

Ethnic Variation and Vernacular Architecture in the Farmsteads of the Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests



*Guard Elliot Examines Homestead Entry
of Allen Haley of Searcy County, 1904*

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Cover photo by C.L. Castle, courtesy of Ouachita National Forest
and Ouachita Baptist University Archives

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1. Ethnic Variation in the National Forests of Arkansas

I. Introduction

This paper will examine the ethnic composition of the non-aboriginal settlers who established homesteads within the boundaries of the Ozark, Ouachita, and St. Francis National Forests in the state of Arkansas. For the purposes of this investigation we have defined the word ethnic to mean those groups of people who identify themselves or are identified by others on the basis of common racial, religious, or national origins.¹ This definition implies a geographic concentration of the ethnic group which contributes to the cohesion of the culture of the group.

The settlement of Arkansas occurred as part of the general westward expansion and migration of the American population. Settlers struck out for the West motivated by the desire for inexpensive land and economic opportunities. The waves of foreign immigrants coming into America also impacted the development of Arkansas. Immigrants came to America in search of religious and social freedom as well as for economic opportunities. The history of these groups in Arkansas can be divided into two phases: the periods before and after the Civil War (and the subsequent development of railroad lines in the state). The physical reminders of ethnic groups in Arkansas — including the sites of their homes and farms — are a record of the contributions these people made to the development of the state and contain the potential to yield more information about their builders and inhabitants. After summarizing the history of immigration in Arkansas, this chapter will examine the ethnic settlement history of the St. Francis, Ouachita and Ozark National Forests.

II. Antebellum Population Growth

The first non-Native American settlers in the region that is now Arkansas were French and Spanish. After the area became an American territory through the Louisiana Purchase, the numbers of people establishing settlements here began to increase gradually. Many early settlers came to the region from New Orleans via the Mississippi River; others came from the eastern portions of the country, traveling overland or via such waterways as the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. These early settlers established villages along the territory's principal rivers — the Arkansas, White and Mississippi — which provided the primary means of transportation throughout the region at that time. Arkansas attained statehood in 1836, and after that time the numbers of new settlers to the land increased at an even greater rate. The national Homestead Act of the same year encouraged settlement by providing up to 160 acres of land to families who would settle on and improve the land, and Arkansas, as a new state, had an abundance of land available. As one historian noted, “[t]he implementation of the federal Homestead Act in Arkansas was one of the most successful of any state.”² Between 1840 and 1860, the population of Arkansas jumped from approximately 96,000 to over 430,000, according to U.S. Census figures. During the Civil War, population estimates held fairly steady, but by 1880 the figure had reached approximately 800,000. By 1900 the population of Arkansas was estimated to be over 1,100,000.

Prior to the Civil War, Arkansas was populated primarily by people of Scotch-Irish, English, and African descent. These early settlers had commonly emigrated from slave-holding Southern states east of the Mississippi River, especially Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina. They came to Arkansas in search of inexpensive land that would enable them to continue the same types of farming they had practiced in their original homes. They generally settled in the Alluvial Plain and Gulf Coastal Plain regions of the state. The settlers who came to the central and northern

areas of the state, which are more mountainous, and less suitable for plantation-style agriculture, generally came from the hilly regions of Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri. There were not large numbers of African-Americans in these mountainous areas of Arkansas because the migrants coming into these regions were not slaveholders. In geographic terms, the Alluvial and Gulf Coast Plains, the Arkansas River Valley and the northwestern regions of Arkansas were the primary locations of settlement before the Civil War. These were areas that were suitable for a variety of agricultural uses and for the raising of livestock. The central Ozark mountains and the western Ouachita mountains were much more sparsely populated and rural.

Only a small percentage of immigrants coming into America before 1910 settled in the South. Settlers in Arkansas before this time were generally migrants from other Southern states. The foreign immigrants who did come to Arkansas generally settled in the urban areas of the state, especially Little Rock and Ft. Smith. Counties lacking urban centers attracted fewer foreign-born immigrants. In 1870, fewer than 6,000 residents, comprising less than two percent of the total population of the state, were foreign born.³ The foreign-born population that was found in antebellum Arkansas roughly reflected the national immigrant population in ethnic composition, the majority being Irish, English and German.

III. Post-Reconstruction Population Growth

Foreign immigration into America is viewed by many historians to have undergone a pronounced change during the 1880s. Prior to this time the majority of new immigrants into the country were Western Europeans, largely of Irish, English and German ancestry. For numerous reasons, after 1880 the majority of immigrants coming into America were from Southern and Eastern European countries such as Italy, Poland, Greece and Russia. While Arkansas did experience some impact from this national transition, the general ethnic settlement trends established in Arkansas during the Antebellum period continued after the Civil War; over half of new settlers in the state were of German, English, or Irish descent. What did change after Reconstruction was that instead of arriving from other southeastern states, the majority of the immigrants into Arkansas now came from Missouri, Louisiana and Texas. The numbers arriving from Indiana and Illinois increased as well. In general, a wider range of ethnic groups, including African-Americans, Italians, Chinese, Jews and foreign-born immigrants, began to settle in Arkansas in larger numbers after the 1880s.

Nearly four million Italians landed on American shores between 1880 and 1915. Large extended families made the crossing in search of economic opportunities unavailable in Italy. The Roman Catholic Church was highly involved in assisting Italian immigrants through an organization called the St. Raphael Society. The society supported efforts to establish colonies of immigrants in Midwestern and Southern states, outside of urban areas.⁴ One such effort was made in 1887 by Austin Corbin, a stockbroker from New York. Corbin purchased 4,000 acres of land in Chicot County, Arkansas, and 100 northern Italian families were recruited to settle the colony which Corbin named Sunnyside. Austin Corbin died in 1896, and the colony was near collapse in 1897 when Father Pietro Bandini, an active member of the St. Raphael Society, brought fresh settlers to Sunnyside, and attempted to stabilize the colony.⁵ In 1898, Bandini led the remaining 35 families out of Sunnyside, relocating them to Northwest Arkansas. The Ozark climate was better suited to the type of agriculture the northern Italians had practiced in their homeland, and the new settlement at Tontitown in Washington County was a success.

German migration and immigration into Arkansas was encouraged by numerous private recruitment efforts beginning in 1874.⁶ These efforts were highly successful; by 1900 approximately one-fourth of the state's population was of German descent.⁷ Along with an influx of foreign-born

Germans, settlers of German descent also migrated into Arkansas from other states, including Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. After 1885 groups of Roman Catholic Germans settled in central and Northwest Arkansas. Benedictine Monks from Illinois founded the Subiaco monastery, near Paris, and Germans from Missouri settled around the Ft. Smith area. Generally, German Catholics settled throughout the Arkansas River Valley.

The Civil War created a labor shortage in the agricultural industry in Arkansas; in response, some planters imported Chinese laborers to work in their fields. Other Chinese came to Arkansas to work on the railroads. These immigrants generally arrived in Arkansas via New Orleans. After Reconstruction, African-Americans began emigrating to Arkansas from other southeastern states. They replaced the Chinese in the agricultural industry, and many Chinese workers left the region.

African-Americans represented the largest minority group in Arkansas at the close of the Civil War. After the Civil War, many former slaves immigrated to Arkansas from Southern states east of the Mississippi. Between 1870 and 1900, Arkansas's black population increased by more than 200 percent, jumping from 122,169 to 366,856. The growth rate for white Arkansans over the same time period was 161 percent. The incoming African-Americans were primarily farmers. Both government and private efforts were made to encourage their settlement in response to an agricultural labor shortage created by the war.⁸

Unlike other ethnic groups, the Jewish population in Arkansas was primarily composed of foreign-born immigrants. They generally settled in the urban areas of the state, especially Little Rock. Jewish families who did settle in or near National Forest boundaries — such as Moses and Isaac Burgauer, who came to Arkansas from Germany in the 1850s and settled at Mt. Ida in Montgomery County, or Sam Badt, who immigrated from Germany with his family in 1880 and ran a mercantile store at Mena in Polk County — were primarily involved in retail business and did not participate in agriculture or homesteading. While there may be individual exceptions, it can be assumed that there was no notable Jewish impact on the architecture of rural farmsteads in the National Forests of Arkansas.⁹

Despite increases in settlement after the Civil War, Arkansas remained underpopulated in comparison to other states in the country. Following the Reconstruction period, Arkansans were able to focus their energy on developing their state's resources, including its population. Efforts were made to increase immigration and migration into the state. The state's leaders encouraged industries and settlers to establish themselves in Arkansas during this period. Both public and private efforts to attract new settlers into Arkansas were to have long term effects on the cultural and ethnic composition of the state.

