THE "YELLOW HOUSE" 204 Chunnenuggee Avenue Union Springs, Bullock County

Owner: Rubye M. Garner 110 Highland Avenue Union Springs, Alabama 36089 Contact: W.H. Garner 204 Chunnenuggee Avenue Union Springs, AL 36089 334-738-5159

SUMMARY:

Dating from around 1855, the "Yellow House" retains the name but not the color for which it was originally known. Constructed as a one-story side-gable four-room center hall house with a central shed-roof porch on the front and rear facades, it has been altered to include a full-width front porch with false dormers and several side and rear additions. As such, it depicts the evolution of vernacular domestic architecture over a period of 140 years and today bears the influence of the early-20th century Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles.

DESCRIPTION:

See detailed written description and drawings (Exhibits I and II) in nomination form.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The "Yellow House" is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criterion C, architecture. Constructed around 1855 as a side-gable four-room center hall house, it has received a number of alterations over the years giving it a Colonial Revival-Bungalow flavor of the early-20th century. As such, it is significant in depicting the evolution of vernacular domestic architecture over a period of 140 years.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

See detailed historical summary (Exhibit III) of nomination form.

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2. Location		*		
street & number 204 Chunnenuggee A	wenue, Lot 9 Block	32 (Miles Map)		
ity.town Union Springs	vicinity of			
state Alabama	county	Bullock		
3. Classification	And the second			
Category Ownership	Status <u>X</u> occubied <u>unoccubied</u> <u>work in progress</u> Accessible <u>X</u> yes: restricted <u>yes: unrestricted</u> <u>no</u>	entertainment government	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:	
4. Owner of Prope	rty			
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5. Please use space below to	sketch floor plan/	site plan.	-	
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7. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 X 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture Xarchitecture art commerce communications		<pre> landscape architecture law literature military music philosophy politics/government</pre>	 religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1850	Builder/Architect Not known		

Specific dates 1850 Buil Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

An ante-bellum raised cottage built shortly after the City of Union Springs was incorporated and before the creation of Bullock County. It was built on the site of a still earlier building and may include portions of it in the kitchen and additions. The house pre-dates the structures in the historic district of Union Springs and was purchased by one of the city fathers shortly after its construction and the tragic death of its original owner. It was called "The Yellow House" for many years because of the bright yellow color its original owner had selected. It provides an excellent example in the evolution of an early dwelling over a 140-year period.

Note: Additional information is included in Exhibit III.

Major Bibliographical References 8.

- 1. Walter Dean Spratlan - Local Historian (Intervield)
- Nan Rainer relative of S. P. Rainer 2.
- Sequicentennial Special Edition: Historical Union Springs: published 1994 by 3. Union Springs Tourism Council (Note: see Exhibit IV for detailed listing)

Geographical Data 9.

Acreage of nominated property 108' frontage x 290'

Quadrangie name .

Verbal boundary description and justification

Union Springs, Alabama Lot 9 Block 32 (Miles Map)

Form Prepared By 10.

name/title W. H. Garner, Jr.

organization N/A

street & number 204 Chunnenuggee Avenue

Union Springs city or town

11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.

Note: See Exhibit V for index of 13 slides submitted.

Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form to:

ALABAMA REGISTER COORDINATOR ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION 468 SOUTH PERRY STREET MONTCOMERY ALABAMA 36130-0900

date

10/15/96

telephone (334) 738-5159

Quadrangie scale _

state Alabama 36089

12.

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EXHIBIT I

6. DESCRIPTION:

Describe present and original physical appearance.

The original ante-bellum building was, and is, an excellent example of a single story raised cottage dwelling popular in the south during the nineteenth century. The easily identified additions and modifications show its evolution to a more contemporary style, but the original configuration dominates the present configuration. The original floor plan utilized a central hall flanked by two rooms of equal size on each side. The kitchen was a separate building with a porch enclosure connecting it to the main house. The living area was expanded to its present configuration by adding another building to the southeast corner, a new wing to the northeast corner, and progressive enclosure and expansion of the rear porch area.

The original foundation was made up of wooden sills and floor joists utilizing mortise and tenon construction and supported by brick pilings 28 inches above ground level. These pilings are beginning to oxidize and have been augmented with concrete jack screws. Subsequent additions also used sills and joists supported by brick pilings. The original foundation was open but was later enclosed by brick with ventilation provided by oblong metal grills. The foundation of the southeast addition is interesting because it is of earlier vintage than the original building. The pilings had given way and the sills had developed a permanent bow before the building was moved and joined to the newer building. The center pilings were built to accommodate the bow. The sills of the two buildings were joined with railroad spikes.

