

# Richard Johnson Law Office

Clinton, Georgia

## A Historic Structure Report



*Photograph by the Old Clinton Historical Society*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Built c. 1830s, per oral history and supported by visual observation of physical evidence, in Clinton, Georgia, the old law office of Judge Richard Johnson was moved on January 26, 2016 to a property owned by the Old Clinton Historical Society in order to facilitate its restoration. The goal of this historic structure report is to assess the current condition of the Richard Johnson law office, evaluate the current conditions in comparison to its historic conditions, and make recommendations regarding the building's restoration.

The significance of the Richard Johnson law office is tied to the significance of the Old Clinton Historic District in which it is located as an intact example of closely related early Georgia plain style buildings still in existence. Because the historic district is currently composed mostly of early nineteenth century houses, the law office serves as a somewhat underrepresented resource within the boundaries of Old Clinton. In keeping with the surrounding buildings in the district, the law office is a simple frame, front-gabled building clad in white-painted clapboard. Unfortunately, the wood-frame building had suffered significant termite damage as it had been turned a quarter in its original location and the moved stone foundation piers were too low to the ground. This led to the removal and replacement of the flooring system, the deterioration of other structural members like the studs, the removal of clapboards to allow for the stabilization and move, and more.

Although the Richard Johnson law office is in considerable disrepair, its retention of structural members and other materials from its period of significance has led us to recommend a full restoration. This will involve hiring a contractor familiar with historic preservation and restoration projects to oversee the construction along with a skilled mason and craftsman, also familiar with such projects, to ensure that the stone work and carpentry are in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Restoration. The work will include the further stabilization of the building by sistering modern 2 x 4s to the existing studs, restoration of the subflooring with salvaged wood, replacement and repair of windows, replacement and repair of the interior and exterior cladding, recreation of the stone foundation piers, recreation of the brick chimney on the east facade, and the subsequent use of the building as an museum for the Old Clinton Historical Society.

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## INTRODUCTION

This historic structure report aims to document the history, assess the existing conditions, and propose restoration and other treatment recommendations for a two-room historic law office, once owned by Judge Richard Johnson, in Clinton, Georgia. Although "Old Clinton" is now within the city limits of Gray, it was once itself a booming antebellum town. Its history is documented in the Old Clinton Historic District's National Register nomination, in which it is recognized as having national significance for the period of 1809 through the mid-19th century. The Richard Johnson law office is evocative of this significance of the district as a whole with its plain frame architecture and representation of the types of businesses that populated historic Clinton. Currently the significance of the Old Clinton Historic District is conveyed mostly through preserved antebellum residences of important Clinton families. The documentation, restoration, and interpretation of the Richard Johnson law office will add to and create a more comprehensive tangible history of the Old Clinton Historic District.

William Lamar Cawthon, Jr., an attorney and historian who received his B.A. from Emory University and his J.D. and a Master's degree in history from the University of Georgia, provided an endowment in his will for the restoration of the law office. Although Cawthon lived in Eufala, Alabama at the end of his life, he was very connected to Clinton during his lifetime as he was a descendant of some of its early families. Cawthon wrote his 1984 Master's thesis on the town, titled *Clinton: County Seat on the Georgia Frontier, 1808 - 1821*. Additionally, he helped found the Old Clinton Historical Society, which is now in possession of the law office. Cawthon's dedication to Old Clinton is clear through his endowment, research, and involvement in the preservation of the district, and we hope to honor his memory through this report and its role in the restoration of the building.

As mentioned above, the Old Clinton Historical Society (OCHS) currently owns the law office. It was donated to the society by Robert and Shirley Billue, the owners of the property on which it originally stood next to their Parrish-Billue House and the attached Iverson law office. The OCHS undertook the stabilization of the law office and moved the building from its original location to their property on Pulaski Street behind the Pine Ridge School House, a small wood-frame building that the OCHS restored and converted into a schoolhouse museum. Due to the OCHS's ownership of the building and its site, its board and members will serve as its main stewards and managers, overseeing its restoration and its subsequent use.

This report will provide a brief historical background regarding Old Clinton and, more specifically, the Richard Johnson law office. The historical background will also include a developmental history, identifying alterations imposed on the building over time. Following the historic section, the

report will provide a documentation and analysis of the existing conditions of the building, focusing on the exterior, interior, and roofing of the building. The last section of the report will provide recommendations for the restoration and use of the building. The report is meant to serve as a guide to David Mitchell, Co-Executor of William Lamar Cawthon, Jr.'s will, and the OCHS in the allocation of endowment funds for the restoration, the management of the restoration project, and future stewardship of the building as a significant historic resource of the Old Clinton Historic District.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Clinton, Georgia served as the county seat of Jones County from 1808 until 1905 when citizens of the county voted to move the county seat to the neighboring city of Gray. Incorporated in 1809, Clinton thrived until the mid-nineteenth century until there was only one business left by 1888. This decline and the subsequent transition of the Jones County seat to the nearby city of Gray were predicated by the railroad bypassing the city of Clinton, instead running through Gray, in the 1870s.<sup>1</sup> Despite the current relatively small size of Clinton compared to its once bustling history, several of its frame plain style houses have been preserved, including the former law office of Judge Richard Johnson.