Private industries involved in immigration advocacy in Arkansas were railroad companies, real estate developers, and business and farm organizations. After the Civil War, railroad development in Arkansas boomed. Railroad companies had an interest in encouraging increased population along their right-of-ways, because more towns along their routes meant more workers for them and for other industries that would require their services. Representatives of Arkansas rail companies were sent to Northern states and abroad to promote Arkansas to potential settlers. The development of railroads in Arkansas began to have an impact on the settlement patterns of the state in the 1870s. In 1871, the Memphis to Little Rock line was completed. In 1874, the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad line was completed connecting Missouri to Texas. Also in 1874, the line running from Little Rock to Ft. Smith was completed. These new railroad lines improved access to the interior regions of Arkansas, and more people were able to travel with greater ease into these regions. Towns that were situated along the railroad lines grew rapidly. In 1900, the Helena and Iron Mountain Railroad line, which ran the length of Crowley's Ridge, was completed. The North Central Railroad, which was operational by 1875, was an important transportation improvement for the



Train sketch, 1881. Courtesy of the Arkansas History Commission.

Ozark region. This line connected Mountain Home with Fayetteville and Van Buren. “Arkansas’ population increased by 400,000 people between 1880 and 1890. The coming of the railroad was an important reason for continued in-migration of people to the state.”¹⁰

A second factor that encouraged the settlement of the interior areas of Arkansas during the late 19th century, and particularly in the Alluvial Plain and Ozark regions, was the expansion of the timber industry. The timber industry supported population growth in two ways: it provided employment to large numbers of new settlers, and it resulted in thousands of acres of cleared land that could now sustain agriculture. African-American immigrants were important to the success of the timber industry in the Delta, which reached its peak between 1880 and 1927. Foreign-born eastern European and German immigrants also played an important role in the timber industry in this region.

The flow of settlers into Arkansas declined after World War I. The slowdown occurred for several reasons. There was a national trend that saw populations shifting from rural to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities, and Arkansas lost some of its rural population as its citizens moved to urban centers outside of the state. This shift occurred in part as a result of technological improvements in farming, which reduced the need for field workers. Also at this time the federal government began placing restrictions on foreign immigration into America. Most importantly, the poor agricultural and economic conditions of the 1920s and 1930s forced many families to leave Arkansas.

By 1940, Arkansas had a total population of 1,949,387 people. 1,466,984, or 75.2 percent of these residents, were classified as white, with 74.8 percent native white, and 0.4 percent (7,692) foreign-born white. Of the total population, 482,578 were listed as African-American, and 725 were listed as Other. Of this Other, 278 were Native American, 432 were Chinese, three were Japanese, and 12 were just “Other.”¹¹ More than three-fourths of the population at this time was living in rural areas, with over half of the total involved in agriculture.

IV. Settlement in the Ozark and Ouachita Forests

It is beneficial to examine the settlement history of these two regions together because, “[d]espite their separation by the Arkansas River, the Ozarks and the Ouachitas witnessed very similar settlement adaptations, and historic populations inhabiting these two areas exhibited closely similar cultural features.”¹² The numbers of settlers moving into the Ozark and Ouachita mountain regions increased substantially with the creation of Arkansas Territory in 1819. The initial settlements in the Arkansas Territory were located along major travel routes, such as the Old Southwest Trail or Military Road from St. Louis, and the White, Arkansas and Mississippi rivers. Gradually people began to move into the interior areas of the Territory, including the Ozark and Ouachita mountain regions. These interior areas remained unsettled not only because of transportation difficulties, but also because of Indian occupation in the region. Contemporary descriptions of the land described it as unfit for cultivation.

Various national events affected the eventual settlement of these interior regions. Increases in the American population caused land prices in the Eastern states to increase dramatically, and forced many people to move westward. Settlers from mountainous regions of southeastern states were the most likely to migrate to the Ozarks and the Ouachitas because there was a geographic and cultural “kinship” between the Appalachian hills and the hills of Arkansas.¹³ Antebellum settlement in this region can be divided into two waves. The first carried settlers who existed through hunting and raising livestock. The second wave, which can be placed between 1820 and 1840, brought settlers who were more involved in agriculture. This second wave was precipitated by changes in the way government land was sold that made it easier and cheaper to make land claims. In Arkansas, authorities were often lax in enforcing requirements concerning residence on and improvement of homestead land claims. Over the years Arkansas was granted more and more federal lands within the state and could therefore offer land to settlers very cheaply. Land was available through the state and federal governments, as well as through private owners, land speculators and industries such as railroad companies. Even with all the opportunities to purchase cheap land, many settlers chose to be squatters on government land. Individuals living on such land often were given the first opportunity to purchase it once it became available for sale.¹⁴ Two other factors precipitating the second wave of antebellum settlement were that Indian tribes had been moved out of region, and as postal service increased, the roads were improved, making settlement easier. This second wave of settlers were from the southern Appalachian areas, especially from Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina, with those from South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia present in smaller numbers.

The next phase of population growth in the Ozark and Ouachita mountain region came after the Civil War. Advances in transportation contributed to changes in agricultural practices, town development, and new industrial growth, and encouraged more settlers to come into the region than ever before. The most important factor was the construction of railroad lines into the region. Small rural communities developed along these new transportation corridors. The placement of the railroad lines was determined by the location of timber, mineral and agricultural resources. Other transportation advances that brought in new settlers were the expansion of road networks and the presence of steamboats on the Arkansas and White rivers.¹⁵ Most post-Reconstruction settlers had substantially different lifestyle patterns than their predecessors; open range livestock grazing largely disappeared and the predominance subsistence farming was replaced by overt attempts to raise cash crops, often referred to as general farming. Tobacco, cotton, corn and wheat were grown, and fruit orchards became especially important in certain regions of the Ozarks. Dairy and poultry farming grew in popularity as well. This period of growth was brought to an end by various factors. After awhile the

small, diverse-product family farms found they could not compete with large scale specialized operations located in the more fertile regions of the state. A series of droughts and floods seriously damaged the already poor soil in the region. The Depression of the 1930s and the resulting exodus of rural populations to urban areas were also factors contributing to the end of this period of prosperity and population growth in the Ozark-Ouachita regions.

V. Ethnicity in the National Forests of Arkansas

A. St. Francis Forest

The St. Francis National Forest was designated in 1960. It occupies a portion of Crowley's Ridge, a range of hills that extend about 200 miles from southern Missouri to Helena, Arkansas. The St. Francis National Forest is located within the Mississippi Delta area in what is called the Alluvial Plains region of Arkansas. It covers portions of Lee and Phillips counties between Marianna to the north and Helena to the south. The eastern boundary of the forest is formed by three rivers, the L'Anguille, the St. Francis and the Mississippi.

The land of Crowley's Ridge can support only very limited agriculture because of its terrain



Horn Lookout Tower, LaGrange vic., Lee County. Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. AHPP Photo.

and because of the poor composition of its soil. The land is more suitable for use as pasture. The earliest settlements in Lee County were found along the Mississippi River and also on the eastern slopes of Crowley's Ridge near the mouth of the St. Francis River. They were established by pioneers from Tennessee and Ohio. The interior of Lee County remained sparsely settled until the arrival of steamboats on the St. Francis between 1835 and 1840.

The 1870 census for Phillips County recorded a total population of 800 residents for the L'Anguille Township. American born residents accounted for 788 of this number, and 12 were listed as foreign born. Two hundred and ninety-five were classified as white, and 505 residents were African-American. A Works Progress Administration writer from the 1930s noted that there was a only an extremely small percentage of foreign born settlers in Lee County. According to her report most of the population had migrated into Arkansas from other states, primarily North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia, and later from Indiana and Illinois. A relatively substantial African-American population was composed primarily of ex-slaves who had been brought to the area with their former masters, and their descendants.¹⁶ However, it is important to note that while the author was probably focusing on the Delta regions of Lee County, we must assume her conclusions are transferrable to the Crowley's Ridge region, since we have no further available data.

The same author also wrote the WPA report on the ethnography of Phillips County.¹⁷ She again stated that there was only a very small percentage of foreign-born residents and a high percentage of African-Americans, descended from slaves. The foreign-born immigrants who were present included Germans, Jews, Greeks, Italians, Mexicans, Chinese and Syrians, but they were in very small numbers. Her explanation for this was that the African-American population supplied most of the needed agricultural labor so that there was not much work for foreigners.

The townships that fall into the national forest region of Lee County include Bear Creek, Richland, and Hardy. The townships included in the national forest region of Phillips County include Cleburne and L'Anquille. The 1860 census reported that large numbers of emigrants from Tennessee and Kentucky settled in L'Anquille Township in Phillips County. Bear Creek Township in Lee County was home to settlers from Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and a few immigrants from France. Richland Township in Lee County was primarily inhabited by emigrants from North Carolina and Tennessee.

B. Ouachita National Forest

Many historic factors influenced the settlement of the Ouachita mountain region. One of these was commercial logging, which began to boom in western Arkansas in the early 1880s. The expansion of railroads in the state and throughout the country brought a high demand for cross-ties, and other industries requiring lumber were expanding as well.

