

The hoarse strains of a homemade fiddle, strung with cotton cord and built more than a century ago, provided appropriate atmosphere for last year's fall festival at the John Looney House in Ashville, Alabama.

Alabama's Looney House Harvests History

You can hear the music a little distance apart. It sounds a bit like a violin, but the notes sound raw, hoarse somehow. Drawn by the lamenting tune, you round the corner and there, closer than you would have guessed, is the source. Seated behind a table full of rough-hewn, almost, boxlike fiddles, a black man whose thin, curling hair has long since turned gray, saws away with a thick wooden bow.

The scene is a fitting introduction to this October day's event, the annual fall festival at the John Looney House near Ashville, Alabama. Under a still-warm autumn sun, 80-year-old Earnest Mostella has come to play his great-grandfather's fiddle and to sell, for \$20 each, those he fashioned the way his great-grandfather taught him. It's the cotton-cord strings that give the fiddles their mellow sound. "It's not as loud a music as steel," he observes, "but it's easier on the fingers." After another melody and some prompting, he explains how he builds his fiddles, leading his appreciative audience ever so slightly into the past.

That, really, is the purpose of the whole day—to create a vignette of the past, that of the area's early pioneers, including the John Looney clan. Behind the house the acrid smell of smoke spices the clear air. Fires burn to make soap and candles, to soften the metal for the black-

smith's hammer. Nearby, children bob for apples, and blue-jeaned men replay the days of traditional barn raisings as they work to reassemble an old corn crib. Two other fellows, both in plaid shirts, take turns chopping apples; then they grind the pieces and press them. The juice drips out a mud color, looking more

like a brew of dark tea and cream, but the fresh, sharp taste of homemade apple cider is unmistakable.

After touring the backyard trove of activities and crafts, visitors wander through the Looney House. Erected about 1820, it is a two-story home fashioned of thick, square logs and cement, and built around a double dogtrot, a rare architectural feature in Alabama. That is, a breezeway separates the two first-floor rooms, while a porch does the same upstairs. Restored by the St. Clair Historical Society, the Looney House was opened to the public in 1974 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places a year later. The rooms of the house, like the activities out back, draw from another time, the era between 1820 and 1840. That was the time John Looney and his family from Maury County, Tennessee, came to homestead the valley land he discovered while serving under Gen. Andrew Jackson in the Creek Indian War.

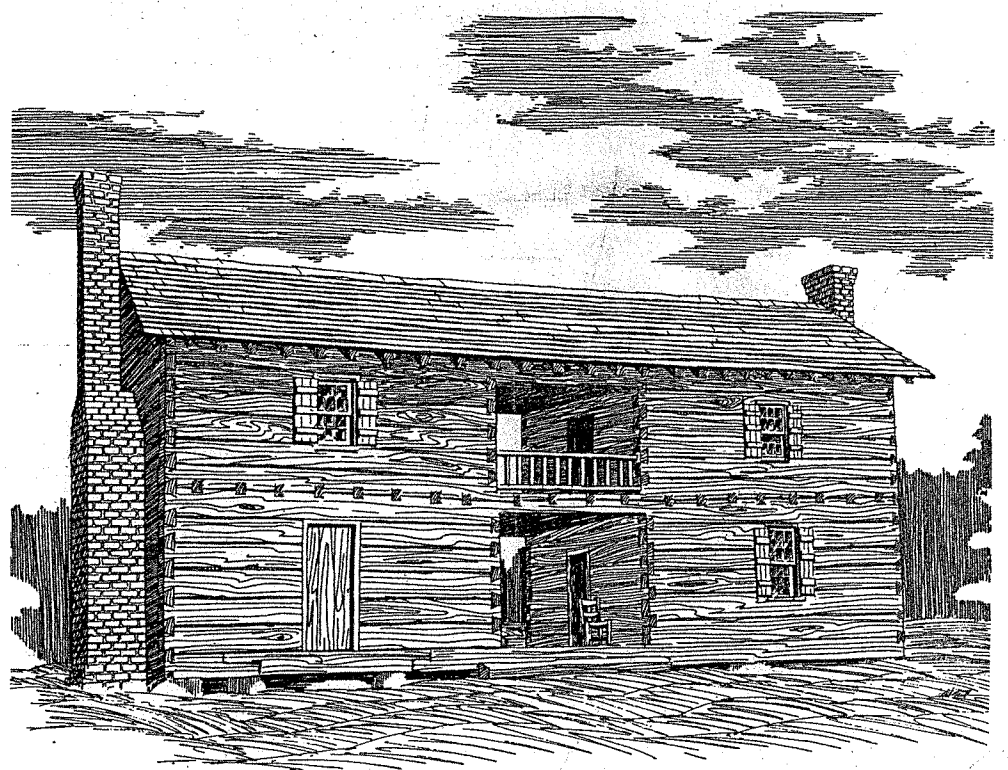
The Looney House annual fall festival is scheduled for October 25 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is a nominal admission fee. The house is also open year-round from noon to 5 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday. Ashville is about 50 miles northeast of Birmingham.

For more information about the festival or the John Looney House, write to Mrs. Carolynne Scott, Route 1, Box 241, Springville, Alabama 35146.

