

FORGOTTEN PLANTATION ARCHITECTURE OF BURKE COUNTY, GEORGIA

by

PHILIP MILLS HERRINGTON

(Under the Direction of Mark Reinberger)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to document the existence, appearance, and (if applicable) destruction of pre-1861 plantation residences within the antebellum boundaries of Burke County (including the upper portion of Jenkins County, established 1905). A poor rate of survival, shortage of records, and absence of significant research has allowed for the majority of these structures to fall from human memory. Much of the information found in these pages was the product of extensive research through primary sources, including several newspapers (with dates surveyed): the *Augusta Chronicle* (1800-1865), Waynesboro *True Citizen* (1882-1938), Waynesboro *Expositor* (1872-1873), *Waynesboro News* (1858-1859), and Waynesboro *Independent South* (1860-1863), as well as diaries, military records, and personal papers. It is hoped the result will serve the cause of preservation by providing a context for the interpretation of plantation dwellings and by advocating the conservation of surviving structures.

INDEX WORDS: Georgia, Burke County (Ga.), Plantations, Architecture, Greek Revival, Vernacular, Antebellum, Preservation, Historic Buildings

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DEDICATION

To Mama and Daddy

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INTRODUCTION

In the American mind, the plantation exists in a limbo of memory, historical consciousness, and imagination. This mindset is a kind of netherworld of moonlight-illuminated pathos that encompasses both the beautiful and the cruel, making the plantation an object of simultaneous admiration and contempt. Yet our fascination with the plantation has propelled it into the stratosphere of myth, and imagination has largely consumed memory and historical record. The mythical has been substituted for the actual, and slowly the real plantation has been forgotten.

Largely ignored historically and architecturally, the plantations of Burke County, Georgia, have been devoured by fire, by time, and by historical apathy. The status of plantations elsewhere in Georgia is generally the same, although in Burke County the record is astonishingly bare considering Burke's size, wealth, and location. Burke County was one of the eight original counties of Georgia, established in 1777; its high level of productivity, perpetual decline in white population until 1840, and steady rise in slave population indicate the presence of a developing plantation economy. Yet little remains of the plantation dwellings or outbuildings that were once such a dominant feature of the landscape. The obscurity of an institution that was once an integral part of Burke County makes the plantation an interesting and necessary subject for historic research.

If the reader hopes to find within these pages a complete chronicle of the plantation architecture of Burke County, turn back now and hope for better things to

come. For the plantations of Burke have indeed been forgotten, and fully resurrecting them is a task outside the scope of this thesis, and perhaps outside the realm of possibility. The author has, however, set out to document the existence, appearance, and (if applicable) destruction of many of the pre-1861 plantation residences within the antebellum boundaries of Burke County. It is hoped the result will serve the cause of preservation by providing a context for the interpretation of plantation dwellings and by advocating the conservation of surviving structures. The reader should note that dwellings within the limits of Waynesboro, the county seat of Burke County, have not been included; a rough count by author of surviving antebellum residences within Waynesboro comes to no more than five structures. Although planter families in many of the wealthy counties in Georgia had residences either exclusively in town or both in town and on the plantation (although the latter occurrence was rare), census records indicate that the vast majority of Burke County planters resided on their plantations during the antebellum period. The migration between town and country in Burke County was limited to the departure of many families in the summer to retreats in the pinelands of adjacent counties, such as Richmond Bath, Hephzibah, and Mount Enon in Richmond County, and Summerton in Emanuel County. The architectural record of these establishments is especially bare, although the few known structures were simple, vernacular wooden buildings with wide porches and little exterior ornamentation.

The author wishes to emphasize that plantations should always be viewed as agricultural landscapes, rather than exclusively as family residences. Plantations were the homes of many families, primarily slave, and along with the main house and slave cabins existed the many agricultural buildings essential to the operation of the plantation.

Unfortunately, the supporting structures of the plantation have been nearly obliterated in Burke County and throughout Georgia. These buildings were rarely photographed or described in any detail, making their documentation especially difficult. This work focuses on the plantation house in part because the plantation house is deserving of specific study, but also because without significant archaeological research the agricultural landscape of the plantation is almost impossible to rediscover once lost. It is hoped that further work in this area will expand the knowledge of the plantation landscape, particularly in the area of African-American slave life.

Much of the information found in these pages was the product of extensive research through primary sources, including several newspapers (with dates surveyed): the *Augusta Chronicle* (1800-1865), *Waynesboro True Citizen* (1882-1938), *Waynesboro Expositor* (1872-1873), *Waynesboro News* (1858-1859) and *Waynesboro Independent South* (1860-1863). Diaries, military records, deeds, personal papers, and correspondence with knowledgeable individuals provided additional means of documentation. The author also consulted the collections of the Burke County Museum, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Georgia Department of Archives and History, and the University of Georgia.

This thesis is the result of many years of research into the plantation architecture of antebellum Georgia. The author is currently researching twenty-four Georgia counties in the hope of producing a work that will better document the plantations of Georgia and stimulate interest in their continued study. What appears herein is a portion of this ongoing project, and as such I ask other historians to respect the integrity of this work. Authors wishing to make lengthy citations or extract plantation names and facts not

recorded in other works should apply in writing for permission to use. As my research in Burke County is not complete, I must also caution that this work is not exhaustive, and therefore additional structures of equal importance to those included may have been overlooked. I invite anyone with additional information to contact me via the College of Environment and Design at the University of Georgia.

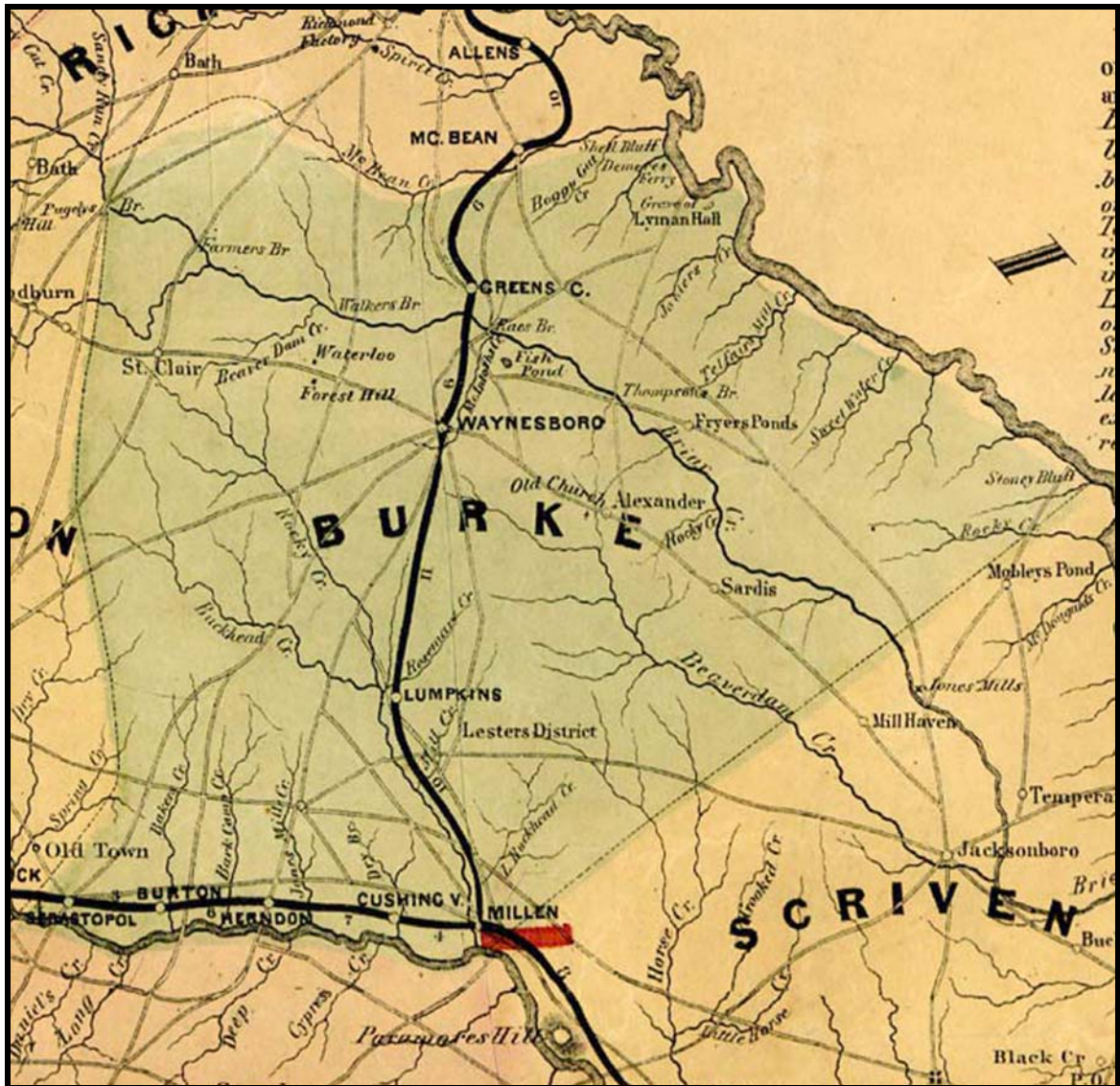


Figure 1
Burke County, 1864

Courtesy Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia

Items of Note:

- Forest Hill and Waterloo plantations (Quaker Road, W of Waynesboro)
- Old Church (Quaker Road, SE of Waynesboro)
- Bath (also “Richmond Bath,” NW of Waynesboro in Richmond County)

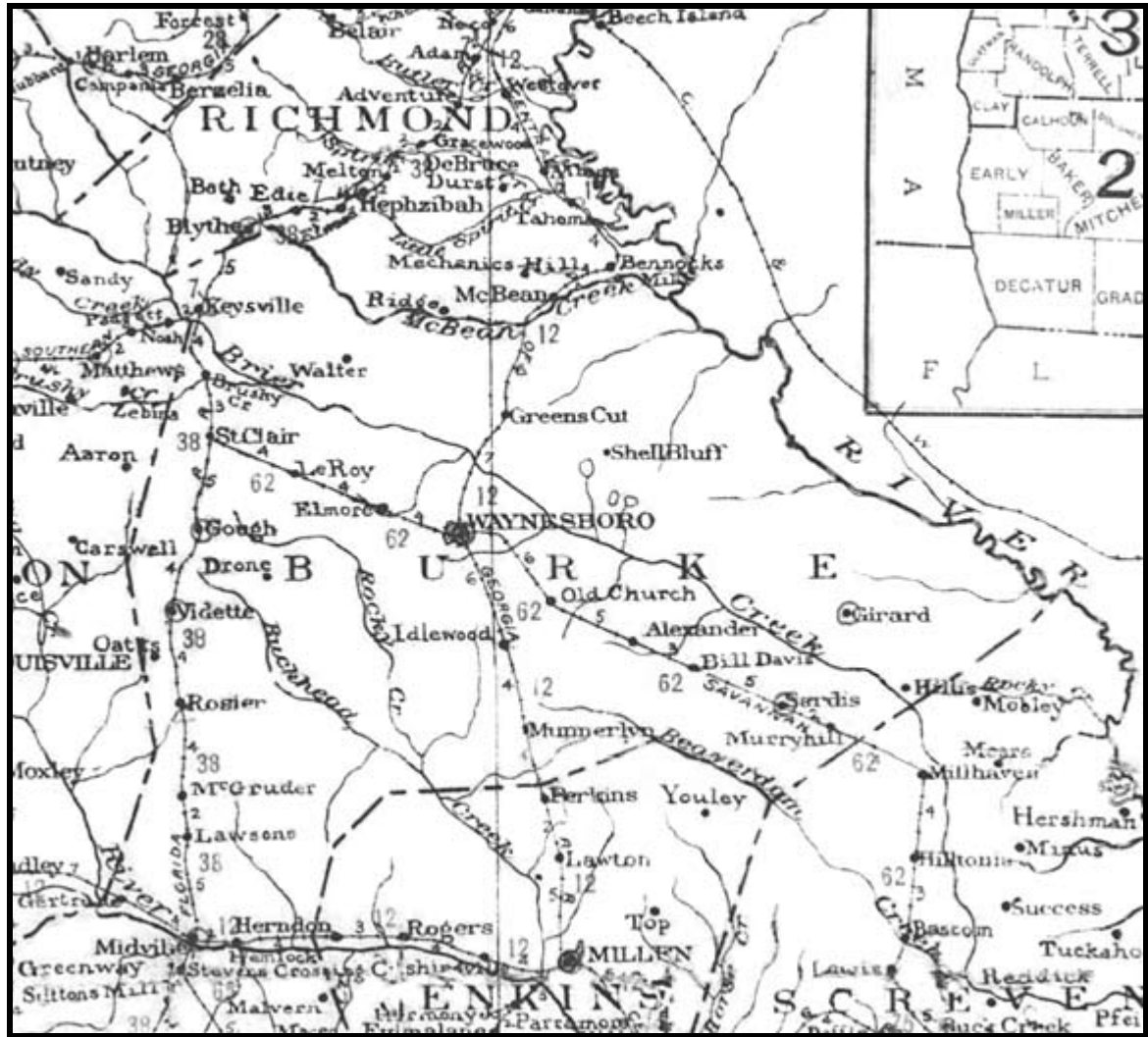


Figure 2
 Burke County, 1915
 Showing Burke subsequent to the creation of Jenkins County in 1905
 Courtesy Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia



Figure 3
 Georgia in 1864, showing railroads and major rivers
 Note Burke County (in green) on eastern boundary of Georgia
 Courtesy Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia

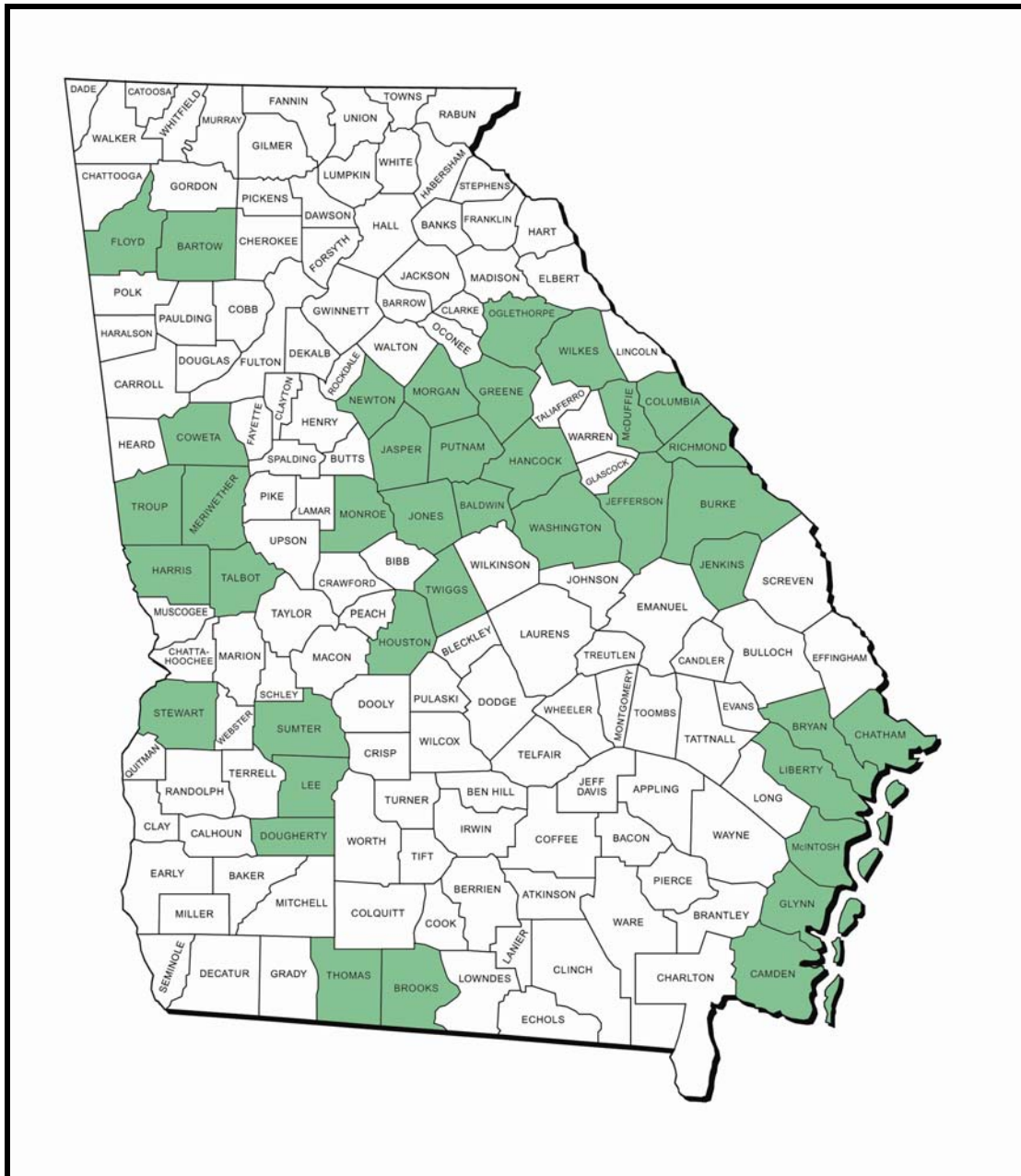


Figure 4
 Map of Modern Georgia
 Counties with major plantation resources noted in green

CHAPTER 1

THE DUST OF CIVILIZATION

In 1860, Burke County was enveloped in the red dust cloud of an antebellum dream. In the terms of success appreciated by the planter class—land and slaves—Burke County was a triumph of capitalistic achievement. It numbered first among the Georgia counties in large slave holdings, even surpassing the newer, cotton-rich counties to the west. Burke also outranked any other county in the number of units with over 1,000 cleared acres.¹ As one visitor reported, “This county, as I have been told, has more wealth, larger plantations and richer soil than any other in Georgia.”² In addition to its advantageous position on the Savannah River, connecting Augusta to Savannah, by 1850 Burke had been straddled by a railroad, a feat most counties would have to wait several decades to achieve. The county could also claim six academies, four newspapers, and a new brick courthouse with a marble floor, remarkable in an era when many courthouses were still constructed of logs. Yet the “real corner-stone” of Burke County’s prosperity was not symbolized in brick or marble but in human property, in 1860 a population of 12,052 individuals.³ The enormity of this investment is illustrated in the property valuations of 1860, in which ten Burke County planters held personal property estimated

¹ See Joseph K. Menn, *The Large Slaveholders of the Deep South, 1860*, diss., University of Texas, 1964, 10-13, for statistics on large slaveholdings (50+) in Georgia. Also Ralph B. Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 131.