By the 1880s, introduction of an interstate railroad system opened new agricultural markets and settlement in the Ouachita Mountain region increased. Railroads spurred a region-wide lumbering boom and speculators competed for valuable forested land. Large tracts were obtained from the public domain through the use of land bounty warrants, timber and stone claims, and through homestead claims. Enticed by government policy offering free land and by new commercial lumbering opportunities, many marginal tracts of land in mountainous areas were homesteaded. Frequently,



Loading logs by means of cross haul, 1924, Cold Springs Ranger District, Arkansas National Forest. Courtesy of Arkansas History Commission

these farms, with marginal improvements, were sold to timber companies even before formal award of patent.¹⁸ Commercial logging in Arkansas reached its peak in the first decade of the 20th century and declined slowly after that. In 1907, the Arkansas National Forest was created as part of the federal government's effort to respond to public and scientific concern over the depletion of forest resources by unrestricted logging.

The Forest Homestead Act of 1906 authorized homestead applications for land within forest reserves. In that year, there were 110 patented homesteads in the Ouachita National Forest. Of that number, 60 were occupied by the original settlers who had made the patent, and 50 were occupied by new residents. By 1919, there were 1,748 patented homesteads, 437 of which were occupied by the original settlers, 700 were occupied by new residents, and 611 were unoccupied.¹⁹

The Forest Homestead Act and the Weeks Act of 1911 were created in response to public concern that the Forest Service was "locking up" good farming land. They called for the Forest Service to release for sale any lands that were suitable for agriculture. To determine what land was suitable for agriculture, a major effort to classify land held by the Ouachita Forest began in 1916 under direction of Ranger William Wooten. In his final report, Wooten commented on the general infertility of most of the land within forest boundaries. He concluded that basically all the land that was suitable for agriculture was already being farmed. In his report Wooten also described the living conditions of rural families in the Ouachitas and their impact on the land. "In many instances the standard of living is exceedingly low. Families are raised on small corn patches cleared on hillsides, cultivated among rocks, yielding after the most wearisome effort, only 10, 15, to 20 bushels to the acre, such hillside fields soon losing their fertility and requiring the homesteader to clear land elsewhere."²⁰ Wooten goes on to describe the typical pattern of homesteaders in the Ouachitas: "...entrymen who have settled upon these out-of-the-way places. Many left before obtaining patent. Those who remained long enough to make final proof and secure patent as a rule leave out and either sell to timber companies or land speculators, or rent to whomever they can. The renters who commonly inhabit these out-of-the-way places are known as drifters or birds-of-passage. One year they make a crop in Arkansas, the next one in Oklahoma, and the next in Texas, and then go the round again and again."²¹

In 1926 the Arkansas National Forest was renamed the Ouachita National Forest. During the Great Depression, 13 Civilian Conservation Corps camps were located in the Arkansas portions of



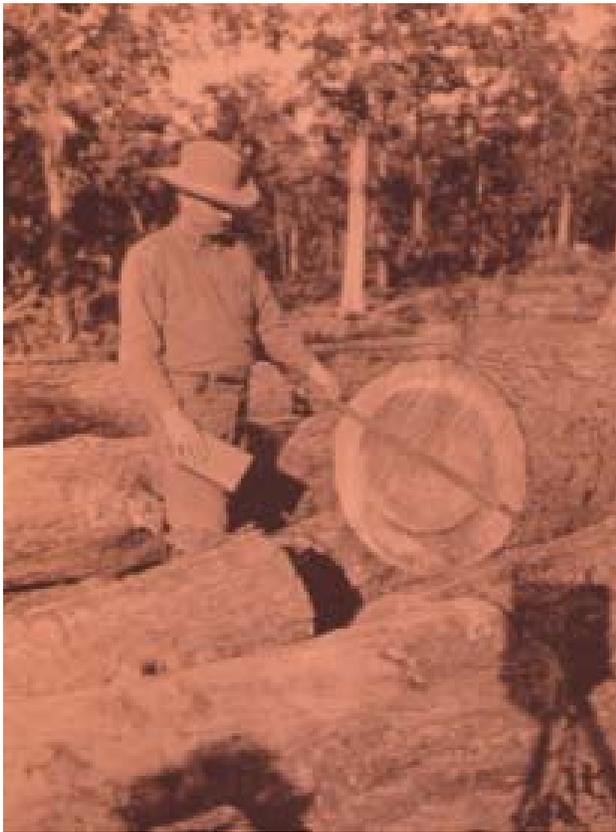
Civilian Conservation Corps workers build a cabin at Petit Jean State Park. Courtesy of Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

the Ouachita National Forest. CCC work that had an impact on settlers in region included road construction and the construction of recreational facilities. These were not the only changes occurring in the Ouachitas during the 1930s. "During the decade of the 1930s, the Ouachita National Forest more than doubled in size. With acquisition of so much land, the Forest Service inherited hundreds or even thousands of farms replete with buildings and fences. Standard Forest Service policy required that the former owner remove all improvements. Abandoned buildings were routinely destroyed."²²

The Ouachita National Forest currently occupies portions of 10 counties in Arkansas: Garland, Hot Spring, Logan, Montgomery, Perry, Polk, Saline, Scott, Sebastian and Yell. In Garland County, the present communities of Avant, Bear, Crystal Springs and Percy fall within the Forest boundaries. In the WPA files for Garland County, it was written that the population of the county was primarily American.²³ The foreigners that were noted appear to be settled in urban areas, although no specific locations are given. Assyrian and Greek immigrants were mentioned. The author remarked that the Assyrians tended to be merchants, and the Greeks owned restaurants. These groups attended Episcopalian churches because no Orthodox churches were available. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were also noted. The Chinese reportedly owned restaurants and laundries, and the Japanese owned retail stores. The file closed with mention of a few German and Dutch settlers who had small farms in the county. A second essay in the Garland County WPA file refers specifically to the history of the community of Bear. In this essay, Mary Dengler Hudgins remarked that there was no longer any large scale farming in the community, and that the majority of the citizens were American. "Only three families of foreign extraction have ever lived there. During the mining boom of the seventies, three families, two Germans and one Polish came in. One family of Germans remained."²⁴ Only a very small portion of Hot Spring County is occupied by the National Forest. This portion includes the town of Bonnerdale. A WPA writer recorded that there was no presence of any racial groups or bilingual districts within the county. A slightly larger but still fairly small amount of land in Logan County falls in the Forest boundaries. The closest community to that boundary is Sugar Grove.

"Nearly one-fifth of the total forest [Ouachita National Forest], 307,264 acres to be exact, lies within Montgomery County."²⁵ Black Springs is probably the oldest settlement in the county. In 1830, Montgomery County was known as Caddo Township. The census for that year recorded a population of 165 people, with 140 classified as white and 24 classified as slaves. The county was officially established in 1842. The first post office was located in Mt. Ida and run by Granville Whittington, who was from Massachusetts.²⁶ The 1840 census recorded 700 people living in the county, 42 of which were slaves. The 1850 census recorded 1,958 people, of which 66 were slaves. The majority of the people in the county had migrated from other southeastern states, especially Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. There were reportedly three residents of foreign birth in the 1850s, all of whom were from Great Britain. In 1870, there were only five residents classified as foreign. By 1880 the population had risen to 5,743 residents, including 408 African-Americans. This was due primarily to the silver boom that occurred in the 1880s. In 1897 the Missouri-Pacific Railroad Company built a line that ran from Gurdon through Clark, Pike and Montgomery counties to meet the needs of the booming timber industries in these areas. The Great Depression took its toll on Montgomery County, as it did in many rural areas of Arkansas. "In 1935 there were 1,601 farms in the county, comprising 138,951 acres. In 1945, there were only 1,118 farms, with 124,767 acres."²⁷ A current resident recalls one native Englishman who had a homestead near Mount Gilead Church in the 1930s.

The Ouachita National Forest occupies a fairly large portion of the southwest quarter of Perry County. It includes the towns of Hollis, Thornburg and Williams Junction, and the towns of Aplin, Fourche Junction and Nimrod are near the borders. The 1870 census recorded three residents of foreign birth in Aplin. The township of McCool, found on a 1930 map, shows no residents of foreign



Ranger Thos. F. Hale scales logs, 1924, Waldron Working Circle, Scott County, Arkansas National Forest. Courtesy of the Arkansas History Commission.

birth in the 1870 census. According to WPA reports, the population in the 1930s was about one-third American.²⁸ The remaining two-thirds were Italian and Lithuanian. The Italians migrated from the South Halstead area of Chicago, Illinois, in 1912 in search of work. They settled in the hills near the towns of Ledwidge and Bigelow because the land was cheap and was suitable for vineyards. There they maintained vineyards and a winery and practiced small scale farming. The members of the colony spoke Italian, but the children were reported as being quickly assimilated into American culture. German immigrants also settled in the region. “Gustavus Klingelhoefter immigrated at the head of sixty German families from Rheinhessen to Perry County sometime between 1833 and 1836.”²⁹

A considerable portion of Polk County is covered by National Forest land. There is considerable research information available on the settlement history of Mena, the largest town and county seat. However, there is little to be found on the more rural areas of the county. The communities that fall within the Forest are Big Fork, Eagleton and Rich Mountain. Acorn,

Board Camp, Cherry Hill, Ink, Mena, Potter and Rocky are located near the boundaries. The 1870 census for Polk County records no foreigners living within any of these communities.