During its period of significance from 1809 until mid-nineteenth century, Clinton was mostly defined by two endeavors, the Clinton Academy, which admitted female students as well as males, and Samuel Griswold's cotton gin manufacturing establishment. The Griswold Cotton Gin Company is notable not only for its prominence in the area, but also for its employment of Daniel Pratt, a New England master architect and craftsman responsible for buildings in Clinton and Milledgeville and a businessman who would go on to found the city of Prattville in Alabama for his own gin factories.<sup>2</sup> Although it is doubtful that Daniel Pratt was himself responsible for the design and construction of the Richard Johnson law office, it is possible that he had some influence on the craftsmen who were responsible as Pratt was in the area in the 1830s and the clear roman numerals carved into the structural members suggest proficient craftsmanship.

According to the Old Clinton Historical Society website, Richard Johnson and his wife, Annie Griswold, were both grandchildren of Samuel Griswold. Johnson lived on Madison Street in an a house that is no longer extant throughout his life. He practiced law both in Clinton and Gray and became the Judge of the Jones County Court in 1877, a position which he kept for ten years. Judge Johnson went on to serve as a representative in the Georgia legislature from 1888 to 1889 and as a senator from 1890 to 1891. Although it is unclear who occupied the building prior to Johnson, he would have used it as his law office in the late nineteenth century. This building, according to deed research of the OCHS, was one of

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<sup>1</sup> William Lamar Cawthon, Jr., "Clinton: County Seat on the Georgia Frontier 1808-1821," (Master's Thesis, University of Georgia, 1984) 3-4. v-vi.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Z. Macgregor, "Old Clinton Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, June 10, 1984.

three buildings used as law offices on Madison Street. It is, however, the only free-standing law office remaining as the other two have been attached to residences.<sup>3</sup>

The Old Clinton Historic District National Register states that Clinton:

has an immeasurable significance in Georgia history--an evaluation substantiated by the fact that Clinton had one of the country's largest manufacturing establishments for cotton gins, one of the first female seminaries, as well as a significant number of early nineteenth century residential and public structures, several of which are attributed to the master craftsman-architect, Daniel Pratt.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the buildings in Clinton "comprise one of the most closely related groups of of early Georgia plain style structures still in existence."<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the historic resources in Clinton, mostly including houses, have a high level of significance and should be preserved. The preservation and restoration of the Richard Johnson law office will provide for a more comprehensive history of the Old Clinton Historic District as it is one of the oldest freestanding law offices in the area.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY**

The building that would eventually serve as Judge Richard Johnson's law office is thought to have been constructed circa 1830s or 1840s. This date is supported by the timber frame construction of the building, the use of cut nails to nail in many of the structural members, the varying sizes of studs, and the straight-sawn lumber marks. Additionally, cut nails that currently stick through the wood lathe sheathing the rafters of the roof indicate wood shingles. The law office was built next to the Parrish-Billue House (identified as the Parrish-Hutchings-Johnson House in the National Register nomination), which was constructed c. 1810 on Madison Street. Like the Parrish-Billue House, the law office was oriented towards Madison Street, with its symmetrical front facade, consisting of a door in the center flanked by two double-hung sash windows, one nine-over-nine and one six-over-six, and topped by a gable. Although the building now has two rooms that are the width of the original front facade, it is possible that the building once consisted of one long room, which ended with a fireplace and chimney centered on the original rear facade.

At one point in the law office's recent history it was turned so that its entrance, once facing the south was facing the east. During this time a porch was added on the north or rear elevation of the moved building to the west side, and a door was added to facilitate entry into the porch from the building. From the OCHS photographs of the move, it appears that there once was a transom light above the added door. A gable, perhaps to make the building appear more symmetrical with the porch addition, was added to the rear facade on the east side. During this time, a tin roof replaced the original wood shingles, evidenced by

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<sup>3</sup> "Judge Richard Johnson Law Office," Old Clinton Historical Society, accessed October 5, 2016, <http://www.oldclinton.org/more-about-clinton/current-projects-3/richard-johnson-law-office/>.

<sup>4</sup> Macgregor, "Old Clinton."

<sup>5</sup> Macgregor, "Old Clinton."

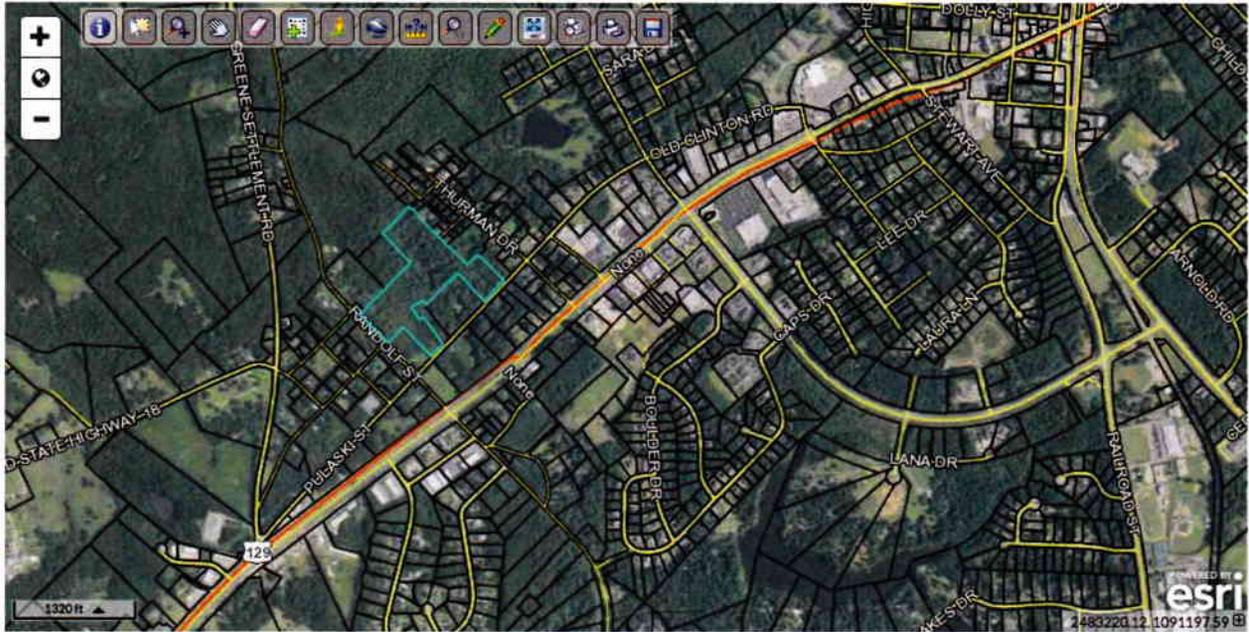
the remaining wood lathe, through which cut nails have pierced, visible from inside the attic. Additionally, several of the windows were replaced with shorter windows as evidenced by a larger opening outlined above the shorter windows now filled with shiplap.