² Emily Burke, *Pleasure and Pain: Reminiscences of Georgia in the 1840's* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1978) 85.

³ “The real corner-stone” taken from a well-known speech by Alexander H. Stephens, “This stone [slavery] which was rejected by the first builders ‘is become the chief of the corner’—the real ‘corner-stone’—in our new edifice.” In addition to 12,052 slaves, Burke County had 5,103 whites and 100 free blacks in 1860.

to be worth at least \$100,000. Nearly all of this amount was in slaves, a cornerstone which, once removed, would cause the edifice of Burke County's prosperity to crumble.

Although the planter's prospect in 1860 was one of abundance and permanence, the events of 1861 would begin a long road culminating in a far different scene. Of the 301 members of the Secession Convention in Milledgeville in January, 1861, three were representatives of Burke County, and these voted unanimously for secession. All were large planters: Edmund Byne Gresham, owner of 99 slaves and land in six counties; Elisha Anderson Allen, owner of Waterloo plantation and 65 slaves; and William B. Jones with 59 slaves, who had inherited in 1853 the well-known Jones plantation at Birdsville. These individuals could have scarcely imagined that their actions would not only ultimately destroy all they sought to protect, but would bring upon them the personal devastation of war. Burke County was halfway between Atlanta and the sea.

* * *

In 1893, an aged citizen of Burke County wrote a few paragraphs in the Waynesboro *True Citizen* regarding events of the 1860's. He begins:

One can hardly believe, while looking around him these summer days in 1893, that it has been nearly twenty-nine years since Sherman's army passed through Old Burke. Still there remains a few things to mark his march to the sea. . . In the midst of now large cotton fields are beautiful oak groves, the only mark to memory, save a few brick bats and an old dilapidated well, where once stood the mansions of wealthy planters before the desolating hand of Sherman came.⁴

Such remarks typify the sentiments of late-nineteenth century Burke County, in which the Old South of memory shone far brighter than it ever did in fact. Remembrances of plantation life—sanitized and sweetened with time—are replete in the Waynesboro *True Citizen*, which included the following few lines about the old Ivanhoe plantation: "The

⁴ Waynesboro *True Citizen*, Jul. 22, 1893.

old homestead was noted for its hospitality, and illustrated how the old southerner enjoyed the solid comforts and luxuries of life. The old homestead has gone to wreck and ruins and only lives in the memory of the remaining few who are fast passing away.”⁵ While such writings are of interest, their fusion of fact and memory tell us little about the plantation architecture of Burke County; rather, they tell us that even by 1893 this architecture had been largely forgotten.

Rediscovering lost buildings requires a type of archaeology—an excavation of all available sources for information which, when assembled, can provide a truthful record. Unfortunately, there has been little documentation of Burke County’s historic resources. Burke was almost entirely overlooked during the Historic American Buildings Survey of the 1930’s; it was subsequently ignored in every major architectural work on antebellum Georgia. No county history existed until 1985, and this only detailed a few major houses. Burke keeps its secrets well; an 1856 courthouse fire destroyed nearly all the antebellum county records, reducing the available number of primary sources. What is apparent is that few structures remain standing. As is true of far more ancient civilizations, dust and ashes have largely replaced the structural environment. What can be known about Burke County must be drawn from a handful of surviving buildings, the scattered record of a dozen or so more, and written accounts in the form of letters, diaries, newspapers, and deeds. From these sources we find the skeleton of what was antebellum Burke County.

The disappearance of nearly all plantation structures in Burke is often blamed on the effects of Gen. William T. Sherman and his Georgia campaign from Atlanta to Savannah, November 15-December 25, 1864. Unfortunately it is impossible to verify the number of structures destroyed during the march, although it is clear that structures

⁵ *True Citizen*, Mar. 1, 1890.

considered productive, such as barns and cotton gins, were burned more frequently than dwellings. Diaries and letters of the period record few instances of inhabited homes being burned, although hastily abandoned houses were not so fortunate. As one Union soldier described: “About three-fourths of the families fled at our approach, leaving home and farm in the care of their negroes; and in such instances the buildings and their contents seldom escaped the torch of straggling troopers. Strict orders restrained, though they did not entirely prevent, arson and pillage of dwellings.”⁶ Catharine Whitehead Rowland of Ivanhoe plantation adds: “Our Soldiers say the Yankees burn all unoccupied dwellings.”⁷ Rowland was at Ivanhoe during a visit from Union troops, who arrived there under the command of Gen. Judson Kilpatrick, November 27, 1864. The gin house and stables were burned but the house was largely untouched, in part due to the arrival of Confederate forces.⁸ Rowland records only five houses being set on fire; one of these was saved when the slaves extinguished the blaze. An unnamed observer to Sherman’s raid noted: “They burned everything but occupied dwellings.” He adds, “The wife of one of my neighbors—a very rich family, brought up to luxuries—just saved a single frying-pan, like we did.”⁹

Despite the close proximity of Burke County, the *Augusta Chronicle* reported little on the destruction there, noting on December 2, 1864, “The plantations of Edward Thomas, Esq., Gid Dowse, L. C. Warren, McNatt, and Mrs. Battey, in Burke Co., are

⁶ Capt. George W. Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman’s Campaign: In Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, OH, 1866) 246.

⁷ Catharine Barnes Whitehead Rowland, *Journals of Catharine Barnes Whitehead Rowland, as transcribed by Charles A. Rowland IV* (Atlanta: G. W. Rowland, 1975) 225.

⁸ Rowland 223.

⁹ J. T. Trowbridge, *The South: A Tour of its Battle-Fields and Ruined Cities* (Hartford, CT, 1866) 503.

reported to have been stripped of everything by the Federals” and on December 13 that the depot, warehouse, and water tower at Waynesboro had been destroyed. Federal forces were in Burke County from approximately November 27 to December 3, their primary objective being the destruction of railroads and related structures. Union diarists were especially interested in the destruction of the station house at Millen: “The extensive depot at Millen was a wooden structure of exceedingly graceful proportions. It was ignited in three places simultaneously, and its destruction was a brilliant spectacle.”¹⁰ Another soldier added: “At Millen and Gordon the station houses were spacious, elegant and expensive; but neither cost nor beauty availed to save them. The windows were dashed out, the neat columns hacked to pieces, and soon the depot disappeared from sight in smoke and ashes.”¹¹

The personal accounts of Sherman’s activities in Burke County are almost exclusively from soldiers marching along his direct path; this includes only a small portion of the county, as Sherman’s personal route was roughly along present-day Highway 17 from Midville to Millen.¹² Besides the depot at Millen, the only other structure of note mentioned by Union authors was the plantation house of Joseph B. Jones, brother of William B. Jones. On December 1, having just entered Burke County, a Union officer noted: “We are now camping in front of a very aristocratic Mansion—Beautiful in Every sense of the term. The man owning the house one J. B. Jones had absconded taking nearly all of his furniture but leaving his wife & children. The niggers

¹⁰ George W. Nichols, *The Story of the Great March* (New York, 1865) 80.

¹¹ Pepper 246.

¹² No accounts have been discovered from members of Kilpatrick’s raid, which permeated Burke County to the southern bank of Brier Creek and was probably far more destructive.

tell a good joke on him. They say a Yankee built his house for him and Jones hadn't paid it yet."¹³ This residence was the only plantation structure mentioned in Union accounts of Burke County, and virtually the only building described that was not put to the torch.

While Catharine Rowland said of the Yankees, "if God does not punish them in this world He certainly will in the next," available records poorly document their devastation in Burke, recounting the destruction of only a few properties.¹⁴ In addition to those described, the residence of William S. C. Morris at his "Spring Hill" plantation was also burned, bringing the total of major buildings known to have been destroyed by Sherman's men to a half dozen dwellings, the Waynesboro warehouse, two depots, and a hotel and Confederate hospital at Millen.¹⁵

Newspaper accounts provide evidence that the destruction of most rural antebellum buildings in Burke was caused not by the havoc of war, but by the slow decay and neglect of buildings that had become increasingly obsolete. Before 1861, the removal of wealthy families from country to town had already begun in several Georgia counties, most notably Morgan, Newton, and Clarke; after 1865, failing farms, racial tensions, and a desire for more urban amenities sent many of Burke's white families to Waynesboro. Farm foreclosures alone accounted for much of this migration. Before the war there were generally fewer than ten announcements of sheriff's sales in Burke County every few months; after the war, one edition of the Waynesboro *Expositor* listed

¹³ John Van Duser, "John Van Duser Diary of Sherman's March from Atlanta to Hilton Head," *GHQ* 53 (1969): 230.

¹⁴ The absence of specific accounts does not verify that more structures went unharmed; in fact, it is likely that many unrecorded dwellings and scores of outbuildings were burned.

¹⁵ George P. Rawick, ed., *Georgia Narratives*, vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972) 263. Julia Glover, a former slave of Morris, stated that "Spring Hill" was burned along with the "Red Hill" lodge, also owned by Morris.

fifty-six such sales.¹⁶ Many former planters' residences were used as tenant houses or completely abandoned. One such house, the property of the Whitehead family, was described by the *True Citizen* in 1904:

[The Whiteheads] were generally wealthy and owned beautiful homes in the vicinity of Waynesboro, many of which are standing to this day, marking a colonial period that ended with the dissolution of the Confederacy. The homestead dwelling of Mr. John P. C. Whitehead is still standing about 12 miles west of Waynesboro and belongs to the family yet, but has long since ceased to be tenanted by any of them.¹⁷

These rural houses were almost exclusively built of wood, and succumbed to decay and accidental fires with alarming regularity. Between 1901 and 1925, the *True Citizen* recorded the destruction of at least eight rural antebellum dwellings; it also confirmed the existence of several more that were subsequently destroyed at an unknown date. Unfortunately these newspaper items provide sparse information regarding the buildings' exact age, size, or style. One typical notice announced the destruction of the former Baldwin B. Miller dwelling: "The old Adam Cason residence in the upper part of the county—65th dist.—was destroyed by fire last Monday. . . This was an old country mansion that was built in ante bellum days by the father of Dr. R. L. Miller of Waynesboro."¹⁸ The romantic end of another "old country mansion" and the economic realities responsible for its abandonment paralleled the origin of these rural properties. The plantation had its naissance in capitalistic enterprise, but the idyllic associations of the plantation, before and especially after the Civil War, often gave a rose-colored tint to a world that was often far more glaring in reality.

¹⁶ Waynesboro *Expositor*, Jul. 3, 1873.

¹⁷ *True Citizen*, Mar. 26, 1904.

¹⁸ *True Citizen*, Jun. 4, 1910.

CHAPTER 2

THE PLANTATION: CAPITALISM VS. ROMANTICISM

The plantations of Burke County cannot be fully understood without some insight into how they were regarded by their antebellum owners. Such views, of course, had not yet been colored by a “Lost Cause” mentality, which in Burke, as elsewhere, would take shape in the 1880’s in the form of Confederate memorials and later in twentieth century cinematic and literary sentimentality. Of the more modern and often picturesque idea of the Old South much is known, while far fewer sources help us to penetrate the relationship of real-life plantation to planter. Certainly the plantation was an almost singularly economic enterprise, established not to provide sustenance for its inhabitants but to produce a cash crop intended for the financial benefit of the owner. It cannot be doubted that the majority of planters saw their plantations, at least initially, in purely economic terms; this is well-illustrated in the eagerness of many planters to continually migrate west, abandoning old lands and exploiting new areas. Slavery, of course, was often justified solely on its necessity as a source of labor. In fact, in most Northern abolitionist arguments, the plantation system is challenged largely on a capitalistic basis.¹⁹ The opinion of the Burke County planters, with their enormous investment in

¹⁹See Richard Harrison Shryock, *Georgia and the Union in 1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1926) 41-42. Shryock makes the argument that Northern abolitionists, eager to rationalize emancipation as economically beneficial to the South, failed to consider social issues that were equally if not more important in the Southern mind.

slaves and land, no doubt paralleled that stated by the *Augusta Chronicle*: “The whole matter will turn in the end on the pivot of dollars and cents.”²⁰

However, despite its fundamentally profit-minded *raison d’etre*, there can be little doubt that by 1860 the plantation had already begun to be the fount of Southern feudalistic mythology. In the decades before the Civil War, the plantation and its “aristocracy” had been heavily romanticized in the literature of the period, popular among both Northern and Southern audiences. Such writings were an offshoot of the Romantic period in general, and were greatly influenced in the United States by contemporary British authors. Clement Eaton, in his *The Mind of the South*, refers to a romantic spirit that “subtly permeated the society of the Old South.” This romantic spirit, Eaton claims, “was backward-looking and strengthened conservative trends. Especially did it nourish ‘chivalry’ and an archaic conception of honor. . .romanticism in the South glorified the status quo of the slave-based plantation society. The historical novels of Sir Walter Scott fitted in perfectly with this trend of thought and feeling.”²¹ The mythical fantasy of the South would embrace the plantation, but shorn of its true pecuniary function. Paternalism and chivalry disguised exploitation and capitalism, with England and Virginia held as models of pre-industrial virtue.

The degree to which Burke County planters saw themselves as the heirs of a paternal and feudalistic tradition is difficult to ascertain. In his *Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732 to 1860*, George G. Smith associates Burke with this tradition: “Nowhere was old Virginia life of a century gone by so reproduced as in Burke sixty

²⁰ *Augusta Chronicle*, May 17, 1849; Shryock 35.

²¹ Clement Eaton, *The Mind of the South* (Baton Rouge: University of North Carolina, 1967) 245, 248.

years since,” yet this quote more fully illustrates the sentiments of 1900 than 1860.²² What is clear is that by the late antebellum period, Burke County’s planter class was participating in the more obvious forms of Southern “chivalry”: oratory, militarism, and the occasional equestrian parade or review. The romanticism of the period is also evident in an unlikely source: the names of Burke County plantations. Although the complete disappearance of such names has led some historians to doubt that these properties were given fanciful epithets, a survey of newspaper, deed, and genealogical resources reveals over two dozen such names, including among them the plantations of two Whitehead brothers: “Ivanhoe” and “Waverly.” Neighbors of these Scott-inspired planters used a variety of pastoral appellations, including “Pleasant Valley,” “Lake Forest,” and “Glenalta;” additional titles included the historical “Waterloo” and the fanciful “Clifton Cottage.” An 1860 account of “The Barbecue at Ivanhoe” in Waynesboro’s *Independent South* newspaper is revealing in its Arcadian depiction of the plantation: “the barbecue ground was a model of comfort and beauty—being a high and rounding hill thickly dotted with large trees. . . The Captain certainly has one of the most pleasant, delightful and picturesque places. Every feature about it seems romantic; even its title—Ivanhoe—is romance itself.”²³

While the naming of plantations provides us no specific information about Southern architecture, the way in which plantations were viewed by their owners did directly effect the built environment of the plantation.²⁴ Planters who regarded their

²² George G. Smith, *The Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732 to 1860* (Macon: 1900) 130-31.

²³ *The Independent South*, Aug. 31, 1860.

²⁴ It should not be assumed that named plantations were always architecturally sophisticated; an 1821 advertisement in the *Augusta Chronicle* for “Oakland Hill” in Wilkes County describes a log dwelling.

plantations merely as a form of investment, especially in the early antebellum period, would have seen the land as worthy of exploitation rather than embellishment. Emily Burke, a northern schoolteacher traveling in Georgia in the 1840's, remarked: "In answer to the question, 'Why the planters have no better dwellings,' I would reply that they are under the necessity of changing their places of residence so often on account of the soil, which in a few years becomes barren, owing to the manner in which it is cultivated. If they invested much property in buildings, they would be obliged to make great pecuniary sacrifices."²⁵ This form of agricultural capitalism, a variant of colonialism, could not produce rural mansions; on such properties the residence of the planter would have been incidental, its unpretentious appearance attracting little admiration. As one Union soldier noted in 1864, "The smaller planters live in cheaper and less ostentatious dwellings than persons of the same means at the North. At a distance the master's mansion is sometimes hardly distinguishable from the cottages of the slaves."²⁶

Such evidence has brought about an abundance of literature debunking the plantation house myth and supporting instead a picture of the migratory planter whose ties to the land are ephemeral and economic rather than familial or sentimental. Mills Lane, in his series *Architecture of the Old South*, concludes that the "vast majority of Georgia planters lived in modest comfort but without much display or leisure time. Most prosperous planters put their money in land and slaves, not in big houses, for they would be obliged to migrate to new lands as soon as their old fields had become worn out and

²⁵ Burke 39.