The northwest corner of Saline County is occupied by the Ouachita National Forest. Lake Winona is within the Forest border and the town of Paron is located just to the east. A 1930s map shows the National Forest area as a township named Walnut Bottom. Records for the county in the 1930s show a largely homogeneous white population, with a small number of African-Americans residing in the vicinity of Benton. Before 1900, a small group of Germans, some from Eastern states and some from Germany, settled near the town of Collegette, 10 miles east of Benton.³⁰ The colony maintained vineyards and a winery. Prohibition laws forced the closure of the winery and most of Germans moved away.

Records from the 1870 census for Scott County, a significant portion of which is National Forest property, show a total of 22 foreign residents in the county. This is a high number in comparison to most other counties in the Ouachita National Forest. Unfortunately, other historical data on these settlers and where they were located is scant. Histories of the county do record migrant settlers arriving from virtually every state in the country from Pennsylvania to California. The communities in Scott County that are located in the National Forest are Bates, Blue Ball, Cauthron, Cedar Creek, Harvey, Nola, Union Hill and Y City. There is relatively little land in Sebastian County that is occupied by the National Forest and no present day communities fall within this boundary. Numerous towns in Yell County fall within the Ouachita National Forest, including Aly, Briggsville, Fouche Mountain, Nimrod Lake, Onyx, Waltreak and Wing. The 1870 county census records a total of 26 foreign residents.

C. Settlement Patterns in the Ozark National Forest

The Ozark National Forest was created on March 8, 1908. It was the first federally protected timberland in the country, with a standing value of \$1.5 million at the time of creation. The expansive boundaries of the Ozark National Forest occupy only a portion of the geographical region defined as the Ozark Mountains, which stretches through portions of Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma for an estimated total area of 60,000 square miles.³¹ The ethnic composition of the Arkansas Ozark area has not been documented or researched as extensively as it has been for the Missouri Ozark region; however, some similarities can be assumed and generalizations can be made for the purposes of this study.

The first non-Indians to settle in the Ozarks were French, and early French settlements were located along principal rivers. The French settlers in Arkansas were primarily traders and did not practice extensive agriculture. French architecture of this period was distinguished by two characteristics: the residences, usually of log construction, had porches on at least two or three sides, and they were of vertical log construction rather than horizontal (examples of this style can still be found in St. Genevieve, Missouri). The layout of French settlements were also distinctive. The homes were enclosed in a central area, and agricultural fields and common pasture were arranged in a formal pattern outside of the enclosure. However, remains of this type of layout will not likely be found in the Arkansas Ozark area today.³²

Until the Civil War, people of Scotch-Irish descent made up the majority population in the Ozarks. The classification Scotch-Irish refers to an ethnic group that does not include Irish Catholics whose wave of immigration occurred at later time. "The people of the Ozarks are Scotch-Irish immigrants," remarked one WPA writer.³³ Most of these Scotch-Irish settlers were native-born Americans who had migrated to the Ozarks. Most of them came from the Appalachian Mountain regions of Kentucky and Tennessee. They settled in the mountains because the land was cheap and well suited to the types of subsistence agriculture they traditionally practiced. "Squatting was easier in the less desirable hill country. The simple agriculture of the Scotch-Irish did not require the rich valley soils, and they were expensive. The Scotch-Irish desired less from society. Their subsistence farming was coupled with hunting and gathering which did not necessitate location in the mainstream with access to markets to sell or buy. Near self-sufficiency was a characteristic of many of the Scotch-Irish pioneers."³⁴

They were primarily livestock farmers and were not interested in raising large, plantation-style cash crops. They are often characterized as highly self-sufficient people. The Scotch-Irish Americans were always moving west with frontier, many did not stay in Arkansas but continued West after awhile. Migration to the Ozarks was clan based, with extended families settling in a region together. The Scotch-Irish who settled in the Arkansas Ozarks were highly assimilated Americans. They did not have a strong ethnic architectural style. "Although Scandinavians brought the log cabin to America, it was the Scotch-Irish who diffused it to areas west of the Atlantic Seaboard."³⁵ Scotch-Irish contributions to Ozark regional culture include place names, musical influence, clan organization of society and moonshining.

Settlers of German descent were a strong presence throughout Arkansas, and the Ozarks were no exception. "During the period beginning in the 1830s and ending in the 1870s more than a hundred thousand Germans settled in the Ozark region, mostly in Missouri."³⁶ Private immigration advocacy groups were in part responsible for this large number. German settlements were often highly organized and compact. The Germans preserved their old world culture and language more than other groups settling in the Ozarks. "Germans were the only major non-English speaking people

in the Ozarks.”³⁷ They maintained the hillside agricultural practices they learned in South Germany, and tried to maintain ethnic homogeneity in their settlement areas. To discourage other ethnic groups from settling around them, Germans located their colonies on the most rugged, cheapest land. Unlike other ethnic groups in Ozarks, Germans were full-time farmers. One distinct colony of Germans in the Ozark region were the German-speaking Swiss immigrants who settled near Altus.

The numbers of African-Americans settling in the Ozarks were always small in comparison to other areas of the state. This was largely because the earliest Ozark settlers did not bring slaves with them when they settled. “Among the Americans to settle early in the Ozarks were some slaveholders. The wealthier planters from the tidewater districts made their way to the Ozarks with slaves. They could afford the most fertile and accessible lands which were along the major rivers—the Mississippi, Missouri, and Arkansas. It is in these areas and the mining districts that the largest numbers of blacks were concentrated at the time of the Civil War. Although a few of the Scotch-Irish brought slaves, the majority did not. They had come from Northern areas where slavery was not practiced, and the areas in the interior Ozarks where they settled would not support a slave-based economy. The Germans who settled in the Ozarks had little association with slavery and few slaves were to be found in these areas.”³⁸ After the Civil War the African-American population that was present in the Ozarks declined as blacks left the area for better economic opportunities. “In the years following the Civil War, the black population declined sharply. In the rural areas, the decline occurred mainly as slow attrition; as young blacks moved away, and as their grandparents died, many Ozark counties became totally white. The causes of this population decline among blacks were primarily economic. The freed slaves possessed no land and opportunities for employment were limited. There were also social causes for the out-migration of blacks following the Civil War. The general anti-Negro attitude in the Ozarks, which included a number of lynching incidents, undoubtedly contributed to the black migration. Between 1860 and 1930 the black population of the Ozarks was reduced by half. In 1930, six Ozark counties had no blacks, and in most of the remaining interior sections, there were no more than 10 in each county. It was possible for young whites to grow to manhood without seeing a Negro, and octogenarians may have seen black people on only one or two occasions.”³⁹

Using data from the 1930 census, a WPA writer recorded that in Benton County out of a population of 36,491, only 657 were foreign born, and only 88 were African-American.⁴⁰ The foreign-born included people from Germany, Ireland and France. The settlers of the county came mostly from Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia. The author noted that it was unusual to meet someone in the county who spoke a foreign language or even English with an accent. It would not be outrageous to assume that these percentages and generalizations would apply to all of the counties in the Ozarks.

IV. Conclusion

In summary, the farmsteads of the National Forests of Arkansas were primarily occupied by native-born American settlers of Western European descent. Their settlement in Arkansas was part of the national westward expansion that characterized the period after the Civil War. The German, English and Scotch-Irish settlers who made up this majority were on the average highly assimilated into American culture. African-Americans, while found in larger numbers in the St. Francis National Forest, represented only a minority of the population in the Ozark and Ouachita regions. And foreign-born immigrant settlers, of various ethnicity, comprised the smallest segment of the homestead population in the National Forests of Arkansas.

Research problems encountered during this study included a lack of information specifically related to the Crowley’s Ridge area of Lee and Phillips County, and for all of the areas researched it

was found that those county histories that did provide information on ethnicity focused their work on towns and urban areas rather than on rural areas.

2. Vernacular Architectural Types in the Ozark, Ouachita and St. Francis National Forests and their Ethnic Associations.

I. Introduction

The architecture of a region speaks volumes about the culture of the inhabitants and their level of technology. An investigation of the architecture of a region also yields information concerning the way a people adapted to their locale, as well as their level of cultural sophistication. This is especially true when investigating farmsteads, because the type of outbuildings, as well as their relationship to one another, yields another level of information which is not possible in many other types of architectural study. The Ozark and Ouachita National Forests are especially ripe for this sort of interpretation for several reasons, the first being the very nature of the homesteaders who settled in these areas. For the most part, the settlers in these areas were isolated, and had little contact with outsiders, partly because of the nature of the land formations in these areas. The hilly terrain and the less than fortuitous farming conditions forced the inhabitants of these farmsteads to become very independent. In essence, the majority of the daily activities necessary for basic human survival took place in this microcosm, the farmstead.

