

Wilson County's Antebellum Landscape

A Past Worth Preserving

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to create a photographic record of the extant buildings built prior to the American Civil War in Wilson County, Tennessee. Previously, a complete survey of Wilson County's historic buildings, or specifically, its antebellum buildings, did not exist. The need for this survey was evident as these buildings are being continually lost to neglect and to the expansion of Nashville's suburbs. By thoroughly and methodically scanning Wilson County's roads on Google Earth and referring to the National Register of Historic Places and local history books, I developed a list of every extant building (excluding outbuildings) that was likely to have been constructed before the Civil War, as far as was practical and possible. I then photographed each of these buildings—75 houses and 1 church—and researched and analyzed each one to write a brief paragraph to a page describing the building and, where possible, its history. These pictures and descriptions are intended to provide an accurate view of the remains of the antebellum architectural landscape in Wilson County. Some buildings in this survey warrant or require further research, and their pictures and descriptions here could be the basis for further research and for National Register nominations.

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Introduction

Wilson County is located in the rolling hills of Middle Tennessee, surrounded by Sumner County to the north, Trousdale County to the northeast, Smith and DeKalb counties to the east, Cannon County to the southeast, Rutherford County to the south, and Davidson County to the west, with the Cumberland River marking twenty-five miles of the northern county line. In 1799, the Tennessee General Assembly created Wilson County, a mere three years after the organization of the State of Tennessee. The new county was named after the Revolutionary War hero Major David Wilson (Goodspeed, Merritt, 1, 37).

Wilson County's population grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, with communities springing up across the county (Couch, 3). Lebanon was the county seat and the largest town. In the second half of the century, railroad development created two new towns on either side of Lebanon: Mt. Juliet to the west and Watertown to the east. Now, with Wilson County approaching 220 years of age, development pushing east from Nashville poses a threat to the county's once open, largely rural landscape. This study documents extant nineteenth century town homes and farmhouses before these irreplaceable pieces of the county's historic environment are lost.

Of Wilson County's historic buildings, the antebellum ones—those built prior to the American Civil War—are of particular interest and importance due to their age and their association with such important historical themes as settlement, the slave economy, and the vernacular architectural traditions they embodied. Several of these buildings in Wilson County are on the National Register of Historic Places, while others have been noted in the Historic Lebanon Driving Tour and history books written on Tennessee,

Middle Tennessee, Wilson County, and Lebanon. However, there is no up-to-date survey of Wilson County's historic buildings in general, or its antebellum ones in particular. As a result, most of Wilson County's antebellum buildings are undocumented.

The antebellum buildings of Wilson County are a far cry from the extravagant plantation homes found elsewhere in Middle Tennessee. Beyond their Greek temple-influenced porticos, these clapboard-sided, often log construction homes bear little resemblance to the massive brick mansions of Greek Revival perfection in other counties such as Davidson, Williamson, and Maury. There have already been plenty of books written on those grand antebellum homes of the South, but precious few written on antebellum homes of the middle class, such as those found throughout Wilson County. Although they line our town's oldest streets and dot our back roads and state highways, historians and historic preservationists have overlooked the average buildings. For years, I drove by my county's antebellum homes genuinely intrigued and impressed by their simple beauty, but totally unaware of their age and historical significance.

Eventually, I came across the information I had looked for on these familiar houses in local history books and National Register of Historic Places nomination forms. The more I learned, the more interested I became. I started to notice other homes similar to the few documented in books and the National Register and began looking for key features that indicated an antebellum home's age. I found that there were far more antebellum homes in my own county than I ever imagined and saw that there was no single document that contained a photographic or written record of all these homes. In early 2017, I started a survey of Wilson County's antebellum homes which grew to

include the additional surviving antebellum church building. The survey became the basis for this thesis project.

The purpose of this thesis project is to create a current record of Wilson County's surviving buildings constructed prior to the American Civil War by finding, identifying, photographing, and researching each one of these buildings as far as is possible and practical. This record could then be useful for the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Historical Commission, as Wilson County is currently left out of the commission's online GIS map entirely. Additionally, some of the information in the thesis project could be used as a basis for future National Register of Historic Places nominations. While this record is intended to help with the protection and preservation of these buildings, it is also intended to document what is here before it is lost or altered. More broadly, it is intended to also provide an accurate look at the average homes of the antebellum South.

To conduct this survey, I relied primarily on Google Earth for its aerial and street views of Wilson County, methodically scanning the county in sections, looking for tell-tale signs of antebellum construction. Any house with a simple roofline, one-room-deep main structure, and large chimney(s), typically protruding from the walls on the gable ends and suggesting the presence of a wood-burning fireplace, was considered a potential survey property. By spending many hours on Google Earth over the course of three years, I was able to put together a list of buildings (mostly homes) to investigate and possibly photograph. Some of the first buildings to make my antebellum buildings list were those that I found through the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic Lebanon Driving Tour, and *Tennessee's Historic Landscapes: A Traveler's Guide*, but the vast

majority that made the list and are included in this survey were found using the mapping technologies of Google Earth.

The Google Earth technology proved invaluable for locating antebellum buildings facing the road, thus in the public viewshed. One category of antebellum homes, however, rarely faced the road, and was found instead “back of the big house” (Vlach). That category is the dwellings of the enslaved. There were once hundreds of slave houses across the county. According to Michael Strutt’s survey, only a few still stand in Wilson County. The homes of the enslaved deserve a full survey in their own right.

Although the goal was to put together a complete list of Wilson County’s surviving antebellum buildings, it was inevitable that some would be left out. Many of these buildings are not on the National Register of Historic Places or included in Tennessee or Wilson County history books, and some are not visible from the road or on Google Earth. It was beyond the time and resource limitations of this project to find every single remaining antebellum building in the entirety of Wilson County, but it was feasible to come close. However, there are also some buildings, such as the Neddy Jacobs cabin on the Lebanon square or the Sam Houston law office in Fiddler’s Grove, that were intentionally excluded because they have been moved and rebuilt and contain little of their original building materials. Additionally, they (having been moved and rebuilt) are more historical monuments than pieces of the historic landscape, and they do not face the same threats as most other antebellum buildings in the county.

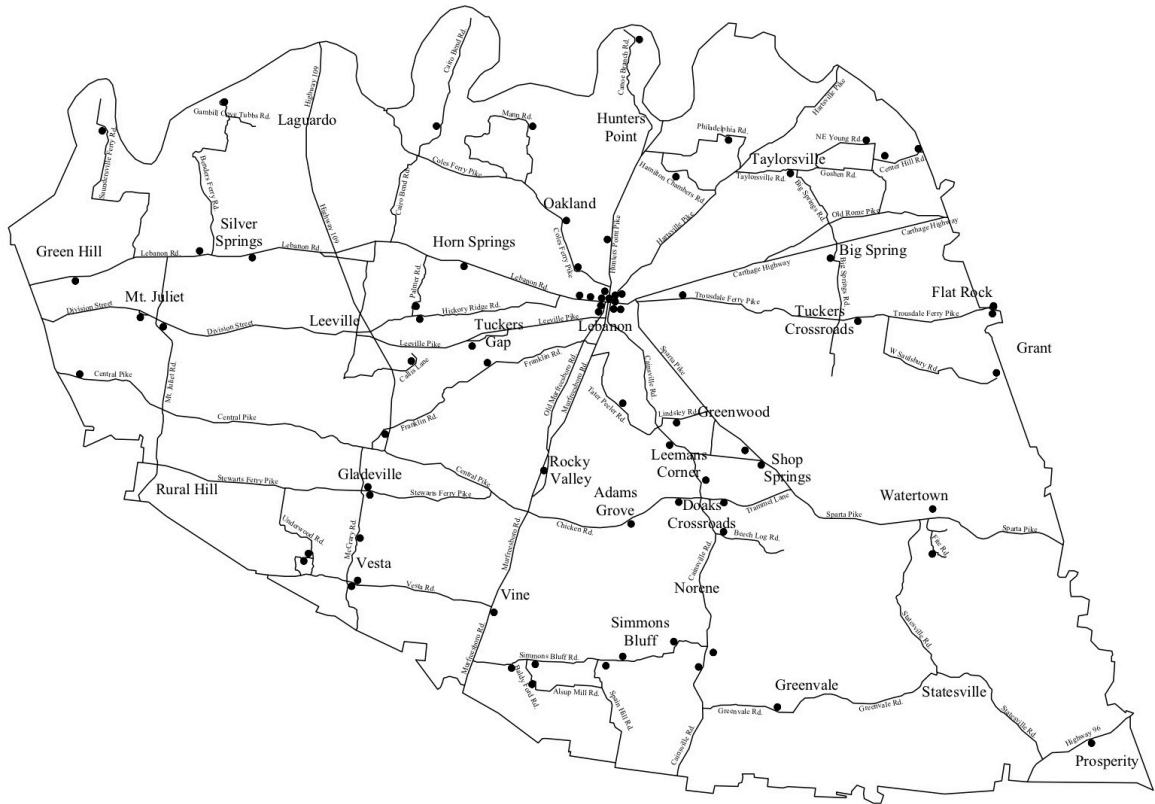
Many times throughout this survey, I would identify what appeared on Google Earth to be an antebellum home which met the survey’s requirements only to drive by later and find that the building was little more than a recreation of an antebellum home.

Typically, the house would have many of the signs of antebellum construction—log walls, a central hall, and limestone chimneys at the gable ends—but the original mud and stone chinking between the logs would be replaced with concrete, the windows and doors would be modern replacements, and the chimneys would be stone veneer over concrete blocks or sloppy stone masonry recreations lacking the refinement of antebellum masonry. At this point, the only antebellum pieces of the building would be the logs—often in poor shape—and possibly some reused cut limestone. This would suggest that the original dwelling was entirely rebuilt, likely moved, and very possibly mixed with pieces from other old buildings, thereby rendering it no longer a piece of the antebellum landscape in the view of this survey.