²⁶ Pepper 246.

unproductive.”²⁷ Such statements, however, ignore the vast differences between counties and regions within Georgia, making generalizations about the “average” planter or plantation nearly impossible. By the time of the Revolution, Burke County had already been heavily settled by a wave of immigration from Virginia and the Carolinas; certainly in the period of the Early Republic (1800-1830) this tide of immigration would have continued from Burke to the western counties of Georgia, thence to Alabama and Mississippi. However, as migratory planters moved out of the eastern portion of the “Red Hills” region of Georgia (which included Burke) and the older Piedmont counties (Greene, Hancock, Putnam, etc.), the planters that remained consolidated larger holdings in land and slaves.²⁸ By 1850, the vast majority of Burke’s inhabitants, and an even higher percentage of Burke’s planters, were natives of Georgia.²⁹ Furthermore, many of the leading planter families, such as the Jones, Byner, Carswells, Sapps, Whiteheads, and Dowses had been well-established in the county for at least fifty years. These planters would have considered Georgia their state, Burke County their home, and their lands as ancestral.

Though watered by profit, the more romantic ideas of home and ancestry provided fertile ground for more ambitious rural architecture. The settling dust of a booming migration allowed the old cotton belt counties, such as Burke, to lose much of their frontier aspect and develop what one author refers to as a “respectable maturity.”³⁰

²⁷ Mills B. Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: Georgia* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1990) 34.

²⁸ The migration of smaller farmers and planters caused a decline in white population through 1840.

²⁹ The 1850 census was the first to provide statistics on place of birth; considering Burke’s early development it is likely that by 1830-40 the number of Burke residents born in Virginia or North Carolina would have dropped considerably.

³⁰ Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990) 18.

This maturity, with its associations of permanence, community, and sophistication, would have allowed for the emergence of the “country seat”—a rural property, often primarily agricultural in nature, but which had been improved as a residence by a planter having both the inclination and the necessary excess capital. The presence of fairly elaborate plantation houses in certain parts of Georgia (particularly the Piedmont) indicates that at least *some* properties were developed with an attempt at ornamentation. It is worthy of note that the same soldier who described the lowly appearance of some planters’ houses in 1864 also found the area of the Georgia cotton belt near Milledgeville to be “one of the richest and best farmed districts; and the appearance of many of the houses evidently shows that the occupants have had both skill and capital. The fine old plantations, prolific orchards, and the beauty, richness, and culture of soil, has altogether a more respectable appearance than the generality of Southern territory.”³¹

Descriptions of plantations being offered for sale before the Civil War reveal that many planters attempted to attract buyers not only with a cotton gin and good soil but with a residence that had “beautiful scenery,” was “elegantly improved,” and stood upon “a beautiful eminence.”³² A few highly developed showplaces, such as “Westover” and “Mount Nebo” in Baldwin County, even appear on state maps of the period; “Forest Hill” and “Waterloo” in Burke County were also sufficiently well known to appear on such maps (Fig. 1). However, it must be remembered that for every country seat, there were a dozen more functional neighbors, and for every “Pleasant Valley” there were a dozen bald hills and slave huts to symbolize the destructive economic, environmental, and social practices that no amount of romantic camouflage could conceal.

³¹ Pepper 269.

³² *Augusta Chronicle*, Sept. 21, 1822; Aug. 27, 1836; Oct. 5, 1847.

CHAPTER 3

EARLY ARCHITECTURE OF BURKE COUNTY

Little is known of the built environment of Burke County prior to 1830. Although many travelers chronicled their observations of contemporary Georgia, few noted Burke County specifically, and when mentioned, Waynesboro is typically the focus of their attention. One such tourist, John Melish of New York, set down the following remarks in 1806: “Waynesborough is built principally on one street, and consists of about 40 dwelling houses, church, jail, academy, and court-rooms. It contains 220 inhabitants, of whom above one half are slaves. The land in its vicinity is pretty good; is cultivated a considerable way round; and there are in its neighbourhood some very wealthy planters.”³³ Melish arrived in Waynesboro on an “agreeably uneven” road, from which he made several notations about landscape but none about architecture. An earlier and better-known visitor, George Washington, recalled his stops along the way but was inspired to write little else but that “Waynesborough is a small place. . . 6 or 8 dwelling houses is all it contains.”³⁴ While these statements tell us nothing about specific buildings, they do verify that Waynesboro was small—extremely so before 1800. Thus the population of Burke County was overwhelmingly rural, and would remain so throughout the antebellum period: by 1860, Waynesboro had a population of 307, a growth rate of approximately sixteen persons per decade.

³³ Mills B. Lane, ed., *The Rambler in Georgia* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1973) 21-22.

³⁴ Donald Jackson, ed., *The Diaries of George Washington*, v. 6 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976-79) 140.

There can be little doubt that well into the nineteenth century the vast majority of Burke County houses were modest log or frame dwellings, the product of the forests around them. Such residences, varying in size and sophistication, were considered the state's general form of habitation by early travelers. Basil Hall, touring Georgia in 1828, wrote:

Almost all these forest houses in the interior of the State of Georgia consist of two divisions, separated by a wide, open passage, which extends from the front to the back of the building. They are generally made of logs, covered with a very steep roof, I suppose to carry off the heavy rains. The apartments, at the ends of these dwellings, are entered from the open passage which divides the house in two, the floor of which is raised generally two or three feet from the ground. This opening being generally ten or twelve feet wide, answers in that mild climate the purpose of a verandah, or sitting-room during the day.³⁵

Two years later, traveler James Stuart made similar observations:

The planters' houses in the southern states are very different in their mode of construction from those in the north. The common form of the planters' houses, and indeed of all houses that you meet with on the roadsides in this country, is two square pens, with an open space between them, connected by a roof above and a floor below, so as to form a parallelogram of nearly triple the length of its depth. In the open space the family take their meals during the fine weather. The kitchen and the places for slaves are all separate buildings. . . About ten buildings of this description make up the establishment of an ordinary planter, with half a dozen slaves.³⁶

Fortunately at least one description of a Burke County log house survives. The occupant, only identified as "Sheriff Burke" was probably Thomas Burke, who in 1820 lived near Alexander and owned 14 slaves. The author, Jeremiah Evarts, writes in 1822:

³⁵ Lane, *The Rambler in Georgia* 76.

³⁶ Lane, *The Rambler in Georgia* 88-89.

Sheriff Burke [of Burke County], though possessed of a large plantation and some slaves, lives in a house having only one room, and that without windows or any place cut for windows. There are two doors, opposite to each other. And when more light is wanted than descends the chimney, one of the doors must be opened. The house is about thirty feet long and twenty wide, the chimney in one end and the sides made of square hewn pine timber, with battens nailed over the cracks. No floor or ceiling above, but the eye rests on a shingled roof.³⁷

It is notable that the single-pen home of Sheriff Burke, with its remarkable lack of ventilation, seems ill-adapted to the climate of Georgia. However, the double-pen residence, often having front and rear piazzas in addition to its central breezeway, was an excellent solution to the heat of summer and was found throughout upcountry Georgia.

An expanding economy and the corresponding increase in wealth brought about a desire for larger and more permanent structures. Newspaper advertisements of the early nineteenth century reveal that by 1800 the two-story house was becoming increasingly common as a plantation house form in Burke County. In 1804, one plantation of 267 acres near Waynesboro was described as having “a two-story dwelling, a brick smoke house, and a gin house.” In 1815, a 1,000 acre plantation bordering Brier Creek was advertised as having “a good large two story house, kitchen, barn, machine house, and all other necessary buildings that makes a farm complete.” Another plantation with its “new two story house” was offered for sale by the estate of Jeremiah Lewis in 1818.³⁸ Unfortunately these descriptions tell us nothing about the sophistication of such houses; the early capitalistic spirit of the plantation required an emphasis on acreage and outbuildings, not houses. Nevertheless, comfort and capitalism were not mutually exclusive. Increasing wealth did produce larger houses, but these structures were built

³⁷ Lane, *The Rambler in Georgia*.

³⁸ *Augusta Chronicle*, Sept. 15, 1804; Nov. 17, 1815; Sept. 30, 1818.

within the confines of the architectural conservatism of the planter class and showed deference to the practical concerns of climate and materials. The organic expression of these considerations produced a house type that could answer the needs of both prosperity and practicality. This form, known as the “I-house” because of its long, narrow footprint, was typically a rather broad-faced house of five bays, one room in depth with a single chimney at either end. In basic plan the I-house mirrored the double-pen with its central dog-trot, but here the open air passage has been converted into a hall. Such houses were common in Virginia and North Carolina, and migrants from these upper states carried their building traditions southward where such forms were extremely well suited. Highly adaptable, the I-house could be easily enlarged with wings; popular architectural features, such as fanlights and cornices, could also be incorporated with little trouble, although most such houses were fairly plain. Catherine W. Bishir, in her excellent *North Carolina Architecture*, notes: “Generally houses like this presented little external display of ornament or fashion. They communicated their owners’ status through their size and the familiar language of good materials and craftsmanship.”³⁹ The I-house was a conservative architectural form which to the modern observer may convey an austere and even egalitarian spirit; however, as Bishir describes, the I-house adequately expressed status within the confines of practical execution.

Bellevue (Fig. 5-6), a two-story frame I-house south of Waynesboro, may be the earliest surviving house in Burke County, and perhaps one of the earliest in the state. Traditionally it has been assigned a date of 1768; Bellevue’s extended hall-and-parlor plan is consistent with such a date, but plans of this type were being used in the South

³⁹ Bishir, Catherine W., *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 101.

well into the 1800's.⁴⁰ The original structure is a plain two-over-two with an unusual two-story shed projection at the rear which allows for additional space on both floors. The house rests on a moderately high foundation of brick piers, an almost universal feature of houses in rural Georgia up until the 1950's. The first floor front consists of five bays: a central door with a small transom above, symmetrically placed between two nine-over-nine windows on either side. The second floor is made up of only four bays, with four symmetrically placed windows. Relatively low in slope, the side-gabled roof is clipped close to the house. Four square pillars support the shed porch roof; these pillars are plain and unadorned but for their simple Doric capitals and are heavy enough to suggest that alterations may have occurred in the mid-antebellum period. In the possession of the same family for over two hundred years, Bellevue house has been extensively improved and expanded, though it retains its unpretentious early character.

The main house at Birdsville (Fig. 7-9), the well-known plantation of Henry Philip Jones, was originally constructed as an I-house before an extensive Greek Revival remodeling disguised the earlier structure.⁴¹ Jones, an industrious planter, had inherited his father's original tract of 287 acres and expanded it to what Emily Burke described as "forty-nine square miles of land" by the 1840's.⁴² The original house at Birdsville has often been assigned a date of approximately 1800, although Henry Philip Jones (1788-1853) was not old enough at the time to oversee such construction. As with most

⁴⁰ Unfortunately the author was unable to personally inspect Bellevue. An analysis of timbers, structure, and additional features could allow for a more definite date.

⁴¹ "Birdsville," though long synonymous with the Jones plantation, was the name of the adjacent post office, named after the post-master, a Mr. Bird. There is no evidence that the Jones plantation was ever given a proper name.

⁴² Burke 85. Although the owner of the plantation is not given by Burke, details indicate the property was Birdsville.

structures of the period, the Jones house was remarkably compact with only a few modestly sized rooms. As at Bellevue, the front door opened into a main parlor or salon; to the left of this room was a smaller room, now used as a dining room. The stair was incorporated into the larger room and would have faced the visitor when entering the front door. Shed rooms, original to the structure, were incorporated at the rear of the first floor, giving the house a total of six rooms, excluding the basement. Birdsville differed from the traditional I-house in its lack of breadth, the major rooms being deeper than they are wide. This aspect of the house, coupled with its low hipped roof, would have given the house a squarish appearance as opposed to the usual slimness of the I-house. Two chimneys are located at the rear of the structure, which allowed for the presence of three openings on the side facades and provided heating to the shed rooms without the construction of additional chimneys. Although a rare innovation, the same scheme was used at Boykin Hall near Milledgeville in the 1820's, and served to relegate the chimneys to the service façade of the house. This de-emphasis was a marked shift from the traditional I-house, where the chimneys were often the most conspicuous feature of the façade.

Ornamentation on the exterior of Birdsville was restricted to a fairly thick cornice which would have encircled the entire building. This cornice consists of a prominent, blocky fascia and soffit topping a recess, followed by a second, smaller fascia, which is ornamented with two tiers of dentil bed molding. Finishing the cornice is a simple band which projects only slightly from the clapboard façade. An 1829 plat of the property provides a rough sketch of the house, which had only a front stoop rather than a full-façade porch. This stoop, which featured curved steps on either side, survives under the

body of the 1850's addition. The interior of Birdsville received a fair amount of embellishment, featuring simple moldings and mantels which adorned an otherwise Spartan structure. The dining room mantel is fairly elaborate, decorated with a cabled band below the mantelshelf and two primitively carved urns. These urns are slightly bowed to suggest depth but in essence are flat relief panels only shaped as urns. There is trace evidence that the mantelpiece was brightly colored in blues, reds, and yellows; the current owner has recreated some of this coloring, which is similar in vivacity to the restored paint colors at the James Vann house (1803-04) near Spring Place. The main salon contained a cornice with scalloped molding, flush board walls, wainscoting, and a practical, sturdy staircase with a rounded rail supported by plain unembellished balusters.⁴³ The treasure of the house is a door in the current stair hall, which one modern-day observer noted "has been so artfully grained to imitate paneled wood that the deception cannot be discerned without the sense of touch."⁴⁴ This door is actually flat, but has been faux-painted to give the impression of panels and a finer wood. Additional doors in the hall, as well as the stair risers, also have evidence of faux-graining. Such details reveal a simple house content with limited refinements, the efforts of craftsman not focused on outward, exterior display but on a few interior features which indicated wealth, sophistication, and an access to artisans that would have impressed the Jones' neighbors.

Similar to Birdsville in its juxtaposition of frontier spirit and sophistication, the Byne-Gresham plantation house (Fig.10) was a familiar landmark of Burke County

⁴³ A partition, added in the 1850's remodeling, now divides the main room into a smaller room and central hall. The original cornice, however, continues uninterrupted through the partition, providing evidence of the original configuration.

⁴⁴ National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 1971.

before its demolition in 1963. Located northwest of Waynesboro on Brier Creek, the plantation was in the neighborhood of Burke County's most prosperous planters, whose properties, including Waterloo, Forest Hill, and Ivanhoe plantations, were being extensively developed between 1800 and 1830. Unfortunately, so little information survives that it is impossible to determine if this cluster of planters' houses would have shared similar features. The builder of the Byne house is unknown, although it is reasonable to speculate that it may have been an ancestor of the first known owner, William Byne (b. ca. 1806), who lived there in the antebellum period. The Bynes were an early Burke family with large holdings in the area north of Brier Creek, west of Waynesboro. An earlier William Byne, a native of King and Queen County, Virginia, is known to have owned a plantation named "Liberty Grove" in Burke County, but no evidence has been uncovered to link Liberty Grove with the Byne-Gresham house.⁴⁵ A single photograph of the house reveals a two-story, frame structure of five bays, fronted by a full-length shed roof porch. Notably, the porch posts—apparently young tree trunks—stand independently of the porch itself, which is set back under the deep shade of the overhanging roof. Further research is necessary to determine if this vernacular form was common in parts of Virginia or the Carolinas; in Thomas County, Georgia, porches were constructed on the same principle, but most of these were constructed in the 1840's and 50's, and were Greek Revival in style. The ceilings of the front, side, and rear porches of the house were coved, a feature seen at Ellerslie, Cumberland County, North

⁴⁵ See *Augusta Chronicle*, Mar. 20, 1824, for the obituary of William Byne of Liberty Grove plantation. Byne, who died February 12, 1824, was 66 at the time of his death, allowing for the possibility that he was the William Byne listed in the 1820 Burke County census as a head of household of 45+ years. In his household was another male age 16 to 26. The William Byne of the 1820 census owned 29 slaves and is listed among a larger group of Bynes.

Carolina, and at High Gate in Augusta.⁴⁶ The Byne-Gresham house was flanked with end chimneys decorated with patterns in blue brick—a common feature of houses in the Carolinas in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The interior of the Byne-Gresham house is only known from a few twentieth century descriptions. One writer observed during the house's demolition: "The rooms were spacious and the first floor ceilings measured 10 feet while the second floor ceilings were eight feet. The house contained about 10 rooms, excluding halls, dressing rooms, and the basement."⁴⁷ An article from 1932 reports: "It is the type of many pre-war dwellings which have high roofs, large front porches, and a wing at the back. . . The fireplaces in the house are large enough to burn logs, and over them are high, wide mantels. The doors are high, but because of their width they give a 'squarish' effect. . . the staircase is enclosed and is entered by a door from the living room, which opens on the first step. The passage is dark and the steps turn sharply, each being wedge-shaped."⁴⁸ The baseboards of the house were marbleized, a common Federal decorative technique, though undocumented elsewhere in Burke County. As at Birdsville, faux finishes were used to suggest wealth and to camouflage the indigenous building materials so apparent elsewhere in these structures.

