

"Strawberry Hill"
William Walton Home
R. P. Spence, Owner
Near Forkland, Alabama
on State Highway #40
GREENE Co.

HABS No. ALA-271 (WPA)

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ALA.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT NO. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Auburn, Alabama

NEAR STRAWBERRY HILL PLANTATION.
Forkland, Greene County, Alabama.

2.

Ownership:

Present Owner: Minnie Webb & Mrs. John Coker.

Previous Owners: William Walton.

Date of Erection: 1821. mid-19th C.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: William Walton.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Two story frame; hand hewn
and morticed construction.

Other Existing Records:

See: "HISTORIC HOMES OF ALABAMA AND THEIR TRADITIONS"
By Alabama members, National League of American
Pen Women.

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Additional Data: Thirteen miles south of Eutaw - on the State road leading to Demopolis, lies Strawberry Hill, the ante-bellum home of the Walton and Webb families. In support of the venerable age of this Southern Estate, the original land grant shows the date of the year 1820, and bears the signature of President Monroe, with the Great Seal of the United States of America. The house, surrounded by wide acreage, was built by William Walton, from Georgia, in 1821, and for more than a hundred years has gathered - to itself the charm of romance and historical interest. Within its walls have lived, and passed, men and women - whose lives interwoven with the two greatest epochs of our country's history - the Revolutionary and War Between the States.

William Walton, the founder of Strawberry Hill, was the young brother of George Walton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His own services to his country was in the active capacity of an officer on General Washington's staff, and as such he is pictured holding the flag in the well known painting, "Washington Crossing the Delaware". Continental Congress gave land grants to many of its Revolutionary officers, and William Walton - after his marriage - took up several thousand acres. As his children married, he bestowed upon them portions of the plantation, until now the original holdings surrounding the house has been diminished to about one thousand acres; leaving the bordering plantations all in the ownership of kinsmen.

Strawberry Hill was named for the Walpole estate and home of Horace Walpole in England - the Walpoles being connected by marriage with the families of both William Walton and his wife.

Of hand hewn and mortised construction, the house is appealing in its simplicity of design and beauty of proportion. Even the materials which went into its erection hold much of interest. The timber used was cut from virgin trees on the surrounding acreage, and hand hewn by slave labor; bricks for foundations and chimneys were made on the place; nails and iron work were imported from England, arriving via Mobile. As one looks at the house through the pathway flanked on either side by boxwood planted a century ago, it seems a small building - dwarfed by the gigantic trees of its setting.

Additional Data: (continued)

But on entering, one is impressed with the spaciousness of its interior. Two rooms, each twenty feet square, open from a central hall - this in turn leading into a cross-hall fifteen wide and extending the width of the house. Connecting with the central hall is a wing composed of a dining room, commodious pantries, and kitchen, with a back porch of generous proportions. On the second floor are two immense bedrooms, with a connecting hall twenty feet square.

During the War Between the States, all the women of the family refugeed at Strawberry Hill, as it was off the path of the invading Federal soldiers under General Butler.

Strawberry Hill has sheltered people of illustrious names, both as inmates and guests. It has also been the scene of many social activities.

Source of Material:

Natalie B. Cocke.
Eutaw, Alabama.

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Compiled by:

Katherine Floyd.
Auburn, Alabama.

Approved:

E. Walter Burkhardt, A. P. I.
Auburn, Alabama.

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