

PRESERVING EARLY SOUTHERN ARCHITECTURE:
THE ANTEBELLUM HOUSES OF HANCOCK COUNTY, GEORGIA

by

CATHERINE DREWRY COMER

(Under the Direction of Wayde Brown)

ABSTRACT

Antebellum houses are a highly significant and irreplaceable cultural resource; yet in many cases, various factors lead to their slow deterioration with little hope for a financially viable way to restore them. In Hancock County, Georgia, intensive cultivation of cotton beginning in the 1820s led to a strong plantation economy prior to the Civil War. In the twenty-first century, however, Hancock has been consistently ranked among the state's poorest counties. Surveying known and undocumented antebellum homes to determine their current condition, occupancy, and use allows for a clearer understanding of the outlook for the antebellum houses of Hancock County. Each of the antebellum houses discussed in this thesis tells a unique part of Hancock's history, which in turn helps historians better understand a vanished era in southern culture.

INDEX WORDS: Historic preservation; Log houses; Transitional architecture; Greek Revival architecture; Antebellum houses; Antebellum plantations; Hancock County; Georgia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fulfillment
By Frederick W. Branch
"Land of the Yankees" 1946

*The man who built this house of mine
A hundred years ago
With Christian doors of smooth, clear pine
And chestnut timbers, row on row,
Whose oxen hauled the brick and lime,
Who squared the hearth's broad stone,
Could not foresee that Fate and Time
Would someday make it all my own.*

*Of course he knew that it would stay
Here, on its sturdy sills,
Long after his last Spring should lay
Her fragrant mornings on the hills.
So even if he did not know
Just who its owners were to be,
I'll still maintain that, years ago,
He planned and built this house for me.¹*

When owners of historic houses appreciate the craftsmanship, quality of materials, and embodied energy that went into their construction, antebellum architecture has its best chance for preservation. Not all antebellum houses, however, are lucky enough to fall into the hands of owners who can, or are willing, to properly maintain them. Although such houses were built with virgin timber, stone, or brick, they cannot last indefinitely without proper maintenance. Throughout the southeastern United States, the physical remnants of a

¹ Branch Brothers, "Poetry," <http://www.branchbrothers.net/poems.htm> (accessed March 10, 2016).

fascinating period in American architecture can be seen on downtown streets, beside major highways, and along dirt roads.

Houses from the antebellum period include all of those built prior to the Civil War. Although this period typically begins with early and mid-nineteenth century architecture, for the purposes of this thesis, “antebellum construction” will also include houses built in the colonial period extending through the dominance of the well-known Greek Revival architectural style. Antebellum houses are irreplaceable cultural resources because of the high quality materials and craftsmanship that went into their construction, but also because their numbers are so exceedingly finite. Having existed for a century and a half, today, most antebellum houses that have not benefited from continuous maintenance or have never undergone any significant restorations are in need of serious interventions. Accordingly, necessary measures for their preservation must be identified and pursued in both urban and rural communities to address this unique resource in peril.

When an antebellum house is lost, so too is its association with the surrounding landscape, which in turn destroys the connection that once existed between a house’s physical location and the historic community of which it was a part. As architecture is a primary way in which societies preserve and interpret their culture, it is crucial that surviving antebellum houses are conserved for future study and interpretation of a vanished era of southern history. As author

Kenneth Severens aptly notes in his book on southern architecture, the importance of the sense of place provided by antebellum houses cannot be overemphasized:

Sense of place is a dominant architectural characteristic of a remarkable number of great southern houses. Although patronage also led to the erection of churches and civic buildings, plantation houses as ancestral seats are the preeminent contributions of the South to American architecture.²

The state of Georgia is ideal for those who wish to study the architecture of the antebellum South. Extensive agricultural, industrial, and transportation developments during the early and mid-nineteenth century helped Georgia's economy develop into a financial empire. It was this type of growth and prosperity prior to the Civil War that resulted in the state's nickname of "the Empire State." Because Georgia's strong economy helped to bolster the Confederate war effort, the state was a primary target of northern military tactics designed to bring an end to the years of conflict.

William Tecumseh Sherman's infamous March to the Sea is often remembered for its unforgiving hand with regard to the multitude of houses, outbuildings, possessions, and crops that were destroyed. The heartland of the state, through which Sherman's troops passed on their way from Atlanta to Savannah, is often referred to as Georgia's Plantation Belt because of the high volume of agricultural production that occurred there in the antebellum period. Although parts of the Middle Georgia were destroyed as a result of the March to the Sea, the majority of houses survived. Sherman's troops did pass through

² Severens, *Southern Architecture*, 3.

Hancock County, and although they took mules, slaughtered hogs, and burned cotton, they inflicted little damage on the county's architecture.³ At the plantations of David and his brother Thomas Dickson in the southeastern portion of the county, for example, the Union Army destroyed 1600 bales of cotton.⁴ Although Union scouts did cross the Oconee and enter western Hancock County, they diverted south, perhaps because Sparta did not have a railroad while neighboring Sandersville was a main stop on the Central of Georgia Railroad.⁵ After the war, the remaining houses in Georgia became part of an increasingly select group that for the next century would lack any sort of appropriate recognition or protection.

With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966, however, there was a shift in the nation's awareness of historic resources threatened by rapid development. By that time in large cities such as Atlanta, antebellum houses were increasingly threatened due to the intense pressures of both commercial and residential development. Even with the few protections afforded to such houses by the NHPA, today antebellum houses are rarely found in large Georgia cities where preservation has never been a priority. Illustrative of this fact, as this thesis was written in January of 2016, Atlanta demolished the Wilson House, one of three antebellum houses left in the city that remained on

³ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 163-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-4.

its original house site.⁶ The Wilson House had long been vacant and its roof was partially collapsed, which led city officials to declare it unsafe and structurally unsound. Michael Kitchens, who is a researcher of threatened and lost antebellum houses, perfectly summed up the significance of the Wilson House in 2012, writing that:

Structures like the William A. Wilson plantation cannot and will not be rebuilt... [for] once these historically significant and architecturally important structures are lost, no amount of discussion or teaching about “what was” can equal the impact of seeing, smelling, and touching historically important objects still standing in their original setting. Only by standing near the house or within its walls can one experience its scale and energy. Once lost, it is lost forever.⁷

Hancock County, Georgia was chosen for this study of antebellum houses in part because of its great prosperity in the nineteenth century, but more importantly, because of its economic decline throughout the twentieth century. This dichotomy has resulted in a surplus of antebellum houses, most of which lack owners with financial resources to restore them. A county that was once a thriving center of agricultural production and reform throughout the entire South has dwindled from its developmental peak just before the outbreak of the Civil War. Currently Hancock County holds no designation of leadership within the state in terms of educational or economic recognition. Quite the opposite, over the last decade Hancock has been ranked among the poorest of Georgia’s 159 counties. In 2008, for example, the per capita income in Hancock was under \$18,000, whereas the same figure for nearby Oconee County, which is located

⁶ Atlanta Journal Constitution, “Atlanta antebellum mansion now a pile of rubble,” <http://www.myajc.com/news/news/atlanta-mansion-razed/nqDTk/> (accessed January 29, 2016).

⁷ Michael Kitchens, *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia’s Lost Antebellum Homes and Plantations*, 304.

adjacent to the city of Athens, was just over twice that amount.⁸ Although the case could be made that poverty and its associated lack of development can be beneficial to the preservation of the historic fabric of impoverished areas, to have such destitution continue for more than a century ultimately takes a negative toll on the prospects for antebellum houses. Due to the depressed economic state in Hancock, it is difficult to believe that the future will be kind to some of the county's most beautiful and significant antebellum houses.

Research Question

The primary research objective of this thesis was to find out, through research and a countywide survey, the current condition of surviving antebellum houses in Hancock County. The survey employed a rating system for the condition of houses on a scale from Excellent down to Good, Fair, Deteriorated, and Ruins. To answer the primary research question, the following sub-questions had to be answered to reveal patterns within the data. How many antebellum houses remain in the county seat of Sparta? How many antebellum houses survive within the boundaries of Hancock County? Of those remaining, how many are inhabited or inhabitable? How many exist in a deteriorated or ruinous state? Is there a correlation between urban and rural antebellum houses and their condition? Does the distinction of a house's listing on the National Register of Historic Places have any relationship with the likelihood of sufficient

⁸⁸ Online Athens: Athens Banner Herald, "Oconee richest county, Hancock poorest in new state assessment" http://onlineathens.com/stories/122408/new_370607298.shtml#.VsPAIXQrKu5 (accessed Feb. 17, 2016).

maintenance? What patterns emerge among the characteristics of surviving antebellum houses that can be used to assist those planning for their long-term preservation? What historical and modern developments most have most affected the current state of Hancock's antebellum houses?

These questions provided a framework for this study of Hancock's antebellum houses and as it turned out, the county could not have proven to be a better subject for such research. Further studies must be conducted on these and other antebellum houses in Georgia before more important examples are lost to time and neglect. Two well-known scholars of Hancock County, John Rozier and John Linley, whose research will be discussed in the following chapter, documented the majority of antebellum houses in this survey. Of the houses presented here, many have never been previously documented. Only two such undocumented houses were located within Sparta's city limits, one on Maiden Lane and another on Burwell Street, both of which were identified using the tax assessor's data. While the house on Maiden Lane appears to be antebellum, the house on Burwell Street does not. Both of these houses and properties will require future research to determine reliable dates of construction.

The ratio of undocumented to documented houses in the county was closer to half, as 19 out of 45 houses were previously undocumented. Some undocumented properties in the county were located through the tax assessor's data or by word of mouth, but many were spotted while surveying in the field. Three significant properties in particular were all brought to the author's attention

by word of mouth only. The “Tidewater House” on Pearson Chapel Road and the Saunders House on State Highway 15 south of Sparta, both of which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, are highly significant houses that have not previously been documented. The last house brought to the author’s attention through personal communication with people living in Hancock County was the Leonard Place, which likely dates from the mid-antebellum period. The house has been neglected and abandoned for decades, has lost one of its two end chimneys, and was listed by this survey as being in a Deteriorated condition. Determining condition, as previously discussed, was the primary objective of this research. These three houses are all difficult or impossible to see from the road, so talking with locals willing to share their knowledge vital for this study of antebellum houses.

Methodology and Limitations

As a part of this research, the location and dates of construction of extant antebellum houses in Hancock County were collected from various sources, including published materials, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office, the National Register of Historic Places, the Sparta Hancock County Historical Society, the Hancock County Tax Assessor’s Office, and the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic GIS (GNARGIS) website. All houses noted to have been constructed prior to 1861 were visited, evaluated, and photographed where

possible. A thumbnail image for each of the houses surveyed appears in Appendices D and E.

Even with the assistance of known resources, original dates of construction for antebellum houses are difficult to verify with complete accuracy. Building materials were examined wherever possible to reveal clues about the age of the structure. For example, if a house has straight-sawn lumber incorporated into its foundation, it can generally be assumed that it was built prior to the 1850s, when circular-sawn lumber came into production. If a house has only hand-hewn beams, it was almost certainly built prior to 1850. Such physical evidence can be revealed by saw marks, exposed nails, and type of foundation, which typically further confirmed generally accepted dates for the houses in this study.

Because the current condition of the antebellum houses was a major factor in this investigation, a generalized survey form had to be used that could address all pertinent information while surveying in the field. Although the Georgia Historic Preservation Office has guidelines for the evaluation of historic buildings and structures, the author found a survey form distributed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation to be the most complete example of any such forms available on the Internet. The Historic Structure Inventory form, found at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24847, has a total of 67 entries of

required information for any given historic structure.⁹ While an extremely thorough study would necessitate all of the requested information to be answered, the 28 questions on the first two pages address all of the basic information needed to complete a general county survey.

To assess a structure, the Parks and Recreation form asks for any known names, historical designations, location, surroundings, size and style of structure, the architect or builder if known, and a date of construction, among other information.¹⁰ The second page delves deeper into the current state of the structure, asking for the overall condition, needed maintenance or repairs, and any threats that cause harm to the structure, such as deterioration, fire, pests, collapse, demolition, vandalism, or intrusions.¹¹ For the purposes of this survey of antebellum houses, the most important question on the form is about a structure's condition. Houses are categorized based on a 6-point scale, beginning with a condition of Excellent, moving down to Good, Fair, Deteriorated, Ruins, and Site only.¹² The author did visit the sites of several lost antebellum houses, but they were not included in this study. The 76 houses surveyed ranged across these classifications, although the condition of some houses marked as Excellent were covered in vinyl siding, which obscures most obvious signs of physical deterioration within the structure.

⁹ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Historic Building Condition Assessment: Historic Structure Inventory," http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/22491/files/dpr_historic_structure_assessment_form.pdf (accessed April 15, 2016).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

The tax assessor's data was helpful primarily because it provided physical addresses for all properties constructed in 1860 and before. Records were easily obtained for a little more than half of the total number of houses surveyed, but the remainder of the houses were either assigned dates much later than their original construction or they were not listed by the tax assessor at all. Over time and with sufficient resources, it would be possible to improve the data provided by tax assessor's offices. As it is, however, the data serves more as a guide than as a comprehensive listing of antebellum houses. Dates attributed to houses should be interpreted more as indicators of their original dates of construction, as precise dates can only be derived through written documentation, physical analysis using dendrochronology, or other methods that are difficult to dispute. Generally agreed upon dates across a spectrum of documented sources provide the closest possible estimate for houses where construction episodes cannot be verified through written documentation.

The GNARGIS data comes from surveys completed by the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources. In addition to their inclusion of historic sites of interest, GNARGIS additionally maps both natural and archaeological features. While the state's data is highly useful and at one time was searchable through various queries, the current software is not user-friendly and can only be studied one record at a time. In the future, as with the data from the tax assessor's office, improvements need to be made in terms of how researchers can access and manipulate existing historical data.

Organization of Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the study of antebellum houses in Hancock County. This study's primary research questions, methodology, and limitations are all presented in Chapter One. At the end of this introductory chapter, the organization of all six chapters is outlined. In the second chapter, a full review of prior research on Hancock County is provided. Significant contributions made throughout the twentieth century are discussed with regard to the specific influences they had over subsequent research. Chapter Three introduces the history of Hancock County, beginning with early settlement in the late-eighteenth century, and continuing until the outbreak of the Civil War. Important developments such as population change, the rapid expansion of the cotton industry, agricultural reforms, and advances in transportation, communication, and education are discussed in this chapter.

The various types of antebellum architecture found in Georgia are discussed in Chapter Four, which adopts the noted historian John Linley's architectural classification system of the east-central area of the state. The architectural record begins with indigenous and pre-antebellum architecture, followed by Oconee federal and transitional architecture, Greek Revival, and finally by other less common architectural styles employed during the antebellum period. Chapter Five is dedicated to some of the significant antebellum architectural losses that the county has incurred over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The results of the author's survey of Hancock's antebellum

houses are the primary focus of Chapter Six, within which the goals of the survey, methodology used, limitations present, and analysis of results are presented.

Chapter Seven presents the survey findings and answers the research questions posed in Chapter One. As this chapter serves as the primary analysis of the current antebellum architectural record in Hancock County, the county's notable decline throughout the twentieth century is examined to better explain the current state of Hancock's antebellum houses. Hancock's post-Civil War history is examined beginning with Reconstruction in the nineteenth century and followed by declining agricultural and manufacturing pursuits in the twentieth. In addition to historical developments that played a role in the economic outlook of Hancock County, Chapter Seven also discusses the relevance of an antebellum house's location to its chances of being well preserved. To highlight the significant loss that occurs when an antebellum house is destroyed, notable antebellum houses that have been lost from the county's architectural record are discussed in this chapter. In the thesis' last chapter, Chapter Eight, a general conclusion is provided along with some insight into what the future might hold for Hancock County's antebellum houses. Included are tactics that could help address the pressing preservation issues of these exceptional architectural resources.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Hancock County was included in a 1937 United States government project known as the Federal Writers Project, with a note that it was, “one of the older counties of Georgia, as attested by the number of old houses on its numerous unpaved roads. Most of them are in a state of disrepair, and are inhabited by poor tenants, white or Negro.”¹³ In the span of only seventy years, the economic and demographic makeup of the county had changed drastically. During the era of great wealth within the county, planters went to great expense to build and maintain their plantation houses. However, in the early twentieth century, most antebellum houses had become merely roofs over the heads of financially stressed tenants. Small-scale farmers during the Great Depression could little afford to care for the houses that provided them with shelter. As house maintenance fell to the wayside, preservative elements such as fresh coats of paint or replacement materials were no longer applied to the most antebellum houses throughout Hancock County, the state of Georgia, and the entire South. This pattern was one of the driving forces behind a groundbreaking government study of the nation’s historic resources: the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

¹³ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 142.

Between 1933 and 1934, HABS was created in a cooperative effort of the National Park Service, the American Institute of Architects, and the Library of Congress.¹⁴ The importance of this study cannot be overemphasized, as is evidenced by the loss of many of the properties originally studied in the 1930s. By 1979, for example, it was estimated that roughly 40 percent of the buildings recorded as a part of the HABS surveys were either totally lost or were in irreversible states of disrepair.¹⁵ Without this seminal study, historians would have far less material to aid in the interpretation of antebellum houses. Such governmental research remains invaluable to the practice of historic preservation. In some cases, drawings and photographs taken by unemployed architects contracted by the government to study America's historic buildings are the only surviving evidence of an antebellum house's existence.

As early as 1972, one scholar of the architecture of Middle Georgia was brutally honest – and even grim – when discussing the plight of Sparta and Hancock County. John Linley spent his career as a professor at the University of Georgia, teaching within the landscape architecture program. Linley was a vital motivating force in the establishment of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and authored *The Georgia Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey*. In another book entitled *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, Linley discussed the condition of the county and told a cautionary tale for its future. In noting the end of the plantation era and the rise of the tenant farmer

¹⁴ Mitchell, "A Look at Historic Preservation and American Architecture, Emphasizing Georgia" 42.

¹⁵ Ibid.

system, Linley pointed out that the county population in 1970 was less than was recorded in 1860.¹⁶ Throughout the twentieth century, Hancock County experienced a severe population decline that still continues to the present. Although the majority of Linley's fieldwork took place in 1968, the book was not published until 1972. Linley classifies the antebellum houses surveys into five categories: Nationally Important, Valuable to the Area, Valuable, Notable, and Worthy of Mention. Linley did not award the category of national importance lightly: only one house in Hancock County was deemed as such, the remarkable Cheely-Coleman House.

A thorough study of any county's history must begin with Federal Census record data, which has been collected every ten years beginning in 1790.¹⁷ Census data provides researchers fascinating insight into historical trends in agriculture and industry. A man's occupation might change entirely during the period of ten years. A landless farmer in 1850 might be listed as an industrial worker in 1860, for example, reflecting the introduction of new employment opportunities within the county.¹⁸ Census data is critical to studies of historical social trends, because it always relied on third party reporting. If researchers had to rely solely on self-reported data, they would lack the authenticity provided by workers for the federal government.

¹⁶ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 145.

¹⁷ Georgia Archives: University System of Georgia, "Census Records: Federal and Georgia State Census Records," http://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/census_records (accessed Mar. 6, 2016).

¹⁸ Bonner, "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," 670.

Scholars have long been fascinated with Hancock County, so it is not surprising that its history has been the subject of a number of noteworthy published works. For twenty-five years, historian James C. Bonner was Chair of the History Department at Georgia College, which was then known as Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville, where he extensively published articles in scholarly periodicals about Hancock County's antebellum pursuits in agriculture, animal husbandry, and viniculture. Bonner's titles include, "The Open Range Livestock Industry in Colonial Georgia," "The Genesis of Georgia's Livestock Industry," "The Georgia Wine Industry on the Eve of the Civil War," "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," and "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," the last of which was specifically focused on Hancock County. Bonner's articles devoted to antebellum Hancock County were influential to subsequent scholars and remain important to any study of the county.

Individuals born in Hancock County often provided the best published accounts of the county's history. A native to the county, Elizabeth Wiley Smith compiled a two-volume history of the county in the early 1930s that was not published until 1974. Smith's work included marriage and death records for the county, which made it the most extensive published record about antebellum life in Hancock available at the time. A later book, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County to 1940*, was published in 1990 by Forrest Shivers, another native to Hancock County. Shivers' work, which was recently issued in a new printing in 2014, is imperative to understand the historical, social, political, and

cultural developments that shaped modern day Hancock County. The most recently published source for Hancock's architectural heritage is *Houses of Hancock: 1795-1865*, published in 1996 by John Rozier. Rozier was also a native of Hancock County who, after retiring as public information director at Emory University, wrote three books on the county's history. In addition to *Houses of Hancock*, Rozier published *Black Boss: Political Revolution in a Georgia County* and *The Granite Farm Letters*, each exploring a different chapter in the county's fascinating history.¹⁹ Rozier's work provides a concise synthesis of all previous published research on the county, yet focuses primarily on architecture throughout.

While the works of Smith and Shivers focus on the historical developments that informed the growth of the county, Linley and Rozier's books emphasize Hancock's architectural importance to Georgia and indeed, to the entire nation. Finally, Michael Kitchens' 2012 book *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia's Lost Antebellum Homes and Plantations* was the inspiration for an important part of this thesis' conclusion. Kitchens is a native Georgian and a lawyer by trade, but his passions is preserving the stories of lost antebellum places through oral tradition and photography. It is essential that researchers study the notable antebellum houses that have been lost so their unique stories can be preserved and linked to the physical sites where they took place.