Although the widespread destruction of rural houses in Burke has left us little from the period of 1800 to 1830, there is evidence that the area along the Quaker Road, southeast of Waynesboro, experienced an early antebellum architectural flowering. Though almost nonexistent today, the tiny hamlet of Alexander was a cultural center of

⁴⁶ See Bishir 118-19; John Linley, *The Georgia Catalog* (Athens: University of Georgia Press) 45.

⁴⁷ *True Citizen*, Aug. 21, 1963.

⁴⁸ *True Citizen*, Feb. 26, 1932.

early Burke County, boasting at one time prestigious male and female academies and a small group of planters' houses in its immediate vicinity. Although the town was not laid out until 1841, the area was already developed by the middle of the antebellum period, due to its location upon a well-traveled highway. The aspirations of nearby planters inspired the plotting of a regular grid of streets and the chartering of a company to handle transactions. Alexander had little time to develop before a devastating visit from Gen. Judson Kilpatrick in December of 1864. Efforts to revive the town failed, and what remained of the hopeful architecture of the Alexander area was slowly obliterated. As one turn-of-the-century visitor recalled:

Alexander! Historic old Alexander!! What memories cluster around this once splendid old town. Beautiful even in its dilapidation, one cannot suppress a sigh while gazing upon its magnificent ruins sitting upon a hill, which overlook the surrounding country, the melancholy moaning of the pines swaying to the evening zephyrs, is but a fitting requiem for a departed grandeur. Time was when the very name Alexander possessed a charm suggestive alike of wealth, of beauty, and of luxurious ease. Here the wealthy planters of ante bellum days built beautiful homes, planned magnificent work and gardens where the youths and maidens mingled in perpetual rounds of pleasure.⁴⁹

While most of the buildings in and near Alexander have vanished without a trace, two major antebellum buildings have avoided complete oblivion, although only one survives today. The now-demolished Shewmake house (Fig. 11-12), which lasted well into the twentieth century, was located within Alexander, although the house predated the town by some years. Joseph Shewmake (1779-1838) was a well-known figure in the Alexander area and a fairly successful planter; he owned 29 slaves in 1830, eight years before his death. His son, Joseph Allen Shewmake (1816-1889) is the first confirmed occupant of the house, and either father or son may have been the builder. Neither

⁴⁹ *True Citizen*, Jan. 22, 1906.

Shewmake was among the wealthiest of the Burke County planters. Joseph Allen Shewmake owned only 23 slaves in 1840 (which he probably inherited from his father); by 1850 he owned 33. Although falling into the middle class of planters, the Shewmakes were quite prominent; Joseph's younger brother, John Troup Shewmake, married Elizabeth Penelope Jones, youngest daughter of Henry Philip Jones of Birdsville. The Shewmakes were also involved in iron smelting at their factory near Alexander, a surprising bit of Burke County industrial history worthy of more attention.

With its tall end chimneys and broad front façade, the Shewmake house was reminiscent of the traditional I-house, but here the depth of the house has been nearly doubled to include four rooms per floor. The transition to the four-over-four house form is not quite complete, however, in that the rear rooms of the Shewmake house were smaller and were apparently not provided with chimneys. A rather plain façade was relieved by a somewhat thick cornice and the incorporation of slender corner boards with small Doric capitals. The house had a hipped roof, seen earlier at Birdsville and found on a later house, Orris Grove, near Midville.

Establishing a date for the Shewmake house is difficult given that little documentation was done prior to its demolition. Besides the basic room configuration, little is known except that there was some wainscoting in the downstairs rooms. One local author noted that the ceilings were made of pine planks while the wainscoting was of oak.⁵⁰ If the house was constructed by Joseph A. Shewmake, to whom it is traditionally attributed, it could not have been built earlier than the 1830's, and even then Shewmake was fairly young to construct such an ambitious home. Although the use of

⁵⁰ Albert Miller Hillhouse, *A History of Burke County, 1777-1950* (Swainsboro, GA: Magnolia Press, 1985) 273.

narrow corner pilasters and nine-over-nine windows suggests a Federal structure, additional information on the doorway, moldings, and mantels could place the house squarely in the 1840's. Unfortunately the opportunity for definite dating was missed when this noteworthy structure was scrapped for parts in the 1980's.

The remaining antebellum house in the Alexander area, which still stands halfway between Alexander and the nearby town of Sardis, is without question the most graceful structure extant in Burke County. Its remarkable degree of integrity and architectural refinement elevate this residence to the level of national importance, and render its continued preservation a necessity. This structure is the Sapp house (Fig. 13-14), believed to have been constructed by planter William Sapp (1789-1875) prior to his marriage to Sarah Hankinson in 1826.⁵¹ If such a date is accurate, it is likely Sapp received some assistance from his father (in 1820, William owned only two slaves; his father John Sapp was far wealthier, owning 50).⁵² William's slaveholding increased throughout the following decades: 25 in 1830, 43 in 1840, 98 in 1850, 138 in 1860. In the latter two decades William Sapp was among the ten largest slaveholders in Burke County.

Externally the Sapp house is a fairly plain, two-story structure with end chimneys, an archetype of the I-house form, although the gentle slope of its roof helps alleviate the severe verticality noticeable in many I-houses when viewed from the side. Mortise and tenon construction was used; one researcher noted: "Roman numerals neatly carved into mating timbers at the spot they were to be joined are visible in accessible parts of the attic

⁵¹ Per National Register of Historic Places nomination form, June 1978.

⁵² 1820 Federal Census of Burke County.

and foundation. Large pine pins, an inch or more in diameter, and as much as a foot long, and hand cut nails were used to hold the timbers and hand planed siding and flooring in place.”⁵³ The cornice is simple, clipped so close on the side facades as to leave the house virtually devoid of eaves. The flush board siding on the front exterior of the first floor indicates that the original porch ran the full length of the structure; it has been replaced by a one-story pedimented porch which covers only the middle bay.

Only when one passes through the front door does the true value of the house become apparent. The wide central hall encases a spiral staircase (Fig. 15), rising from the left, fitting into the far end of the hall, which is curved to accommodate the stair. The staircase features a plain, rounded banister with simple balusters and an embellished string with plain S-curve molding. An arched niche is situated in the left side of the rear wall, fitted with rounded molding. Perhaps the most outstanding features of the space are the doors to the rear of the hall, fitting underneath the stair, which are curved to fit flush with the wall (Fig. 16). The central door, six-paneled or “Crusader” style, was apparently the original rear entrance; two adjacent doors are narrower and access closets. The ceilings of both the upper and lower halls and the two downstairs rooms feature elaborate plaster centerpieces and moldings (Fig. 17-18); the wooden window and door moldings are capped with square ornaments that resemble paterae. Such elaborate and masterful artistry is remarkable considering the Sapp house originally contained just four rooms and two halls, but such a house would have seemed palatial to the aforementioned Sheriff Burke, whose one-room house contained no windows or ceilings.⁵⁴

⁵³ *True Citizen*, Apr. 20, 1861.

⁵⁴ For information on the Sapp house see National Register of Historic Places nomination form, June 1978.

Often boasting delicate moldings and spiral staircases, the late-Federal dwellings in and near Milledgeville and Sparta are worthy of comparison with the Sapp house, although under scrutiny they share few similarities. The plaster centerpieces and curved staircases of Lowther Hall (ca. 1822) and Westover (ca. 1830), both near Milledgeville and attributed to carpenter-builder Daniel Pratt, recall similar features at the Sapp house, but along with other Pratt houses display a concern with exterior decoration that is absent at the Sapp house. The Pratt houses generally feature two-story porticoes (Lowther Hall is the exception), fluted columns, and fanlights; the exterior of the Sapp house is exceedingly plain, its only embellishment being a double door with a broken transom and sidelights, more massively Greek Revival than Federal. None of the Pratt houses, however, have the flourishing of plaster ornament found at the Sapp house, where the ceilings of the downstairs rooms are tiered to allow for successive bands of ornamentation. The egg-and-dart moldings at the Sapp house can only be matched in the early Piedmont by the Terrell-Stone house (ca. 1820) at Sparta, which features similarly exuberant ornamentation in its main parlor and equally fine plaster centerpieces. Similar centerpieces can be found at the Sayre-Turner-Shivers house (ca. 1829), on Broad Street in Sparta. However, the latter dwellings have finer mantels and exterior decoration than the Sapp house.

The presence of such a dwelling as the Sapp house makes it unfortunate that a greater number of Federal-era structures have not survived in Burke County. Without objects of comparison, it cannot be determined if the Sapp house was simply a unique product of exceptional, transient craftsmen or only one of several examples of high-style Adam architecture in the area. It should be considered that William Sapp's father, John

Sapp, was 13th in slaveholdings in the 1820 census; for the twelve largest slaveholders, no information was discovered regarding their dwellings. Of the fourteen Burke County planters with fifty or more slaves in 1830, only two have known residences.⁵⁵ Occasional items surface indicating an exceptional house; the William Lassiter house at Alexander was noted upon its accidental destruction in 1902 as having been “a magnificent structure in its day” with interior walnut trim. A 1912 article remembered the Lassiter house as having been “the finest dwelling in this part of Georgia.”⁵⁶ Yet for the majority of these rural properties the record is silent. The named estates, such as Pleasant Valley, Mount Hope, and Waterloo, which emerged in this period have no recorded buildings or landscapes, which along with their fanciful names seem simply to have faded away.

⁵⁵ Henry Philip Jones, with 89 slaves, was the owner of Birdsville; John C. Poythress, with 52 slaves, is known to have lived in Waynesboro in the well-known Carter-Munnerlyn house, now demolished. For census information see Hillhouse 91-92.

⁵⁶ *True Citizen*, Sept. 6, 1902; Aug. 17, 1912.

EARLY ARCHITECTURE OF BURKE COUNTY
FIGURES



Figure 5
Bellevue, front façade showing additions
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 6
Bellevue, interior photograph showing one of the principal rooms
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 7
Birdsville, north (rear) façade, showing ca. 1800 portion of house
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History

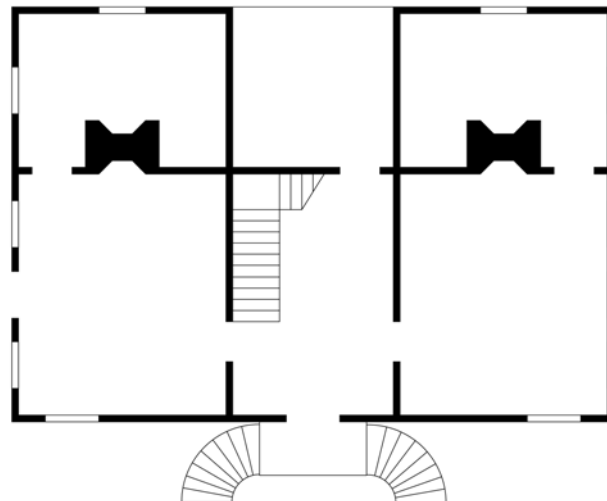


Figure 8
Birdsville, first floor plan, showing house prior to additions
Some elements are conjectural; house may have had two additional front windows



Figure 9
Birdsville, original portion of house, staircase

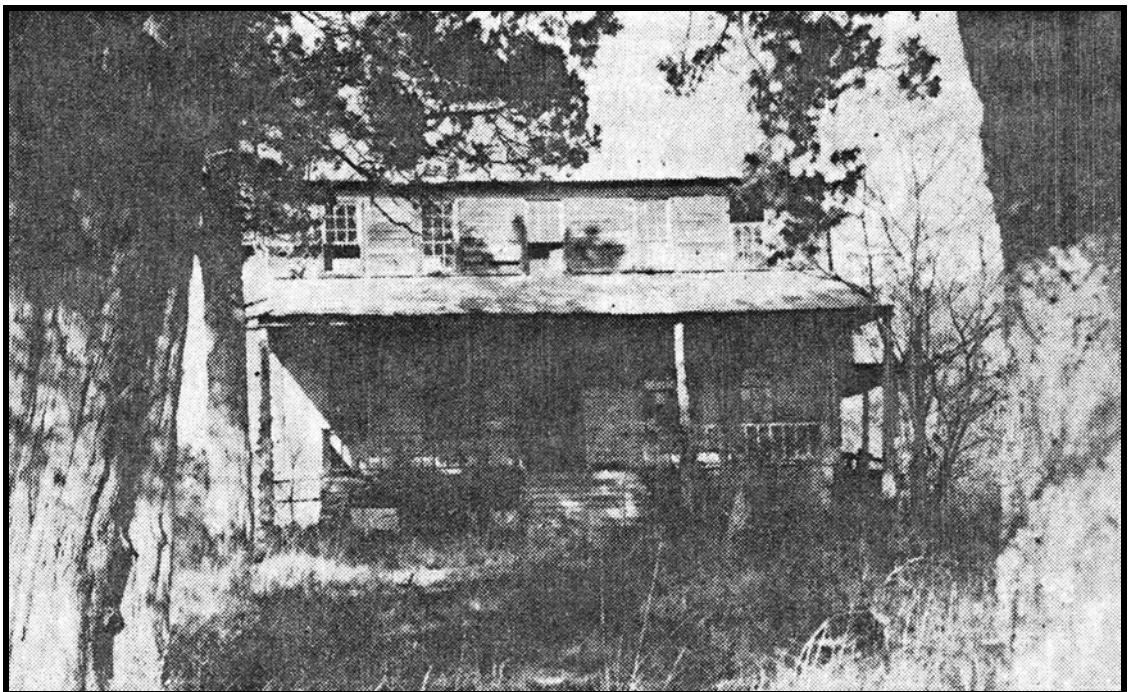


Figure 10
Byne-Gresham house, ca. 1963
Courtesy Waynesboro *True Citizen*



Figure 11
 Joseph A. Shewmake house, from an old photograph
 (Note upper floor of six bays)
 Courtesy Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division

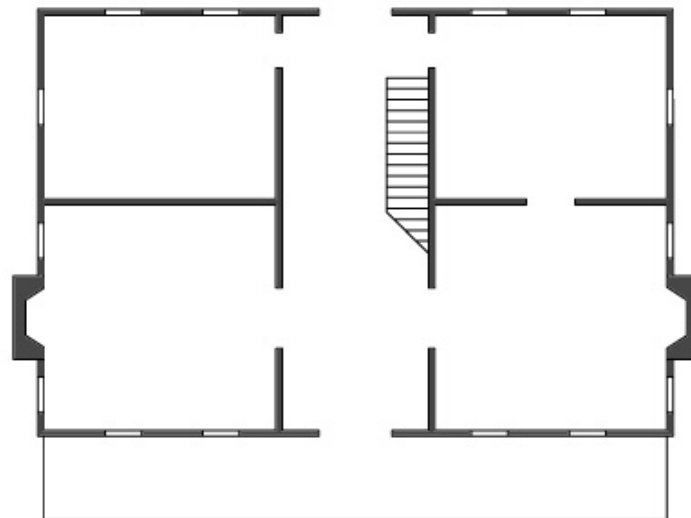


Figure 12
 Joseph A. Shewmake house, first floor plan, showing house without rear addition
 Plan based on interviews with former visitors; some window/door arrangement conjectural



Figure 13
William Sapp house, south (front) façade

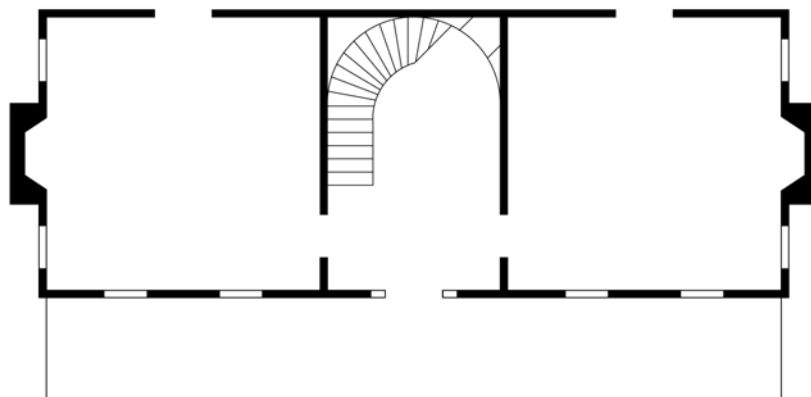


Figure 14
William Sapp house, first floor plan,
showing house before twentieth century rear additions
Porch outline represents original porch

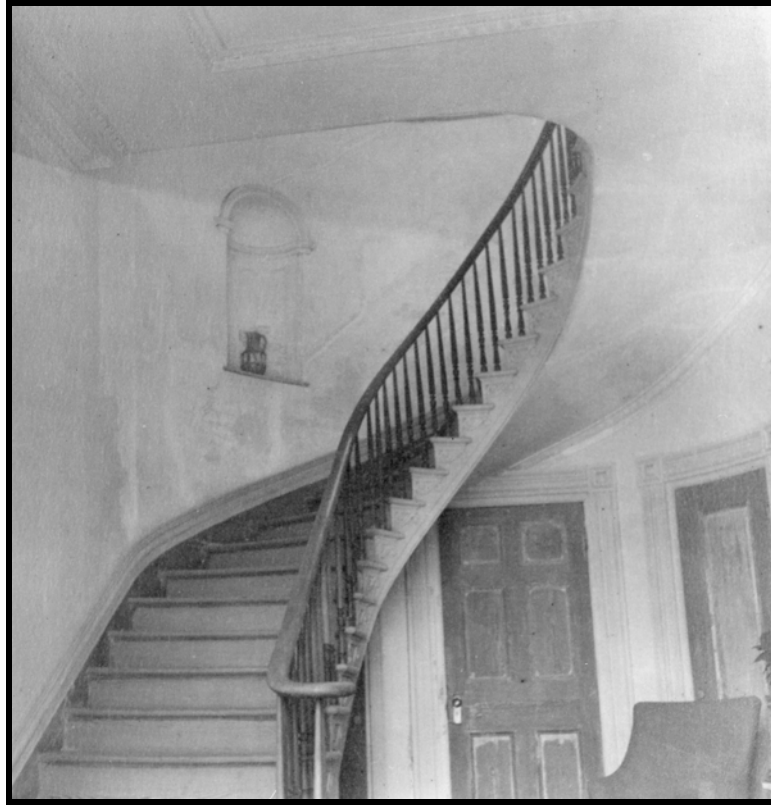


Figure 15
William Sapp house, staircase
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 16
William Sapp house, entry hall, showing curved wall and closet door