Interior framing of the original building utilizes large vertical heart of pine members at corners, door and window openings, fireplace frames and along load-bearing walls which are joined to ceiling perimeter beams using mortise and tenon. Ceiling crossbeams and smaller vertical members were nailed or fitted to mortises, lathing was attached and thick plaster was applied to interior ceilings and walls the interior of the southeast addition was similar but walls and ceilings were covered with wood planking. Later additions were wood frame covered with wood or plaster.

The exterior of the original dwelling was of wooden clapboard. It was closely matched on later additions but could not be matched on the newest additions or where repairs were made. The house is now painted white. There was evidence of colors or stained finishes in the past. There are no notable exterior decorative elements in the original building or its additions.

The front porch was originally the width of the central hall and extended twelve feet to its present porch width. Its roof was supported on the outside corner by square columns. The porch was later extended to the full width of the house with four matching square columns. Decorative column-like woodwork was added to each corner of the house. The original back porch extended to the end of the kitchen (south) and from the kitchen to the east wall of the hallway. It was covered by an extension of the kitchen's shed roof and was enclosed by balustrades on three sides. An opening provided access to a walkway running from the well to the back door of the kitchen and the back stairs. This area is now the breakfast room. The balustrades form the wainscoting. Walls and ceilings are covered with tongue and groove planking. The opening is now a rear door. The walkway was first widened and later enclosed, along with two access ramps from the southeast addition to form the expanded kitchen, back entry, and bath. The porch on the northeast wing was a part of the new wing when it was first built. The open porch on the southeast addition was installed more recently when the rear bathroom was expanded.

The original building consisted of six bays - two forming the central hall with two bays on each side. The kitchen was detached from the main building.

Most houses built in Union Springs, at the time of construction, had hip roofs. This building used a pitched roof on the east/west axis. The kitchen and porches were shed type roofs. They were originally covered with wood shingles over tongue and groove planks and later covered over with embossed metal shingles, with the exception of the front porch which was recently covered with metal sheet roofing. The metal shingles are the present covering. The roof has been modified on several occasions. The shed roof on the rear was tied into the pitched roof of the rear addition, resulting in two parallel peaked roofs. These were later joined together by a connecting gable to alleviate what must have been a severe run-off problem. This, and the northeast wing have embossed metal as the original covering and were probably done at the same time. Three false dormers were added to the front of the house at a later date since they are atop the metal covering.

The roof features false beams which support the roof overhang. These were part of the original mortised construction. Roof edges are covered with fascia boards.

The house has three brick chimneys. One exposed chimney is at the west end of the living room. One double chimney is between the dining room and kitchen. A second double chimney is between the front bedroom (now study) and rear bedroom. The main entrance opens into the central hall on the north side of the building. The 3' x 8' single door has four panels topped with three arch shaped lights. It is flanked by $1\frac{1}{2}$ foot sidelights having three panes each. The two bottom panes have been covered. The top transom has been replaced with a semielliptical window with a sunburst pattern of panes. The rear door to the kitchen porch is 3'-0" wide x 6'-6" high. It has two lower panels and the top section has three horizontal panes 8 inches wide. Above the door is a transom three feet high and three feet wide consisting of nine lights. The door on the southeast addition is solid wood 3'-0" wide and 6'-6" high. It has four panels.

The front rooms have french doors opening onto the front porch. They are centered in each room. They are 46%" wide, 8'-0" high, and have 14 lights in each section (24 per pair). These are not the original windows. The west wall of the living room has a window flanking the fireplace on each side. They are 3' x 7 1/2' with a single pane on the lower sash and 9 lights on the upper sash. They are double hung and counterbalanced by iron weights attached to ropes riding over a pulley. The corresponding openings on the east wall of the study are now occupied by a french door (41/x 8' with 12 lights per door) opening onto the screen porch and a double door leading into the front bedroom. The east wall of the back bedroom has two windows side by side 42"x 76". The lower sash is single pane and the upper sash has nine lights. They also have counterweights with rope and pulley. The corresponding opening on the dining room west wall is now occupied by two French doors. The window frame has been moved out 2'-0" to form a bay into which two French doors are fitted. The doors are each 11/x 8' (3'-0" per set) with seven lights in each door. A window at the end of the hallway has been covered over by cabinet work in what is now the breakfast room. It is visible in what is now the pantry. The frame measures 37 3/4" x 80 3/4". The kitchen, back porch, and bathrooms are fitted with 2x3 double hung windows with single pane lower sash and 3 vertical lights in the upper sash. The six windows in the southeast addition are 3' x 6' double hung with 9 lights each in upper and lower sash. These are not original. The outline of openings for wooden drop sash, hinged at the top, are clearly visible on the interior wall. The four windows in the northeast addition are 2'-6" x 5' double hung with single pane lower sash and 3 vertical lights in the upper sash.

