



## ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

### 1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: The Clive Shell Farm  
and/or Common Name:

### 2. LOCATION

Street & Number: County Road 37 / East Dogwood Trail

City: Chapman

State: Alabama

County: Butler

Zip:

Is the property located within the city limits?  Yes  No

Township: 8N

Range: 14E

Section: 18

USGS Quad Map: Greenville East

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

**Category:**  Building(s)  District  Structure  Site  Object  
**Ownership:**  Public  Private  Both  
**Status:**  Occupied  Unoccupied  Work in progress  
**Public Acquisition:**  In process  Being considered  
**Accessible:**  No  Yes: restricted  Yes: unrestricted

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Wayne & Alton Shell

Telephone: 334.887.5866

Street & Number: 765 East Magnolia Street

City: Auburn

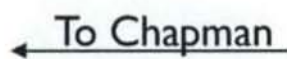
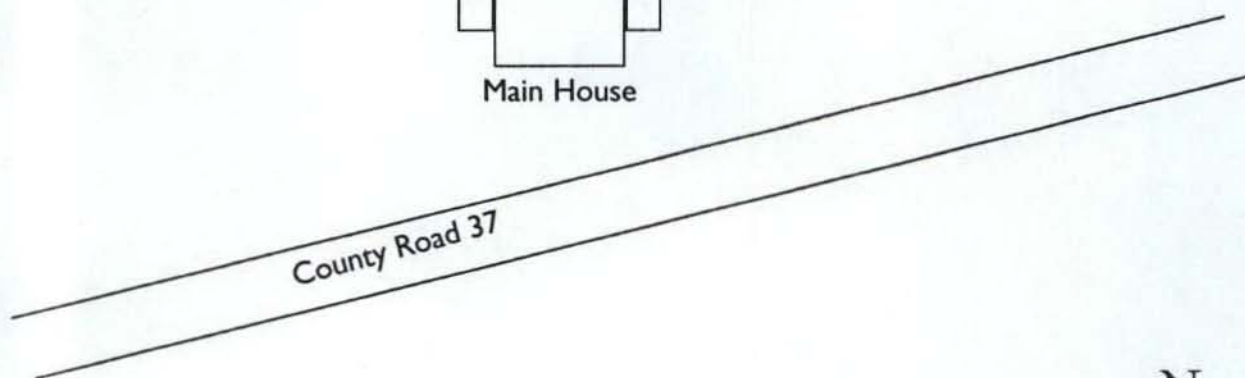
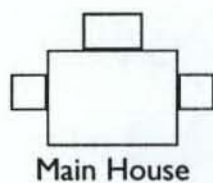
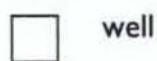
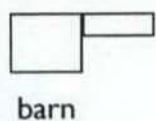
State: AL Zip: 36830

Email:

### 5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

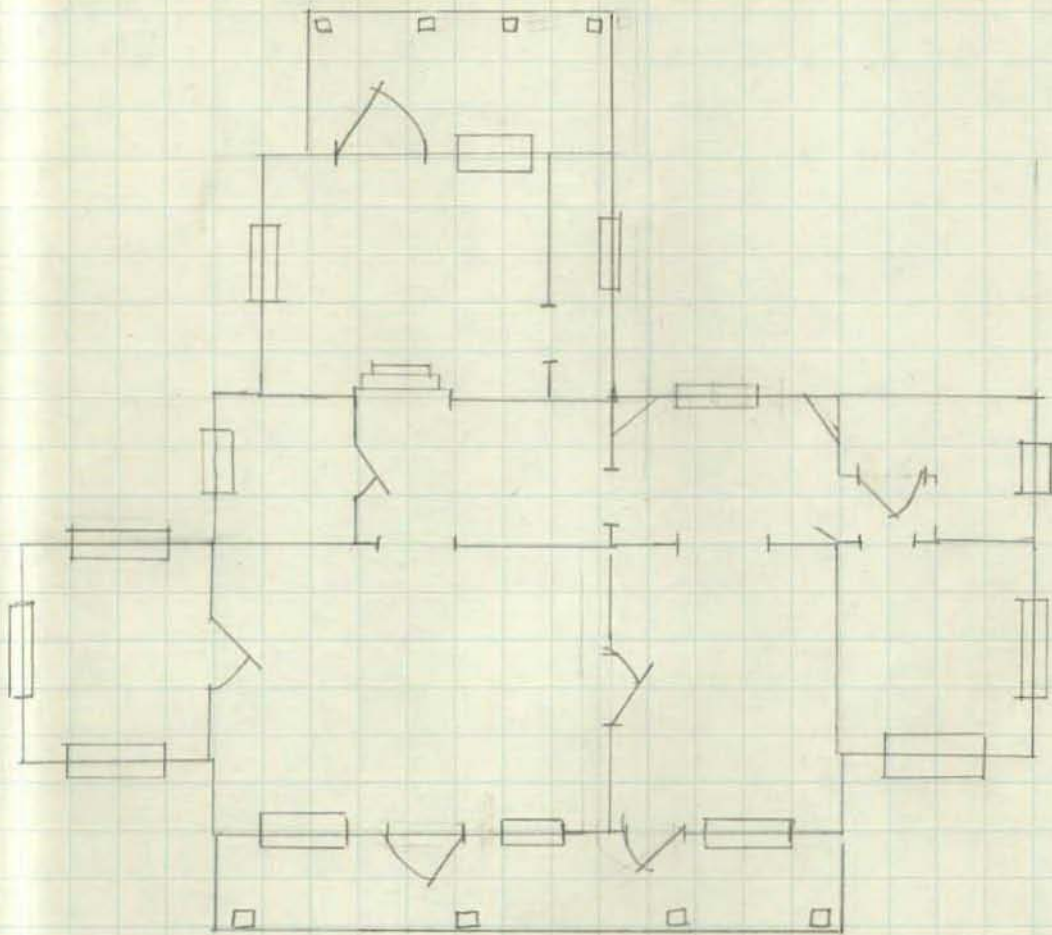
*Attach sketched floor plan. If the property includes more than one building, submit a site plan showing the locations, dates of construction, and uses of the buildings.*