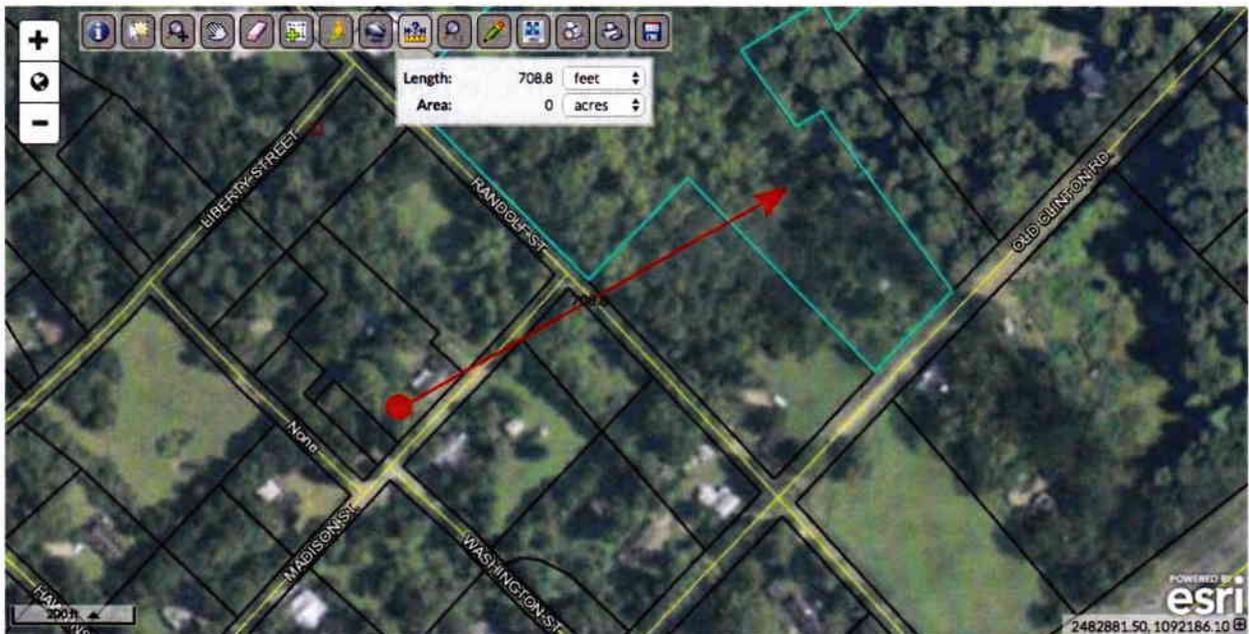
*These photos display changes that have occurred throughout the building's history. Above left: The porch has been removed in this photo, but is evidenced by the unpainted siding. The added gable is still present in this photograph by the Old Clinton Historical Society. Above right: The original opening appears larger than the current window, and the window to the right is taller than the current window.*

The Richard Johnson law office was located on the property of Robert and Shirley Billue, who currently own and live in the Parrish-Billieu house and the attached Iverson law office. The Billues donated the law office to the Old Clinton Historical Society (OCHS) so that they could move the building. It was quickly deteriorating, so the OCHS agreed to take on the restoration work in order to preserve one of Old Clinton's early buildings.

In December of 2015, the building was prepared for its move to its current location with the addition of a new floor of new joists and oriented strand board (OSB) sheathing and a new foundation. The porch and an accompanying gable, which were not original to the building, were removed before the move. The law office was moved to its current location on Pulaski Street, which also serves as the site of the Pine Ridge School House, a building that the OCHS moved to the site and restored in 2000. The Pine Ridge School House currently operates as a small museum.



*Outlined in turquoise in the northwestern quadrant of this map is the 17-acre parcel of land owned by the Old Clinton Historical Society, where the Richard Johnson Law Office now sits. Base map accessed from Jones County public records.*



*A closer look shows the relationship to its original location. The building was moved roughly 700 ft northeast of its original location. Base map accessed from Jones County public records.*

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES**

The Richard Johnson law office is a one-story, two-room, wood-frame building, with white clapboard siding in keeping with the rest of the plain style buildings in the Old Clinton Historic District.