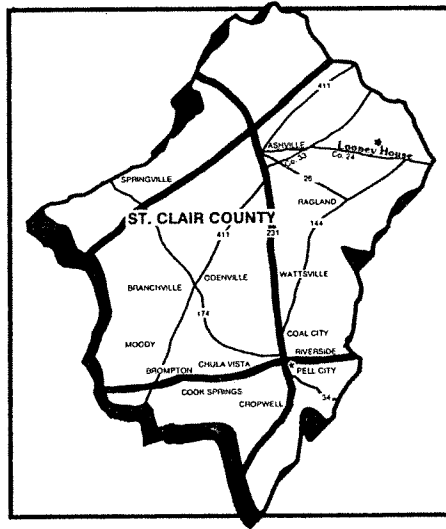


A breezeway separates the first-floor rooms, and a porch does the same upstairs, making the Looney House a double dogtrot, a rare piece of architecture in Alabama.

at Looney House this weekend



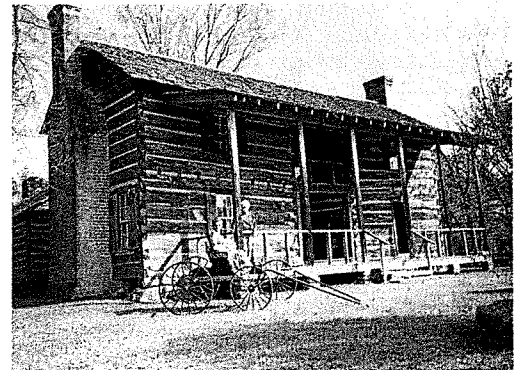
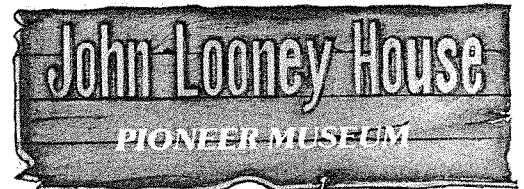
HENRY LOONEY HOUSE



The John Looney House Pioneer Museum is located about 8 miles south of Ashville. Follow the signs located on U.S. 231 North and U.S. 231 South, U.S. 411, and county roads 33 and 34.

Brochure--project of the St. Clair Historical Society

**STEP BACK INTO THE PAST
AT THE**



**Circa 1820
Ashville, Alabama**

**The John Looney House is the only re-
stored two-story double-dogtrot
pioneer log home in Alabama.**

**Restored by the
St. Clair Historical Society**

Alabama!
The State Of Surprises!
Paid for in part by funds from the State of Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

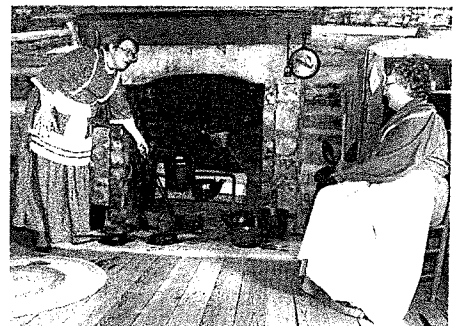
In the year of our Lord, 1813, General Andrew Jackson brought an army of volunteers into what is now Alabama with orders to subdue the hostile Creek Indians. Among Jackson's men were John Looney and his son, Henry, who helped build Fort Strother on the Coosa River and fought in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. During this time John Looney fell in love with this beautiful country and resolved to move his family to this new land.

Late in 1817, John and his family left Marion County, Tennessee and traveled to Alabama. An Indian territorial grant signed by President James Monroe allocated eighty acres to the Looneys in Beaver Valley on the western banks of the Coosa River. John and Rebecca and their seven children worked hard all winter setting the place to rights. But in the spring an unexpected freshet brought disaster when it flooded their home. Invading mosquitoes and sickness forced them to undertake the tremendous task of dismantling and relocating to higher ground. And the house stands there today -- a perfect example of pioneer architecture.

On September 16, 1972 the Looney House property was deeded to the St. Clair Historical Society by Colonel and Mrs. Joseph S. Crietz. It was furnished and officially opened to the public on November 23, 1974. Today the house is much as it would have been during those pioneer days. You step back into the past as you tour the rustic two-story log home with its authentic replicas of rope-slat beds with straw and feather mattresses. Examine the buttermilk painted cupboards, hand-hewn rafters and the hand-pressed bricks. Historical documents and other 19th century artifacts aptly portray the rugged life of the pioneer.

AS YOU TOUR THE PIONEER LOG HOME ENVISION THE LIFE OF THOSE BYGONE DAYS

THE WOMEN TENDING STEW OVER THE COOKFIRE, MEN LABORING IN THE FIELDS AND CHILDREN DOING THEIR DAILY CHORES.



Ladies by cookfire in kitchen

Local Bed and Breakfast Inns

Roses & Lace Country Inn

P.O. Box 852, Ashville, AL 35953
Telephone (205) 594-4366 or (205) 594-4660

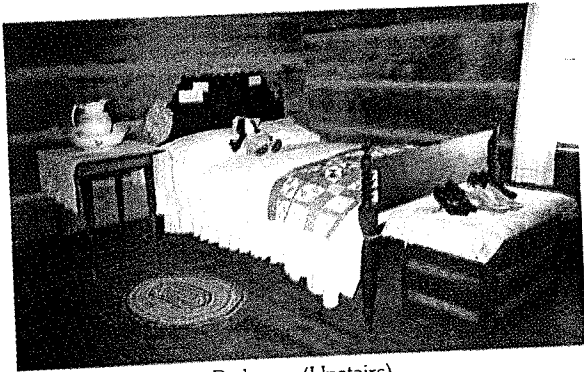
Beason House Open 7 days a week

Route 1, Box 521, Steele, AL 35987
Telephone (205) 594-7878

Overnight camping

Legion Town - A wild west town replica.

