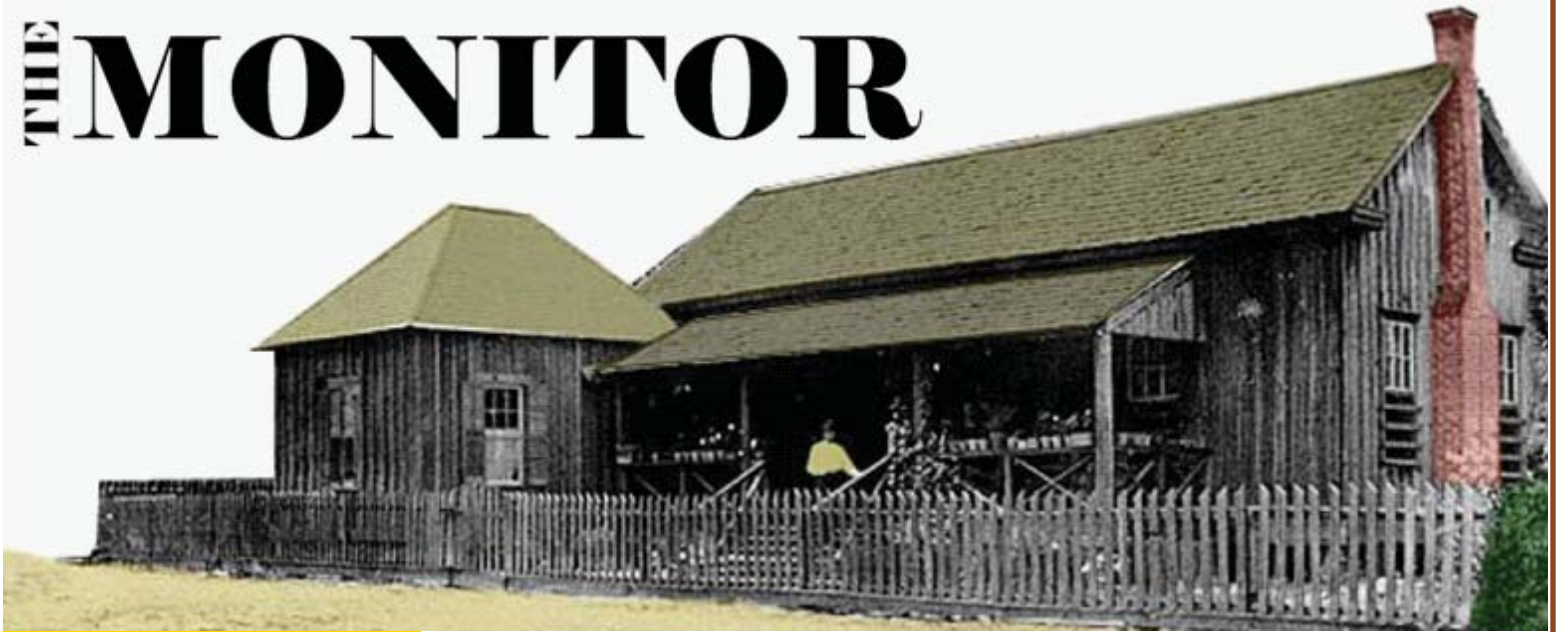


THE MONITOR



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From the Chairman

Submitted by Mark Reinberger

It's that time of year again: when I wander through Georgia's roasting countryside (or at least this quarter of it) investigating more or less decrepit buildings about which preservation students can write historic structures reports for our Building Materials Conservation class. "Building Materials Conservation" is a fancy term for the technology of old structures (different from how we build today). A "historic structures report" (HSR) discusses how the building was put together and changed over the years, what physical problems it has (sort of like a doctor's check-up), and what should be done about the problems. To qualify, a building must be historic (although we've done a few that were barely 50 years old), not too big (we once did a courthouse but that's about the limit), be on its original site, and have a certain amount of problems (if it's in too great a shape it's not as good as a learning tool). Over the past 18 years that we've been running the class we've studied over 100 buildings.