The farmstead of the Ozark/Ouachita region was a complex unit. The farmstead often included many other structures besides the house and the barn. There were often corncribs, springsheds and smokehouses as well.⁴¹ The arrangement of the outbuildings was only consistent in certain areas. The smokehouse was almost always located nearest to the house, most certainly because it doubled as a pantry. The barn was usually farthest from the house because of the odor and insects that usually accompany animals. Moreover, a walk to the barn could be pleasant even in the winter, which could not be said in colder climates where barns may be closer to the dwelling.⁴² The houses were always located on or near a road, and the barn was never in front of the dwelling, unless it was separated by a road.⁴³ During this investigation, these were the only consistent findings concerning the farmstead layout, and there seemed to be little or no correlation between the ethnic origin of the inhabitants and their preference for a specific arrangement. Another limitation in this regard was that many of the historic photographs found in the Forest Service collections illustrate farmsteads that were improved only for the timber value of the land, (Figures 1, 2) and/or were abandoned. (Figure 3) These photographs often depict dwellings that were crude in nature. Therefore, one must be cautious when studying the homestead photos with few outbuildings and improvements because they do not present a good cross-section of farmstead types. However, other photographs that were studied portray a variety of farmstead types, and even though they are diverse in some ways, all consistently reiterate the layout features mentioned above. (Figures 4-9) Archeological fieldwork and further study would help to support the consistencies that were found in farmstead design, as well as increase the amount and diversify the type of information available.

II. Major Architectural Types

A. The Ozark/Ouachita National Forests

The architectural types noted during the study of the farmsteads of the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests has led to the conclusion that architecturally the areas are very similar. In fact, only

minor variances were found during the study, and for this reason the architectural types of both the Ozark and the Ouachita National Forests will be discussed together. For the most part, the built environment of the rural landscape in these areas fell into certain categories that correspond to those discussed by Jean Sizemore in her work, *Ozark Vernacular Houses: A Study of Rural Homeplaces in the Arkansas Ozarks 1830-1930*.⁴⁴



Figure 1: Unknown Farmstead (1917). Courtesy Ouachita National Forest



Figure 2: Unknown Farmstead (1917). Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figure 3: Abandoned Farmstead along Highway 27 between Mt. Ida and Norman, Montgomery County. Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figure 4: "Andy Jaynes Ginsing (sic) Patch, White Rock District, Ozark." Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 5: Homestead, Arkansas National Forest. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 6: Unknown Farmstead. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 7: Unknown Farmstead. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 8: Unknown Farmstead. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 9: Unknown Farmstead. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

During the course of this study, seven traditional/folk house types and one nontraditional type in the Arkansas Ozark and Ouachita National Forest regions were identified. That is not to say that all the structures examined fit neatly into these categories. On the contrary, there were many structures that defied categorization. With this in mind, Sizemore identifies the following six traditional architectural housing types: the I-House and the central hall cottage, which stem from high-style architecture, and the dogtrot, the saddlebag, the single pen and the double

pen house, which are based on basic log construction house forms.⁴⁵ All of the above traditional forms were built in both log and frame construction, depending on various influences such as the date of construction, the materials available, and the housing needs and financial resources of the builder. Sizemore also adds the one-and-one-half-story house, which is not technically a “type,” and the bent house type, which is a nontraditional house type; both will be discussed here. All of these house types also follow the English folk tradition of being one room deep (not including the typical shed or ell additions).

The Single Pen House

This one-room structure was one of the most common dwellings, although very few survive today. Their typical purpose was as a temporary elemental shelter and they are what one often thinks of as the quintessential frontier cabin. (Figure 10) In Arkansas, the single pen was always less than two stories in height, and most often constructed out of logs. The earlier cabins had an exterior chimney on a gable end, which was often stone when it was readily available. These cabins were built well into the 20th-century, with approximate dates of construction from 1837-1920 for certain areas of the Ozarks.⁴⁶

These houses commonly featured a shed addition on the rear of the structure, which was either built initially or at a later date as more space was needed. The single pen cabin was constructed out of logs as seen in Figure 10, or of box construction (covered in board and batten as in Figure 11). They were also built of other materials, but these are the most common forms in Arkansas. The single pen featured a chimney at the gable end before the popularity of the cook stove after the turn of the century. This chimney was commonly a mud cat chimney in areas where good stone

was not readily available, or the stone construction was too labor-intensive to suit the immediate needs of the homeowner. The mud cat chimney on the cabin in Figure 11 is a typical example of the type seen during our study. A similar mud mixture was often used for chinking, yet this material covers the entire exterior wall surface up to the gable end of the house seen in Figure 11. Figure 12 shows another typical single-pen log structure.



Figure 10: Unknown House. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

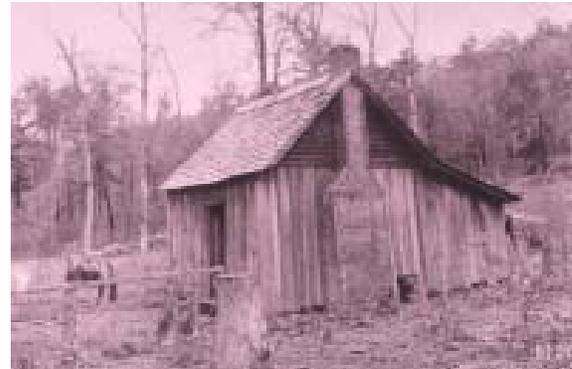


Figure 11: Unknown Cabin/Ranger Station? Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figure 12: “Guard Elliot Examines Homestead Entry of Allen Haley of Searcy County, 1904.” Photo by C.L. Castle, Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

The single pen was often just a starting point for many settlers. The Dr. H. H. Bolinger House in Brashears, Madison County, is an unusual example of how one settler built five single pen cabins together to form a large dwelling. (Figures 13 A and B, 14) This type of structure is highly unusual. However, this is an example of how the more affluent settlers in these areas often used conventional folk forms to create their houses, rather than building a structure in a truly high-style manner. The site plan of the Bolinger House also illustrates the conventional farmstead arrangement with the well or cistern very

close to the dwelling, and with the barn approximately 40 yards away.

The variety seen in the details of the simple single pen structure present a wealth of information for interpretation. A variety of different corner notching was utilized in the construction of the pens: rough unhewn logs with saddle notching (Figure 15), and split log, half hewn, half dovetail notching as seen in Figures 16A and B. During the course of this study, several other types of notching were also seen, with no apparent correlation between a specific construction method and a specific area, or ethnic group. However, further investigation into this topic may yield more information in this area.

The Double Pen House

The double pen house, which is an extremely common house type in both the Ozark and the Ouachita regions, is a one-story structure characterized by two front doors, although it may also have only one entrance on the front. In a survey of Independence County, Arkansas, the double pen house was deemed the most common type of folk construction in the county.⁴⁷ Perhaps this is due to the fact



Figures 13A and B: Dr. H.H. Bolinger House, Brashears, Madison County. AHPP Photos.

