southeast" and by the American Society of Civil Engineers as a National Historic Engineering Landmark. In 1972 the National Park Service included the stone on the National Register of Historic Places.



Donated to the City of Mobile in 1917, along with a 50' x 50' plot of land, the stone sits on its original site, where it should remain. The monolith, however, needs to be protected from the weather, which is eroding the inscription, and from vandals who occasionally chip off pieces of the rock. Concerned about these problems, the City of Mobile has applied for a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission to develop a master plan for the stone's preservation, including a plan to control access to the site.

## GULF, MOBILE AND OHIO TERMINAL MOBILE

**THREAT:** *Neglect*

CONSTRUCTED IN 1905 during the heyday of U.S. rail transportation, particularly passenger transportation, the GM&O terminal is typical of the grandiose railroad buildings erected across the country during the early twentieth century. Significant architecturally as a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the building also has his-



# Decatur builds steel base

## Two other firms seriously considering area

By **CHRISTOPHER BELL**  
Times Staff Writer

DECATUR — Southern steel, made in Decatur, may become an industrial trademark in the 21st century as another steel plant revealed plans Thursday for a facility that will become the flagship of a nearly \$2 billion corporation.

Worthington Industries of Columbus, Ohio, will begin construction next year on a \$150 million plant that will provide some 200 construction jobs and permanent work for upwards of 250 employees.

It will be built immediately east of Trico Steel Co.'s \$450 million mill that, starting next year, will produce steel in a molten state, 4 inch thick and 20-foot long slabs that Worthington will refine several ways.

Worthington is expected to buy a large share of more than 2 million tons of steel Trico's 320-employee force will produce annually.

One process, pickling, an acid cleaning procedure, will remove impurities, while another, slitting, will cut steel into various widths. A cold

rolling process will further reduce the thickness and provide an even better surface for Worthington customers.

The pickling and slitting sections are to be ready by mid-1998 while the cold-rolling mill is to open less than a year later.

Alabama Development Office Director Ira Silberman said, at a Decatur City Hall announcement, that Worthington's decision to locate in the state "confirms that Alabama is the heart of the new industrial South."

The state will spend \$503,000 for an access road in the Mallard Fox Creek Industrial Park and Port, on the Tennessee River, five miles west of downtown Decatur.

TVA will provide a \$2 million low interest loan while Decatur and Morgan County offered a 10-year property tax exemption, except for the revenue earmarked for schools.

No date has been set for hiring workers and most are expected to come from Madison, Limestone, Morgan and Lawrence counties.

"This is what it is all about," said Morgan County Commission Chairman Larry Bennich, adding, "Jobs, jobs so people can support their

families."

Decatur Mayor Julian Price proclaimed Thursday "Worthington Industries Day."

Worthington Chairman John P. McConnell said that while many places sought the plant, the decision to locate in Decatur has been reaffirmed "by true, Southern hospitality."

The 575,000-square foot plant will be built on a 96-acre site on Red Hat Road, which extends north from Alabama 20 to the river.

The plant, with anticipated sales of \$400 million annually, will be the largest of Worthington's 55 plants that are in 22 states and five countries.

Since Trico selected Decatur last year, Mi-Tech Steel Inc., said it will be a \$25 million steel processing facility that will provide 100 jobs.

Two other steel companies are seriously considering Decatur, officials said.

Trico is a joint venture of three major corporations, LTV Corp. of Cleveland, British Steel and Sumitomo Metal Industries of Japan.

While Trico will connect with the river, Worthington will be landlocked.

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Hills Times 22 Nov 96



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Annette Philpott and Bob Gamble talk on the grounds of the Murphey House, one of the oldest frame houses in North Alabama still standing. DAILY Photo by Gary Costly Jr.

## This OLD HOUSE Preservationists pitching to save historic landmark near Trinity

By Patrice Stewart  
DAILY Staff Writer

It doesn't resemble Tara at all. So why have the Alabama Historical Commission and Alabama Preservation Alliance put this 19th-century cotton plantation house on their 1996 "Places in Peril" list of endangered historic landmarks?

Many people think that a building must be made out of logs or have tall columns to be a landmark, said Bob Gamble, architectural historian with the state Historical Commission. "We're trying to get people out of that mindset."

About 15 years ago the Historical Commission identified and began investigating the house, located on farm land near Trinity that has since been purchased by Trico Steel Co. The list of endangered landmarks says the house is threatened by encroaching industrial development.

Gamble said it is "one of the oldest, if not the oldest, frame houses remaining in this area" and called it a plantation cottage built in the Colonial Virginia style.

"Why in the world are we making such a fuss over this dilapidated old house?" he asked at Tuesday's meeting of the Morgan County Historical Society.

The architectural historian for Colonial Williamsburg, Carl Lounsbury, calls the Murphey House "a rare and early example of the Virginia house-type transplanted to the Deep South." He

By Patrice Stewart  
DAILY Staff Writer

A dilapidated old wooden house sits atop a small knoll just half a mile from where giant steel beams reach for the sky, a modern juxtaposition of David and Goliath.

The Morgan County farmhouse built about 1823 has made the 1996 list of 11 endangered historic landmarks in Alabama, but Trico Steel Co. now owns the property and is cooperating in steps to halt deterioration of one of the oldest frame houses in the area.

Known as the Dr. William Murphey House, it recently was "mothballed" by



An artist's sketch shows what the Murphey house would look like if it were restored.

wrote in the fall issue of Alabama Heritage magazine: "It would take little imagination to picture the Murphey house lining the streets of Williamsburg."

### Piecing together history

Archives, old wills and other documents have helped piece together the story to be told by the house, which was discovered during Historical Commission survey work done in the county in the late 1970s.

George Murphey and his wife, Mary, built the house about 1823 after moving

to this area in pursuit of rich soil on which to grow cotton. Gamble said it is believed she died the next year and her husband in 1846, and the house was passed on to their son, William E. Murphey, a doctor. His wife and two children all died at young ages, so there were no direct descendants to maintain the house.

The house was located on an 800-acre plantation where 53 slaves helped produce 70 bales of cotton annually. The Murphey family came here from Virginia and essentially built an 18th-

Please see **Preserve**, page B2.

## Trico, other industries take on preservationist roles

the Alabama Historical Commission. Some plywood and other protective coverings were added over the old wood so the house could be set aside for possible future use or restoration. Carpenters and expertise were provided by the Historical Commission, while Trico assisted with materials and funds.

Industries all over the country are taking on the role of preservationists, architectural historian Bob Gamble of Montgomery told the Morgan County Historical Society on Tuesday night. He mentioned preservation work undertaken on historic houses in Louisiana by Shell Oil and Dow Chemical, and in South Carolina, where Union Camp has

turned a structure into an employees' retreat.

The program featured Gamble, who works for the Historical Commission, and Harvie Jones of Huntsville, a restoration architect who serves on the architectural review board for the commission.

"What really pleased us was that we had a corporation willing to go that far," said Gamble. "They've got huge fish to fry out there where they are building a \$500 million plant."

The house had been neglected for 40 years, Gamble said, but Trico has

Please see **Help**, page B2.

## Other places in peril

The Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Preservation Alliance released the following list of the other 10 sites on the 1996 list of "Places in Peril":

► St. James C.M.E. Church (ca. 1833) in Lowndesboro, one of the oldest houses of worship in the state, is under threat of demolition by neglect. Its unusual three-stage cupola once graced the first Alabama statehouse in Cahaba and is the only remaining vestige of that building.

► The City of Anniston, founded in 1872 as "the model city of the New South," is being threatened by unplanned development. Anniston was designed as an idyllic company town, with cottages, tree-lined streets, churches, parks and schools all meant to attract new capital to the South.

► Bald Rock Lodge and WPA architecture at Cheaha State Park is threatened by deterioration and inappropriate remodeling. These buildings form the state's best collection of WPA Depression-era structures designed for recreation.

► The original Dallas Academy (ca. 1844) in Selma is threatened with demolition by neglect. This structure is one of the oldest standing school buildings in the state.

► The Ellicott Stone in Mobile County, which is included on the National Register of Historic Places, is threatened by erosion and vandalism. This weathered boundary stone marks the 1799 demarcation line between American Territory and the Spanish colony of West Florida.

► The Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Terminal (1905) in Mobile is threatened by neglect. The building is an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture that flourished in the early 20th century as railroad companies erected grandiose buildings across the country.

► Pelham Road in Jacksonville, the main thoroughfare in this historic college town, is threatened by spot zoning, a lack of comprehensive planning and vandalism.

► The historic area of Union Springs in Bullock County is threatened by poor municipal planning. Union Springs is thought to be one of Alabama's most attractive courthouses and is home of many Victorian-era and antebellum residences.

