John R. Trimm Barn
On the Old Natchez Trace, 0.5 mi. NW of Mackeys Creek, about 5 mi. SW of the intersection of State Rte. 25 and 30
Tishomingo Vicinity
Tishomingo County
Mississippi

HABS No. MS-181

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of INterior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. MS-181

JOHN R. TRIMM BARN

Location: On the Old Natchez Trace, .5 mile northwest of the Mackeys Creek, about 5 miles southwest of the intersection of State Routes 25 and 30, Tishomingo Vicinity, Tishomingo County, Mississippi.

USGS Paden SE 7 1/2' Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates: 16.380570.3830280.

Present Owner: United states of America (August 1978).

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The Trimm Barn, built about 1940, is an example of a transverse crib barn, the most common barn type in the Upland South. Originally built to house registered cattle, the gambrel roof barn was modified several years later to serve a more generalized agricultural operation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1940. John Trimm stated that he had the barn built relatively soon after he purchased the land in 1939.

2. Architect: John Trimm planned the layout, of the barn and turned his plans directly over to the carpenters who constructed the building.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The Trimm Barn is located on an 82-acre tract of land at the west end of the northeast quarter of Section 36, Township 5 South, Range 9 East, in Tishomingo County, Mississippi, acquired by the United States of America for the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project.

The following deed records are located in the Tishomingo County Courthouse, Iuka, Mississippi.

1939 Forfeited Tax Land Patent. State of Mississippi to John R. Trimm, April 27, 1939. Deed Book B-26, p. 419. 78 acres.

1943 Deed. John R. Trimm to Dalton Ward, December 8, 1943. Recorded January 12, 1945, Deed Book P-28, p. 89. 78 acres, $10 and other valuable consideration.

1954 Deed. E. J. Harper and wife, Eunice Faye, to A. D. Riddle and wife, Virginia, September 25, 1954. Deed Book P-33, p. 68. $10 and other valuable considerations (reserves right to make a drainage ditch).

1957 Deed. A. D. Riddle and wife, Virginia, to C. A. Riddle, October 29, 1957. Deed Book P-35, p. 60. $10 and other valuable considerations (right to make drainage ditch).

1961 Warranty Deed. C. A. Riddle to H. H. McNatt, Febuary 28, 1961. Deed Book B-41, p. 114. $10 and other valuable considerations (right to make a drainage ditch).

1978 Warranty Deed. H. H. McNatt et ux to United States of America, July 21, 1978. Deed Book B-92, p. 687-690. 82.05 acres, more or less, sold for $38,000.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers, etc.: Lumber was cut from the tract of land on which the barn was to be built, and milled at a nearby lumber mill. John Trimm hired the Smith brothers, two young men from the town of Tishomingo who were just starting as carpenters, to build the barn. Trimm payed them 10 cents an hour, and it took the Smith brothers fourteen days to complete the building.

5. Original construction: According to John Trimm, the original plan of his barn consisted of a central longitudinal passageway with a one-room stable the length of the barn on the south side, and two rooms used for storage of corn and cotton seed on the north side. A gambrel roof was chosen, according to Trimm, because it allowed more loft space to store hay than a gable roof. The dimensions of the original structure were approximately 26' by 27'.

   The Trimm Barn is an example of a transverse crib plan, the most common barn type in the upland South. (Kniffen, 1965: 563-565) This type, thought to have developed in the Tennessee Valley, is found both with gable roofs, and in the newer examples, with gambrel roofs.

6. Alterations and additions: John Trimm stated that alterations were made to the barn soon after it was purchased by Dalton Ward (1943). The function of the barn changed from housing a small cattle operation to serving a more generalized farming operation. The stable area was partitioned into three stalls for mules and milk cows. Shelters with shed roofs were added along the south and north sides. The south addition is enclosed with fencing, except on the west end, which has horizontal wooden siding, and appears to have served the purpose of sheltering livestock. The north addition, sided on the north with sheet metal and open on the east and west ends, appears to have been used recently for the storage of farm equipment.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Structure:

The property on which the Trimm Barn is situated belonged to the McDougals, the family of John Trimm's sister's husband, from 1911 to 1924, at which time it was sold to D. V. Beard. Mr. Trimm had lived on the property himself, for several years while teaching school, prior to becoming a Post Office clerk in 1917. In 1939, while living in the town of Tishomingo and serving as its Postmaster, John Trimm bought the property. An older log barn was torn down, and this barn was built a short time later, specifically to house registered cattle. Five registered cattle purchased in Fulton, Kentucky, and brought to Tishomingo County, Mississippi, were, Trimm reports, among the first registered cattle in the county. Several years later Trimm sold the property when his cattle became too numerous to house in this barn. After it was sold in 1943, the barn was modified for more generalized use. Since that time the barn has had several owners, and has primarily been rented to farmers who did not dwell on the property

John R. Trimm remains one of Tishomingo's prominent citizens. He served as the town's Postmaster from 1924 to 1960, and is its Mayor from 1960 to 1974. Still an active landholder in the county, Trimm owns a productive farm.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Records, Tishomingo County Courthouse, Iuka, Mississippi.

Interviews with John Trimm, Tishomingo, Mississippi, August 1 and 3, 1978. Former Postmaster and Mayor of Tishomingo, and person for whom the barn was built. 1940.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Glassie, Henry H. Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

Kniffen, Fred, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 55 (1965): 549-577.