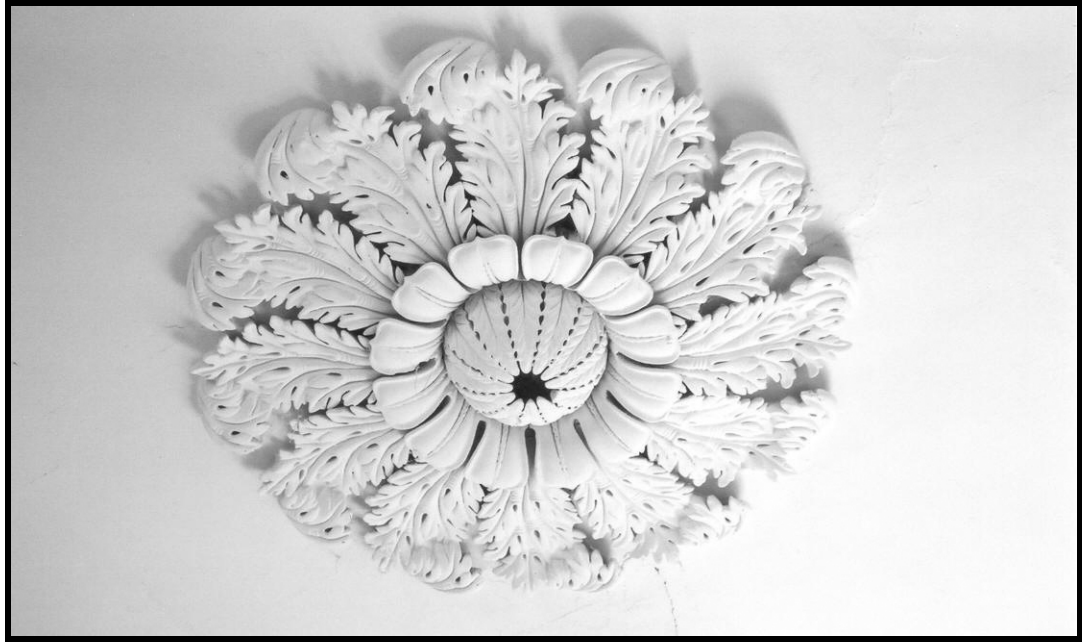


Figure 17
William Sapp house, plaster ornamentation, second story hall



Figure 18
William Sapp house, west (left) downstairs room, showing plaster ceiling
embellishment

CHAPTER 4

THE GREEK REVIVAL IN BURKE COUNTY

In many ways the late antebellum era was a continuation, and even an acceleration, of trends that had begun earlier in the century. Forests were removed to open up new farm land, and even in Burke County, where red hills had replaced woodlands long ago, the amount of improved acreage increased by nearly 60,000 acres between 1850 and 1860. Likewise the value of Burke County's farms rose dramatically, assessed at a worth in 1860 of \$4,034,000, over a million dollars greater than in 1850.⁵⁷ Cotton production increased, the top yielding counties in 1850 being equally divided between the newer southwestern counties and the old cotton belt, of which Burke was a part. Slavery was becoming ever-entrenched in the economic, social, and political mindset of the South, and in Burke County the stakes in this investment were becoming increasingly high. In the period of 1820-1830, only three Burke County slave owners had holdings of greater than 100 slaves; by 1850-1860, this number had grown to nine. Far more dramatic was the rise in slaveholdings of 50 to 99 slaves, with the number of such holdings almost quadrupling between 1820 and 1860. In the same period, the number of holdings of 25 to 49 doubled.⁵⁸

Yet while the triumvirate of slavery, land, and cotton continued to rule the South, changes were occurring within the economic system. With land and slave values rising, the former fluidity of class and capital was becoming more rigid, causing a decrease in

⁵⁷ Hillhouse 87.

⁵⁸ Hillhouse 90.

the percentage of white families owning slaves in the lower South in the late antebellum period.⁵⁹ Those whites engaged in agriculture but owning few or no slaves often had to migrate to newer areas or be content with small and often inferior plots of land. Such dynamics caused the white populations in several eastern Georgia counties to decline. In Burke County, the white population dropped between 1790 and 1840, then leveled off with little change between 1840 and 1860. The slave population, however, which had made up less than half of the total population of Burke in 1820, was two-thirds of the total population in 1860.

Although many poorer whites were unaffected by Georgia's increasing prosperity, rising values in land, cotton, and slaves enriched the Burke County elites. In 1856, the estate of Augustus Harcourt Anderson advertised a plantation of 8,745 acres bordering the Ogeechee River; this property was valued at \$60,000. The Whiteheads of Forest Hill owned three Burke County plantations, totaling approximately 4,100 acres and valued at \$29,000, in addition to lands in Richmond and Talbot counties and a 1,700 acre tract in Florida. At his death in 1853, Henry Philip Jones of Birdsville owned land in at least nineteen Georgia counties.⁶⁰ Although the description of these individuals as members of the "Southern aristocracy" implies exaggerated ideas of social stratification, it is reasonable to conclude that many of these planters chose to exhibit the trappings of status. Such trappings, however, did not necessarily include the construction of large plantation houses.

While the basic economic motive of the plantation—greater holdings in land and slaves—was essentially the same throughout the antebellum period, by the 1840's the

⁵⁹ Bartley 21.

⁶⁰ *Augusta Chronicle*, Nov. 24, 1855; will of Henry Philip Jones, Burke County Courthouse.

dynamic of plantation life was changing, especially in Georgia. Railroads were being constructed, galvanizing many of the small county seats in their path and making these towns increasingly attractive to planters who were often bored with isolated plantation living. Between 1840 and 1850 alone, four major railroads were constructed in Georgia: the Georgia Railroad, connecting Augusta and Athens; the Central of Georgia, from Savannah to Macon; the Macon and Western from Macon to Atlanta; and the Western and Atlantic, which headed north from Atlanta, connecting it with Chattanooga.⁶¹ The location of these railroads is revealing; they crisscross the areas of the state with high plantation activity, completely circumventing less productive areas such as the massive “Piney Woods” region of southeast Georgia. By 1850, nearly all of the major Piedmont towns—Madison, Greensboro, Athens, Covington, Washington, Eatonton, and Milledgeville—had direct railroad connections. These railroads provided better access to markets for the cotton crop, heightening the capitalistic spirit of the plantation.

Continually expanding, agrarian capitalism was thriving in late antebellum Georgia through better transportation and booming land and slave prices. Such prosperity, however, had decidedly unromantic consequences for the plantation. The use of overseers, made possible by increasing wealth, in addition to easier access to markets, made direct management by the owner unnecessary on many plantations. Many planters were eager to remove their families to towns, especially in the Piedmont, where educational facilities were flourishing.⁶² The abandoning of plantations as family homes

⁶¹ Shryock 16-17.

⁶² The University of Georgia (Athens), Oglethorpe University (Baldwin Co.), Mercer University (Greene Co.), Oxford College (Newton Co.), Greensboro Female College, Georgia Female College (Macon), and Madison Female College were all located within sixty miles of Eatonton, at the center of the Piedmont cotton belt.

made the plantation less feudal, less pastoral, and less paternalistic. While many planters remained on their plantations, it is clear by the large number of high-style antebellum dwellings in such towns as Eatonton, Washington, and especially Madison that many of the wealthier planters preferred living in town. Most of these town residences differed little in plan and materials from the older plantation houses, but were being constructed in a new style—the Greek Revival.

Although the Greek Revival movement in the United States originated outside the South, within the South it took on a significance and an ideology peculiar to the region. On its most practical level, the Greek Revival was well suited to the Southern climate with its emphasis on large piazzas and porticoes. Greek forms could be easily adapted in wood, the dominant form of construction in Georgia, and could be accomplished with effective results by the carpenter builders so common in the South. Despite the often stiff inflexibility of the Greek Revival movement, these builders produced houses with a remarkable degree of originality. Wilbur Zelinsky, in his study of the Greek Revival in Georgia, notes “the Georgia Greek Revival house displays great variety—from pomposity and stolid dignity to graceful improvisation and even whimsicality, from parvenu grossness to delicate romanticism, but in all cases the spirit of the builder, the place, and the era are most effectively conveyed.”⁶³

The notion of democracy and civilization thriving in a slave society made ancient Greece especially attractive to the Southern mind. With a kind of one-dimensional self-satisfaction reminiscent of the makeshift temple fronts applied to otherwise humble dwellings, the South embraced outward forms of classicism, including architecture and

⁶³ Wilbur Zelinsky, “The Greek Revival House in Georgia,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 13 (1954): 9-12.

oratory, while neglecting more analytical aspects of the classical tradition. As Eaton writes, “In the struggle between the classic tradition and the romantic spirit for supremacy over the Southern mind, the victory went decidedly to romanticism; even classic culture was viewed in a romantic and unhistorical light.”⁶⁴ While the South may have considered its Greek Revival architecture to be suggestive of the values of ancient Greece and Rome, in reality the ideals represented were far more Old South than Old World. As one author stated, “under the colonnades and pediments they had created something which the Greeks never knew.”⁶⁵

While the Greek Revival movement in Piedmont Georgia has been the subject of much study, the effect of the Greek Revival in the Savannah River Valley has been largely ignored. Here, the two major cotton-producing counties, Burke and Columbia, had similar developmental histories. Unlike the Piedmont, where towns such as Madison and Eatonton were gaining wealth and population, the rural counties of the Savannah River Valley experienced no significant town growth in the antebellum period. The towns here, of which Waynesboro was the largest, were probably retarded in growth by the dominance of Augusta, while the Piedmont towns were generally far enough from both Macon and Augusta to allow for their individual development.⁶⁶ Even the arrival of the railroad in the 1850’s seems to have had little immediate effect upon Waynesboro (although the town did receive a small influx of Irish workers), while in Columbia County the effect of the railroad was even less pronounced. The absence of growing towns in the Savannah River Valley makes the area an interesting study for the effects of

⁶⁴ Eaton 299.

⁶⁵ Eaton 299; Eaton quotes Oliver Larkin.

⁶⁶ In 1860, Waynesboro had a white population of 151.

the Greek Revival on rural architecture. Unfortunately, the study of the influence of the Greek Revival upon the plantation houses of Burke County is impeded by the poor survival rate of these structures. While a few Greek Revival residences do survive, the Greek Revival in Burke is better illustrated by another rural building type—the church. Along with the plantation house, the church was the major rural building type in Burke County, and the continued use of rural religious structures after the Civil War assisted in the preservation of church buildings. A study of the Greek Revival churches of Burke County not only confirms the presence of the Greek style in the county, but provides information on the sophistication of builders within the area. While the existence of Greek Revival churches does not verify the use of the style in plantation structures, it does indicate an interest in and access to the style by local residents and builders.

Between 1840 and 1860, Burke County builders constructed an astounding number of rural churches, the product of prosperous plantation communities. The rural character of Burke County made the church especially significant as a means of socialization, and the increasing religiosity of the antebellum South heightened the church's power and importance. Furthermore, the emotional and at times anti-intellectual character of the antebellum South made evangelical denominations especially popular, as was the case in Burke County, where the country churches were overwhelmingly Methodist and Baptist. Whether these congregations saw a special significance in being enshrined in rural temples is unknown, but the independent and even severe character of many of these buildings must have made them powerful structures in the landscape.

Buckhead Baptist Church (Fig. 19), located on the banks of Buckhead Creek, was one of the finest of the Greek Revival churches and the only structure in antebellum

Burke County which has a documented builder. John Trowbridge (1817-1894) of Massachusetts was hired to build the Buckhead Church in May of 1855.⁶⁷ Trowbridge is known to have been in Georgia by 1843, when he married Sarah Maria Vallotton of Burke County. His marriage announcement, published in the *Augusta Chronicle*, listed him as a resident of Richmond Bath, a summer resort community of Burke planters located just above the county line in Richmond County.⁶⁸ Trowbridge does not appear in the Georgia census of 1850; however his brother, William, was living in a boarding house in Waynesboro that year, and listed his occupation as carpenter. John and William both appear in the 1860 census, at which time they are both residents of Richmond County. In this year John listed his occupation as “master carpenter.” In 1870, John is again absent from the Georgia census, but William is listed as a resident of Richmond Bath. John’s absences may have been the result of projects in various locations; it is probable Bath was his permanent home as he was buried there at his death in 1894.

While little is known of the career of John Trowbridge, it is probable he worked on a great number of projects in Burke County and Bath during his fifty years in the area. His marriage to a Burke County resident, together with his known connection to Buckhead Church, makes it likely that Trowbridge was associated with some of the Burke County plantation houses from the late antebellum period. Notably, Trowbridge saw himself as a Southerner by the 1860’s, enlisting in the Confederate Army. Trowbridge was still active in 1886, when the *True Citizen* announced “Contractor Trowbridge has broken ground on new brick stores;” later that year it was reported that

⁶⁷ Per “Subscribers for Big Buckhead Church” provided by Mr. Donald Perkins.

⁶⁸ *Augusta Chronicle*, Mar. 28, 1843.

“the county commissioners have employed the Trowbridge Brothers of Bath to build a residence for the jailor.”⁶⁹ Trowbridge is also associated with the Italianate remodeling of the courthouse in Columbia County, indicating an ability to execute works in a variety of styles. Should more information be discovered regarding Trowbridge, the architectural history of Burke County would be greatly enriched.

The proportions of Buckhead Church reveal the hand of a master builder. Four square, paneled pillars support the entablature, which consists of an architrave of three bands, a frieze, and an unembellished cornice. The entablature circles the entire building and is topped by a front gable roof, the pediment of which features moldings of equal breadth and finish to those of the entablature. In place of corner boards are pilasters; the two of the front façade are adorned with a single vertical panel while the remainder are left bare. Two double doors are embellished with plain Doric pilasters on either side, crowned with entablatures incorporating broad, heavy cornices. As there is no porch, the doors open directly onto the front steps, and the columns rest atop small brick pedestals. The sum of these parts is a masterpiece of simplified Greek motifs, executed with a frank expression of materials that is charming in its honesty.

Elsewhere in Burke County, churches with similar classical aspirations were being constructed with varying degrees of success. Erected near Alexander ca. 1853, Old Church (Fig. 20) was the Greek Revival successor of an earlier colonial building which was demolished to accommodate its replacement. The massive entablature, together with square pillars of archaic proportions, reveals the hand of a builder inexperienced with the Greek forms. The square mass beneath the porch ceiling is apparently the rear portion of the slave gallery, a unique and rather ingenious reapportionment of the portico. Although

⁶⁹ *True Citizen*, May 14, 1886; Nov. 12, 1886.

the front of the building has the flush siding and corner pilasters common to the Greek Revival, the rear of the structure reverts back to simpler times, with a hipped roof and slender corner boards. Nevertheless, its diminutive size and picturesque wooded setting alleviated these shortcomings, and helped to make the building a much-loved Burke County landmark before its destruction by fire in November of 1934.⁷⁰

A third Greek Revival church, Bark Camp (Fig. 21), was constructed by a Baptist congregation near present-day Midville in 1848. In form it is similar to Buckhead and Old Church, having a front façade of flush siding, four square pillars, and a large pediment. At Bark Camp, however, the details have been simplified and there are only incidental references to the Greek Revival. The building is dominated by a large pediment which rests on four thin, paneled pillars, set apart equidistantly on short brick pedestals (Fig. 22). The entablature, so ponderous at Old Church, has been reduced here to a narrow frieze. Corner pilasters have been eliminated altogether, replaced with simple corner boards. The most interesting feature of Bark Camp is the molding found on the exterior doorways, decorated with plain, rectangular panels (Fig. 23). Though possessing a number of classical details, Bark Camp is more Spartan than Athenian, indicative of a congregation that valued austerity and simplicity over ornamentation.

Perhaps the finest of Burke County's antebellum churches, Hopeful Baptist (Fig. 24) was constructed circa 1851, undoubtedly by a master builder. Here, the scale is grander and the materials much more fine. Four round, plastered masonry columns surmount granite steps, said to have come by train from Stone Mountain.⁷¹ Silver plated,

⁷⁰ *True Citizen*, Nov. 30, 1934.

⁷¹ Per National Register of Historic Places registration form, 1993.

solid brass door knobs and pews trimmed in mahogany attest to the affluence of the congregation. Normative Greek Revival features include flush siding on the façade, pilasters on the corners and doorways, and an ample entablature. This schoolbook example of the Greek Revival, executed in fine detail, illustrates that Burke County was no isolated backwater, but instead was able to obtain exceptional builders and materials when desired.