Those buildings that are remaining pieces of Wilson County's antebellum landscape, however small or simple they may be, have gained historical significance not just because they are old and constantly becoming fewer in number (there are still, after all, 75 of them in this survey). They are a physical link to the past, displaying evolution of construction methods, architectural styles, and standards of living from Tennessee's frontier days as the North Carolina territory to the times of college towns like Lebanon that were known for being centers of education which produced politicians, lawyers, and military men known and respected across the state and the nation. William Bowen Campbell, the man for whom Kentucky's Fort Campbell is named, James Chamberlain Jones, the first Tennessee-born governor of Tennessee, Tennessee Supreme Court Justice judge Nathan Green Sr. and his son, Cumberland Law School co-founder and dean Nathan Green Jr. are among antebellum Wilson County's—specifically Lebanon's—notable residents. Their homes are all still standing and included in this survey.

The homes of even the most prominent antebellum Wilson County residents, while not exactly modest, are hardly the imposing mansions one might expect to find in a “Gone with the Wind” Old South. They do not support any myth of universal grace and grandeur in the architecture of the antebellum South but paint a more accurate picture of life in the Old South. There are only a few brick buildings among Wilson County’s many remaining antebellum buildings. Many of these buildings are, in fact, log construction and no more than one or one-and-a-half stories. While a handful of the log homes have survived with only minor changes, most were added onto and updated in an effort to look less crude and more contemporary. By studying all of Wilson County’s antebellum buildings from the smallest to the largest and the oldest to the newest, we can see the ongoing changes of construction methods and styles. In some cases, such changes can be seen in just one house. For these reasons, Wilson County’s antebellum buildings are worth preserving individually, but also as part of a larger historic landscape.

Map of Wilson County



Towns, communities, and roads relevant to the survey are labeled

Survey buildings are marked with dots

The Federal Era: Log Buildings and Federal Vernacular, 1790-1840

This survey of Wilson County's antebellum buildings begins with those dated circa 1790, when carpenters and slaves built the earliest surviving buildings of this region of the state. In some of Middle Tennessee's finer homes, the influence of Federal architecture can be seen from about the 1780s through the 1830s at which point the Greek Revival style became more popular. Since Middle Tennessee was rarely at the head of the trend, some traces of Federal architecture can be seen in homes built as late as the 1840s and even 1850s. In the time that popularity shifted from one style to the next, the two were often blended together in buildings that are both Federal in their basic design and Greek Revival in their ornament. This blended style is especially true for Wilson County where prior to the Civil War, any detectable architectural style was almost always a vernacular interpretation of a popular style. Thus, old buildings from this era are difficult to categorize or organize. With those caveats in place, this chapter identifies what I found to be the county's oldest buildings from the frontier and Federal era.

John Cloyd House, 1791, c. 1820, c. 1840, 13836 Lebanon Road, Green Hill Community



John Cloyd and his enslaved laborers built this house as a one-room log cabin with a limestone chimney in what would become the Green Hill community in 1791, giving it the oldest recorded construction date of any extant building in Wilson County (Harper, 3). When Cloyd decided to expand his house c. 1800-1820, he and his enslaved laborers added a one-and-a-half-story I-house addition, also log construction, turning the earlier dwelling into a rear L-addition. The uneven vertical placement of the windows from the front to the sides and the short one-and-a-half-story height document the log construction beneath the clapboard siding. The siding may have been added later—the narrow boards suggest an 1840-1850 date. The brick chimneys are typical for their era, extending well past the outer edge of the gable end walls and sitting on large, stepped stone plinths. The Cloyd House embodies one of the few frontier-era one-room log homes left in Wilson

County. It is also an excellent example of the evolution of such a dwelling with its many additions and is perhaps the best-preserved home of its kind in the county.

Hall-and Parlor House, c. 1800, 145 Burgess Road, Gladeville Community



This house on Burgess Road near the Gladeville community is truly one of a kind for Wilson County. It is a one-and-a-half-story hall-and-parlor home with enormous limestone gable-end chimneys and two separate entrances—one for each room. The few and small openings for doors and windows, along with the use of limestone rather than brick for the chimneys and the short one-and-a-half-story height suggest that it is a log structure beneath the siding. It is very likely that the house was built in around 1800, as the hall-and-parlor plan seems to have fallen out of popularity in Middle Tennessee early in the 19th century.

Cloyd-McWorter-Sperry Fisher House, c. 1800, 380 East Main Street, Mt. Juliet



The Cloyd-McWorter-Sperry-Fisher House (also known as House of Cedar) was built in Mt. Juliet c. 1800. It is a two-story hall-and-parlor design, presumably built of cedar logs. A two-story, four-room ell with a central chimney was added at the rear, probably no later than the 1840s. Perhaps the most significant and certainly the most unique feature of the house is its two, original gable-end chimneys which sit on large stone plinths. Unfortunately, one of these chimneys has had the top two-thirds removed. However, the other remains intact displaying the double shoulders of a typical Federal-era Virginia chimney—the only example of its kind in Wilson County. Interestingly, the chimneys also feature Flemish bond brickwork which is more common in eighteenth century buildings. Most antebellum brick construction in Wilson County features brick laid in common bond. The front porch was likely added c. 1900 when the fluted square posts were popular in Wilson County.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, 3060 Philadelphia Road, near Hunters Point

Community



This one-and-a-half-story house is another hall-and-parlor structure likely built not long after the Cloyd-McWorter-Sperry-Fisher House—probably in the 1800s to 1820s. It has one large brick chimney that extends far outside the exterior wall and sits on a tall stone plinth. The age of the house and the small window openings on the second floor suggest that it may be log construction beneath its clapboard siding. Also of interest on the property is the log outbuilding which is seen in the left of the picture and is also likely antebellum and may have been a dwelling for enslaved laborers.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1840-1860, 2770 Tuckers Gap Road, Tuckers Gap Community



This home on Tuckers Gap Road is one of the few two-story hall-and-parlor houses in Wilson County. The hall-and-parlor design suggests construction c. 1800 to 1820, but the centrally located door on the upper floor indicates a central hall second floor plan above the hall-and-parlor first floor. It is possible that the house was altered with the creation of an upstairs central hall c. 1840 to 1860, or that the house began as a one-story hall-and-parlor dwelling with a central hall second floor added c. 1840 to 1860. If the second floor was a later addition, then the large brick chimneys with stone plinths must have also been constructed or altered c. 1840 to 1860. The two-part Greek Revival portico was likely added about this time, but it was modified later, c. 1940, with porch posts on concrete block bases that do not align with the upper level posts. A one-story portico was also added to left side of the house c. 1920. Although the house has been remodeled and

added onto over the years, its unique structure and its chimneys have survived intact and unobscured, and it is a good example of the evolution of an antebellum home.

I-House, c. 1800, c. 1820, c. 1840, 788 Hamilton Chambers Road, Hunters Point

Community



This two-story log I-house is unusual in that it is not a symmetrical, or even nearly symmetrical dwelling. The right pen is significantly wider than the left pen, and it has its own front door, which is centered between two windows. This indicates that it was probably built as a two-story hall-and-parlor c. 1800, then, by c. 1820, the house was expanded with a new two-story log addition connected by a gable roof extension. This created an open passage between the older dwelling and new addition, which was likely enclosed c. 1840 to 1860. A portico may have been added at this time, although it has since been altered with a concrete floor. The chimneys appear to be original and, though not identical (further evidence of construction in phases), are both brick and sit on stone plinths. The house seems to be the only dramatically asymmetrical I-house in Wilson

County and is one of the few two-story log houses, making it quite architecturally significant.

Prosperity House, c. 1800-1820, approx. 20735 Highway 96, Prosperity Community



This one-story central hall home located in the community of Prosperity has an unknown date of construction, but the enormous cut limestone chimneys suggest construction between 1800 and 1820. Given the home's age, it is almost certainly log construction and probably started as a dogtrot. The simple, but large Federal entry with double four-panel doors was likely added c. 1820 when the breezeway was enclosed, and the logs were covered with clapboard siding. This alteration likely occurred before the Greek Revival trend became virtually universal in Wilson County, so probably no later than the mid-1830s.

Center Hall House, c. 1800-1820, 1595 McCrary Road, Gladeville Community



This is another house that almost certainly started as a log dogtrot c. 1800 to 1820. As seen in other similar houses, the uneven vertical placement of windows from the front to the side of the main structure suggests log construction. The large stone chimneys also hint at log construction because they tell the home's approximate age, but also because they show that it was constructed using materials (limestone and logs) that were plentiful and inexpensive. The one-story gabled portico probably dates to the Colonial Revival era of the early twentieth century when later additions to the rear were built.

Center Hall House, c. 1800-1820, 4744 Cairo Bend Road



Although this house could easily be mistake for a Craftsman farmhouse with its newer shed-roof addition, front porch, and dormer, the two large, stone chimneys at either gable end suggest that it is, in fact, a c. 1800 to 1820 one-and-a-half-story log house. As with so many houses of its age, it probably started as a dogtrot, but had its breezeway enclosed and logs covered as soon as its owners were able to do so in order to convert it from a primitive frontier dwelling to a modern central-hall home. In the early twentieth century, owners took the historic house, extended the gable roof to create a full porch, added paired windows flanking the historic entrance, installed a central gabled dormer window, and extended the roof to the rear with the addition of electricity and a new kitchen.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, 3488 Sparta Pike, Shop Springs Community



A similar twentieth century alteration happened to this home in the Shop Springs community. Its large limestone and brick chimney suggests a construction date of c. 1800 to 1820. The main structure is too narrow for a central hall or breezeway and too wide to be a one-room cabin, and it has only one exterior chimney, so it is likely a log hall-and-parlor house hidden beneath the siding and additions, making it one of only a few of its kind left in Wilson County. The porch and rear addition underneath the extended rear gable roof dates to c. 1900 to 1920.

Adams Grove House, c. 1800-1820, near 3330 Chicken Road, Adams Grove Community



This house is partly hidden by trees and several additions, making its age difficult to estimate, but both visible chimneys appear to be antebellum. The chimney in the foreground of the above photo appears to be no newer than the 1840s based on similar examples and may be much older than that. The one-story structure to which that chimney is attached may be a one-room log cabin and the oldest part of the building. The one-and-a-half-story structure to its left was likely the first addition. Although its history is undocumented, this is among Wilson County's best examples of the evolution of an early Middle Tennessee home.

Log House, c. 1800-1820, 5479 Beech Log Road, near Doaks Crossroads Community



This house on Beech Log Road near the community of Norene appears to have been built as a one-and-a-half-story single-pen log home around 1800 to 1820. The one-story addition to its right, with a slightly smaller brick chimney, is likely also antebellum—perhaps constructed in the 1830s to 1840s. Although missing its original doors and windows, the house retains much of its architectural significance with its chimneys and original structure still intact.