Prepared by: Michael Ann Williams
Assistant Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
August 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This structure is an example of the most common barn type in the Upland South-the transverse-crib barn.

2. Condition of fabric: Moderately maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This one-and-a-half-story barn is approximately 48'-1" (one-bay front) by 27'-4". In plan this is a transverse-crib barn with shed additions at either side.

2. Foundations: The foundation consists of a horizontal wood sill placed upon stone piers of varying sizes.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: The walls are composed of circular-sawn horizontal boards roughly 9" to 12" wide. Between the boards are gaps averaging 1" in width. Crude horizontal battens of varying width, made of scrape lumber, are used on the wall of the main building under the shed roof extension of the south. The wood siding of the barn has never been painted. Galvanized corrugated metal sheeting is used as siding on the north facade of the north addition.

4. Structural system, framing: This barn shows simple wood frame construction, consisting of milled framing members to which flat, siding boards have been applied. The 4" by 4" wood foundation sill is white oak. The remainder of the framing is pine. The roof structure consists of 2" by 6" rafters to which 1"-thick purlins varying in width from 8" to 12" have been applied. Vertical wall studs are spaced 32" to 36" on center and are surfaced with a single exterior layer of horizontal wood sheathing, except along the north facade, where metal roofing material is used. Diagonal wind braces are notched into the studs beneath the sheathing.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: None.

6. Openings: There are four exterior doorways in this building. The two major openings are entrances into the central aisle of the main structure. These openings each measure roughly 10' in width and 8' in height. The west entrance has a removable fence-like barbed wired closure stretched across it. The entrance on the east end is an opening measuring roughly 3'-6" by 4'-0" which serves as a doorway. Also on the west facade is a doorway measuring approximately 3'-0" by 6'-0", leading to the one-story shed addition on the south side of the barn. This opening has a diagonally framed wood gate hinged along its south edge and swinging outward.

7. Roof:

   a. Shape, covering: The barn has a galvanized corrugated metal gambrel roof with shed roofs of similar material on either side. The sheds slope at approximately the same slope as the two upper planes of the gambrel roof.

   b. Cornice, eaves: To the north, the metal roofing overhangs the wall line by approximately 8"; to the west, approximately 10"; to the south, approximately 1'-5"; and to the east approximately 10". On the west facade, fascia boards are used just beneath the roofline.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The barn has a transverse-crib plan with two shed additions on either side. An open central aisle runs longitudinally, east-west. On the south side of the main structue are three animal pens, on the north two rooms for grain storage. The south addition is a partially open space, enclosed with wire on the south and east sides, and wood siding on the north.

The north shed addition is open completely on the east and west sides with galvanized corrugated metal sheeting on the north side. There is a loft space above the main central portion of the barn.

2. Flooring: The central aisle and the three animal pens have dirt-manure floors while the grain storage area (north side of main structure) has a raised wooden floor approximately 18" above grade. The shed additions have dirt-manure floors.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: Exposed rafters and joists to which metal sheet roofing has been attached serve as the ceilings, except in the lower portion of the main structure, where exposed floor joists and a few loft-space floor boards serve as a partial ceiling.

4. Doorways and doors: On the north side of the central aisle, there are two outward-swinging doors leading to the two raised-floor grain storage spaces. On the south side, three outward-swinging doors lead to the three animal stalls. All five doors are constructed of vertical boards braced horizontally on the exterior and secured with a pivot latch, in one case, and with sliding stick latches in the remainder. All are mounted with metal gate hinges.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The major axis through the center of the main entrances runs roughly east-west. The dirt approach road is connected to the Old Natchez Trace, which passes just north of the barn and comes to within 115 feet of the northwest corner. A second dirt road branches to the east from the approach road and runs along the north side of the barn, approximately 90 feet from it.

2. Outbuildings: None currently exist, although a house did at one time accompany the barn and was west of the barn, about 160 feet away.

Prepared by: James Murray Howard
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
August 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation done during the 1978 Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project, undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Interagency Archeological Services, Atlanta, and cosponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile and Nashville Districts, in compliance with Executive Order 11593, as a mitigative effort in the construction of the waterway. Records were made of eighteen historic sites and structures in the region between Gainesville, Alabama, and Iuka, Mississippi.

The project was executed under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect, of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor was James Murray Howard of the University of Illinois. Project Historian was Betty K. Bird of the University of Virginia. The Assistant Historian was Michael Ann Williams (University of Pennsylvania). Foreman was Ruthie D. Wiley of the University of Florida. Student Architects who prepared measured drawings for the project were Carol J. Crandall (Carnegie-Mellon University), Richard J. Cronenberger (University of Miami), Peter G. Darlow (McGill University), Daniel M. Gaines (University of Tennessee), and R. Bradley Mellor (Rice University). The inventory of sites within the project area was carried out by Inventory Supervisor J. A. Chewning of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Assistant Historian for the inventory was Pamela J. Wolf (George Washington University). One structure was recorded during the winter of 1979 by project supervisor Peter G. Darlow (McGill University), Sally K. Tompkins, Project Historian, and Staff Architects Bethanie C. Grashof, Rudy Massengill, and Janet Hochuli (The Cooper Union). Drawings for this structure were completed during the spring of 1979 by staff Architects Peter G. Darlow, Janet Hochuli, James F. Speake and Reginald A. Berry (Howard University). Photographs were taken by David J. Kaminsky in the summer of 1978 and by Gil Ford in the spring of 1979.