Legion Town Campground
Route 1, Steele, AL 35987
Telephone (205) 594-7867



Bedroom (Upstairs)



Front Room Fireplace

**ENJOY OUR ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL
AND PIONEER CRAFTS SHOW
2nd Saturday of October**



Civil War Reenactment Group



Homemade Instruments



Spinning Wool

VISITORS WELCOME

Saturdays and Sundays 1-5 p.m.

ADMISSION

Adults - \$2.00 Children - \$1.00
Under 6 - Free
Group Rates - One-half admission price

**For more information about touring the
John Looney House, contact hostess:**

Inez Franklin
Route 1, Box 790, Ashville, AL 35953
Telephone (205) 594-7849

**OTHER HISTORICAL SITES
NEAR ASHVILLE INCLUDE:**

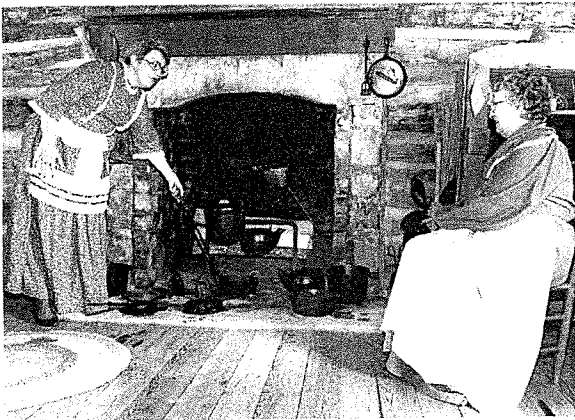
- John Inzer House Confederate Museum
- Ashville Museum and Archives
(located in Ashville Library)
- St. Clair County Courthouse
- Ashville Masonic Lodge building
- Numerous historical homes

For more information contact

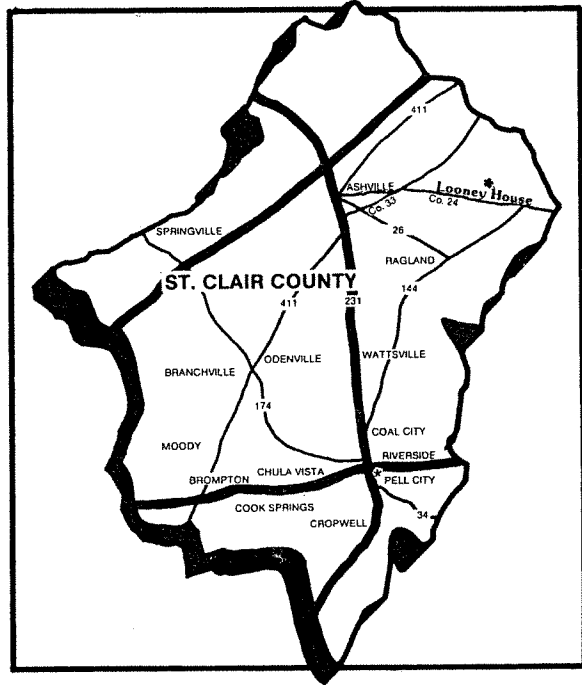
Ashville Library - (205) 594-7954
P.O. Box 187, Ashville, AL 35953

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THE WOMEN TENDING STEW OVER THE COOKFIRE, MEN LABORING IN THE FIELDS AND CHILDREN DOING THEIR DAILY CHORES.



Ladies by cookfire in kitchen



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Added To Register

The Looney House, which was opened to the public after two years of careful restoration by the St. Clair County Historical Society, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The house, along with the Greer House which serves as the kil-

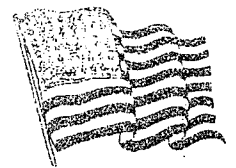
chen, have been restored to the manner of construction around 1820. The houses are furnished with rustic period antiques and implements. The houses are open to the public from 2-4 p.m. each Sunday afternoon. (NCHS) by Jenna Whitehead

Looney' House nominated to National Register

The Looney House has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and is awaiting its listing.

Its roof, which was tin for many years, is now covered with wooden shingles, as in its early days.

Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama now has the properties on the National Register, a prestigious list of historically significant properties.



PAGE 2

Pell City—

What

BY DANNY AUSBU
Special to the News-A

Two girls driving down the freeway in a sh black car were of heading for Pell City to damage and get in ever way, but they didn't ma polite Guardsman, bac by two state troopers them back, and I said goodness.'

At first the damage much, just trees around. But a block or it was homes, bricks, and people that ha upheaved by the i winds; displaced, ove sent sprawling.

Pell City, on a warm afternoon, was digging of the rubble cause disastrous tornado before. Yet, to me, it se it was a quiet, almost place, filled with still which I can yet see in i

Inside the drug; disheartened woman looks at her cup of cc reflection of the Salvat rescue can surrounds the image is a stra Perhaps it symbol organization's work.

Outside, on the stree

The U.S. Department of Interior, according to an announcement by State Senator Robert Weaver and Representative Marilyn Quisenberry.

The Looney House, on Chesapeake Road, is possibly the oldest standing two-story, single-story house in the state. The two-room structure, constructed by open breezeways on both levels, was the most popular style of rural housing in the 19th Century Alabama. Relatively few of these two-story structures have survived.