Due to its large corner posts, irregularly-sized studs, ranging from 2 x 3" to 6 x 3", and braces that span the width of the wall, the building can be classified as timber framed. Many of the studs and the joists that were salvaged are straight sawn. Some of the structural members, most likely joists, however, are straight sawn on one side and hand-hewn on the other. The majority of the nails in the building are cut nails, which came into popularity in the 1800s. All of these factors date the building to between 1800 and 1850, which is consistent with the proposed construction date of the building c. 1830s.

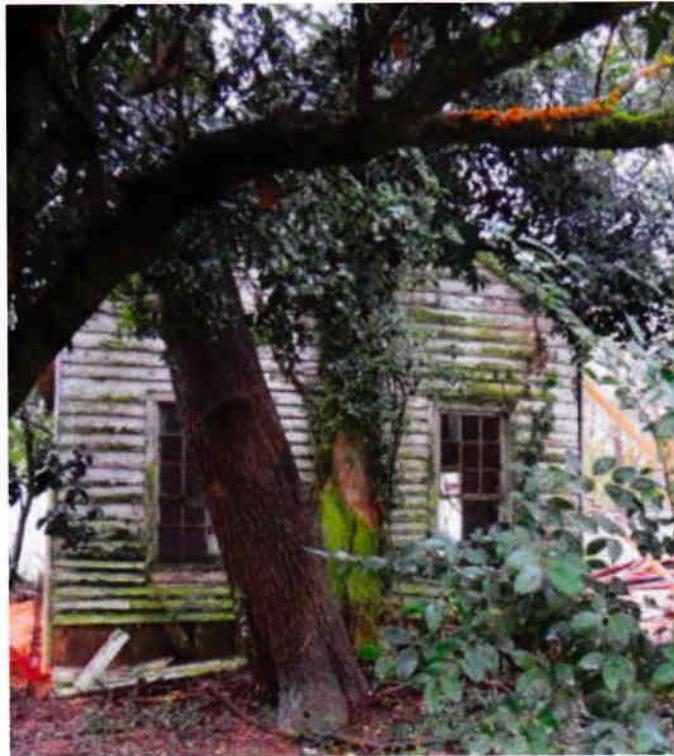
As described in the developmental history, the original front facade, which is now the west facade and will be referred to as such for the duration of this report, consists of a gable end and a centered, simple door flanked by a nine-over-nine sash window to the right and a six-over-six sash window to the left. The current north elevation (once the west) consists of an added door opening to the right, a door opening close to the center of the facade, and the ghost of a window to the left. The east elevation (originally the north) consists of two 9-over-6 sash windows flanking a fireplace opening and the ghost of a chimney. The south facade (originally the east) consists of a 6-over-6 sash window to the right, a door near the center of the facade leading into the fireplace room, and a 6-over-6 sash window to the left.



*Above: West facade of the law office, originally the south facade and the entryway. Photograph by OCHS.*



*Above: North facade of the building, originally the west. Note the added gable has now been removed. Photograph by OCHS.*



*Above: East facade of the building, originally the north. Note the ghost of a chimney. Photograph by OCHS.*



*Above: South facade of the building, originally east facade. Photograph by OCHS.*

Although the law office was originally a front gable building, its current orientation leads it to appear as a side gable building. The roofing system is a common rafter system without wind braces, purlins, or collar beams. The system merely consists of two principal rafters at each of the gable ends and common rafters in between. The principal rafters are seemingly supported by studs that are approximately 3 x 3" and are regularly spaced.

The interior of the building is relatively simple with painted shiplap serving as the siding. The original entry room is currently painted pink, while the fireplace room is painted powder blue. These rooms are separated by a wooden door in the center of the interior wall. The ceiling appears to be covered in white-painted shiplap. There is a small attic space that may have operated as a storage space. As stated previously, the flooring system has been completely replaced. OSB sheets are serving as the current subfloor, and there is no floor covering atop the OSB.

The character defining features of the building should be preserved or restored where necessary. The extant character defining features include the building's simple rectangular plan, front-gable roof profile, white clapboard cladding, original door openings, and original window openings and patterns. There is physical evidence of other character-defining features that are no longer extant that should be reproduced based on the evidence. These include wood shingles as the roof cladding, windows that match the original openings, stone piers of adequate height, doors that match the original openings, and a chimney constructed partially with the bricks transported from the building's original site.

## CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT - EXTERIOR

The most significant issue with the exterior and interior of the law office is termite damage. Termites accessed the flooring system and the studs when the building was turned and inadequate foundation was provided. Termite damage is apparent in several of the studs and the exterior siding. There is, however, no active termite infestation. Additional insect damage was inflicted on the building by powder post beetles, which does not necessarily affect the structural integrity of the building but does affect the aesthetics. Much of these damaged parts have already been cut away, and 2x4s and other modern lumber have replaced the worst of the termite damage; however, replacement of additional structural members may be needed.



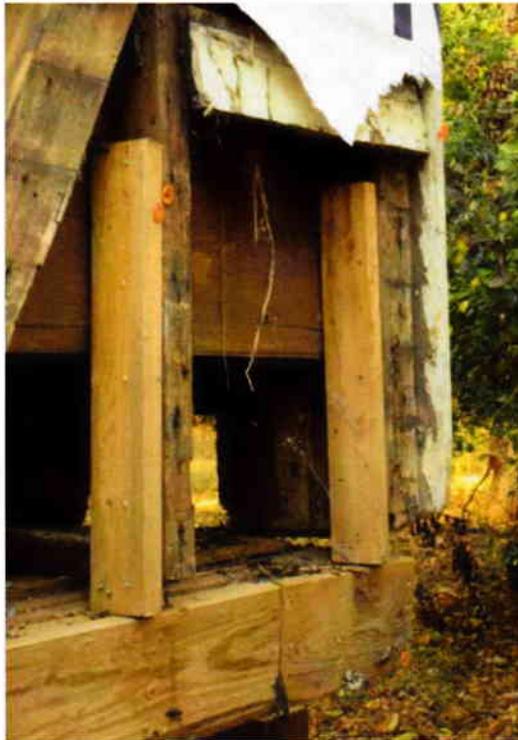
*Above: Termite damage deteriorating one of the studs and damaging some exterior siding. Unfortunately, this is a relatively ubiquitous problem for the law office.*

A significant portion of the exterior clapboard siding was removed during the stabilization of the move as the floor system was completely replaced. While there are certainly clapboards that should be replaced, many of them can be salvaged. Those that can be salvaged are currently suffering from chipping paint.