Log House, c. 1800-1820, 1100 Simmons Bluff Road, Vine Community



This one-story, likely two-room cabin on Simmons Bluff Road, with its large limestone chimney, is another log house probably constructed c. 1800 to 1820. Its three-bay façade features a door to the far left and two windows to its right and board and batten siding. It is unique in that it either has not been added onto, or its additions have been stripped away. The lack of additions suggests that it may have been a house for enslaved laborers before 1860 or for tenant laborers in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, 5084 Hickory Ridge Road, Lebanon



This one-story home on Hickory Ridge Road has one large stone chimney on the right gable end, mostly hidden by the Saucer Magnolia in this picture. The chimney, the two front doors, and lack of a central entry suggest that this is a hall-and-parlor plan—probably of log construction. There may have been another chimney on the opposite end, but the one surviving chimney is now the only exterior evidence of the home’s likely c. 1800 to 1820 construction date. The front porch addition probably dates to c. 1900-1920.

Log House, 2355 Greenvale Road, c. 1800-1820, Greenvale Community



This relatively large one-story, single-pen log house near the Greenvale community is another one of the few c. 1800 to 1820 log homes in Wilson County to survive mostly unaltered. In its mostly uncovered state, the log notching is visible and appears to be half dovetail. Despite having its clapboard siding and part of its roof stripped away and its chinking missing, the house—its logs and chimney—seems to be in quite good condition.

Toll Station, c. 1800 to 1820, 10602 Trousdale Ferry Pike, Flat Rock Community



This one-story log house across from the William Washington Seay House on Trousdale Ferry Pike was probably constructed c. 1800 to 1820 based on its very large cut limestone chimney. The room to the far right to which the chimney is attached is likely the only original part of the structure. It appears to have been built as a one-story, single-pen log home with a two-room frame addition attached to its left side c. 1900, at which time the windows in the original structure were also replaced. According to the owners of the Seay House, this served as a toll station on Trousdale Ferry Pike—originally a toll road.

Log House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1870-1880, 2840 Franklin Road, near Tuckers Gap

Community



This house near Lebanon on Franklin Road started out as a one-and-a-half-story, two-room log structure c. 1800 to 1820, but appears to have been converted into a Folk Victorian gable front and wing house with the addition to the left, which features a second front entrance, c. 1870 to 1880. A front porch and a two-room ell with a central chimney were also added—likely at the same time. Further additions to the rear were made along with the addition of a concrete porch floor c. 1960. The vinyl siding and windows were added in the late 20th century. The original log pen, with its half-dovetail-notched logs and large brick chimney on a massive, stepped plinth remain intact. The house displays the evolution of an antebellum Middle Tennessee dwelling, and the property also features a log barn and another small log outbuilding.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, 5195 Central Pike, near Mt. Juliet



This one-and-a-half-story log I-house was probably constructed c. 1800 to 1820. On one gable end it has a large limestone chimney and on the other, it has a brick chimney. The stone chimney is almost certainly original, while the brick one, which appears to also be antebellum and composed of handmade bricks, may have replaced another original stone chimney. As with so many houses like it, the current porch was likely added c. 1900 to 1920.

Log Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, 8905 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Gladeville

Community



This one-and-a-half-story hall-and-parlor house in Gladeville is likely a log structure beneath the siding, which would point to a construction date c. 1800 to 1820. However, the chimneys, though stone, are small for that era and suggest a build date closer to the 1840s. It is possible that the current chimneys were built or reconstructed later than the rest of the building, or it may be a very late example of a log hall-and-parlor home. The ell may be a 19th century addition with further additions in the 20th century from c. 1920 to 1960. The Craftsman porch was likely added c. 1920, and the awning dates to c. 1960.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, 2930 Underwood Road, Gladeville Community



This house on Underwood Road near Gladeville is among the oldest two-story I-houses or dogtrots (it is unclear whether the central hall was originally enclosed or an open breezeway) in Wilson County. The massive stone and brick chimneys with stepped stone plinths suggest a construction date around 1800 to 1820, but possibly earlier. Given its age, it may be log or timber frame construction. The Folk Victorian double portico with its hipped roof and Victorian-style woodwork likely dates to the 1880s-1890s.

Central Hall House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1840, c. 1900, 223 North Cumberland Street,
Lebanon



This two-story house on North Cumberland Street in Lebanon is quite possibly the town's oldest surviving building. The one original and very large brick chimney on the right gable end suggests a construction date of c. 1800 to 1820. The central entrances on the first and second floors indicate the presence of a central hall. The dwelling may have started as a central hall house or as a hall-and-parlor house with a central hall created c. 1840, converting it to an I-house. Given its age, it is probably a log house beneath the siding. Clapboard siding was likely added with the rear ell addition and two-part Greek Revival portico c. 1840. The ell appears to have been expanded and the chimney on the left gable end constructed c. 1900. The concrete porch floor and column bases were likely added c. 1960, and vinyl siding was added in the late 20th century. Although it has been extensively altered, the house is still architecturally and historically significant for

Lebanon as one of its oldest—if not its very oldest—houses and with one of its original handmade brick chimneys still intact.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1800-1820, 60 Goshen Road, Taylorsville Community



This narrow two-story house on Goshen Road appears to be a very narrow hall-and-parlor structure, which is a rare form in Wilson County. Compared to other homes in the county, the brick chimney on a stone plinth suggests a build date around c. 1800 to 1820. The two-story Victorian porch with turned wood posts dates to c. 1880. Although the doors and windows have been replaced in the 20th century, the dwelling and its chimney remain intact and are architecturally significant.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, 760 Fite Road, Watertown



This two-story I-house near Watertown has interesting and very beautiful gable-end chimneys. Though somewhat difficult to see from the road, the stone masonry looks very neat and the chimneys' shoulders are unusually long and steep. The front entry appears to have sidelights and a transom, but without much decorative detail, suggesting a construction date before the Greek Revival era. This, along with the chimneys, places construction in the 1800 to 1820 range.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1920, 2492 Sparta Pike, Shop Springs Community



This two-story I-house near Watertown is very similar to the one on the previous page and affords a closer look at what appear to be nearly identical chimneys. Again, it was probably built c. 1800 to 1820. The house has been altered with a Colonial Revival porch and entry and paired windows c. 1920, but its chimneys are wonderfully intact, and the main structure is not obscured by newer additions.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, 6431 Simmons Bluff Road, Simmons Bluff Community



This two-story I-house on Simmons Bluff Road has two large, stone chimneys at the gable ends and lacks any Greek Revival details or evidence of such details that may have been removed. The Victorian two-part porch with turned wood posts was likely added c. 1880. The entry is just a single door topped with a transom rather than a large entry unit with sidelights. All of this suggests that it was built c. 1800 to 1820.

I-House, c. 1820, c. 1920, 4441 Simmons Bluff Road, Simmons Bluff Community



This two-story I-house on Simmons Bluff Road is located near the one on the previous page and is very similar to it in appearance. It was likely constructed c. 1820. This house, much like its neighbor, lacks any Greek Revival details. However, it does have a front entry with sidelights, which may have been added or altered along with the porch around c. 1920. This one also has a two-room, two-story ell, which may be original, and a small outbuilding with a limestone chimney that matches masonry of the two chimneys on the main house and may have served as a dwelling for enslaved laborers.

I-House, c. 1820, c. 1920, 4535 East Saulsbury Road, Near Grant Community



Like the homes on the previous two pages, this two-story I-house has two gable-end limestone chimneys and was likely built c. 1820. The portico was likely added c. 1920, and the newer windows on the first floor appear to be c. 1960 alterations.

I-house, c. 1820, 8924 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Gladeville Community



This one-and-a-half-story I-house in Gladeville has two gable-end chimneys built of a limestone and, from the shoulders up, brick. It was likely constructed c. 1820. If it were older, the chimneys would likely have been larger and less refined with more crudely cut limestone, unless the builder updated the chimneys later when the Victorian-styled porch was added c. 1880. It is possible that the current porch replaced an older one, but there is no extant evidence of one. The small windows on the second floor suggest that it may be a log structure beneath the clapboard siding.

Single-Pen Log House, c. 1800-1830, 307 North College Street, Lebanon



This small one-and-a-half-story home on North College Street in Lebanon is a truly unique dwelling in this survey. Given its large brick chimney, small and few window and door openings, and half-story second floor height, it is almost certainly log construction. That it is a log house located in town makes it rare, but the fact that it was originally a two-room (one per floor) log house makes it extremely rare. The survival rate for such structures is very low since such a house in town would usually be replaced by a larger and more modern house before it even had gained significant age. The age of this house is unknown, but it was probably built c. 1800 to 1830. The lack of any definable style makes houses like this harder to date, as does the fact that log construction was likely to be used later in smaller houses such as this one. Its porch and shed-roofed rear addition were added later. The house may have been moved to this city lot, clapboarded, and added onto at that time.

I-House, c. 1800-1830, c. 1910-1920, 3465 Canoe Branch Road, near Hunters Point

Community



This two-story I-house is a difficult one to estimate the age. The missing chimneys, c. 1910 to 1920 Craftsman style portico, and newer windows and front entry obscure its original identity, but its squat appearance with a very low second story suggests construction c. 1800 to 1830.

Central Hall House, c. 1820, c. 1840, c. 1860, 52 Trousdale Ferry Pike, Lebanon



This house near Lebanon on Trousdale Ferry Pike may have originally been a log dogtrot due to the large central passage typical of that form. It is possible that it was built as a Greek Revival home with its partially inset portico, or this may have been added later. In c. 1850 to 1860, due to the Victorian tracery in the central and side gables, the owners directed a thorough updating of the house, covering it with clapboard siding, adding the low Greek Revival-style portico, and installing the bracketed frieze below the eaves. The large brick chimneys protruding from the gable end walls were not likely built later than the 1840s.

Central Hall House, c. 1820, 7209 Franklin Road, Gladeville Community



This one-story central hall house—quite possibly a dogtrot originally—appears to have been built c. 1820, with the dating reflecting the gable end brick chimneys. It is most likely of log construction and has survived without much serious alteration. The doors and windows have been replaced, but the chimneys are intact and the dwelling itself is unmodified except for a few additions: a hipped front porch from c. 1880, a small shed-roofed addition from the 20th century, and a two-room ell that is connected at the rear on the right side and is likely antebellum itself.