► The Rosenwald schools across the state, conceived by Booker T. Washington as a private-public initiative to improve educational facilities for black children, are faced with demolition by neglect.

► Chantilly, a large, unusual residence located on Tuscaloosa Street in Greensboro for 150 years, came under threat of demolition last year. A last-minute rescue effort calls for moving the structure to nearby Newbern and restoring it.



**ADVICE**

**Ann owes no explanation for turning childless choice**

**Dear Ann Landers:** In a recent column, you told the mother of an adult son whose wife refused to have children to MYOB. Would you now please address the heartache I am experiencing? I have just been told by my son that he and his wife have decided not to have children and he "doesn't want to talk about it." Those words stung as if he had slapped me in the face.

Ann, aren't parents and grandparents entitled to an explanation as to why a son is throwing away his contribution to the family gene pool? We are a family of honor college graduates, abounding in writers and professionals, with a long, proud family history of high achievers. We believe that passing superior genes from one generation to the next is a ability and validates us as human beings.

You bought into the self-absorbed 20th century American as long as one doesn't hurt someone else, one can do as well. Well, the decision of our son to have no children has We consider it a family tragedy and believe he owes tion to us as to why. Please support our position, Ann, we — Carlsbad, Calif.

**ad:** Sorry, I do not agree that your son owes you nor does he owe you an explanation as to why he and decided not to have a family. I cannot imagine a decision rsonal and less the business of anyone except the man

**nders:** This is in response to "E.M. in Denver," who t her husband opens her mail. In my opinion, such a s the trust and privacy of the sender as well as that of hom the letter is addressed.

**ister** know, in no uncertain terms, how upset I was t his wife had opened and read a very personal letter l to him. He explained that his wife ALWAYS reads his d personal mail. Moreover, he said this arrangement d he believes it strengthens their shared intimacy. t sharing means mutuality, so I assumed that he, in t his wife's mail as well. When he said, "Oh, no — I t my wife's mail," I concluded that their shared one-sided.

**ntly** claims that he and his wife "share a ministry" e lacks theological and pastoral expertise. I find it hard a physician or any other professional could ever get rting a practice" with an unqualified spouse. I think is really an invasion of privacy rather than healthy if both spouses consent. As for my minister, doesn't the unethical? What do you think, Ann? — Miffed in

**In** my opinion, your minister is off base by a country t violates the confidence of his parishioners when he ccess to their personal problems.

**t** strengthen his intimacy with his wife, he should seek it does not betray the trust of his congregation.

**to Miserable** in Abilene, Texas: You will never sucog your sorrow with alcohol. Sorrow knows how to

**ur saves the day once cleaning a tea kettle**

**Dear Heloise:** Thank you, thank you, thank you! Your hint for using vinegar to clean the inside of a teakettle worked like magic for my favorite, stain-less kettle.

I was desperate after I had used everything to clean it and nothing worked, until I read your hint. Keep up the good work. — Florence Rybarczyk, Belton, Texas

For those of you who may have missed how to clean a teakettle, here's the scoop:

Lime deposits can be removed from inside your teakettle by filling it with a mixture of a half cup each of white vinegar and water and then boiling. Rinse well afterwards.

is very heavy, use full strength and add a few marbles up. Rinse well and enjoy a cup of tea. — Heloise

I have a very useful hint that I discovered the other the walls under the handrails on the staircase.

has a squeegee on it to wring out the water s your hands out of all that water and detergent. extra muscle on the tougher dirt, and it's good for walls and ceiling vents during spring cleaning. Other-have to get up and down on a ladder.

everyone out. It sure did me. — Ruth Fagg, Terre

**akes marriage vows sly and hates divorce**

**Help**

Continued from page B1

helped slow the deterioration and buy some time. The "mothballing" process included treating for termites, reinforcing the structure with plywood and ripping off the porches, which were collapsing. About \$1,300 was spent on items to halt deterioration; Jones estimated the cost of complete restoration at \$100,000.

The commission's preservation architect, Ed Hooker, spent three days here in September, supervising the work Melissa Beasley, curator for the nearby Wheeler Plantation, assisted by painting windows on the Murphey House.

Gamble said the house was found about 1979 during a "windshield survey" by the commission. The Glenn family, which owned the property at that time and was storing hay in the structure, "was very cooperative" as documentation was begun. Since the property was purchased for the steel mill, Gamble said, "Trico has been very receptive and cooperative from day one as we entered into a dialogue about how we could save this house."

Kim Pritchard, manager of environment and energy for Trico, said following Tuesday's meeting that no decision has been made about the future disposition of the house. "We hope we can have a win-win situa-



DAILY Photo by Gary Cosby Jr. Kim Pritchard of Trico Steel, left, and architect Harvie Jones, right, discuss the future of the Dr. William Murphey House, which sits on Trico property. The company is cooperating with preservationists to save the early 1800s structure.

tion" where both preservation and industrial development needs can be met, he said.

He noted that the Murphey House is located to one side of the Trico property, with a large mound of earth between the house and the construction area. Adjacent prop-

erty not owned by Trico is earmarked for industrial growth, Pritchard said.

Meanwhile, the mothballing process "leaves us with options for the future," he said.

Randy Cross, vice president of the Morgan County Historical Soci-

ety, said the steel mill has been "a very good neighbor." Without the plant's interest and cooperation, the house would have continued to deteriorate, he said.

Gamble said, "There is precedent for industry and preservation living together." He added, "I think we're off to a good start here."

**Preserve**

Continued from page B1

-century Tidewater-type house in 19th-century Alabama, said Gamble. "The house reflects the lifestyle of a moderately wealthy planter family on Alabama's cotton frontier far more accurately than does the white-columned image of Southern mythology," he said.

Using slides, Gamble and restoration architect Harvie Jones pointed out the house's two massive limestone chimneys, transoms over doors, and the wing on the rear that probably was added in a later era.

Gamble said the upstairs "was nicely floored" and was probably a sleeping loft. The house's siding was probably poplar, with beading along the bottom. "The Virginia characteristics are those prominent chimneys, the steep pitch of the roof and peephole windows on each

side of the chimneys," he said.

The house was originally painted white with either dark green or blue shutters, Gamble said. It had a paneled door that has been put in storage for now.

He said there is potential for some "good archaeological work to be done" to discover what outbuildings once surrounded the house, such as a kitchen and smokehouse.

Jones said, "We're not looking at an ordinary old house that ought to be bulldozed. We're not kidding you about this being an early and important house." He discussed the original mantels and doors, porches, floors, and plaster and plank walls.

Annette Philpot, former director of the Morgan County Historical Society, said the Murphey House can be viewed as a model for others who acquire property with a potential landmark. Such simple measures as nailing up plywood to

make the structure weathertight and treating it for termites have "bought a lot of time, maybe a decade," she said, for making a decision about whether to restore the structure.

She said Morgan County only has four or five structures documented and listed on the National Register

of Historic Places, while the city of Decatur has about 700. "This and Springwood and Westview are the only three plantation houses left in this area."

"You have opened a door, but there's a lot of history and architecture behind that door," said Gamble. "It's a challenge for Morgan County."

**TODAY IN HISTORY**

**Kennedy assassination**

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Nov. 22, the 327th day of 1996. There are 39 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 22, 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. Gov. John B. Connally was seriously wounded. A suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald, was arrested. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson became the 36th president of the United States.

On this date:

In 1718, English pirate Edward Teach — better known as "Blackbeard" — was killed during a battle off the Virginia coast.

In 1890, French president Charles de Gaulle was born in Lille, France.

In 1906, the SOS distress signal

was adopted at the International Radio Telegraphic Convention in Berlin.



AL-1257. Commission newsletter - Nov/April '97

# NEWS FROM H.E.L.P. — the Historic Endangered Landmarks Program

## Historic Murphey House "Mothballed"

Considered to be Alabama's best example of an early hall-and-parlor type dwelling, the circa 1825 structure was stabilized this fall after decades of abandonment and use for hay storage. Alabama Historical Commission carpenters Ceasar Jones and Elvis Fields carried out the four-day project under the supervision of preservation architect Ed Hooker. Financial support was provided by Trico Steel Company which acquired the property earlier this year and is building a multi-million-dollar plant to the east of the house site.

"This is a great example of public-private cooperation," said Gamble. "There are no firm plans for the future of the Murphey house, but Trico officials have been receptive to our concerns since the first time the Morgan County Historical Society and the Historical Commission approached them in August of '95.

"Mothballing is a great way to buy time for a landmark until its future can be determined," said Gamble. "Too often preservationists sit on their hands and do nothing simply because the final scenario has not yet been

worked out. In this regard, preservation is not for the timid."