*Above: A significant amount of clapboard siding was removed for stabilization, and some of the siding that remains is suffering from chipping paint.*

With the replacement of the floor system, the original joists were removed and disconnected from the studs. Most of the studs are not themselves currently tied into the sill. Instead, all of the studs and one of the braces have new 2x4s attaching them to the sill, extending upward from the sill just beyond each member's compromised material. Because these 2x4s do not extend the full height of the studs, they cannot be considered true sisters. It appears that the structural members still covered by the intact clapboard siding have not failed and are not compromised, but some additional sistering, or replacement, of structural members may be needed.



*Above: Example of original studs and corner post not extending to replacement sill with sister extending instead.*

#### **CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT - INTERIOR**

The interior walls are clad with shiplap siding, which is mostly in decent repair. Although the paint colors are currently pink and blue, it is covered by several layers of paint, some of which is chipping. The ceiling is clad in white-painted shiplap. A majority of the interior cladding is covered in surface debris, which will need to be cleaned in the restoration. Additionally, some of the shiplap is buckling and separating from the wall studs.



*Above: These photographs display the pink, blue, and white shiplap that clads the interior of the building. Debris is especially evident in the picture on the left. The photograph on the right shows some of the shiplap buckling in the corner.*

A majority of the windows are most likely not original, evidenced by the ghosting of larger openings around the six-over-six double hung sash windows. The nine-over-nine and nine-over-six windows that fit into the original openings are in disrepair with a missing sash in one case and missing panes or deteriorating and debris-covered wood in others. The mantelpiece is in good repair, but the fireplace and chimney are missing as they were deconstructed prior to the move due to their deteriorated condition. As noted earlier in the report, the floor system has been completely replaced. The fireplace

room has a nonfunctional lighting fixture suggesting that the building has previously been electrically wired, but we cannot be sure without further investigation whether or not this wiring is current.



*Above: The window on the left has a missing sash and stool and a casing that would not reach the stool. Notice also the mantelpiece and missing fireplace and chimney. Also note the non-functional lighting fixture.*



*Above: The nine-over-nine window, which fits the original opening is missing one full pane with parts of others missing.*

## CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT - ROOFING SYSTEM

The roofing system is a common rafter system where the rafters rest on a false plate. There are no collar ties, purlins, or a ridge board. Wood lathe pierced by nails, which remain in place, suggests the original use of wood shingles. It appears that the ceiling joists have been sistered at the end, but it is not clear from observation why this was done.



*Above: This photograph shows the cut nails protruding through the wood lathe, indicating that wood shingles were the original roofing material and that those shingles were simply ripped off when replaced. This also shows the sister at the end of the ceiling joist that is currently supporting the false plate.*

Although a good amount of the wood lathe for the roof cladding is intact, some of it is missing or deteriorated. The wood lathe that is intact is spaced. Spaced wood lathe was typical for wood shingle roofing as the wood had to be able to breathe.



*Above: These photographs reveal missing or deteriorated spaced lathe that will need to be replaced.*

The metal roof cladding was removed from the roof structure before the move leaving the wood lathe exposed. Therefore, the exterior roofing elements are currently covered in Tyvek to protect the uncovered wood lathe and rafters from further water damage. However, photographs taken by the OCHS indicate that the fascia has been removed on the rear facade of the building.



*Above: These photographs reveal the lack of fascia on the north facade.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: TREATMENT AND USE**

*The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* has identified four treatment levels for historic buildings ranging from little intervention to full scale reconstruction. The levels are preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The Standards define restoration as the "act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period."<sup>6</sup> Restoration can be considered as a

<sup>6</sup> "Standards for Restoration," National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, accessed November 20, 2016. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-restoration.htm>.

treatment when “the property’s design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations or additions are not planned.”<sup>7</sup> Due to the removal of the substantial alterations of the porch and the gable, the significant amount of historic fabric remaining on the Richard Johnson Law Office, and the necessity for the repair or replacement of damaged materials, we recommend a full restoration of the building to its appearance during its period of significance (c. 1830s - 1900) in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Restoration*.

*The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Restoration* lists ten requirements for the proper restoration of historic properties. The standards are generally advisory and not regulatory, with the exception of seeking funding through tax incentives, grants, and other such opportunities. These requirements pertain not only to the restoration itself, but also to the subsequent use of the building and the documentation of the restoration. The restoration of the Richard Johnson Law Office should comply with these standards. The following section will list the ten standards and how each will apply to the law office restoration. Along with the standards, the Department of the Interior has also provided treatment guidelines. A link to these guidelines will be provided in the bibliography.