The mantel in the living room is 75" wide. It is encased in decorative wood molding and the fireplace is faced with wood and black tile. The hearth is also covered in black tile. The mantel in the study is 60" long and 2" thick. The corners are rounded. Wood facing on the fireplace has a simple scroll or

jigsaw design. The remaining fireplaces have been enclosed and plastered over.

In the original building, all interior doors and windows are trimmed out in 1" x 6" with 2" trim molding on outer edges. In new additions, trim is similar but molding profile may vary. Door openings leading from the hall are 3' x 7'. The original doors had two vertical panels separated by a 6-inch strip. The doors have been cut in half to provide a double door having 18" sections. There is an 8' x 8' opening between the living room and dining room. There were two 4' x 8' doors having 28 lights per door. These were taken down and used in other construction. The shutters now dividing the rooms are from the Bullock County Courthouse circa 1871. There is an archway in the hall at the load-bearing section. The bow is elliptical spanning seven feet with a vertical radius of two feet. The supporting wood columns are 5" square with vertical fluting and with a 6" x 6" cap made of molding sections (wood). The arch is trimmed in wood 1" thick by 4" wide both sides. It appears to be a single piece and the underside is also faced in wood. The arch matches the transom over the front door along with the supporting wood columns.

There are no interior stairways.

Walls and ceilings in the original structure are plaster over lath. Each room has 1" x 6" baseboard topped with 2" molding and sealed with 1" quarter round at floor. Two inch molding is 15" from ceiling. There are no notable plaster features. In the southeast addition, all walls have chair rails and vertical wainscoting. Above the chair rail, wainscoting runs horizontally on all walls, extends through hallway and down the east wall of the breakfast room. Old porch rail forms the chair rail and vertical boards enclose the old square balusters. The rest of the wall surface is 3" horizontal boarding. Ceilings of the southeast addition and breakfast room are 3" planking.

Flooring in the original building was 2" x 10" pine planking. Kitchen and breakfast room were 2" x 6". A new floor of $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " wide oak was laid over the old floor in the original building. The original floors in the kitchen and breakfast room were covered with 6" wide pine.

There is no evidence of gas lighting. Electrical lighting was available in Union Springs early in the 20th century and the building was wired using spool and tube with un-insulated wire. The living room chandelier has been reclaimed, polished, and reinstalled.

Tax records show the original house constructed in 1850.

The southeast addition was added between the time its third owner acquired it (prior to 1870) and when it was sold to the fourth owner (1906). The building which formed the addition was probably a store located on an adjacent lot which had to be removed to construct a new residence. The property changed hands again in 1922. The residence map of Union Springs, October 1923, shows the southeast addition, the rear bath extension, the expanded kitchen, the breakfast room, the dining room bay, and the expanded front porch as having been completed. The pitched roof was built over the old shed roof which covered the kitchen and breakfast room during this time, and the oak flooring was installed in the original house.