¹⁹ Atlanta Journal-Constitution: AJC.com, "John W. Rozier, 92, worked at Emory, wrote history books," <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/john-w-rozier-92-worked-at-emory-wrote-history-boo/nQpws/> (accessed Feb. 17, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Hancock County is located in Georgia's Lower Piedmont, in the east central portion of the state. The county is situated roughly halfway between the cities of Macon and Augusta, just to the northeast of the city of Milledgeville. Georgia's largest city Atlanta is one hundred miles, or an hour and a half, from the county seat of Sparta. The fall line, illustrate in Figure 15, is a geological boundary roughly twenty miles wide that runs in a northeast direction across Georgia from Columbus on the western border all the way to Augusta on the Eastern border.²⁰ This dividing line through the state passes almost directly through the center of Hancock County, which divides the county into two distinct regions.

The soils in the county are primarily comprised of coarse sand and sandy loam, which are comparatively poor when juxtaposed with other counties in the region.²¹ When the county was initially founded, the northern portion of the county, covered with oak and hickory forests, was considered more desirable than the southern half.²² Despite its soils of varying quality, planters in Hancock

²⁰ New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Fall Line," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/geography-environment/fall-line> (accessed November 1, 2015).

²¹ Bonner, "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," 665.

²² Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 133.

were able to circumvent these natural barriers placed upon them by diligently studying problems evident in accepted farming practices and adapting their planting methods accordingly to amass great fortunes in the decades leading up to the Civil War. The county's climate lent itself perfectly to agriculture, and to the cultivation of cotton in particular, as the planting season was far more than the necessary two hundred days needed by cotton plants.²³

The agricultural region in which Hancock is located is referred to as Georgia's Cotton Belt, sometimes its Plantation Belt,²⁴ which was an area that stretched in a northeastern-southwestern diagonal swath across the central portion of the state. The distinguishing characteristics of the 79 of Georgia's 159 counties that are considered a part of the Plantation Belt are the production of cotton and a large slave population.²⁵ The Plantation Belt in Georgia can be seen in Figure 16, where the darkest shaded counties are located, which according to this map from the 1930s indicates counties with over 75 per cent blacks.

The Plantation Belt in Georgia, which has generally fertile soils and upland terrain well-suited to agriculture, is part of a much larger region known as the Black Belt, where a concentration of plantation estates existed in a fifty-mile-wide spread throughout the central parts of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.²⁶ A 1916 U.S. Census defined the Black Belt as a collection of 325 roughly contiguous counties within 11 states, including Arkansas, Louisiana, and

²³ Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893*, 17.

²⁴ Levernier and White, "The Determinants of Poverty in Georgia's Plantation Belt," 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁶ Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, 6-7.

Texas.²⁷ During the early nineteenth century this area of fertile soils was ripe for settlement due to the rapid expansion of the cotton industry.

In the final decades of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, the Georgia Piedmont and Coastal Plain were settled more rapidly than any other part of the state.²⁸ During that early phase of the country, large tracts of fertile land were available to pioneers ready to participate in the coming agricultural revolution. Although land was plentiful settlement in Georgia did not always proceed at a steady pace. In some areas, including the lower portion of the Piedmont, settlement was unusually rapid and faster growth ensued. Pioneers arrived from areas to the northeast, traveling in a southwestern direction across the state.²⁹

As Georgia was the youngest of the original thirteen colonies, many early pioneers of the state came from older colonies such as North Carolina and Virginia. These early settlers brought with them the architectural traditions of the older colonies, which can still be observed in some of the county's antebellum houses today.³⁰ One example comes from the tidewater house typical of many in early Virginia, which appears in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century examples in Hancock County.

In the late-eighteenth century, white settlement of the area that eventually became Hancock County began with a series of formal treaties between the

²⁷ Levernier and White, "The Determinants of Poverty in Georgia's Plantation Belt," 67.

²⁸ Zelinsky, "An Isochronic Map of Georgia Settlement," 194.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 195.

³⁰ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 21.

colony of Georgia and the Creek and Cherokee Indians inhabiting the region.³¹ All of the treaties signed between the two nations resulted in Native American cessions of large portions of their territory. This period of Georgia's history was marked by tension with the Indians, who did not want to concede their rights to such valuable lands. Prior to the incursions of Georgian colonists pushing westward, this area in east central Georgia served the Indians as prime hunting and fishing lands. At the time whites settled the Georgia Piedmont, Native Americans still maintained control over all lands to the west.

The area that went on to create Hancock County included all land between the Ogeechee and Oconee Rivers, which was a part of a thirty-mile-wide buffer territory dividing the homelands of the lower Creeks to the west from the English settlements to the east.³² Within two decades of the November 1763 signing of the Treaty of Augusta, demands for the fertile lands of the middle portion of the state were stronger than ever. That same year the Proclamation of 1763 was issued by King George III, which declared that all lands west of a boundary line extending from the southernmost border of Georgia northward along the western border of all of the original colonies, were not to be settled by any colonial government, but rather reserved as Indian territory.³³ The portion of the boundary that traverses the state of Georgia is shown in Figure 4. As it turned out, a decade later in June of 1773 the Creeks ceded over two million acres of land to

³¹ Hemperly and Jackson, *Georgia's Boundaries: The Shaping of a State*, 54-55.

³² Bryant, *How Curious a Land: Change and Conflict in Greene County, Georgia*, 14.

³³ Hemperly and Jackson, *Georgia's Boundaries: The Shaping of a State*, 51-52.

the colony of Georgia. Each Indian cession resulted in a marked increase in Georgia's desire for more land from a dwindling supply.

A portion of the large territory north of the city of Augusta that was ceded by the Creeks in 1773 was later used to form Wilkes County in 1777. This brought the total number of counties in Georgia to eight that year, shown in Figure 6. By 1783, Georgia sought to gain formal control of all lands between Wilkes County and the east bank of the Oconee River. Cherokee and Creek Chiefs eventually agreed to give up the area in two separate treaties signed in Augusta in May and November of 1783, together known as the Treaties of Augusta.³⁴ The state of Georgia used what it referred to as the "Ceded Lands" to create the counties of Franklin and Washington in late February of 1784. Settlers, primarily from Virginia and the Carolinas but also from the northeast and Europe,³⁵ began to pour into the colony of Georgia as new counties were opened to settlement. The colony employed a system of headright grants to distribute the land, which was delineated into parcels of between 200 and 1000 acres that were awarded to pioneers for the purpose of promoting development within the colony's newly acquired territory.³⁶

In 1786, just two years after its creation, a large portion of the original Washington County was cleaved off for the creation of Greene County in order to accommodate the area's growing population. Ultimately seven counties plus

³⁴ Ibid., 57.

³⁵ Rice, *History of Greene County, Georgia 1786-1886*, 12.

³⁶ Georgia Archives: University System of Georgia, "Headright and Bounty Plats," <http://cdm.georgiaarchives.org:2011/cdm/landingpage/collection/looseplats> (accessed 13 April 2016).

portions of nine more were carved from the original county of Washington,³⁷ as seen in Figure 6. The same year Greene County was founded, the county seat of Greensboro was established near the county's center. Indians attacked the town in its infancy the following year in 1787 in a raid that killed thirty-one citizens, injured another twenty, and burned the town to the ground.³⁸ The propensity for violence from the Indians continued throughout the following two decades, as Indians were incrementally forced westward. Other major population shifts in the state were yet to occur. Within just five decades of the removal of the Native Americans, the population of counties in middle portion of Georgia changed entirely. The American agricultural revolution, which began with the introduction of the cotton gin in 1794³⁹ and was still thriving at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, allowed planters in Hancock County to come to the forefront of Georgia's cotton industry. Alongside this new economic system came a corresponding dramatic increase of the number of slaves needed to provide the system with power.

Creation and Development of Hancock County

Two more counties, Columbia and Elbert, were founded in 1790, to make nine total counties. To accommodate expanding populations and encourage settlement, a flurry of county creation began in Georgia, of which Hancock was

³⁷ New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Washington County," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/washington-county> (accessed October 15, 2015).

³⁸ Rice and Williams, *History of Greene County, Georgia 1786-1886*, 6.

³⁹ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 69.

only a part. Screven, Hancock, Bryan, McIntosh, Montgomery, Oglethorpe, and Warren Counties were all created in December of 1793. Hancock County, which was carved from the southern portion of Greene and the northern portion of Washington County, was established on December 17, 1793. Within a couple of years Hancock was home to settlers who held large tracts of land, including Charles Abercrombie who owned 8,304 acres and Robert Flourney who owned 7,483.⁴⁰ In 1795, the town of Sparta was founded on Major Abercrombie's land, which allowed an area that began as an Indian trading post develop into a thriving social and economic center in Middle Georgia in less than three decades.

Census data for county demographics generally reflect changes in agricultural trends, which greatly influenced the southern labor system throughout the nineteenth century. In 1800, the first year of the census recorded for Hancock County, records show that the population of whites was 9,605, a peak from which the white population of the county continued to decline until the present day, with the exception of two spikes in 1850 and 1880 that corresponded to booms in the agricultural markets when increasing numbers of people moved to the county to farm cotton.⁴¹ Based on this population data it is evident that at the turn of the nineteenth century Hancock County was in the midst of its greatest period of growth.

It is especially important to link population trends with historical events, particularly for enslaved African Americans, as changes typically reflected spikes

⁴⁰ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 3-4.

⁴¹ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 321.

in the price of cotton and ensuing surges in production. Hancock's population began to shift as the county dramatically increased its amount of cotton production. From 1850 to 1860, the white population of Hancock fell from 4,210 to 3,871 while the enslaved population rose from 7,306 to 8,137, the highest total ever reached.⁴² This shift in demographics was the result of wealthy planters consolidating land holdings by buying out smaller, less successful farming operations. In addition to increasingly consolidated land ownership, more and more slaves were brought into the state to satisfy the demands of the cotton market.

Impact of the Cotton Industry

During this time of settlement the American economy was closely linked with that of England, where in the mid 1790s new spinning and weaving machinery created a textile industry that demanded more cotton.⁴³ The revolution of the cotton industry in America truly began following Eli Whitney's introduction of the cotton gin, which had a powerful impact on many of the planters in Hancock County. Although cotton was grown in small patches for personal use prior to the invention of the cotton gin, the mechanized way of separating the seed from the cotton was liberating to southern planters and by 1800, the cultivation of cotton was widespread.⁴⁴ Even though the process by which cotton was gathered became easier, transporting the raw, baled product to market

⁴² Ibid., 80.

⁴³ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 69.

remained a struggle for decades until a revolution in rail transportation made it possible for increasing numbers of planters living in the uplands of Georgia to become wealthy through increased profit margins. Increased prosperity led to Sparta becoming relatively metropolitan: Early in its history, Sparta showed great potential to be an educational beacon of education in Middle Georgia. In 1820 the only bookstores in the state were found in Atlanta, Savannah, and Sparta.⁴⁵

Prior to the development of railroads in Georgia, planters were forced to rely on the shipment of their product over roads that were not uniformly maintained and always difficult to traverse. The transportation of goods during the early nineteenth century led to the development of cities in towns in areas where agricultural transport lines intersected. Following the War of 1812, the cultivation of cotton became increasingly profitable and therefore, common.⁴⁶ The occupation of cotton planter soon became the most desired in the region, as planters enjoyed increasing amounts of political and social power.

By the early mid-nineteenth century, leaders within Georgia recognized a need to invest in improved transportation methods to facilitate the shipment of cotton to market. The state of Georgia formally committed to building a statewide network of rail lines in 1836,⁴⁷ with the goal of connecting the industrial center of Augusta to the interior of the state where the growth of upland cotton flourished throughout the 1820s and 1830s. The building of railroads became a full-time industry to the extent that by the 1850s Georgia boasted more rail lines than any

⁴⁵ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 129.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁷ Davis, "The First Golden Age of Georgia Industry, 1828-1860," 700.

other southern state.⁴⁸ The intensive rail development had a major impact on cotton production, as shipments from the interior reached the markets in Augusta with more ease than ever before. Because this revolution in the way cotton was shipped to market allowed for increased profit margins, planters began to grow as much cotton as possible. This extreme emphasis on cotton meant that planters often neglected to grow the corn needed to feed their families, which by the 1840s was of major concern to some Hancock County planters.⁴⁹

Of all crops grown during the antebellum period, corn and cotton were the harshest to the fertility of the soil. While the railroads increased the amount of cotton transported throughout the state, as it turned out, they also had a dramatic effect on the sale of commercial fertilizers in Georgia preceding the Civil War. Ironically, the introduction of the use of such fertilizers beginning in the 1840s coincided with an agricultural reform movement in the region, which meant that at the time planters were actually being encouraged to produce less cotton to maintain the integrity of the land. There was a particularly noticeable increase in the use of such fertilizers between late 1858 and mid-1860 when Georgia hauled nearly four million pounds of fertilizers, compared to the more than fifteen million hauled throughout the state the following year.⁵⁰

Despite the fact that towns were established all over the central part of the state to support railroad development, Sparta was bypassed by any potential

⁴⁸ New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Georgia History Overview," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/georgia-history-overview> (accessed October 5, 2015).

⁴⁹ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 485.

⁵⁰ Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*, 93.

commercial development a railroad stop would have provided. The tracks from Augusta terminated at Mayfield, twelve miles east of Sparta, so travel to and from town also required the use of horse-drawn wagons and carriages.⁵¹ It was not until after the Civil War that rail lines were finally extended to Sparta, but the lack of transportation development in the decades preceding the war always hindered developments that took place in the late nineteenth century. It should be emphasized that the delay of rail development in the county did not prevent planters from making profits, but such profits would have likely been exponentially higher had Sparta become a stop on one of the state's rail lines.

Agricultural Reform in the Early to Mid-Nineteenth Century

During the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of agricultural journals sprang up throughout the South, the foremost being the *Southern Agriculturalist*, originally published in Charleston in 1828.⁵² However, a quarter of a century earlier Sparta was leading the way in middle Georgia with its establishment of the weekly *Farmer's Gazette* by Dennis Ryan in 1803.⁵³ Ryan's house on Maiden Lane still stands, but is currently unoccupied and in desperate need of repair. These journals served as a way for planters and businessmen to exchange progressive ideas about agriculture, which was vital to halting the westward emigration of planters to other counties and states.

⁵¹ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 57.

⁵² Messick, et. al., "Georgia's Historic Agricultural Heritage—A Context," 20.

⁵³ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 129.

Prominent planters and businessmen published in widely circulated periodicals about experimental treatments of crops and fields designed to alleviate the stresses placed on farmland by the cotton industry. Planters knew that worn out fields were becoming increasingly commonplace as the years passed as Georgia's staple crop cotton ravaged the land; something, anything, had to be done to reverse the destruction of Hancock's soils. Unless significant changes were made to the farming techniques of Hancock planters, cotton would be Hancock's saving grace and its deathblow at the same time.

One revolutionary civic organization, known as the Hancock County Planters Club, developed as a result of the desperation felt by many planters in the region as they watched crop production dwindle as the years progressed. A paradox of sorts had evolved in Hancock, where "there occurred a combination rare in the history of the Lower South—intelligent and enterprising farmers living on very poor soil. These men faced the challenge of a declining agricultural economy in a manner somewhat novel for that age of cheap land and emigration to more fertile regions."⁵⁴ Consequently, Hancock planters who were invested in land knew the outlook for the young county must change, and quickly.

The Planters Club was founded in 1837 by eighteen "gentlemen" of the county, a group that consisted of leading citizens including "ten prominent planters, two justices of the peace, the county sheriff, the clerk of the Inferior Court, two prominent schoolteachers, and the judge of the Superior Court,

⁵⁴ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 476.

Nathan Sayre.⁵⁵ The popularity of the organization's social events reflects the importance of agriculture throughout the county. The Planters Club began hosting annual fairs in the 1840s, which each lasted for a week and were always well attended by people from all over the surrounding area.⁵⁶

One member of the club, Eli Baxter, summed up the dire situation within the county in a plea for agricultural reform:

At every point the eye meets the evacuated and dilapidated mansion and worn-out and exhausted plantations. Fields that once teemed with luxuriant crops are disfigured with gaping hillsides, chequered with gullies, coated with broom-straw and pine, the sure indices of barrenness and exhaustion—all exhibiting a dreary desolation. Heretofore we have contemplated the gradual and certain deterioration of our lands with a careless indifference. Cheap and apparently inexhaustible supplies of rich land lay upon our borders... But the choice lands in desirable locations are all occupied... and there is no alternative, but in expatriation, or [to] remain and be content with a lean and scanty subsistence.⁵⁷

Obviously Baxter's testimony indicated that the historically accepted narrative for the extreme wealth present in Hancock County prior to the Civil War must be carefully examined. Indeed, scholars have acknowledged the debt faced by many planters during times of plenty.

Shivers notes:

The growth of the plantation system was not without its casualties. The deed books show many transactions where people took on large holdings in good times which they were forced to relinquish in periods of financial stress. Without banks and at the mercy of fluctuating cotton prices and the vagaries of weather, planters often

⁵⁵ Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893* 28.

⁵⁶ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 140.

⁵⁷ Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893*, 29.

had to sell out and move on, or stay put and make do on a much reduced scale.⁵⁸

The Planters Club, which was the first successful planters club in the Georgia cotton belt,⁵⁹ soon became a leading advocate for agricultural reform in the Georgia Piedmont. As the soils became exhausted in Hancock, many farmers and planters were flocking to the millions of acres opened to white settlement in former Indian territory. As John Forsyth stated in an address before the Alabama Horticultural Society in 1851:

The settlement [of the planter's home] is not regarded as a home, but only as a temporary abiding place... This system is a blight on our land... We murder our soil with wasteful culture because there is plenty of fresh land West—and we live in tents and huts when we might live in rural palaces.⁶⁰

As much as the Planters Club wanted to encourage proper land management practices, it also aimed to discourage westward emigration that had become typical during this period when virgin lands were cheap and plentiful.

Richard S. Hardwick was another important member of the Planters Club known primarily for his study of and introduction of hillside terracing, a method that had never been used previously in the United States.⁶¹ Periodicals such as the *Farmers' Register* and the *Southern Cultivator* published articles and testimonials about these and other new techniques pioneered by planters in Hancock County throughout the 1840s and 1850s. Crop rotation experiments

⁵⁸ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 75.

⁵⁹ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 477.

⁶⁰ Bonner, "Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War," 374.

⁶¹ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 483.

with various types of grasses, including Terrell and Bermuda, occurred in Hancock and subsequently radiated to other areas of the Deep South.⁶²

Hancock experienced a similar – yet more dramatic – rise and fall that occurred in many other Cotton Belt counties as a result of cotton’s domination of agriculture during the first half of the nineteenth century. So much cotton was grown during this period that soil depletion was already a serious problem by the 1840s. In Hancock County, the Grand Jury presented to the Superior Court a list of complaints in 1841 stating:

the yearly drain of thousands from the state for horses mules and Pork that might be produced by ourselves... The making of cotton to purchase everything else necessarily causes us to be great consumers of the products of other states, consequently exchange must be upon us. Under this unwise policy our lands have become exhausted, our citizens involved in debt, and relief is called for from every quarter.⁶³

Despite worsening conditions, Hancock planters continued to make agricultural adjustments that improved their long-term economic position.

The decade of the 1850s witnessed an evolution in the plantation system that had profound impacts on those living in Hancock County. During this period the white population decreased 7.8 per cent while the enslaved black population increased 11.37 per cent, a demographic change that was accompanied by a concentration of land ownership and an increase in the value of land.⁶⁴ These trends meant that increasingly it was left to a smaller number of planters to make informed decisions when it came to the care of their land. To illustrate this

⁶² Bonner, “Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt,” 488.

⁶³ Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*, 67-68.

⁶⁴ Bonner, “Profile of a Late Antebellum Community,” 666.

dramatic shift in demographics, one should examine slave ownership throughout the nineteenth century. In 1802, there were a total of 819 slave owners and 4,823 slaves, as compared to 1860, when there was a total of 410 slave owners and 8,137 slaves.⁶⁵

David Dickson was a model agriculturalist in antebellum Hancock who championed agricultural reform, although he was not invited to become a member of the Planter's Club due to his open relationship with one of his mother's biracial slaves, with whom he had a mixed-race daughter. During the pinnacle of his planting career, Dickson owned a plantation southeast of Sparta where he farmed up to 15,000 acres.⁶⁶ Dickson is best known as being the first planter in the Deep South to use commercial fertilizers extensively. Dickson's records indicate that in 1860 he purchased \$38,000 worth of various fertilizers, a sum that indicates his excess wealth before the outbreak of the Civil War.⁶⁷ By that time, Dickson had perfected his planting methods and yielded production that was unheard of anywhere else in the county. His techniques included plowing deeply in initial planting and extensively using manure, followed by successively shallower plowing with the use of a "sweep" that he invented.⁶⁸ The core of Dickson's plantation is still largely intact, although thousands of acres were sold off and developed following Dickson's death in 1885.

⁶⁵ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 73.

⁶⁶ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 167.

⁶⁷ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 482.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 483.