While over a dozen churches in antebellum Burke County were being constructed and reconstructed in the Greek style, it is unclear to what extent plantation houses were being erected in a similar fashion. The stabilization of Burke's population between 1840 and 1860 may have reduced the need for new construction; further, the tendency of many of the wealthy planters to migrate to pinelands in adjacent counties in the summer (due to Burke's high volume of wetlands) may have made them unwilling to invest large sums in new winter residences. However, the historical record provides evidence that at least some of the older houses were being enlarged and remodeled, while new houses were being constructed with varying degrees of fidelity to the Greek Revival. Known additions in the period include a rear wing at the Byne-Gresham house in 1837 and a "courting parlor" added to the house at Bellevue around 1850.⁷² Some new residences were adapting elements of the Greek Revival; the Middleton Thorn house, ca. 1840, built in the vicinity of Lawtonville was a spacious, two-over-four farmhouse with a recessed entry featuring a transom and sidelights.⁷³ The house at the Ramsey plantation, near Blythe, was another typical I-house, Greek Revival only in its use of sidelights along the

⁷² *True Citizen*, Aug. 21, 1963; Bellevue information provided by Carswell family member.

⁷³ Per information provided by Mr. Donald Perkins. The Thorn house burned in the 1960's.

front door. A third, unidentified I-house, located east of Waynesboro, featured a transom, sidelights, and cornice returns; otherwise it was little changed from the earlier Federal I-house.⁷⁴

Often overlooked because of their dissimilarity to the mythical plantation house, the simple one story dwellings of the late antebellum period were typically roomy, well constructed buildings with high ceilings, large windows, and ample porches. Many of these structures were quite large and were homes of prosperous planters. Fortunately several of these buildings survive in Burke County, while several more, though now destroyed, were cataloged in a 1978 historic resources survey. These buildings generally have fairly steep, side gable roofs, vernacular Greek Revival details, and “bottleneck” chimneys which become narrower halfway up the stack (about the height of the first floor ceiling). In some examples, porches were incorporated underneath the massive roof of the main structure, eliminating the need for shed or gabled porch projections.

One such house, an unidentified structure on the Quaker Road (Fig. 25), featured four square unadorned pillars and an entablature that returns onto the sides of the house, nearly touching the chimneys. The most surprising feature of this structure is its rather exuberant front door, which was recessed within at least three layers of bold trim. Two similar structures appear in the 1978 survey. The first, a four-pillared edifice southeast of Alexander, featured a simple Greek Revival doorway and typical, heavy cornice returns. The second house, west of Telfair Pond in eastern Burke County, was a larger variant with six, square pillars, each having a single, vertical panel. Flush siding on the front

⁷⁴ For the Ramsey plantation and unidentified structure see nos. 52 and 268, 1978 survey of Burke County, Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division

façade, cornice returns, sidelights, and a transom were other typical features, although the use of interior chimneys, seen here, was uncommon.⁷⁵

Though long neglected, one example of the vernacular Greek Revival cottage near Lawtonville (Fig. 26) illustrates the comfortable sophistication of many of these structures. The original owner is unknown; however, the house is identified on a 1909 map of Burke County as the home of Street Perkins (1858-1924), a subsequent owner, and son of a middle class Burke County planter. A shed roofed, one-story porch runs nearly the length of the front, supported by six, square members with small Doric capitals. These supports were apparently cut from single logs and chamfered from the capital to slightly over halfway down the shaft. The doorway includes a transom of three panes, sidelights of four panes each, and a single rectangular panel on either side, below the sidelights (Fig. 27). The interior of the hall has smooth, flush board walls, while the downstairs rooms have simple Greek Revival mantels incorporating Doric pilasters. An unusual feature of the house is the large dormer projecting from the roof (Fig. 28); although possibly an addition, it is similar in treatment to the main house with heavy cornice returns and simple corner boards.

A more humble example of the one story type is the former Robert A. Murphey residence near Little Dukes Pond (Fig. 29), northwest of Millen. Believed to have been constructed circa 1855, the Murphey house has four large, square rooms divided by a central hall; there are no rooms or windows in the massive gable roof. The simple details of the Murphey house include a somewhat narrow cornice with no returns. Instead of sidelights, the doors on both the north and south elevations are set between six-over-six

⁷⁵ The Quaker Road dwelling is only known through a photograph in the collection of the Georgia Dept. of Archives and History. The two latter structures are nos. 307 and 310 in the 1978 DNR survey.

windows. The framing of the doorway and adjacent windows within a pair of Doric pilasters is the only real indication of an interest in classical vocabulary (Fig. 30).

Of the more imposing, two-story Greek Revival residence, only three examples could be found within the boundaries of antebellum Burke. All of these, however, are interesting in their use of traditional forms within the classical style. The origin of the first of these structures, the Fulcher house (Fig. 31-34), is largely unknown. One historian determined that it was built circa 1840 by John Colson Fulcher (1814-1882), a Burke County planter.⁷⁶ Fulcher's resources, however, do not indicate the ability to construct such a home. In the 1850 census, the value of Fulcher's real estate is given as just \$5,000; he owned 21 slaves, but of these, ten were under the age of twelve. His acreage in 1850 was just 850 acres, valued at \$4,500. If Fulcher did construct this large Greek Revival house, it is probable he had additional assets.

The Fulcher house is an excellent example of the use of the traditional I-house within the context of the Greek Revival. The main body of the house was a two-over-two structure with wide center halls; a rear one-story portion with a hipped roof provided two additional rooms. The side-gable roof of the house incorporated the porch, which was embellished with four two-story Doric fluted columns and an entablature consisting of an architrave of three bands, a frieze, and a dentil cornice. Although the arrangement is not academic, the proportions and execution of the columns suggest a master builder. The door of the house was carved with six octagonal panels and was surrounded by a transom and sidelights; this composition was framed by Doric pilasters supporting an entablature with dentil molding. Notably, the pilasters and entablature were nearly identical in style and scale to those found on church doors of the period, particularly those at Hopeful

⁷⁶ Hillhouse 273-74.

Baptist. The first floor windows of the front façade were floor length, six-over-nine, trimmed with “dog ear” molding (shouldered architraves). The gables were edged with a raked cornice, terminating at one end with the portico entablature and at the other with a cornice return. The brick exterior chimneys interrupted the cornice line, a feature also found at the Street Perkins house. One unusual feature of the house was its foundation piers, which were a form of tabby, a concrete mixture of shells, lime, and sand.⁷⁷ Although unique to upper Georgia, the presence of prehistoric shell deposits at “Shell Bluff” on the Savannah River explains the utilization of this material.

Although not especially common, the placement of a columned portico under the main body of a side-gabled roof is found in other structures in Georgia, most notably “Oakland Hall” (ca. 1840) in Putnam County, although here the slope of the roof has been altered. Other examples include “Buena Vista” (enlarged ca. 1850) near LaGrange, which was remodeled in the Greek Revival style, and “Forest Home” (ca. 1851), also near LaGrange. This house form is also found earlier at the Thomas Cheely house (ca. 1825) in Hancock County, although here the porch does not encompass the entire front façade.⁷⁸

The date of construction for the Fulcher house is difficult to establish. The appearance of the house in available photographs would suggest a date of 1840 to 1850. However, a journalist who interviewed persons involved in the 1958-62 restoration of the house reported that the house dated to “pioneer days” and had undergone a Greek Revival

⁷⁷ Per conversation with former owner of the Fulcher house.

⁷⁸ For Oakland Hall and the Cheely house see John Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972) 39, 75; Buena Vista and Forest Home, David K. Gleason, *Antebellum Homes of Georgia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987) 96, 101.

remodeling in the 1840's.⁷⁹ An examination of exterior photographs suggests that if the house was indeed remodeled, the changes were significant enough to disguise the lines of the earlier structure. Such modifications would have involved replacing the siding of the two-story front façade with flush boards and dramatically altering the roofline to accommodate the portico. Destroyed by fire in the early 1990's, the true history of the Fulcher house may never be known.

Still standing in a field near the southwestern edge of Burke County, "Orris Grove" (Fig. 35-36) is an unadorned, box-shaped, two-story frame structure. The Greek Revival influence is found in its broad door and transom and its nearly flat roof, which can only be identified as hipped when viewed from a distance. The four-over-four plan of the house was the standard form for large houses during the late antebellum period. The plan and proportions of Orris Grove recall the hipped-roof, six-columned houses of Athens and LaGrange, but Orris Grove has no heroic portico or entablature. However, with its spacious proportions, Orris Grove would have made a comfortable if unpretentious home. A wise builder incorporated closets in the voids formed by the interior chimneys, unique among the surviving Burke County houses but found in contemporary houses elsewhere in the South. Dates have been assigned to Orris Grove ranging from 1833 to 1850; the latter seems more probable although the thin cornice suggests nothing of the Greek Revival. Unfortunately, the original windows at Orris Grove have been replaced and the entire structure clad in artificial siding.

Burke County's most outstanding monument to the Greek Revival, the enlarged plantation house at Birdsville (Fig. 37-39), is now located in Jenkins County, which was created from Burke and adjacent counties in 1905. The modifications may have been

⁷⁹ Porter Carswell, Jr., "Heirloom House," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 2 Feb. 1964.

commissioned by Henry Philip Jones several years before his death in 1853, or by his son, William B. Jones, after William inherited the property from his father. The latter is perhaps more likely, as it is probable that William's three brothers all began building projects in the 1850's on portions of their inheritance.⁸⁰ The "new" Birdsville cannot be considered a remodeling, as the older house was left virtually untouched, disguised by the addition of a larger and far more elaborate dwelling.

The Greek Revival portion of Birdsville is a two story structure, one room in depth, over a high foundation. The plan of the two upper floors consists of a large room at either end of the building, separated by a hall and a recessed, columned portico. This portico is comprised of two fluted wooden columns with cast iron Corinthian capitals, situated in antis between Corinthian pilasters; the pilasters give the impression that the house has four columns, rather than two. The pilasters are repeated on the four corners of the new structure. Above the capitals is an entablature consisting of an architrave of three bands, a frieze, and a projecting cornice. A pediment rests above the recessed porch and is fitted with simple, classical trim.

Birdsville is a remarkable structure, especially considering the sum of its parts. Despite its ample scale and costly fittings, it is essentially the traditional I-house in glorified form. Long and narrow, the newer portion of the house has been ingeniously fitted against the old, effectively disguising the Federal structure. A visitor to the house may be surprised to find upon entering the front double doors, enclosed in a transom and sidelights, that a second set of double doors lies only a few feet ahead. The visitor is, in fact, standing in front of the original façade of the house.

⁸⁰ The homes of Joseph Bertram Jones (burned ca. 1910), Henry Wilkes Jones (burned 1923), and James Vickers Jones (unknown) were all in the vicinity of Birdsville.

The up-to-date features of Birdsville, comprising not only Greek but Italianate and Gothic elements, are evidence of a talented builder with knowledge of changing trends in architecture. The exterior of Birdsville, which could have easily been somewhat severe, is enlivened by projecting Italianate bays that pleasantly interrupt the mass of white wall. To the rear of the structure, small one story porches with Carpenter Gothic woodwork help to merge the old and new portions of the house, and provide a lightness and even whimsicality in place of classical columns (Fig. 40). The interior of the house features spacious rooms with broad cornices, high baseboards, and vaguely Gothic mantels that feature pointed arch insets rather than Greek Doric pilasters. It is tempting to consider John Trowbridge the builder, given his associations with the Italianate remodeling of the Columbia County courthouse, but no corroborating evidence has been discovered.

A comparison between Birdsville and other high-style Greek Revival residences in Georgia reveals the uniqueness of many of Birdsville's features. Although occasionally used in public buildings, the recessed porch was extremely uncommon for residential building types. Wrought iron railings, also used at Birdsville, are uncharacteristic of plantation houses, the railings of which were generally of wood. The use of a pediment is also unusual; most Greek Revival residences in Georgia were built without pediments, and of those with pediments, Birdsville is possibly the single example of a non-projecting pediment being superimposed upon a side-gabled roof. Corinthian columns are also a rarity in Georgia; they are used with great effect at Montrose (1849) near Augusta and the President's House (1857) in Athens but, with the exception of Birdsville, the Corinthian order is never found on plantation houses in Georgia.

Although the examples are limited, the known Greek Revival buildings of antebellum Burke County illustrate the fluidity and variation with which country builders were able to incorporate Greek elements into functional, traditional forms. Unlike the less conspicuous Federal buildings of the county, in which a plain façade often disguised a fine interior, the Greek Revival structures were larger, grander, and inherently more attention-seeking. Instead of finely grained doors or plaster garlands, the Greek Revival offered an importance based upon monumentality, achievable in both the high-style and the vernacular. Unfortunately, an overemphasis of white columns and magnolia blossoms has discouraged the appreciation of the Greek Revival in Georgia as a complex and variable architectural form.

THE GREEK REVIVAL IN BURKE COUNTY
FIGURES



Figure 19
Buckhead Baptist Church, ca. 1907
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 20
Old Church, ca. 1907
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 21
Bark Camp Baptist Church, south (front) façade

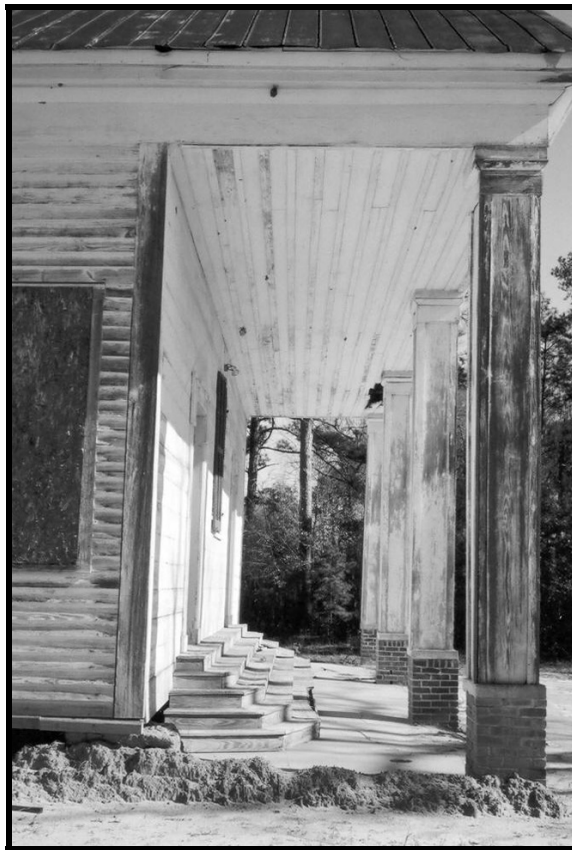


Figure 22
Bark Camp Baptist Church, west (side) façade porch detail



Figure 23
Bark Camp Baptist Church, south (front) façade doorway



Figure 24
Hopeful Baptist Church



Figure 25
Unidentified Quaker Road house
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History



Figure 26
Street Perkins house, south (side) façade

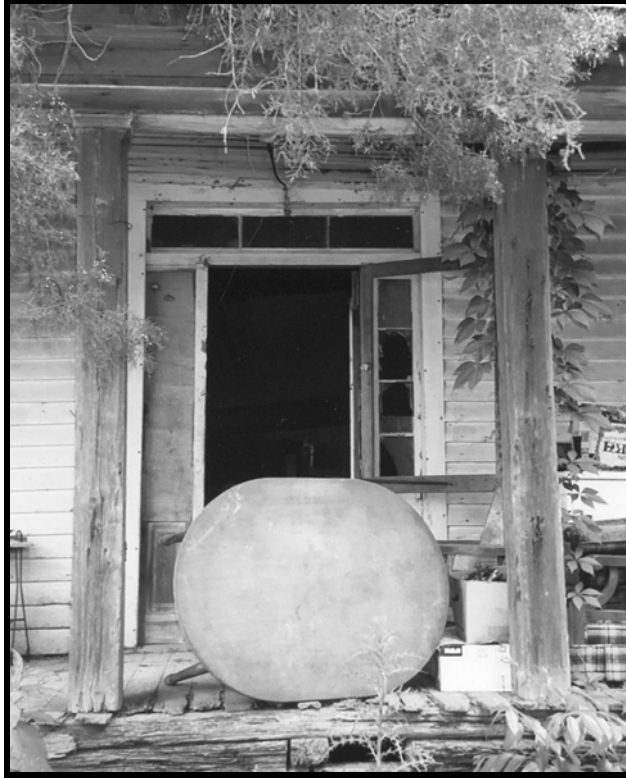


Figure 27
Street Perkins house, main entry (east façade)



Figure 28
Street Perkins house, gable in east (front) façade



Figure 29
Robert A. Murphey house, east (side) façade



Figure 30
Robert A. Murphey house, doorway, south façade



Figure 31
Fulcher house, front façade
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History