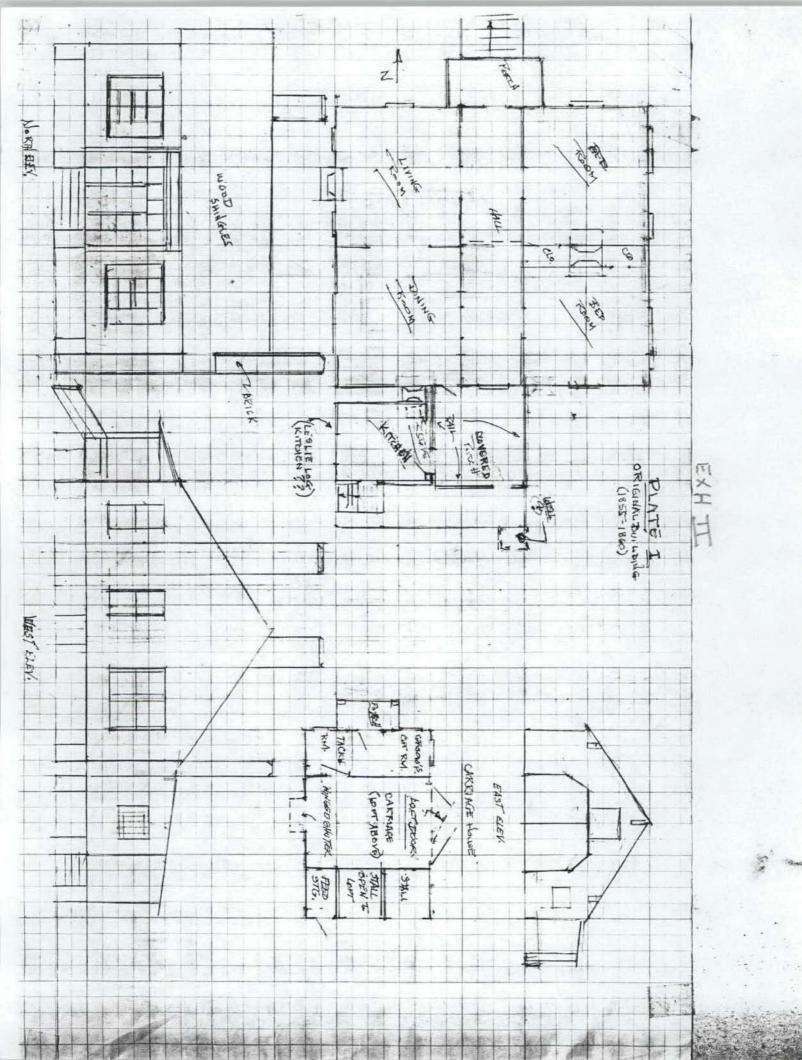
In 1930, the property again changed hands. The northeast addition was built and the north/south gable was added to the roof structure to improve run-off. Metal roof was installed over old wood shingles. The pantry was enclosed and bookshelves added to the front bedroom (study). Later, probably after World War II, a bathroom was added to the northeast addition and false dormers were installed on the front of the original house. The rear bath was expanded to provide a tub enclosure. Still later, partitions were added to break up house into apartments, but these were removed by the present owner.

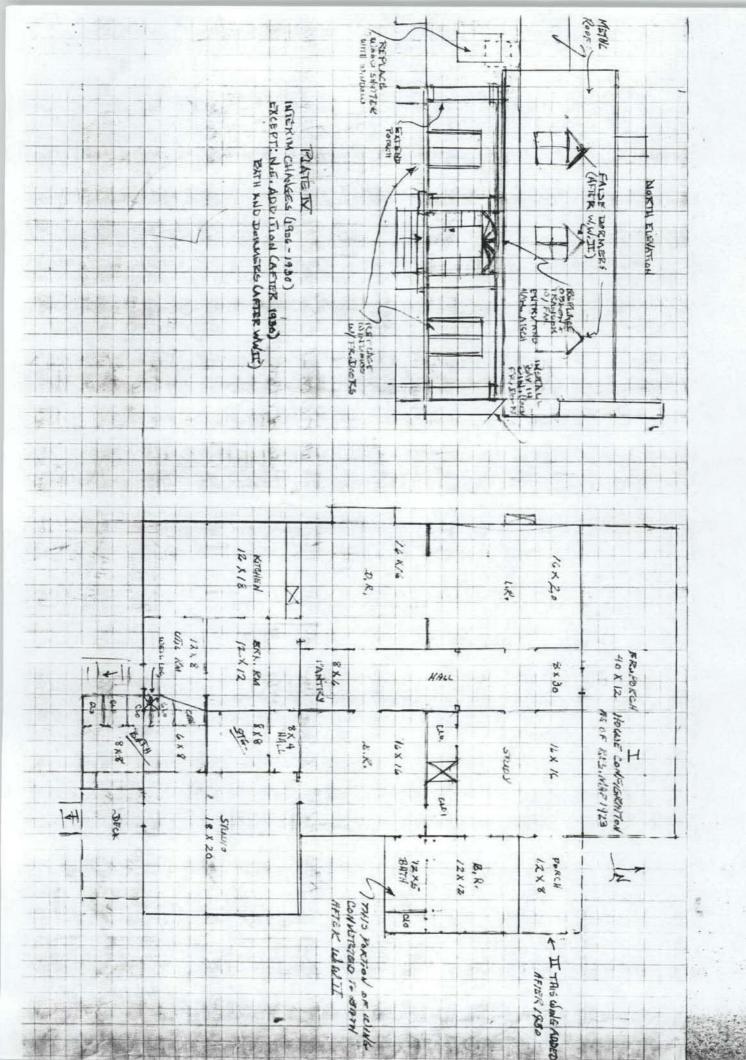
A series of drawings (plates) have been provided to show various stages of evolution based on logical sequence and overlay of materials.