The dwelling has undergone renovation since it was built in about 1820. The building was moved about one mile from its original location to the present site for reasons of health.

The house rests on piers made of native stone. The logs are joined with half dovetail notching. The graduated size of the logs, each one-half inch larger than the log beneath it, is an unusual characteristic of the building. Newton Smith, the contractor who supervised restoration of the Looney House said that the building was built as though by the method of placing the logs together in exacting detail.

The two chimneys are made of brick which was made locally. The floors are heart of pine. The sills are cedar and much of the original hardware has been salvaged, with only one, better door

Historical Society have been hoping for the nomination of the Looney House to the National Register. Their efforts in restoration have been directed to the preservation of this structure, which has stood for 150 years, as a visual part of the heritage of St. Clair County, and a tribute to the family which constructed the dwelling so long ago.

According to W. Warner Floyd, executive director of the

structures.

Floyd commended Mr. Mrs. Karl C. Scott and Mrs. Abner Crowe for the background information on the Looney House.

The Looney House and Porter House, which serves as the kitchen, is open to the public each Sunday afternoon from 2-4 p.m. School groups wishing to arrange a tour of the houses should contact Mrs. Anna V. Jackson at 594-3318.

everywhere. At first, that someone will cut t on it; but then I realize one is driving on the

A few people still a street along Cogswell, this Saturday aftern like the rest of th awnings are saggin askew4 and windo boarded up. Two p slowly swagger down t billysticks in hand.

Beside the jailhouse,

Utilities expected to be back in order today

Utilities which were knocked out during the tornado late Friday are expected to be back to near-normal operation by today according to spokesmen for Alabama Power, Pell City Utilities and Coosa Valley Telephone Co.

City clerk Bettie Scott indicated Wednesday that city gas customers in the 19th Street area of First Avenue South north to Pell City High School were still without gas services. However, she said "we feel this area will be fixed by Thursday.

Mrs. Scott said uprooted trees and broken connections were causing repair crews to take

alley, block by block to find where the lines would hold gas pressure without showing leaks.

Coosa Valley Telephone Co. President Mrs. Jean Brandli said she expected phone customers in the area to have near-normal service by Thursday also.

"We sustained approximately \$1.5 million dollars worth of damage," Mrs. Brandli said. "But, we have five line crews and two truck loads of material working 24 hours a day to restore full service."

The phone executive said the 338 exchange in Pell City was operable by Friday midnight

available to them."

Blomeley said a "figure" for the sustained by Alabama was "in the neighborhood of two million dollars."

Crews from Tuscaloosa, Clanton, Childersburg, Birmingham, Oneonta, Cullman, Anniston and Goodwater are in the operation.

Local A.P. Manager Williams added "we want to thank all law enforcement personnel and other personnel around Pell City for their cooperation. We also appreciate the patience of our customers for waiting for

of Historic Places-

Looney House Nominated To National Register

State Sen. Robert Weaver and Rep. Marilyn Quarles have announced that the Looney House in St. Clair County has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and the nomination awaits approval in Washington, D.C. by the U.S. Department of Interior.

According to W. Warner Floyd, executive director of the Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama now has 158 properties on the National Register, a prestigious listing of historically significant sites and structures.

The Looney House, on Greensport Road near Ashvill, is possibly the oldest standing two-story, log dogtrot house in the state. The two-pen (room) structure connected by an open breezeway was the most popular type of rural housing in 19th-Century Alabama and numerous examples remain. However, relatively few of the two-story structures have survived.

Henry Looney and his father constructed the building in 1818 about a mile from the present location. The first site proved to be unhealthy and in 1820 the house was disassembled and moved to its present site on higher ground.

The house, along with its separate rear kitchen, has been restored by the St. Clair County Historical Society and furnished with rustic period antiques and complements. It is open on Sunday afternoons, from 2 to

4:00 p.m.

The house rests on native stone piers and the logs are secured with half dovetail notching. An unusual feature of the house is the graduated size of the logs--each one is a half-inch smaller than the log beneath it. The two chimneys are of locally made brick and

the floors are of heart pine. The sills are cedar and much of the original hardware has been salvaged, with only one batten door missing. The roof was covered with tin for many years but is now covered with wooden shingles as originally.

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for the background information of the Looney House.

The National Register includes such Alabama landmarks as Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller in Tuscumbia; the Coldwater Covered Bridge near Anniston; and Arlington, Birmingham's only ante-bellum mansion.

NEED HELP??

WE HAVE ASSISTED SEVERAL PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT LOCATE THEIR INSURANCE AGENT TO REPORT A LOSS. IF YOU HAVE AN OUT-OF-TOWN AGENT AND NEED ASSISTANCE, PLEASE BRING YOUR POLICY AND WE WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU IN FILING YOUR CLAIM.

(There is No Charge for this Service.)