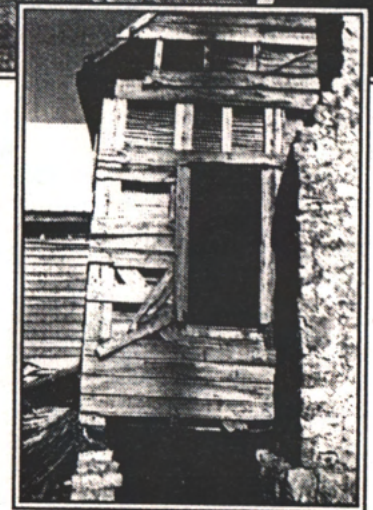
The mothballing process included pulling off collapsed later front and rear porches, shoring up the foundation, splicing and repairing rotted sills, and extensive treatment to combat termite infestation. Gaping windows and doors, and exposed structural framing were covered with plywood. Melissa Beasley, curator of the nearby General Joe Wheeler Home, painted the plywood to resemble nine-over-nine sashing. "This is effective," said Gamble, "because it vividly conveys an impression of what the Murphey house could look like if fully restored. It helps people to see the potential."

Fortunately little roof work was needed. A new tin roof was put on the house when it was converted to hay storage. Brush and small trees close to the house were cut and cleared. "We got a lot for a little paint and plywood, four days work, and less than \$1500," said Gamble.

Believed to have been built by George Murphey, a prominent early settler from eastern North Carolina's Franklin County, the house was later the home of Murphey's son, a physician. Its architecture reflects the traditions of the Chesapeake-Albermarle



Morgan County Historical Society representative Annette Philpo't and AHC Architectural Historian Bob Gamble chat in front of the recently "mothballed" Dr. William Murphey house located west of Decatur.



This detail photo shows the house's condition before being mothballed.

region of the Atlantic seaboard—the birthplace of many early Decatur-area settlers. It is a rare and important example of the first generation of permanent frame building in Alabama. In November, Gamble and Huntsville architect Harvie Jones presented a program on the Murphey house to the Morgan County Historical Society.

## Selma Hosts Archaeology

## Decatur Hosts CFC Lecture



# PLACES IN PERIL 1996:

## Alabama's Endangered Historic Landmarks

For the third year, the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Preservation Alliance have called attention to some of the state's most imperiled historic places. This year's list includes 11 landmarks.

Indifference to the value of historic structures continues to rob Alabamians of their cultural heritage as distinctive landmarks fall victim to a variety of culprits—outright demolition, demolition by neglect, or, perhaps most destructive of all, unplanned development.

Well-planned towns and hamlets, once a pleasure to drive through, are giving way to look-a-like buildings, nondescript streetscapes, and "mall sprawl." Ironically, most of this destruction has occurred in the name of "progress."

Progress, however, does not have to mean destruction of historic environments. In fact, long-term economic progress goes hand-in-hand with enhanced historic streetscapes and well-planned communities, as many Alabamians already know.

### ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH

#### Lowndesboro

**THREAT:** *Demolition by neglect*  
Built as a white Methodist church (c. 1833) through the efforts of a wealthy local planter, Maj. William Robinson (1799-1882), this framed clapboard building is one of the oldest extant houses of worship in Alabama. Its unusual three-stage cupola, with octagonal belfry capped by a copper-plated ogee-roofed dome, once graced the first Alabama statehouse in Cahaba and is the only vestige remaining of that historic building.

When the original Methodist congregation built a new edifice in the late 1800s, the old structure was sold to an African American religious group, the St. James C.M.E. congregation, who added a pulpit alcove to the rear. This congregation has, in turn, dwindled, and in 1983 the church building was abandoned.

In 1990 the Alabama Historical Commission secured on behalf of the Lowndesboro Heritage Association a 50-year lease from church officials to facilitate stabilization and rehabilitation of the deteriorating structure. Temporary roof and foundation repairs were carried out. Unfortunately, local efforts to save the church have floundered; it continues to deteriorate and its famous cupola now lists to one side.

### CITY OF ANNISTON

#### Calhoun County

**THREAT:** *Unplanned development*  
Anniston, begun in 1872, was founded by two men, Samuel Noble and Daniel Tyler, who hoped to create an idyllic company town with profits from their prosperous charcoal iron furnace. Urbane and visionary, Noble and Tyler were interested in more than making money; they wanted their employees to earn better-than-average wages, to live in nice cottages on paved, tree-lined streets, and to have the schools, churches, parks, and other amenities they needed to uplift their minds and spirits. Together the two entrepreneurs succeeded in building a community that became known nationwide as "the

model city of the New South."

Anniston historian Grace Hooten Gates noted recently that "Anniston still bears the stamp of the careful planning of its founders. Their promotional methods and town-boosting efforts remain a pattern for a present generation still seeking to attract jobs and capital to the South." But that "stamp of careful planning" is fading rapidly as symbols of Anniston's New South ideology disappear: The Pines, one of Alabama's first Colonial Revival residences and the home of a member of the city's founding family, Edmund Tyler, was destroyed by city firefighters in a 1992 practice burning; the city's National Register African American business district is threatened with annihilation; the heart of the Glen Addie neighborhood—a planned, landscaped residential community built for Woodstock Foundry employees during the 1880s—has been gutted to construct a housing project; and once-handsome Quintard Avenue, designed for stately homes, public buildings, and churches, has become a nondescript neon-and-asphalt strip since being opened up to major US 431 traffic.

Woodstock Furnace and Adelaide Mills have been razed, leaving the handsome brick Anniston Manufacturing Company as the only remnant of the city's early efforts to industrialize and diversify. Mill villages that accompanied those early industries have also been demolished one-by-one in recent efforts to "clean up" the city, divert flood waters, or "redevelop" in the vernacular of the disastrous 1960s urban renewal programs.

Although planning is no longer a priority, the city has in place the necessary commissions and boards to devise and implement a comprehensive planning program, including a planning commission, a zoning board, a housing rehabilitation program, and an office of the East Alabama Regional Planning Commission. In addition, the local news media, particularly the *Anniston Star*, is highly supportive of aesthetic planning.

With effective leadership from the city, Anniston's planning agencies and support groups could work together to improve the quality of life in the area and retain something of the distinctive heritage of what was once the South's most famous "model city."

### BALD ROCK LODGE AND WPA ARCHITECTURE

#### Cheaha State Park

**THREAT:** *Deterioration, inappropriate remodeling*

The Depression Era witnessed a flowering of recreation-related public architecture supported by the federal government's Works Projects Administration (WPA). Cheaha State Park's ensemble of rustic, native stone buildings—a lodge, observation tower, cabins, and swimming pavilion—is perhaps Alabama's premier collection of WPA "playtime" architecture. While many of the Cheaha structures are still used, all have suffered from poorly conceived retrofitting and from general neglect. The plight of Alabama's state parks has received considerable publicity recently, but the architectural

and historic aspects of parks like Cheaha have been ignored.

### ORIGINAL DALLAS ACADEMY

#### Selma

**THREAT:** *Demolition by neglect*

This simple masonry structure, erected around 1844, shares with Mobile's Barton Academy and Athens State College's Founders Hall the distinction of being one of the three oldest documented school buildings in Alabama. Though remodeled in the 1920s, including the addition of a bungalow-style porch, the dignified original character of the academy building is still evident in its tall, many-paned windows and pleasing proportions. As an artifact, it is a rare tangible link with early educational efforts in the state.

The Reeves family, owners of the building, recently allowed the Selma-Dallas County Preservation Society to clean the overgrown grounds and board gaping doors and windows. The structure's historical significance makes the building eligible for rehabilitation tax credits, but no one has yet come forward to reclaim this notable landmark as part of Selma's distinguished past.

the Murphey house lining a street of Williamsburg."

Wishing to preserve their social status and the Atlantic coast cultural traditions, the Murpheys built what is essentially an eighteenth-century Tidewater-type house in nineteenth-century Alabama. The house dates from around 1820 and reflects the lifestyle of a moderately wealthy planter family on Alabama's cotton frontier far more accurately than does the white-columned image of Southern mythology.

Three spacious high-ceilinged rooms, neatly trimmed with Federal-style woodwork, accommodated most household activities except for cooking. A separate kitchen was but one of a brood of outbuildings that clustered around the main house in the manner typical of most plantation complexes. Only the main dwelling survives today. But the immediately surrounding area—where barns, a kitchen, smokehouse, stables, and slave quarters once stood—could yield interesting archaeological data about everyday life in early Alabama.