Although some planters did very well for themselves in the antebellum period, many others were unable to become land and slave owners. On the one extreme, Dickson was a dominant leader within the county in term of his ownership of property and successful crop production. The value for his land holdings increased from \$15,000 in 1850 to \$200,000 in 1860, while his brother Thomas was the next highest earner pulling in \$60,000, with both brothers far surpassing any other planter in the county, each of whom made \$35,000 or less.⁶⁹ On the other extreme, there was a considerable portion of the white population (a little under half) that “did not share in the bounteous existence that is sometimes presented as typifying a planter life... [that when] added [to] the more than eight thousand black slaves the number of those with a material cause for discontent was far greater than the number of those who enjoyed the major benefits of the system.”⁷⁰ Poor whites prior to the Civil War became tenant farmers after its conclusion, which was a transition that still left them near the bottom of the socioeconomic totem pole.

Postbellum Developments in Hancock County that Hindered Growth

The town of Sparta was never directly impacted by the destruction experienced by some cities in Georgia during, and in the aftermath of, the Civil War. As Linley noted, Sparta was not burned to the ground by Union troops, which would have necessitated a revival of industries and a rebuilding of the

⁶⁹ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 82.

⁷⁰ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 86.

city.⁷¹ Consequently, the production from many industries in Sparta limped on after fighting ceased without ever having to renew or refresh vital industrial development within the county. Had fresh and innovative industries developed during this period, perhaps the outlook for the county's antebellum houses would be more promising than it is currently.

Reconstruction, the period that lasted from the end of the Civil War in 1865 until 1877, was difficult on all communities throughout Georgia, but in Hancock County residents particularly struggled to restore any forward movement of industry or agriculture that had defined the earlier nineteenth century. Without the economic force of slave labor, planters were not able to attain the same profit margins that they could prior to the Civil War. Despite the changing labor force, cotton always remained king in Hancock County throughout Reconstruction, despite the efforts of some planters to introduce new crops.

Reconstruction was marked by tension between the races, with whites feeling as if they had lost their rightful property, a grievance that in their minds could never be made right again. As many southern planters viewed it, northern abolitionists

ought to consider that the institution of slavery is a *civil* and not an *ecclesiastical* one; and that it is not one of our making; that we, as a slaveholding people, are mostly the inheritors of them from our forefathers—that they came into possession under the prejudice of early education. We have been taught from our cradles that they were *our money*, that we had a right or title to them.⁷²

⁷¹ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 142.

⁷² Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 84.

As it turned out, this way of thinking never fully left the county, even after the long and costly Civil War was over.

Because the price of cotton remained relatively high during the early years of Reconstruction—83 cents in 1865, 43 cents in 1866, and 31 cents in 1867—it allowed planters in western states such as Alabama and Mississippi, where land was more profitable, to offer higher wages than planters in Hancock County and other surrounding counties could ever afford to pay.⁷³ Accordingly, planters in Hancock had to not only deal with the loss of their enslaved workforce, but also with a lack of whites available to fill the void left by the emancipation of slaves.

Very few black persons became wealthy during Reconstruction, although one notable example did occur in Hancock County when biracial Amanda America, the daughter of famed planter David Dickson, inherited almost nearly all of her father's estate upon his death in 1885. Amanda's status as a mixed-race child of a slave meant that she was considered black. Due to the fact that a black woman stood to become the richest African American in history, newspapers as far away as New York and Cleveland covered the trial about the validity of David Dickson's will closely.⁷⁴ Though the bulk of Amanda's story took place after the Civil War, it is often included in antebellum histories of Hancock County to convey the intricacies of racial relations in the South. Ultimately Dickson's carefully selected team of lawyers successfully defended the validity of his will

⁷³ Ibid., 193.

⁷⁴ Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893*, 2.

and the judge sided with Amanda's rightful claim to her inheritance, regardless of the slave status of her mother Julia.

By 1890, sharecropping firmly dominated the agricultural scene in post-Reconstruction Georgia. In the decade prior to the turn of the century, planters had to adjust to a new balance of power within the county: a large amount of their powers to control trade and finance had shifted to bank and shop owners.⁷⁵ Planting became a riskier and more difficult venture, although a select few planters were able to remake fortunes lost after the Civil War, such as David Dickson in the southeastern portion of the county and George Rives of the Hurt-Rives Plantation in the northwest. Along with the sluggish revitalization of agriculture in the South following the Civil War, industrialization also moved at a slow pace. Research reveals that between 1890 and 1910, 5.6 million new manufacturing jobs were created, with only 381,000 of those jobs occurring in the six southern states, including Georgia, where plantations were most common.⁷⁶

At the turn of the century, the economic outlook for the vast majority of blacks was similar to what it had been at the end of the Civil War. Property ownership among the black community was virtually nonexistent. In 1901, the respected black author W.E.B. Dubois remarked that, "A Thrifty Negro in the hands of well-disposed landowners and honest merchants early became an independent landowner. A shiftless, ignorant Negro in the hands of unscrupulous

⁷⁵ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 318.

⁷⁶ Levernier and White, "The Determinants of Poverty in Georgia's Plantation Belt," 52.

landowners and shylocks became something worse than a slave.”⁷⁷ While it was rare, some blacks were able to own modest tracts of land and make a decent living during this period.

The Great Depression of the 1930s only exacerbated the problems that were negatively affecting the American South. While the plantation system still limped along in the form of sharecropping, the crippling of the United State’s economic system came as the final death blow to the southern plantation system. Although land collapse began in the 1920s, agricultural pursuits went into a crisis during the depression while “New Deal-pumped infusions of federal money into the region, [which] marked the beginning of the end for traditional plantations.”⁷⁸ The well-known Georgia historian Arthur Raper found that in 1934, sharecropping had declined nearly 15 per cent in just over a half a decade, while laboring for wages had increased 14 per cent.⁷⁹

The demographics of the county reflect the various exoduses that have occurred throughout the last century and a half. Since the increase in slavery that accompanied a growing demand for cotton, the county has always had a majority black population, despite the mass migration of blacks to northern cities in the early to mid-twentieth century and the steady exodus of whites since the nineteenth century. In 1800 before the cotton boom the black population made up just 33.6 per cent of the population of Hancock County, whereas in 1990 it was

⁷⁷ Dubois, “The Negro Landholder in Georgia,” 726.

⁷⁸ Kirby, “The Transformation of Southern Plantations c.1920-1960, 261.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 266.

79.4 per cent black,⁸⁰ with just 1,831 whites and 7,077 blacks living in the county. The demographic makeup of Hancock County helps to explain the sharp divide that exists between the small percentage of those with the means to restore houses and the rest of the population who would never be able to attempt such restorations. These demographic issues will be will be discussed in further detail in the analysis portion of this thesis.

Twentieth Century Developments

With the coming of the twentieth century, basic technologies and services developed within Hancock that provided residents with the luxuries of telephone communication, electricity, and public wells, all of which enhanced the daily lives of the county's citizens. The first of these innovations to arrive within the county was the telephone, which began widespread service in 1902, although several privately owned telephones were available for public use at a fee as early as 1879.⁸¹ The introduction of phones was soon followed by electric streetlights to light the streets of downtown Sparta in 1906 as well as a public well in 1911, which were services that continued to be introduced to rural areas within Hancock as late as the mid-1930s.⁸² These dates are relatively late when comparing Sparta to large cities such as Augusta and Savannah, but in terms of the rural areas within the state, these technological developments made Sparta increasingly metropolitan.

⁸⁰ Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893*, 19.

⁸¹ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 301.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 305.

The agricultural empire the county created prior to the Civil War never again regained the same amount strength it possessed during the antebellum period, although agricultural pursuits continued throughout the twentieth century. The revolution in planting techniques that occurred before the war was seemingly all for naught, as the “lively agricultural studies and experiments are a thing of the past. So, too, are the famous grapes, the vintage wines, and the thoroughbred horses. Some spark seems to have gone out. Hancock is still a predominately agricultural county, but it is no longer a leader in that field.”⁸³ The twentieth century proved to be difficult for Hancock.

The stability of cotton prices, which had once made the crop a reliable choice for Hancock planters, was affected strongly by major world events during the twentieth century. In 1914, with the outbreak of War World I in Europe, Hancock produced 25,077 bales of cotton: the largest crop of cotton in its history.⁸⁴ This boom provided much-needed relief to the planters of Hancock but the high was short-lived, as it was soon followed by the havoc wreaked by the boll weevil, which was present in Georgia by 1917.

The threat posed by the insect was not unknown to Hancock planters however, as its incidence was reported by the *Ishmaelite* as early as 1895.⁸⁵ The boll weevil was merely the final deathblow for the sharecropping system, which had already become economically untenable due to the intense focus on the cultivation of cotton and lack of planters’ intervening efforts to control erosion or

⁸³ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 145.

⁸⁴ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 293.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

crop rotation and fallow. During the 1920s in neighboring Greene County 43 percent of blacks and 23 percent of whites left to try to make a life in big cities.⁸⁶ Hancock experienced a similar exodus, which left the county grappling to find a dependable source of labor to support industries in the mid-twentieth century.

The migration of both races to cities was spurred by the agricultural plight affecting the area. As one researcher said, the great exodus of the landless poor in the American South began because “the boll weevil and a host of other southern miseries provided a classic “push” to black migration... [because] for the first time since emancipation, World War-generated industrial jobs outside the region presented generous alternatives to farm work—the classic “pull.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Reinberger, “The architecture of Sharecropping: Extended Farms of the Georgia Piedmont,” 117.

⁸⁷ Kirby, “The Transformation of Southern Plantations c. 1920-1960,” 259.



Figure 1, Map of Georgia Counties with Hancock Highlighted

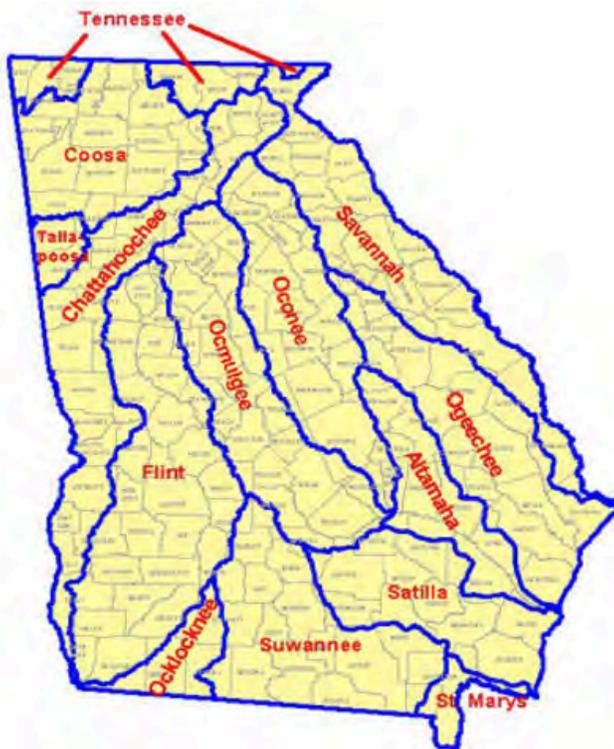


Figure 2, Georgia's River Basins



Figure 3, Map of Georgia's Geological Regions

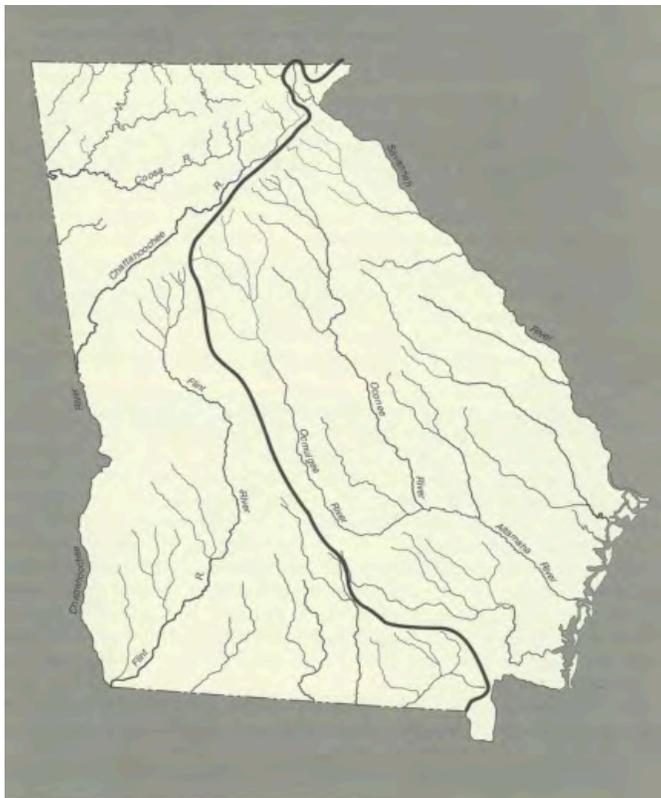


Figure 4, Proclamation Boundary of 1763 in Georgia

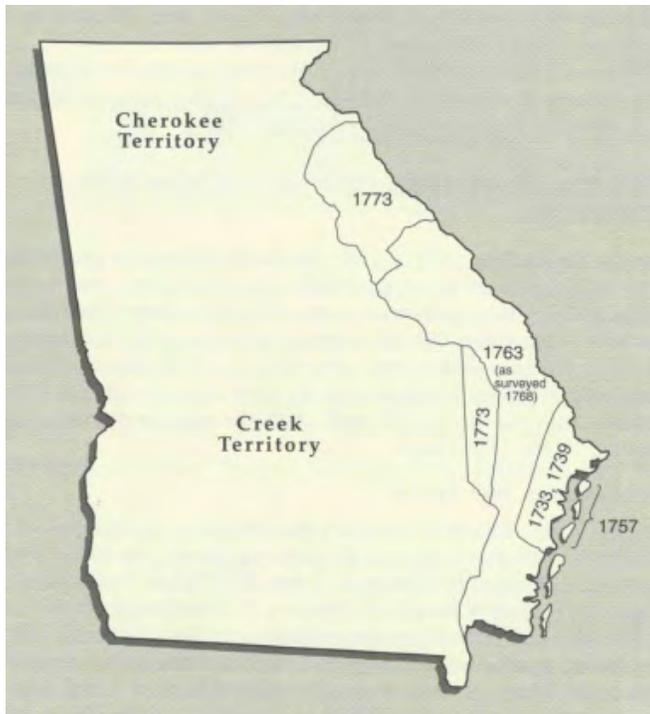


Figure 5, Indian Cessions, 1733-1773

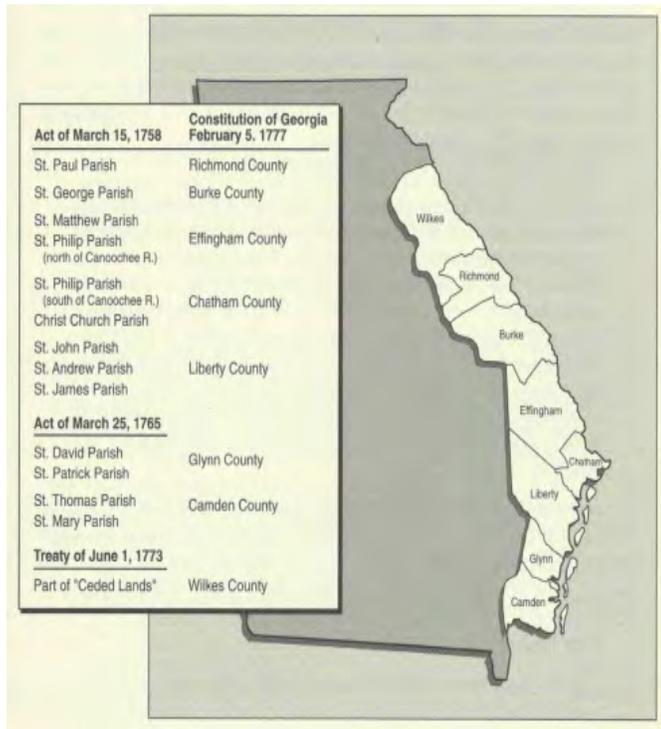


Figure 6, Georgia Counties in 1777

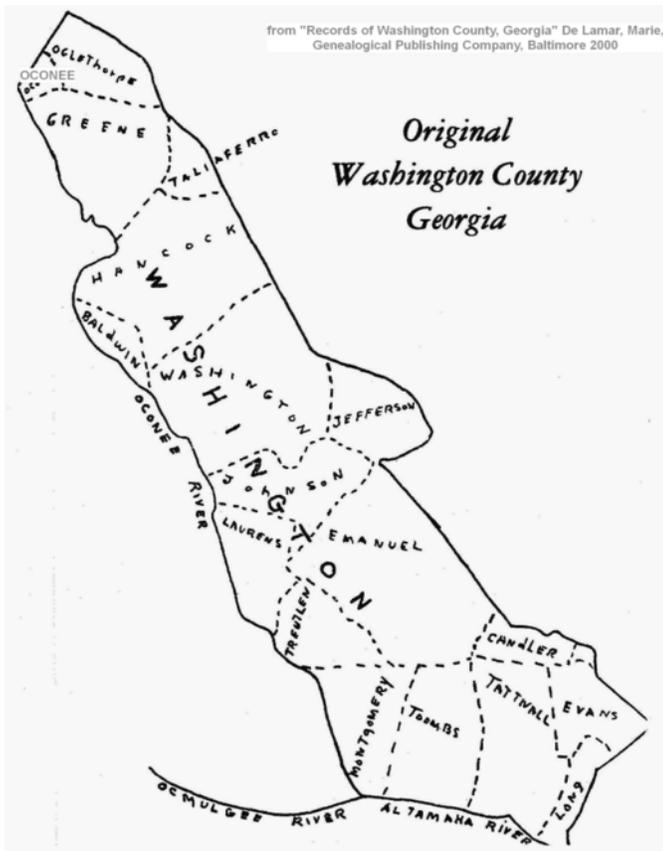


Figure 7, Original Washington County, Before the Creation of New Counties

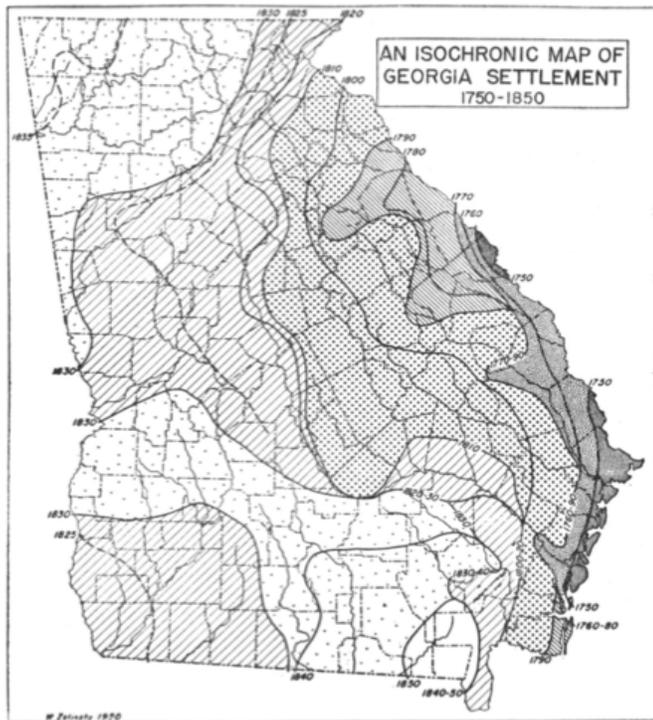


Figure 8, An Isochronic Map Of Georgia Settlement 1750-1850



Figure 9, Indian Cessions, 1783-1805



Figure 10, Georgia Populations in 1790

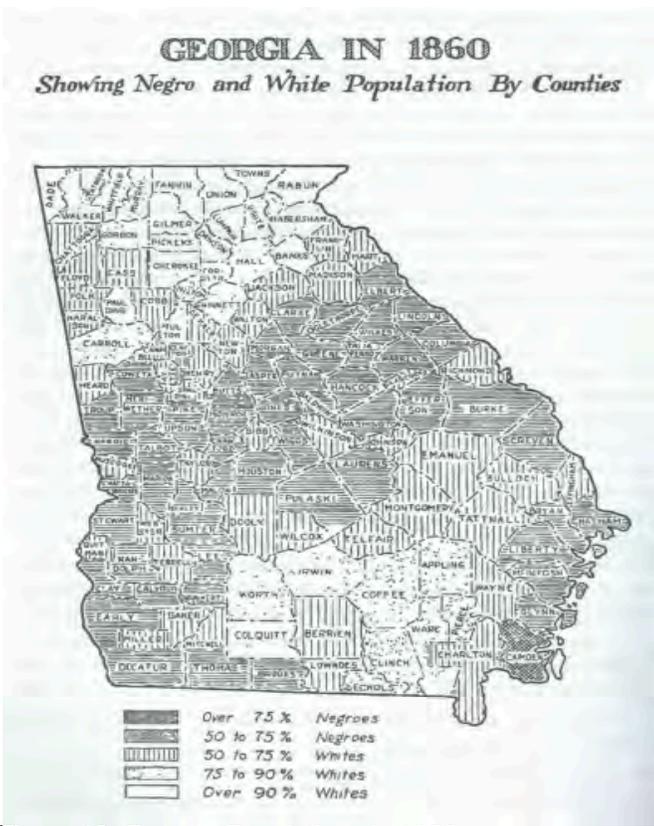


Figure 13, Georgia Populations in 1860



Figure 14, Cotton Production by Counties in Georgia in 1850

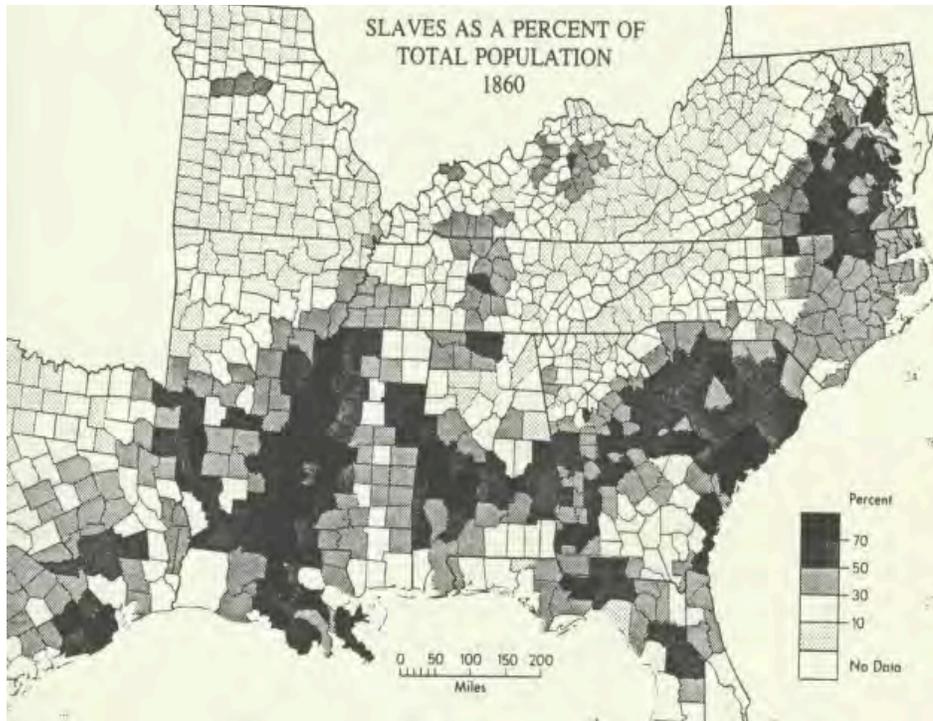


Figure 15, Slaves as a Percent of the Total Population in 1860



Figure 16, Timbered Land in Southern Hancock County



Figure 17, One of Many Granite Quarries in Hancock County



Figure 18, Drawing of the Sparta Female Model School



Figure 19, Early Postcard of Downtown Sparta



Figure 20, View Facing East on Broad Street in Sparta

CHAPTER 4

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ANTEBELLUM HANCOCK COUNTY

When asked to envision an antebellum house typical of Georgia, many think of enormous, white-columned mansions. This vision of a quintessential southern antebellum plantation has long been synonymous with the American South—in large part thanks to literature and film. The reality of housing during the antebellum period was often quite the opposite. The houses that the vast majority of Georgians lived in were anything but refined and architecturally complex.