# The Clive Shell Farm Chapman, Butler County



1152

Clive Shell Homeplace  
Butler Co.  
Chapman



Not to Scale

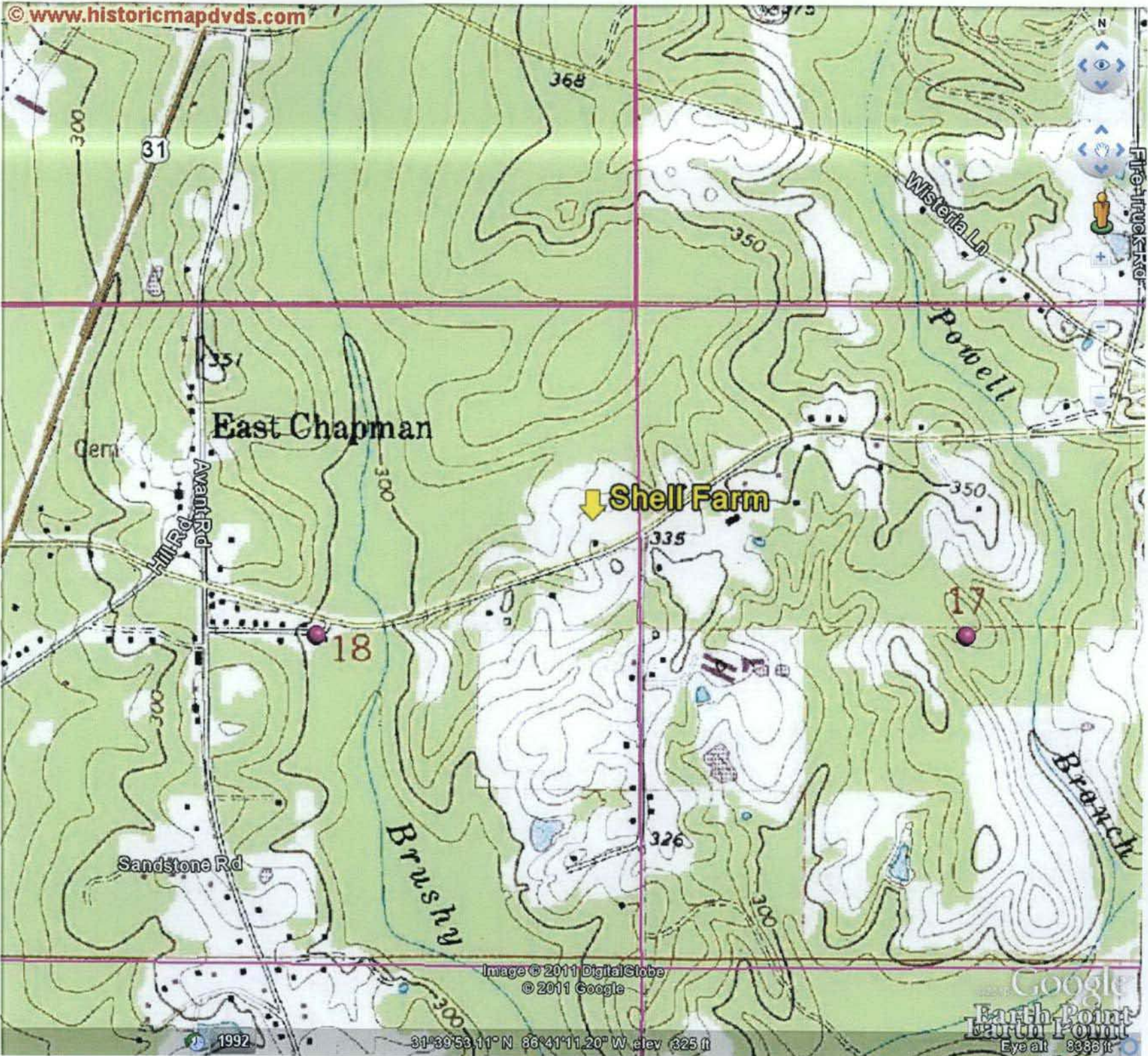


Image © 2011 DigitalGlobe  
© 2011 Google

31°39'53.11" N 86°41'11.20" W elev 325 ft

Google  
Earth Point  
Earth Point  
Eye at 8338 ft

1992

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION See Instructions for more information.

Construction date:	c. 1890s	Source:	current owner
Alteration date:	c. 1930s	Source:	current owner
Architect/Builder:	n/a	Contractor:	n/a
Physical condition: (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Ruinous)	excellent	Remaining historic fabric: (High, Medium, Low)	high
No. of stories:	One		
Historic use of property:	Residence--Farm		
Current use of property:	Residence--vacation home		
Architectural style category:	None	Architectural style sub-category:	None
Basic typology:	None	Basic shape:	Rectangular with rear addition
Basic floor plan:	Two rooms	Historic Construction material(s):	weatherboard
Current exterior wall material(s)	weatherboard	Roof finish material(s):	composite shingles
Main roof configuration:	side gable	Foundation material:	open with concrete piers
Porch type:	attached with four square wood column supports		
Window type and materials:	4/4 wooden		
Describe alterations:	side additions; rear addition and porch		
Number and type of all outbuildings: (if significant, fill out separate survey form)	6: 2 sheds, 2 barns, 1 well, 1 propane tank		
Exterior Architectural Description:	<p>One story, side gable farmhouse. Front facade features a central 4/4 window; two wooden doors with flanking 4/4 double hung sash wooden windows. Attached porch is full-width with four square wooden column supports. Two matching side additions were added c. 1930 and also feature 4/4 double hung windows that match the ones on the original part of the house. A rear addition and back porch were also added around this same time.</p>		
Description of Setting:	<p>The Clive Shell Farm faces south toward County Road 37. It is very rural and open around the house and outbuildings and forested behind house. A pasture is located across road.</p>		

Personal Reflections, Dr. Wayne Shell, grandson of original owner.