Recently acquired by Trico Steel Company, the rolling farmland where the Murphey house stands is slated for industrial development. Trico's CEO,



Dr. William Murphey House, Morgan County

### DR. WILLIAM MURPHEY HOUSE

#### Morgan County

**THREAT:** *Encroaching industrial development*

Probably the oldest framed structure in Morgan County, the long-abandoned Murphey House is described by Dr. Carl Lounsbury, architectural historian for Colonial Williamsburg, as "a rare and early example of the Virginia house-type transplanted to the Deep South." Writes Lounsbury, "It would take little imagination to picture

Bill Wiley, has indicated a willingness to cooperate with preservationists to save the house and helped finance interim stabilization. But the fate of this rare vestige of early Alabama domestic architecture remains in the air.

### ELLCOT STONE

#### Mobile County

**THREAT:** *Erosion and vandalism*

In 1796, as a result of the Treaty of San Lorenzo el Real, also known as the Pinckney Treaty, President George Washington appointed Maj. Andrew

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## BEFORE AND AFTER "MOTHBALLING"

EVEN WHEN THERE is no surefire way to save a landmark, preservationists may be able to stabilize or "mothball" the building until a permanent preservation plan can be worked out. A case in point is the long-abandoned Murphey house (c. 1820) in Morgan County, one of Alabama's oldest



frame houses. It was mothballed in 1996 through the joint efforts of the Alabama Historical Commission, the Morgan County Historical Society, and the owner of the property—the multinational Trico Steel Company. Undergrowth was cleared away, the sills reinforced and

treated for termites, the roof patched, and the windows and doors boarded over. To convey some idea of how the house would look if original windows were restored, plywood coverings were painted to look like



glass sash. The whole project cost less than two thousand dollars. Listed as one of Alabama's "Places in Peril" in 1996, the Murphey house is a rare example of eighteenth-century Atlan-

tic seaboard residential design transplanted to early nineteenth-century Alabama. Despite its small scale, the house was the seat of a large plantation. Dr. Murphey's wife, Julia, was the sister of Confederate General James Longstreet. (*Before and after photographs by Robert Gamble*)

◆ **Moore-Hill House, Lamar County.** Looking good. The plight of this important early Alabama folk house caught the eye of Col. and Mrs. Dean Wilson after statewide publicity. In 1995 they purchased the house from the previous owner, Mrs. Beulah Hill, who had stabilized the structure in hopes of finding a sympathetic restorer. The Wilsons, who plan to use the house as a retirement home, have begun a long-term restoration project.

◆ **Alabama State Penitentiary, Elmore County.** Owned by Elmore County, this historic facility, a model of penal reform in its day, continues to deteriorate. Innovative solutions to the problem—such as selling the parcel for adaptive rehabilitation or gutting the ruinous structures and inserting modern office facilities within the historic shell—have not been pursued.

◆ **Old Memphis and Charleston Depot, Scottsboro.** After lengthy negotiations with the Norfolk-Southern Company, owner of this Civil War-era landmark, the Jackson County Historical Society has developed a preservation plan. The company has agreed to transfer the property to the Society, a process not yet complete. An application for assistance in restoring the facility with an Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) grant was rejected by the Alabama Department of Transportation.

◆ **Cedar Haven, Marengo County.** Bad to worse. The picturesque c. 1850 Black Belt plantation house has been badly vandalized and stripped since 1995, after fruitless attempts by several would-be restorers to buy it from a Birmingham land speculator.

◆ **The Forks of Cypress Ruins, Lauderdale County.** A local task force, headed by Florence AmSouth banker Robert Redd and assisted by the Alabama Historical Commission, has negotiated with the owners of the Forks of Cypress ruins. The hope is to protect the ruins—a picturesque reminder of one of antebellum Alabama's most notable estates—from further deterioration and vandalism through a public-private partnership.

◆ **Mount Vernon Arsenal/Searcy Hospital Complex, Mobile County.** No comprehensive preservation/rehabilitation plan has been developed to safeguard the historic qualities of this important nineteenth-century military and institutional complex (first developed in 1830). But publicity regarding the historical value of the complex has raised awareness of the site's importance and will have a beneficial effect on work done at the site in the future.

◆ **Aldrich Mines, Shelby County, and Virginia City Mines, Jefferson County.** Situation remains largely unchanged. At the Aldrich Mines site, the grandson of one of the miners has purchased part of the former mine

Doc. by HJ-96

JJA Arch. - HJ

3  
JJA Arch. - HJ



property, including the mine entrance. He is constructing a house on the mountain above the mine and is clearing the area below to expose the mouth of the mine. The archaeological and historical value of the mine will be protected.

1996

◆ **St. James CME Church, Lowndesboro.** As a result of an agreement negotiated by the staff of the Alabama Historical Commission, church officials leased the c. 1833 building to the Lowndesboro Heritage Association. In 1997 the association received a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission to stabilize and partially rehabilitate this abandoned landmark.

◆ **City of Anniston.** Streetscape erosion along monumental Quintard Avenue has been stabilized in the last few years, and Anniston's vigorous Main Street Program is bringing attractive and historically sensitive improvements to a number of storefronts along Noble Avenue, the city's traditional commercial thoroughfare. Threats to west Anniston's historic working-class communities continue, however, as local officials—adopting a 1960s-like attitude toward rescuing faltering neighborhoods—have opted for mass clearance rather than a more analytical and selective rehabilitation approach.

◆ **Bald Rock Lodge & WPA Architecture, Cheaha State Park.** Good news. Refurbishing of the rustic Roosevelt-era cabins at Cheaha is scheduled to begin in November 1997. Plans have also been developed by the Alabama Department of Conservation for refurbishing the 1938 Bald Rock Lodge, but actual work awaits legislative passage of a bond issue to finance the project.

◆ **Original Dallas County Academy, Selma.** Owners of this pre-Civil War school building gave the Selma-Dallas County Preservation Society permission to clear the underbrush away from the buildings so as to slow its deterioration. The *Selma Times-Journal* and the Alabama Historical Commission have promoted the landmark as a unique adaptive-use opportunity for some private developer, but so far there are no takers.

◆ **Dr. William Murphey House, Morgan County.** With funds donated by Trico Steel Company, owner of the property, and the cooperation of the Morgan County Historical Society, historical commission staff member Ed Hooker oversaw the mothballing of the c. 1820 Murphey house in November 1996. With the roof re-

paired, the foundation strengthened, termites eliminated, and the walls and windows covered with protective plywood, this rare example of an eighteenth-century Tidewater house in Alabama is stabilized, but its ultimate fate remains in limbo. (See sidebar, page 39.)

◆ **Ellicott Stone, Mobile-Washington Counties.** Working with a planning grant from the Alabama Historical Commission, the Mobile Historic Development Commission is devising plans for improving the site and protecting the historic monolith, recognized as the oldest historical surveying monument in the Southeast.

◆ **Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Terminal, Mobile.** With the support of the local congressional delegation, the City of Mobile is seeking a seven-million-dollar federal grant to convert this 1907 landmark into an intermodal transportation facility (buses, trucks, taxis, trains). Time will tell.

◆ **Chantilly, Hale County.** Saved. Bill Morrisette, a resident of Greensboro, North Carolina, with Alabama roots, funded the moving of this distinguished antebellum residence which was threatened with demolition. Morrisette moved the structure to his property in Newbern under the guidance of the Alabama Historical Commission staff. Tentative plans are to rehabilitate the house for some type of nonprofit or commercial venture, possibly in connection with one or more state institutions of higher learning.

◆ **Pelham Road, Jacksonville.** Newspaper publicity and awareness-building events notwithstanding, local officials remain reluctant to push for comprehensive preservation planning or regulatory action for this area. Late last year, a major Pelham Road landmark residence, Boxwood (c. 1840), was demolished by Jacksonville Methodist Church after long abandonment. Several other structures are currently threatened by creeping asphalt and neon.

◆ **Union Springs Historic Area.** Although partially included in a National Register historic district, the area along U.S. Highway 82—which cuts through the heart of Union Springs—is slowly becoming a nondescript commercial strip. Citizen concern has yet to coalesce into concerted action.

◆ **Rosenwald Schools, statewide.** Public interest continues to grow in preserving surviving examples of this watershed school-building effort. A thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places is being prepared. Meanwhile, individual Rosenwald school buildings in such small communities as Midway (Bullock County) and Leighton (Colbert County) are the subject of ongoing maintenance and preservation efforts. AH

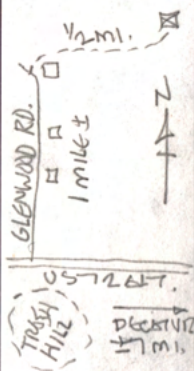


1 of 32  
c. 1818 Dr. William M. Upshen  
(planter, owned 36 slaves & large plantation)

photos 4 May 1996 HARVE P. JONES F.A.I.A.  
(Huntsville, AL.)