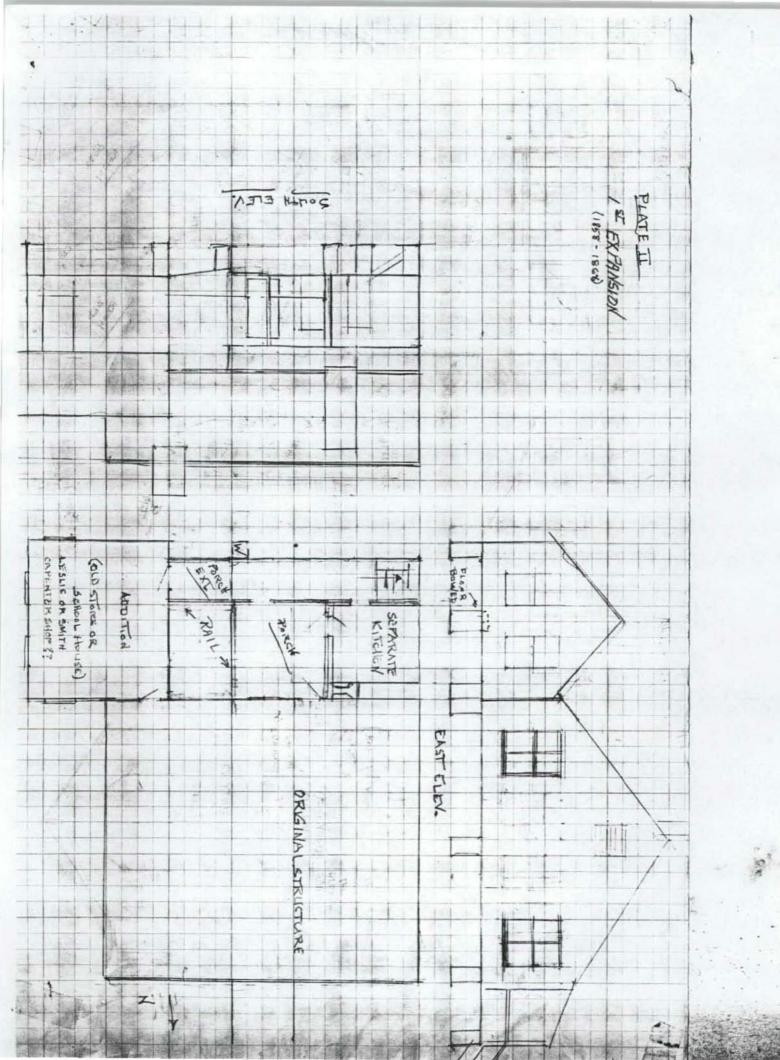
The building faces north on Lot #9, Block 32 (Miles Map) in Union Springs, Alabama, now designated as 204 Chunnenuggee Avenue. Lot size is 108-foot frontage by 290 feet deep. An oak and several pecan trees are as old or older than the building. The flower beds on the front and west side of the house are quite old. Azaleas, camellias, crepe myrtle, dogwood, magnolias, cherry laurel, and wisteria are well established on lot boundaries and in formal beds surrounding the house.

The old carriage house was shown to be on the southeast corner of the lot on the map of 1923. It has since been moved to the west side of the lot about 40 feet to the rear of the house. It has two stalls, a dry feed storage room, a hayloft, carriage storage, tackle room, and bunk room. It is of wood frame construction. Interior board are 2" thick in widths of 8" to 12" (pine). Presence of the bunk room would indicate quarters for the groom. It now serves as a garage.

Please see Exhibit II for sketches of property at various stages of development.







