Log Construction in Louisiana Historic Context

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CONTEXT SUMMARY

Log construction, horizontally laid logs attached at the corners via a technique known as notching, occurred historically in various parts of the United States. However, it is most closely identified with what cultural geographers term the Upland South Culture. Indeed, it is an emblem or icon of that group. Cultural geographers vary in their interpretations of virtually every aspect of the Upland South Culture, including its physical boundaries. This document will define the core of Upland South Culture to include West Virginia, western Virginia, the western Carolinas, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Because this core area corresponds to much of Appalachia, sometimes the term Appalachian Uplander is used. (Appalachia is a region in the eastern United States that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from roughly Pennsylvania to northern Alabama.)

A significant number of the pioneers who settled the Upland South Culture Region were of Scots-Irish descent (or lived in close proximity with those of Scots-Irish descent and learned their folkways). These were frontiersmen, small landholders – sometimes squatters – in sparse and scattered settlements in a remote hinterland. While the Scots-Irish played a large role in spreading log construction, it was not native to them. Scholars generally agree that they learned the technique in the course of their western expansion, but they disagree as to whether the ultimate origin of log construction in America is via Germany or Scandinavia (Finland and/or Sweden).

As migration continued, the Upland South Culture would spread generally in a southwestward fashion to include parts of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. By its very name, Upland South Culture is equated with upland, or hilly, terrain.

Historic log buildings are found today mainly in three areas of Louisiana. The largest geographically is a six-parish area in north-central Louisiana (sometimes called the “hill parishes”). The two other areas are western Louisiana and Washington Parish, the latter located in the eastern corner of a region known collectively as the Florida Parishes.

Settlement of the three areas of log building concentration in Louisiana began in earnest in the early 1800s, particularly the 1820s and ‘30s. There is general consensus among scholars that the early settlement patterns of the north-central part of the state are representative of the Upland South Culture. Published scholarly materials are inconclusive as to the sources of log construction in western Louisiana and Washington Parish.

Regardless of origins, it is clear that log construction was the method of choice for early settlers (labeled "true frontiersmen" by Louisiana historian Dr. Philip Cook) in certain parts of Louisiana (as noted above). It is also instructive to note where log buildings were very seldom seen: areas of the state settled by French Creoles, for they had their own building traditions.

On the eve of the Civil War, Louisiana surely must have boasted hundreds upon hundreds of log farmsteads (log houses, of various types, with log dependencies). Log buildings in certain parts of the state would have been ubiquitous. But today this once impressive pioneer legacy is virtually gone. There are probably less than 40 historic log residences remaining in the state. Extant log outbuildings with any degree of integrity probably number even fewer. Log outbuildings in particular are for the most part severely deteriorated, suffering from demolition by neglect.

TIMEFRAME (Circa 1830 to Circa 1900)

The earliest known extant log buildings in Louisiana have been dated to circa 1830 by the state Division of Historic Preservation. The folk building tradition continued into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even in the face of much easier balloon frame construction.

DATING LOG BUILDINGS

It is extremely difficult to assign even a circa date to log buildings. They almost always contain only construction clues (i.e., no stylistic clues). The latter are so important in dating buildings because architectural styles change fairly quickly over time. In other words, the "window" of time for a Federal style mantel in Louisiana is short, enabling the architectural historian to assign a quite reasonable circa date to a building. But construction clues (nails, types of saws used) change slowly over time, giving the architectural historian a large "window" of time. (And one does not even have much in the way of saw marks for log buildings. The logs display hatchet marks.)

In the typical case, when a given log building has no stylistic details, one may have the following clues: (1) If door frames, for example, are held in place with square head manufactured nails, the house was built sometime before roughly 1880. (2) If a door has two-part cast-iron hinges, it most likely is from the middle of the nineteenth century. (3) Very generally speaking, the earliest extant log buildings in Louisiana have the largest logs. (4) If elements of the structure are made with manufactured lumber (for example, rafters), these buildings tend to be later in the nineteenth century. By contrast, earlier examples have skinned pole rafters.

In the past, the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation has utilized two pieces of information in determining a circa date for a log building: family history and the architectural evidence. Many times, staff had access to the descendants of the original settlers, and the family's arrival in Louisiana is well known. And in some cases, the family history has been published. In the foregoing instances, the Division has used the family history date if the architectural evidence supports it.

CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT: BACKGROUND

The Scots-Irish:

Cultural geographers Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups identify the Scots-Irish as the "largest single genetic input" to what they call the "backwoods population"—noting that they set "the colonization machine in rapid westward motion (*The American Backwoods Frontier*, 1989).

This was a hardy pioneer stock that could cope with what was, in reality, a harsh and often hostile, primeval environment. President Theodore Roosevelt hailed them as the "kernel of the distinctively and intensely American stock who were the pioneers of our people in their march westward." As a frontier culture, Appalachian Uplanders have been described as follows: "They tended to live isolated lives in backwoods settlements. It was a harsh, pioneering existence, but they had become well suited to it. They were fierce, clannish and unruly" (McCrum, Robert, et. al., *The Story of English*, 1986). The Scots-Irish connection is particularly telling. These were descendants of Lowland Scot Protestants who emigrated to Roman Catholic Northern Ireland in the early seventeenth century to work large farms owned by English and Scottish "planters." As Protestants entering a Catholic world, their reception was hostile, but they endured, becoming markedly and collectively tough, "ready to take on all comers."

A century later the Scots-Irish emigrated further, this time to the British colonies in North America. Many settled in frontier areas of Pennsylvania. From there they quickly spread to dominate the entire southern Appalachian region, bearing the brunt of Indian resistance. Cratis Williams, considered "the father of Appalachian studies," has noted the Scots-Irish penchant for storytelling and their "broad" speech -- a "jumble" of Scots, English and German (the latter from the Pennsylvania Germans). For instance, the famous Southern you-all is a Scots-Irish corruption of the traditional plural "yous" (McCrum, Robert, et.al., *The Story of English*, 1986). Most notable of all is the Scots-Irish use of the word "cabin" for the log houses they were building on the mountainous frontier. The first known use of the term log cabin appears in 1770 to denote a house in an Irish community in "the Valley of Virginia."

Origins of Log Construction:

Scholars agree that log construction was eminently practical for rapidly claiming and settling a vast hinterland. They also agree that it was not part of the Scots-Irish tradition and that the Scots-Irish learned the technique in the course of their frontier experience. Paraphrasing Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups, the Scots-Irish were the purveyor, not the inventor (*The American Backwoods Frontier*, 1989). Like the English of Jamestown, the Scots-Irish hailed from the British Isles where traditions of joinery and construction knew nothing of log-on-log architecture. One wonders how it could have been otherwise. Because despite its virtues,

log construction consumes a great deal of timber for even a modest size building. In England and Ireland the great forests of the Ancient Britons had long since been felled for farmland to feed a growing population. As early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in England, there was a shortage of wood for construction. And in later centuries, all of the timber to build the frigates and mighty ships of the storied British Navy had to be imported.

From whom did the Scots-Irish learn log construction? Here there is no consensus among scholars. In the broadest sense, there are three historic centers of log construction in Old Europe: Scandinavia, Germany and Russia. Of these, the Russian traditional buildings are of interest because of their sheer size and architectural qualities – most notably churches. Indeed, some of the world's largest and most intricate historic log buildings are found in the Great Russian Steppe and temperate forest regions. Of these three old-world log building traditions, two, the Scandinavian and the German, have been identified as possible or probable progenitors of log building in America.