N →

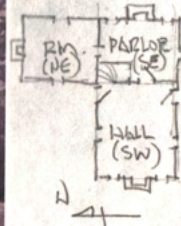


S. FRONT (later porch)



N →

MODERN PORCHES - no apparent evidence  
of orig. porches



S.W. Corner of S.W. rim,

2188  
MURPHY  
1157  
DEAN





H S



H S

2



H S

H S

limestone



W:  
chim.  
shoulder



34932

H  
↘



← rafter  
(fascia  
joint)



N.W. Corner of S.W. Room



↖  
S.W.  
Corner of  
S.W. Room



H  
↘

H  
↘





N  
N

FL. = 5/4 S4S  
WEST. PINE

↙ S.W.

Corner  
of S.W.  
Rm.



↖  
under  
S. Rms.



↖



↖

) note 1818 -  
chisel  
marks

W.  
Chimney  
↖



50630



→



N. window of  
S.W. Rm.



→

Collapsed back porch = modern.  
No signs of 1818 porch. (?)

→

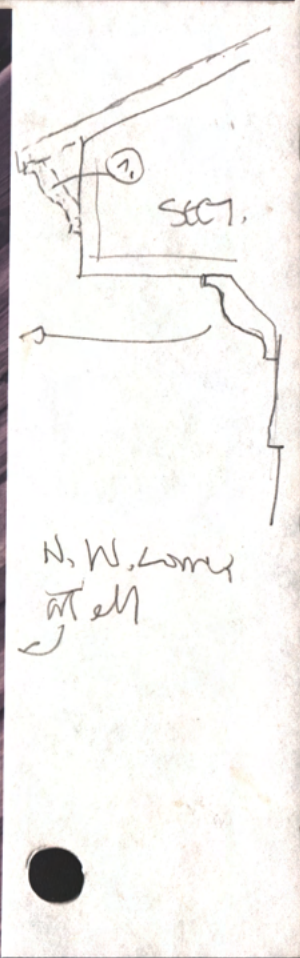
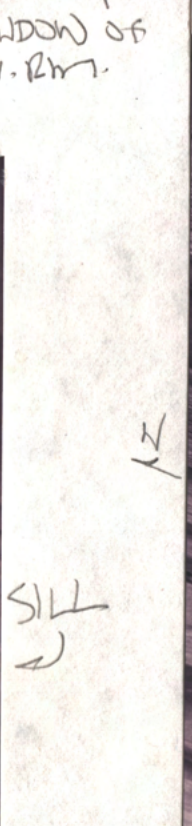






PN

N. WINDOW OF  
S.W. RM.

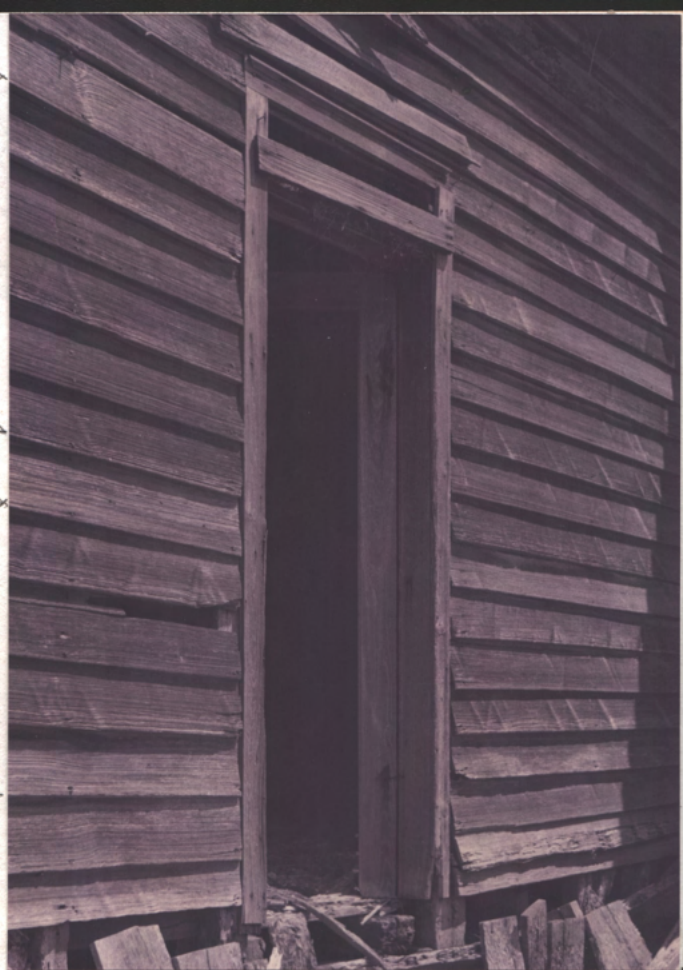






note beards at chrybble  
 = normal in fast. period

AZ



HEAD DETAIL

NW corner of  
 N.E. ell. RM



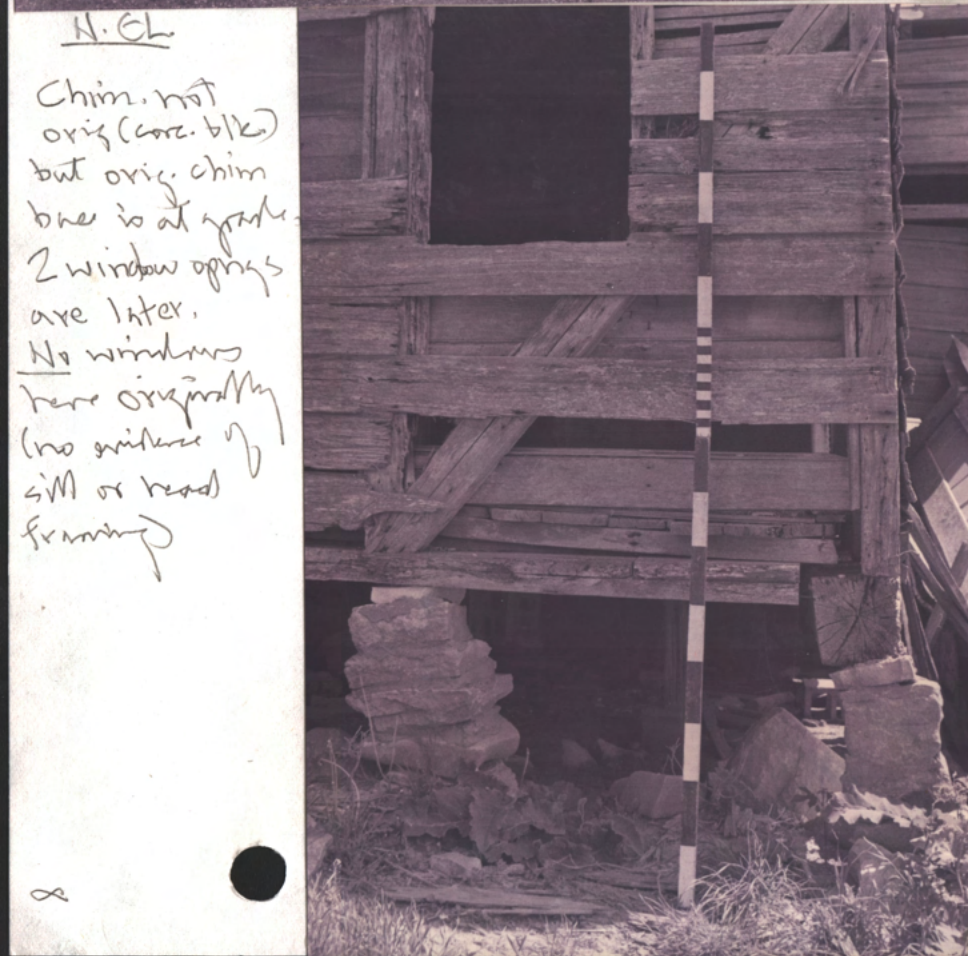
AZ







Note tapes  
of rake  
facies  
(Imp. of  
Ford.)



N.W.  
Corner  
of N.E.  
Rm

N



N. Ch  
Obble

note  
peg at  
sill of  
JTB



9432



← Under N.E. Ell Km



E. El,

→ N

East  
Chim.  
(limestone)

→  
Shoulder







S. FRONT → H



E. Cl. of N.E. Ell Rm → H



10 E. CHIM → H

↑ E. DOOR  
AT S.E. RM  
(mod. B+B door)



25,  
RMS &  
CENTRAL  
SP.