Scholars of southern architecture acknowledge that huge mansions were the exception, not the rule, in the antebellum South. During that time, the majority of people in Georgia lived in small utilitarian houses that offered little, if any, architectural ornament, detailing, or style. In even the grandest and best-appointed houses, most occupants had to cope with living quarters that were cold and drafty in the winter and stifling in the full heat of the summer.⁸⁸ Indeed, the number of Georgians that would have inhabited grand mansions, such as Tara in *Gone with the Wind*, would have comprised less than 5 per cent of the total population in 1860.⁸⁹ When evaluating this resource, scarce even before the Civil War, it becomes clear they have fared only decently well in the modern era.

⁸⁸ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 134.

⁸⁹ Zelinsky, "The Greek Revival House in Georgia," 11.

As the period of time between the settlement of Georgia in 1733 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 spans nearly 130 years, researchers have grouped its architecture into several distinct periods. While these periods were defined by distinct architectural styles, there is always overlap between time periods as well as houses that cannot be neatly placed into a single period. For this thesis, the author has chosen to follow Professor John Linley's classification system, which begins with the first settlers in the region and their indigenous architecture that is so indicative of that early period. Next, Linley distinguishes the Oconee federal and transitional category from the later Greek Revival style that came to mark the architecture of the antebellum period. Houses that were intermediaries between indigenous two-story houses and Greek Revival houses were categorized in a transitional period and grouped with Oconee federal architecture.

In the antebellum period, houses were almost always built to take advantage of their environmental surroundings, regardless of the style in which they were designed. Linley noted the importance of:

The connection between climate and architecture, particularly that of the houses built just before the Civil War. Such characteristics as separate buildings for the kitchen, large porches, open hallways, high ceilings, oversize windows and doors, louvered blinds, lattice sun screens, and a preference for white or light colors were developed in part, at least, for their cooling effect.⁹⁰

Houses were sited according to the movement of the sun, prevailing winds, and topographical features: "The practice of leaving the space under the house open

⁹⁰ Linley, *The Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 1.

for the wind to blow through, and the conscious orientation and arrangement of rooms for summer breezes and winter sun are further indications of the influence of climate on antebellum architecture.”⁹¹ Many houses, including several notable remaining examples, were constructed on the highest hills so as to take as much advantage of the surrounding topography as possible; a goal that was of constant concern to antebellum builders.

Linley’s first type of architecture he defines within the region is Indigenous Pre-antebellum architecture. The years between the conclusion of the American Revolution and around 1820 are also collectively referred to as the Federal period of American architecture. During this period, even though floor plans were axial, individual rooms were located based on their utility and convenience, rather than symmetrical proportions.⁹² When pioneers first settled Georgia’s interior in the 1780s and 1790s, virtually all houses were comprised almost exclusively of logs, as “it may be safely stated that almost the whole of the gross material culture of the Georgia pioneer was based on the log... [as] when a town was founded, many of the first dwellings and inns were log.”⁹³ These houses were not elaborate as they were constructed based primarily on the utilitarian needs of a pioneer. The timber used to construct log houses was felled near the desired house sites. Because trees were in plentiful supply in North America and nails were time-consuming to produce, it was important for early settlers to know and understand log construction.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Linley, *The Georgia Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey*, 31.

⁹³ Zelinsky, “The Log House in Georgia,” 180-181.

The majority of log houses had one story, but sometimes they included lofts above and were even two-story structures in rare examples. Trees were selected according to circumference and length so that timbers could be created through the use of iron axes and adzes made by blacksmiths. Where the logs met at the four corners of the structure, various types of notching techniques were used to stitch the walls together. Log houses are load-bearing structures, so the walls themselves provide support for the roof. Techniques for log construction were passed down through generations and reflected the architectural heritage of the various European homelands of early settlers.

At the corners of log houses built by Swedish immigrants, the ends of the logs were left projecting out from the walls followed by a later trend of cutting the ends flush with an axe.⁹⁴ Later log houses built by German and immigrants of other nationalities incorporated logs that were keyed or dovetailed at the ends to allow for flush edges.⁹⁵ The plan of log houses was typically very simple, as houses often had either one or two rooms. If there were two rooms, they either shared a central chimney with two fireplaces or had separate chimneys for both rooms.

Of the houses studied for this thesis, the Amos House and some outbuildings were the only structures made completely of logs. The Amos House, discussed at greater length later in this paper, is included in Rozier's 1996 book on antebellum houses in the county, but lacks a photograph to show its condition

⁹⁴ Rempel, *Building with Wood*, 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

at the time. Rozier included the Georgia Office of Historic Preservation's original citation for the Amos House in the 1970s that described the house as plantation plain, clapboard, and two rooms over two rooms with a shed room and an original kitchen on the side. Today there is only evidence of the log structure that must have been beneath clapboard siding noted in the description, most of which has long rotted away, except for on the shed addition to the rear of the house. Currently, the house is so grown up with privet that it is difficult to photograph.

Today it is rare to see log houses on their original sites. Many log houses that can be seen from roadways have been relocated and restored on new sites. Fortunately research was conducted to identify and record log houses in Georgia over sixty years ago, when log houses were more numerous. Between 1950 and 1952, a graduate student in the geography department at the University of Wisconsin named Wilbur Zelinsky surveyed the state of Georgia documenting and studying log houses (in addition to Greek Revival houses that will be discussed later in this section). Zelinsky went on to become a professor of geography at Penn State University for fifty years.⁹⁶ Zelinsky found that the incidence of log houses in any given area had an inverse relationship with the development of roads that facilitated the movement of people, materials and ideas.⁹⁷ While he noted that undoubtedly his survey had missed numerous log houses covered up by clapboard siding, he estimated that even including the

⁹⁶ Penn State Department of Geography, "Professor Emeritus Wilbur Zelinsky," <http://www.geog.psu.edu/news/professor-emeritus-wilbur-zelinsky-passes-91> (accessed Feb. 17, 2016).

⁹⁷ Zelinsky, "The Log House in Georgia," 187.

missed examples, there were roughly 10,000 to 12,000 log houses remaining in Georgia.⁹⁸ After not locating a single log house anywhere in the state in an urban location, Zelinsky stated that, “good roads are the bane of log houses, and cities the harshest possible environment.”⁹⁹

Although log construction continued until the late nineteenth century, the trend of constructing houses made of logs began to fade with more advanced technologies that allowed for the production of mechanically sawn lumber. Increasing numbers of lumber mills made man-powered saw mills, also known as pit saw mills, nearly obsolete by the middle part of the century. In frame construction, “all principal load-carrying members are vertical, and the stress over a large area is collected by one member and, in turn, transferred to another member at a given point.”¹⁰⁰ In frame construction, an evolution of fasteners occurred throughout time: first, beginning with “the pin or peg, the nail, and the spike; [followed by] advanced technology that brought in the screw, and the bolt and nut.”¹⁰¹

From the time it was introduced, frame construction became the new architectural standard within a relatively short period of time. It is important to note, however, that frame houses retained many of the simple details that had characterized log construction. Houses were most often unpainted inside and out, although some had whitewashed board walls or ceiling rafters. Plain interior

⁹⁸ Zelinsky, “The Log House in Georgia,” 182.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁰⁰ Rempel, *Building with Wood*, 92.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

doors, windows, mantels, and interior woodwork were similar to houses built in the colonial era. These houses were “out of necessity built very simply of native materials, and were designed primarily to protect from the exigencies of and to exploit the benefits of the local climate.”¹⁰² In most cases, rooms remained small with low ceilings, which would stay the norm until the Greek Revival style took over.

During the early 1800s, timber frame construction began to dominate architecture, although during the colonial period it was already in widespread use. This period began a type of architecture Linley described as Oconee federal and transitional. In the early nineteenth century, houses on the Georgia frontier were constructed through the use of Indigenous architecture, although post-Colonial and Federal influences could sometimes be found.¹⁰³ By 1825 Federal construction had been replaced by the Greek Revival style, which was beginning to be found throughout the American South as early as 1820. These early houses continued to make use of wood, although frame houses with clapboard siding took the place of dark log houses that limited architectural creativity. Cut stone and brick foundation supports came into widespread use during this period. Houses that once would have rested very close to the ground began to be constructed on raised basements, which allowed for increased ventilation of air and protection from water infiltration.

¹⁰² Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 22.

¹⁰³ Linley, *The Georgia Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey*, 42-43.

By the late 1820s the cotton industry was in full swing, which allowed a growing class of planters to use extra revenue to begin experimenting with Greek Revival architecture, Linley's third type for the region. Beginning in the 1830s, houses with enormous columns supporting imposing porticos were constructed on high elevations across the landscape, although typical plantation houses could not boast such luxuries. Information on Greek architectural construction was first released in America as a part of John Haviland's *The Builder's Assistant* in 1818, published in Philadelphia.¹⁰⁴ From the period from 1820 until the Civil War, Greek Revival dominated architecture in Georgia.

It is important to remember that just as the quintessential white-columned Greek Revival mansion was the exception rather than the rule, so too were architecturally precise, symmetrical Greek Revival houses. The first Greek Revivals built were essentially combinations of early frame houses with only an indication of the stylistic changes to come later in the antebellum period. For example, "the portico may be the full two stories high but without properly carved pillars, or the portico may cover half or less of the front... [unlike] the better Greek Revival houses [that] involved the services of trained architects... as well as the importing of expensive artisans or specially commissioned work."¹⁰⁵ Greek Revival houses were further differentiated from the average farmer's house because of their characteristic raised basements, indicating the home had a cellar and therefore greater material wealth than most.

¹⁰⁴ Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: Georgia*, 132.

¹⁰⁵ Zelinsky, "The Greek Revival House in Georgia," 9.

The Greek Revival house was well suited for the American South because its design was well equipped to accommodate the hot and humid southern climate. The large porch overhangs of Greek Revival houses, for example, prevented overbearing sunlight or rain from entering the house, while the tall ceilings allowed for air circulation, all under a low pitched roof that was ideal for light southern winters.¹⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that while the Greek Revival house gained tremendous popularity between the 1830s and the Civil War, not one suggestion of such classically-inspired proportions can be found anywhere within the pages of well-known journals in the South between 1830 and 1860.¹⁰⁷ It is odd that the style proliferated to such an extent without any corresponding articles to explain how the style became so widespread.

Zelinsky's survey of Georgia is valuable to researchers not only for the material he collected in the mid-twentieth century, but also because it serves as a benchmark for the loss of Greek Revival houses over the intervening six decades. In 1952, Zelinsky determined 200 Greek Revival houses were left in Georgia. Zelinsky stressed that his findings revealed that the "Greek Revival house... was always minor in terms of the total settlement landscape of Georgia; [it] was mainly an urban phenomenon restricted to a relatively few towns."¹⁰⁸ Although he confessed that surely worthy examples were likely missed by his the survey, "even if they could be included in the reckoning, the disproportion

¹⁰⁶ Bonner, "Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War," 380.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 376.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 11.

between urban and rural examples would still be enormous.”¹⁰⁹ This reality provides the basis for the continued need to study and preserve early Indigenous architecture, Federal and transitional architecture, as well as later Greek Revival architecture: there were never and will never be many examples in existence. Accordingly, remaining antebellum houses must be treated as the rare cultural resources they are.

The Gothic Revival movement, Linley’s fourth category for the Oconee area, did gain some traction among southern builders and architects during the 1850s, despite the fact that the style was generally rejected in the South.¹¹⁰ Houses boasting high styles were sometimes met with criticism from southerners who thought that professional architects were incapable of creating houses of a more modest style. There was a select group within the South that despised false impressions given by the grand appearance of “what would appear to be massive columns, but which are generally made of wood, in the ridiculous ambition of appearing to live in something like a Grecian temple.”¹¹¹ Those who did not like the Greek Revival style believed that a building should read from the outside as it functions on the inside and felt that false facades, such as those formed by large entablatures, were unnecessary. Although there was some experimentation in Hancock County with Gothic architecture, houses built in this style are often overshadowed by their Greek Revival contemporaries. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some individuals even “felt that both the Greek Revival and the Gothic

¹⁰⁹ Zelinsky, “The Greek Revival House in Georgia,” 10.

¹¹⁰ Bonner, “Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War,” 376.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 378.

were completely out of harmony with the southern landscape, unsuited to plantation life, and not wholly adapted to the climate.”¹¹² The Italianate movement was also represented during the antebellum period, but Linley did not study any Hancock County examples in his book on the architecture of the area. Italianate elements, such as intricate wooden porches, were sometimes added to antebellum houses that originally began in another style. Overall, however, the Italianate movement is not well represented by the antebellum houses of Hancock County.

Supporting Plantation Structures

Outbuildings on plantations varied widely depending on a number of factors, but primarily based on the profitability of the particular venture in question. Most planters had plain, utilitarian outbuildings to support basic plantation functions. Supporting plantation structures might include dovecotes, smokehouses, well houses, spring or milk houses, slave quarters, wagon or animal barns, corncribs, outdoor kitchens, blacksmith houses, commissaries, and privies, among others. Researchers of the antebellum South “recognize the emergence of a “Southern system” of plantation architecture, involving the arrangement of the landscape as well as the design of buildings... in the 1850’s, when the quest for economic independence was undergoing transition to southern nationalism and political independence.”¹¹³ Outbuildings were a primary

¹¹² Ibid., 377.

¹¹³ Ibid., 376.

part of this architectural pattern, in which buildings were often located in a row behind and adjacent to the main plantation house, as can be seen in the 1835 plan for the Harris-Rives Plantation (now the site of Oakland Plantation), in Figure 21.

The construction quality used for slave quarters was decidedly poorer than that used to build primary plantation residences, which slaves often referred to as the “Big House.” Some research on slave housing during the antebellum period indicates that well-known slave narratives may have underrepresented the range of slave houses that existed, which included up to four-room houses according to other slave narratives.¹¹⁴ The most common type of slave house built throughout the South during the late antebellum period was a two-room structure known as a “saddlebag” configuration, which would have housed two separate slave families.¹¹⁵

Slave houses were inferior to the main houses in multiple ways. First, slave houses were built close to the ground, which resulted in the accumulation of trash and debris beneath them. Additionally, because their chimneys were poorly constructed, slaves houses almost always had smoky interiors. Most significantly, many slave houses lacked the material finishes, such as glass windows or interior paneling, which made life in the house more comfortable. In reality, slave houses were more akin to rustic cabins and outbuildings, because only architectural necessities were incorporated into their design. The health of

¹¹⁴ Vlach, ““Snug Li’l House with Flue and Oven”: Nineteenth Century Reforms in Plantation Slave Housing,” 121.

¹¹⁵ Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, 22.

the slave population was a common problem for planters and “while many argued they preferred log cabins because they could be built quickly and cheaply, they were countered by just as many who saw log buildings as the chief source of slave illness.”¹¹⁶

The various types of antebellum houses, including those of slaves, demonstrate the wide variety of living conditions that could be found over time. A wide disparity in housing was also reflected by racial divisions within the South at the time. For example, an antebellum slave cabin could easily be confused with a tenant house of the Reconstruction Era. Only subtle details such as the types of saw marks and exposed nails are the clues that can definitively date a structure to the antebellum period.

There is a particular type of outbuilding that appears in the architectural record of Hancock County, but it has never before been studied or properly documented. These structures were all made from stone or granite block and were built to have precisely eight sides. Numerous examples of octagonal structures built prior to the conclusion of the Civil War exist throughout Georgia. The main portion of the T.R.R. Cobb House in Athens was constructed as a plantation plain style house in 1834, but it was not until 1852 that its signature two-story octagonal wings were added.¹¹⁷ The Simeon Parker Plantation in Prattsburg, Georgia was also originally constructed in the 1830s as a plantation

¹¹⁶ Vlach, ““Snug Li'l House with Flue and Oven”: Nineteenth Century Reforms in Plantation Slave Housing,” 120.

¹¹⁷ T.R.R. Cobb House, “Heritage: The Home,” <http://www.trrcobbhouse.org/heritage/the-home.html> (accessed Feb. 24, 2016).

plain style house, but had one-story octagonal bays added to each side in the 1850s.¹¹⁸ In Columbus, Georgia, there was a one-story octagonal expansion of a house known as The Folly in 1862.¹¹⁹ Although octagonal construction was fairly rare in the antebellum period, it did occur in residential examples. Existing examples of octagonal outbuildings made of stone are mostly limited to the northeastern United States. The lost and surviving examples of octagonal outbuildings in Hancock County represent what was quite possibly an architectural form unique to the area.

In terms of construction efficiency, a square building is actually less efficient than a building shaped like an octagon in multiple ways. First, an octagonal structure encloses 20 per cent more area than does a square building.¹²⁰ For example, if someone was building a four-sided house and wanted to enclose 100 square feet, they would need 40 feet worth of material to build the walls, based on the formula for the area enclosed within a structure being equal to the length times the width of the building. If the person wanted to enclose 100 square feet within an eight-sided house, however, they could save 11 per cent in materials.¹²¹ In the antebellum period, planters sought efficiency in many ways, and these octagonal structures in Hancock County are physical evidence of that desire for efficiency.

¹¹⁸ National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," <http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/13000530.pdf> (accessed Feb. 24, 2016), 7.

¹¹⁹ Historic Columbus, "Columbus Historic District," <http://historiccolumbus.com/local-columbus-historic-districts/> (accessed Feb. 24, 2016).

¹²⁰ Absolute Green Homes, "Why Octagon?," <http://www.absoluteremodeling.com/TransformationsWhyOctagon.html> (accessed Feb. 24, 2016).

¹²¹ Personal conversation with Rick Joslyn.

Although what was likely the finest example of an octagonal provision house in Hancock County no longer survives, the ruins of at least four others still stand, in addition to documentary evidence of three more now-lost examples. These provision houses are all octagonal structures, the inside angles of which are 135 degrees each.¹²² Some had large openings for windows while others had small openings covered by iron bars. At least one was constructed of cut and dressed granite while the others were made from fieldstone. One of the surviving provision houses, the ruins of which can be seen in Figure 25, even had a coat of plaster applied over its stone walls.

¹²² Ibid.