I-House, c. 1820, 310 Cedar Street, Lebanon



This one-and-a-half-story I-house on Cedar Street in Lebanon appears to have been built around c. 1820, as evidenced by its chimneys. The entry has sidelights and a transom surrounding a wide single door, which was likely in the Greek Revival style before modern alterations were made. Such an entry may have been original, but, given the home's one-and-a-half-story height, it seems likely that the structure started as a log dwelling, and the entry was added later. If it is indeed a log house, it would be one of the few left in Lebanon. Whether it is log construction or not, the house has architectural significance in its two gable-end chimneys and its 6-over-6 windows, which may also be original. The porch is likely a 20th century addition, and the vinyl siding, false shutters, and rear addition visible in the photo all appear to be late 20th century additions.

Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1820, c. 1900-1920, 2883 Saundersville Ferry Road, near
Green Hill Community



This two-story late Federal house with brick gable end chimneys appears to be a hall-and-parlor plan because it lacks a central entry on the first floor and a central window on the second floor. The house's chimneys and its location high on a hill overlooking the Cumberland River/Old Hickory Lake suggest that it was built c. 1820. The front porch, front room adjacent to the porch, and rear wing were likely added c. 1900-1920.

I-House, c. 1820-1840, 1919 North Mt. Juliet Road, Mt. Juliet



This two-story I-house on Mt. Juliet Road was one of the oldest surviving houses in Mt. Juliet. The chimneys point to a construction date of c. 1820 to 1840. The front and side porticos and some of the rear additions were likely added c. 1920. Though in good condition and quite well preserved, the house was demolished in the spring or summer of 2020. This was a very unfortunate loss, as it was one of the few remaining antebellum homes in Mt. Juliet. It was still standing when this survey was started and when this picture was taken in the winter of 2020, therefore it is still included in the survey.

I-House, c. 1820-1840, 5600 Old Murfreesboro Road, Rocky Valley Community



The James and Nancy Clemmons home was likely built c. 1820 to 1840 in the Rocky Valley community. Nancy lived there since the early 1860s, but as Linda Granstaff points out in her book, *From the Wilson County Archives: Collection of Images*, it bears a strong resemblance to a number of Wilson County homes built in the 1840s, and could have easily been built years before Nancy lived there (313). With a narrow three-bay façade and no portico, it could in fact be even older. Its structure is typical for the era: a two-story I-house with a chimney at either gable end and a two-room, one-story addition with a central chimney forming a T-shaped footprint. The left side chimney is gone, but its outline remains visible, while the other two are still intact. The original windows were likely 6-over-6 double hung units. The porch was added or replaced c. 1960, and the windows and front door were also likely replaced at this time.

I-House, c. 1820, c. 1920-1960, 980 Baldy Ford Road, near Vine Community



This one-story I-house with large limestone chimneys is probably a log house that was built c. 1820. It may have started as a dogtrot with its breezeway enclosed later. The paired windows and front porch appear to have been added c. 1920, the concrete porch floor, brick column bases, and rear additions were likely added c. 1950-1960, and the vinyl siding, windows, and front door date to the late 20th to early 21st century.

I-House, c. 1820, 3401 McCrary Road, Vesta Community



This one-story I-house has what appears to be a two-room ell and three limestone chimneys—one located at each gable end. The chimneys indicate a construction date around c. 1820. The ell may have originally been a separate kitchen that was attached to the main house c. 1870 to 1880, at the time Though covered in vinyl siding, the house is well preserved and unmarred by any new additions that would obscure the original dwelling.

I-House, c. 1820-1830, 1565 Center Hill Road, near Taylorsville Community



This one-story I-house with a two-room ell appears to have been built c. 1820-1830 given that it displays certain refined features—the tall stone foundation and brick chimneys—not commonly seen in earlier homes, but still features large chimneys on stone plinths that extend far past the edges of the gable end walls. The eave returns on the end gables are interesting and uncommon in Wilson County. They suggest the house may have seen some Greek Revival updates c. 1850, but such updates are now all but gone. The nearly full-width front porch may have replaced a Greek Revival portico when it was added c. 1920-1940, and the four-over-four windows seen on the side of the house are also likely c. 1920-1940 replacements, as the front windows appear to be original 6-over-6 units.

Federal House, c. 1820, 2274 Mann Road, near Oakland Community



This house on Mann Road near the Cumberland River is the only one of its kind in Wilson County. As one of only two two-room-deep central hall dwellings in this survey, it was certainly one of the county's finest homes of the Federal era. The home's design, somewhat steeply pitched roof, and chimneys suggest a construction date of c. 1820. Although it was modified extensively in the 20th century with additional windows in the center passage, false shutters, and a wing added to the left side, the house retains much of its original chimneys and (possibly) original portico.

Pickett Chapel, 1827, 209 East Market Street, Lebanon



Pickett Chapel is one of the only remaining antebellum buildings in Wilson County that is not a house, and the only such building identified in the course of this survey. It is also one of the county's most historically significant buildings as Lebanon's first brick church and most likely the oldest surviving brick building in Lebanon and the surrounding county. Although there seems to be some uncertainty, the construction date is thought to be 1827, making it one year older than the Robert L. Caruthers House, the oldest brick house in Lebanon (Historic Structure Report). Pickett Chapel is architecturally significant for its brick construction (Flemish bond on all but the north wall), large ogee bricks which form the exterior cornice, and its floor which slopes gently toward the north wall. After the Civil War, the white congregation transferred the building to African American congregants. It has ever since served as a center of African American education, culture, and faith. The African American congregation gave the church a new Victorian-styled

belfry c. 1880. The congregation moved to a new building in the late 20th century and turned over the historic church building to a community non-profit, which has been supervising its conversion into a museum and cultural center. Pickett Chapel has been on the National Register since 1977 (Dalton, 1).

Brick Hall-and-Parlor House, c. 1830, c. 1880, 512 Green Street, Lebanon



This house on Green Street is certainly among Lebanon's oldest brick buildings. It appears to have started as a hall-and-parlor dwelling since it lacks a central entry and appears to be too narrow for a central hall. The chimney at the right gable end suggests a construction date c. 1830. Like the log house on Franklin Road, owners enlarged it into a gable front and wing house with a second front entrance c. 1880, at which time the front porch was also probably added. This dwelling may date to the 1820s along with Pickett Chapel (1827) and the Robert L. Caruthers (1828), but additional research is needed. Regardless of whether or not it is older, it has great architectural significance in Lebanon for its uniqueness and as one of only a handful of surviving antebellum brick buildings.

Stagecoach Inn, c. 1830, c. 1860, c. 1900-1920, 8858 Lebanon Road, Silver Springs

Community



The Stagecoach Inn, which is located in the old Silver Springs community, was built c. 1830. Its beautifully preserved chimneys show the evolution of chimney construction in Wilson County. These chimneys are narrower than earlier examples and do not extend as far past the gable end walls, but they still sit on stone plinths, though the ones here are quite small. The original appearance of the rest of the house is difficult to determine. The 4-over-4 windows probably date to the 19th century. The two-story porch posts date to c. 1900-1920 judging from the exposed rafter tails and eaves brackets. The two-story porch itself, though modernized, may date to c. 1860, during the popularity of the Greek Revival style.

I-House, c. 1830, 4135 Vesta Road, Vesta Community



This two-story log I-house dates to c. 1830 based on its log construction and large, brick gable end chimney. Interestingly, the façade is asymmetrical with one window on the front wall for each of the four rooms, except the second-floor room to the right of the central hall, which has two windows. Also on the right side of the house is a brick chimney inside the gable end wall, which was probably added c.1880—possibly in place of an original chimney. The two-part full Victorian-styled porch was also added c. 1880. The stone chimney to the right of the house appears to be from c. 1800 to 1820 and may be a remnant of a kitchen, a dwelling for enslaved laborers, or an earlier dwelling on the property.

I-House, c. 1830, c. 1880, 2174 Simmons Bluff Road, near Vine Community



This two-story I-house on Simmons Bluff Road has changed little in the last century, but its Folk Victorian updates—a front porch, paired windows, and shingled front gable—which are now quite old and architecturally significant themselves, radically changed its appearance c. 1880. However, the original chimneys remain and point to construction c. 1830.

I-House, c. 1830, c. 1920, 6851 Cainsville Road, near Doaks Crossroads Community



This simple, two-story, late Federal I-house on Cainsville Road is very similar to two other houses on the same road—all of which appear to have been built c. 1830. The resemblance is strong enough to suggest the possibility of a common builder. This particular house is probably the finest of the three with its grand double-door entry with sidelights and a transom. The entry, like the rest of the house appears to be quite well preserved. The only visible alterations are the front porch and rear wing, which probably date to c. 1920.

I-House, c. 1830, 12915 Cainsville Road, Norene Community



This is another one of the simple, two-story late Federal I-houses on Cainsville road likely built c. 1830. Like the one on the previous page, it has changed little over the years and is very well preserved, with only a shed-roofed rear addition from c. 1900-1920. The front porch may also have been added at this time, but closer inspection is needed. Interestingly, the house has high shoulders on the left gable end chimney and low shoulders on the right, which suggests that it has fireplaces on the first and second floors on the one side but only on the first floor on the other side. This is an unusual feature that is also found in the older stone chimneys on the 1817 Dement House which was built several miles down Cainsville road in Rutherford County.

I-House, c. 1830, 4960 Cainsville Road, Leemans Corner Community



This is another one of the similar, simple, two-story, later Federal I-houses likely built c. 1830 on Cainsville Road and the only one to feature an ell. That ell is two stories in height and features two rooms—one room and a hall on each floor. The chimneys and the floor plan both closely resemble those seen in the Dr. John Owen Campbell House (1841-43). However, owners significantly remodeled the house in the 20th century with a new porch, paired windows on the first floor, a small rectangular window in the center of the second floor, and a Ranch-style one-story rear addition and carport c. 1960. The house's original chimneys remain mostly intact.

