

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GAINESVILLE
SUMTER COUNTY, ALABAMA

THE "COFFIN SHOP" - Kring Carpenter Shop
SE corner McKee Street (Alabama 39) and Monroe Street

Mr. John M. Smith
Gainesville, AL 35464

Lot #65, Block 21 UTM: 16/391630/3631900
Tax Map: #60-08-01-02-4

Date of construction: c. 1860-1870

Builder/Architect: Edward N. Kring

Description:

Simple frame rectangular building with clapboarded front and board and batten sides and rear. Gable-end of roof facing street, with pierced and scalloped bargeboard trim; small center chimney stack with connecting flue; front door topped by transom; two room "shot gun" arrangement inside. Moved back (E) approximately 12 feet from Alabama Highway 39, c. 1970 and set on cinderblock foundation footings. 87½' x 150'.
(less than 1 acre)

Statement of Significance:

Criterion A - Commerce:

This small unpretentious frame building, although moved a very short distance from its original location, is significant as the only building which survives from Gainesville's mid-19th century commercial district which was located along McKee and State Streets.

Historical Summary:

Although long known locally as "the Coffin Shop" or "the Coffin House," it seems likely that this building was erected c. 1860-70 by Edward N. Kring as an adjunct to his carpenter shop which stood to the rear. It is so designated on the November 1884 Sanborn Insurance Map of Gainesville. However, coffins built by Kring were indeed displayed in this building. The scalloped bargeboard trim adorning the front gable was a feature found on other early commercial buildings now destroyed in Gainesville.