1. “*A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property’s restoration period.*”

The lack of modern plumbing and electrical system coupled with a lack of demand, the building will not retain its historic use. Instead, because the building is owned and managed by the Old Clinton Historical Society, it should be converted into a museum of Old Clinton history. This use will honor its historic function and provide a new educational and architectural attraction for visitors of Clinton. Materials that cannot be repaired and therefore have been removed from the building, especially if they convey the craftsmanship techniques of the period of significance, should be salvaged for display in the museum. Additionally, this conversion will require some electrical updating to provide for lighting, which has been added previously as evidenced by a lighting fixture hanging in the blue room but is no longer functional.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



*Above: Note the lighting fixture, light switch, and place for an electrical outlet indicative of some time of electrical wiring.*

- 2. "Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken."*

Although much of the building is racked by termite damage, many of the structural members, the exterior clapboard, and the interior shiplap can be salvaged. Many members of the floor system were salvaged when it was replaced for the move. If possible, these boards should be used in the restoration, although joists can be replaced as needed as they will not be visible. Exterior and interior siding should also be retained.

- 3. "Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research."*

While relocating a building generally significantly compromises its integrity, the move of the law office was necessary to save the building. Prior to the relocation of the building, it was stabilized and moved by Hugh Braswell of Swainsboro and the Fish Brothers House Movers of Eastman. Mr. Braswell should be contacted to provide information for the documentation of the stabilization via the floor replacement, temporary sisters, and interior braces. Additionally, the move should be further documented.



*Above: Interior bracing and partial sisters that comprise current stabilization.*

Further stabilization will be necessary. This will consist of replacing the existing temporary bracing with sisters that span the length of the studs. The studs and sisters will need to be tied back into the sill plate with an appropriate connector, such as a Simpson Strong-Tie product. Knee walls should be constructed under window sills as needed to provide support.

### DSP/SSP/SP/SPH/RSP4/TSP Stud Plate Ties



**Stud-Plate Ties**

 This product's information may differ depending on the category of use. You are currently viewing details related to Stud-Plate Ties. You can also view product information related to the category: [Strong-Fix™ URS Components](#)

The Stud Plate Tie series offers various solutions for connecting the stud to the top and bottom plates. All models can be used to make a connection to either the top or bottom plate, and several are suitable for double top plates and studs.

**Material**

- DSP/SSP/SPH — 18 gauge; TSP — 16 gauge; all others — 20 gauge

**Finish**

- Galvanized. Some products available in ZMAX® coating. See Corrosion Information.

**Installation:**

- Use all specified fasteners; see General Notes.
- TSP/DSP/SSP — sill plate installation: fill all round holes.
- TSP/DSP/SSP — top plate installation: fill all round and triangle holes.
- SP1/SP2/SP3/SP5 — one of the 10d common stud nails is driven at a 45° angle through the stud into the plate.
- Some products may be installed with the Strong-Drive® SD Connector screw. See model table.



*Above: An example of a Simpson Strong Tie Stud-Plate Tie that can be used to tie the existing studs back into the sill plate. [https://www.strongtie.com/studplateties\\_strapsandtys/dsp-ssp-sp-sph-rsp-tsp\\_productgroup\\_wcc/p/dsp.ssp.sp.sph.rsp4.tsp](https://www.strongtie.com/studplateties_strapsandtys/dsp-ssp-sp-sph-rsp-tsp_productgroup_wcc/p/dsp.ssp.sp.sph.rsp4.tsp)*

4. *“Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.”*

Similar to the recommendation in the third standard, further documentation of the removal of the added porch and the gable during the stabilization and move should be documented. Any historic photographs displaying these features should be compiled to accompany the documentation. Photographs of the move should also be collected.

5. *“Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.”*

Although they will be covered up by the exterior and interior cladding, the Roman numerals carved into several of the studs should be preserved and documented. These carpenter marks were often carved into rafters or mortise-and-tenon joints to ensure that the correct structural members were connected to each other. They therefore represent craftsmanship indicative of the early nineteenth century. If any of the studs containing these carpenter numerals are found to be irreparable, they should be salvaged for display inside of the law office.



*Above: Roman numerals are noticed on many of the larger framing members. This is common of timber-framed, or brace-framed, construction.*

Additionally, elements like the remaining fascia, the exterior clapboard, interior shiplap, and timber framing in general should be retained and reproduced appropriately when necessary. All of these elements exemplify not only the craftsmanship of the period of significance but also the

significance of the Old Clinton Historic District as one of the largest intact collections of plain frame buildings.

6. *“Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.”*

Although we observed much structural damage from termite infestation and other moisture or mechanical issues in the lower portion of the building, our visual observation was restricted to that lower portion and therefore limited. Thus, there may be additional termite damage to certain members making further repair, sistering, or replacement necessary. We suggest replacing with harvested historic heart of pine or other old growth wood appropriate for the period of significance.

The historic windows on the now western facade and now eastern facade that are 9 over 9 double hung sash and 9 over 6 double hung sash should be replaced. We recommend contacting Taylor Davis of Low Country Preservation in Brunswick, Georgia who specializes in repairing and replicating historic windows. From photographs, he has confirmed that at least the 9 over 9 window on the western facade can be repaired. Taylor’s email address is [taylor@lowcountrypreservation.com](mailto:taylor@lowcountrypreservation.com), and Low Country Preservation can be reached at (912) 230-1260 or (404) 259-7655.