The very limited number of American scholars that, for nearly a century, have been concerned with this study have divided their scholarship and support between: 1) the Scandinavian theory of origin (Swedish and/or Finnish), and 2) the German theory of origin. These may be summarized as follows:

Scandinavian Origin: Early in the twentieth century a coterie of antiquarian scholars, led by restoration architect Fiske Kimball, claimed New Sweden as the original pioneer hearth for log construction, beginning in the 1630s. Sweden's brief experiment with North American colonization (1638-1655) was a linear colony along the Lower Delaware River – portions of today's Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. At that time the Realm of Sweden included Sweden, Finland, and small portions of Norway and Russia. The first ship from Sweden reached the Delaware Bay in 1638, and a fort was built at the site of present-day Wilmington, Delaware. Over the next seventeen years, eleven ships carrying some 600 Swedes and Finns reached the colony. (See Photo 1 for a log house in New Sweden.)

Scandinavian proponents note that, unlike most of the rest of late medieval Europe, the Realm of Sweden was rich in timber. They also note the relatively sparse population and the long tradition of log construction. Finally, they observe similarities in Swedish/Finnish and American log construction techniques, notably corner notching (fixing logs together at the corners of a structure). Discarded for a time, the Scandinavian hypothesis enjoyed a revival in the late 1970s and the 1980s, led principally by historian Walter Prescott Webb and cultural geographer Terry Jordan.

Jordan, in the last work of his decades-long study of log construction (*The Upland South: The Making of an American Folk Region and Landscape*, 2003), reaffirmed his strong belief in the Scandinavian theory, specifically Finnish. Interestingly, Jordan began as a strong proponent of the German theory of origin. But extensive fieldwork in Finland in the 1980s converted him.

German Origin: In 1938 Thomas Wertainbaker challenged the Scandinavian theory, claiming that the true source was northern Germany, specifically Saxony, Moravia and Bohemia. It was brought there in the 18th century by Moravian Brethren settlers. Others have suggested western parts of Germany such as the Black Forests of Baden and Wurttemberg on the Rhine. This latter group includes western parts of Switzerland in

their study area. Adherents to the German theory point to the rich and long-lived log building tradition in that region. They also note that Appalachian Uplanders cohabited with the Pennsylvania Germans for more than a generation in the mid 18th century. There was an obvious cultural cross-fertilization between the two groups (they also traded words). Finally, German adherents would also note that New Sweden existed for a relatively short time, and that was roughly 100 years before the major period of Scots-Irish immigration to the American colonies.

A fairly recent scholar on the subject, Jerah Johnson, in an essay published in 1997 (*Plain Folk of the South Revisited*), notes the above views, takes the measure of each, and concludes simply, "That is where the matter stands today." Interestingly, Johnson then goes on to explore briefly the theory that British immigrants could possibly have developed the technique of log construction on their own. He lays out some possible lines of research. But his essential thesis does not go beyond speculation.

Vernacular Architecture:

Log construction in general, and the log cabin in particular, fall under the heading of what has come to be termed vernacular architecture. It is the study of folk architecture – like folk art. Since the Second World War, vernacular architecture has attained legitimacy as a distinct and separate field of study under the general heading of architectural history. This is something relatively new. Antique buildings have been of interest in the West for centuries, beginning with Renaissance attempts to revive the splendors of classical antiquity. But then, as in later times, antiquarians were exclusively concerned with the greatest and most elegant works of design. The contemporaneous humble dwelling of ordinary people did not interest them. Indeed, they would not have taken them seriously as works of art. So, in historic terms, the emergence of the study of vernacular architecture is something quite extraordinary. It is as if the lettered lord of the manor suddenly decided the crude huts of his tenant farmers were notable works of architecture imminently worthy of study.

"Vernacular" is actually a linguistic term that has been applied by analogy. It literally means the local language, or the language of a clan or native group. But this application to indigenous folk building is now widely in use and is generally accepted.

British architectural historian Dr. R. W. Brunskill, a pioneer in the discipline, has made a useful distinction between what he terms "polite" architecture and vernacular architecture (see, for example, Brunskill's *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties*. 1974). In the case of polite (high-style) architecture, the architect is designing after a national, or even international, fashion. In the case of vernacular, the builder is following a local tradition, uninformed by the contemporary fashion of the outside world. One can reinforce Brunskill's point with another distinction. Many high-art styles of architecture have been informed, to some degree or other, by some sort of abstract or moral philosophy as, for example, the High-Church Gothic Revival of the mid 19th century. The local folk builder has no philosophy, except perhaps good workmanship. He is simply doing what the local people do – what they have always done. In this world of opposites there is yet another distinction. As Brunskill notes, high-style architecture varies greatly over time, as fashion changes, but

not much over distance. In contrast, vernacular architecture varies greatly over distance, as one encounters different traditions, and not much over time, as traditions are handed down.

Central to many vernacular traditions, including log construction, is the phenomenon of the "raising bee," in which a community of neighbors band together to construct a building for one of its members. The Upland South chapter in *Louisiana Buildings 1720 -1940*, written by one of the authors of this document, includes an account of a hypothetical raising bee for a log building. The following excerpt is provided to illustrate: "For several days prior to a raising, the landowner and his family, sometimes with the help of friends who could spare a day or two from their labors, cut trees and squared off logs, leaving them on the ground near the building site. . . . Early in the morning on the appointed day, neighbors converged on the site. The first operation was to place the bottom logs, or sills, on heavy wood blocks or piles of stones. . . . Once the foundation was down, the floor was laid anywhere from one to three feet above the ground. As the log walls went up, four skilled axmen served as 'cornermen' chopping and chiseling the ends of the logs so they interlocked in neat corners. . . ." The shell of the house was normally completed in a day. The final stage typically was hoisting the roof rafters, usually skinned poles, and setting them in place.

Louisiana cultural geographer Dr. Martin Wright (in his 1956 dissertation "Log Culture in Hill Louisiana") underlined the importance of the raising bee as an essential for log building. He makes his point simply: "Log house construction cannot be accomplished single-handedly. The sheer weight of the logs makes additional help a necessity." And Frank Owsley, in his landmark work *Plain Folk of the Old South*, adds a extra flourish noting that in the evening "if a party had been planned in connection with the raising, a fiddler might be engaged and a whiskey jug put in circulation." Indeed, raisings were very much social events on the isolated frontier.

In evaluating log construction as a vernacular architecture tradition, the raising phenomenon offers several observations. The techniques of log construction required relatively modest skills compared with, for example, English half timber construction with its complex systems of braces, mortises, tenons and pegs. This modest skill level enabled most of the neighbors to work in the raising without any training or special help. Participation by so many required that the form of construction be familiar to all. This tended to thwart any attempt at personal innovation and perpetuate the old way of doing things. This, combined with frontier isolation and the limited number of design choices available, completes the portrait of the vernacular log builder. At bottom, it simply never occurred to him that there might be a better way to build.

<u>Log Construction on the Southern Plantation</u>:

While log construction is most closely identified with the Upland South Culture and its yeoman farmers, it was also part of the plantation landscape – especially for quarters houses. This is a fact occasionally noted by scholars but, generally, not much remarked upon. Nonetheless, it is possible to make some significant observations:

1) From the body of existing literature, one is left largely to surmise just how it was that building techniques and house types associated with Uplander yeoman farmers became translated to the

plantation setting. After all, planters and Uplanders did not usually occupy exactly the same environment. Neither did they emerge from precisely the same cultural background. John Vlach (*Back of the Big House*, 1993*)* covers the matter with the stroke of a pen, noting that "Southern planters generally followed the example of their yeoman neighbors."