THE ASH AGENCY

2305 Cogswell Ave.

Pell City

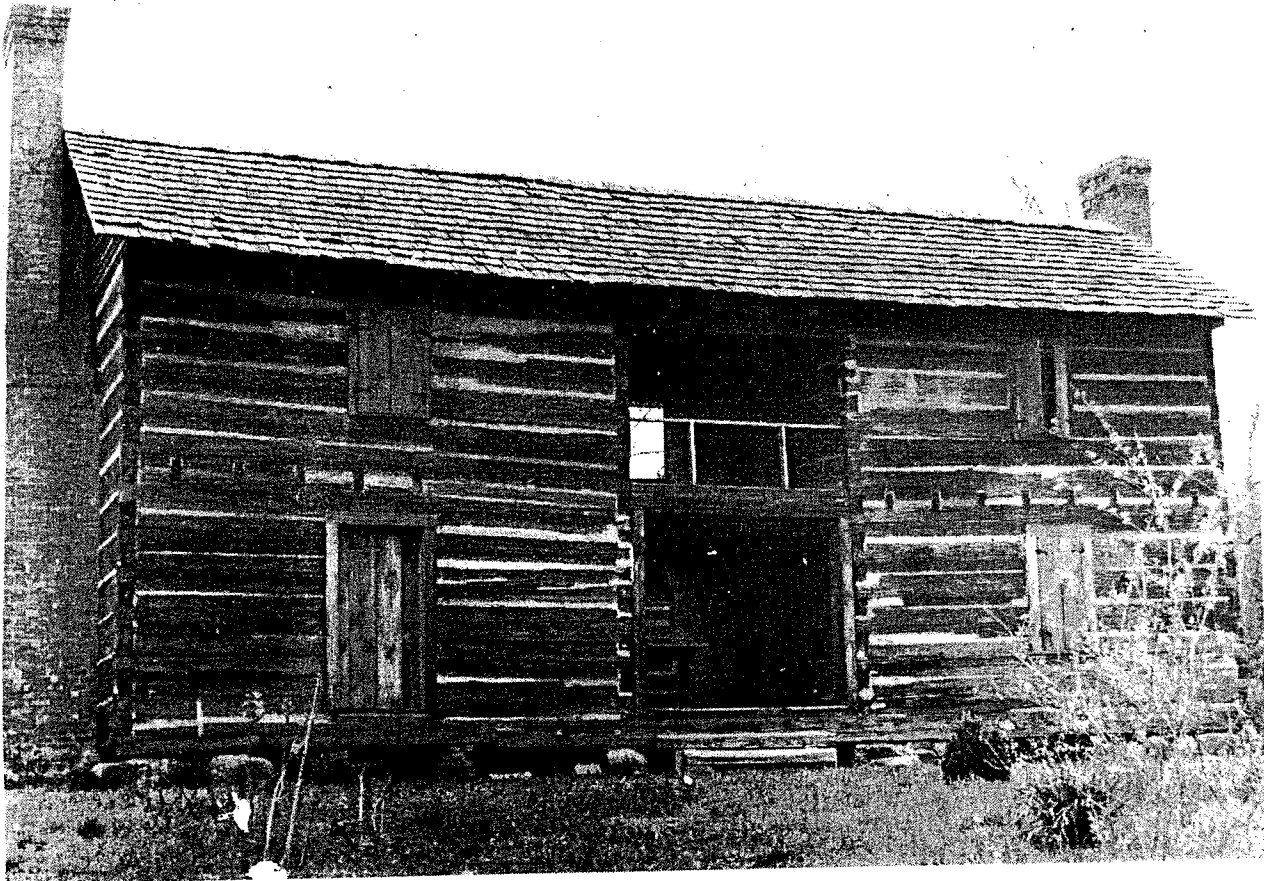
338-3368

884-2380

Form 64p (State)-(12-74)

State Bank No.

Consolidated Report of Condition of "..... FARMERS AND MERCHANTS BANK"
of ASHVILLE in the State of ALABAMA and Domestic Subsidiaries at the close of
business on DEC. 31 , 19 74



Henry
Looney
House

Story Of Log House That Became County Museum

When Andrew Jackson answered the call in 1813 from early pioneers in what is today Alabama and came from Tennessee with a volunteer army to fight the Creek Indians, there were two young men in his troop by the name of Looney, Jack and Henry. These were two of the men who helped Jackson build historic Fort Strother at Ten Islands on the Coosa. This Fort was Jackson's headquarters throughout his campaign against the Creeks and the Looneys were with him and fought at the final battle at Horseshoe Bend.

They liked the country. After the treaty removing the Creeks to the East Side of the Coosa was signed in 1814, Jack and Henry Looney, with the help of their father, John, disposed of

the house was known as the Henry Looney home where Henry later brought his bride, Jane Rutherford Ash (daughter of John Ash for whom the town Ashville is named) there to live.

Today, the Looney House is standing, still as steady and strong as when it was built.

The house is 19' by 48'. No metal nails were used, only wooden pegs. The exposed rafters were hand placed, and the pine logs, one 48 feet long, dovetail to fit perfectly. There are four huge rooms, two downstairs, two up and two fireplaces large enough to burn five-foot logs. The fireplaces are built of hand-pressed brick, made of clay from the land. The sills of the house are of cedar.

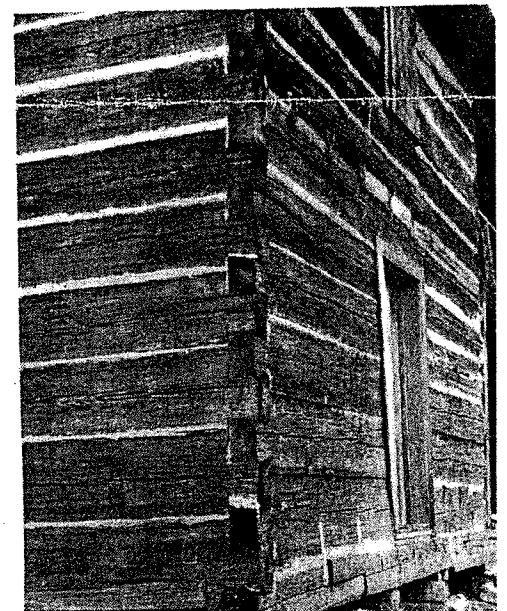
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organization of a historical society, this goal of restoring the Looney cabin brought the County to a sound basis for the beginning at the St. Clair Historical Society.