→ H Under S. end of N.E. Ell Rm



110432

split white oak  
lath inside

↓ R



E. CHIM.

↓ R

↓ R







↑ NW  
↙ S.W.  
CORNER



↑ N



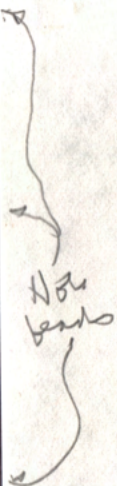
↑ N

S. FRONT



↑ N

↑ Note pegs at mortise of tenon joints  
(typ. of 1800-1870±)



How beads



130f32



Note wide stiles to fit  
stock of panes of 10" x 12".  
(most common Feb. period size)

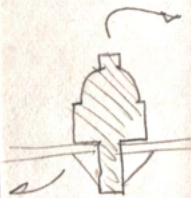
core?

N

S. FRONT ENTRY



TRANSOM  
(GL. GOING)



TYP.  
FED.  
MUNTIN

N



N





Wide-bd. leads of chair rail  
 = orig.  
 Walls were lath & plaster,  
 here are modern pine

↑ N

N. WALL

modern  
 Sashes

S.W. RM

↑  
 Foot  
 Mantel



E. DOOR (Foot)



↑ N

E. WALL

Foot. door ↓



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front entry

S. WALL

Vic Sash (orig. opng)

S.W. RM.

ALL sashes modern



fast mounted

12

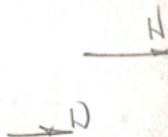


W. WALL + fast. mantel





bd, ceiling  
upper walls  
= 20th c.  
(was  
plaster)



FED. MARKET, S.W. COR  
(only surviving market)



16

Vary wide FP,  
90° sides = usually seen only at  
cooking f.p.'s (?)



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N

TEKSON  
(see ext photos  
for such)

S. ENTRY  
DOOR  
(FED.)



was  
plaster

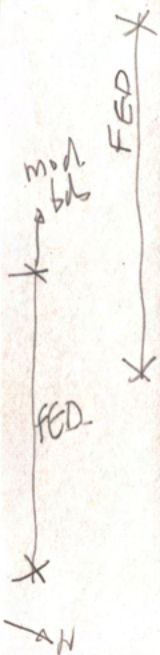


N



S. WALL OF S.W. RM

S. WINDOW (FED.)



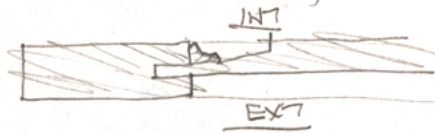
N





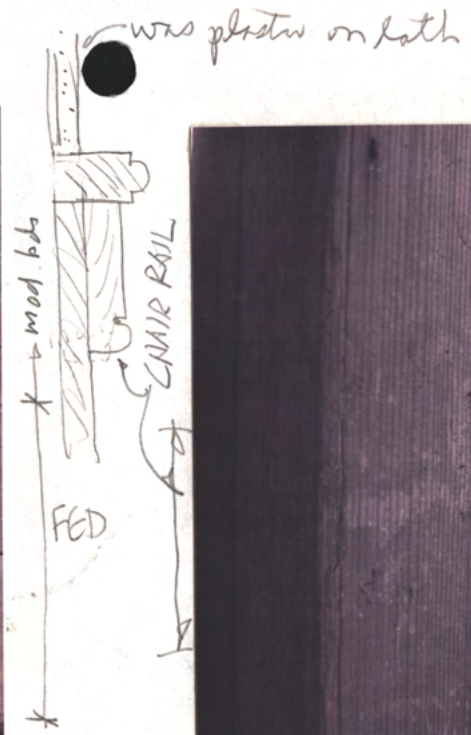
N →  
ENTRY DOOR (6 PNL.)  
 S.W. WALL, S.W. CORN.

Note "raised pnl" on int. side of flat pnl. on ext.  
 — common in Fed. terr. but usually the reverse of this

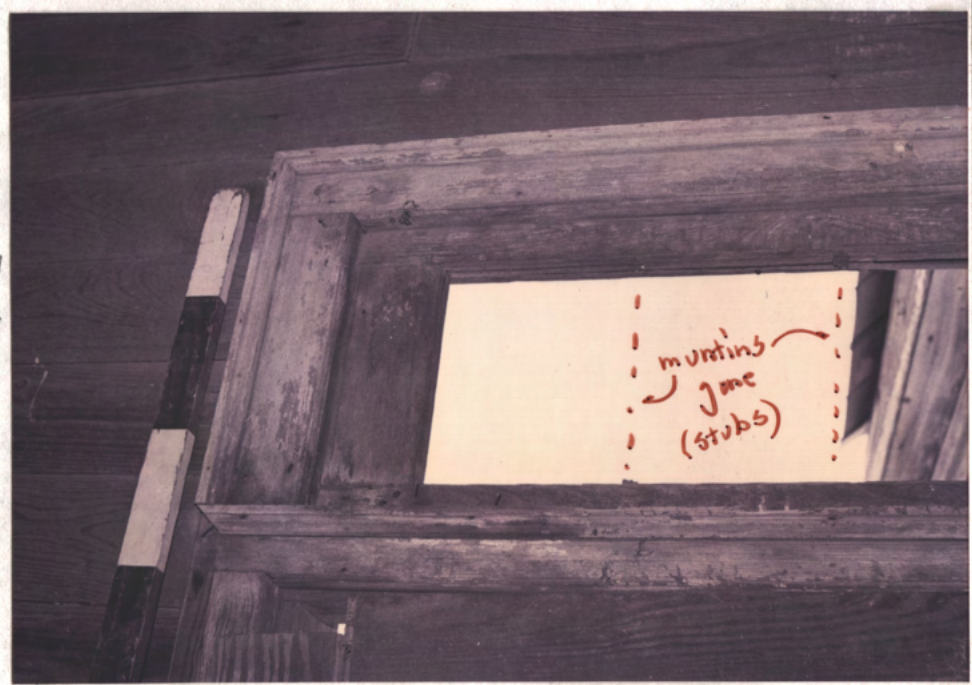
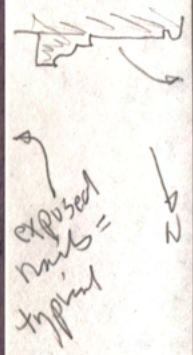




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E. Wall, S.W. Rm



HECKER DUNE 5/4 x 6 ± S4S PL., S.W. Rm (TYPICAL HWL)

