

Cabaniss House: Purchase a piece of Georgia's Past

At first glance, the Cabaniss-Hungerford-Hanberry House, 21 miles north of Macon, may not be your idea of a dream house, but this fixer-upper is one of a kind. And it could be yours for a very reasonable price. Sound like the typical realtor's pitch? Well, the Cabaniss House is anything but typical.

Seeing the Cabaniss House for the first time, one is reminded of the ingenuity of its craftsmen. Extra measures were taken to incorporate many fine details into this home. Civil War folklore surrounds the house which is rumored to be haunted.

Inside, exceptional craftsmanship is reflected in elaborately carved mantelpieces, cornices, doors, and paneled wainscoting. Six fireplaces sharing two chimneys once warmed nearly every room in the house against the chilly Georgian night air.

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You can't see the Cabaniss House from Hungerford Road—tall, overgrown sumac hides perhaps the last remaining vernacular example of Jeffersonian Classicism in Georgia. Instead you hear the ring of hammers and the low murmur of voices talking as workers undertake a \$120,000 construction rehabilitation funded by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's Revolving Fund and donations from generous Trust members.

The house, located 21 miles north of Macon and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built c. 1805 by former Virginian George Cabaniss. Civil War folklore surrounds the house which is rumored to be haunted. It's not hard to imagine the daunting arrival of the Union soldiers and the hardships of the Reconstruction that most certainly engulfed this weatherboard house. The unusual tripartite (three-part) plan, with a central one-over-one portion and a 1.5-story wing on each side, would have been familiar to most colonists, because the plan was popularized by Thomas Jefferson who regarded Classical Roman design as an appropriate inspiration for America's new republic.

Seeing the Cabaniss House for the first time, one is reminded of the ingenuity of its craftsmen. Extra measures were taken to incorporate many fine details into this home. Roman numerals are barely visible where they were scratched into the hand hewn beams, mapping the course of the mortise-and-tenon joints. Primitive, eight-pointed stars ornament a small frieze below the exterior cornice. Inside, exceptional craftsmanship is reflected in elaborately carved mantel pieces, cornices, doors, and paneled wainscoting. Six fire places sharing two chimneys once warmed nearly every room in the house against the chilly Georgian night air. Tucked behind a chimney in one wing is a dogleg staircase. Its butter milk green paint is barely visible now.

The house was last occupied in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Faded print wallpaper is peeling from the walls. "I've seen that same wallpaper is several hotels in Macon," says Denny Noojin, contractor for the project.

Besides the historical value associated with the house, Cabaniss House is near many recreational sites including two golf courses, the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, and abundant hunting and fishing venues. Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair are both less than an hour away.

Currently, the house is a property of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. The house was purchased through the Trust's Revolving Fund, a program which seeks out endangered historic properties and places them with buyers who agree to rehabilitate the site. The Revolving Fund has already been responsible for saving five endangered properties in Georgia.

David Richardson, a Macon based architect, drew up the plans for the restoration of the Cabaniss House. Torgin Construction is the contractor. A party is scheduled for today, Sunday, October 26th from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. to celebrate completion of Cabaniss House restoration. Those who have made donations toward restoration—a total of more than \$18,000 has been donated by Trust members will be honored.

Interested members of the general public are invited to join Georgia Trust members and friends for refreshments, music, and laughter as the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation celebrates the preservation of one of Georgia's most significant structures.



This historical landmark is truly a unique part of Georgia history.

Bruce Radcliffe/The Macon Telegraph



The restoration of Cabaniss House has progressed quite well.



Notice the unique architecture that fills this old home.



This is the original wood the house was built with.



The fireplace runs through each floor of this tripartite home.