During that first year, the membership climbed to over 500, an accomplishment which earned state wide recognition for a new historical society.

Funds for restoration of the house have come from many sources—membership in the Society, donations from interested persons and businesses, a subscription drive to the St. Clair Observer substantial donations from the St. Clair County Commission and numerous fund raising drives by the Society. But the job was done.

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On reaching this area, they found that Choccolocco Valley on the East side of the river was still in the hands of the Creeks. So they chose around 900 acres on the West side of the river and an early tract book at the courthouse in Ashville shows the land was entered in the name of the father, John Looney.

Their two story log house was completed by 1820. Jack Looney, who brought his wife with him from Tennessee, built his home some three-quarters of a mile from the house that Henry, who was not married, helped his father build. This

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The house is a perfect example of pioneer architecture. The story of people coming into a wilderness, and with a few crude tools building homes of native materials that have stood for 150 years is a story that has inspired the St. Clair Historical Society and other interested citizens into restoring it as nearly as possible to its original condition as a county museum, now open to the public.

In March of 1972, Col. and Mrs. J. R. Creitz, then newcomers to St. Clair County, offered the old log house and the land on which it stands—with enough extra for parking—to the county or to any historical organization which would pledge to have it properly restored and used as a museum.

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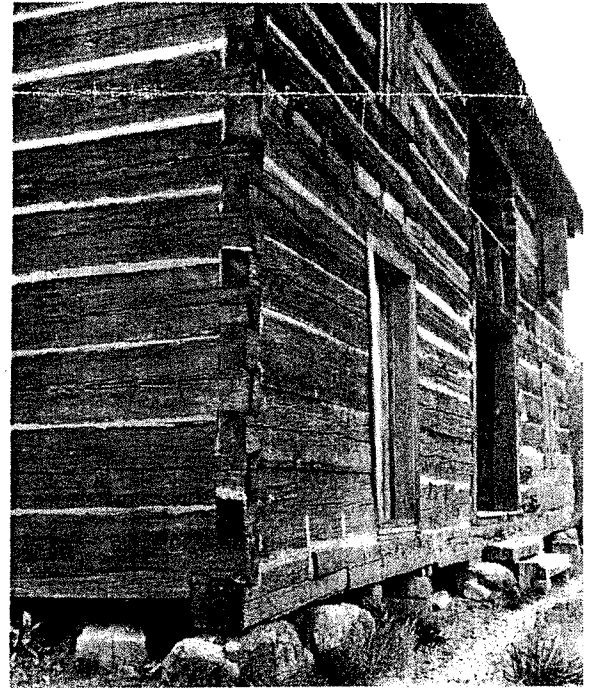
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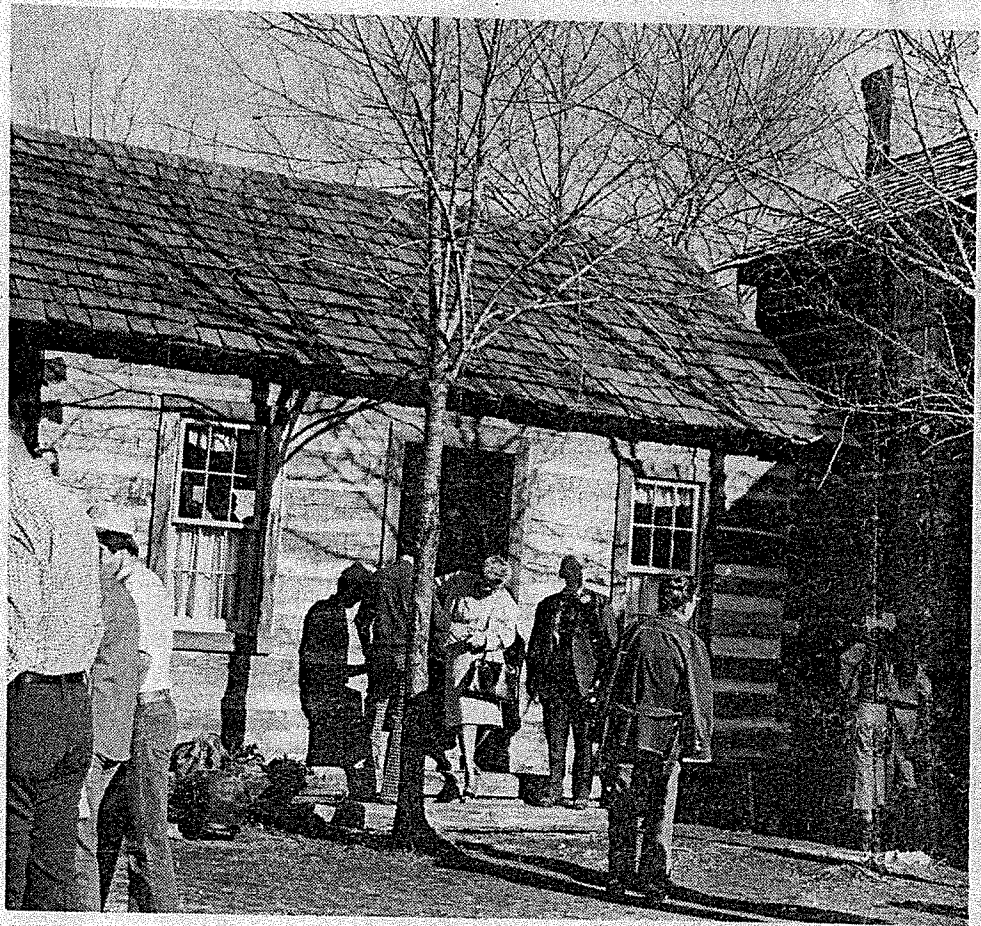