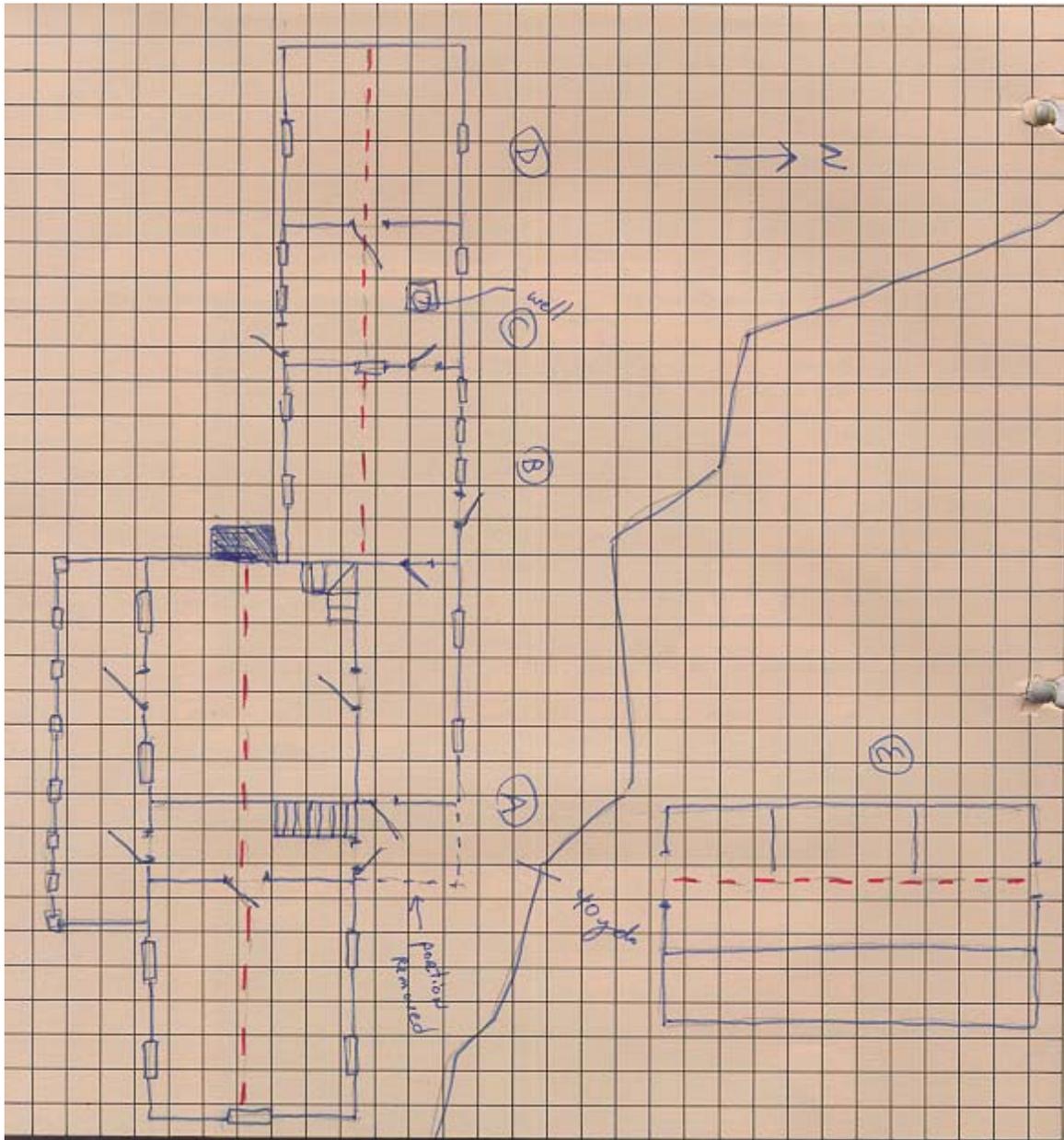


Figure 14: Dr. H.H. Bolinger House Site Plan. AHPP Survey Files.



Figure 15: Unknown House. "Chimney Under Construction." Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figures 16A and B: McLean Caretaker Cabin (ca. 1900), Caddo Gap, Montgomery County. AHPP Photos

that many single-pen houses were built as temporary dwellings and were later expanded into double pen houses, or dogtrot houses, or another form. This is not to say that all double pen houses evolved out of single pen cabins, as many were constructed that way initially. Michael A. Pfeiffer of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest has written a manuscript on the topic of the double pen, titled “Which Front Door Do I Use?” and Other Ozark Exotica,” which focuses on the mysteries of this structure and the many unanswered questions.⁴⁸

The variety of construction methods used in constructing the double pen are similar to those used for the single pen. They were sometimes built utilizing box construction (Figures 17, 18, 19), and they were also often built out of logs. In certain instances, the double pen house contains a frame and a log portion as seen in the John Vickery Homestead in Figures 20 A through C. Here, one pen has half dovetail notching and hewn logs, while the other half of the house (built later) is of box construction and sheathed in board and batten. Double pen houses are often characterized by a chimney on either gable end; however in many remaining examples, the chimneys are gone as they were often replaced by more efficient stoves.



Figure 17: Unknown Structure/Ranger Station? Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



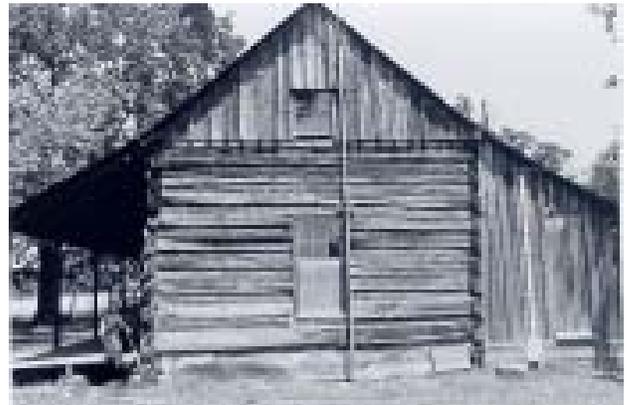
Figure 18: Unknown House. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 19: "Group of Woods Workers and Families, 1924, Cold Springs Ranger District, Arkansas National Forest." Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figure 20A: John Vickery Homestead (ca. 1904), Fiftysix vic., Stone County. AHPP Photo.



Figures 20B and C: John Vickery Homestead, Fiftysix vic., Stone County. AHPP Photos.

Saddlebag Houses

The saddlebag house is similar to the double pen except for the fact that it is characterized by a large central chimney between the two pens. (Figure 21) The house is also typically one room deep and one story in height. From the scant photographic documentation of this type in the National Forest files at Hot Springs and Russellville, it would appear that the saddlebag was one of the least common types of housing in the areas under consideration. This finding concurs with Jean Sizemore's own findings from her surveys of Stone and Washington counties.⁴⁹ The saddlebag house



Figure 21: Residence #1, Caddo Gap, Montgomery County. AHPP Photo.

is primarily found in the eastern part of the United States because of the heat retention qualities of this type, which are rarely necessary in our warmer climate. For this reason, the dogtrot appears to have been preferred over the saddlebag in Arkansas.

Dogtrot Houses

The Jacob Wolf House in Norfolk, Baxter County, borders the Ozark National Forest and is perhaps the oldest extant house in the Ozarks and in the state. It was built around 1825 and is one of the rare examples of a two-story dogtrot. Most dogtrots were one-story tall, similar to the house seen in Figures 22 and 23. The site plan for the Reeves-Melson House shows typical dogtrot construction and also describes the plan of the farmstead. The well and well cover are located nearest to the house and are noted as “B” and “C.” The log smokehouse and chickenhouse are located about an equal distance from the house, while the barn is located across the road at a good distance. The two pens of the Reeves-Melson House were constructed at different times, and one is frame while the older

Figure 22: Reeves-Melson House, Bonnerdale, Montgomery County. AHPP Photo.



pen is of log construction.

Other notable dogtrot houses include a house named Jones Valley in Caddo Gap. (Figure 24) Jones Valley is very similar to the Old Bates House near Pine Ridge which is pictured in Figure 25. Both feature half-dovetail notching and were originally two one-room log pens, although the Old Bates House was enlarged. The Jones Valley House now has an enclosed dogtrot and has a small front porch. Despite the small differences, the basic composition is the same. The Gillham Place (Figures 26, 27) in Garland County is one of the best remaining dogtrots in that part of Arkansas. It features split log construction and square notching. The front posts are chamfered, and the porch is very wide. The dogtrot has been infilled as can be seen from the site plan, and the rear additions were done about 1920.

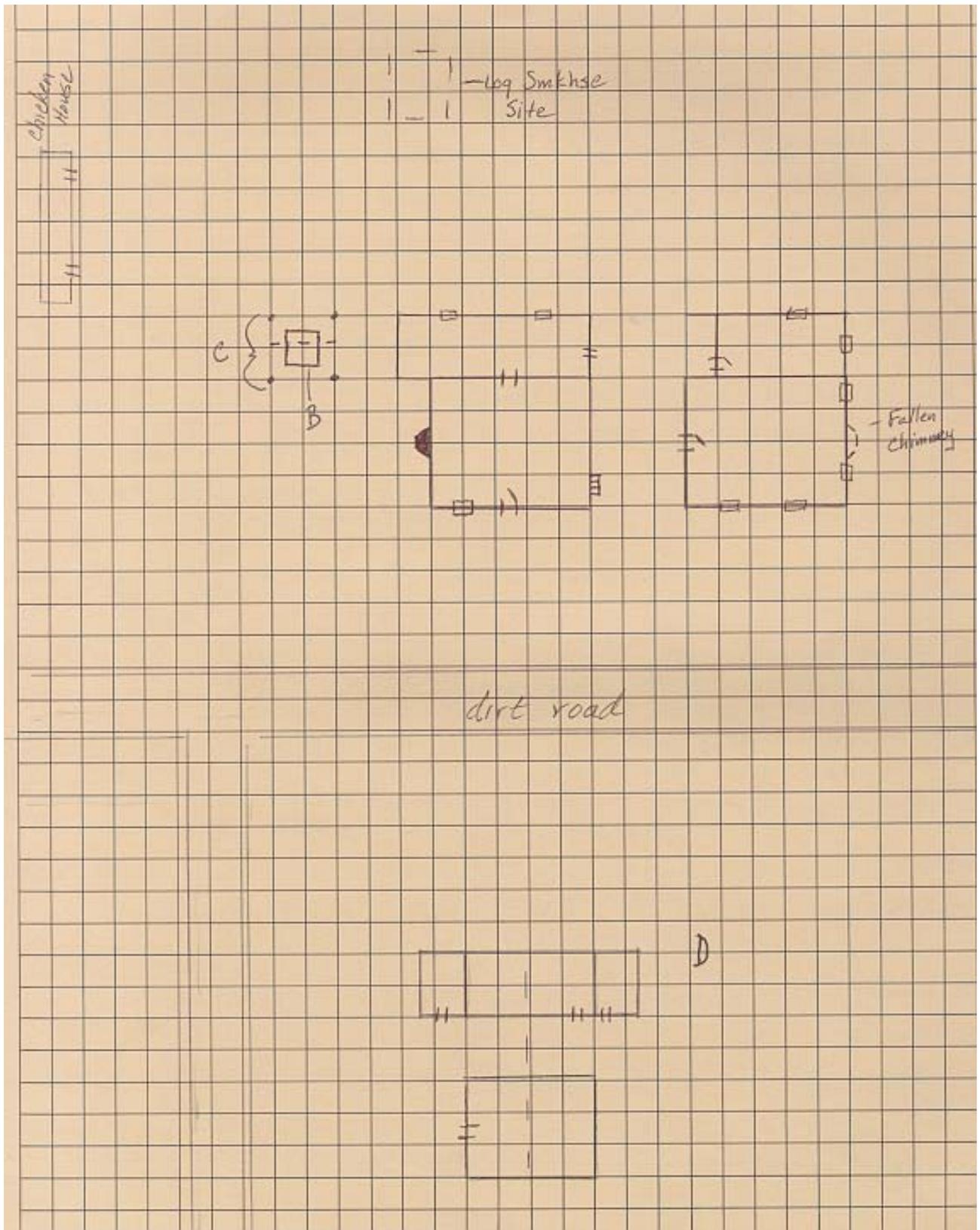


Figure 23: Reeves-Melson House Site Plan, Bonnerdale, Montgomery County. AHPP Survey Files.