William Washington Seay House, c. 1835, c. 1850, 10575 Trousdale Ferry Pike, Flat Rock Community



The William Washington Seay House on Trousdale Ferry Pike was built c. 1835 for Seay as an exact replica of a New Orleans plantation home which he admired (Akins & West, 1). It is a simple, vernacular Federal I-house with double galleries spanning the full width of the front and two-thirds of the rear. On the left side, it is two rooms deep under the main roofline and has two gable end chimneys of massive, neatly cut limestone. The chimney on the right gable end is brick covered with stucco. The front and rear walls of the house are also covered in stucco, but the gable end walls are clapboard sided. The house also features a two-room kitchen ell attached at the rear by a breezeway that has never been enclosed. At the left gable end, a Greek Revival portico was added c. 1850 (Akins & West, 1). Decorative brackets were added to the portico c. 1870, a bathroom

was added on the first floor of the back porch in 1962, and a laundry room was added on the second floor of the back porch in 1985 (Akins & West, 7-8). The presence of two chimneys on one gable end, an original breezeway that has remained unenclosed, the original front and rear double galleries, and the use of stucco are all uncommon for an antebellum home in Wilson County. The Seay House has great historical and architectural significance, and it has been on the National Register since 1995.

The Greek Revival Era, 1830-1860

For Wilson County, it appears that the first glimpses of the Greek Revival trend that swept the entire country came in the 1830s and 1840s. There were some early and especially grand examples in Lebanon, such as the Henry Reiff-designed Robert L. Caruthers House (1828, with c. 1840 Greek Revival updates), the Cumberland University building (1842), and the William Strickland-designed courthouse (1846-1848) on the square, that likely had a heavy influence on home construction throughout the county (Parks, 11-13, *Our History*). From the 1830s until about 1860, the Greek Revival style with its symmetry, wide central halls, prominent columns and pilasters, large glass-flanked entries, and use of Greek mouldings was wildly popular. Many of Wilson County's antebellum buildings, whether high style or vernacular examples (and almost all are the latter) fall into this category of style. By the 1850s, the influence of Victorian architecture began to appear, mixed with the Greek Revival style, but in Wilson County, Greek Revival remained unquestionably the most popular style right up to the end of the antebellum era.

Robert Looney Caruthers House, c. 1828, c. 1840, c. 1860, 241 West Main Street,
Lebanon



The Robert Looney Caruthers House was built for Caruthers, a prominent lawyer in Lebanon, in 1828 (Our History). Its architect is Henry Reiff, who is also responsible for the Hermitage's 1830s remodel and the construction of Tulip Grove, both of which are also located on the old Nashville Turnpike (Lebanon Road/Highway 70) west of Caruthers' house. This house has the distinction of being the oldest surviving brick house in Lebanon. Originally a three-bay Federal I-house, it was expanded with one-story brick wings at the left and right c. 1840 and given the full Greek Revival treatment. It is likely that the first and second floor front entries and large brick pilasters were added at this time. The paired first floor windows, decorative Victorian window crowns, and Victorian trim work in the center gable were likely added c. 1860. Though it has been remodeled multiple times in its life, the Caruthers House still retains many original or architecturally

significant features. The triglyph and dentil friezes, Doric columns, massive Victorian window crowns, and entries with tapered round columns are uncommon features among Wilson County's antebellum homes and are still present and intact. Since 1938, the dwelling has housed the Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home. A chapel was added to the rear of the house in 1948, and further renovations and additions were completed in 1998.

Camp Bell, c. 1835, c. 1855, c. 1920, 1315 Coles Ferry Pike, Lebanon



Camp Bell, the home of William Bowen Campbell, started out as a central-hall brick home c. 1835. This original dwelling makes up the center of the house, seen between the two side wings and behind the Greek Revival porch columns. Those wings were added c. 1855 along with the entry, which features double two-panel doors, pilasters, and red glass in the sidelights and transom, making it perhaps the finest Greek Revival entry in the county (Wright, 7). This form of I-house with wings can be found in limited numbers across Tennessee and is known as a “piano box” house. Although Camp Bell’s National Register nomination form refers to it as a “modest example of the Greek Revival style” due to its centered post entry the house is an excellent example of how Greek Revival elements could be added to a folk form. Its four-room width (plus a central hall) and two-room depth are exceptional for the county, as are the eared Greek Revival casings it features inside. Also notable are the square porch posts with lancet-shaped panels, which were likely added during the c. 1855 remodel and are virtually identical to those added to

the Warner Price Mumford Smith House during its own Greek Revival remodel in 1853. The three centered dormers, rear addition, and screened side porches were added during a c. 1920 remodel (Wright, 7). The house has been on the National Register since 1982.

I-House, c. 1835, c. 1850, 2094 Trammel Lane, Doaks Crossroads Community



This one-story Greek Revival I-house with a two-room ell on Trammel Lane was likely built in the 1830s, making it among the earliest vernacular Greek Revival homes in Wilson County. The lack of an original gable end chimney makes its age difficult to guess, but the large and simple entry with double four-panel doors and no pilasters shows the transition from the Federal to Greek Revival style and suggests a c. 1835 construction date. The Greek Revival portico retains what appear to be original mouldings and tapered posts or period-correct replacements, but the concrete floor and brick porch foundation walls suggest that it was partly reworked in the late 20th century, at which time the false shutters, vinyl siding, vinyl windows, and new chimney were likely added. The two-room ell with a central chimney may have also been a later addition, but its vernacular Greek Revival mantels indicate that it was constructed no later than the 1850s.

I-House, c. 1840, 4870 Chicken Road, Doaks Crossroads Community



This one-story Greek Revival I-house on Chicken Road features a double-door entry with tapered pilasters much like those seen on the Dr. John Owen Campbell House (1841-1843) suggesting that it too was built in the 1840s. It is also possible that the house is at least a couple decades older but remodeled in the 1840s because similar chimneys can be seen on other Wilson County houses as early as c. 1820. The builder's use of architecturally correct mouldings in the c. 1840 Greek Revival pediment and entry is a rarity for Wilson County, particularly among smaller homes such as this. A brick foundation wall veneer and a rear wing with a screened porch was added c. 1970.

I-House, c. 1840, approx. 385 Callis Lane, near Leeville Community



This one-story Greek Revival I-house, much like the one on Chicken Road, was likely built c. 1840. It is architecturally significant as one of the smallest I-houses with a Greek Revival portico in Wilson County. Its portico, Greek Revival entry, chimneys, and some of the windows appear to be original to c. 1840. The one-and-a-half-story structure at the rear appears to be a former kitchen and possible dwelling for enslaved laborers, which was attached to the main house in the 20th century.

Central Hall House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1840, c. 1900-1920, 3834 Simmons Bluff Road,
Simmons Bluff Community



This one-story Federal central hall house on Simmons Bluff Road appears to have been built c. 1800 to 1820 due to its limestone and brick chimneys and small 6-over-6 windows. The small window and door openings also suggest that it may be log construction. A two or three-room ell is attached at the rear of the house and may have been added c. 1840. The eared door and window casings appear to be later Greek Revival additions from c. 1840. The porch, with its round Colonial Revival columns, was probably added c. 1900-1920.

Dr. John Owen Campbell House, 1841-1843, 2344 Lebanon Road, Horn Springs

Community



The Dr. John Owen Campbell House (also known as the Campbell-Ruck House) is one of Wilson County's finest and best-preserved examples of a Greek Revival I-house. B. W. G. Winford built it from 1841 to 1843, and it has survived mostly unaltered (Dennison, 2). The dwelling consists of a two-story I-house with a two-story, two-room ell forming an L-shaped footprint. The original two-part classical portico is unusual for Wilson County for its use of columns rather than square posts. The 12-over-12 and 12-over-8 windows are also unusual; 6-over-6 windows are by far most common. The first and second-floor front entries with double doors flanked by round columns and sidelights also stand out as some of the finest in the county. Although the use of mouldings in the pediment and entries is limited, it is still beyond what is typically seen in the county's antebellum homes. The wing at the left of the house and the enclosed rear porch are 20th

century alterations. Though most of the surrounding property was subdivided and developed in the 1970s, the Campbell House remains a private residence.

Wilson Lawrence Waters House, c. 1850, 201 Waters Avenue, Watertown



The Wilson Lawrence Waters House was built by Waters, the founder of Watertown, c. 1850, sometime after he and his wife built a log cabin near this site in 1844 (Watertown, TN History). Although the front windows and entries appear to have been replaced in the early 1900s when the Greek Revival portico was updated in the popular Neoclassical/Colonial Revival style, the side entry and side and back windows appear to all be original. As one of the only antebellum homes in Wilson County with a two-room-deep main structure and the home of Watertown's founder, the house has great architectural and historical significance.

Warner Price Mumford Smith House, c. 1800-1820, 1853, 10277 Lebanon Road, Silver Springs Community



The Warner Price Mumford Smith House began as a rare full two-story dogtrot built in the Silver Springs community at an unknown date by an unknown builder. The property was part of a 640-acre tract granted to Private Charles Webb in 1790 by the state of North Carolina. It is possible that Webb built the dogtrot as early as the 1790s, but it may have been built at a later date by John Bell (Jack) Vivrett, from whom W. P. M. Smith purchased the house (Worrell, 8). Either way, it seems likely that it was not built later than about 1820 given the impressive size of the chimneys (which seem to be unmatched by any other Wilson County home) and the log dogtrot construction. When Smith purchased the dogtrot with 1-3/4 acres in 1853, he went to work transforming it from a relatively large but rough frontier dwelling to a vernacular Greek Revival showplace. During the 1853 remodel, Smith enclosed the breezeway with double-door entries,

covered the house in clapboard siding, and added a two-room ell connected by a side hall, a shed-roofed back porch, and a two-story portico (Worrell, 8). A bathroom was added in 1976 with narrow windows arranged to resemble a transom and sidelights, but this was never an entrance. In 1989, the side entrance to the hall connecting the ell to the main house was replaced with French doors (Worrell, 4-5). The portico is one of the most prominent features of the house and features lancet-shaped panels in its square columns, which are repeated in the pilasters that flank the front doors. The effect is an interesting one, as the portico is quite impressive, yet done without the use of any Greek mouldings. It is something of a wonder of folk architecture that gives the already significant house increased architectural importance.

I-House, c. 1800-1820, c. 1850, 3561 Tater Peeler Road, Lebanon



This two-story Greek Revival I-house near Lebanon on Tater Peeler Road bares a strong resemblance to the W. P. M. Smith House in Silver Springs. With its massive brick chimneys on tall stone plinths, it is likely also a c. 1800 to 1820 log house that was given a Greek Revival update around 1850 like the Smith House. With vinyl siding, vinyl windows, and a rear wing added in the 20th to 21st century, this house has been modified more since its antebellum updates than the Smith House and not preserved as well, but it is still architecturally significant as a two-story log house with a grand vernacular portico.