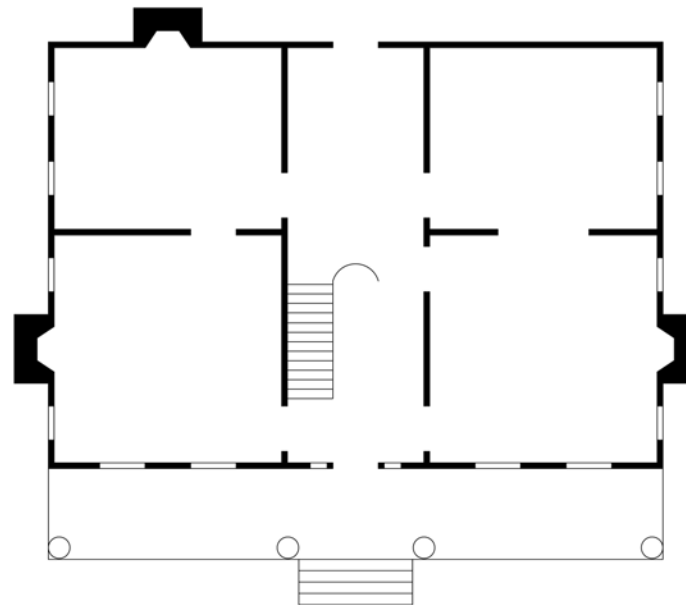


Figure 32
Fulcher house, first floor plan
Plan derived from interior/exterior photographs and information provided by former owner



Figure 33
Fulcher house, staircase and central hall
Private collection



Figure 34
Fulcher house, side and rear façades, showing twentieth century additions
Private Collection



Figure 35
Orris Grove, south (front) façade

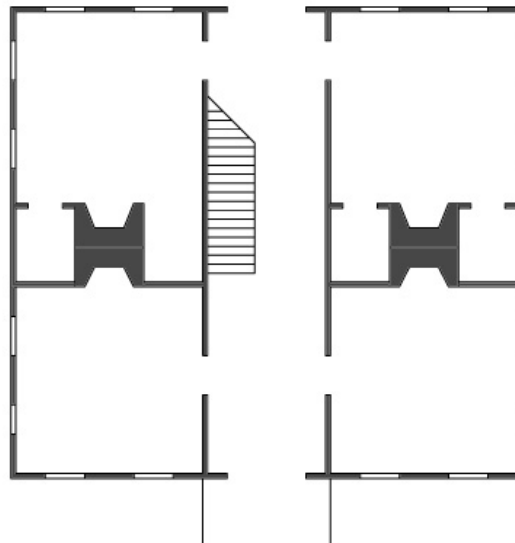


Figure 36
Orris Grove, first floor plan, showing house prior to addition of shed rooms
Plan is not to scale; some window/door arrangement conjectural



Figure 37
Birdsville, Greek Revival south (front) façade
Courtesy Georgia Department of Archives and History

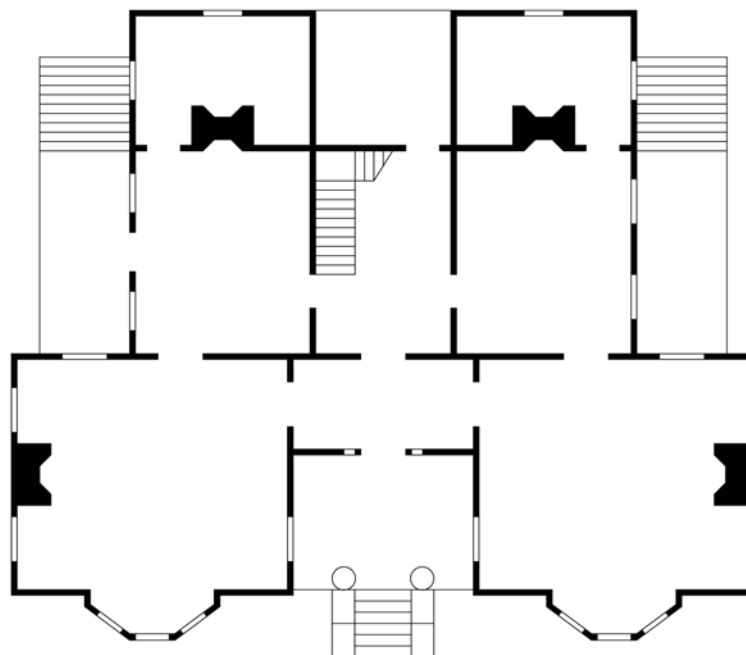


Figure 38
Birdsville, first floor plan, showing house after Greek Revival addition
Plan derived from photographs and personal inspection; house has not been measured



Figure 39
Birdsville, showing detail of Corinthian pilaster and entablature



Figure 40
Birdsville, side façade, showing Carpenter Gothic porch
and joining of early and later structures

CHAPTER 5

THE FORGOTTEN PLANTATION

Much of the architectural history of antebellum Burke County will never be known, but surviving information does allow for a better understanding of the county's history and built environment. Despite the general lack of evidence, there are indications that by 1850 to 1860, Burke had evolved into a fairly sophisticated county with a stable economy and an increasing number of fine houses. In the vicinity of Buckhead Church, a "stately mansion" was constructed on the "Spring Mill" place by Henry Hines and his wife, Caroline Elizabeth Sapp, the daughter of William Sapp of the Sapp house near Alexander. The house at Spring Mill was said to have taken four years to build (1852-1856); its appearance is unknown, but its proximity to Buckhead Church and similar date of construction allow for the possibility that Spring Mill was the product of John Trowbridge.⁸¹ In 1856, the plantation of Augustus H. Anderson was offered for sale, together with its "elegant finished two story Dwelling house, of beautiful model."⁸² In 1857, the executors of the estate of John Whitehead offered his plantation on Boggy Gut Creek for sale, noting its "large commodious and new Dwelling. . .the winter residence of the deceased."⁸³ Unfortunately none of these houses survive.

⁸¹ Henry Hines and his mother, Mary Thomas Jones Sapp, were among the principal donors to the Buckhead Church construction fund, strengthening their ties to John Trowbridge.

⁸² Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Jan. 1, 1856.

⁸³ *The Floridian*, Sept. 12, 1857, provided by Alva T. Stone. The Boggy Gut plantation was not Forest Hill, indicating that Whitehead had given the Forest Hill plantation to his son, John Randolph Whitehead, a fact made official in John Whitehead's will, Jan. 24, 1857.

Perhaps the finest plantation house in Burke County was the residence of Joseph B. Jones near Herndon, referred to by one Union officer as “a very aristocratic Mansion” and described in greater detail by Maj. Henry Hitchcock, a member of Sherman’s staff. Hitchcock writes: “This is a fine place—large three-story double frame house, wide porch three sides, five large rooms and wide hall on first floor, and cupola on top—finest house we have seen yet, and with excellent out-buildings. ‘Tis quite new and the servants say *built by a Yankee for Mr. J.* and not yet paid for.”⁸⁴ The presence of a cupola, together with the use of brackets and bay windows at Birdsville (the residence of Jones’ brother), indicates that the Jones mansion may have had Italianate influences. Such influences are all the more probable considering the design of Fair Haven Methodist Church (Fig. 41-42), commissioned by the four Jones brothers of Birdsville in 1846.⁸⁵ This charming front-gable structure features simple, paired brackets, arched windows, paneled corner pilasters, and an entry with a small, delicate fanlight. Fair Haven is identical in form to the Greek Revival churches of Burke County, but its ornamentation is not classically inspired; rather the builder designed a highly picturesque structure with greater simplicity and few allusions to antiquity.

Should more information be discovered about the antebellum carpenter-builders of Burke County, the lost history of many of these structures could reappear in vivid detail. That there was a Yankee builder involved in the construction of the Joseph B. Jones house is not surprising; it has been well documented that Northern architects and craftsman were responsible for many of the South’s finest structures. John and William

⁸⁴ Hitchcock, Maj. Henry. *Marching with Sherman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927) 123.

⁸⁵ Date of constructed for Fair Haven provided by the church; basis for this date is unknown.

Trowbridge are two known examples of Northern builders in Burke; in 1860, a carpenter named Frank Foster, of New York, was listed as living near Millen. Not all builders, however, were from the North: three “house carpenters” were living in the vicinity of Foster, two from Georgia and the third from South Carolina. Notably, in 1850, a resident in the household of William Byne listed himself as “architect,” this being James Nelson, of England. Unfortunately nothing is known of the work of Nelson, although his presence attests to the existence of master builders within the boundaries of antebellum Burke County.

Though sentimental interpretations of the Old South depict a land overflowing with white houses on hilltops, it should be emphasized that the high-style plantation house in Georgia was always the exception, rather than the rule. As Bartley states, “The transition from a rough and tumble frontier society to a more stable antebellum social order was a gradual and never fully completed process [in Georgia].”⁸⁶ The level of ornamentation on any plantation in Georgia was determined by economic constraints, access to artisans and materials, and the desire of the owner to divert capital that could be more practically invested in land and slaves. Thus, even by the late antebellum era, the inhabitants of Georgia lived in dwellings that varied widely in scale and refinement, even amongst persons of the same class. In 1860, the Waynesboro *Independent South* reported the observations of an Ohio visitor to upper Georgia: “In many instances, the exterior of the master’s residence differs little in appearance from the cabins of his servants, except in size, and perhaps the embellishment of white paint and a verandah, while the latter are simply white washed. The more aristocratic planters, however, make a greater display of

⁸⁶ Bartley 18.

wealth and their houses and grounds are often models of architectural beauty and good taste.”⁸⁷

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“I never saw Ivanhoe looking more lovely than it is now,” wrote Catharine Rowland in April, 1864, about her wanderings through Ivanhoe plantation’s two acre rose garden. “Every thing looks so bright and cheerful about the place and the flower garden is beautiful, being filled with flowers.”⁸⁸ In less than a year, the idyllic world enjoyed by Rowland and other members of the planter class would be visited by the direct hand of war. However, the events of 1864 would not conclude plantation culture, but only bring about its slow decay. The tenancy system emerged, a continuation of the plantation system, but stripped of romantic illusions. Tenancy never claimed to be anything but what it was—capitalism in its most brutal form. Conversely, the plantation system was one of contradictions—the exploitation of land and slave labor, rationalized by culture, democracy, Christianity, paternalism, and any other means of justification. The “Plantation South” was agrarian capitalism in Arcadian packaging, a double identity that the tenancy system had neither the ability nor the desire to sustain. In the New South, the little acreage that had been spared by planters for flower gardens and oak groves was plowed under, and plantation houses took on their only useful function—that of housing for farm laborers. The transformation from plantation to tenant farm was so rapid that in twenty-five years time, such places as Ivanhoe would go to “wreck and ruin,” relegating the majority of Georgia’s plantations to the tomb of historical oblivion.

⁸⁷ *Independent South*, Apr. 27, 1860.

⁸⁸ Rowland 92. Two acre rose garden verified in personal papers of Whitehead family descendants.

Aside from mere historical curiosity, why should the memory of these plantations be resurrected? It would seem that historic preservation has little to do with vanished buildings and landscapes; they are little more than footnotes of regret in a world brimming over with more tangible preservation concerns. However, surviving buildings exist within the context of lost buildings—without the latter, the former cannot be fully understood. This point is best illustrated in rural preservation, where the historical record is especially poor, and where economic and social changes quickly render many buildings obsolete. Birdsville is the oft-cited plantation of antebellum Burke (it now stands within the boundaries of Jenkins County); it is possibly the sole-surviving two-story Greek Revival plantation house in five contiguous counties. Birdsville must be interpreted within the context of an agricultural community, in which it had neighbors of equal and lesser architectural refinement. Without such comparison, Birdsville becomes a historical anomaly—a single Greek Revival dwelling in a range of five counties.

Of course, existing plantation structures do have very real preservation concerns on a more practical level. Of the surviving plantation houses mentioned in this survey, several, including the more modest Murphey and Perkins houses, are in very poor states of repair. These houses are hardly known to those outside of their immediate neighborhood, and doubtless are considered to be of no historical value to those familiar with them. Modest antebellum dwellings are particularly endangered in Georgia, in part because they are perceived as unimportant because of their dissimilarity to the fictional plantation mansions of literature and film. Those knowledgeable of the age and quality of construction of these buildings often value their fabric, rather than their historic

integrity. The Byne-Gresham and Shewmake houses were, after all, demolished for their materials.

Given the poor survival rate of plantation structures, proper documentation is imperative. However, contemporary preservationists are often more interested in the documentation of buildings that challenge the notion of preservation—such as 1940's and 50's warehouses—rather than more traditional structures. A greater interest in twentieth century non-residential buildings does nothing to fill the void left by early Georgia preservationists, who rushed to record the best houses, especially those of Savannah, ignoring whole counties and even entire areas of the state. Notably, none of the plantation structures of Burke County have ever been recorded in the Historic American Buildings Survey; there are no floor plans or measured drawings for any antebellum Burke residences, even Birdsville. However, the record of plantation houses is substantial in comparison to that of outbuildings and slave quarters, which are at the point of becoming historical non-entities. Without the documentation of these auxiliary structures—which are essential to the depiction of the experience of African-Americans—the plantation house will appear to have descended from the clouds. A separation of the plantation house from its supporting structures devalues the agricultural reality of the plantation, substituting instead an erroneous picture of the plantation as a kind of suburban villa. A significant absence of recorded architectural information is found throughout the Savannah River Valley, and is perhaps the area's most urgent preservation concern.

The continued preservation of plantation resources, not only within the boundaries of Burke County but elsewhere, must consist of four major components: 1)

comprehensive county surveys taken at intervals of no more than fifteen years; 2) documentation of existing plantation structures (including all antebellum and postbellum agricultural buildings) in the form of measured drawings, site plans, and photographs to ensure that additional information will not be lost; 3) implementation of archaeology to provide information on plantations upon which no structures survive or upon which only a few structures survive; and 4) community support for preservation. The most recent (and essentially the only) surveys of either Burke or Jenkins counties were prepared by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in 1978. The Burke County survey appears to have been fairly complete, although outbuildings were typically ignored; the Jenkins County survey is notably incomplete, lacking information on many rural buildings in addition to a great number of buildings within the town of Millen. The necessity of proper surveying is apparent when one notes the disappearance of many structures which were standing in 1978. Recent surveys undertaken in Walton, Jackson, and Putnam counties by the University of Georgia have greatly improved the record of rural buildings in these counties, and it is hoped that Burke and Jenkins will be resurveyed in the near future.

The absence of publicly accessible measured drawings and site plans for any of the Burke County plantations is indicative of the poor level of documentation for even the best known of the county's plantations. It is imperative that all antebellum plantation structures in Georgia be documented through drawings, plans, and photographs. Even the best kept plantation houses succumb to fire; the main house at the Casulon plantation near Social Circle in Walton County, Georgia was greatly damaged by fire in 2002, and despite the inclusion of Casulon in *The Garden History of Georgia* and various other

publications, the house and outbuildings had never been properly recorded. However, it must be remembered that not all available plantation resources are above ground, and therefore architectural plans and illustrations alone are not sufficient documentation. Although it would be impractical to carry out excavations at every major plantation site in Georgia, a greater use of archaeology would significantly benefit the understanding of the plantation in Georgia. While several coastal plantations have been excavated, the number of plantations in upper Georgia receiving similar treatment is extremely limited. Archaeology is recommended to enhance the historical value of extant sites, such as Birdsville, and also at abandoned plantation sites, such as Forest Hill and Waverley. Archaeology is also the primary means of uncovering data on slave life and culture, and could provide information on slave diet, clothing, habitation, and customs in Burke County.

Community support for preservation is always essential, although in rural areas this component of preservation is often overlooked. Historical, genealogical, and other civic-minded organizations generally initiate such protective measures as the inclusion of historic buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Of the structures mentioned within this survey, only Birdsville, the Sapp house, and Hopeful Baptist Church have been included on the National Register. While the National Register provides only minimal direct protection (when potential threats, such as road construction, receive federal funding), the Register conveys a significance to its listed structures that may boost community support for their preservation. Additionally, the establishment of rural historic districts through local designation would provide greater protection to rural structures and landscapes. Both strategies are recommended as

potential tools for preservation within Burke County, for buildings of both the Old South and New.

While its buildings may remain largely forgotten, the Old South itself will no doubt continue to be a source of fascination, as it has been since its conception in the era of Reconstruction. The historical periods with the most obvious contradictions are often the most intriguing, and the Old South is no exception. Though possessing so many attributes justifiably despised today—racism, classism, and a ruthless disregard for natural resources—antebellum Georgia still holds a peculiar, pre-industrial appeal that retains much of its sentimental quality. Perhaps the notion that Forest Hill, Waterloo, and Pleasant Valley lie somewhere in the undergrowth inspires the romantic imagination, but perhaps more likely is that within the antebellum South we see surprisingly familiar human themes, and an endless passion for ideals that poorly disguise our more basic motives of fortune, comfort, and pride.

“Ah! Vanitas Vanitatura! Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or having it, is satisfied?—Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.”