2) Unlike planters in the Caribbean Region and South America, who typically housed their enslaved workers in large barracks, American planters almost invariably provided a single cabin for each enslaved family or, at least, a single room in a multi-room house. So it was that "quarters rows" were a familiar sight on the thousands upon thousands of plantation holdings that once characterized the Old South. Frontier Uplander log house types such as the single pen (one room), the double pen (two rooms) and the dogtrot (two rooms separated by a covered open passage) all had their counterparts on the plantation. The major difference was that, while non-plantation two room double pens and dogtrots housed a single white yeoman family, their plantation equivalents housed two enslaved families.

3) Clearing forest land for cultivation provided the planter with ample logs with which to construct cabins for his workers, at almost no cost. Moreover, as field hands were usually worked in gangs, one can easily envision the plantation equivalent of an Uplander raising bee.

4) Compared to wood-frame, brick or stone quarters houses, log quarters houses tended to be of the poorer sort. Frederic Law Olmsted, famed chronicler of the Antebellum South landscape, described a typical scene, noting that cabins "scattered irregularly about the (planter's) house were of the worst description though, as good as local custom requires. They are but a rough enclosure of logs, ten feet square, without windows…Great chinks [gaps] are stopped with whatever comes to hand – a wad of cotton here, a corn shuck there." (The foregoing is quoted in John Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 1993.) An 1856 article in the *Southern Planter* concluded that, owing to their sheer ugliness, log quarters houses should be placed "out of sight of the mansion." Frame houses with clapboards and "some cheap ornamental cornice' were the recommended remedy. Towards the end of the Antebellum Period, agricultural reformers advocated better, cleaner quarters – fit for a person to live in. Replacing log structures with frame houses with a raised plank floor was the most common solution.

5) Per above, the great majority of log quarters houses were built with the bottom logs resting upon the ground. Thus they provided the inhabitants with a dirt floor. Such dwellings were labeled by reformers as "laboratories of disease." But, in addition, the direct ground contact also promoted rapid deterioration. Many log quarters houses did not survive through the Antebellum Period. Of the thousands that must have been built, almost none survive today.

6) Given its plantation connection, it is ironic that the log cabin emerged as a potent symbol of American rugged individualism and freedom. To the historian, it could equally well be a symbol of enslavement.

7) Other log outbuildings on the plantation, such as barns and stables, resemble their Uplander counterparts to a large degree.

8) To complete the picture, log construction occasionally appeared in the form of the plantation house itself. This would have represented planters of the second tier who did not, one assumes, indulge in gentlemanly posturing as the great planters might. So few log plantation houses survive, or presumably were ever built, that drawing conclusions from the cultural background of their owners would probably not be meaningful.

Log Cabin as Cultural Symbol:

The American log cabin became a potent cultural symbol during the presidential election of 1840. The campaign of the incumbent Democrat, Martin Van Buren, charged that the White House was too good for his Whig opponent General William Henry Harrison whom, it was charged, lacked sufficient refinement for the job. Indeed, so the campaign oratory went, Harrison would be content with nothing more than a "log cabin" and a "jug of hard cider." Harrison sensed the misstep and took full advantage, declaring that he was the kind of American who would be proud to live in a log cabin. In the boisterous "log cabin and hard cider" campaign that followed, the log cabin became imbued with homespun American frontier virtues such as ruggedness, an indomitable spirit, simplicity and honesty. Harrison won the election and, thereafter, the log cabin became a valuable political asset as well as a symbol of the very heart of Americana. (Photos 2 & 3)

The Log Cabin and the Colonial Revival Movement:

In time the log cabin became caught up in the expanding Colonial Revival Movement as it gained strength in the decades after the Civil War. It became strongly associated with the very founding of the earliest English colonies, beginning with Jamestown in 1607. It was also seen as the architecture of the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Among antiquarians this view of the log cabin became widely accepted. But it was incorrect.

Especially in its earlier days, the American Colonial Revival Movement tended to apply the venerable term "colonial" to all manner of old things, and somewhat old things. From medieval style salt-box houses of ancient New England, to Greek Revival columnar mansions of the 1840s, all were covered under the broad and generic term "colonial." This distinction extended to the humble log cabin as well.

In his landmark 1952 work *Early American Architecture*, architectural historian Hugh Morrison derided the rise of the log cabin to the peak of colonial antiquity as "a comedy of errors." It began in 1841, a year after the famous election. That year a Whig political activist, the Reverend Alexander Young, published the *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers.* In it he noted that the Pilgrims' houses were "probably log huts, thatched, and the interstices filled with clay." Before long, other antiquarians accepted the log cabin as the true early colonial archetype. Morrison writes in part, "In speeches, articles, journals and learned histories, it snowballed. In historical pageants, Puritans garbed in sober black and white – which they never wore – prayed to God…before the doors of reconstructed log cabins – which they never lived in. School textbooks came out

with convincing illustrations of pioneer Plymouth and Jamestown, of Miles Standish or of John Alden and Priscilla, all before log cabin settings."

As the American Colonial Revival Movement matured, its learning increased. One of the seminal fruits of this was Harold R. Shurtleff's 1939 treatise *The Log Cabin Myth*, in which he totally debunked the theory that the log cabin, as we know it, was a feature of the early English colonies. The true picture of Plymouth, Jamestown and the Massachusetts Bay Colony was that of Late Medieval England, not the log cabins of Appalachia.

CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT: THE LOUISIANA STORY

Geographical Distribution:

Cultural geographer Martin Wright, as part of a landmark study conducted from 1949 to 1951 (see below), identified five regions of log construction in Louisiana at that time, based on extensive fieldwork:

(1) The central portion of northern Louisiana (what he called the Red-Ouachita Divide). This is by far the largest of his regions and the one he identified as having the greatest concentration. This includes Lincoln, Bienville, Claiborne, Webster, Jackson and Union parishes.

(2) A small area in northeast Louisiana north/northeast of Monroe and bordering Arkansas (the Bastrop Hills).

(3) A roughly linear area along the western edge of Louisiana (the Dolet Hills), which includes portions of Sabine, Natchitoches, Red River, DeSoto and Caddo parishes.

(4) A small area in the Florida parishes centering on St. Helena Parish and eastern East Feliciana parish.

(5) A small area in the Florida parishes centering on Washington Parish.

Today (2012) the three areas of concentration would correspond to #s1, 3 & 5 above.

Migration to Louisiana (General):

Generally speaking, settlers who built log buildings in Louisiana arrived from the older states of the Upper South. The following will attempt to make observations on migration sources for the three areas of log construction concentration in the state today based on the available scholarly studies. Specifically, preparers have been asked by the client (the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation) to ascertain if it is valid to associate all regions of log construction with the Upland South Culture.

The above is by definition challenging for the following sometimes related reasons: (1) Sources, whether primary or secondary, often indicate only the state in which a person was born, which in and of

itself is of no value for purposes of speculating on the source(s) of log culture in Louisiana. (What would be helpful, for example, is to know where the person matured into adulthood – where he assimilated cultural traditions such as log construction.) Or the source might indicate what state a settler migrated from, not what portion of that state. All of the older southeastern states from which settlers came had portions dominated by the Upland South Culture. Did a settler move to Louisiana from that portion of the state? (2) Log buildings are folk architecture generally built by individuals who left no written record. (3) Of the three areas of log construction concentration in Louisiana, those in western Louisiana and Washington parish have received less scholarly attention on their own; there is not a general body of published scholarly opinion as there is with the hill parishes of north-central Louisiana.