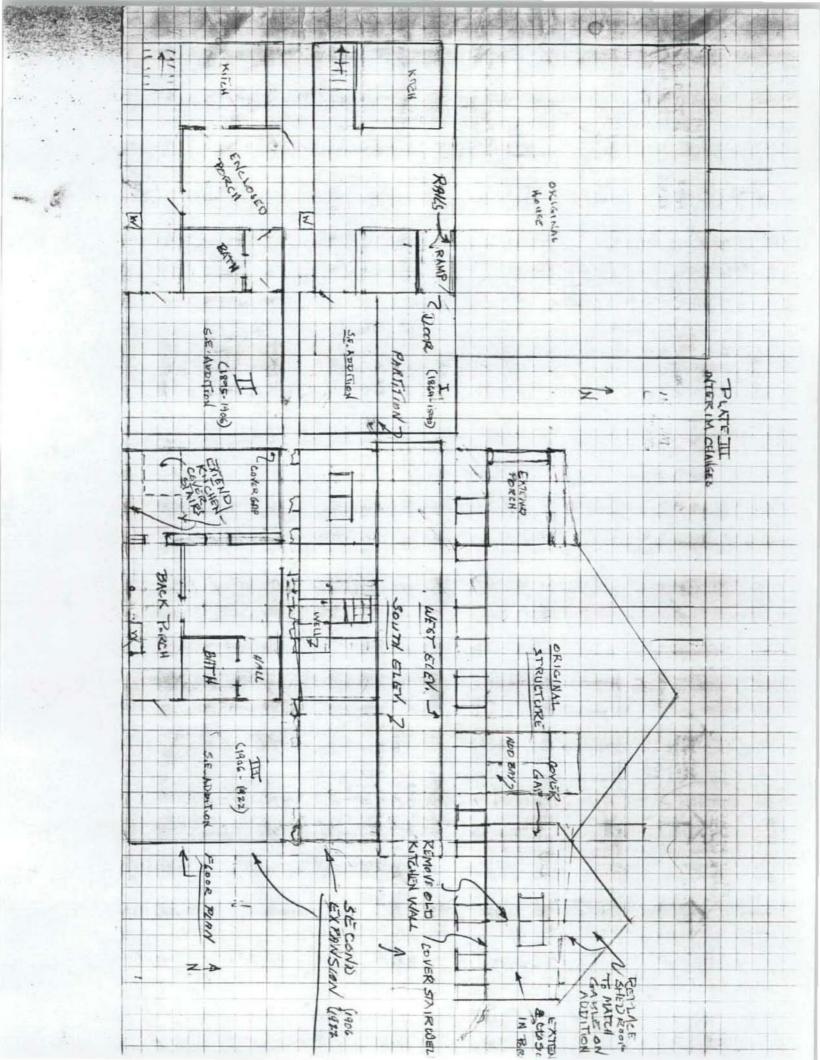


EXHIBIT III Addendum to Statement of Significance

Tax records show the construction date as 1850. Directly across the street from the H. H. Smith House (1844) and where the S. P. Rainer house now stands, was Smith's Carpenter and Ginwright Shop. It was still there in 1858. On the next lot to the east was the John Leslie (Sr.) Place described as a double pen log with a hall between, a log gallery in front with shed rooms to the back, stick and dirt chimneys on each end and the log kitchen to the rear. John Leslie was one of the first settlers in Union Springs. In 1851 or 1852, he traded houses with Lenoah Lassiter. That house was located in what is now the Oak Hill Cemetery. Lenoah Lassiter lived in the Leslie house for two or three years and then moved to Chunnenuggee Ridge. A Mr. Porter moved into the house when Leslie vacated, but stayed no more than a year.

In 1855 or 1856, the property was purchased by J. B. (Jabe) Bell. Mr. Bell was a widower with two stepsons and a son of his first wife who died about one year after their marriage. He built a new house which is described as quite pretentious for its day. It was referred to as "The Yellow House" because it was painted a bright yellow. Shortly after the house was completed, he married Susie Hooks. Immediately after their wedding he went to bed suffering from typhoid fever. He died one month to the day after his marriage.

The property was purchased by Col. Howell Peebles. Col. Peebles was one of the first three county commissioners when Bullock County was formed (1867). He was on the building committee of the new Bullock County Courthouse. A concrete marker on the northeast corner of the Courthouse bears his name.

Prior to 1866, records were maintained in Macon County. It is not clear where records were kept between 1866 and 1872 before completion of the courthouse. During this time, the property was sold to C. R. Lee. There is no public record of the sale. It is believed that C. R. Lee died in 1870 and Col. Peebles in 1871.