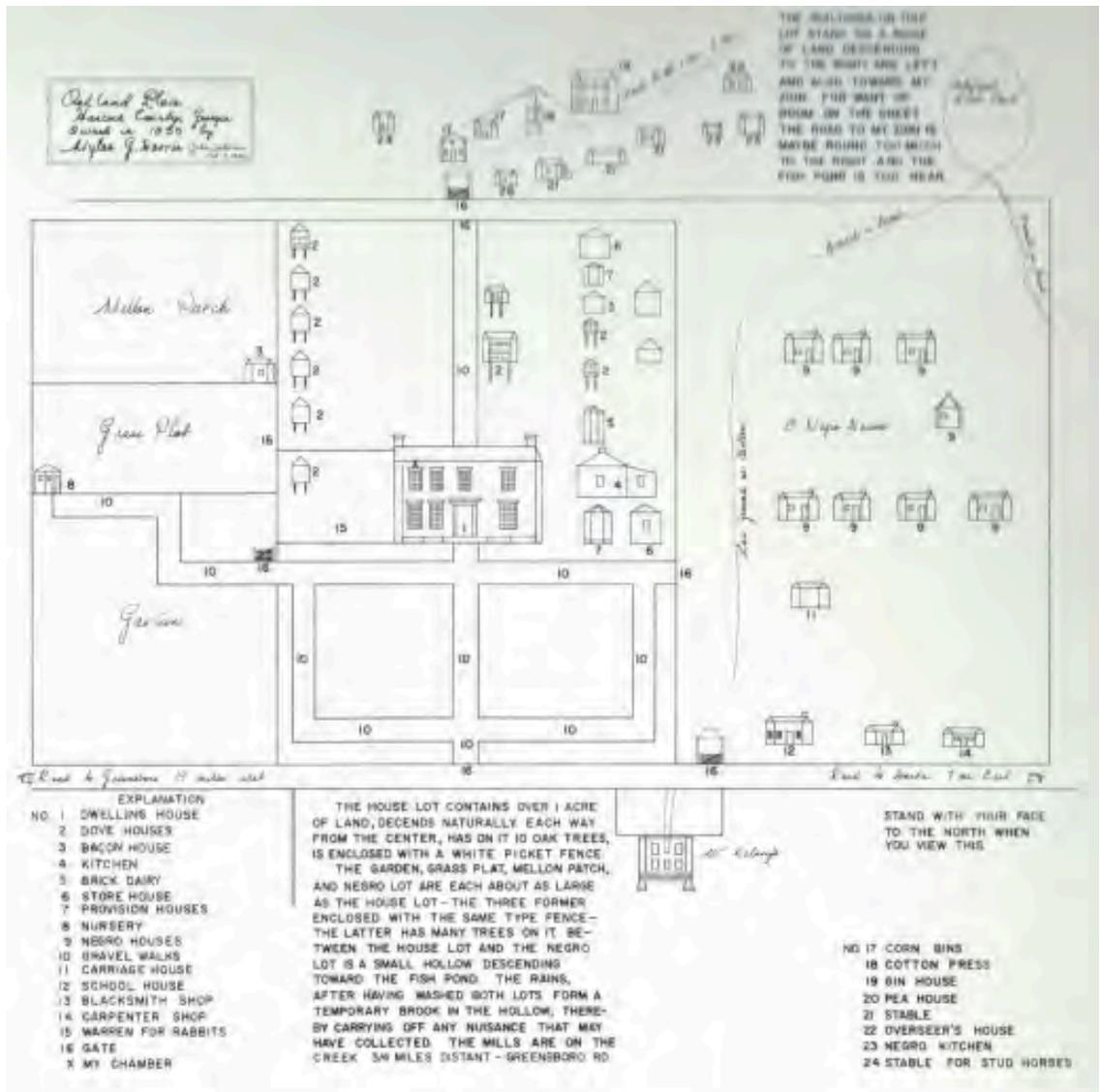


Figure 21, The Harris-Rives Plantation from October 1835 Drawing



Figure 22, First of Group of Three Provision House Ruins in Northwestern Hancock County



Figure 23, Second of Group of Three Provision House Ruins in Northwestern Hancock County

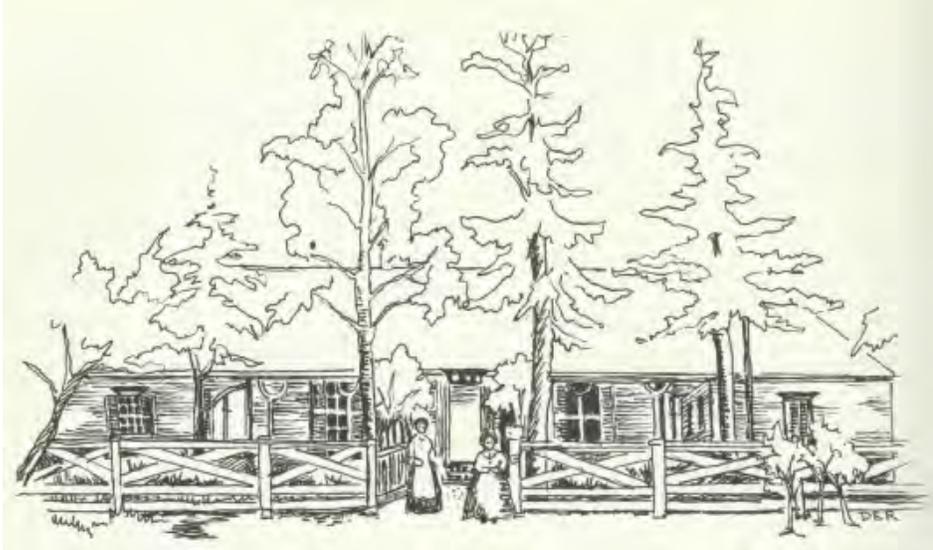


Figure 24, Drawing of Sunshine Plantation



Figure 25, Provision House with Stucco Application at Sunshine Plantation

CHAPTER 5

LOST ANTEBELLUM HOUSES OF HANCOCK COUNTY

While Hancock County has retained many of its notable antebellum houses, several important houses have been lost in the process of the county's decline following the Civil War. While it is important to study remaining antebellum houses and ensure their long-term preservation, research on antebellum houses that have already been lost is equally important for the preservation of our collective historical memory. Michael Kitchens' book on this topic, *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia's Lost Antebellum Homes*, has helped to preserve such histories; a subject to which few prior publications have been dedicated. Accordingly, a sample of significant antebellum houses that once stood in Hancock County will be discussed and evaluated for their significance in order to illustrate pertinent urban and rural architectural losses to the area's visible historical record. Although not all of the following houses are discussed in Kitchens' book, his efforts highlight the continuing need for such historical research.

When researchers envision houses that have been lost from a county, they often think of them falling victim to natural decay, neglect, fire, war, or some other untimely end. In reality, some houses were simply moved to new locations, as was the case with three of Hancock's antebellum houses. Two of these lost

houses were moved to nearby Milledgeville, where one of which has been restored as a private residence. The Devereux-Coleman House, built by Samuel Devereux sometime between 1820 and 1834, was originally located southwest of Sparta on the highway to Milledgeville.¹²³ The house, which had been neglected for decades, was moved, one story at a time, in the early 1980s and sited within a residential subdivision. While it is an architectural loss for Hancock County, the move of the Devereux-Coleman House ensured it would be well looked after for decades to come.

Throughout the 1850s, Andrew Jackson Lane built Granite Hill, which was unfortunately lost in the late twentieth century.¹²⁴ Lane was a notable citizen of Hancock County, particularly during and after the Civil War when he led the 49th Regiment of the Georgia Volunteers and then became a leading railroad builder of the South, working on the Macon & Augusta, Eufaula & Montgomery, New Orleans Pacific, the St. Johns & Lake Eustis, and the Pensacola & Atlantic Railroads.¹²⁵ Lane made extensive use of natural outcroppings of granite in the vicinity when constructing his home. The walls of the house's foundation were made from 18-inch thick granite blocks that were quarried from the property.¹²⁶ The frame and clapboard upper story of the house also reflected the skill of the unknown craftsmen who built it.¹²⁷ Lane had another structure built on his property that is arguably more impressive than his residence. A provision house,

¹²³ Rozier, *Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 227.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹²⁵ Shivers, *The Land Between: Hancock County, Georgia, to 1940*, 206.

¹²⁶ Rozier, *Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 176.

¹²⁷ Kitchens, *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia's Lost Antebellum Homes and Plantations*, 196.

which would have likely been used to house the valuable provisions for Lane's plantation, was a two-story, eight-sided building constructed entirely of granite. Written sources have called the structure a jail,¹²⁸ but its likely use was of a less nefarious nature.

Granite Hill eventually succumbed to the same fate as many grand antebellum mansions, after the family who built it moved elsewhere and left the house in the hands of individuals who were not able, or willing, to maintain it. In the 1960s, however, a family from Macon deconstructed the main house at Granite Hill with the intention of rebuilding it in their hometown, where it sadly burned to the ground in the rebuilding process. It is ironic that in the process of being "saved" by individuals with seemingly good intentions, such an important part of Hancock County was forever lost. Had the house remained on its original site, it may well have suffered a similar – yet slower – fate.

Today, the site where Granite Hill once stood is an active granite quarry. All signs of the house and associated outbuildings have been erased from the landscape, save for the entrance gates to the plant, which were constructed using the granite blocks from Granite Hill's octagonal provision house demolished in 2010 to make way for mining operations.¹²⁹ The loss of Granite Hill from Hancock County's architectural landscape is made less severe by the survival of Glen Mary, which greatly resembles Granite Hill.

¹²⁸ Rozier, *Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 178.

¹²⁹ "The Passion of the Stonemason Kickbush," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BauG5dTzXI4> (accessed December 10, 2015).

Old Dominion, shown in Figures 34-36, was once located off of Jones Street at Spring Street, just north of Sparta's city center, across Georgia Highway 15 from the Terrell House. The house, which was likely constructed before 1806, was one of Sparta's oldest houses. The early house, which was most notably the site of the first Methodist conference held in Georgia, decayed throughout the twentieth century, evolving through various states of disrepair until it was finally demolished in the 1980s.¹³⁰ The sketch shown in Figure 35 was drawn in 1922 by an artist visiting the county, who after seeing the house a very poetic description of the house:

Now, [after the plantation era] all is silence. No footfall echoes on its threshold. No sound save the sighing of the winds through the branches of the huge and venerable oak. We glance inside. The grinning chimneys, the falling plaster, a loose brick here and there, bear mute testimony to the Old Dominion's forgotten glory.¹³¹

In 1972, Linley noted the fine craftsmanship used in the construction of Old Dominion, which was at that time in ruinous condition. The house's weatherboard siding was beaded, a finish that would have been enormously time consuming as it would have need to be applied by hand on every single board, which demonstrates the attention to detail that went into constructing the house.¹³² The site of Old Dominion has been covered by a parking lot at the police department, just across Jones Street, or Georgia Highway 15, from the Terrell House. Nothing remains of the ancient structure that once welcomed visitors traveling south into the city of Sparta.

¹³⁰ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 63.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

¹³² Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 31.

Other significant antebellum architectural losses were incurred within the county in more recent decades.¹³³ Pomegranate Hall was a favorite of many researchers of antebellum architecture primarily for its relatively uncommon design¹³⁴ and siting at the crest of Adams Street in downtown Sparta. The house, built by Judge Nathan Sayre in 1839, had walls that were two feet thick, constructed entirely from local stone and brick.¹³⁵ The house was of an asymmetrical design, with a side-hall entry and two large rooms on each floor off of the front and back of the hallways both upstairs and down. The rear of the house was full three stories, making it a story taller than the front of the house, although from the street this design element cannot be seen. The builder of Pomegranate Hall, Judge Nathan Sayre (1795-1853), was rumored to have kept a secret family with his house slave, a family that according to legend lived in the rear part of the house and was kept private from Sayre's public relationships.¹³⁶

Pomegranate Hall caught fire in the mid 2000s and suffered extensive damage throughout the house. It is unknown whether or not preservation measures to stabilize the remaining portion of the structure would have helped the current outlook for the house. The onetime Sparta landmark still stands, but in ruinous condition. While most of the house's facade remains intact, much of the rear portion is missing and has collapsed into the center of the structure. The Doric column on the far left that helped to support the enormous two-story portico

¹³³ Kitchens, *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia's Lost Antebellum Homes and Plantations*, 185.

¹³⁴ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 81.

¹³⁵ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 70.

¹³⁶ Kitchens, *Ghosts of Grandeur: Georgia's Lost Antebellum Homes and Plantations*, 182.

has fallen, which has placed tremendous pressure on the other columns, exceeding the load that they were designed to accommodate. In its current state the house appears to be a total loss for the city of Sparta as it has been exposed to the elements for over a decade. There are some potential preservation approaches to Pomegranate Hall that would benefit the city. For example, at Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville, Georgia, the historic interior of the house was irreparably damaged so the ruins were stabilized and converted to a historical gardens and museum.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Barnsley Resort, "History," <http://www.barnsleyresort.com/history.aspx> (accessed Feb. 10, 2016).



Figure 26, The Devereux-Coleman House Before Being Moved



Figure 27, The Devereux-Coleman House in Milledgeville, Present Day



Figure 28, Original Mantle in the Devereux-Coleman House, Present Day



Figure 29, Historic Photograph of Granite Hill Plantation



Figure 30, Provision House at Granite Hill in 1976



Figure 31, Interior of Provision House at Granite Hill in 1976



Figure 32, Provision House at Granite Hill with Person for Scale



Figure 33, Entrance to Aggregates USA, Built from Granite Hill's Provision House, Present Day



Figure 34, Old Dominion in 1973



Figure 35, 1922 Sketch of Old Dominion



Figure 36, Fireplace at Old Dominion in 1973



Figure 37, Pomegranate Hall in 1973



Figure 38, Pomegranate Hall, Present Day



Figure 39, Rear Kitchen of Pomegranate Hall, Present Day

CHAPTER 6

EXTANT ANTEBELLUM HOUSES OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Figure 40 is the map of the city Sparta from Rozier's *The Houses of Hancock, 1785-1865*. From this map, one can see that the town's primary axis is comprised of its north-south route (linking Sparta to Greensboro in the north and Sandersville in the south) intersecting with its east-west route (linking Augusta to the east with the frontier country to the west). These two major thoroughfares meet in front of the Victorian courthouse, which was constructed from 1881-1883. The plan for the city, known as the "Sparta Plan," was so successful that Jefferson, Lincolnton, Danielsville, Dublin, and other Georgia cities later copied it.¹⁴⁰ The Sparta Plan required a somewhat mountainous terrain, as a steep incline to approach the city square was required for the plan's full effectiveness.¹⁴¹

Surrounding the town's central axis are numerous antebellum houses that were constructed at various times in a range of styles. Although the author visited almost all of the houses (except those noted) listed in Appendix A and B, for the purposes of this thesis not every house could be discussed in detail. Accordingly, the only houses included for evaluation were notable for one or more specific

¹⁴⁰ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 119.

¹⁴¹ Sears, *The First One Hundred Years of Town Planning in Georgia*, 21.

reasons. Dozens of other antebellum houses are not discussed, although this does not indicate they are not worthy of preservation.

Case studies from Hancock County were primarily drawn from Rozier's *The Houses of Hancock, 1785-1865*, from Linley's *The Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, and from the Hancock County tax assessors' data. The tax assessors' data includes a date of construction, square footage, and parcel size along with the tax information for listed houses, all of which are helpful for the study of antebellum houses. The data from the tax assessor's office is not without flaws, however. Dates ascribed to houses are sometimes inaccurate, and unpredictably so. Because dates can be much earlier or later than what they really should be, the tax assessors' data is most useful as an indicator of a general age range, rather than an actual reflection of a true date of construction. Another problem inherent in the data is a lack of physical addresses for some properties, although this missing information is not as much of a hindrance as when properties have no parcel maps. Researchers can only hope that with better technology in the future, the tax assessors' data will improve with accuracy and completeness. For now, it merely serves as a guide to facilitate research.

The city of Sparta has a consolidated group of antebellum houses within its downtown, almost all of which are part of the Sparta Historic District. Maiden Lane has a higher concentration of antebellum houses than any other street in Sparta. This street was originally named Rabun Street, but after the Sparta

Female Academy was opened, Rabun Street began to be called Maiden Lane. Shown in sketch in Figure 18, the Sparta Female Model School educated young women from 1831-1895. Its campus was located at the far end of Maiden Lane in downtown Sparta. Comprised of 3.4 acres, the campus opened in 1833 on the former drill field fronting the Abercrombie House.¹⁴² Although the main school building was demolished in 1890¹⁴³, the two dormitories are currently personal residences. While one of the two dormitories is well maintained, the other is in a particularly deteriorated condition, needing restoration to many areas. The central structure between the two surviving dormitories was demolished and a house built upon the site in the mid-twentieth century.

The house that is generally accepted to be the oldest house in Sparta is the Abercrombie-Dickens House,¹⁴⁴ which was constructed sometime before 1794 by Charles Abercrombie (1742-1821).¹⁴⁵ The following year, in 1795, Abercrombie was responsible for surveying the town of Sparta and laying out its street pattern. The house stands at the southern end of Maiden Lane and remains a testament to the early heavy timber frame construction used to build it: it is still held together with wooden pegs.¹⁴⁶ Sawn lumber is used throughout the house, which although remarkably early for such construction. Forrest Shivers accounts for this based on Abercrombie's status as a representative from Greene County who spent much time in Augusta where sawn lumber and other advanced

¹⁴² Ibid., 131.

¹⁴³ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 17.

¹⁴⁴ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 122.

¹⁴⁵ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

building materials could be obtained.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of how Abercrombie came by his materials, the house is impressive for its sheer size at the time it was constructed. Today, the house's age is evident primarily because of its Federal-style, not from chimneys, which were both removed at some point in the house's history. Also long gone are the flanking slave cabins that housed Abercrombie's slaves: he was listed as owning 24 in 1794.¹⁴⁸

The house considered to be the next oldest in Sparta is located on Broad Street on the north side of the road heading west toward Milledgeville. The Rossiter- Little House, likely built in 1798 by Dr. Timothy Rossiter,¹⁴⁹ still retains its eighteenth century form and features, although two projecting wings on the house's street-facing side were likely later additions.¹⁵⁰ The frame house's original saltbox form can clearly be distinguished, however, from a photograph taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey, shown below in Figure 45.

Two other houses on Maiden Lane—the Alston-Wiley House and the Alston-Hutchings House—were both built sometime in late 1819 by Robert West Alston.¹⁵¹ For its large size, architectural detailing, and early date of construction, the Alston-Wiley House, shown in Figures 51 and 52, is paramount to the history of Maiden Lane. It, along with a few others, best reflect the deeply rooted tradition of romantic architecture of the Old South that can be found in Hancock County. The porch's whimsical wooden balustrade, which was not an original

¹⁴⁷ Shivers, *The Land Between: Hancock County, Georgia, to 1940*, 122-123.

¹⁴⁸ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Shivers, *The Land Between: Hancock County, Georgia, to 1940*, 123.

¹⁵⁰ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 98.

¹⁵¹ Shivers, *The Land Between: Hancock County, Georgia, to 1940*, 124.

feature, combined with the grand front steps make the house reminiscent of a sweeping southern landscape. The house is in fairly good condition, but needs restoration work, particularly on its back right side corner where it evidently has suffered from issues pertaining to integral gutters. The Alston-Hutchings House, shown in Figures 53-55, is thought by some to have been built by Robert for his son Willis Alston, but others think by Charles Haynes (1784-1841), a five-time Congressman.¹⁵²

Two of the antebellum houses on Maiden Lane were once dormitories for the Sparta Female Model School, both constructed in 1832. Although the central school building no longer remains, the two dormitories are a reminder of Sparta's educational legacy. One of the dormitories will be discussed in further detail later in this paper as a part of a condition assessment of antebellum houses in peril. The other dormitory, known as the Harris-Middlebrooks House, is well maintained, making it quite the opposite of its former educational counterpart. The house also has a detached kitchen, which can be seen in Figure 58.

Sitting just off Highway 15, just north of the courthouse and monument square, is the Terrell House, which was completed in 1822 by Dr. William Terrell (1786-1855).¹⁵³ Terrell, who moved to Sparta during his second term in congress from 1817-1821, was a leading citizen of Hancock County. Terrell is also notable for his organization of the Hancock County Planter's Club, of which he became

¹⁵² Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 25.

¹⁵³ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 95.

the leader.¹⁵⁴ Terrell's agricultural pursuits on his county plantations were highly significant, as he was one of the first to experiment with crop rotation using various types of winter grasses, including his own variety known as "Terrell" grass, which at the time was the only winter grass grown in the Lower South.¹⁵⁵

Aside from its grandeur, Terrell's property was also known for his ornate gardens and glass conservatory where he grew rare plants that he had collected while representing the Georgia Legislature as a young man from 1810-1813.¹⁵⁶

Although the conservatory no longer exists, there is a clear impression of where it once joined the left side of the basement level of the house.

Terrell's house is an excellent example of Federal-style architecture, although for most of the twentieth century a Victorian-era porch across its facade misrepresented its age.¹⁵⁷ Both stories have beautiful fanlights, which upon close inspection are made up of multiple panes of glass abutted to one another without any method of bonding. This masterful use of glass can be seen below in Figure 60. Surprisingly the house does not have a grand staircase, but rather two narrow passages that are stacked on top of each other, which explains why the windows on the facade are not precisely symmetrical as seen above in Figure 59. The facade of the Terrell House reflects a Palladian influence.¹⁵⁸ Because the house borrowed from a style that demands absolute symmetry, it is interesting that Terrell chose to have the stairs removed from the center hall and moved to a

¹⁵⁴ Bonner, "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," 478.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 488.

¹⁵⁶ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 96.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 97.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 38.

slender passage. The resulting space, however, is very open without the staircase, effectively making it another functional room of the house.