Addressing log construction in Louisiana as a single entity and associating it with the Upland South Culture began for the Division of Historic Preservation with a document produced for the agency by well known Louisiana cultural geographer Dr. Milton B. Newton. (Newton was a student of the dean of Louisiana cultural geographers, Dr. Fred Kniffen.) The typescript is dated 1980 and entitled "The Historical Settlement Patterns of Louisiana." It was this document as well as other sources by cultural geographers that formed the basis for Jonathan Fricker's chapter "The Folk Architecture of the Appalachian Uplanders," in *Louisiana Buildings, 1720-1940* (1997), as well as various National Register nominations on log buildings in the state.

North-Central Louisiana Hill Parishes:

Of the three parts of Louisiana that today retain the greatest concentrations of log buildings, the north-central hill parish region is easily the largest geographically and retains the largest number of log buildings. This includes the parishes of Lincoln, Union, Jackson, Claiborne, Webster and Bienville. As noted above, it has been studied the most by academics, ranging from cultural geographers, to architects, to folklife scholars. The general consensus is that log construction in the region is most closely identified with the Upland South Culture.

Historian Dr. Philip Cook, in an introduction to F. Lestar Martin's *Folk and Styled Architecture in North Louisiana* (1989), observes that "the hill country of North Louisiana was settled by Anglo-Americans in two phases and involved distinctly different types of settlers with contrasting migration paths and settlement patterns. In both cases the ethnic stock was primarily Scotch-Irish and English." Cook's initial wave ("true pioneer people") arrived in the first three decades of the nineteenth century (particularly the 1830s). "Most were born in the upcountry of the Carolinas, moved westward into Tennessee as young adults, and during middle age worked their way down to northern Louisiana." Their settlement pattern was that of isolated subsistence farmsteads and small, scattered communities known as settlements. The authors of this document contend that these settlers were particularly important because they were the ones to build the first buildings in what at the time was a howling wilderness. They could be said to have established a cultural pattern of log construction.

But certainly not everyone who settled the north-central Louisiana hill parishes was an Appalachian Uplander subsistence farmer. What Cook identifies as a second wave began in the late 1830s. Seeking

fresh lands for the commercial production of cotton, these individuals, "many of whom were affluent," "desired to recreate in North Louisiana the more civilized way of life that they had left behind in the southeastern states." The "greatest number" of the new wave came from Georgia and Alabama, although Carolinians continued to come too, states Cook. The settlement pattern for the second wave was larger farms or plantations focusing on the commercial production of cotton, and towns began to appear.

What type of residences did the generally more affluent settlers of the second wave construct? One suspects, most likely, both wood frame and log. Affluent (i.e., not a subsistence farmer) and log residence are not mutually exclusive. Some of the surviving log houses in the north-central Louisiana hill parishes are fairly large for the period and represent someone fairly well-off.

In a longer article published a couple of years earlier, Cook identified the specific parts of states from which certain settlers came to north-central Louisiana. In particular, he references a "wave of migration" from middle Tennessee, sparked by a glowing description of northwest Louisiana made by one Colonel William Clark in 1817. This is a particularly interesting migration source, for cultural geographers consider Middle Tennessee to be a major point of diffusion for log construction. "The typical migration pattern," writes Cook, "was for Carolinians to first move over the mountains to Middle Tennessee and then several years later float down the river to North Louisiana, often after a short stay in southern Arkansas."

Scholars of Louisiana folklife are valuable resources for an analysis of the region as well. Maida Owens, the longtime director of the state's Folklife Program in the Division of the Arts, writes of "two primary subcultures in North Louisiana: the Upland South hill culture and the Lowland South plantation culture, the latter along the river bottoms of the region" (on-line material titled "Louisiana's Traditional Cultures: An Overview").

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Western Louisiana:

There have been no published studies on this region and its log architecture. And only one log building in the geographical area outlined in the above referenced 1949-1951 study has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places; so one does not have a body of research in Register nominations to consult.

This area of western Louisiana corresponds loosely to the so-called Neutral Ground established in 1806 between Spanish Texas and the newly American Louisiana. (The western boundary of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase was disputed.) Until the matter could be settled, officials agreed upon designating the land in question as neutral – belonging to neither Spain nor the United States. Also called the Neutral Strip or "No Man's Land," the area was a place of much lawlessness. The Sabine River was settled upon as the boundary by treaty in 1821.

What might be called permanent settlement did not begin until after the 1821 treaty. And even then, settlement was rather sparse in this fairly remote section of the state. (Apparently the Sabine was more of a boundary rather than a path of settlement.) Regrettably for this document, there is very little published

scholarly material on the post-Neutral Ground settlement of the area. (Scholars either concentrate on the region's early Neutral Ground history or its late nineteenth and early twentieth century lumber history.)

One suspects that a significant percentage of early settlers to the region came there from elsewhere in Louisiana. Two small pieces of information regarding sources of migration to western Louisiana (post Neutral Ground) indicate that this was the case for the parishes of Vernon and Sabine: (1) Steven D. Smith, in *A Good Home for A Poor Man: Vernon Parish and Fort Polk,* writes that "the first reliable census for the parish," 1880, indicates that "the overwhelming majority of the people in Vernon Parish were White Anglos who had migrated from northeastern Louisiana." Northeastern Louisiana is a fairly broad designation. It would include part of the north-central hill parishes where log construction was quite common. Also, Smith (an archaeologist by training) specifically labels Vernon Parish as part of the Upland South Culture. (2) The 1850 census for Sabine Parish reveals that roughly 40% of the inhabitants had come there from elsewhere in Louisiana.

Washington Parish:

Research is also sparse on the sources of migration to Washington Parish, located in the northeastern corner of a several parish region known as the Florida Parishes. Historian Samuel C. Hyde, Jr. has published a book on the region as a whole (*Pistols and Politics)*, but his conclusion on immigration patterns does not seem to apply to Washington Parish. He writes that while "large numbers of Scotish-Irish [sic] settlers called this area home, immigrants of English descent predominated within the Anglo-Celtic group. After the American Revolution, significant numbers from the Tidewater region of Virginia and the Carolinas, many of them Tories fleeing persecution, migrated to the Florida Parishes." The issue with this conclusion is that the Florida Parishes were far from monolithic – ranging from the plantation elite of the western side of the region (East and West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge parishes) to the piney woods yeoman farmers of Washington Parish, in the far eastern part of the region. Hyde's statement fits chronologically with the western side of the Florida Parishes, which was settled earlier than Washington Parish. According to historian E. Russ Williams, Jr. (*History of Washington Parish,1798-1992*), settlement of Washington Parish did not begin in earnest until after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. By 1820, the parish had a population of 1,957 free whites and 559 slaves.

Williams' book was the only published source the preparers could uncover on the history of Washington Parish. Essentially Williams identifies various migration streams depending upon which route they took to Washington Parish. Collectively speaking, settlers came from Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and nearby Mississippi. Williams identifies Georgia as the state "that so many early Washington Parish families claimed as former homes." Settlers who had roots in North Carolina, notes Williams, had moved westward through the Cumberland Gap into Tennessee, and from an area near Knoxville, came to Washington Parish.

As alluded to previously, simply knowing the states that were the sources of migration in and of itself does not enable one to draw conclusions regarding whether a given region's log buildings represent the

Upland South Culture or not. All of the states mentioned above have portions dominated by the Upland South Culture.