N. WALL, N. DOOR TRUSSUM, S.W. Rm



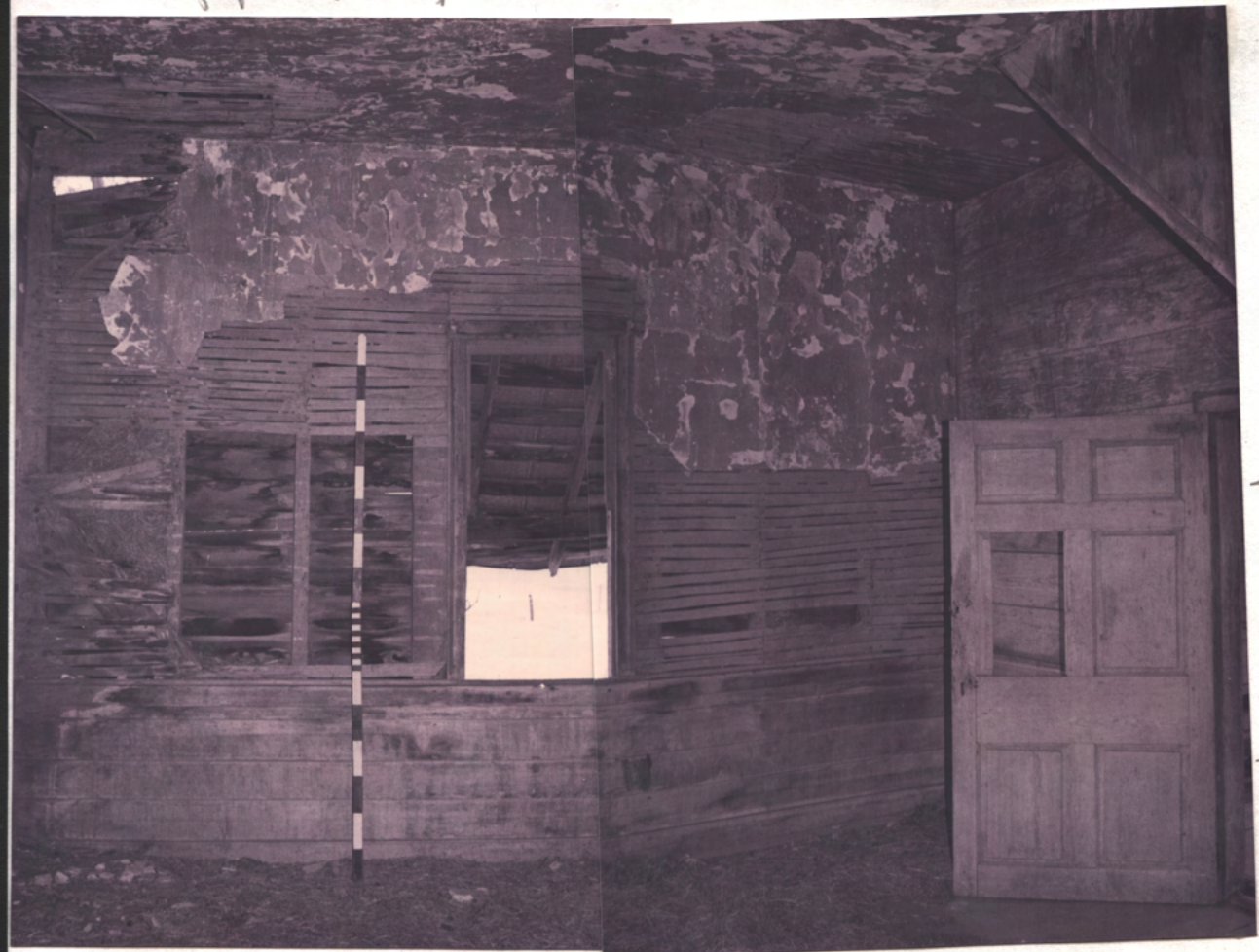


mantel trace?  
 fire place  
 mod. door in orig. opening



orig. plaster & lathing

SE Rm.

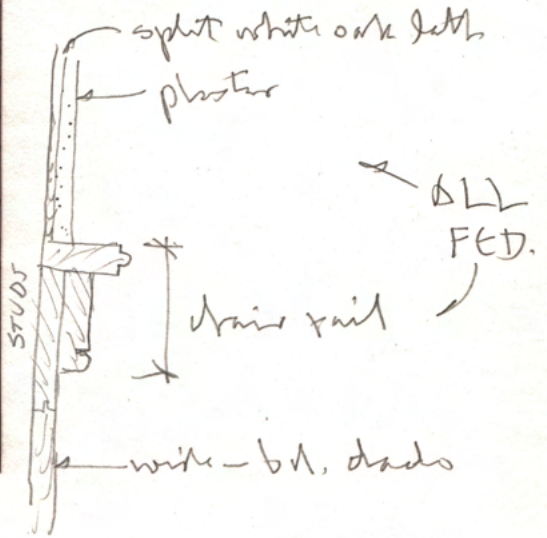
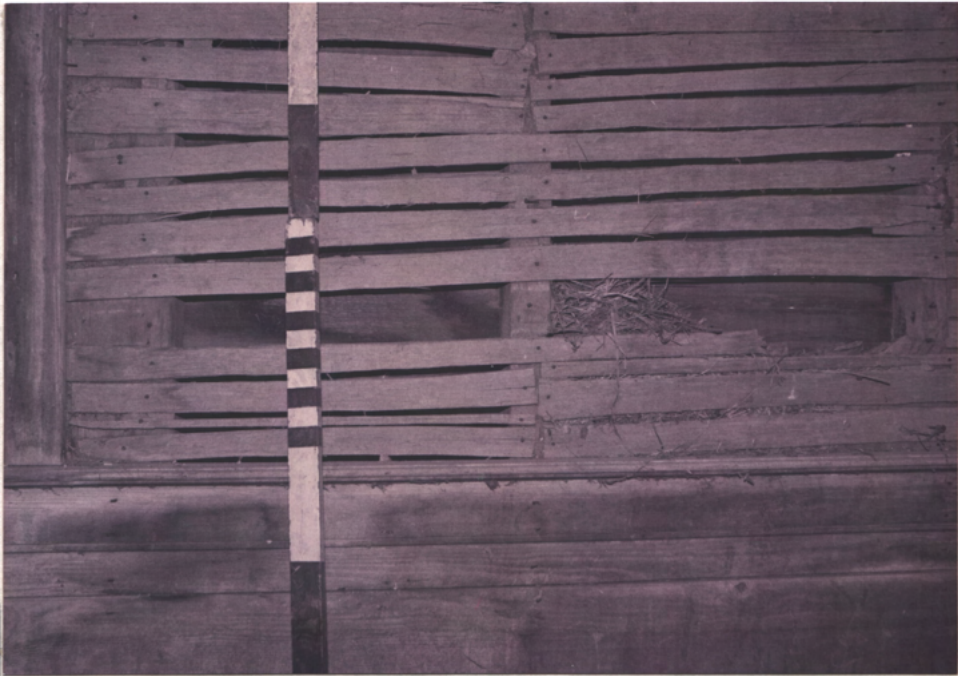


very long f.p.  
 + 90° sides seen  
 usually only in  
 looking f.p.s.

Fork door  
 & trim

To S.W. Rm





bH

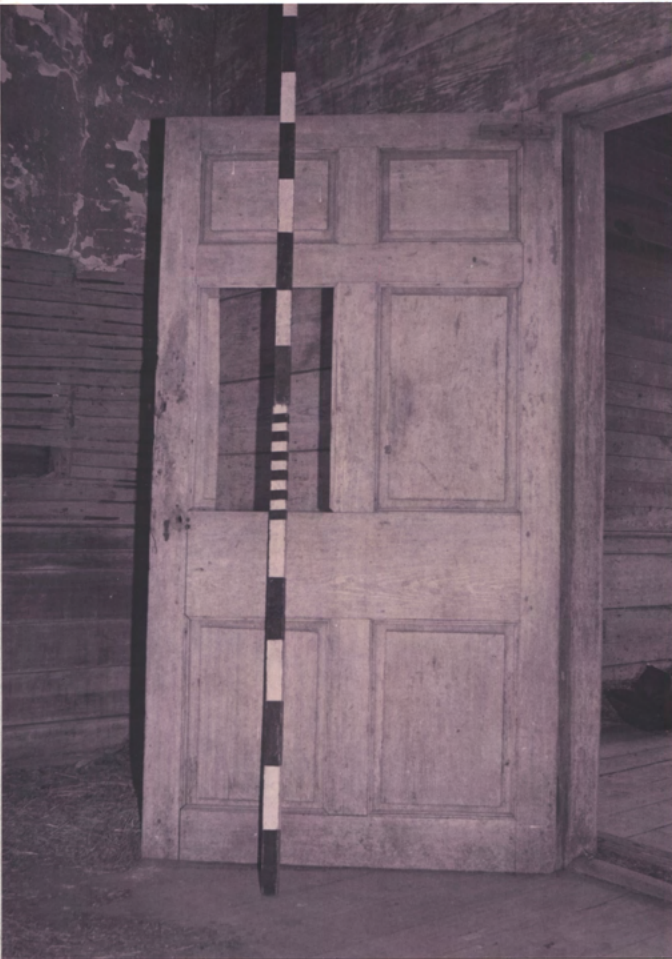
S.E. Rm., S. Wall





STAIRCASE  
 ↙  
 ↘ wide pls. = original  
 ↙  
 ↘ N

backband traces, S.E. RM, W, WALL



W. Door to SW Rm.  
 Rusted-wood on "hall" rm. side } TYPICAL of Fed. Prison  
 flat panel on "parlor" rm side }  
 Hinges probably NOT in orig. position,  
 but are orig. cast iron "fast-pin" type





orig. bd.  
wall here  
(1 layer of  
bds)



CLOS. UNDER STAIRS

mod. bd. of bottom door,  
but batters look orig.  
(Kensel)







N. WALL of S.E. RM ← modern door in orig. frame



bd. wall  
= modern

N  
↑

N. WALL OF N.E. ELL RM ← F.P. wall here (chairs area)

2 window openings chopped - in later, PH evidence. No windows in this wall originally



X FED. DADO, X FED. LATH + plaster  
X BASE-CHAIR  
RAIL  
E



E. WALL, N.E. Cell Rm.



Ns



N  
4





DETAIL

mod. door in orig. frame

W

N.E. Ell Rm  
S. WALL



W

note traces of  
plaster keys



Was this once a  
 window?  
 Needs more  
 examination.  
 If not, there would  
 originally have been  
 no windows in this  
 room. Doesn't seem  
 reasonable.



→ 11

N.E. Ell Rm.  
W. Wall

↳ Vic. door (4 pl.) Fragment  
 doesn't fit opp.