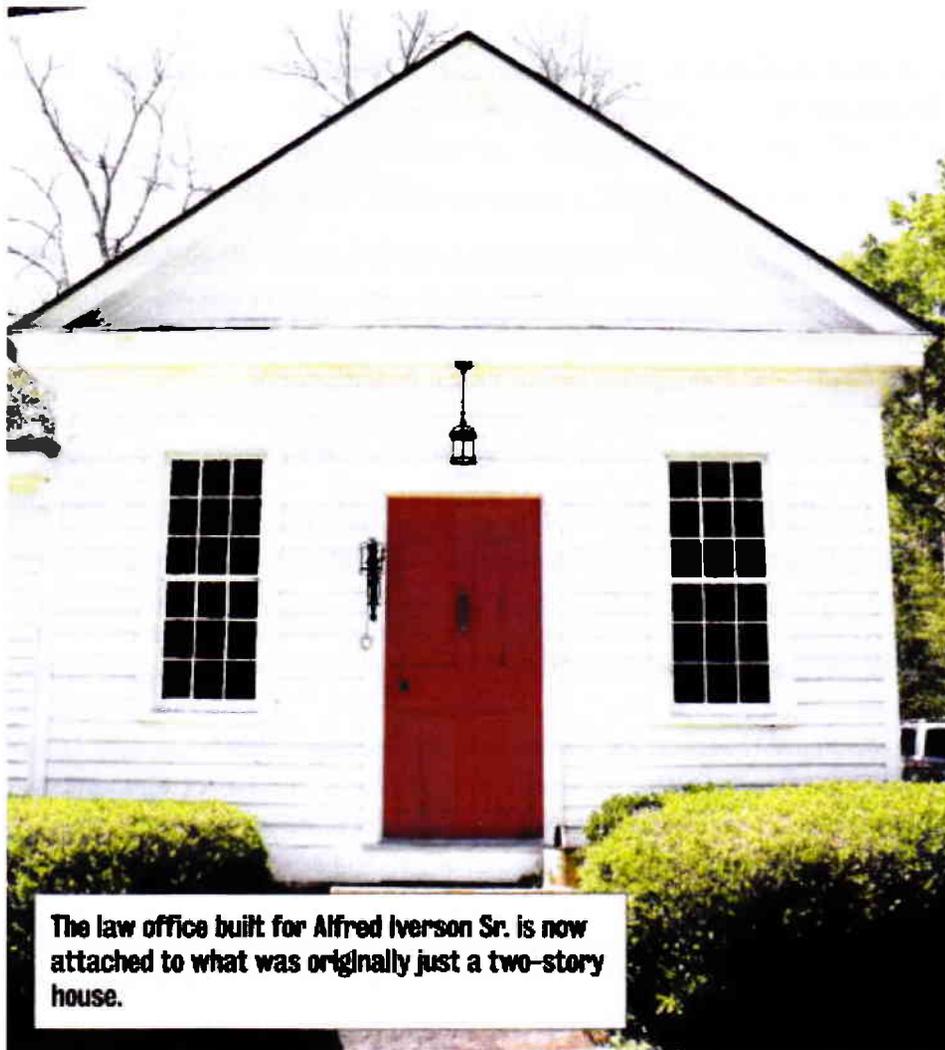
7. *“Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.”*

Physical and photographic evidence indicates the original presence of a brick chimney, wood shingles, larger windows, stone pier foundations, and a different paint color on the interior shiplap. In terms of the wood shingles and other wood members which will need to be replaced like studs, clapboards, and shiplap, a craftsman skilled in historic restoration work should be contracted. Wood shingles were most commonly made out of cedar and cypress, and if no physical evidence is found, these woods would make durable shingles for the new roof cladding. However, the attic should be further investigated to see if any wood shingles might have fallen into the attic space to identify the original wood used for the shingles. Additionally, archaeological investigation in the original site could uncover original wood shingles. Paint analysis can be performed to identify the original paint color of the shiplap.

As suggested previously, Taylor Davis of Low Country Preservation not only repairs windows, but also creates reproduction windows based on evidence present at the site, in photographs, and in similar buildings from the same period. In general, where the physical or photographic evidence is lacking, similar resources in the area should be looked to for restoration support. The ghosting around the six-over-six windows in the law office suggests that the larger nine-over-nine or nine-over-six double hung sash windows are the original sizes. The former Iverson law office, now attached to the other side of the Parrish-Billue house provides further support for this theory as the two windows flanking the entry beneath the front gable are nine-over-nine double hung sash windows.<sup>8</sup> Although this is not definitive evidence of the original windows in the Richard Johnson Law office, it certainly corroborates the ghosting and the existing nine-over-nine window on the west facade.

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<sup>8</sup> Carol Krom, "Parrish-Billue: A home at the heart of Clinton." *Jones Living* (Spring 2015): 16-27, accessed November 15, 2016. <http://www.oldclinton.org/wp-content/uploads/Parrish-Billue-House-Article.pdf>.



*Above: Photograph of the Alfred Iverson law office now attached to the Parrish-Billieu house, from the Jones Living article "The Parrish-Billieu House: A Home at the Heart of Clinton's History." Note the symmetrical facade with the nine-over-nine double hung windows flanking the doorway under a gable. The fascia of the building is also similar to the Richard Johnson law office.*

There are currently bricks and stones on the new site from the chimney and stone piers that were attached to the building before the stabilization and move. These should be reused to reproduce the chimney and stone piers along with compatible materials appropriate for the time period when there is not enough original material. Because this is a full restoration, a mason skilled in historic restoration projects should be contracted to recreate the piers and chimney from the existing materials. Additionally, a contractor truly skilled in historic restorations should oversee the restoration. Garbutt Construction has been referred to us as a good preservation firm, and they have expressed interest in the project and plan to visit the site in January.