The only other relevant published source uncovered by the preparers on Washington Parish is an essay entitled "The Piney Woods – Tangipahoa, St. Helena and Washington Parishes" by historian Dr. Joy Jackson (*Folklife in the Florida Parishes,* 1988). She observed that the early settlers of these three parishes were "English speaking from the hill country of western Carolinas and Virginia. Some may have lived in Georgia for a while."

Kniffen, Wright, et. al. Fieldwork, 1949-1951:

Most fortunately, Louisiana's log buildings were documented in a landmark study conducted 1949-1951 by the Louisiana State University Department of Geography and Anthropology, under the Auspices of the Office of Naval Research. The study was directed by Dr. Fred B. Kniffen, arguably the father of the discipline of cultural geography in Louisiana. Field staff included three paid graduate students. Ultimately it resulted in a doctoral dissertation written in 1956 by Martin Wright, the lead graduate student ("Log Culture in Hill Louisiana").

In the summer of 1952, through a grant from the Ford Foundation, Wright conducted extensive fieldwork in Finland and Sweden. As a result, he was a staunch adherent of the Scandinavian theory of origin. He denounced the counterpart German theory as "in error."

The 1949-51 study is of great value for many reasons, not the least of which is its early date. It occurred at a time when much of the log construction cultural landscape was still recognizable. For instance, it occurred before the Interstate Highway System (1956) homogenized the land and did much to create a more mobilized society. Moreover, and significantly, it offered the opportunity to interview numerous older people who had been young adults in the late 19th century with direct, or close to direct, knowledge of their family's history, farmsteads, dwellings and migration patterns. The survey also occurred at a time when rural people still continued to live in the communities where they were born, and where their parents had been born, something much less common today.

The survey was very detailed and exhaustive. The fieldwork covered over 12,000 miles and recorded information on more than 45,000 farmsteads. In its first year, 1949, the field survey identified 80 log residences and produced a map showing the location of each. Further survey work, conducted in 1950, convinced the team that the 1949 coverage was "woefully inadequate," that the number 80 should probably be multiplied by at least three. The team further concluded that the reason for the initially inadequate coverage was that so many examples were in remote areas difficult to access, at least by car.

Wright, in his 1956 dissertation focusing on north-central Louisiana, identified some of the distinguishing aspects of log construction in that region:

1) As a family or a settlement matured, there were two phases of log house construction. In the earlier so-called "Pioneer Phase," a crude temporary cabin would be built. In the later so-called "Log Phase," a more finely crafted permanent home would be built.

2) Raisings could take up to three days.

3) By local custom the owner would often hold a dance in connection with the raising to "warm the house."

4) Finished Uplander cabins never had the bottom logs resting on the ground. They had sills resting on stone piers (often without mortar) or piers fashioned of short logs standing up. Thus they had the amenity of raised plank floors.

5) Chinking, filling gaps between the logs, could be accomplished using many different materials. In some sections of the South stones and mortar were used. In Hill Louisianan the preferred material was clay tempered with Spanish moss and wood chips.

6) Notching, cutting logs to fit together at the corners of a structure, could be done in many different ways depending upon the skill of the builders. In Hill Louisiana the most common notching was the saddle-notch – scooping out a round void in the bottom of a log to rest upon the round log beneath it. (The different types of notching are explained below.)

7) Logs were invariably notch cut from underneath (the bottom side of the log was scooped out). This made for better shedding of water during Louisiana's torrential rains and helped prevent corner rot.

8) Log residences had unusually deep eaves. In addition, the porch was usually an integral part of the building mass. This is in contrast to log houses in more northern climes which often lacked porches. (Photos 4 & 5)

9) Log outbuildings, especially barns, were found to be more numerous that log residences. Indeed, many were still in use.

<u>Louisiana Tech University Surveys (1981-1986):</u>

Between 1981 and 1986, comprehensive standing structure surveys were conducted of the north-central Louisiana hill parishes under the direction of Professor F. Lestar Martin of Louisiana Tech University. Funded by grants from the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, the survey project utilized Tech architecture students as primary investigators. The following parishes were surveyed: Lincoln, Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson, Union and Webster. At that time eighty-seven historic log houses remained in the region.

Survey teams began by examining 1953-vintage, 15 minute United States Geological Survey maps of the targeted areas to note concentrations of extant buildings. Teams also utilized Louisiana State Parish

Highway Maps. They then traveled to the targeted areas to: 1) note resources on the ground; 2) interview occupants and other locals; 3) photograph extant structures; and 4) so far as possible, provide the date of each structure. In addition to the standard comprehensive survey material, the surveys also produced a published booklet on each parish highlighting its most significant architectural resources.

The surveys encountered some interesting findings for log construction. For instance, the last known construction of a log dogtrot house was as late as 1915 (regrettably this structure is no longer extant). Some of the extant log structures had been built by the, then, present users. More general observations included: 1) Most log residences were located near roads (as opposed to the current practice of having a front yard set-back. 2) No barns of more than two cribs were found. (In some southern states log barns have been recorded with as many as four to eight cribs.)

Log Buildings on Louisiana Plantations:

As in other Southern states, log houses were a feature of Louisiana plantations. And they were residences of the poorer sort. Interviewed many decades after emancipation, former enslaved worker Bill Homer recalled quarters row and the plantation cabins near present-day Shreveport where he had grown up. "De cabins was built of logs and had dirt floors and a hole where a window should be and stone fireplace for de cookin' and de heat." (The foregoing is quoted in John Vlach's *Back of the Big House*, 1993.) And in his narrative *Twelve Years A Slave*, Solomon Northup described his "log mansion" in Avoyelles Parish near present-day Bunkie: "The cabin is constructed of logs, without floor or window. The latter is altogether unnecessary, the crevices between the logs admitting sufficient light. In stormy weather the rain drives through them, rendering it comfortless and extremely disagreeable."

According to architectural historian Barbara Bacot in *Louisiana Buildings: 1720-1940*, it was not uncommon for both slaves and masters to live in log dwellings as new land was settled. As the plantation became more established, "some planters built frame houses…but the slaves frequently remained in log cabins." And she notes: "Slave cabins were not the snug cabins of the idealized frontier." As far as established scholarship can determine, it would seem that log quarters houses in Louisiana were less common on French Creole plantations than those owned by Anglo-Americans from what was termed "the old United States."

In Louisiana, as in other southern states, logs structures occasionally took permanent form as the plantation "great house." A. A. Parker visited the Red River Region in 1834-35. He was astonished to discover a large and well established plantation whose owner occupied "a log house without a glass window in it." In this planter's view "the house was well enough; if the hole cut out for a window did not make it light enough, he opened the door." (The foregoing is from A. A. Parker, *Trip to the West and Texas*, Boston,1836, as quoted in Barbara SoRelle Bacot's "The Plantation," *Louisiana Buildings: 1720-1940.)*

The closest Louisiana has to a log plantation house is the Shadow House in Webster Parish (Photo 6), a sizable log dogtrot built c.1830 and enlarged and remodeled circa 1850 with frame construction. The log

walls remain uncovered on the interior. It was home to North Carolina native Calvin Leary, who in 1850 owned nearly 1,200 acres and 23 slaves.

ASSOCIATED SURVIVING PROPERTY TYPES

The Single Pen (Photos 7-10) : This is a house consisting of a single roughly square room with a door (and perhaps a window) on the front, set under a pitched roof with side gables. The fireplace chimney is set outside of the wall on the side elevation. Louisiana examples usually include a front gallery, often incorporated under the capacious pitched roof structure. The roof rafters are formed of skinned wooden poles. This is the smallest log house type and was once the most common.