Figure 24: Jones Valley House, Caddo Gap, Montgomery County. AHPP Photo.

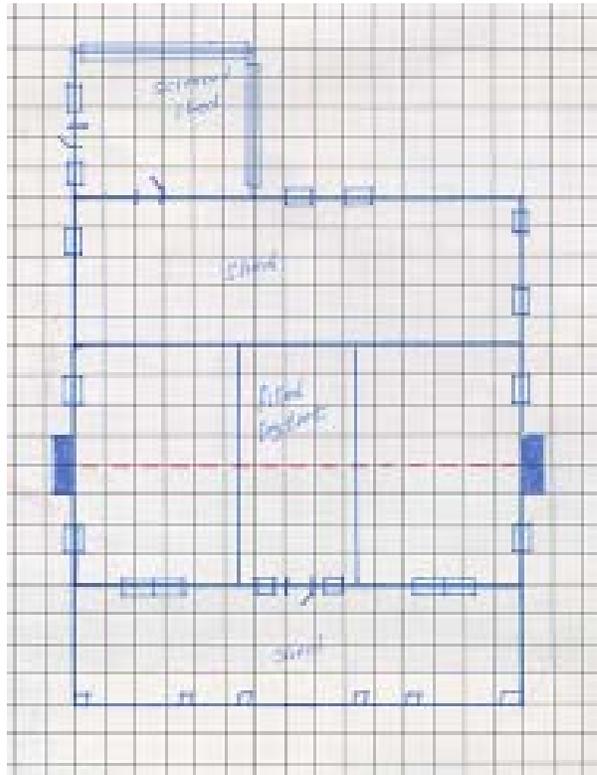


Figure 25: Old Bates House, Pine Ridge vic. Montgomery County. AHPP Photo.



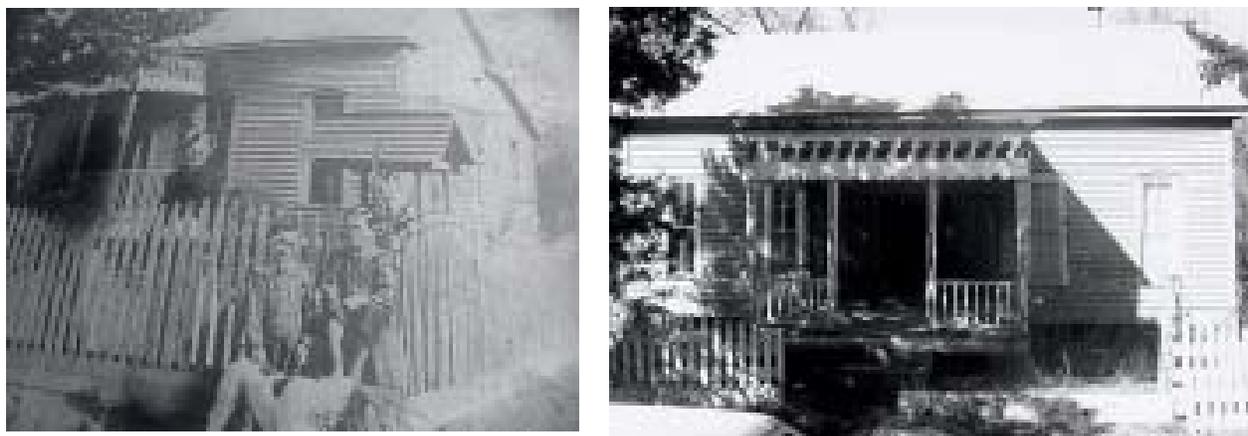
Figure 26: Gillham Place (ca. 1855/1920), Royal, Garland County. AHPP Photo.

Figure 27: Gillham Place Site Plan, Royal, Garland County. AHPP Survey Files.



I-Houses

This architectural type has been closely associated with the Midwest. Fred Kniffen first named the I-House type in 1936 during his study of Louisiana houses because the builders of these houses in Louisiana came from the “I” states of Illinois, Indiana or Iowa. These were a full two-stories in height, and two full rooms in width, and one room deep with a central hall. They are the most common type of folk dwelling in the United States, although in the regions under investigation they do not appear to be very common. Most of the farmers in the Ozark and Ouachita regions were not prosperous enough to afford such a house. In the northern part of the state, the majority of such homes would have been located in slightly more urban areas (Washington County), or on land that was better suited to farming. For this reason, our study did not uncover any photographic evidence of an I-House in the forest areas under consideration. However, because of the popularity of the type it is likely that there were examples of this house type in these areas; further investigation will be required.



Figures 28A and B: Mitchell House (1891), Waltreak, Yell County. AHPP Photos.

Central Hall Houses

The Central Hall Cottage is a European type that was introduced to the New World by the Scotch-Irish settlers in the Chesapeake Tidewater region and the English colonists.⁵⁰ The central hall house in Arkansas is basically like a double pen with an enclosed hallway in the center. It is one-story tall and one room deep. The Mitchell House (1891) in Waltreak in Yell County is a good example of the type. (Figures 28A and B) This house forms an ell in the back, and contains three rooms (there are no log central hall houses in either this study or in the one by Jean Sizemore).

The One-and-One-Half-Story House

This investigation uncovered three board-and-batten houses which were not tall enough to be considered I-Houses, nor were they simply double pen houses. (Figures 29A and B, 30) Although three houses do not constitute a type, Jean Sizemore notes that this type competes with the I-House for dominance in Indiana, and she notes, “...within the scale of rural affluence, it represents an intermediate dwelling between the modest double pen and the I-house type.”⁵¹ The two types pictured here are both of box construction. They are remarkably similar, and each features a shed addition to

the rear of the house. The one-and-one-half-story house may have been more prevalent in Arkansas than we thought, and further research will be required.



Figures 29A and B: Curd Neely House, Fiftysix, Stone County. AHPP Photos.



Figure 20: Unknown House. Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.

The Bent House

There are many other terms used to describe this type such as the “T” house (or prow house) or “L” house. From the information gathered from photographic documentation it would seem that the majority of the houses which are described here as “bent” are “L” shaped. (Figures 31-35). Of the five houses illustrated here, two are of log construction. The design of the bent house is basically a way to increase living space by adding another pen on the front or rear of the dwelling. However, this type is often termed nontraditional because some scholars contend that the type grew out of a form known as the picturesque cottage. Architect A. J. Davis first introduced this form in 1836.⁵² The style immediately spread through the country by way of the architectural pattern books, which were the craze of the 19th century. Although it is questionable as to how many Arkansas settlers actually owned a pattern book, the effect that these books had on everyday rural society may be evidenced here in the popularity of the bent house throughout the state.

High Style Houses

Although the poor, rural portions of the state did not feel the full effect of the architectural explosion of the Victorian period, they nevertheless did see some elements of high style design



Figure 31: Unknown House. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 32: "A Bona Fide Homestead." Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 33: "Cold Springs Ranger District Temporary Quarters, Arkansas National Forest." Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.



Figure 34: Chas. L. Henderson House, Jasper vic., Newton County. AHPP Photo.



Figure 35: "Abandoned Homestead, Fiddlers Creek, Oden Ranger District, Arkansas National Forest, Montgomery County." Courtesy Ouachita National Forest.

during the period under consideration. The Greek Revival style had a pervasive influence on construction in Arkansas, and this high style influence is quite prevalent in the design of the churches and schools in the Ozarks and the Ouachita regions. Architectural Historian William Pierson states that the Greek Revival's popularity peaked across the United States between 1820 and the Civil War, however the style persisted far longer here in Arkansas.⁵³ The Greek Revival style continued to influence home construction in Arkansas into the 1880s, a phenomenon that was rare on the East Coast.



Figure 36: Will Causton House (ca. 1880), Nola vic., Scott County. AHPP Photo.