Col. Peebles had too large a family to live in a two bedroom house over a 10-15 year period. The old cabinet shop was probably moved from the Rainer lot during this period and became the southeast addition. The Widow Lee sold the property to Maggie H. Feagin in 1906. Little is known of the Widow Lee. During the forty years she owned the property she may have enclosed the porch areas and expanded the kitchen. Indoor plumbing became available and she probably installed the first bath. Electricity was becoming available about the time she sold the house. Maggie H. Feagin and I. B. Feagin owned the house for 16 years. During this time, extensive changes were made. The front porch was extended and French doors replaced the front living room windows. The dining room bay was added with French doors replacing the regular windows. The kitchen was again expanded, the rear walkway enclosed, and the bathroom expanded. It would have been necessary to extend the peaked roof of the new addition to cover the shed roofs over the enclosed porch (breakfast room) and kitchen. The house was wired for electricity during this time. In 1922, the property was sold to Mabel L. Feagin and the original Feagins moved to Jefferson County, Alabama. The deed included an assumption of mortgage indicating considerable outlays for improvements.

Mabel Feagin owned the house for 8 years. New oak flooring was installed. Installation of the arched doorway fanlight and entry treatment with matching foyer archway may have been done during this time. Sterling Price Rainer, owner of the adjoining lot, was the nephew of Mabel Feagin. Mabel Feagin, by marriage, was an in-law of Lucy Feagin, founder of the Lucy Feagin School of Drama in New York City.

In 1930, Mabel Feagin, then a widow, sold the property to Marguerite Cope McCaslan. Major alterations were made during the 60 years the house was owned by the McCaslans.

Gas lines were installed for water heater and space heaters. The fireplaces in the back bedroom and dining room were enclosed. The gable tying the front and rear pitched roofs together was built, the northeast addition was added, and the metal roof was installed over the old wood shingles. The last three of these changes were done at the same time. The addition was made to provide living quarters for R. E. L. Cope, an attorney and leader in Bullock County, who was Marguerite McCaslan's father. Dr. McCaslan was a well known physician and one of the founders of the Bullock County Hospital.

After the death of Mr. Cope, additional changes were made. A new bath was added to the northeast addition, the old bath was expanded, false dormers were added to the roof, the end of the hallway was enclosed to provide a pantry, the four foot glass doors between the living and dining room were removed, the three foot doors off the hallway were cut in half and rehung as double doors, and bookcases were added to the front bedroom (study) and across the hallway at the pantry wall. After Dr. McCaslan's death, a variety of partitions were added to divide the house into apartments.

The house was sold to the present owner in 1990. Most of the temporary partitions have now been removed along with various

wall and floor coverings to expose the original surfaces of the original house and of the permanent type modifications and additions made to it. The north wall of the southeast addition had severe water damage and new clapboard was installed. The house was rewired. The foundation was stabilized with concrete screw jacks and floors leveled. The composition roof on the front porch was replaced with metal roofing.

The present owner of the house is Rubye Moody Garner, widow of W. H. Garner who owned and published "The Herald" for 25 years (1951-1976). The Herald (Archives) morgue was the source of much of the information contained in the sesquicentennial special edition. As with other Herald editors, he was prominent in state and county affairs and was a part of the events chronicled during that time. Rubye M. Garner covered most of the social and family activities during that period.

EXHIBIT V Index to Slides

- NOTE: The numbers used appear in the upper right corner of each slide. The film processor's number may appear elsewhere but has been crossed out.
- The northeast corner of the house showing the northeast addition, the southeast addition, and the original building. Note the false beams supporting the east roof overhang (mortised construction). The front porch is believed to have been extended to full width until the 1900's but its false beams are also mortised. Chimney servicing double fireplace for two bedrooms is visible.
- 2. Front of house from northwest. Foundation indicates porch originally was marked by two center posts but there are no wide cross beams from columns to house. The entire upper structure may have been replaced. French doors and fan light transom are not original. Ballustrade was added by present owners from old Lawrence House which was recently demolished. The false dormers were added recently (1940-1950).
- East side of house from northeast. Note living room window and chimney, dining room bay and roof of kitchen to the south.
- 4. Rear of house from southeast. Shows the southeast addition, the final rear bath extension, and the rear of the expanded kitchen. The old well was located on the west end of bath extension. Chimney serviced dining room/kitchen. S. P. Rainer House is in background.
- 5. The center hall. Front door shows on right. Doorway to front bedroom (study) on left. Note archway matching front entry configuration. Bookcase marks pantry where rear of hall was closed off. Front chandelier was in dining room. Rear chandelier by present owners.
- Living room from hall facing east. Note mantel, two flanking windows.
- 7. Front bedroom (study) from hall facing west. French door leads to screen porch. Double door on right leads to bedroom and bath, all in northeast addition. Note double doors at hallway.
- 8. Dining room from hallway facing east showing bay window and french doors. Chandelier is by present owner.