Side Hall and Wing, c. 1820, c. 1850, 520 Gambill Cove Tubbs Road, near Laguardo
Community



This house was probably built c. 1820 as a simple, two-story, Federal side hall dwelling. The vernacular Greek Revival portico was likely added c. 1850, and the one-story wing with a brick chimney inside the gable end wall may have been added at the same time. The ell appears to be a 20th century addition, and the fluted porch posts date to c. 1900 to 1920. This is one of Wilson County's few antebellum side hall homes, and it is remarkably well preserved and relatively unchanged.

Fite-Fessenden House, 1852, 236 West Main Street, Lebanon



The Fite-Fessenden House was built in Lebanon in 1852 and is among the few surviving antebellum brick homes in Wilson County. It displays elements of both the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The front entry is typical of the Greek Revival, but the projecting central section reflects its Italianate influence. Architectural historians often classify a house like this one as transitional, combining Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate elements. The floor plan is also interesting as a variation of the typical I-house plan with the central hall extended past the main roofline under a front-facing gable. A one-story addition and two-story addition were both added at the back of the house c. 1891 (Mayo, 2).

Judge Nathan Green Sr. House, c. 1850, c. 1900-1920, 607 West Main Street, Lebanon



The Judge Nathan Green Sr. House was built c. 1850 on West Main Street in Lebanon. Green was a Supreme Court justice and a professor of law at Cumberland University (Parks, 16). Besides its historical significance as Green's home, this two-story Greek Revival I-house has great architectural significance as the only house in this survey with original tripartite windows and one of the few with eave returns and a denticulated frieze. Its Greek Revival portico is unusual for the area as it is only one story with a flat roof, and the cross-gable form is more commonly found in the Shenandoah Valley and East Tennessee. The house also features an unusually neat cut limestone foundation and chimneys that, while large, do not extend far outside the gable end walls—a sign of things to come in postbellum architecture. Besides some small additions in the back and an early 1900s front entry, the house has changed little since Green built it, and is among the best preserved and most significant antebellum homes in Wilson County.

William Haskell Neal House, c. 1850, 6544 Trousdale Ferry Pike, Tuckers Crossroads
Community



The William Haskell Neal House, also known as Maple Dale, on Trousdale Ferry Pike near Tucker's Crossroads is a two-story Greek Revival I-house that was probably built c. 1850. Neal purchased it in 1905. He is in Wilson County's Agriculture Hall of Fame and is known for inventing Paymaster Corn, which greatly increased Tennessee's corn production (William Haskell Neal). As a result, the house is historically significant, but it is also architecturally significant in its own right. Its double-door Greek Revival entries with pilasters, sidelights, and transoms are some of the finest in the county. Those elements, along with the two-part Greek Revival portico and the chimneys, which are very similar to those on the Nathan Green Sr. House, make the property an outstanding example of the Greek Revival style in Wilson County.

I-House with Wings, c. 1850, 3215 Coles Ferry Pike, Oakland Community



This two-story Greek Revival I-house with two one-room wings and double galleries on Coles Ferry Pike in the Oakland Community is undoubtedly among Wilson County's finest antebellum homes. The wings may be later additions to the house, but are closely matched, and their age is likely close to that of the main house. The portico may be original, but it appears to have been reworked in the late 20th century when the vinyl siding was added. Though only one room deep, the house is very impressive even today with its nine bays across the front of the first floor and five on the second. Its single-door entries with pilasters, sidelights, and transoms are beautifully preserved as are most of the windows and all four gable end chimneys—two at one story in height and two at two stories—which look much like those on the Nathan Green Sr. and William H. Neal houses. These similarities suggest that it was built c. 1850. Despite some similarities, its

floor plan is entirely unique in the county, and it is among the county's most architecturally significant homes.

I-House, c. 1850, 3460 Big Springs Road, Big Spring Community



This two-story Greek Revival house on Big Springs Road near the Big Springs community has one of the finest Greek Revival porticos in Wilson County. It is a rarity with its large, paneled posts and denticulated, though somewhat undersized porch rack. The interior end chimneys are similar only to those seen on the Wilson Lawrence Waters House and suggest that it, like the Waters house, was built c. 1850. The rear wing may be a later addition or the first house to which the front wing was attached, but it been heavily altered with a stone veneer and a shed-roofed addition to its left. The paired windows and cast-iron fence are likely Victorian period additions c. 1880, and the second-floor balustrade in the portico is probably a 20th century addition.

I-House, c. 1840-1850, 13500 Cainsville Road, near Simmons Bluff Community



This two-story Greek Revival I-house with its relatively small, though still likely antebellum chimney, is dated c. 1840 largely due to the thin posts of the two-part portico. The portico received some Folk Victorian elements c. 1880, but the gable appears to be original, as do the first and second-floor entries. Overall, it is a good example of Greek Revival style added to what is otherwise a typical “middlin’ class” I-house.

I-House, c. 1850, c. 1920, 840 Lindsley Road, Greenwood Community



This two-story house on Lindsley Road appears to have been built c. 1850 based on the chimneys, the paired windows, and large transomed entrance. The windows and front porch have been replaced and updated c. 1920, but the original vernacular Greek Revival entries appear to remain behind the storm doors and windows. The chimneys may have been restored c. 1920, and the Victorian cast-iron fence was likely added c. 1880.

I-House, c. 1810, c. 1850-1860, 165 Northeast Young Road, near Taylorsville

Community



This two-story Greek Revival I-house on NE Young Road has been beautifully preserved with its antebellum one-room wing and rear ell and virtually no modern additions. The main house appears to have been built c. 1850 to 1860 in a Greek Revival manner with four dominating posts that are enlivened by hints of Victorian styling. The wing at the right side has a stone chimney and was likely an earlier log house, built c. 1810. With its original doors, windows, and chimneys all beautifully intact and the general lack of updates and additions, this is certainly among Wilson County's best preserved antebellum homes.

Side Hall and Wing, c. 1830, c. 1850-1860, 306 East Spring Street, Lebanon



This house on East Spring Street in Lebanon combines elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The main part of the house, a two-room-deep two-story side hall structure, was likely built in the 1850s and is notable for having one of the few hipped roofs among Wilson County's antebellum homes. The one-and-a-half-story wing to its right appears to be the original dwelling, which was likely constructed c. 1830 judging by its squat appearance. This earlier dwelling is asymmetrical, and its off-center front door suggests that it is a hall-and-parlor plan. The porch with paneled posts and a denticulated frieze was probably added with the two-story wing c. 1850, and a rear wing was added c. 1900-1920. The overall product of these combined parts is a unique dwelling for Wilson County.

Center Hall House, c. 1840, c. 1950, 2035 Palmer Road, near Leeville Community



This one-story center hall house on Palmer Road appears to have been built c. 1840. Its brick chimneys are small but still rest on stone plinths like many earlier examples, while the windows and front entry with its semi-elliptical transom and arched sidelights were very modern for the time. An ell was added c. 1900, and a shed-roofed rear addition and the current front porch were added c. 1950. Altogether, this is a classic central hall house of the first half of the 19th century.

James Chamberlain Jones House, c. 1840, 2070 Hunters Point Pike, Lebanon



The large brick home of James Chamberlain “Lean Jimmy” Jones is located a few miles north of Lebanon (West 307-308). Jones was the first Tennessee-born governor of the state and later a U.S. senator. His house, which consists of a two-story I-house main structure and two-story, four-room ell forming a T-shaped plan, is one of the largest surviving antebellum homes in the county. It is also one of the few surviving antebellum brick buildings in Wilson County outside of Lebanon. The exact construction date of the house seems to be unknown, but it was likely in the 1840s when Jones was governor. Its Italianate cornice and porch columns are very similar to those seen on the James R. DeBow house, the construction of which began in 1854 about 20 miles away in adjacent Trousdale County (Oliver, 2). Jones’s house, while similar, was probably built earlier.

I-House, c. 1850, c. 1900, 411 West Main Street, Lebanon



This two-story brick I-house with interior end chimneys on West Main Street in Lebanon bares a strong resemblance to the Fite-Fessenden House just down the street and also displays some similarities to the J. C. Jones House to the north of Lebanon. Like those two houses, it was probably built around 1850 with some of Italianate details, such as the prominent window hoods on the second floor, but is a typical Greek Revival form. The bracketed frieze and eave returns are very likely original, but the house has been extensively modified with new windows and a Neoclassical porch and entry installed c. 1900 to 1910.

I-House, c. 1850, 452 Center Hill Road, near Taylorsville Community



This two-story frame I-house near the house on the previous page also reflects late Greek Revival styling on the I-house form. It has what appears from the road to be a virtually identical portico, but unlike the other house, it has windows and a front entry transom with flattened arches that are common in the Italianate style, but rare in antebellum Middle Tennessee. It was likely constructed c. 1850. The house is very well maintained and has many contributing farm buildings.

I-House, c. 1850-1860, 8061 Murfreesboro Road, Vine Community



With its front and side porticos and traditional I-house-with-an-ell plan, this home on Murfreesboro Road in the Vine community combines the tried and true elements of the Greek Revival style with the arched windows, bracketed frieze, and more delicate porch columns typical of the modern (at the time) Italianate style. Given the transition of styles it displays, and the interior end chimneys, it was probably built in the 1850s. This house reflects Middle Tennesseans' reluctance to abandon the Greek Revival style for the newer Victorian styles in the mid-1800s. It has been well restored and is now used for events.

Side Hall and Wings, c. 1850-1860, 402 East Spring Street, Lebanon



This home on Lebanon's East Spring Street seems to be the only example of a tripartite plan in the Palladian manner in Wilson County. The plan, which in this case consists of two-room-deep two-story side hall structure with one-room wings, was most commonly seen in the Federal style and occasionally Greek Revival. This one appears to have been built in the 1850s mixing the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The low-pitched gable roofs with eave returns and the 6-over-6 windows are typical for the Greek Revival style, but the porches, which may be original or an addition from shortly after construction, are strictly Italianate with square paneled posts and decorative brackets. The right front porch was enclosed, and awnings and a rear shed-roofed addition were added in the 20th century.