Most importantly, Jean Sizemore states that the Greek Revival style was the most adaptable to the folk traditions that had already established themselves in the Ozarks. The Greek Revival style is easily applied to the boxy, severe vernacular aesthetic that was so firmly established in this region. Sizemore states, “Underscoring this supposition is the important fact that three common aspects of earlier high style Greek Revival houses in the eastern and midwestern areas of the United States were never adopted in the Arkansas Ozarks—the hipped roof, the asymmetrical plan featuring a side hallway, and the gable-front house; it seems that these details were too contrary to the established building tradition.”⁵⁴ The Will Causton House near Nola in Scott County is an example of a basic ell-shaped house which was originally in the Greek Revival style, with a transom around the door and a Greek Revival style one-story portico. (Figure 36) At some point after its 1880s construction date, the front porch and door area were altered, and Folk Victorian detailing was added, but one can still surmise what is basically a vernacular form underneath.

The documentation on the high style houses in the areas under discussion would seem to suggest that when high style architectural details appear, they are rarely inherent in the form itself, but are merely appendages on what remains a basic vernacular form. An example of this fact is seen in the Mayberry Springs/Rector House near Crystal Springs in Garland County. (Figures 37 A and B, 38) The majority of this structure was constructed in 1895, although some of the house may date from 1850. Although the large house has an unusual form, the house is built in the Plain/Traditional Style, with the decorative Queen Anne balustrade the only truly stylistic feature on the exterior.



Figures 37A and B: Mayberry Springs/Rector House (ca. 1850/1895), Crystal Springs vic., Garland County. AHPP Photos.

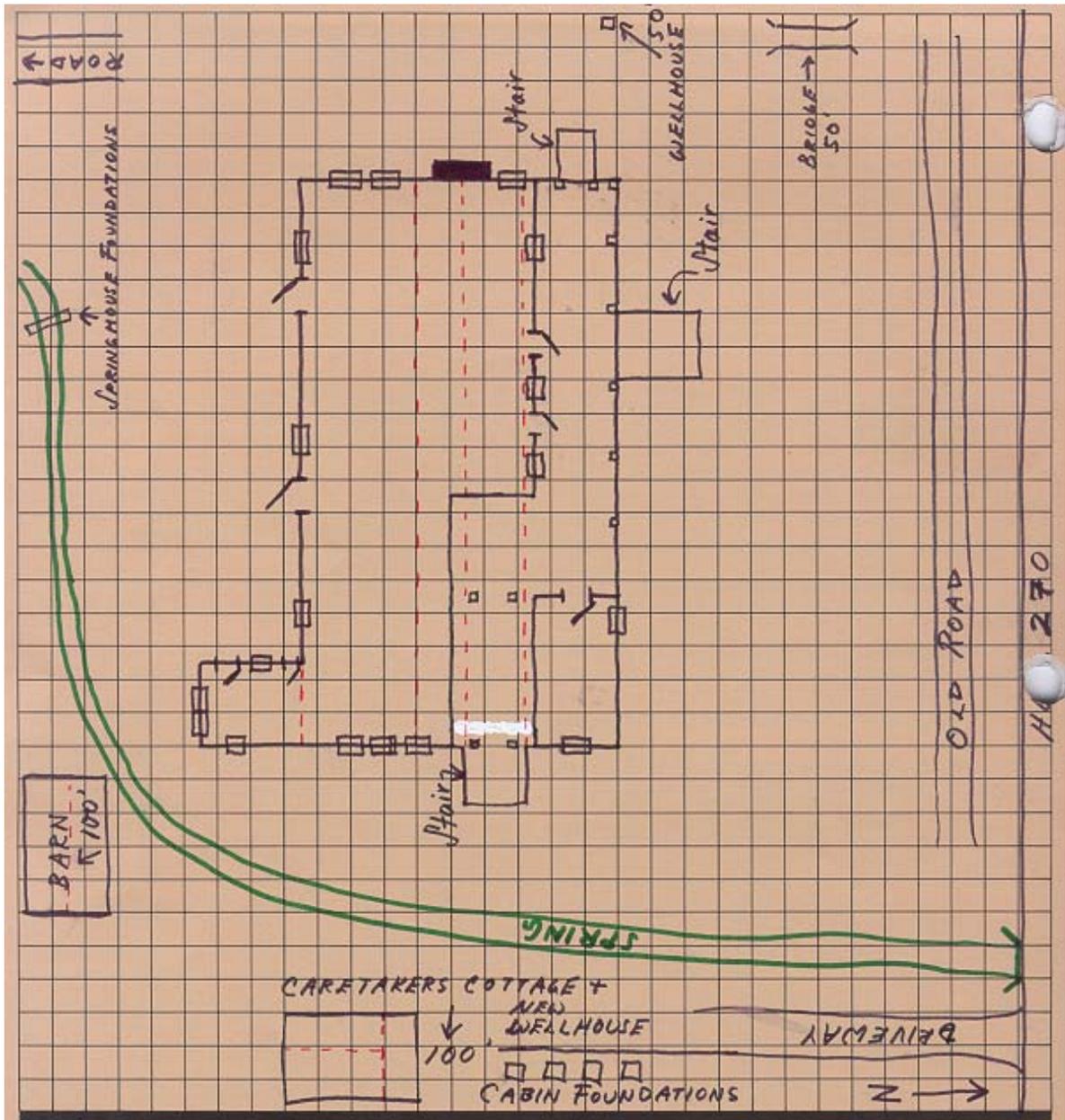


Figure 38: Mayberry Springs/Rector House Site Plan, Crystal Springs vic., Garland County. AHPP Survey Files.

The Lawhorn House in Cedar Creek, Scott County is an example of a double pen, double door house with Folk Victorian detailing. (Figure 39) Again, the builder did nothing more than apply stylish detailing to an established vernacular house form.



Figure 39: Lawhorn House (ca. 1900), Cedar Creek, Scott County. AHPP Photo.

B. The St. Francis National Forest

There was no historic photographic data on this area, as it was acquired by the National Forest Service in 1960. Due to the lack of photographic documentation, it is also difficult to establish “types” without extensive survey work in this region. The St. Francis National Forest consists of Crowley’s Ridge and flat Delta lands. The ridge rises 200 feet above the delta and is composed of gravel, clay, ocean-bottom sand and loess. The Delta soil is a richer, river-deposited soil and is not seen on the Ridge. A further study into the types of farmsteads in the forest area and their similarities with the Ozark and Ouachita forests has the potential to yield a great deal of information in many areas.

III. Ethnic Associations with Architectural Types in the National Forest Regions

After much investigation into the ethnic origin of the settlers of the three regions under discussion, as well as categorization of architectural “types,” there seems to be no apparent correlation between the ethnic origin of the settlers and the type of structures they built. The reasons for this “melting pot” of architectural vocabulary are multifarious and complex. The primary reason is that the settlers who came to Arkansas during the time period under discussion were coming from neighboring states. They had already lost many of their ethnic characteristics and many had already been living in a house which was built in the Mid-Atlantic or Upland South tradition. As houses were



Bariola House, Tontitown, Washington County. AHPP Photo.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Altus vic., Franklin County. AHPP Photo.

commonly built through “house-raisings” the neighbors no doubt contributed to the design of the house and farmstead through example and advice.

The high style homes give evidence to the fact there were national styles emerging (albeit a few years behind the times) that had filtered into the most remote areas of the country. The Folk Victorian detailing found on vernacular houses is an example of how a national stylistic consciousness was creeping even into the minds of those settlers who built modest log homes, in part because of the emergence of the 19th century mass-transit system, the railroad. There is certainly much more to be said about the loss of ethnic diversity through the industrial revolution, but it is surprising to note the extent to which it affected the lives of those who would seemingly be removed from it.

It is also important to note here that there are ethnic settlements such as Altus and Tontitown which were settled largely as ethnic communities and that have maintained certain ethnic traditions in their architecture. The Bariola House in Tontitown and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church near Altus are two such examples. Although they are outside the area under discussion, they nevertheless exhibit the fact that further research may lead us to other examples of ethnic diversity.



Figure 40: Unknown House. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.



Figure 41: Unknown House. Courtesy Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

IV. CONCLUSION

The photographic resources that were studied from the collections of the Ozark-St. Francis and the Ouachita National Forests presented a wealth of architectural information. Unfortunately, many of the captions were missing, and the locations of many of the structures will never be known.

That aside, some of the photos were architectural puzzles, which challenged our conceptions about what was once built. (Figure 40, 41) This study has proved how sparse the scholarly material and photographic documentation is in the area of rural vernacular architecture in Arkansas. There is far more to be learned through on-site examination, scholarly work, and archeological research, not to mention roundtable discussions. The homestead sites in the St. Francis, Ouachita and Ozark National Forest are significant physical reminders of Arkansas history. They contain the potential to reveal more information about the past cultural diversity of these areas.

Endnotes

- 1... As defined by Russel L. Gerlach in *Immigrants in the Ozarks: A Study in Ethnic Geography*, Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1976, 4.
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