

Gov. Thomas Bibb (Newman) Home
Huntsville, Alabama

Madison Co.

HABS No. 16-403

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

Project #16-403
GOVERNOR THOMAS BIBB (NEWMAN) HOME
William Street,
Huntsville, Alabama.

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HISTORICAL DATA:

Built: 1824-1832.
Cost of Material for House: \$32,000.
Architect:

Ownership:

Colonel LeRoy Pope originally owned the lot upon which this house was built, having bought all of the land now covered by Huntsville at the Government land sales in 1809.

J. M. Taylor bought from Colonel Pope two acres. This was in 1818.

John Read bought property, including a house, in 1819.

Governor Thomas Bibb bought this property from John Read in 1821. Here he built the present home for his daughter Adeline (Mrs. James Bradley)

Andrew Beirne purchased this home in 1844. He, his son George P. Beirne, and descendants, occupied the house for more than 70 years.

Miss Jane Beirne, daughter of George P. Beirne, left the place to her nephew, Howard Thomas, in about the year 1917.

W. E. Butler bought this property from Howard Thomas in 1920.

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Newman bought this home in 1927. Mrs. Newman is the great-great-granddaughter of Governor Thomas Bibb.

Present Occupants:

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Newman and family.

Governor Thomas Bibb:

Second governor of the State of Alabama. The brother of William Bibb, only governor of the Alabama Territory and first governor of the State

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of Alabama. In 1820, Governor William Bibb died of injuries received in a fall from a horse. Thomas Bibb succeeded to the office of his brother.

The Governor's home was at Belle Mina, a few miles west of Huntsville. Here, in the town of Huntsville, he erected a home for his daughter, Adeline Bibb, (Mrs. James Bradley). They copied the Governor's home at Belle Mina, avoiding the mistakes made in the first. This house still "ranks as the loveliest home in North Alabama."

"The marriage of Mrs. Bradley's daughter Susan, grandmother of Mrs. Newman, to Thomas White served as the housewarming event for the home. This was a big event for Huntsville. An account of the wedding has come down by word of mouth through several generations."

The Beirnes:

Owned the house from 1844 to about 1917.

During the Civil War the house was used as headquarters by the Federal Army. Many famous generals stayed here when in Huntsville, such as Butler and Sherman.

The Beirn family lived in middle Alabama during the conflict. Upon returning to Huntsville, they found their home in good condition. As headquarters for the Union Army, the house had not been harmed by the Yankee soldiers.

Mrs. W. W. Newman:

The granddaughter of the Susan Bibb whose wedding to Thomas White served as the housewarming event for this house. Thus Mrs. Newman is the great-great-granddaughter of Thomas Bibb, second governor of Alabama and the builder of this fine old home.

Source of Material:

Historic Homes, by Pat Jones, published in the Huntsville Times for November 6, 1932.

Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.

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ARCHITECTURAL MERIT AND DATA:

This house is one of the most pretentious and forceful homes in Huntsville. Architecturally it is a rather bold and massive structure, still very well preserved to the present day. Two story slave quarters are still in existence in the rear of the building.

The interior detail, by contrast, is of a firmer character than the exterior treatment would suggest. The fireplaces are unique and finely carved.

The original fence is still in existence today and is of the same heavy character as the house.

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Source of Material:

E. Walter Burkhardt, District Administrator, HABS,
Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama.

Pat Jones, Historic Homes, published in the Huntsville
Times, November 6, 1932.

Howard Major, The Domestic Architecture of the Early
American Republic, The Greek Revival, Lippincott, 1926.

Revised 1936, H.C.F.

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