

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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Woodlane, located on U.S. 431 in Eufaula, was added to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage on December 15, 1989. Characterized by its symmetrical facade which displays much of its original clapboard siding, Woodlane is a good example of an 1851 central hall plantation house. The interior displays many original features including its random width pine floors, four fireplaces, fourteen foot ceilings and its door and window moldings.

The plantation was originally owned by John W. Raines who was a wealthy cotton grower. For over 40 years, Anne C. Wilson has resided at Woodlane. She and her late husband spent much time and effort renovating the building so that it would continue to be a gracious residence for many years to come.

The Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage is a prestigious statewide listing of buildings, structures, objects, and districts that possess architectural or historical associations.

### WOODLANE OVERVIEW

U.S. 431, Eufaula  
Barbour County

Eligible under Criterion C, Woodlane is a relatively intact example of an 1851 central hall plan, double pile, plantation house. A long drive, which is flanked by brick gate posts displaying hospitality pinnacles, leads to the residence. Crowned by a hip roof and characterized by its symmetrical facade, the one-story dwelling has retained most of its original clapboard siding, its nine-over-nine sash rectangular windows, some of its original frame shutters, the front and rear doors, and its three brick chimneys. Some changes have been made to the exterior including the removal of the original front porch and the addition of a smaller porch in 1956. Metal cresting was also added to the hip roof and a large addition was made to the rear. Originally constructed on brick piers, the basement level was enclosed with brick and then covered over with stucco.

The interior displays many original features including its random width pine floors, its 1 inch thick hand hewn floor joist, its four fireplaces which display simple, yet restrained, frame mantels, its door and window moldings and its 14 foot ceilings.

Woodlane was originally owned by John W. Raines who was a wealthy cotton grower. Raines became very controversial in the Eufaula community when he willed his entire plantation to Mary Raines, his slave and the mother of his children. After he died around 1856, his will was contested by just about everyone. The case dragged on until after the War, but in the end, Mary Raines and her children did not get the plantation.

For over Anne C. Wilson has resided at Woodlane. Unfortunately, most of the original 240 acres was acquired by the City of Eufaula which in turn sold the land to TNS Mills, Inc. Now surrounded by the plant, Mrs. Wilson has been under pressure to sell the remainder of her property to the company. She strongly believes this is an important property because it is one of the few surviving rural antebellum plantation homes that has survived in southeast Alabama.

## WOODLANE PLANTATION - Home of Anne C. Wilson

The story of Woodlane Plantation, for more than two decades the home of Anne Calhoun Wilson, is a classic example of Barbour County plantation history from the isolated and apparently random claims to blocks of land (see Tract Book map) through the consolidated plantation that developed during the 1850's to the Reconstruction and tenent farm periods to its rebirth as a gracious home - the heart of a working and productive twentieth century farm. (See Synopsis of Owners)

However there is a story behind this progression of owners which casts the "Eufaula Regency" in a most unfamiliar role. Many properties are regarded as historically significant because of a famous owner or the site of a well-publicized battle - Woodlane Plantation is requesting nomination because its most obscure owner generated a battle that was waged ( of political necessity) in silence. That battle, waged by a roll call of the Eufaula Regency - the most outspoken firebrands of the South dedicated to the right to maintain slavery - was fought to free a slave and her children to inherit the master's property. And they won!

Nothing is known about John W. Raines except what is found in the records of the Barbour County Court House. He was in Barbour County by April 6, 1833<sup>1</sup>. The 1851 Tax Plat (the earliest known for the county) shows him paying taxes on the entire south half of Section 18, most of which he purchased from Tennant Lomax.<sup>2</sup> The Tax Plat also show Raines and Dr. Horatio Thornton (son-in-law of Gen. Reuben Shorter and Eufaula's first mayor) paying taxes on all of Section 17 toward the Chattahoochee River.

WOODLANE PLANTATION - Home of Anne C. Wilson

"That's going to be my house when I grow up! It will be my home and I am going to live there."

The determined little girl pointed at an old house at the far end of a long tree-shaded alley.

"Why would anyone want to live in that spooky old house way out in the middle of nowhere? It's Haunted!" taunted the other children.

"It has been a beautiful old house - and someday I will make it bright and beautiful again," little Anne Calhoun calmly replied. "All it needs is someone to love and care for it".

Two decades later, Anne Calhoun Wilson and her husband, Robert Earl Wilson were the proud owners of the 128 acre "Woodlane Plantation".

Over the past 44 years, Anne C. Wilson and her husband until his death, gave Woodlane that love and care that the plantation needed. It was once more a gracious and comfortable home surrounded by a prosperous farm land - and now it is in danger.

Mrs. Wilson, now a widow, has been under pressure from TNS Mills, Inc. a Japanese owned company, to sell her property, a working farm and a gracious ante bellum home which she has lovingly restored.

Until April, 1986, the land south of Eufaula was zoned for farm and timber. At that time it was re-zoned for heavy industry and in June 1986 TNX Mills executed and recorded a deed to a tract of land next to Woodlane. The next year they bought and additional two tracts of land.

Woodlane Plantation is one of the very few surviving antebellum rural plantation homes left intact in Southeast Alabama and is worthy of support on an official level, for that reason alone. But the events and people who surround the house make it even more valuable to the often turbulent political history of Barbour County.