Looking back over buildings we've done in the past, it's apparent that there is an intimate relationship between the class and Vernacular Georgia. I have found many HSR subjects on VGA excursions. The first and still one of my favorites was Fort Hollingsworth or the White House (circa 1790s) in Banks County. I visited it on my first VGA excursion (1996, led by one of our founding members, Jorene Martin), and subsequently led a class project there that eventually resulted in a grant to restore the house's oldest log section. However, it has also gone the other way: sites studied for HSRs have become the subject of VGA excursions. A good example is Lincoln County, where we have done multiple HSRs and where VGA had an excursion in 2005. HSRs have also brought valuable folks into VGA: perhaps the best example is Abbie Parks who I met through an HSR project on the Cowan House in Acworth. Our



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most recent VGA Excursion to the North Georgia Mountains (see next article) uncovered the Richardson-Lumsden House, purported to be the oldest residence in White County. BMC students are finishing up documentation of this structure during the Fall 2010 semester.

The HSR projects help our students, Vernacular Georgia, and historic preservation efforts in the state. Seen through a wider lens, the relationship between Vernacular Georgia and the University of Georgia is only one of several strong connections between our organization and academic institutions in the state. Others come readily to mind: Savannah College of Art and Design; Kennesaw State University, West Georgia State, and Georgia State University (and others that my heat-addled brain is forgetting at the moment). These institutions are working constantly with non-profits such as Vernacular Georgia to preserve the state's heritage. Thanks for working with us, and if you know of worthy buildings to study, please let us know.

VGA Summer Excursion: North Georgia Mountains



Jarrett's Ruins



Liberty Lodge

Vernacular Georgia escaped the summer heat for its excursion held August 21, 2010 in the North Georgia Mountains. However, we do think this excursion was one for the books, as the wettest outing we've had. Rain dogged us for most of the day, but the damp was well worth it!

Many thanks to Chip Wright for opening all of these doors for us. Our day began at the Toccoa Southern Railroad Depot (1915) which has recently been rehabilitated and houses the Toccoa-Stephens Chamber of Commerce and the Currahee Military Museum. Our timing and schedule precluded a visit to the museum, but definitely was a place to return during our own wanderings. Before heading on our way, we made a driving tour of downtown Toccoa and had the opportunity to see the wonderful restoration work that is being done to remove historically inappropriate late 20th century facades that had been installed as part of a pedestrian mall (so common during that time). Kudos to the Toccoa Main Street Program and their Downtown Development Authority for their vision and efforts in this undertaking!

Our next step was one of those rare gems that make VGA excursions so unique. The die-hard preservationist came out in all of us as we visited Jarrett's Ruins. Built in the early 19th century, the two story brick residence had been the victim of a fire in the late 20th century. Once surrounded by formal gardens, it is now mostly overgrown by vegetation. However, our experience



Traveler's Rest



Hardman Farm Dairy Barn



Richardson-Lumsden House

came full circle when we were graciously invited into Liberty Lodge, which was built by Robert Jarrett (son of Devereaux Jarrett of Jarrett's ruins) c. 1850. Liberty Lodge mirrored Jarrett's Ruins – it was a two-story brick structure with eight rooms finished in the same Greek Revival architectural style as the one that had burned. It boasted walls that were solid brick (8-15 inches in width), with interior woodwork of hand-dressed heart pine, plaster walls, and interior door locks imported from England. It is still occupied by descendants of the Jarrett family with great care taken to preserve many of the original elements of the 1850s structure. A trip to the Jarrett family cemetery and a brief stop at Travelers Rest (a National Historic Landmark property of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites) completed our time in Stephens County.

We regrouped after lunch for a private tour of the Hardman Farm property in the Sautee-Nacoochee Valley Historic District in White County. Hardman Farm dates to the 1870s, but its association with Governor Lamartine Hardman gives it its identity. In the early 1900s, Hardman added farm buildings and a dairy operation at the property, including an enormous two-story dairy barn that has undergone an amazing structural stabilization and restoration by the Georgia DNR.

From the Hardman Farm property we made our way to the Richardson-Lumsden House, c.1830. It is a two-over-two frame structure with a central hall, ell porch, and kitchen with a basement floor adjacent to the main structure. It is a rambling structure that has had several additions over time, but the geometric patterning of the brick chimney was notable feature. Some other sites of interest during our time in White County included the Old Sautee Store, the Gainesville and Northwestern Railroad Depot, the Sautee-Nacoochee School and the Folk Pottery Museum. Many thanks to Chip Wright, Georgia DNR, and the property owners who graciously provided access to their family history for a most memorable excursion!

SAVE THE DATE! November 13, 2010

Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 13, 2010. Vernacular Georgia will host a day-long Excursion that features sites in Northwest Georgia, including *In the Valley*, the 56-acre homestead of Georgia author Corra Harris located just outside of Cartersville. More details coming soon!

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