One of the most fascinating aspects about the construction of the house was seemingly not discovered until the early 1990s when new owners removed badly damaged clapboard siding on the north-facing facade. This restoration revealed brick nogging, which was a common construction method in medieval Europe, in which bricks or clay used as infill between the heavy timber frame walls of houses.¹⁵⁹ While architectural historians are not sure exactly what factors motivated builders to use brick nogging historically, some research suggests that bricks were added to braced framing for increased insulation and rigidity, or even for the purpose of fireproofing the structure.¹⁶⁰ Nogging does appear in the United States architectural record, but primarily in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions of the country.

Within the walls of the Terrell House, brick nogging runs the full length of all of the exterior walls on only the ground floor of the house. Construction incorporating brick nogging is exceedingly rare in the American South, which makes the Terrell House all the more significant to the architectural history of Georgia. Another reason why the nogging on the Terrell House is particularly impressive is that such a method of construction would have been cost prohibitive for all but the wealthiest of homeowners. In Maryland, where the use

¹⁵⁹ Montgomery County Planning Department, "Places from the Past," http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/places_from_the_past/documents/p052_073.pdf (accessed Feb. 29, 2016), 63.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

of brick in houses was more common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, researchers noted that the individuals who could afford to construct brick houses were part of “the uppermost strata of the economy.”¹⁶¹

Another house from Hancock County that is known to have incorporated brick nogging on a much smaller scale is the John Roe House, which was moved to Milledgeville in the early 1980s. Rozier states that the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation once provided the owner of the John Roe House with a citation that, “the house is the only documented example in Georgia built with brick nogging.”¹⁶² The only reason that the nogging was discovered in the John Roe House was because it was relocated and at the Terrell House because it had damaged siding. Such discoveries beg the question of how many important details of antebellum construction lay hidden within the walls of historic houses, undiscovered by modern owners.

Although the Terrell House has been documented by a number of credible sources, a reference to the unusual incorporation of brick nogging within the interior of its first floor walls cannot be found in any known written resources about the house. When the clapboard siding was removed from Terrell House, its owner Rick Joslyn believes that the sequence of its wall construction was revealed. Joslyn and his workmen felt that the impressions formed by the mortar on the outside of the bricks, which can be seen below in Figure 65, indicated that the bricks were pushed up against siding that was already in place. According to this

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 216.

theory the foundation level was built of stone, which was followed by heavy timber framing of the first and second floors. Next, clapboard siding was nailed to the exterior of the walls and brick nogging was inserted into the openings between timbers to insulate the house. Finally, wooden lath was nailed to the inside of the framing timbers and plaster was applied.

There is no evidence that the house was constructed in stages, although one can only speculate as to the reasons why only the first story of the house incorporated brick nogging, which could have easily included its expense. During the restoration of the north facade of the Terrell House, a small set of fingerprint indentations was discovered and photographed. These fingerprints could have easily belonged to that of a slave, but there is no documentation of slaves assisting in the construction of Terrell's house, despite the fact that he owned many. The lack of such documentation is a common problem faced by historians, and while it is unfortunate that the builders of the Terrell House will likely never be recognized, it should be acknowledged that such documentation would be exceedingly rare. It is fascinating to think of the various craftsmen, including slaves, whose combined efforts made a house such as the Terrell House possible to be constructed in frontier Sparta. Often the importance of slaves to the construction of grand antebellum houses was not addressed historically. Historians have postulated as to whether this lack of recognition was the result of

“the racial taboo against taking advice from dark-skinned people, or because of a fundamental fear of encouraging leadership in slaves.”¹⁶³

When Olney Ethridge built the Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House in 1853,¹⁶⁴ it was unique among the antebellum houses of Sparta because of its Gothic Revival style. The house is located on Boland Avenue on the south side of downtown. The architectural historian Frederick Nichols admired the interesting style of the Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House and its detailed wooden accents on its eaves and front porch, calling the house a masterpiece of jigsaw design.¹⁶⁵ Houses built in this style were often referred to as “wedding cake” houses for their intricate woodwork, which was “made possible by the modern technology that allowed freer styles and more elaborate ornamentation.”¹⁶⁶

Figure 69 is Rozier’s map of greater Hancock County, which also includes the sites of lost antebellum houses. His map of the county is particularly helpful, as it gives the reader an idea of the distribution of antebellum houses that once existed within Hancock. There were a total of 46 antebellum houses surveyed for this thesis that were spread all throughout the county. When compared with the concentrated 33 antebellum houses in Sparta, one begins to appreciate the isolated nature of these county houses during the antebellum era.

Possibly the earliest surviving example of Hancock’s most important antebellum houses located within the county is the Hurt-Rives Plantation, a

¹⁶³ Mooney, *Prodigy Houses of Virginia: Architecture and the Native Elite*, 168.

¹⁶⁴ Rozier, *Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 78.

¹⁶⁵ Nichols, *The Architecture of Georgia*, 63.

¹⁶⁶ Rozier, *Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 78.

portion of which is thought to have been constructed sometime in the mid-1790s,¹⁶⁷ and which is still located in a very rural setting. Of all of the houses surveyed for this thesis, the Hurt-Rives Plantation provides the most authentic character of having traveled to the past, primarily because of its very rural setting. The house was in a poor state of disrepair when it was surveyed and photographed for Linley's 1972 book. Despite its rundown appearance at the time, Linley recognized the plantation's significance, suggesting it had more original plantation structures than any other antebellum plantation in the region.¹⁶⁸ Today the property retains some two-dozen outbuildings, including three that date to the eighteenth century, which are illustrated in Figure 72.¹⁶⁹

The main house itself was a simple cabin, with enormous stone fireplaces that reflect the size of the logs used by early settlers of Hancock County, as well as the importance given to warmth and cooking in an antebellum household. Today, this is one of the few places in Georgia where an intact row of slave cabins can still be observed. The slave cabins were constructed as duplexes, each of which provided shelter for multiple families of slaves from a single chimney with two fireplaces. Although the fieldstone fireplaces in the slave cabins at the Hurt-Rives Plantation are enormous, their entire width was not used to accommodate logs. An open fire would have been kept on one side of the fireplace while coals for cooking would be kept on the other.¹⁷⁰ Still, the

¹⁶⁷ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 222.

¹⁶⁸ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 63.

¹⁶⁹ Information provided by Bob Woodall, owner of the Hurt-Rives Plantation.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

enormous size of the fireplaces compared to the small size of the rooms they heated demonstrates that the architectural proportions of fireplaces varied little from the primary plantation house to that of the slaves.

Other very early houses are located within the county, but none are as expansive as the Hurt-Rives Plantation. Another very early frame house, for which no name could be found, is located in the southwestern portion of the county along the highway heading southwest towards Milledgeville. The house has the appearance of an old stagecoach inn, with enclosed rooms adjacent to its front porch, although there is no documented evidence to confirm such an assertion. A unique feature of this house that was not observed anywhere else in the county was that the rear portion of the house was actually constructed *on top* of a large granite boulder.

Another of the earliest houses in the county is also one of the best preserved. The only single story dogtrot in the survey is located in the woods, not visible from the road, behind a Victorian house on Highway 15, just south of Sparta. The house, known as the Saunders House, is constructed entirely of hand-hewn logs, evidenced by the countless axe and adze marks throughout the structure. Each room originally has its own chimney, although one side chimney has totally collapsed. As seen in Figure 83, the interior of the dogtrot has boards covering the gaps between the logs, likely to provide an extra barrier against the elements.

William Shivers (1784-1852) built Rock Mill, shown in Figures 84-87, in the eastern part of the county around 1820.¹⁷¹ For its early age, the house is exceedingly large, which reflected the financial status of its builder. The statistics of the first house in the county to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places¹⁷² are astonishing: 14 rooms with heart pine floors throughout and 12 fireplaces¹⁷³ make this house one of the largest surveyed for this thesis. The house has a granite block foundation with two full stories and four chimneys that meet in a unique way in the attic to form two single chimneys exiting the roof.

Most houses in the county reflect the architectural trends of the eras in which they were constructed, but in some cases they did not. Often, architectural detailing was handled in a vernacular manner, which sometimes resulted in a fascinating mixture of features. Such a blend of features defines an exceedingly unique house in Hancock County. The Cheely-Coleman House, shown in Figures 88-93 was built in 1825 by Thomas Cheely¹⁷⁴ on the shoals of the Ogeechee River in far eastern portion of the county. Aside from its unique architecture, during the Civil War the Federal Cavalry Commander, Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick, used the house as his headquarters while in the area.¹⁷⁵ On a wall in the house, Kilpatrick and his staff signed a wall beneath a saying: "May all the names engraved here / in the golden book appear."¹⁷⁶ To retain such a tangible

¹⁷¹ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 146.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 38.

¹⁷⁵ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 163.

¹⁷⁶ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 40.

piece of American history is just one of the many reasons why the Cheely-Coleman House is so significant.

The architectural details of the house are fairly simple. The cornice is made up of small holes and a scalloped edge, which are both carved into a thick board as seen in Figure 93. The capitals of the columns are formed by wooden silhouettes of Ionic scrolls that were nailed to the front of the columns. The house has two sets of stairs; one inside that is the only way to access the upper bedroom on one side of the house and another set of stairs on the porch to access the upper bedroom on the other side of the house. Linley marveled at the ingenuity of its builder, whom he suspected to be not highly-trained based on his naive, yet unique, handling of its architectural plan:

In plan, detail, and sheer ingenuity, few houses offer more of interest and delight to the student of Early American architecture than does the Cheely-Coleman-Moore house... [due to] its two-story porch with curving stairs and its marvelous indoor-outdoor relationship [that] sets this house apart from all the others.¹⁷⁷

Indeed, as one ponders these various architectural details and considers the early date of construction of the house, the Cheely-Coleman House is absolutely remarkable. The house is one of the very few surviving examples of a two-story dogtrot house; perhaps one reason why Linley listed it as the only house in the county possessing national significance in his definitive book on the architecture of the Middle Georgia region. Based on Linley's classification, the Cheely-Coleman house is not only one of the most significant houses in Hancock County, but in the entire state of Georgia.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 39-40.

Built in 1848, Glen Mary Plantation, shown in Figures 105-107, is another good example of the kind of Greek Revival house that has been highly romanticized in American culture. Undoubtedly one of Hancock's County's finest houses, Glen Mary has undergone significant restoration efforts over the last decade and is a good example of ongoing preservation efforts within the county. The grandeur of the house is a testament to the skilled craftsmen that labored throughout its construction to perfect everything from its prominent siting to its elaborate finishing plasterwork details. The house was purchased in 1998 by a non-profit organization, Preservation America, with the goal of restoring and preserving the house for future generations to be able to appreciate such an incredibly rare resource.

Stephen Edward Pearson began construction upon another important antebellum house located in Hancock County in 1853.¹⁷⁸ The house, known as the Pearson-Boyer Plantation, is typical of a county plantation in the late antebellum period. Like several other houses in the county, the Pearson-Boyer House is made up of four structures, "beginning with a one-story, central-hall plan and connecting the central house by galleries or porches to additional wings."¹⁷⁹ Because of the main house's relationship to its two forward-flanking structures, there is a particularly tangible indoor-outdoor relationship between the house and its surroundings.

¹⁷⁸ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 194.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Like the Pearson-Boyer House, another frame house on Pearson Chapel Road shows a similar pattern of growth over time. The original house cannot be seen from the road, as a later enlargement of one of the front detached rooms obscures it from view.¹⁸⁰ Beneath the original portion of the house are hand-hewn beams on top of granite piers. The house is in relatively good shape, although it is missing several glass windowpanes and one of the main foundation supports has settled away from the house, leaving a 6-inch gap that places tremendous pressure on that portion of the house.

Another house in Hancock County, Shoulderbone Plantation, resembles Glen Mary Plantation in significant ways. Shoulderbone Plantation is located in the northwestern part of the county along the old highway to Greensboro, near the Greene County line. The house commands a view unparalleled by any other houses in this survey, including Glen Mary: from the back porch one can see for miles to the east. The elevated siting of Shoulderbone is made even more impressive by its two full stories over a raised basement. Essentially, Shoulderbone represents a quintessential Greek Revival house of the antebellum period:

Antebellum Georgians sought commanding locations for their columned houses. They were aware that the Parthenon did not sit unremarked in a valley; and just as they named their towns Sparta and Athens and added columns to their houses, they also sought the highest spots for major houses and public buildings.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 196.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 131-2.

Shoulderbone was placed on the national register in 1984, as the John S. Jackson Plantation, named for John Jackson who moved to Hancock from Greene County in 1856 and was the first person to live in the house.¹⁸² Hancock has lost several notable houses that once graced its hilltops, including Old Dominion, so all the more significance is now given to Glen Mary and Shoulderbone, as they are the only remaining houses that can truly represent this trend in antebellum architecture of the South. The family that restored the house in the early 1980s moved another antebellum house, the 1852 Carter-Evans House, from nearby Sandersville to the property in 1989.¹⁸³ The relocated house can be seen in Figure 110, in the distance, down the hill from Shoulderbone.

Oakland Plantation is located in northwestern Hancock County near the shoals of Shoulderbone Creek. The current antebellum, plantation plain style house was moved to its present site in the mid-nineteenth century from a nearby property after the original plantation was destroyed.¹⁸⁴ As previously discussed, a plan for the original grounds of Oakland Plantation was drawn in 1835 and reproduced in Linley and Rozier's books about the county. In the drawing, dozens of outbuildings can be seen, the ruins of some of which can still be seen today. These outbuildings demonstrate the range of purposes for which outbuildings used in the antebellum period. At Oakland, there were dovecotes,

¹⁸² Ibid., 131.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 133.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 126.

rabbit warrens, smoke houses, a dairy, corn bins, a pea storage house, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, stables, and slave houses.¹⁸⁵

Hancock County's Antebellum Houses in Peril

There are at least four houses in this study that will likely not survive into the mid-twenty-first century. These house range dramatically in scale, from the frame and log Amos House, to the frame and brick house on Pearson Chapel Road, to the classical former dormitory of the Sparta Female Model School, to the grand Pomegranate Hall. Numerous other antebellum and late nineteenth century houses dot the back roads of Hancock County. Despite the differences in the methods of construction employed to build them, these houses all share common elements in terms of their frame parts.

The very early Amos House and the house on Pearson Chapel Road illustrate the difficulties faced by antebellum houses on private land in the county. From its ruinous condition, it appears the Amos House has been abandoned for as long as a half-century or more. The house has lost both of its brick chimneys, which rest in two piles on either side of the house, the right-side chimney clearly a more recent addition on the ground than the left-side chimney. Although the Amos family cemetery is located adjacent to the house, the house itself is completely grown over with privet, indicating that any who may have once cared to save the house are long gone from the area.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 127.

The house on Pearson Chapel Road appears based on its construction to be remarkably early. Its two basement-level fireplaces are almost identical to those that could once be seen at Old Dominion before it was lost in the 1980s, shown in Figures 33-36. This house is of a very early style that was common in the Mid-Atlantic states such as Virginia and North Carolina. The house is of frame construction on the second story, which rests on top of a brick first story. The house has one chimney on each gable end with two doors to enter the first floor on the front and one door on the rear.

The former dormitory of the Sparta Female Model School and Pomegranate Hall are both indicative of a more refined construction and more lavish plan and execution. If a good roof is kept on the dormitory it could be saved, but the current standing seam metal roof is in need of major repairs, including where a chimney has crumbled away leaving a large opening. The house has more broken panes of glass than it does intact windows, and numerous holes exist throughout the walls where animals are provided with easy access to the interior.

The ruinous Pomegranate Hall has been exposed to the elements for over a decade, so its interior walls and floors are likely beyond repair or even salvage. In fact, the property is listed with the Hancock County Tax Assessors' Office as not having any improvement or accessory value, which means the structure is uninsurable. Unfortunately, the only realistic hope for the house is that it can be preserved as a ruin for local citizens and visitors to enjoy.



(Numbers on maps indicate general location.)

1. Abercrombie-Dickens House
2. Site of Lincoln Stephens House
3. Walker-Moore House (also site of Sparta Female Model School)
4. Site of Sparta Female Model School dormitories
5. Harris-Middlebrooks House
6. Alton-Wiley House
7. Richard Malcolm Johnston-Ann Berry House
8. Haynes-Wiley-Huchings House
9. Dennis Ryan's House
10. Lafayette Powell House
11. Site of Abercrombie-Skinner-Morris House
12. Roasiter-Little House
13. Taylor-Mansfield-Whithead House
14. Bird-Pierce-Campbell House
15. Sayre-Turner-Shivers House

16. Keest House
17. Site of the Metropolitan Hotel
18. Site of the Frank Burner Building
19. Site of the Scuddy House
20. Hancock County Courthouse
21. Confederate Monument
22. Little Red House
23. Smith-Beall House
24. Roberts House
25. Dickens Law Building
26. James Burner Building
27. Drummer's Home
28. Watkins-Frazier Building
29. Site of Old Rock Shop
30. Site of Old Dismal
31. Sparta Presbyterian Church
32. Site of The Church of the Ascension
33. Sparta Baptist Church
34. Pottogranite Hall
35. Thomas Cobb Moore House
36. Penfield-Greaves House
37. Graves Barn

38. Ehridge-DuBoys-Hitchcock House
39. Lane-Walker House
40. Moore-Lewis House
41. Site of Sparta Grammar School
42. Harley-Harris-Rives House
43. Brightside
44. Jackson House
45. The Hollis
46. Site of Sidney Cicero Shivers House
47. Site of Birdsong House
48. Sparta Cemetery
49. Pierce Memorial Methodist Church
50. Harry Hinton House
51. Prime-Kvms-Evans House
52. Mansfield-Hutchinson House
53. Sparta Male and Female Academy
54. Site of Cary House
55. Audasent
56. Terrill House
57. Clinch House

Figure 40, Rozier's Map of the City of Sparta, with Locations of Antebellum Houses



Figure 41, Monument Square in Downtown Sparta, Present Day



Figure 42, Broad Street Looking West toward Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 43, Right Side of the Abercrombie-House around 1970



Figure 44, The Abercrombie-House, Present Day



Figure 45, Left Side of the Rossiter-Little House in an Undated Library of Congress Photograph



Figure 46, Rear of the Rossiter-Little House, Showing its Saltbox Form, Present Day



Figure 47, The Eighteenth Century Simplicity of the Center Hall of the Rossiter-Little House, Present Day



Figure 48, The Johnson-Berry House on Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 49, Left Side of the Johnston-Berry House, Present Day



Figure 50, Right Side of the Johnston-Berry House, Present Day



Figure 51, The Alston-Wiley House on Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 52, Right Side of the Alston-Wiley House, Present Day



Figure 53, The Alston-Hutchings House on Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 54, Rear of the Alston-Hutchings House, Present Day



Figure 55, Front Door and Fanlight of the Alston-Hutchings House, Present Day



Figure 56, The Harris-Middlebrooks House, Former Dormitory on Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 57, Right Side of the Harris-Middlebrooks House, Present Day



Figure 58, Detached Kitchen on Left Side of the Harris-Middlebrooks House, Present Day



Figure 59, The Terrell House on Jones Street, Present Day



Figure 60, Joinery of Glass Panes Seen in Faint Vertical Lines of the Terrell House's Fanlight, Present Day



Figure 61, Brick Nogging in the Terrell House Revealed During Restoration in the 1990s



Figure 62, The John Roe House in Milledgeville in an Undated Photograph



Figure 63, Detail of Brick Nogging in the John Roe House in an Undated Photograph



Figure 64, Detail of Brick Nogging in the Terrell House Revealed in the 1990s



Figure 65, Fingerprints on Brick Nogging in the Terrell House Revealed in the 1990s



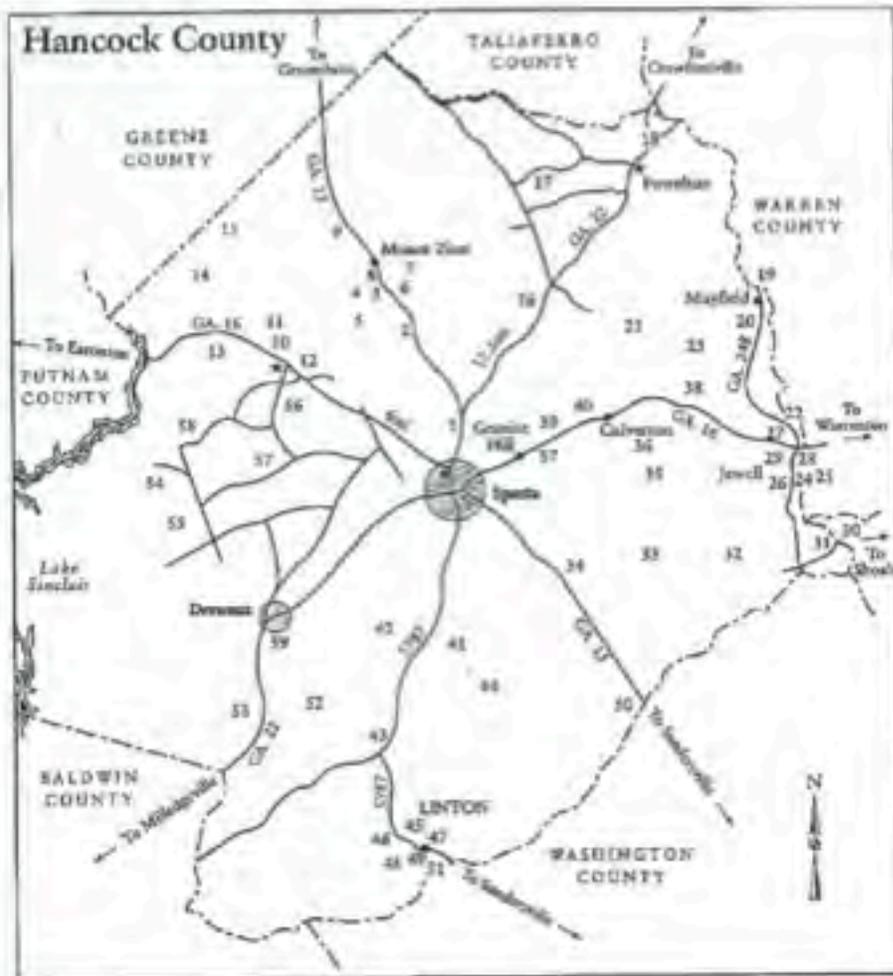
Figure 66, The Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House on Boland Street, Present Day