8. *“Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.”*

Because the exterior and interior siding is somewhat fragile, we suggest hand scraping the chipping paint off and repainting where necessary. Chemical treatments should not be necessary.

9. *“Archaeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

This does not apply in the same way as the restoration of a building in its original site. However, we recommend performing an archaeological investigation of the original site of the building, near the Parrish-Billieu House. This might reveal further evidence of certain building materials, evidence of Richard Johnson’s occupation, and other artifacts important to the building’s history. These artifacts could be used in the interpretation of the building.

10. *“Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.”*

At this time, we are not aware of any historic alternate plans or designs for the Richard Johnson law office. However, if any plans are ever located, they should not be executed.

If possible, the building should be turned to its original orientation, with the original entrance facing the street. Although the building would be facing Pulaski Street and not Madison Street, this orientation would be more true to the building during its period of significance. This orientation would also allow the building to assume its original form of a front-gable building, which is one of its character defining features.

In conclusion, the Richard Johnson Law Office should undergo a full restoration to its appearance during its period of significance. This will involve further stabilization, extensive repair, reconstruction of certain elements, and documentation of all restoration efforts. Although this restoration will require a large amount of effort and funding, the Old Clinton Historical Society; Patsy Childs, the granddaughter of Judge Richard Johnson; citizens of Clinton; and David Mitchell, co-executor of William Lamar Cawthon, Jr.’s estate, have already shown that they are ready and willing to dedicate the necessary effort and funding to the restoration of such a significant historic resource to Old Clinton and Georgia.

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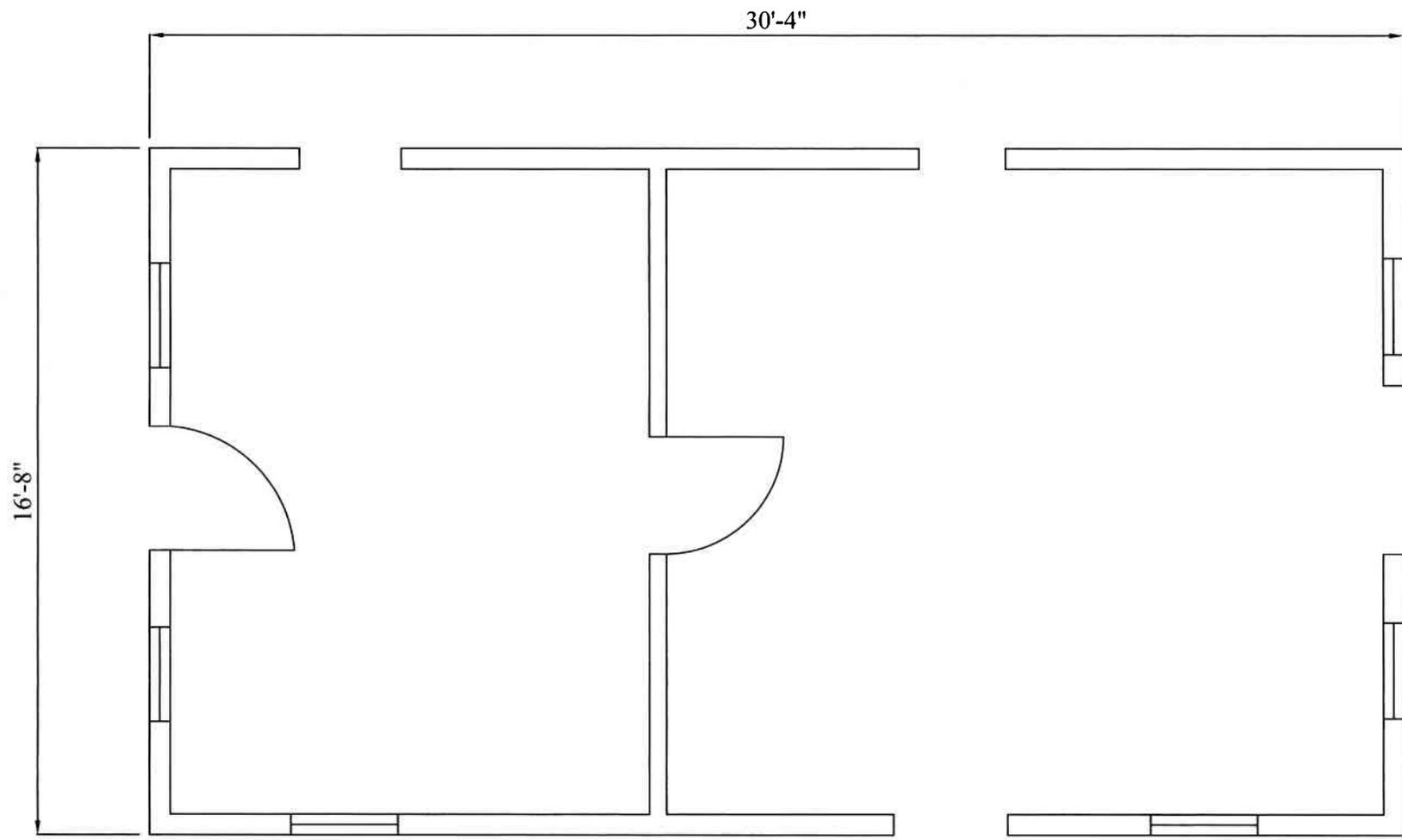
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**APPENDIX: FLOOR PLAN**



Richard Johnson Law Office  
Floor Plan  
Created by Olivia Head



1" = 4'