→ 11

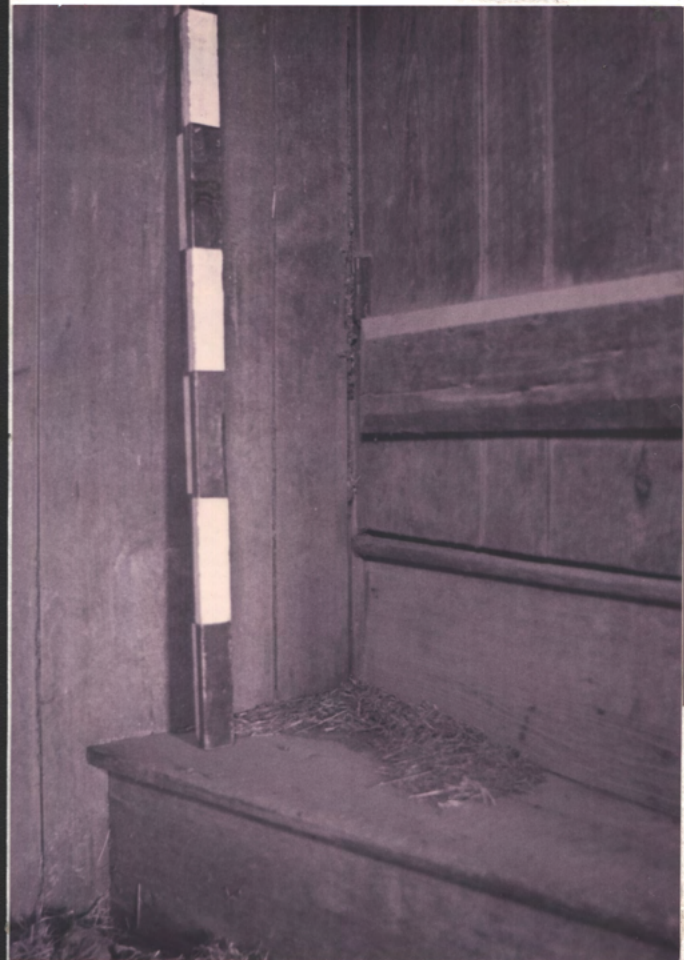




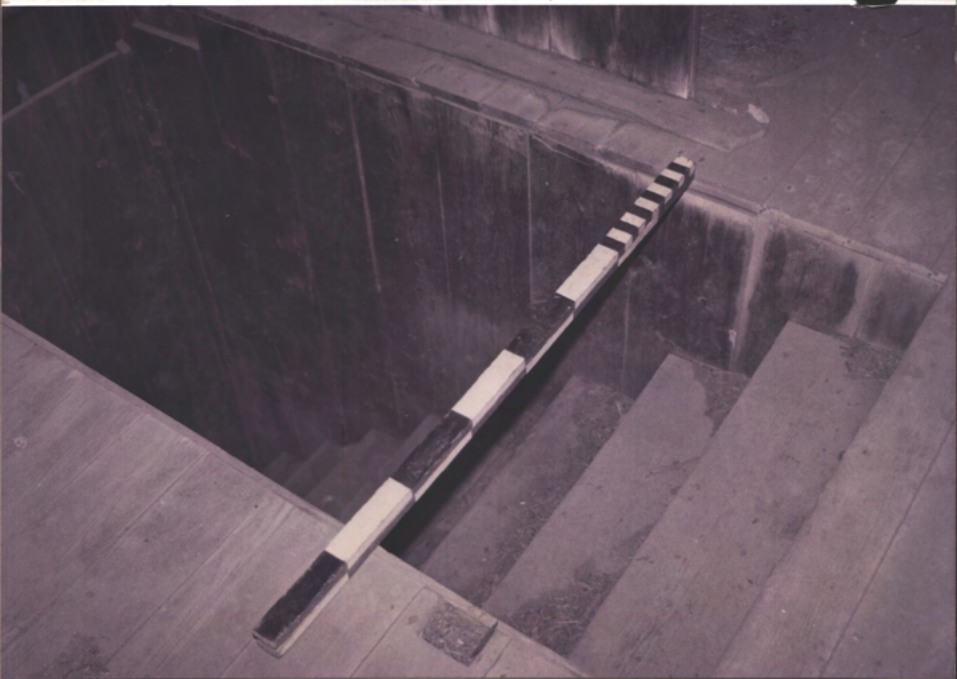
W → A7 FL 1  
orig. bd. f bottom door



Look up to loft ← AH  
orig. bd. partition →



W → A7 FL 1



W → A7 LOST  
mortise for post?  
probably.



No evidence of dormers  
 MAY HAVE BEEN WINDOWS. CR. AT SITE



→ NW

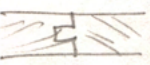



CLM. → NW



NW

LOFT  
S.W. RM.

Loft fl. =  $5/4 \times 6 \pm$  T & G   
 (First fl. =  $5/4 \times 6$  SAS )

Why?  
 T & G is better for more  $\phi$ .  
 Why just in loft?

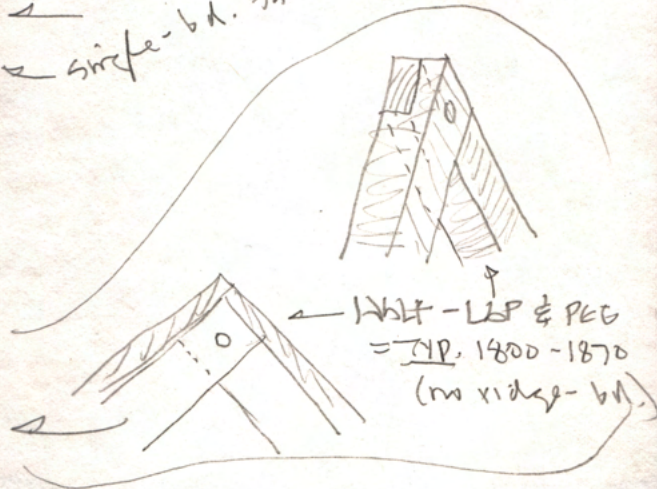




STAIRWELL

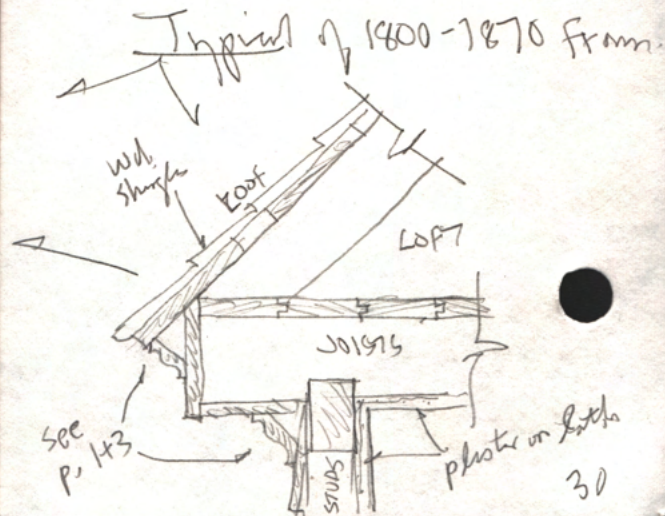


single-b.d. 5/4 T&B pattern



LOFT  
S.W. RM

fed. slab - planks for shingles  
modern gals. iron roof





31832



↑



↑

LOFT, S.E. RM

\* Crosscut \*  
\* window opening \*  
chim



note cell. both below

↑



↑





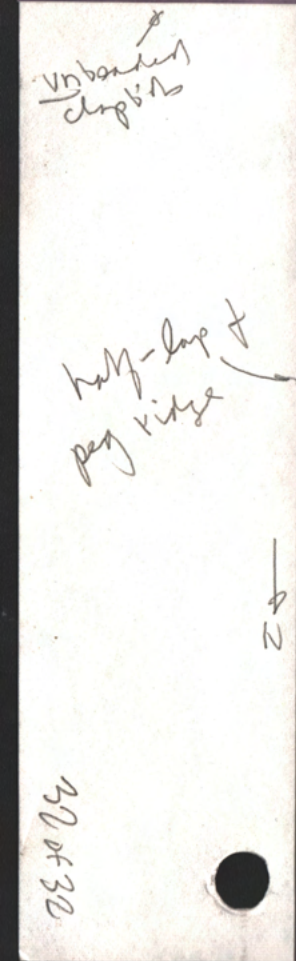
← banded  
clapboards  
NW



→ NW

• Unweathered banded clapboards.  
WHY?  
Apparently a "partition".

Loft - W.E. Ell Rm



↑  
unbanded  
clapboards

half-lap +  
peg ridge →

→ NW

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