William Syptert House, c. 1855, 214 West Gay Street, Lebanon



This brick gable-front and wing home on West Gay Street in Lebanon was supposedly built in 1831 by William Syptert, however it was most likely built c. 1855 as the Folk Victorian style and this type of floor plan were not seen in Middle Tennessee in the 1830s (William Syptert Station). Similar houses, such as the James R. Debow house in nearby Trousdale County, were built in the mid-1850s and later. It is possible that an earlier house on the property was built in 1831 and torn down or extensively altered and added to in order to construct the current house, which is an excellent example of Folk Victorian gable-front and wing architecture in Middle Tennessee.

Conclusion

From start to finish, this thesis project took nearly four years to complete, with the bulk of the work being done between the fall of 2019 and the fall of 2020. In that time, my expectations for the survey changed continually with unexpected challenges and findings. When I started this project in 2017, I expected to find about two dozen antebellum homes in Wilson County. In three years, that number tripled. By the time each building in the survey was photographed, and the non-qualifying buildings were removed, there were seventy-six in total—the seventy-five homes and one church that appear in this thesis project.

The unexpectedly large number of extant antebellum homes in Wilson County was a pleasant surprise which made the survey a rather diverse collection of dwellings, but it also presented a bigger challenge than expected. Finding these houses was a very time-consuming process, as was photographing them. With Wilson County being one of the larger counties in Middle Tennessee, and these antebellum buildings being spread from one end to the other, hundreds of miles of driving were required to take the photographs for the survey. To complete this roadside survey, I divided the county into manageable sections just as I had done when surveying with Google Earth, but I also had to plan according to the weather. Most photographs were taken in the winter or early spring, when deciduous trees were bare, and on overcast days to keep foliage, harsh sunlight, and shadows that would obscure the buildings to a minimum.

Unfortunately, there were several antebellum homes that I found through the use of Google Earth, but could not include in the survey because, even in the winter, taking a satisfactory photograph from the road was not possible. There are likely more antebellum

homes in Wilson County that are neither visible from the road or Google Earth's aerial view. In working on this survey, I realized that a truly complete survey of Wilson County's extant antebellum buildings would not be possible within the time limitations of a thesis project. For my thesis project's goals and expectations, the survey is complete. However, the thesis project is merely a starting point for a more complete survey and further research.

As I was working on the thesis project, the dominance of the central hall plan became very much apparent. Most of Wilson County's antebellum homes contain a central passage, whether it is an enclosed breezeway as seen in the Warner Price Mumford Smith House, a one-room-deep central hall as in numerous houses such as the Dr. John Owen Campbell House, or a two-room-deep central hall in the Wilson Lawrence Waters House. This basic design continued to be used after the Civil War but seems to have been especially popular during the antebellum era in Wilson County. Typically symmetrical in form, it is simple and relatively easy to build. Most of the examples in this survey have one main roof with gables at either side, no hips, and no additional gables except for later additions. One logical reason for the popularity of the central hall house is that it lends itself well to later additions, which are seen in various styles, sizes, and forms throughout the county. The W. P. M. Smith House features a two-room, one-story ell, while the Dr. John O. Campbell House has a two-room, two-story ell. The James C. Jones House has yet another ell variation with a four-room, two-story wing attached at the center of the rear wall, forming an upside-down T-shaped footprint.

At first, I expected almost every antebellum home in the county to be some variation of a central hall plan. However, I came to find more hall-and-parlor dwellings

than I expected. Nine of the homes in the survey appear to be traditional hall-and-parlors, four appear to be side hall plans with a narrow side passage, and many are, or contain, single-pen log dwellings. Still, the vast majority of the homes in this survey—fifty-four, in fact—appear to be central hall dwellings. The periods of greatest popularity for each of these forms of dwelling and the evolution of these forms are points of interest which present opportunities for further research. A research project could be easily devoted to the central hall dwellings alone due to their abundance and continued popularity after the Civil War. The adaptation of the central hall dwelling from one style to another can be seen to some extent in this survey with examples displaying Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate influences. The central hall house plan could be better represented in a survey that goes beyond the antebellum era to include late nineteenth and early twentieth century examples.

As I worked on this survey, other opportunities for further research also presented themselves. Initially, I intended to research each building in this survey further by consulting Lebanon and Wilson County historians and searching county property records for each building. Records of land sales could be very helpful in determining construction and addition or alteration dates since houses are often built, added onto, or remodeled shortly after transfer of property ownership. Additional information, such as the names of owners and the size of the property and number of enslaved laborers they owned would be valuable in understanding what the size, appearance, and age of a house indicates about its owners. Knowing the state or country of origin for the builder or the builder's ancestors could also allow a better understanding of each house's appearance. Unfortunately, I determined that finding such information for seventy-five houses would

not be feasible for this thesis project, even without the added difficulty of conducting research during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another opportunity for further research that I found in conducting this survey is with the supporting buildings for the houses in the survey. These include kitchens, barns, dwellings for enslaved laborers, and other buildings. Early on, I decided that to keep the project manageable I would not include these in the survey beyond mentioning them where they show up in the background of the survey's photographs. It was often difficult to estimate the age of the houses in this survey because of their simple, vernacular designs, and this is true even more so for their outbuildings. An entire survey could be dedicated to these buildings, or even the slaves' quarters alone. To properly give these buildings the attention they deserve in the context of this thesis project was simply not possible.

The next steps for this survey are to contact each building's owner(s) for permission to examine and photograph the buildings at a closer distance, particularly for houses that are not easily viewed from the roadside. At the same time, supporting structures of antebellum construction on these properties could also be photographed, as these are even more often hidden from roadside view. Interviews should be conducted with each building owner as far as possible to obtain information such as construction and alteration dates and the names of owners at these dates, if known. County property record and family genealogy research would also be required for further information. Between contacting owners and searching county records, a far more exhaustive survey could be completed.

The supporting structures—detached kitchens, slave quarters, and barns, etc.—could be included in an expanded survey, or they may be the basis for a separate survey. Likewise, Wilson County’s many historic buildings constructed after the Civil War could also form a larger or separate survey, as these too have not been thoroughly documented. The transition of popular styles and floorplans that occurred around the time of the Civil War can be seen in Wilson County’s homes built just before and just after the Civil War. Studying these changes and relating them to the changes in the South’s economy during Reconstruction could afford a better understanding of the evolution of the region’s architecture, which should be given attention in an expanded survey.

Besides being a starting point for further survey work, this thesis project is intended to be the basis for future National Register nominations. The survey in its current form identifies most of Wilson County’s extant antebellum homes and lists their exact or rough addresses. In this way, it will be a useful source for the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation and others who may wish to nominate properties for the National Register. Further research would be required to nominate any of the houses not already on the Register, but many of these houses retain enough original or historically significant features to be eligible for nomination. Again, any of these buildings’ supporting structures should also be studied more in depth, as these are typically mentioned and photographed in National Register nominations when they are present.

While working on this project, certain houses stood out to me as being particularly interesting or significant. The c. 1800 hall-and-parlor house at 145 Burgess Road is one which I would like to study further. As a one-and-a-half-story hall-and-parlor dwelling, most likely of log construction, with limestone chimneys, it is a rare example of

this form in Middle Tennessee. The presence of vinyl siding on this house may render it currently ineligible for the National Register, but since it has few other modern alterations, I believe it is deserving of further research.

The c. 1800 to 1820 central hall house at approximately 20735 Highway 96 in the Prosperity Community is another which I would like to study further. As a one-story central hall dwelling, most likely of log construction, with limestone chimneys and an uncommon five-bay façade with a Federal double-door entry, it is also a rare example of its form for Middle Tennessee. With only a c. 1880 front porch and a shed-roofed rear addition added, it has changed little in the last two centuries and, I believe, is worthy of additional research and National Register nomination.

The c. 1830 Stagecoach Inn at 8858 Lebanon Road in the Silver Springs community, the c. 1830 homes at 6851 and 12915 Cainsville Road are all excellent examples of two-story Federal vernacular I-houses which deserve further research and are likely eligible for the National Register. The former is a good case study for the evolution of an early Middle Tennessee I-house with additions and alterations that have gained historical significance. The latter two display no obvious alterations besides one-story porch and rear wing or lean-to additions. The two-story c. 1850 Greek Revival I-house with wings at 3215 Coles Ferry Pike in the Oakland Community is also deserving of further research as the only antebellum house in the county with a nine-bay first floor façade, though its vinyl siding and reworked front porch may prevent it from being National Register eligible.

Of the houses which have historical markers but are not on the National Register, the c. 1840 James Chamberlain Jones house at 2070 Hunters Point Pike north of Lebanon

and the c. 1850 Judge Nathan Green Sr. House at 607 West Main Street in Lebanon are worthy of further research. Both are likely eligible for the National Register and would be worthwhile additions as rare I-house variations for Wilson County, with the Jones House being one of the few with extensive use of Italianate/Victorian elements and the Green House being the only one with tripartite windows or a central gable that does not extend to cover its portico.

Other houses are certainly deserving of further research and possibly National Register nominations, but the above houses are several which especially caught my attention. It is my hope that this thesis project will bring attention to Wilson County's often overlooked antebellum homes, help in conducting further research and making additional National Register nominations, and contribute to historic preservation efforts in the county. Although the thesis project is complete, the survey is not over, and it is my intention to continue working on and adding to what I have so far. As a survey of Wilson County's antebellum buildings completed when one did not yet exist, I consider this thesis project a success, but I hope that beyond providing a record of these remaining buildings the project helps to ensure their preservation.

