

*Final Copy*

**Preservation Plan  
and  
Design Guidelines**

**Smith - Manning House**

**Marietta Historic Preservation  
Commission**

**October 12, 2007**

## **Introduction**

Marietta is one of many Georgia cities taking steps to protect its cultural resources within historic areas. In 2005, the Marietta city council passed a Historic Preservation ordinance, thereby creating the Marietta Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The ordinance charges the Marietta HPC with overseeing preservation activities in Marietta. Commission members are responsible for recommending to the City Council specific places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, or works of art to be designated by ordinance as historic properties or historic districts. In 2006, the mayor and city council directed the commission to designate the Smith-Manning House as the first Landmark listing on the Marietta Register of Historic Places. Commission members asked Robert Ciucevich, who had completed a historic resources survey already commissioned by Cobb County, for use of his survey in the designation process. Mr. Ciucevich presented the study to Marietta HPC members in October 2006 without charge, and, in the interest of saving the city the expense of hiring a historic preservation consultant to prepare design/preservation guidelines for the Smith-Manning House and grounds, Historic Preservation commissioners agreed to write the guidelines themselves.

## **History of Marietta**

For at least 300 years, the land areas of Georgia now known as Cobb County were occupied by the Cherokee Indians. The discovery of gold in North Georgia in 1828 and the demand for land brought conflict between the first white pioneers who began arriving in 1830 and Native Americans. The settlers encroached on the Cherokees' land, then obtained lots in a state land lottery in 1832 that divided Cobb's allotted land into 40-acre gold lots and 160-acre land lots. There were no gold discoveries in the county so most of the new residents were farmers.

Marietta was the first community settled in Cobb, established as a village and as the Cobb County seat in 1834 and chartered as a

town in 1852. By 1845 when the Western & Atlantic Railroad was completed through the town, Marietta had a population of 1,500. In the 1850s, a thriving Marietta became known throughout Georgia as a pleasant resort town with a park, many impressive houses, natural springs and three hotels attracting summer visitors from the coastal areas. Prosperity continued until 1860 when the town's population reached almost 2,700.

After the onset of the Civil War and Georgia's secession from the Union in 1861, most of the men in the Marietta area left to join the Confederate army. Women and children helped provide food and supplies and, during the battles in the area in 1864, nursed the wounded. Men too old to fight formed a home guard unit. By June 1864 when the fighting began nearby, few families remained because word of Federal invasion prompted townspeople to become refugees in other parts of the state. Marietta was transformed into a large depot, first for Confederate troops and wagon trains, then after July 3, 1864 for the Union army occupying the town. Churches and houses were requisitioned as hospitals for the Federal wounded and the remaining citizens lived under martial law. In November, as Union troops were leaving to rejoin the main army south of Atlanta, they destroyed the railroad and set fire to the courthouse, the Georgia Military Institute campus, mills and tanneries. Other buildings and houses added to the destruction, totaling more than 100 structures lost.

Marietta and Cobb County recovered slowly from the war's effects. City property owners saw their holdings, valued at almost \$600,000 in 1860, drop to approximately \$375,000 by 1866. The railroad was repaired by July 1865 to allow trains to resume routes but streets were littered with war debris and many houses showed heavy damage sustained during the occupation. Many former residents gradually returned to the area, opening new stores on the town square; businesses began to revive in the late 1860s. In the 1870s, the county rebuilt the courthouse and jail, more new stores appeared, repairs were made to some houses while a few new

structures were built. By the turn of the century, Marietta experienced a modest revival with new buildings appearing all around the city square. Residents hailed the installation of electricity in 1889 and water and telephone systems were new comforts. The first library was established and a public school opened in the late 1890s.

After the war, Cobb's population grew slowly as farmers experienced hardships due to low market prices. Marietta had about 4,500 residents in 1900 and a new streetcar rail line transporting passengers and freight between the town and Atlanta spurred residential development. War again took Marietta men off to fight in 1917 and those too old to be drafted organized a home guard unit. Marietta and Cobb residents celebrated the county's centennial in 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression. Construction declined, cotton prices dropped drastically and incomes were drastically curtailed. The city's population was about 7,600 in 1930.

Marietta underwent moderate growth after the Depression, reaching a population of 8,600 in 1940. When the United States entered World War II, Marietta was selected as the site for a huge aircraft manufacturing plant and newcomers poured into the area to work in the factory. Drastic change came to Marietta and Cobb County as numerous housing projects were built to accommodate the influx. The aircraft plant closed in 1946 but the Korean conflict spurred reopening the factory in 1951 with Lockheed Aircraft Corporation as its operator. Marietta's population tripled from 1940 to 1960 when more than 25,500 residents were recorded as the once quaint small town planned for unprecedented growth. By the 1980s and 1990s, the area experienced a phenomenal boom in housing, industry and business. After older downtown businesses declined, Marietta launched a successful revitalization program in the 1970s. Despite the loss of the 1872 Cobb County Courthouse and adjacent stores, razed in 1969, most buildings on the downtown Square have been refurbished and draw throngs of

theater-goers, shoppers and diners to the area. Preservation organizations are encouraging adaptive use of historic houses and buildings and adoption of a historic preservation ordinance by the city is fostering interest in preservation. Today, Marietta's population is close to 65,000 in a county with about 650,000 residents. A thriving Marietta contains 21.6 square miles and anchors a strong sense of community identity for the county as a whole.