Figure 67, Left Side of the Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House, Present Day



Figure 68, Detail of Front Porch on the Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House, Present Day



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hollis House. 2. Site of Pleasant Valley 3. Mount Zion Church 4. Site of Mount Zion Academy 5. Site of Rocky Hill 6. Site of Cornucopia 7. Site of Belvedere 8. Site of Home of Governor Northern 9. Site of Whitten Place (Monad Farm) 10. Baxter's Mill (Harris Mill, Millmoor) 11. Vinson-Harris-Lovejoy House 12. Oakland 13. Hudson House 14. Shoulderbone Indian Mounds 15. Shoulderbone Plantation 16. Smyrna Methodist Church (Pine Woods House) 17. Camilla-Zack Coentry Life Center 18. Powelton Baptist Church | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Site of Mayfield (Jonas Shivers House) 20. Horsh-Bagon Church 21. Covey Rise 22. Rock Mill 23. Site of Andrew-Bedding-Middlebrooks House 24. Jewell Baptist Church 25. Jewell School House 26. Methodist Church 27. Site of Lily Wylde 28. Ashley Jewell House 29. Daniel A Jewell House 30. Site of The Aviary 31. Chesly-Coleman House 32. David Dickson's Modern Moxca 33. Granite Farm 34. John Whiskey's House 35. Site of Tuth House 36. Original Site of Columbus Shivers House 37. Original Site of Granite Hill Plantation House | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38. Site of Bass-Foster House 39. Rocky 40. Site of Sunshine 41. Site of Lancaster 42. Pearson-Boyer House 43. Glen Mary 44. Site of Sunnyside Cottage 45. Stone-Boyer House 46. Duggan-Boyer House 47. Adams-Trawick House 48. Darien Baptist Church 49. Site of Washington Institute 50. Site of Eureka 51. Early Trwrick House 52. Mitchell-Ray House 53. Site of the Vintage 54. Original Site of John Roe House 55. Site of Sylvan Hill 56. Site of Haze House 57. Site of Treadwell House 58. Hart-Rives Plantation 59. Original Site of Devereux-Coleman House |
|---|---|--|

Figure 69, Rozier's Map of Antebellum Houses in Hancock County



Figure 70, The Hurt-Rives Plantation around 1970



Figure 71, The Hurt-Rives Plantation, Present Day

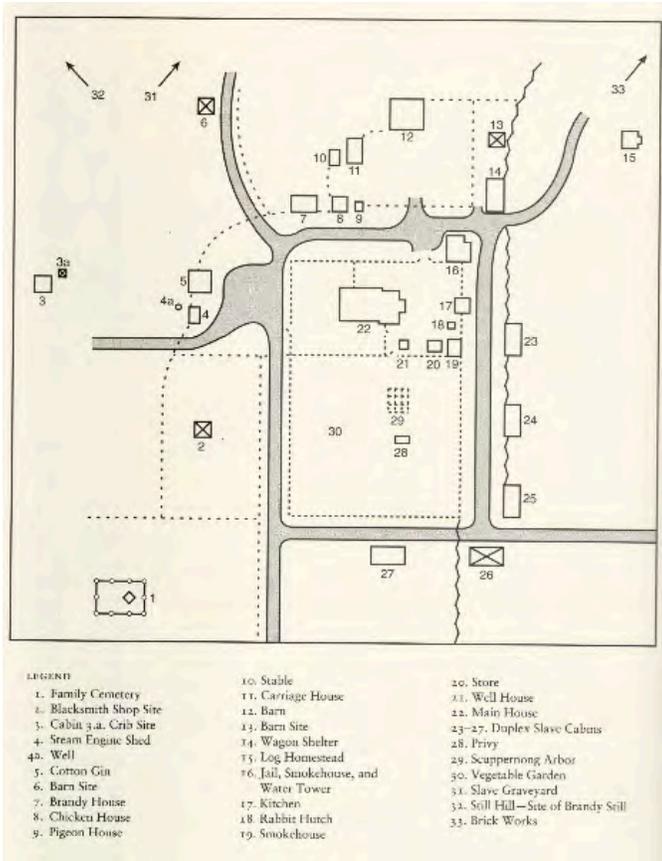


Figure 72, Site Plan of the Hurt-Rives Plantation



Figure 73, Three Slave Cabins at the Hurt-Rives Plantation on the Left, Present Day



Figure 74, Active Preservation on a Slave Cabin at the Hurt-Rives Plantation, Present Day



Figure 75, The 5'8" Author Provides Scale for the Chimney of one of the Slave Cabins at the Hurt-Rives Plantation, Present Day



Figure 76, House in Southwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 77, Rear of House in Southwestern Hancock County, Incorporating a Large Boulder, Present Day



Figure 78, Right Side of House in Southwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 79, Hand-Hewn Timbers on the Underside of House in Southwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 80, The Saunders House on Georgia Highway 15, South of Sparta, Present Day



Figure 81, Side of the Saunders House, Present Day



Figure 82, Detail of Log Joinery on the Saunders House, Present Day



Figure 83, Boards Covering Gaps in the Interior Log Wall of the Saunders House's Dogtrot, Present Day



Figure 84, Rock Mill in 1964



Figure 85, Rock Mill in 1972



Figure 86, Entrance to Rock Mill, Present Day



Figure 87: Rock Mill, Present Day



Figure 88, The Cheely-Coleman House on the Eastern County Line in 1976



Figure 89, The Cheely-Coleman House, Present Day



Figure 90, Rear of the Cheely-Coleman House in 1976



Figure 91, Rear of the Cheely-Coleman House, Present Day



Figure 92, The Cheely-Coleman House Dogtrot around 1970



Figure 93, Detail of Vernacular Approach to Ionic Columns of the Cheely-Coleman House, Present Day



Figure 94, Small Classical House in Linton, Present Day



Figure 95, Right Side of Small Classical House, Present Day



Figure 96, The Pearson-Boyer Plantation in Southwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 97, Right Side of the Pearson-Boyer Plantation, Present Day



Figure 98, Unknown House on Pearson Chapel Road, Present Day



Figure 99, Rear of Unknown House, Showing the Original House, Present Day



Figure 100, Original House, Showing Unsupported Section, Present Day



Figure 101, Underside of Original House, Present Day



Figure 102, Glen Mary Plantation in an Undated Photograph



Figure 103, Glen Mary Plantation, Present Day



Figure 104, Siting of Glen Mary Plantation , Present Day



Figure 105, Shoulderbone Plantation in Northwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 106, Siting of Shoulderbone Plantation, Present Day



Figure 107, View of the East from Shoulderbone Plantation, Present Day



Figure 108, Oakland Plantation in Northwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 109, Woodwork Detailing on the Front Porch of Oakland Plantation, Present Day



Figure 110, Ruin of Former Outbuilding at Oakland Plantation, Present Day



Figure 111, Detail of Coursed Rubble Former Outbuilding at Oakland Plantation, Present Day



Figure 112, The Amos House in Western Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 113, Interior Whitewashed Walls of the Amos House, Present Day



Figure 114, Detail of Notching on the Amos House, Present Day



Figure 115, Left Side of House on Pearson Chapel Road, Present Day



Figure 116, Detail of Brick First Story of House on Pearson Chapel Road, Present Day



Figure 117, Interior of First Story of House on Pearson Chapel Road, Present Day



Figure 118, The Former Dormitory of the Sparta Female Model School on Maiden Lane, Present Day



Figure 119, Left Side of the Former Dormitory of the Sparta Female Model School, Present Day

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

In total, 79 antebellum houses in Hancock County were surveyed for this thesis, of which 33 are located in Sparta and the other 46 within the county. In Sparta, four houses were listed in Deteriorated condition, meaning they are either vacant or inhabited but in poor condition, or are uninhabitable ruins. Similarly, within the county there are also four houses listed in poor condition. As there are 13 more houses in the county survey, these results indicate a higher rate of decay within the city limits. When antebellum houses are surveyed in surrounding counties, the sample size for such evaluation will increase, which will provide more accurate rates of decay for the region.

Three factors were the cause of any antebellum houses not included by this survey: the dates of some antebellum houses are improperly listed or their parcels are not listed at all with the Hancock County Tax Assessor, some houses are not documented in any written sources, and there was simply not enough time to ride each road in the county to find undocumented houses. While the survey completed for this thesis most certainly does not include every antebellum house in Hancock County, the results likely reflect the majority of the county's antebellum houses.

The following table presents the findings of the condition assessment of the antebellum houses of Hancock County. The figures shown in bold represent percentages of different totals. The first percentage row reflects the percentages of houses within the city only. Similarly, the second percentage row reflects the percentages of houses within the county only. Finally, the third percentage row looks at all 79 houses together. The condition most represented by the houses in this survey was Good, accounting for 51.5% of the houses in Sparta and 32.6% of the houses in the county. When these two percentages are combined, it was found that 40.5% of the houses in this survey were found to be in Good condition. The houses that were noted as being in Excellent condition accounted for the next highest concentration in the county at 26.1%. In Sparta, however, the next highest concentration was in the Fair category at 21.2%. These numbers are reflected in the totals for all houses: 21.5% of all houses were in excellent condition, while 20.3% of all houses were in Fair condition.

Table A: Condition of Antebellum Houses in Hancock County

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Deteriorated	Ruins	Unknown	Total
Sparta	5	17	7	2	2	0	33
Percent of Total	15.2%	51.5%	21.2%	6.1%	6.1%	0%	
County	12	15	9	4	1	5	46
Percent of Total	26.1%	32.6%	19.6%	8.7%	2.2%	10.9%	
Total Houses	17	32	16	6	3	5	79
Percent of Total	21.5%	40.5%	20.3%	7.6%	3.8%	6.3%	

The last two condition categories are perhaps the most troubling, simply for the irreversibility of their designations. Once a house is deemed as Deteriorated, it can within a relatively short period of time become Ruins. Once a house is listed as Ruins, it will likely never again be inhabited. Of all houses surveyed, 7.6% were Deteriorated and 3.8% were Ruins. While those numbers may seem low, it should be considered that the houses listed as Deteriorated or Ruins each can tell an important part of Hancock County's history. As previously mentioned, however, because of its central, downtown location Pomegranate Hall does have some hope for a future, but only as stabilized ruins.

Impact of National Register of Historic Places Listings

There are several historic districts in Hancock County, of which the Sparta Historic District and the Linton Community Historic District include dozens of antebellum houses. All houses located within these districts, meaning within Sparta and the community of Linton, are automatically considered as listed on the NRHP. In addition to its antebellum houses located within historic districts, Hancock County has seven individual antebellum houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places, all of which are located outside Sparta.¹⁸⁶ The first house to be placed on the register was Rock Mill in 1970, which was followed by Glen Mary in 1974, the Cheely-Coleman House in 1976, Rockby in 1978, the John S. Jackson (Shoulderbone) Plantation in 1984, the Pearson-Boyer

¹⁸⁶ National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places: Hancock County, Georgia," <http://focus.nps.gov/nrhp/SearchResults/> (accessed Mar. 17, 2016).

Plantation in 1993, and finally the Hurt-Rives Plantation in 1996.¹⁸⁷ After competing the survey of the county, there is no doubt that the current list of NRHP sites for the county is woefully incomplete in terms of houses that are eligible for such recognition.

Some owners intentionally avoid listing on the NRHP due to a perceived threat of government interference with how they would maintain their houses, should they be listed. In reality, the NRHP is essentially an honorific recognition only, and while it does afford some protections in the event of an impending demolition, it does not mandate the care of the houses listed. Of the seven houses in Hancock County listed on the NRHP, for example, two were listed in fair condition. Both houses had architectural significance during the antebellum period as well as historical significance during the Civil War.

As previously discussed, the Cheely-Coleman House served as Federal Calvary Brigadier General Kilpatrick's headquarters on his way to Savannah. The other house on the NRHP listed in Fair condition is Rockby, which is located in eastern Hancock County. The house belonged to Richard Malcolm Johnson, who founded a school for boys there in 1862 that remained open until 1867 when it was moved to Baltimore, Maryland during the pressures of Reconstruction.¹⁸⁸

Another educational piece to note about Rockby is the literature of Johnston, who is probably Hancock's best-known author. Johnson published *Dukesborough*

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Hancock County Historic Markers, "Rockby," http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/historical_markers/county/hancock/rockby (accessed November 5, 2015).

Tales, which was a collection stories written before the Civil War and took place mainly in the 1820s and the 1830s.¹⁸⁹ In his autobiography, he revealed that Powelton, an early community in Northern Hancock County, was his inspiration for the famed town of “Dukesborough.”¹⁹⁰ In the twenty-first century, the longtime owners of Rockby have passed away and the house has fallen into a state of disrepair. The large tract of land on which it is located has recently been timbered, but access to the house was not possible. The photograph of the house included in Appendix E was taken in 1978 when the house was in better condition. In 1994, Rozier observed clear signs of neglect at the house noting, “shutters were missing, windowpanes were broken, and the main entrance hall was open to the weather.”¹⁹¹

Although neither the Cheely-Coleman House nor Rockby is in a deteriorated condition, they both need some interventions if they are to survive intact into the mid-twenty-first century. One NRHP house was assessed to be in good condition, with the remaining four NRHP houses in excellent condition. These findings suggest that the NRHP designation of an antebellum house can result in varying conditions. While this may be the case, most of the NRHP houses in this survey were assessed to be in excellent condition, suggesting there is a correlation between listing and condition.

¹⁸⁹ Shivers, *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*, 128.

¹⁹⁰ Hancock County Historic Markers, “Rockby,” http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/historical_markers/county/hancock/rockby (accessed January 28, 2016).

¹⁹¹ Rozier, John, Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, 184.

Impact of Urban and Rural Contexts

It is important for researchers to understand the significance of differing survival rates between houses located in urban and rural settings. The link between the successful preservation of antebellum houses and their physical locations is important to understand, as it will be a crucial element to any preservation plan specifically addressing the restoration of antebellum houses. The concentrated survival of in-town residences is significant, but is not a factor that represents survival rates for the county as a whole. Based on logistical reasons alone, during the antebellum period it often would have been less expensive to construct a large house within city limits rather than in the county. Noted Hancock County historian James Bonner warn that a “diminishing supply of timber in certain regions of the cotton belt and the limitations of transportation facilities are factors worthy of consideration in evaluating plantation buildings.”¹⁹² In this vein, Hancock is exceptional, given that it did not even have a rail line until after the civil war. Any imported goods into the county had to arrive by wagon, which in the nineteenth century before proper roads were maintained was often a costly and difficult proposition

This survey of antebellum houses in Hancock County revealed many aspects of architecture in a wealthy plantation community; primarily, the high quality and wide variation of craftsmanship that went into antebellum construction. When houses such as the Terrell House and the Cheely-Coleman House are compared, it is fascinating that two structures so different could have

¹⁹² Bonner, “Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War,” 382.

been constructed within just five years of each other. However, the comparison of these two houses also reveals some important similarities. Although the Terrell House is designed to give the impression of precise Palladian symmetry, the house has a concealed set of straight staircases, which provide it with a corresponding slightly asymmetrical fenestration of its facade. In other words at first glance, a house might appear to reflect a certain design style that is not entirely represented throughout its interior.

Qualifying the Causes of a Disappearing Architectural Record

It is difficult to know, or even estimate, the scale of architectural losses that have occurred throughout Georgia since the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. In 1940 it was estimated that of the roughly 250,000 houses that existed in the state in 1860, only 11,361 (or 4.5%) were still standing.¹⁹³ While it is helpful to have a rough estimate of the scale of antebellum architectural losses in 1940, a similar figure has not been determined for the twenty-first century. It can be assumed, however, that the percentage of surviving houses would be notably higher for Greek Revival mansions than for more vernacular antebellum houses of lesser style. Accordingly, when the figures are tied to the popular notion of white-column mansions dotting the landscape, researchers can better understand the misconceptions about the common occurrence of grand antebellum houses.

¹⁹³ Zelinsky, "The Greek Revival House in Georgia," 10.

Historians realize that such misconceptions can be dangerous to our collective understanding of history. As Georgia historian James Bonner noted, “surviving homesteads of famous Southerners are likely to present to later generations an appearance of neatness and elegance which they did not possess in the day of their owner’s glory.”¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the clean appearance of such houses suggests that history was not dirty and uncomfortable, as it was in all likelihood. While the extreme differences between the house of a wealthy planter and that of the average farmer cannot be overemphasized, it is important to realize that almost all of the houses deemed to be in Excellent condition in this survey would likely not have appeared in as pristine condition historically as they do today. On the same note, some houses that were noted in the twentieth century as being in a dilapidated state, as was the Hurt-Rives Plantation in 1970 by John Linley, went on to receive extensive restorations. This underlines an important message of this research: any house deemed to be in Fair or Deteriorated condition can without question be saved. While these houses need stylistic attention and structural intervention, none should be considered to be “too far gone.” Unfortunately for the two houses categorized as Ruins, undertaking any sort of restoration would, at the present day, be extremely difficult, based on the degradation of the houses.

In the twenty-first century, antebellum houses commonly face a variety of threats that can act independently or in conjunction with one another. Common maintenance issues were noted throughout this study of antebellum houses,

¹⁹⁴ Bonner, “Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War,” 372.

which were noted on the survey forms upon observation. Water infiltration through integral gutter systems and termites were found to be two of the biggest problems faced by antebellum houses. Although the houses were built using high-quality materials and craftsmanship, these two elements were consistently seen as problems throughout the group of houses studied for this thesis. On houses that are well maintained, integral gutters can function marvelously to channel rainwater to the ground. If these drainage systems are neglected, however, they cause endless problems throughout the walls of the house beneath problem areas.

Other common issues were the result of materials eroding over time without proper maintenance, such as brick spalling and wood rot of the foundation near the ground surface. Many houses that were surveyed are elevated from the ground on granite or stacked stone piers. In some cases where house settled over time, gaps appeared between the bottom of the house and its stone piers, as seen in Figure __. Some owners have wedged rocks into the gaps to continue providing support for the structures, but in other cases these gaps are left open, placing tremendous pressure on parts of the houses not designed to accommodate such loads.

The Future of Hancock's Antebellum Houses

The romanticism often ascribed to the American South seemingly detracts from the ultimate importance embodied in its surviving antebellum houses.

Hollywood romance and glamour aside, it should be emphasized that, “the real romance and significance of an old building will be found in its factual and documented history... and not in the myths and legends (and ghosts) which are invariably attached, especially in Georgia.”¹⁹⁵ The mythical lure of southern culture, while entertaining, does not reflect the level of seriousness needed to address the preservation concerns of antebellum houses.

Hancock’s antebellum housing stock cannot sustain itself based solely on local residents, as the majority of its citizens do not possess the means to restore an antebellum house. People from other parts of the state and the country that are able to undertake such restorations have greatly benefited Hancock County, but this scenario raises several important questions about the nature of house ownership in mostly poor, rural counties. At many properties in this survey, it is evident that many houses are either occupied occasionally, which were noted as “occasional residences,” or not at all, which were noted as “vacant/abandoned.” Only two properties were categorized as “ruins:” Pomegranate Hall in Sparta and the Amos House in the western portion of the county. Additionally, many of the houses listed in Poor condition seemed to be unoccupied. The research of this thesis showed that houses located in either the city or county proper were hit-or-miss in terms of condition, however in both contexts there were significant antebellum houses that fell into each category of maintenance.

¹⁹⁵Mitchell, “A Look at Historic Preservation and American Architecture, Emphasizing Georgia,” 39.