View Shows
Sturdy Construction

Photos By August Lehe

At St. Clair's Looney Home—

Over 2,000 attend



Country Kitchen-Porter House
Gingerbread & Cider For Everyone

FOR
IS
LIVE

attend open house



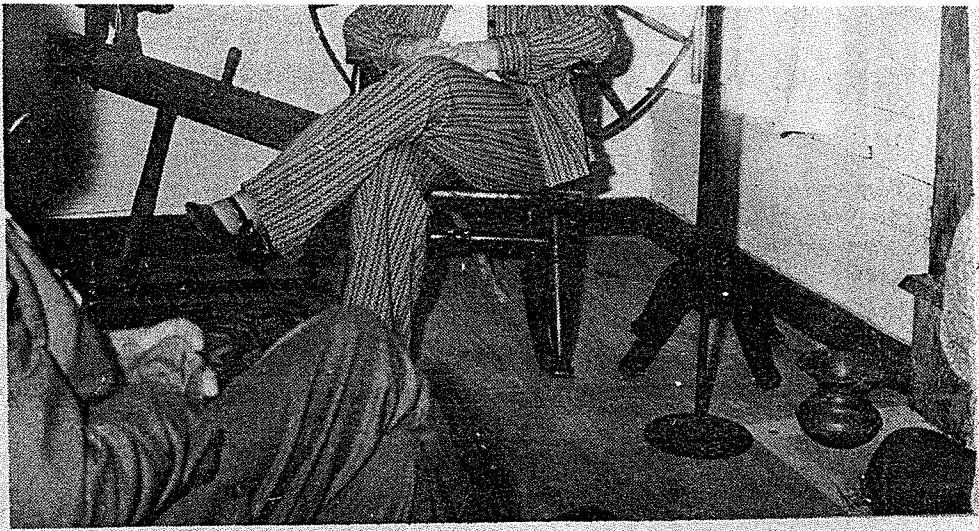
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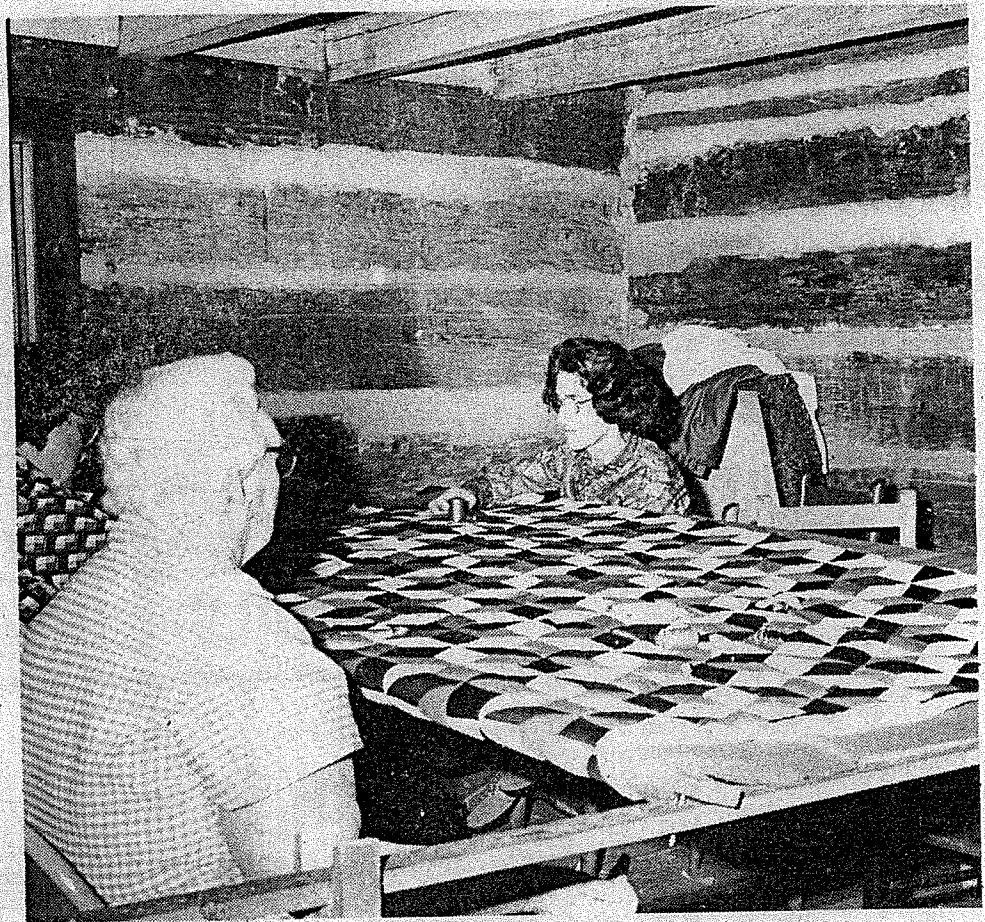