### **History of Rockford**

Rockford, also known as the Smith-Manning House, is one of Marietta's outstanding antebellum dwellings. Built by Dr. Sidney Smith (1800-1856) of Beaufort, S. C, about 1839, the Greek Revival style plantation house is a wood frame dwelling with a one-story front gable. The main level living quarters raised one story on a full-height coursed stone basement. Dr. Smith reportedly bought several hundred acres of land in Cobb County when he relocated from South Carolina in the 1830s. Although his name is not listed in records of Cobb's pioneer settlers, the Smith family may be considered among the earliest to arrive in the area. According to Sarah Gober Temple's definitive history of Cobb County "The First Hundred Years," Dr. Smith owned the largest number of slaves (60), valued at \$36,150, when his estate was appraised in August 1856.

Slaves were responsible for most if not all of the construction work on the house. Dr. Smith died in April 1856 at age 56. Four months later his wife, Mariah A. Smith, died at age 37. Dr. Smith's gravestone in the St. James Episcopal Cemetery in Marietta describes him:

"A skillful physician  
An enterprising and public-spirited citizen  
A zealous friend  
A kind master

An indulgent husband and parent  
He discharged all the duties of life with promptitude and fidelity.  
*Conscia mens recti famae mendacia ridet.*”

In 1864, the house appeared on military maps as a landmark on Civil War battlefields in Cobb County. Although there is no documentation, the Smith house was probably Confederate General William J. Hardee’s headquarters during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in June and July 1864 because of its proximity to the position of Hardee’s Corps. During the heavy fighting in the area, the Confederates used the house as a field hospital for wounded soldiers.

After the war’s end, Smith family members retained ownership in the house until 1873 when William K. Smith sold it to Mary F. Myers of Marietta. The earliest deed of record in Cobb County on the homeplace is a Bond for Title dated June 17, 1873 and does not indicate the total acres but includes all of Land Lots 36, 37, 38, and 111 of the 19<sup>th</sup> District, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section (160 acres); a portion of Land Lot 1 of the 17<sup>th</sup> District, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section (no acreage indicated), lying west of a branch called “Rock Ford,” and north of an unnamed road running through the lot; and a strip of 16 acres on the south side of Land Lots 324 and 325 of the 20<sup>th</sup> District, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section. From this record, there seems to have been at least 176 acres of property sold by the Smith family. Mrs. Myers paid Mr. Smith \$3,500 and agreed to pay an additional \$8,000 in \$500 increments beginning November 1, 1873 as part of the Bond for Title.

Other deed transactions recorded include:

\*Warranty Deed dated January 14, 1880: Mary F. Myers sold to Octavus Donhen of Savannah for \$1,500, including the same property as that purchased by Mrs. Myers from Mr. Smith. Also cited is the transfer of the Myers’ ownership of houses, buildings, stables, yards and gardens.

- \*Bond for Title dated July 1, 1882 from Octavus Cohen to William Alston of Cobb County. Consideration for the transfer was \$4,000 including the same property as that purchased by Mr. Cohen from Mrs. Myers. The Bond cites an outstanding claim of Thomas M. Kirkpatrick of Cobb County.
- \*Warranty Deed dated April 3, 1883 from Octavus Cohen to William Alston of Cobb County. Consideration for this transfer was final payment of \$2,000 from the previous Bond for Title and the property is the same as the property Mr. Cohen referenced in the Bond for Title to Mr. Alston.
- \*Warranty Deed dated May 10, 1889 from William Alston to Matthew N. Cannon of Cobb County. Consideration for the transfer was \$6,500. The property is a portion of the land Mr. Alston purchased from Mr. Cohen, amounting to a total of 180 acres.
- \*Deed to Secure Debt dated May 10, 1880 from Matthew N. Cannon to Virginia S. Payne of Fairgreen County, Virginia. The deed, although difficult to read, appears to secure a note of \$5,000 due in five years on May 1, 1894. Mr. Cannon borrowed these proceeds to purchase the property from Mr. Alston. The Secured Property is the same tract Mr. Cannon purchased from Mr. Alston.
- \*Bond for Title dated May 10, 1889 from Virginia S. Payne to Matthew N. Cannon. At the same time Mr. Cannon gave Mrs. Payne a Deed to Secure Debt, Mrs. Payne also executed the Bond for Title in which she indicated she would reconvey her interest in the property for the sum of \$10,000 plus interest due semiannually, maturing in five years on May 1, 1894. (This document was not recorded until two years later.)
- \*Assignment of Bond for Title dated December 6, 1890 from Matthew N. Cannon to Mr. J. Carroll Payne of Fulton County. Mr. Cannon transferred his right in Mrs. Payne's Bond for Title to J. Carroll Payne about 18 months after the Bond for Title date, then recorded this transfer a year later. The property is still described as the 180-acre tract.
- \*Quitclaim Deed dated October 19, 1891 from Virginia S. Payne to Mr. J. Carroll Payne. Mrs. Payne quitclaimed the 180-acre tract

to J. Carroll Payne, reciting that he had paid the final \$5,700 due on the Note originally from Matthew N. Cannon.