The Double Pen (Photo 11): This is a two room house built along the same lines and with the same details as the single pen. Its two rooms are separated by a common interior wall. Its chimneys are set on the gabled side elevations on the outside of the walls. It, too, had a poorer enslavement counterpart with one family per room, as opposed to the yeoman farmer version in which a single family occupied both rooms.

The Saddlebag House: The so-called saddlebag house has two log rooms. It differs from the double pen in that there is a large central chimney that heats both rooms.

The Dogtrot (Photos 12-17): The dogtrot house, two log rooms separated by a central open passageway under a common gabled end roof, is easily the most distinctive building type associated with traditional American (and Louisiana) log construction. It has been much remarked upon, both by travelers during the historic period and by modern-day scholars. Famed novelist Herman Melville quipped that the separated two room plan reflected “some architect affiliated with a quarrelsome family.”

Despite its importance as a frontier prototype, the dogtrot has a clouded cultural history. Note cultural geographers Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups, “attempts to explain its origin and diffusion have produced mainly controversy” (*The American Backwoods Frontier*, 1989). One theory holds that the dogtrot was a clever frontier adaptation of the English Georgian central hall plan house. Louisiana cultural geographer Milton Newton was a strong subscriber to this theory of origin. Others favored the ancient Welsh and English “longhouse,” a Germanic prototype that originally housed people and livestock on opposite sides of an open corridor. By about 1600, it had become entirely a dwelling. Terry Jordan, arguably the scholar who has studied Upland South folk architecture the most intensely, subscribed to a Scandinavian theory of origin with roots in Sweden, Norway, and the Karelia Province in Old Russia. This last potential cultural hearth offers a tantalizing possible link between American log building and the highly developed log tradition of the Russian hinterland.

At bottom, many have noted the obvious fact of ease of construction. If one were living in a single room log house, and a second room was desired, grafting said room onto the existing structure, notching corner by corner, would be tedious and difficult at best. Far easier to build a second independent log structure and link it via a hallway.

The dogtrot is the largest of the log Upland South house types. When each of the rooms is quite large, it can assume something of the size of a plantation house – the frontiersman's "great house." In medium size examples, the dogtrot would represent respectable middling yeoman farmers. In smaller, less well built versions, it appeared on plantations as a dwelling for enslaved people, as previously described. As best this author can determine, after decades of fieldwork in Louisiana, none of the latter survive.

Farm and Plantation Outbuildings: Log outbuildings are noted here as a single property type because: 1) Relatively few survive across the state, some by chance, and so breaking them out by, corn crib, feeder coop, or animal stall would not produce a meaningful tally. 2) Individual outbuildings may have been used for different purposes as the farming operation grew and evolved. 3) Purely from the standpoint of log architecture, they are very similar because they are all related to the same structural system/structural unit – the log crib.

Essentially a crib is a four-sided enclosure formed of logs with at least one access opening and some type of roof. Generally the logs are left round (as skinned poles) and they are fairly crudely notched at the corners to connect the enclosure. There is generally no attempt to plug the gaps between the logs. A single crib may be used for storing ears of corn; it may house a smithy (and have a chimney hearth and bellows); or it may be used as an animal stall (and have a feeding trough). A log crib is almost always one story in height. An unusual two story single crib forms the core of a barn at Oakland Plantation, Natchitoches Parish. (See photos 18-21 for single cribs.)

Log barns could also consist of multiple cribs linked by a common roof system. A common model was a pair of cribs, separated by a wagon-drive, under a common gable end roof – dogtrot fashion (photo 22). According to Terry Jordan, Uplander barns could have as many as eight cribs. These were generally laid out in two rows with a long wagon drive between. None of these are known to exist in Louisiana. The largest, most complex log barn remaining in the state is the King Barn in Washington Parish, with its three cribs and two dogtrot passages (photo 23).

Farmsteads: During the historic period farmsteads would have contained multiple log structures: the farmhouse plus log crib outbuildings. These have almost completely disappeared. Indeed, one is quite fortunate to find a single surviving log building from a farmstead, let alone enough buildings to illustrate the farmstead complex. Notable exceptions are: (1) the Shadow House in Webster Parish, which retains, in addition to the main house, two log barns; (2) the Reed Farmstead log dependencies (late nineteenth century) in Tangipahoa Parish; and (3) the Miller Farmstead (Webster Parish), with three log dependencies which appear to be roughly contemporaneous with the property's circa 1840 milled lumber dogtrot. As is typical of Upland South settlement patterns, the layout of the Miller Farmstead is the reverse of formal. The log dependencies, located to the rear and side of the dogtrot, are disposed about in no particular pattern.

Construction Methods And Workmanship:

All log building consists of placing log on log. But beyond that there are different means of connecting the logs at the corners of a structure (known as notching), different ways of dressing the logs, and different approaches to plugging the inevitable gaps between the logs.

At the upper end of the workmanship spectrum would be a finely crafted log house with timbers hewn square and fitted neatly together at the corners with complex notching. In such a house gaps between the logs would be cleanly and smoothly filled with chinking material, creating a draft-proof, comfortable interior. At the lower end of the workmanship spectrum would be rough, un-peeled logs crudely notched with no attempt to plug the gaps. As a general rule, residences tended to be better made than outbuildings. But even they could show significant variations in workmanship.

Dressing: In all but the crudest log structures, the bark was removed. Skinned poles could be used fully round. For residences a popular alternative was to split the round logs down the middle and turn the resulting flat sides inward to form the interior wall surface. More refined still, as previously noted, was hewing the logs square. In even the finest hewing the adze marks were not planed off but remained as a testament to the construction method.

Notching Types (photos 24-27):

1. Saddle notch: In this, the crudest form of notching, a half round scoop was cut in the end of a log to allow it to rest on the round log beneath it.

2. "V" notch: Here a sharp angle was cut from the bottom of a log slit in half. This enabled it to fit on the half log beneath it. A modified "V" could also be used for squared off logs.

3. Square notch: The ends of the squared logs were cut down like a tab, to enable the logs to fit more closely together (and reduce the need for plugging).

4. Half dovetail and full dovetail notches: These were the more refined, providing for an even closer fit. Indeed, with finely hewed logs and well executed dovetail notches, a log structure could fit together almost like a piece of furniture. Moreover, the downward slant of the dovetail cut makes it easier for the notch joint to shed rain water, thus providing against rot. (No example of full dovetail notching is known to remain in Louisiana.)

Filling The Gaps: If the owner desired a wind and draft proof wall, the gaps would have to be filled. Chinking was one method -- i. e., filling the gaps with stones, sticks, mud, or clay. In Louisiana, Spanish moss was often used as a binding agent. An alternative was to nail narrow boards, or battens, along the inside surface of the logs. This, of course, required a flat interior wall.

Chimneys: Log residences required heat, both for cooking and a semblance of human comfort. The most common type of chimney was the so-called mud-and-stick chimney, consisting of a wood frame with wooden sticks all plied heavily with mud or clay. (The Bouey Moore Homestead in Washington Parish

retains the remnants of a mud-and-stick chimney.) Chimneys such as these had the unfortunate tendency to catch on fire. Many a rural family had the experience of waking in the night, and rushing out with hooks to pull the burning chimney away from the house. Some chimneys were constructed of locally found, poor-grade ironstone (photo 28). In later times chimneys were constructed of brick. Quite often a brick chimney is a later replacement for a mud-and-stick chimney.

Foundations: Log houses in Louisiana were usually a foot or two above grade, resting on piers formed of wooden blocks and/or ironstone (photo 29).