I believe that the original structure was constructed in the late 1890s, or about the time that grandmother and granddaddy married. In its original form it was essentially a "cropper's" house; although they were never "croppers" themselves.

The current main bedroom is in the same location and is the same size as it was originally. The current living room was used as a combination bedroom and store room. It had no windows, but two large wooden shutters could be opened to admit light and fresh air. The original kitchen was a narrow room on the north side of the main bedroom. The bedrooms on the east and west ends of the house; along with the present-day kitchen and the backporch were added much later, and have little relationship to their lives as farmers. Most of the money to make those improvements came from off-the-farm.

The whole structure was heated by a single fireplace on the west side of the main bedroom; plus some heat derived from the stove in the kitchen when meals were being prepared. When we first lived there, none of the windows were screened. One can hardly imagine the problem that mother had with the "jillions" of house flies produced in chicken houses in a house that had no screens.

The fireplace had apparently shifted a little over the years, and there were some rather large cracks around it. The exterior walls were rough "ship-lap" pine boards nailed to rough-sawn framing underneath. By the time mother and daddy set-up housekeeping, all of the interior was completely sealed with "beaded" pine boards. The floor consisted of finished, wide pine boards. Unfortunately, over the years some rather large cracks had developed in front of the fireplace. I am not certain that the house was sealed when it was constructed.

The shallow well just behind the house was apparently dug about the time the house was constructed. Unfortunately, it was not deep enough to provide a very large reservoir of water; especially to meet the needs of all of those chickens. There were two other "dug" wells that provided some water when the main well near the house would get dangerously low, but they were located a considerable distance from where most of the chickens were located. Until well after World War II ended, all the water required by the chickens had to be "toted" in buckets to them. In the hot summer months, this was a more-or-less continuous process during most of the day-light hours. Finally, after electricity reached the farm, daddy had a new well dug in the "bottom" west of the house. He installed a pump in it that helped with the watering problem.

In the early 1930s there were few "pit" toilets in rural Butler County. The toilet with this house was of the "open" variety. It was located about 50 yards north of the house, and the construction was even rougher. By the time we finally got a "pit" toilet, there was little of that structure remaining.

I wish I knew how we came to live in that house. Daddy had completed high school in Georgiana. He had to board in town in order to attend school there. Apparently he had a severe case of the measles near the end of his last semester, and he had to withdraw and go

home, but apparently he did graduate in 1916. Afterwards, he attended the Massey-Draughon Business School in Montgomery. On completion of that work, he was employed as a time-keeper with W.T. Smith Lumber Company. It is likely that over time with his education that he would have been given more responsibility with the company. Even as a time-keeper, he would likely have qualified for a company house, if he had wanted one.

I will never know why he chose to quit that "day-job" and to enter the business of selection and breeding of white leghorn chickens for improved egg production. Given the resources available to him, his business had failed before it began. He had no money, and apparently received little financial help from his parents. His father was in the process of losing a fine, large farm, largely through mis-management. He had no land and no house, so he had to "squat" on a small portion of his father-in-law's farm and live in a "shack."

He knew nothing of animal breeding, but through sheer determination, unremitting toil and the complete devotion and cooperation of a remarkable woman, he made a significant contribution to poultry production in the country. With his selective breeding program, he was producing some outstanding layers by the mid-30s, but by 1940, he was working off-the-farm at a feed store in Pensacola. Mother was operating the farm. With his reputation, he was selling a considerable number of chicks and some hatching eggs, but his "hill" was just too high to climb. Everything he made selling his chicks and eggs had to be used to construct more buildings. Breeding programs require an inordinate amount of holding and growing space.