\*Warranty Deed dated March 26, 1894 from Mr. J. Carroll Payne to Mr. John L. Manning. Mr. Payne transferred the 180-acre tract (including the Smith House) to Mr. Manning in consideration of the payment of \$5,200. Mr. Manning recorded the deed in 1899.

John Manning's wife, Mamie H. Manning, and four children inherited the house and 1,200 acres upon his death in 1922. In the 1940s, James T. Manning, one of the heirs, bought the remaining interest in the house from his siblings. James Manning sold 300 acres of his property for the Lee's Crossing subdivision in 1978 and his heirs sold the 34 remaining acres in 2006 to Keeler Woods Joint Venture, Inc. James T. Manning served as state representative and state senator from Cobb County and served as solicitor general of the Blue Ridge Circuit. In 1953, he was elected as Cobb County Superior Court judge. After his retirement in 1964, Judge Manning was Superior Court judge emeritus.

The founding of Marietta coincided with an increase in popularity of the Greek Revival style in Georgia. The early houses of Marietta are both significant as examples of the evolution of Greek Revival and as forms rarely found in Georgia. Rockford was one of the earliest, and possibly the first, plantation house to be built in the Greek Revival style in Marietta. The structure features a frame, one-story front gable on a full-height, coursed stone basement. The one-story stone foundation is made with rock quarried from a nearby creek. Other features include a full raised masonry "basement" and two wood-framed upper floors, distinguishing Rockford as one of very few Greek Revival houses in Georgia with those features. Most one and two-story houses of the period are entirely wood-framed and are built upon short masonry piers. The fact that the Smith-Manning house combines period design with seemingly idiosyncratic construction has survived and is virtually intact, makes it of interest and has significance in Georgia's architectural history. The Smith-Manning House represents a



significant place in the local history of the area in which it stands. As an excellent example of an early antebellum structure built by a prosperous landowner and farmer. It echoes the style of the time and met the needs of Dr. Smith's family and social position. Historically, it is a local landmark, having survived the wartime devastation inflicted on many plantations because it was a headquarters for a Confederate general. The house continues to project much of the flavor of the era in which it began.

A historic site survey revealed that the house was remodeled in the Carpenter Italianate/Folk Victorian style during the late 1800s. (The study also refers to the building style as an excellent example of the "sand hills cottage" type of construction.) Original Greek Revival style porticoes were replaced with existing verandahs featuring delicate sawn work frieze, post brackets and balustrades. Ornate paired cornice brackets were added under the eaves in the façade gable end. Another alteration includes a one-story, partial width gable ell service wing added along the rear of the house. The addition contains the kitchen and possibly the servants' quarters.

Outbuildings remaining at the time of the historic site survey in 2005 and 2006 included:

\*Smokehouse – c. 1920s

\*Barn machinery – c. 1920s

\*Barn/dairy – c. 1920s

\*Barn/livestock – c. 1920s

\*Icehouse – c. 1920s

\*Dairy – c. 1920s

\*Garage – c. 1930s

\*Chicken coop – c. 1930s

\*Well house – c. 1930s

### **Preservation Plan/Design Guidelines**

This section addresses the significant historic resources on the site including the main house, outbuilding A and outbuilding B.

## **Main House**

The significant features of the main house include the stone foundation, wood siding, wood windows, wood doors, and porches. The 16' by 32' addition at the rear of the house is not historically significant and can be removed.

The stone foundation is in good condition and should be retained as is. Mortar cracks should be repaired as needed using a non-Portland cement. The stone should never be painted and can be cleaned by pressure washing with water.

The wood siding is in fair condition. Repairs should be made with like material. The siding should not be replaced with a non-wood material. Light pressure washing with water is acceptable for cleaning. Paint removal, if necessary, can be accomplished with chemical paint removal agents. The siding should never be sandblasted.

The windows are historic and should be retained. Interior or exterior storm windows can be installed over the historic windows to increase the energy efficiency of the building envelope. The wooden window shutters should be retained and repaired as needed with like materials.

The doors should be retained and repaired as needed. Replacement doors should be made out of wood and match the appearance of the existing doors.

The porches should be retained as is. Repairs should be made as needed using materials that are similar to what currently exists. The porches should not be removed.

The roof and gutters are in fair condition. Roof replacement should include asphalt or wood shingles. A metal roof is inappropriate.

## Outbuilding A

The wood siding and stone foundation should be treated in the same manner as the main house.

## Outbuilding B

Same as outbuilding A

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Section 7-8-9-040 states: *Prior to any designation of a historic property, the owner or owners of the private property shall be given the opportunity to concur in or object to the designation. If the owner of the private property does not consent to the proposed historic designation, the historic property cannot be listed as a historic property under this ordinance. Additionally, where the owner or owners of private property consent to the nomination, the rules and or guidelines under which they have consented to the designation may not thereafter be changed to be more restrictive without the consent of the owner or owners of the historic property.*

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