NATIONAL REGISTER STANDARDS

Background: An Endangered Species (Photo 30):

It is manifestly clear that historic log buildings have not tended to survive very well. Moreover, many of those extant today may not survive much longer. In short, this is an endangered species. And it is a problem of some long standing. In Dr. Wright's 1949-1951 survey and investigation, he noted that many of the local Uplander families, or descendants, were now inhabiting frame bungalow plan houses with pyramidal roofs. He further observed a climate of opinion adverse to continuing to live in a log house – that it was something of a sign of backwardness or, worse, a sign that a family lacked attainment. Finally, he noted that a number of log houses had been taken apart for the valuable lumber they contained.

In the ensuing years, as post-WWII suburbs spread, the archetypal brick veneer ranch house became an important symbol of attainment and prosperity in southern rural areas. To have built oneself a "brick" (meaning brick ranch house) significantly increased a family's standing in the community. By and large, older log dwellings were simply not wanted or valued.

As for log outbuildings, they are simply of no use in modern agriculture. Indeed, as far as modern mechanized petro-chemical agriculture is concerned, surviving log outbuildings are off-times simply "in the way."

The full extent of the loss of Louisiana's once numerous log structures will never be known, but it is considerable. And the loss continues unabated. For example, as part of this document, the authors consulted with F. Lestar Martin to identify and photograph extant log structures in Claiborne Parish, where historically they were quite numerous. The Tech survey for the region led by Martin (1980-1986) identified twelve log houses in the parish. Today only two of these could be located. Similarly, Martin revisited two important log structures in Bienville Parish (where he resides), only to find them now severely deteriorated and/or severely modified since the time of the survey.

Applicable National Register Criteria and Areas of Significance:

The following guidance is applicable to all of the property types noted above:

National Register Criterion C, with architecture as the area of significance, is an obvious choice when evaluating log buildings. Criterion C recognizes, in part, candidates that "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."

Given their very poor survival rate, it seems clear that any extant log structure in Louisiana that survives with sufficient integrity (see below) would be individually eligible for the Register under Criterion C at the state level. (A candidate could also be nominated at the local level as a rare survivor in its particular area.)

The concept of a rare surviving example of a once common and important architectural type (in this case, within Louisiana) has a long history of acceptance by the National Park Service. In fact, it has been used in almost every National Register listing in Louisiana for log buildings. Of course, one would also recommend that the preparer document that said candidate is also a good surviving example – i.e., that it possesses the character-defining features of the genre, as identified earlier in this document. For late examples, the preparer could also emphasize that said candidate represents an important aspect of log construction in Louisiana: its longevity (in the face of much easier methods of construction).

Another possibility in certain instances would be National Register Criterion A, defined as properties "that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history." In some cases, an early log building might be eligible under Criterion A, exploration/settlement area of significance, because it represents the earliest Euro-American settlements patterns of a given parish or region. This argument, the authors believe, should be used with caution for two reasons: (1) issues with documenting to National Register standards the date of construction for log buildings. (2) If a candidate's date can be documented, does said candidate represent the exploration or settlement of a given area? For example, does a 1860s log dogtrot represent the exploration or settlement of a parish first settled by Euro-Americans in the early 1800s?

The authors know of no log buildings remaining in the state that would be eligible under Criterion B (association with a significant person).

EVALUATING INTEGRITY

Evaluating integrity for National Register candidates, broadly speaking, is almost by definition subjective. There are no easy formulas such as percentage figures for original fabric versus replaced or altered. The following general guidance is given in National Register Bulletin 15 ("How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation").

Quoting from National Register guidelines: "Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but also must have integrity."

The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities "that, in various combinations, define integrity": location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A candidate does not have to possess all of the qualities to meet requirements for retaining integrity.

The applicability of these qualities for log buildings under Criterion C is noted below:

1. Location. According to NPS, this refers to the specific location of the candidate. (See setting below.)

2. Design: This would include their property type (single pen, double pen, etc) and details peculiar to log construction (notching, chinking, peeled pole roof rafters, etc.).

3. Setting: Setting refers to the overall character of the location (wooded, near a stream, etc.). This is particularly important for log buildings, for a rural, often remote setting is fundamental to the type.

4. Materials: Log buildings are by definition synonymous with their material (hence their survival is critical). Other materials (in addition to logs) include chinking (or wood battens), ironstone chimneys, and wooden block and/or ironstone foundations.

5. Workmanship: Related to design and materials, workmanship would include notching, the manner the logs were dressed, etc.

6. Feeling: Log buildings are by definition very evocative of the rugged frontier and the subsistence farmer. They conjure up images of rugged individualism, isolation in a howling wilderness, etc.

7. Association: Similar to feeling, log buildings are associated with the hardscrabble life on the frontier.

It could be argued that all of the National Register's aspects of integrity are important for log buildings nominated under Criterion C. (See comments above.) The possible exception is location, which is addressed in the Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties section below.

The integrity threshold for log buildings nominated under Criterion A (with exploration/settlement as the area of significance) would generally not be as high as those nominated under Criterion C. The litmus test provided in published National Register guidance is whether or not someone from the period of significance would recognize the building today.

The following are samples of log buildings that would retain sufficient integrity, alterations notwithstanding under Criterion C:

1. A log residence that over the years received various frame additions. If the original log portion has not been visually overwhelmed by the accretions, then the building is most likely still Register eligible.

2. A log building which during the historic period was covered in weatherboards. This was a quite common occurrence, sometimes not very long after the original construction. Perhaps a sawmill came to the community and/or the builder acquired additional money. Sometimes a log building morphed into a weatherboard-covered Greek Revival residence. In such cases the old log walls are generally only visible in the attic. According to NPS consultation in preparation of this document, these buildings would still be eligible as examples of log construction. In particular, the preparer should note that this was a common evolution.

A quite common alteration to log dogtrots is the enclosure of the dogtrot corridor. In many cases the enclosure is of some long standing. In such cases the house would still be Register eligible as a substantial example of a log residence. But is the house eligible as an example of the dogtrot house type, keeping in mind that the open corridor is the signature of a dogtrot? If the enclosure were glazed, the candidate would most likely still be eligible as a dogtrot (under Criterion C), for it still conveys the sense of an open dogtrot corridor. In a "grayer" area of eligibility would be a dogtrot house with the enclosure (non-glazed) recessed from the façade. Depending on the sensitivity of the enclosure, one could still argue that the candidate was still recognizable as a frontier dogtrot.

In terms of preservation prospects, the foregoing dogtrot discussion is quite relevant. A corridor-enclosed dogtrot, with a substantial newer frame rear "L" wing, is the only residential scenario that would normally be considered adequate for modern-day family life.

Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties:

The only National Register Criteria Consideration applicable for log buildings in Louisiana is Criteria Consideraton B: Moved Properties.

The related qualities of location and setting are particularly important in evaluating integrity for log buildings according to National Register guidance. These buildings were, by definition, located in rural, generally isolated places and settings. But they oftentimes in Louisiana have been moved as the only practicable avenue for preservation. An all-too-typical scenario is a log building abandoned for decades located in a remote setting. If not threatened with outright demolition, it will eventually succumb to demolition by neglect.