In Sparta, the author noted that multiple gay couples have moved to the city and spearheaded several important preservation developments there over the last decade. Author Will Fellows has documented the trend of gay men moving into depressed areas to rescue decrepit houses.¹⁹⁶ Although Fellows has written several books on gay men in America, in his 2004 book *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture*, Fellows addresses “not so much *what* these culture-keeping gay men have accomplished, but *why* they have compelled to do these things.”¹⁹⁷ It is somewhat surprising that a city like Sparta, which has so few establishments and employment opportunities, is actually a progressive place. Fellows cites the following characteristic traits of gay men that lead them to be particularly interested in historic preservation:

because it involves a cluster of concerns that resonate richly and compellingly with... [their] intermediate natures: creating and keeping attractive and safe dwelling spaces; restoring and preserving wholeness and design integrity; valuing heritage and identity; nurturing community relationships; fostering continuity in the midst of incessant change.¹⁹⁸

The benefits of a city like Sparta embracing individuals who are inclined to preserve historic resources cannot be overemphasized. The 1830s Sayre-Shivers House on Broad Street is a fine example of this type of recent preservation in Sparta. The house, which had suffered for decades from water infiltration in its basement and was in need of replacement materials for rotten exterior woodwork and the missing sheaf of wheat railing on the front porch,¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Fellows, *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture*, Abstract.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁹⁹ Personal conversation with Ben Carter, owner of the Sayre-Shivers House.

was purchased in 2015 through the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and restored by its new owners within three months.²⁰⁰

Other individuals have moved to Sparta later in life and into their retirements, also primarily to restore specific houses. In fact, three houses in the survey were found by their current owners on the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's website. Robert Currey, owner of the 1850 Harley-Harris-Rives House, is a prime example of the positive benefits that can result from an older outsider moving into the city. Currey restored his house in the early 2000s and began a mushroom growing operation in the neighboring furniture warehouse, which was formerly a cotton warehouse. Though Currey's operation does not employ huge numbers of people and sells its produce primarily in Atlanta, his operation is a step in the right direction to restore some lost business to the city of Sparta.

Sparta's quiet nature combined with its proximity to larger cities such as Milledgeville at a half an hour and Atlanta at an hour and a half, leads one to expect those with the means who are interested in restoring old homes would consider Sparta as a place to live. However, most residents who spoke with the author cited the lack of basic services, businesses, and a failing school system as major reasons why many people choose not to invest in the Hancock's antebellum houses.

²⁰⁰ The Georgia Trust, "Headlines and Happenings: Rehabilitation of the Sayre-Alford House is Complete," <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=ac0db05c-fca2-4c6b-944b-14e9fc715940&c=c0e0f0b0-bb5c-11e4-93dd-d4ae529a824a&ch=c1444660-bb5c-11e4-94ec-d4ae529a824a> (accessed Mar. 1, 2016).

In rural counties such as Hancock, many types of developmental pressures do not exist but are rather replaced with the negative results from a lack of development. Indeed, in a county where there is a lack of commercial and residential development, antebellum houses suffer for different reasons. Few individuals are willing to move into and preserve antebellum houses that survive in undesirable locations. As more and more houses are restored, however, the gentrification of Sparta will be even more pronounced. Currently, white families own all of the major antebellum houses in the city: during this survey, the author encountered no black owners. Additionally, a number of the houses located in the county are owned by individuals with mailing addresses in other, more metropolitan cities such as those surrounding Atlanta. The impact of this type of external ownership, or people other than Hancock County natives owning most of the houses, is a subject that warrants further study. The current demographics of the county can essentially be interpreted as irrelevant to the more than 80 percent of those living in Hancock County.

Recognition of a house's design and method of construction is an effective way to show visitors a peek into history. One house stands out from the rest in this regard. In the process of rewiring a portion of the Copeland House in the 1990s, the log construction of the house—complete with spacers—was revealed. Its owner Charlie Edwards intentionally left the interior wall visible in the form of a “reveal,” so that its visitors could appreciate the house's method of construction. The Copeland House, shown in Figures 128-129, is located on Edwards Road in

northwestern Hancock County. It has a log foundation beneath the original plantation plain form, demonstrating its age. Reveals are commonly incorporated into restorations today, making the reveal in the Copeland House from the 1990s well ahead of the preservation trends at the time.

Lastly, the involvement of outside organizations, such as the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, cannot be overemphasized in the quest to preserve antebellum houses in rural communities. The non-profit statewide historic preservation organization has a rotating fund that is used to purchase and resell historic properties after adding protective, preservation-minded covenants. Of the houses surveyed in Sparta, the author is aware that the current owners of the Rossiter-Little, Terrell, and Sayre-Shivers Houses all purchased their homes through the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. The Sparta-Hancock County Historical Society is a local non-profit that may also assist in the preservation of select houses, but budget constraints have limited the organization's usefulness in this regard to date.



Figure 120, The Sayre-Shivers House on Broad Street Before Restoration in 2015



Figure 121, The Sayre-Shivers House After Restoration in 2016



Figure 122, Rear of the Sayre-Shivers Before Restoration in 2015



Figure 123, Rear of the Sayre-Shivers House After Restoration in 2016



Figure 124, Left Side of the Harley-Harris-Rives House on Elm Street, Present Day



Figure 125, Exterior of the Old Sparta Furniture Warehouse on Hamilton Street, Now a Mushroom Growing Operation, Present Day



Figure 126, Interior of the Old Sparta Furniture Warehouse, Present Day



Figure 127, Mushrooms Growing in the Old Sparta Furniture Warehouse, Present Day



Figure 128, The Copeland House on Edwards Road in Northwestern Hancock County, Present Day



Figure 129, Reveal Incorporated into the Interior Wall of the Copeland House, Present Day

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The complete story of Hancock's history brings with it a sense of loss for the once-thriving county. In August of 2014 an event occurred that was seemingly emblematic of Hancock's decline. A fire (for which officials have yet to determine a cause a year and a half later) began around 3 a.m. and totally destroyed the interior and exterior elements of the courthouse. Only the brick walls remained after the fire ceased to smoke a week after the incident. The author visited the site during this time and the identifiable stench of charred timbers could be smelled upon the main approach into the city from the north, just at the city limit sign.

The courthouse, built between 1881 and 1883, is an excellent example of Victorian architecture. Locally the structure was referred to as "Her Majesty" for the spender of the architectural ornament and massive bell tower that adorned it. The county quickly acted to secure the site and install massive iron braces to support the brick walls until the courthouse can be rebuilt within its original shell. It should be noted that even when John Linley published *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area* in 1972, the state of the courthouse security measures was noted as inadequate. Linley noted "the magnificence of the building, which, incidentally, should be sprinklered for fire protection. It is too fine

an example to be lost by fire.”²⁰¹ It is a shame that over forty years later, the courthouse still lacked the proper protection measures that could have saved it. Any progress toward rebuilding was seemingly nonexistent until late 2015, when crews began to reconstruct the interior structure of the building, this time using structural beams made of steel, rather than wood.

It is uncertain what measures can be taken to assist in the revitalization of communities that originally developed around an economic system that has long since disappeared. Agricultural interests, while still prevalent within the county, represent only a fraction of the economic power they once held within the marketplace. In the twentieth century, few industries were able to produce local prosperity that could compare with what antebellum agricultural markets once provided. Despite Hancock’s economic decline, its architectural legacy remains as vital to the preservation of Georgia’s unique antebellum history. When discussing the potential for Georgians to discover their true cultural roots, noted Georgia historian Phinizy Spalding said, “Perhaps [they should look] in that remarkable small town of Sparta where both races have seen such travail but where they have somehow survived and contributed to Georgia’s culture, via writing, education, and an extraordinary architectural legacy that cannot be equaled elsewhere in the state.”²⁰² And while Hancock County’s legacy is tangible, if the current century proceeds as the last the fate of Hancock’s irreplaceable antebellum houses is uncertain at best.

²⁰¹ Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*, 144.

²⁰² Rozier, *The Houses of Hancock: 1785-1865*, Epilogue.

Preservation Approaches to Protect Antebellum Houses

Ultimately, antebellum houses will be preserved primarily through the recognition of their great importance to telling the history of the southern United States. Historic buildings should be properly maintained if only for the basic fact that they are the only lasting physical reflections of the people for which they were constructed. All of the houses surveyed for this thesis were, and are still, solidly built structures. The precise level of craftsmanship that went into the historic methods of construction is demonstrated by the wide variety of antebellum houses in Hancock County. What a log house such as the Amos House, or a Federal-style house such as the Terrell House, or a saltbox pioneer house such as the Rossiter-Little House, or a Gothic Revival masterpiece such as the DuBose House all have in common is that they were built by people who knew how to make them last for generations. The rest of the responsibility for their care lies with the current owners of such unique properties. Indeed, the part of their stories where the antebellum houses are appropriately maintained is the part to which many fall victim.

The builder's plan and design for a historic house is almost always *not* a cause for its failure. Deferred maintenance is the primary downfall of antebellum houses. And while many potential homeowners and contractors shy away from houses that have been neglected for long periods of time, these houses can provide the best opportunities for restoration. Houses that never received telltale mid-twentieth century updates are treasure troves for those who value their

original architectural features. Many of the county's most pristine houses today were abandoned at some time or another in their pasts. While it is true that some houses are "too far gone" to be saved, if a solid roof is kept on a historic building, it can last indefinitely until the right preservationist comes to its rescue.



Figure 130, Rebuilding of the Hancock County Courthouse, August 2015



Figure 131, Rebuilding of the Hancock County Courthouse, December 2015



Figure 132, Rebuilding of the Hancock County Courthouse, February 2016



Figure 133, Welcome to Sparta Sign, Present Day



Figure 134, Sunset at the Southern Hancock County Line, Present Day



Figure 135, Cobwebs Covering the Keyhole to the Tidewater House on Pearson Chapel Road, Present Day

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF ANTEBELLUM HOUSES IN SPARTA, GEORGIA

Name of House	Location	D.O.C.	Present Use	Condition	Previous Documentation
The Roberts House	229 Hamilton St.	1840s	Vacant	Fair	Rozier 53
The Burwell-Goss House	201 Hamilton St.	1823	Residence	Good	Rozier 93
Burwell Street Unknown	25 Burwell St.	1835*	Residence/For Sale	Good	Undocumented
The Rossiter-Little House	12471 W. Broad St.	1797	Residence	Good	Rozier 31/ Linley 98
The Taylor-Mansfield-Hutchings House	12533 W. Broad St.	Pre-1826	Vacant/For Sale	Good	Rozier 35
The Little Red House	80 Monument Sq.	1797	Residence	Good	Rozier 52/ Linley 131
The Smith-Beall House	9535 Jones St.	Antebellum	Vacant/For Sale	Good	Rozier 53
The Terrell-Stone House	9705 Jones St.	1821	Residence	Good	Rozier 95/ Linley 38
Dr. Terrell's Office	9687 Jones St.	1850	Residence	Good	Rozier 99
Sparta Male and Female Academy	249 W. Hamilton St.	1817	Residence/For Sale	Good	Rozier 93
The Harry Binion House	Boland St	Antebellum	Residence	Good	Rozier 92
The Mandle-Hutchinson House	101 E. Hamilton St.	Antebellum	Residence/For Sale	Good	Rozier 92
The Frise-Rives-Evans House	109 E. Hamilton	Antebellum	Rental Property	Fair	Rozier 92
The Lafayette-Powell House	545 Adams St.	1817	Residence	Good	Rozier 28
The Haynes-Wiley-Hutchings House	Maiden Ln.	1820	Residence	Fair	Rozier 24
The Ethridge-DuBose-Hitchcock House	272 Boland St.	1853	Residence	Good	Rozier 78/ Linley 95
Pomegranate Hall	107 Adams St.	1839	Abandoned/Ruin	Ruins	Rozier 70/ Linley 80
The Thomas-Cobb-Moore House	22 Myrtle St.	pre-1839	Vacant	Fair	Rozier 74
The Pendleton-Graves House	305 Adams St.	1820	Vacant	Fair	Rozier 75
The Moore-Lewis House	706 Elm St.	Antebellum	Residence	Good	Rozier 82
The Lane-Walker House	22 Elm St.	1825	Residence	Good	Rozier 81/ Linley 96
The Harley-Harris-Rives House	15 Elm St.	Antebellum	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 84/ Linley 70
Audasten	Old Milledgeville Hwy.	Antebellum	Abandoned/Ruin	Ruins	Rozier 94
The Bird-Campbell-Williams House	12530 W. Broad St.	1834	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 37/ Linley 88
The Sayre-Shivers House	12560 W. Broad St.	1828-1839	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 40/ Linley 87
Dennis Ryan's House	101 Maiden Ln.	1830	Vacant	Deteriorated	Rozier 26
Maiden Lane Unknown	148 Maiden Ln.	1820	Residence	Good	Undocumented
The Johnston-Berry House	161 Maiden Ln.	Pre-1820	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 23
The Alston-Hutchings House	Maiden Ln.	Pre-1820	Residence	Fair	Rozier 24
The Alston-Wiley House	180 Maiden Ln.	Pre-1820	Residence	Fair	Rozier 20/ Linley 104
The Harris-Middlebrooks House	240 Maiden Ln.	1831	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 18
Sparta Female Model School Dormitory	256 Maiden Ln.	1831	Residence	Deteriorated	Rozier 17
The Abercrombie-Dickens House	297 Maiden Ln.	1794	Residence	Good	Rozier 9/ Linley 106

* Indicates that tax assessors' date is likely inaccurate for the house listed.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF ANTEBELLUM HOUSES IN HANCOCK COUNTY

Name of House	Location	D.O.C.	Present Use	Condition	Previous Documentation
The Hollis House	11915 Ga Hwy 15	1786/1812/1820	Residence	Good	Rozier 107
S.R. 22 Unknown	15695 S.R. 22	1797*	Residence	Fair	Undocumented
S.R. 22 Unknown	16323 S.R. 22	1850	Abandoned	Deteriorated	Undocumented
Covey Rise	3084 Covey Rise Rd.	1840	Outbuiding Residence	Excellent	Rozier 144
Shivers-Simpson House (Rock Mill)	1280 Jewell Rd.	1820	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 146/ Linley 33
Sam Hill Road Unknown*	303 Sam Hill Rd.	1850	Residence	Unknown	Undocumented
The Daniel A. Jewell House	78 Hamburg State Park Rd.	1860	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 156
Hamburg State Park Unkown	76 Hamburg State Park Rd.	1850	Residence	Good	Undocumented
The Cheely-Coleman House	11092 Shoals Rd.	1825	Residence	Fair	Rozier 161/ Linley 38
Rockby*	Opposite 14674 Hwy. 16	1850s	Abandoned	Deteriorated	Rozier 180
The Hollies	13277 Hwy. 16	Pre-1847	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 88
The Jackson House	148 Old Augusta Rd.	1858	Residence	Fair	Rozier 87
Brightside	54 Old Augusta Rd.	Antebellum	Residence	Good	Rozier 85/ Linley 106
Balerna Church Road Unknown	3950 Balerna Church Rd.	1860	Residence	Good	Undocumented
Beulah Highway Unknown	Opposite 6371 Beulah Hwy.	1801	Occasional Residence	Fair	Undocumented
Thompson Road Unknown	485 Thompson Rd.	1800*	Residence	Good	Undocumented
The John Boyer House	1135 Ridge Rd.	1800*	Occasional Residence	Good	Undocumented
Linton Road Unknown, Victorian Addition	Opposite 12547 Linton Rd.	1841	Occasional Residence	Good	Undocumented
The Adams-Trawick House	12871 Linton Rd.	1850	Residence	Good	Rozier 205
The Stone-Trawick House	12785 Linton Rd.	1856	Residence	Good	Rozier 207/ Linley 101
Unknown Small Greek Revival	12509 Linton Rd.	1850	Residence	Fair	Undocumented
The Slade-Roberson House	12383 Linton Rd.	1850	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 201
The Stone-Boyer House	12345 Linton Rd.	1850	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 202/ Linley 74
The Duggan-Boyer House	12172 Linton Rd.	1859	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 203/ Linley 64
Linton Road Unknown	12235 Linton Rd.	1850	Residence	Good	Undocumented
Glen Mary	7342 Linton Rd.	1848	Residence	Good	Rozier 196/ Linley 58
The Saunders House	3228 Ga Hwy. 15 S	Antebellum	Vacant/Maintained	Fair	Undocumented
Cheely Road Unknown	Cheely Road	Antebellum	Occasional Residence	Good	Undocumented
Pearson-Boyer Plantation	4144 Pearson Chapel Rd.	1853	Occasional Residence	Good	Rozier 194
Tidewater House	1442 Pearson Chapel Rd.	Antebellum	Abandoned	Fair	Undocumented
Pearson Chapel Road Unknown	Adjacent to 598 Pearson Chapel Rd.	Antebellum	Occasional Residence	Fair	Undocumented
The Mitchell-Ray House*	Opposite 4390 Beulah Hwy.	1801	Unknown	Unknown	Rozier 209
Dr. Ray's House*	Opposite 4390 Beulah Hwy.	1850	Unknown	Unknown	Rozier 211
The Amos House	1228 Jones Chapel Rd.	Pre-1850	Abandoned	Ruins	Rozier 226
The West House	3674 Carrs Station Rd.	1820s	Occasional Residence	Good	Undocumented
The Leonard Place	5845 Carrs Station Rd.	Antebellum	Abandoned	Deteriorated	Undocumented
Warren Chapel Road Unknown	1645 Warren Chapel Rd.	Pre-1850	Occasional Residence	Fair	Undocumented
One Room House	1250 Hunts Chapel Rd.	Pre-1850	Abandoned	Deteriorated	Undocumented
The John Roe House*	Eatonton Hwy. in Milledgeville	1802	Unknown	Unknown	Rozier 215
The Devereux-Coleman House	167 Kenan Dr. in Milledgeville	1830s	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 227
Hurt-Rives Plantation	Address Restricted	1794	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 222/ Linley 63
The Vinson-Lovejoy House	130 Hwy. 77	1854	Residence	Excellent	Rozier 125
Oakland Plantation	S.R. 16, Before S.R. 77	Post-1860*	Occasional Residence	Excellent	Rozier 126/ Linley 111
The Hudson House*	299 Skeet Lane	Antebellum	Unknown	Unknown	Rozier 130
Shoulderbone (Jackson) Plantation	4526 Centennial Church Rd.	1850	Occasional Residence	Excellent	Rozier 131
The Copeland House	508 Gum Hill Rd.	1750*	Occasional Residence	Good	Undocumented

* Indicates that tax assessors' date is likely inaccurate for the house listed or that property was not able to be surveyed.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE SURVEY FORM FOR CONDITION ASSESSMENT

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
HISTORIC STRUCTURE INVENTORY

1. Common Name:
2. Historic Name:
3. Designations: (State Historical Landmark, National Register eligibility/listing, Date Listed, Local Listings, etc.)
4. State Park System Unit:
5. DPR Facility Number:
6. County:
7. USGS Quad (name, date, scale):
8. Township: Range:
9. Land Grant:
10. UTM coordinates:
11. Elevation:
12. Location/Address:
13. Surroundings: (Open Land, Scattered Buildings, Densely Built-up, etc.)
14. Approximate lot size (in feet):
15. Structure Dimensions (in feet): long; wide; stories
16. Structure is: on original site; moved; not known. 17. Architectural Style:
18. Briefly describe the present physical appearance and condition of the structure:
19. Alterations / Restorations:
20. Overall Condition (check one): Excellent; Good; Fair; Deteriorated; Ruins; Site only
21. Threats to the structure (check all that apply): Deterioration; Fire; Pests; Collapse; Demolition; Vandalism; Intrusions; Other:
22. Needed Maintenance and Repairs:
23. Related Structures or Outbuildings:
24. Architect:
25. Architectural Drawings:
26. Builder:
27. Construction Date:
28. Previous surveys, sources and references:

APPENDIX D
THUMBNAIL IMAGES
OF SPARTA
HOUSES



Roberts House



Little Red House



Harry Binion House
(Undated From Rozier, 92)



Burwell-Goss House



Smith-Beall House



Mandle-Hutchinson House



Burwell Street Unknown



Terrell House



Frise-Rives-Evans House



Rossiter-Little House



Terrell's Office



Lafayette-Powell House



Taylor-Mansfield House



Sparta Male and Female
Academy



Alston-Hutchings House



Ethridge-Dubose House



Harley-Harris-Rives House



Johnson-Berry House



Pomegranate Hall



Audasten



Alston-Hutchings House



Thomas-Cobb House



Bird-Campbell House



Alston-Wiley House



Pendelton-Graves House



Sayre-Shivers House



Harris-Middlebrooks House



Moore-Lewis House



Dennis Ryan House



Former Sparta Female Model Dormitory



Lane-Walker House



Maiden Lane Unknown



Abercrombie House

APPENDIX E
THUMBNAIL IMAGES
OF HANCOCK
COUNTY HOUSES



Hollis House



Sam Hill Road Unknown
(From Hancock Tax Ass.)



The Hollies



SR 22 Unknown



Daniel A. Jewell House



Jackson House



SR 22 Unknown



Hamburg State Park Road
Unknown



Brightside



Covey Rise



Cheely-Coleman House



Balerma Church Road
Unknown



Rock Mill



Rockby in 1978 (From
Rozier, 181)



Beulah Highway Unknown



Thompson Road Unknown



Slade-Roberson House



Cheely Road Unknown



John Boyer House



Stone-Boyer House



Pearson-Boyer Plantation



Linton Road Unknown,
Victorian Addition



Duggan-Boyer House



Tidewater House



Adams-Trawick House



Linton Road Unknown



Pearson Chapel Road
Unknown



Stone-Trawick House



Glen Mary



Mitchell-Ray House (From
Rozier, 209)



Unknown Linton Road
Small Greek Revival



Saunders House



Dr. Ray's House (From
Rozier, 211)



Amos House



Devereux-Coleman House



Copeland House



West House



Hurt-Rives Plantation



Leonard Place



Vinson-Lovejoy House



Warren Chapel Road
Unknown



Oakland Plantation



Hunts Chapel Road One
Room House



Hudson House
(From Old Hudson
Plantation Website)



John Roe House (Undated
From Rozier, 215)



Shoulderbone Plantation