When his poultry business was at its "peak," there were five or six large poultry houses in the open field west of the house, and there was a large hatchery building located approximately where the car shelter is today. There were also four or five large "range" houses in the field across the road, and a large "brooder" house about where Uncle Frank built his house. In addition there were three "range" houses around where Larry's house is located. All of these structures were located on land that daddy and mother did not own. Most of the major structural changes to their house were made long before they owned it.

Things got better for them during the war years, and he was able to return to the farm full-time. During this period he produced some of his very best layers, but with the farming depression that followed the end of the war, he again began to have financial difficulties with his chickens. He finally left the poultry business and began to apply his breeding talents to producing and selling red duroc breeding stock. Over the years he also produced some really outstanding hogs, but lost everything they had on two occasions because of unpredictable national "cycles" in hog abundance. He probably would have tried again, but finally mother had had enough. She finally announced that they were out of the hog business forever and longer if necessary.

Daddy finally had to admit that he could not support his family farming. He even went back to Chapman to work for the lumber company, but he quit after one day. Later, he managed a feed and seed store for Murray Yarbrough in Georgiana, but after a couple of years, he established his own store. He and mother were "naturals" for that business. They knew everyone in south Butler County. He really knew the feed business and mother knew seed. They made the first real money of their lives in that store, but he had waited too long to start it.

Unfortunately, while they were good at what they did, they were much too "soft-hearted." They sold too much of their stock on credit. When he finally retired, he had a small fortune on his books that he would never collect. Farming in south Butler County was hard on everyone.

In his will, granddaddy Bass gave mother 2 acres of land and our house. The other three children shared equally the remaining 78 acres, including the "old" house. So around the end of 1956, mother and daddy finally owned a house and 2 acres of land, but by that time their farming days were over.

Daddy was a really good animal husbandryman with a real flair for breeding, but he was never a successful farmer. He really never had a chance. He just never had the resources to begin with (no money, no land, no house, no electricity, no permanent water supply, no telephone, and for years, no personal transportation). In general, farming in Alabama has never been very profitable. The only successful ones, if you can call them successful, usually had a good source of off-farm income that paid for their farming.

Although, daddy was the son of a Baptist minister, he never attended church until about the time he retired from the store. So far as I know he was never a Deacon. In his later years, he thoroughly enjoyed singing in the choir at the Baptist church near home.

Mother came from a family of strict non-denominationalists. They had a single revival, once a year, and that was all. She did not become a church member until she was well into her 50s. She never spent much time with the Eastern Star, but she spent endless hours helping largely illiterate people in the community get the government benefits to which they were entitled.

I could not possibly make the case for including the present house and the buildings on the Registry on the basis of the family's success as farmers, but they truly are a monument to a man's decision to follow his dream regardless of the cost to him or his family and to a woman's willingness to remain steadfastly and completely devoted to him in his largely hopeless quest.



## **8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Use attached sheets as necessary*

Dr. Wayne Shell, Personal Reflections, 2011

## **9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of nominated property: >1

*Attach a map showing the location of the property.*

## **10. Person Applying for Historic Register Designation**

Name: Mary Shell

Address: 468 S. Perry Street

City: Montgomery

State: AL

Zip: 36130-0900

Telephone: 334.230.2691

Email: Mary.Shell@preserveala.org

## **11. PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Images are essential to the review process. They can be 4x6 color prints or digital images on a CD/DVD. All photographs will become the property of the AHC and will not be returned.

## **12. REMINDER:**

Along with this completed application, include attachments for Items 5, 9 and 11 and send them to:

Alabama Historical Commission  
Attn: Lee Anne  
468 S. Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900