Two particularly important subheadings of National Register guidance for Criteria Consideration B are "setting and environment" and "artificially created groupings." For setting and location, "moved properties must still have an orientation, setting, and general environment comparable to those of the historic location and that are compatible with the property's significance." Simply put, the new setting must convey a rural character. And the scene should not be visually dominated by some other manmade feature. If it becomes

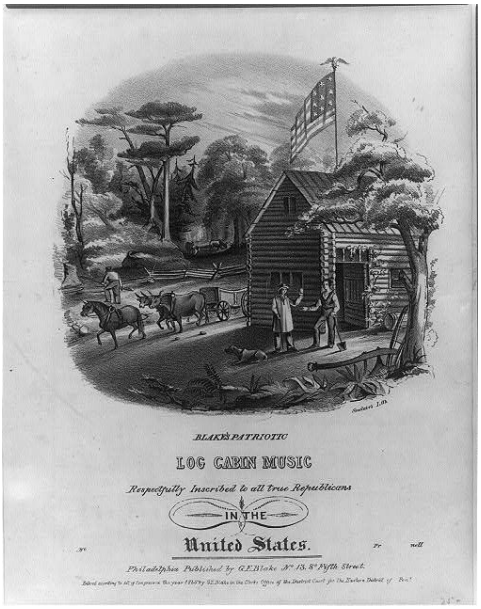
necessary to move the log structure outside the parish where it was built, the new parish in question must also have a heritage of log building (for the building to be Register-eligible). This will ensure that, in its new location, the structure still supports the regional log building heritage and identity of the various log building regions in the state. At one extreme of "not eligible" would be a log house moved from the north-central hill parishes to a parish in Acadiana settled by an entirely different culture group.

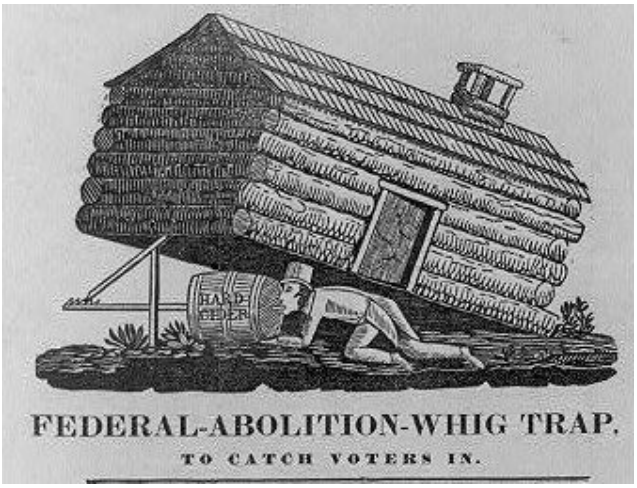
Particularly challenging is the National Register's general prohibition against "artificially created groupings" -- for they give a false sense of time and place (i.e., a museum village or other artificial complex of buildings that never existed together in one place). The Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation had occasion to test this principle in the 1990s when nominating particularly important log buildings relocated to a museum village setting. It was hoped that great significance would "trump" museum village setting. NPS rejected both nominations, even under appeal.

The only exception to the above, per NPS guidelines, is an artificially created grouping that has "achieved significance since the time of its assemblage." The example given is a grouping of moved historic buildings whose creation "marked the beginning of a major concern with past lifestyles." All such groupings in Louisiana are of relatively recent origin.

PHOTO GALLERY

Photo 1: An early log building in Lewes, Delaware, once part of New Sweden





Photos 2 & 3. Log cabin political campaign ephemera. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Photo 4: A typical Louisiana log house with a capacious front porch (Autrey House, Lincoln Parish, 1849).

Photo 5. Rocky Mount, a log house in Tennessee.

Photo 6: Main façade, Shadow House, Webster Parish, a plantation house with a quite large circa 1838 log dogtrot at the core.

Photo 7. A single pen log house (date unknown) relocated to Florien from elsewhere in Sabine Parish.

Photo 8. Façade construction detail – Florien single pen log house.

Photo 9. Jones single pen log cabin (date unknown) relocated to Mile Branch Settlement, Franklinton, from elsewhere in Washington Parish.

Photo 10. Single pen log house (date unknown) in the Arizona community, Claiborne Parish, restored in the 1970s.

Photo 11. Pigott double pen (1860s), relocated to Mile Branch Settlement from elsewhere in Washington Parish.

Photo 12. The Autrey Dogtrot, Dubach vicinity, Lincoln Parish, 1849, is an unusually important log building in Louisiana. It retains so much of its original appearance and remains in its original location.

Photo 13. The Autrey's house two rear log rooms are believed to be early additions.

Photo 14. Thrasher Dogtrot c.1856, relocated to Pioneer Heritage Center, LSU-Shreveport, from Bienville Parish.

Photo 15. Dogtrot opening, Thrasher Dogtrot.

Photo 16. Thrasher Dogtrot interior.

Photo 17. Alberry Wasson Dogtrot (c.1860), Claiborne Parish

Photo 18. This single crib log building at Oakland Plantation, Natchitoches Parish is very finely crafted for a dependency (original use unknown). The whitewashing is relatively recent.

Photo 19. Single crib dependency, Oakland Plantation, Natchitoches Parish.

Photo 20. A mid-nineteenth century barn at Oakland Plantation, Natchitoches Parish, with a two story log single crib at the core.

Photo 21. The unusual two story single crib of the Oakland barn.

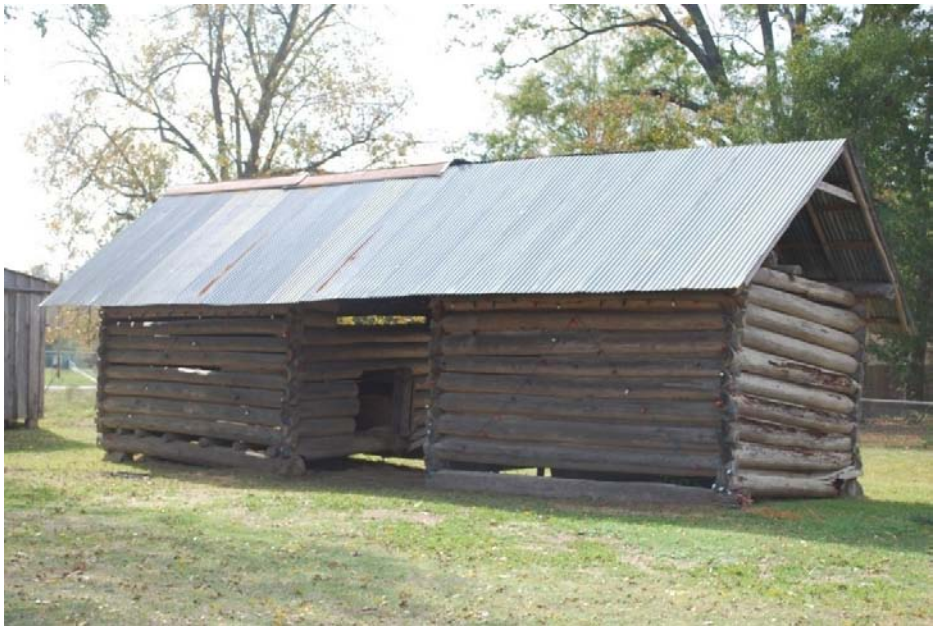


Photo 22. A double crib barn with a dogtrot style central passage, moved to Florien from elsewhere in Sabine Parish.

Photo 23. King Barn, with three cribs and two dogtrot style openings (relocated to Mile Branch Settlement from elsewhere in Washington Parish)

Photos 24 & 25. Saddle notching (left), with a U shape cut. V notch (right).

Photos 26 & 27. Square notch (left). Half dovetail notch (right).

Photo 28. Ironstone chimney, Autrey House, Dubach vicinity, Lincoln Parish.

Photo 29. Ironstone and wooden block pier.

Photo 30. An all-too-familiar scene for the relatively few log buildings that survive in Louisiana.

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