- Back bedroom from hall facing west showing double windows. Note double door entry.
- Breakfast room from dining room facing south. Wainscoting is visible at southeast corner and south wall. Note transom.
- 11. Kitchen expanded southwest corner.
- 12. Southeast addition (studio) facing southeast. Note wainscoted walls, planked ceiling, double windows.
- Dining room and living room facing north from breakfast room. 8x8 opening. Fireplace, east window, french door on north visible in living room.

EXHIV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Walter Dean Spratlan, local historian, provided information on Col. Peebles and C. R. Lee provided copies of deeds from the earliest recorded (4 January 1906) through the previous owner (February 1930). He also provided a copy of the residence map of Union Springs dated 1923 which showed the additions and modifications completed at that time.
- Nan Keller Rainer (Mrs. S. S. (Sam) Rainer), daughter-in-law of Sterling Price Rainer, provided information on relationships between Feagins and Rainers and Lucy Feagin (School of Drama, NYC).
- Bullock County Tax Assessor's Office. Listed date of building construction (1850).
- 4. Bullock County Judge of Probate. Record of property files.
 A. Deed Book P page 506
 B. Deed Book X page 159
 C. Deed Book Z page 209
- Union Springs Tourism Council: <u>Sesquicentennial Special</u> <u>Edition Historical Union Springs</u>: Published by the Bullock County Historical Society, Union Springs, AL., January 13, 1994.
 - Page 43: Reprint of article from the Herald and Times, Oct. 14, 1885: By J. E. Graves. No. II Reference to "one of oldest settled and most noted places in Union Springs is that where Price Rainer lives." Describes log house and shop of John Leslie, sale of property to L. Lasseter, and subsequent sale to J. B. Bell and later to Col. Howell Peebles. No. III Oct. 21, 1985 J. B. Bell Builder of new frame house painted bright yellow, know as Yellow House. Death of J. B. Bell. Also reference to Herring House in relation to the "Yellow House."
 - Page 49: Reprint from Herald March 18, 1908 by J. E. Graves. Reference to Laslie home and shop. Swap of property with Lenoah Lassiter.
 - Page 53: Reprint from Herald; April 29, 1908: by J. E. Graves. <u>The John Leslie Place and the Lassiters</u> <u>and More About the Rainer Corner</u>, describes prior ownership (dates) acquisition of property by J. B. (Jabe) Bell, building of new house, description, names "Yellow House", death of Bell, acquisition by Col. Howell Peoples. His family lived there in 1871.

- Page 54: Reprint from Herald, May 13, 1908 by J. E. Graves. <u>The W. H. Waugh Family and Job Thompson and</u> <u>Others</u>, "Mrs. C. H. Jinks-residence on Chunnenuggee Street on the <u>site</u> of old H. H. Smith Cabinet Shop." (In 1908-later the site of S. P. Rainer House) J. E. G. left Union Springs in 1858. Did not return until 1871.
- Page 55: (sic) <u>The Tuskegee Road</u>. In 1858, carpenter shop still stood in 1858. In 1871, H. H. Smith lived in Jinks House built on old shop site. Mr. Smith had sold his residence lot to Mr. Mose Thompson.
- Page 61: J. E. G. identification as author of previously cited articles. Reprint from Herald, July 24, 1908. <u>A Shocking</u> <u>Crime</u>. Murder of Paschal Smith, father of Robert and Willie Smith, whose widow married Jabe (J. B.) Bell. Smith was poisoned by one of his slaves.
- Page 64: Reprint from Herald, March 15, 1951. <u>As I</u> <u>Remember</u> by Henry J. Rosenstihl. Howell Peebles one of first county commissioners (3 elected).
- Page 89: <u>Notes</u> by Dean Spratlan. Entry 22 May 1867 Howell Peebles elected county commissioner.
- Page 91: (sic) August 2, 1899 Courthouse Gets Electricity.
- Page 95: (sic) 13 May 1896. City water system.
- Page 96: (sic) 16 June 1896. Laying of water mains completed.
- Page 102: (sic) Gas Service to be Available 3/1/37.

Page 108: <u>Courthouse</u> by Annie Mae Turner. Concrete marker names Howel Peebles on building committee (1871-72).

Ref. to records during period of 1866 to 1871-2.