*No Home Was Complete
Without A Spinning Wheel*





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Low Cap Quilting Club

Looney House Opens To Public

County Pays Tribute To



At The Butter Churn

It is not often when a true e manages to survive until the often when a multitude of cil to preserve a landmark such

The Looney House, long marriages and deaths, bec gathering Saturday and Sund around St. Clair County can dream which began two ye

At that time, according to l Teague Crow and Carolynne House and surrounding prop Creitz, agreed to donate the terested citizens would agre

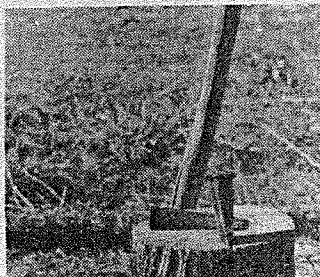
On April 8, 1972, 19 persons of the St. Clair Historical S munity Center.

Then on Sept. 16, 1972, the property was presented to banquet.

What follows is a pictoria culminated in the opening of l The date is Saturday, Nov. 2 spot in Beaver Valley where and seven children carved l History beginning in the year



Wheels



Looney House Opens To Public

County Pays Tribute To



At The Butter Churn

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manages to survive until the j
often when a multitude of cit
to preserve a landmark such :

The Looney House, long
marriages and deaths, beca
gathering Saturday and Sund
around St. Clair County cam
dream which began two yea

At that time, according to h
Teague Crow and Carolynne S
House and surrounding prop
Creitz, agreed to donate the
interested citizens would agre

On April 8, 1972, 19 persons
of the St. Clair Historical S
community Center.

Then on Sept. 16, 1972, the
property was presented to
banquet.

What follows is a pictoria
culminated in the opening of t
The date is Saturday, Nov. 2
spot in Beaver Valley where
and seven children carved t
History beginning in the year



Wheels



A Home And A Heritage

of pioneer architecture
day, and it is even less
f a county join together
Looney House.

eyewitness to births,
e scene of an unusual
undreds of people from
ther to pay tribute to a

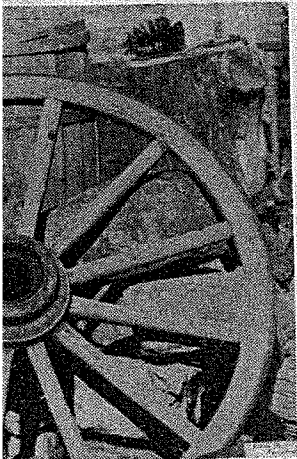
al sketch by Mattie Lou
he owners of the Looney
ol. and Mrs. Joseph R.
and a plot of land it in-
rganize themselves.
ded a founder's meeting
at the Odenville Com-

o the Looney House and
society at its charter

tch of the event which
oney House to the public.
l... The place is the little
Looney, his wife Rebecca
place in St. Clair County
(Photos by August Lehe)



Generations Come Together



Old





Hand Hewn



Ribbon



St. Clair Gothic



A Peek At



Hand Hewn



Ribbon



St. Clair Gothic

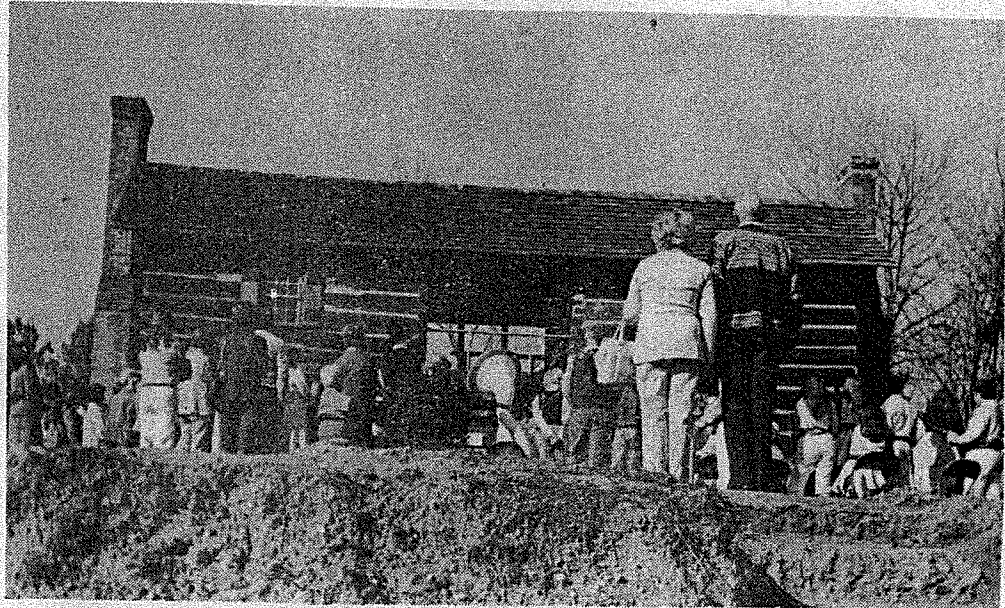


A Peek At



The Latest Fashion

Cutting



Young And Old Alike

The Past

Wheels Of Old



Ribbon Cutting