Glossary

Antebellum: Before the American Civil War—used loosely here to refer to the 1790-1860 time period

Bay: A window or door opening

Board and batten: Vertical siding consisting of alternating wide boards and narrow batten strips which cover the crack between two boards

Chimney plinth: A stone footing which typically extends above ground level and beyond the edges of the chimney which is built upon it

Clapboard siding: Horizontal siding consisting of beveled, overlapping boards

Colonial Revival (1880-1955): A style of architecture which drew influence from Colonial American styles such as Georgian and Adam and is characterized by pedimented entries, dormer windows, and single-story porches with small tapered columns or fluted posts

Column: An upright, cylindrical pillar which typically supports a porch floor or porch roof

Craftsman (1900-1930): A style of architecture which is characterized by squat appearance, low-pitched gable or hipped roofs with exposed rafter tails, grouped or paired windows, and tapered and/or paired porch posts

Denticulated frieze: Small, rectangular blocks placed in the trim work just below the eaves

Doric columns: Fluted, tapered columns which are simple and heavy in appearance and belong to the Doric order of Greek architecture

Ell: An addition attached to the rear of a house at a right angle, which is typically longer than it is wide and often flush with one side of the main structure to form an “L” shape

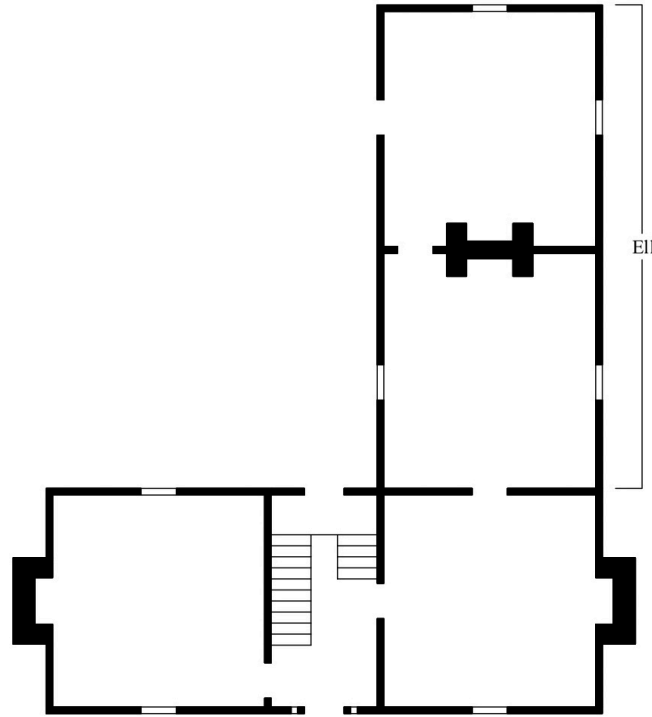


Figure 1: ell attached to an I-house

Façade: The dominant face of a building, which is typically the front or street-facing side

Federal (1780-1840): A style of American architecture common throughout the nation early in its history and inspired by Greek and Roman architecture. Examples may be symmetrical or asymmetrical and, in Wilson County, usually feature massive limestone or handmade brick chimneys, small six-over-six windows, louvered shutters, a simple entrance with sidelights and a transom, and sometimes a front porch or portico.

Folk Victorian (1850-1900): A vernacular style of architecture and term typically referring to relatively plain, simple buildings with limited use of simplified Victorian elements

Frame construction: A method of building which makes use of relatively light, small vertical members (studs) between small horizontal members (plates) and strengthened with larger horizontal members (joists) which support floors and roofs. These structural members may be sawmill lumber or hand-hewed timbers.

Gable: A triangular section of wall that encloses the end of a roof with intersecting pitches

Gable roof: A roof with two main pitches which intersect to form a ridge

Greek Revival (1830-1860): A style of architecture influenced heavily by ancient Greek architecture and characterized by symmetry, low-pitched gable or hipped roofs, prominent columns, posts, and/or pilasters, porches or porticos typically covered by a secondary gable roof, and grand entries with pilasters, Greek mouldings, sidelights, and transoms

Hall-and-parlor: A form of dwelling consisting of two main rooms per floor (a hall and a parlor) and often featuring a front entrance for each of these two rooms

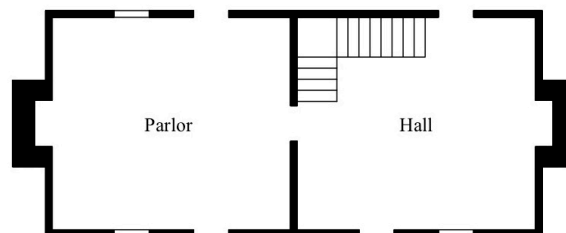


Figure 2: typical hall-and-parlor first floor plan

I-house: A form of dwelling which consists of two main rooms per floor separated by a central passage which typically serves as an entry hall and, in multi-story examples, a stair hall

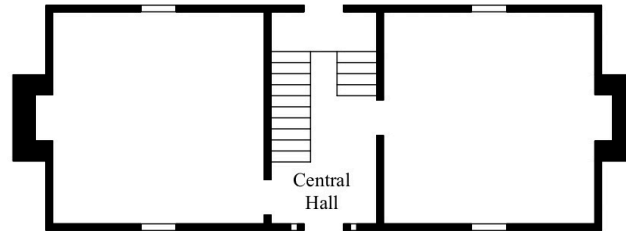


Figure 3: typical I-house first floor plan

Italianate (1840-1885): A segment of Victorian architectural style characterized by low-pitched gable or hipped roofs, decorative brackets in the eaves, chamfered porch posts, and tall, narrow doors and windows with full or flattened arches

Lean-to addition: An addition to a building that shares a wall with the main structure and is covered by a shed roof

Log construction: A method of building in which walls are formed by hand-hewed logs laid horizontally and notched at the corners where they intersect in order to hold the walls together. Gaps between logs are typically filled with mud and/or stone chinking.

Moulding: A piece of decorative trim that has been cut or planed to have an ornamental profile

Neoclassical (1890-1950): A style of architecture closely tied to the Colonial Revival and inspired by Federal and Greek Revival architecture and the Greek and Roman architecture which influenced those styles. It is characterized by prominent

porticos or porches with large, often fluted posts or columns of the Ionic or Corinthian order, pedimented entries, and denticulated friezes.

Outbuilding: A separate, secondary building on the same property as the main building and typically used to cook, store crops, and house livestock or enslaved laborers in the antebellum South

Pen: A room formed by four walls of log construction

Piano box: A form of dwelling consisting of an I-house with two-room-deep, one-room-wide wings at either side, typically with a porch between the wings in the front and rear and a single, side-gabled roof

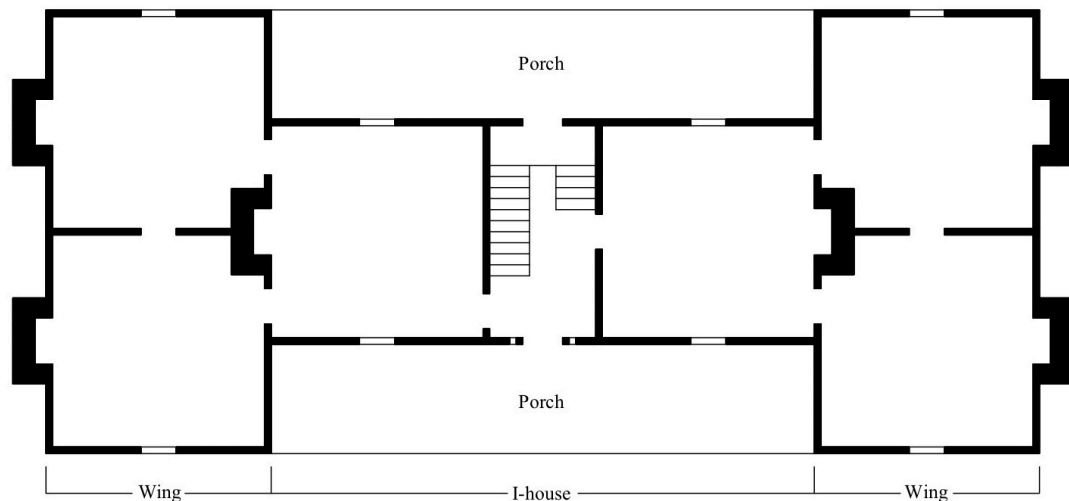


Figure 4: typical piano box first floor plan

Pilaster: A decorative, rectangular post or column which projects from a wall and visually supports an architectural element such as a porch roof

Portico (often used interchangeably with “porch”): A structure with a roof supported by posts or columns that typically covers a main entrance and may be bound on one to three sides by the walls of the building to which it is attached

Post: An upright, often square pillar which typically supports a porch floor or porch roof

Rafter: A beam which extends from the peak of a roof to the eaves

Shed roof: A roof with a single pitch

Side hall: A variation of the hall-and-parlor plan in which the hall is too narrow to be considered a room; similar in appearance to a central hall house with the room(s) one side of the hall removed

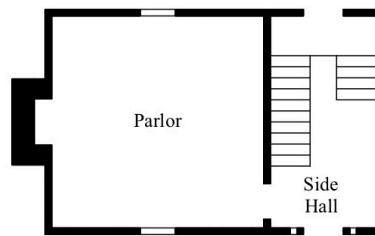


Figure 5: typical side hall first floor plan

Sidelight: A narrow window next to a door, typically part of a main entrance with one sidelight at either side of the door or pair of doors

Supporting structure: An outbuilding which, in conjunction with the main building, contributes to the overall appearance of the property by adding historical context and a sense of place

Transom: A window mounted above a door and/or sidelight(s), often hinged for ventilation

Vernacular: Architecture which is characterized by functionality, influenced heavily by local building traditions, techniques, and materials, and often inspired by popular styles but executed without the supervision of a trained architect

Victorian (1840-1900): A style of architecture which may be further divided into the Victorian styles such as Italianate, Second Empire, Stick Style, Shingle Style, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Queen Anne. It is generally characterized by extensive ornamentation, spindlework, asymmetry, complicated rooflines, porches, and towers and often associated with the Queen Anne style specifically.

Wing: A part of a building added to the main structure. In this survey, the term is often used to refer to additions made to the sides of a house.

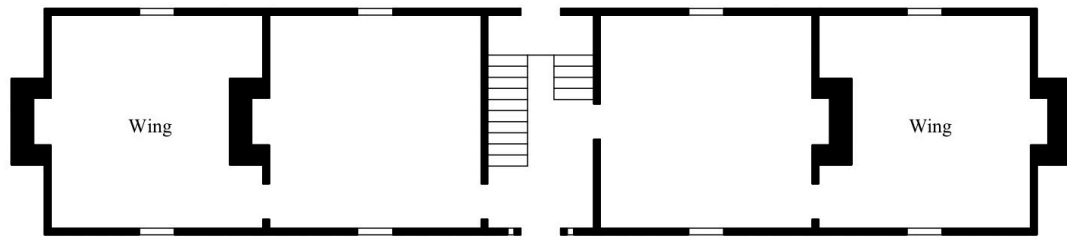


Figure 6: typical I-house with wings first floor plan

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