--William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

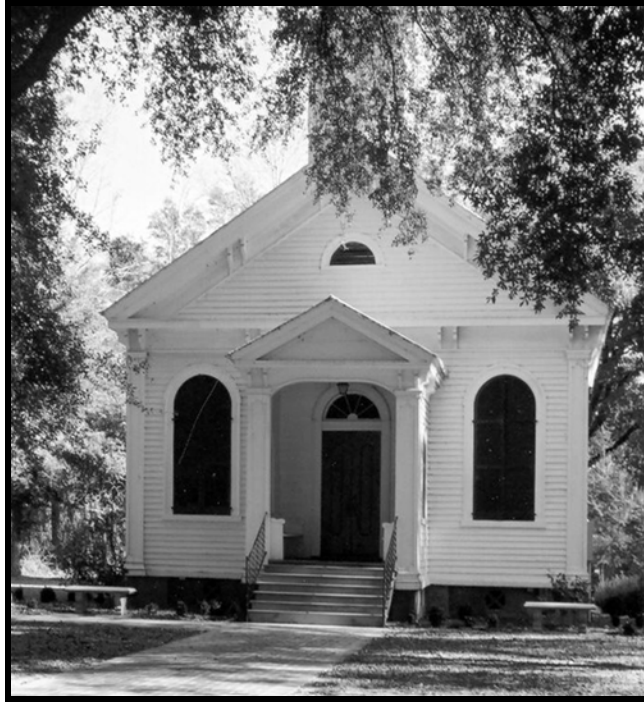


Figure 41
Fair Haven Methodist Church



Figure 42
Fair Haven Methodist Church, south (side) façade, with detail of eaves

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APPENDIX A

REFERENCES IN PRINT TO PLANTATION NAMES

The following references are listed chronologically. Plantations are listed according to their first known reference in print; subsequent references are not included. Plantations marked (*) have not been absolutely confirmed as plantations in either the given item or additional information, although the names do not match known appellations for towns, post offices, or academies within Burke County.

Mount Hope (*Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser*, Mar. 7, 1804)

Died at Mount Hope, Burke County on the 20th ult., James Gray, Esq., of the firm of James and John I. Gray, merchants of Savannah.

Montville (*Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser*, Aug. 21, 1806)

Mont-ville. The residence of the late Gov. Hall. For Sale. This Valuable Plantation, consisting of 2627 acres on the Savannah River, in Burke County, and 767 on the opposite site is in South Carolina.

Waterloo (*Augusta Chronicle*, Dec. 22, 1819)

Married – On the 16th, at Waterloo, the residence of Samuel Dowse, Col. Wm. Davis, of Forest Manor, to Miss Jane Glass, both of Burke Co.

Forest Manor (*Augusta Chronicle*, Dec. 22, 1819)*

Married – On the 16th, at Waterloo, the residence of Samuel Dowse, Col. Wm. Davis, of Forest Manor, to Miss Jane Glass, both of Burke Co.

Millwood (*Augusta Chronicle*, Aug. 19, 1822)*

Died – At Millwood, near Waynesboro, Burke Co., on Wednesday the 13th, Sarah Jane, only daughter of James W. Jones, Esq., aged 3 yrs. and 5 mos.

Shamrock Hall (*Augusta Chronicle*, Dec. 3, 1822)*

Married - On Nov. 20th, Mr. H. Byne of W'boro to Miss Caroline Jane Hughes, of Shamrock Hall, both of the same county

Liberty Grove (*Augusta Chronicle*, Mar. 20, 1824)

Died – In Savannah, on the 12th of February, Gen. William Byne of Burke Co., 66, native of King and Queen Co., Va. . (died in Savannah) his remains were respectfully interred there, and a few days subsequently taken up and conveyed to Liberty Grove, his former residence, where he was buried with military honors.

Pleasant Valley (*Augusta Chronicle*, Mar. 24, 1824)

Died – At his plantation, called Pleasant Valley, in Burke Co., on the 18th, Col. Geo. W. Evans, 47.

Belville (*Augusta Chronicle*, Nov. 24, 1824)*

Died – At Belville, Burke Co., on the 10th, Mrs. Anne Rebecca Boulineau, wife of Mr. Augustus Boulineau, daughter of the late Robert Darby, of Charleston, S.C.

Lake Forest (*Augusta Chronicle*, Nov. 15, 1828)

Plantation for Sale – The subscriber offers his plantation, called LAKE FOREST, situated upon the waters of Boggy Cut and in the neighborhood of the Sister Ponds, in Burke Co., consisting of 1600 acres

Glenalta (*Augusta Chronicle*, Mar. 18, 1829)*

Married – At Glenalta, Burke Co., on Thursday the 12th, Mr. John F. Brown, of Charleston, to Mary Lavinia, second daughter of the late Washington Potter, Esq., of Charleston, S.C.

Labarynth (*Augusta Chronicle*, Sept. 7, 1833)*

Died – At Labarynth, on Wednesday the 28th, Edmund, son of Henry and Caroline J. Byne, 1 yr., 3 mos., 16 days

Oakwood (*Augusta Chronicle*, Nov. 8, 1834)*

Died – At Oakwood, in Burke Co., on Wednesday the 28th, James Jones, son of Wm. and Mary Bennett, aged 2 years, 11 mos., and 4 days

Ivanhoe (*Augusta Chronicle*, Dec. 6, 1834)

Executors Sale – Will be sold at Ivanhoe, in Burke Co., the residence of the late Abraham Walker (cont.)

Rosemount (*Augusta Chronicle*, Feb. 7, 1835)

Sale notice

Cherry Hill (*Augusta Chronicle*, Feb. 18, 1841)

Died – At Cherry Hill, near Waynesboro, Burke Co., on the 31st, Mrs. Elizabeth Marsh, wife of Mulford Marsh, Esq., 35

Mount Pleasant (*Augusta Chronicle*, May 2, 1854)*

Married - In this city, Wednesday evening last, Mr. James Attaway, of Mount Pleasant, Burke Co., Ga., and Miss Catherine Augusta, youngest daughter of Col. G. F. Parish.

Clifton Cottage (*Augusta Chronicle*, Feb. 11, 1858)*

Died – At Clifton Cottage, in Burke Co., on Tuesday the 9th, Mrs. Anna M. Allen

Bennock (*Augusta Chronicle*, Dec. 16, 1864)

In Memoriam - Lambeth Hopkins, Esq., was a native of Clark[e] County, Georgia, and departed this life at residence at “Bennock,” Burke Co., Ga., Dec. 2, 1864, in the 61st year of his age (cont.)

Mulberry Grove (*True Citizen*, Nov. 19, 1884)

For Sale - Mulberry Grove, 10 m. from Waynesboro, 335 acres, good dwelling w/ 7 rooms, apply to J. J. Winter, Alexander, Burke County

Orris Grove (*True Citizen*, May 18, 1889)

Wedding at “Orris Grove”

Bellevue (*True Citizen*, Jun. 11, 1898)

Party at country home “Bellevue”

APPENDIX B

REFERENCES IN PRINT TO DESTRUCTION OF PLANTATION HOUSES

Spring Mill - burned Mar. 8, 1901 (*True Citizen*, Mar. 9, 1901)

AN OLD MANSION BURNED - A Large and Handsome Old Home Burned Yesterday Near Lawtonville - The dwelling house on the place of Mr. J. Feaster Brown in this county near Lawtonville burned yesterday noon. It was a very fine country residence and was built years ago by Mr. Bat Jones [erroneous, see article below]. This originally cost about \$5,000 and was still excellently preserved tho built 50 years ago. Mr. Brown lives at this time in Augusta and we learn he suffers a total loss as there was no insurance. It was occupied by Mr. B. M. Blackburn whom we learned saved the greater part of his furniture.

True Citizen, Apr. 20, 1901. Lawtonville - Sometime ago we saw some one reported that Bat Jones had that house built that was burned (on the now called Brown place) we beg to state, that Dr. H. C. Hines had it built. It was commenced in '52, and was completed in '56. Your correspondent's father was then living on the place. He had the sand hauled from Wallace's bridge that was used in plastering. The most of the work was done by the old negroes on the place--Daddy Neger, and Martin--as they were more familiarly known.

William Lasseter house - burned Sept. 1902 (*True Citizen*, Sept. 6, 1902)

AN OLD SOUTHERN HOME IS BURNED AT ALEXANDER: The Wm. Lasseter home, at Alexander, owned by Capt. Jno F. McElmurray was burned Tuesday afternoon about 3 o'clock. This was an old "befo de wah" evidence and was a magnificent structure in its day. The inside of the house was finished in walnut. At the time of the fire Miss Lavonia Skinner was the occupant of the house. It caught from a defective flue. There was \$500 insurance on the building.

Benjamin B. Miller, Jr., house - burned 1910. (*True Citizen*, Jun. 4, 1910)

OLD HOME BURNED - Adam Cason house - 65th district, "old country mansion" built in "antebellum days" by the father of Dr. R. L. Miller.

Jesse P. Green house - burned Dec. 1911. (*True Citizen*, Dec. 30, 1911)

Country Home Burned - The country home of Mr. Walter G. Green, in the 67th dist. of the county, was burned Friday night about 10 o'clock. It was an old antebellum home, two and a half stories in height, and was valued highly by Mr. Green for the many pleasant associations of the past besides its general splendid construction. He estimates his loss at fully \$4,000, with only \$1,000 insurance. The origin of the fire is unknown, as the tenant who occupied it was absent at the time. The fire was seen from Waynesboro, about ten miles away.

Bullard house - burned Oct. 1912 (*True Citizen*, Oct. 26, 1912)

The old colonial home on the Bullard plantation was burned Wednesday last. It caught from the stove flue and was a total loss. Estimated to be about \$3,500. It was the property of Mrs. Carswell, of Hephzibah. The house was occupied by Mr. Jacob F. Carter, who saved only a portion of his furniture. There was some insurance both on the residence and the furniture. Mr. Carter will move to Waynesboro if it is possible to secure a house.

Robert T. Jones house - burned Oct. 1914 (*True Citizen*, Oct. 31, 1914)

Old Ante-Bellum Home Burned - The home of Mr. P. B. Lewis, about 9 m. from Waynesboro, in the 66th dist. of Burke County, was burned about 2 o'clock Thursday morning. The origin of the fire is unknown, as Mr. Lewis was asleep and barely escaped with his life, saving little of his effects. Fortunately little of his furniture was burned, as he had not moved his family from Waynesboro.

This old home was built more than a hundred years ago, and was for years the residence of the late Judge Robt. T. Jones. It was one of the best constructed houses in the county. Many of our old citizens will learn of its destruction with regret, as it has always been one of the most hospitable homes of the county. It has been the scene of many pleasant social gatherings of "Auld Lang Syne" that brings back sweet memories of the past.

Mr. Lewis estimates his loss over \$4,000, with about \$2,000 insurance.

Henry Wilkes Jones house - burned Feb. 1923 (*True Citizen*, Feb. 24, 1923)

Historic Law Home at Birdsville Burned Last Friday afternoon--Was Over One Hundred Years Old--Sherman's Headquarters During Raid Thru Georgia. - The Citizen carried an item last week of the burning of the Law home at Birdsville, in Jenkins county, which gave only meagre details of this splendid old home. This home was about one hundred years old and was located on the old Jones estate which was granted by King George to the ancestors of the Laws and it was known far and wide for its splendid open heartedness and hospitality. There was always open house there. It was built of hewn timber, of colonial style was filled with things of long ago. Mahogany was used profusely throughout the structure and many pieces of old fashioned furniture were housed there. The communion set used a Fair Haven church near by was destroyed in the fire. The communion set was taken during Sherman's raid through Georgia, but was returned for some reason or another; the old furniture had the marks of his raiders when they searched the house for jewelry, and a watch that belonged to Mrs. Law's mother was saved from the raiders by reason of her hiding it in her bosom. She told afterwards of never hearing a watch tick so loud in all her life as it did while she had it hid and she was afraid all the time that it might be heard. The grandfather clock and some of the silver and part of the furniture downstairs was saved. The Jones family always kept open house and this custom had been followed by the Laws and the fire occurred just after a dinner party. Mrs. Law, Miss Annie Law, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes Law who were residing in this old building have moved to Waynesboro for the present. Mrs. Law and Miss Annie Law had just returned to the old home on account of the loss of their home on Waynesboro a few weeks ago.

Taylor house - burned Dec. 1931 (*True Citizen*, Dec. 11, 1931)

Fire in County Destroys Old Home - Fire of undetermined origin destroyed one the old historic residences Tuesday in the Midville section known as the Taylor Home, situated 5 miles from Midville. The house, a large eight-room structure, [was] built about 1785. No nails were used in it. The timbers were morticed with wooden pegs. Before the Civil War, it was the home of some of Burke County['s] aristocratic families, including the Taylors, the Connelleys, and the Streets. As the "Big House" of a typical southern plantation, it was the scene of many gay festivities, and was known far and wide for the lavish hospitality always dispensed there.

Greenwood - burned Aug. 7, 1962 (*Augusta Chronicle*, Aug. 22, 1962)

Plantation home in ashes - One of Burke County's oldest plantation houses has come to a tragic end. Greenwood, a three-story house built in the West Indian fashion, accidentally caught fire Aug. 7 and burned to the ground as its helpless owners watched. (cont.)

William Byne house - demolished Aug. 1963 (*True Citizen*, Aug. 21, 1963)

The old house took its secrets to the grave and all that is left is a scattering of gnarled cedars and a few crumbling bricks. . . Until recent months the proud dwelling sat vacant looking down across a sandy road into young pine trees, growing in fields which used to be white with cotton. (cont.)

Jeremiah Inman - burned Sept. 1970 (*True Citizen*, Sept. 9, 1970)

The Shadrack Inman ante-bellum home, three miles from Midville and near Bark Camp Church, was completely destroyed by fire last week. The old house was built in 1827 and restored to its former beauty and charm in 1942 by a great, great granddaughter, the late Miss Maud E. Hodges.

. . . Nothing remains now of the old Shadrack Inman home built in 1827 but ashes. Two out houses are still standing in the yard, the century old smoke house and the garden house. The land on which it stood belongs at this time to Miss Hodges's niece, Mrs. Donald G. Thomas of Atlanta.

APPENDIX C

STATUS OF SURVIVING PLANTATION STRUCTURES

The following list is not exhaustive. The status of several antebellum buildings found in the 1978 historic resources survey at the Department of Natural Resources is unknown.

Bellevue (Burke Co.)

Condition: Excellent

Threatened?: No

Outbuildings: Some survive, although the antebellum buildings are said to have been destroyed in 1864.

On National Register of Historic Places?: No

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Absence of measured drawings and floorplans.

Birdsville (Jenkins Co.)

Condition: Good

Threatened?: No

Outbuildings: Several, although several more have been demolished since the 1970's.

On National Register of Historic Places?: Yes

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Deterioration of house and outbuildings.

Sapp House (Burke Co.)

Condition: Good; restoration in progress.

Threatened?: No

Outbuildings: A few, though of uncertain date.

On National Register of Historic Places?: Yes

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Sensitivity in restoration.

Street Perkins House (Jenkins Co.)

Condition: Poor; house would be fairly sound but a large hole has opened in the roof.

Threatened?: Yes; the current owners have suggested donating it to the fire department.

Outbuildings: Original kitchen survives in back yard, although moved a short distance.

On National Register of Historic Places?: No

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Survival of the structure; documentation of the structure.

Robert A. Murphey House (Jenkins Co.)

Condition: Extremely Poor

Threatened?: Yes, by neglect

Outbuildings: None

On National Register of Historic Places?: No

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Survival of the structure; documentation of the structure.

Orris Grove (Burke Co.)

Condition: Good, although artificial siding has been employed.

Threatened?: No

Outbuildings: Two, including the original kitchen.

On National Register of Historic Places?: No, but current owner is interested in listing.

Immediate Preservation Concerns: Sensitivity in restoration; removal of artificial siding.

APPENDIX D

TABLE OF PLANTATIONS IN ANTEBELLUM BURKE COUNTY

The following table provides a cross-reference of information provided in the previous appendices, together with additional information. Data is provided based on available material. The locations of several plantations are unknown, making it impossible to state with complete certainty that those plantations have no surviving buildings; these properties are marked accordingly (*).

	House extant?	If not, date of destruction?	Antebellum outbuildings?	Available information on house
Anderson, A. H.	no	1960's?		none
Bellevue	yes		possibly	house standing
Belville	no*			none
Bennock	no*			none
Birdsville	yes		several	house standing
Bullard	no	1912		none
Byne, William	no	1963		several articles
Canaan	no	1874?		one undated article submitted to author describes it as a brick structure with square columns
Cherry Hill	no*			none
Clifton Cottage	no*			none
Ellerslie	no*			none
Forest Hill	no	post-1864		none
Forest Manor	no*			none
Fulcher, John C.	no	1990's	none	photographs; information provided by former owners
Glenalta	no*			none
Green, Jesse P.	no	1911		2 ½ stories, square columns
Green, Moses	no			constructed ca. 1854
Greenwood	no	1962		1962 article
Inman, Jeremiah	no	1970		1970 article
Ivanhoe	no	1880's?		descendants have evidence the house had double porches
Jones, Henry Wilkes	no	1923		none

Jones, James Vickers	no			none
Jones, Joseph Bertram	no	1910?		porch on three sides, five rooms on first floor, cupola
Jones, Robert T.	no	1914		none
Labarynth	no*			none
Lake Forest	no*			none
Liberty Grove	no*			possibly the William Byne house
Miller, B. B., Jr.	no	1910		none
Millwood	no*			none
Montville	no			none
Mount Hope	no*			none
Mount Pleasant	no*			none
Mulberry Grove	no*	post-1884		seven rooms
Murphey, Robert	yes		none	house standing
Oakwood	no*			none
Orris Grove	yes		two	house standing
Perkins, Street	yes		kitchen	house standing
Pleasant Valley	no*			none
Rosemount	no*			may not have had a planter's residence
Sandy Hill	no			none
Shamrock Hall	no*			none
Spread Oak	no			none
Spring Hill	no	1864		none
Spring Mill	no	1901		had double parlors
Taylor	no	1931		1931 article
Thorn, Middleton	no	1960's		remembered by some individuals in area
Waterloo	no			none
Waverley	no	post-1904		none