

# Country Home

April 1991 Display until April 16

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# Linkin' Log HOME

Three historic log cabins connect into one wonderful Georgia home that's furnished in old Southern charm.



*Three historic log cabins were transplanted to the Atlanta area and joined to make one home.*

Photographs: Rick Taylor

*By Candace Ord Manroe  
Produced by Ruth Reiter*

Atlanta homes went up in clouds of thick black smoke as Sherman marched through the South, leaving behind little to gratify posterity's hankering for historic houses.

The impact of the general's campaign is still felt today, and not only by those who take an architectural approach to history. Some Atlanta antiques aficionados smart at a dilemma that's entirely their own—wonderful Southern collections, but scarcely

a compatible place to put them.

Jim Lord, a new convert to country collectibles, was such a person. Eager to find a suitably seasoned home for what was fast becoming a commodious collection, he fell discouraged. It wasn't just Atlanta proper that had a paucity of historic houses, Jim discovered, but the entire metropolitan area.

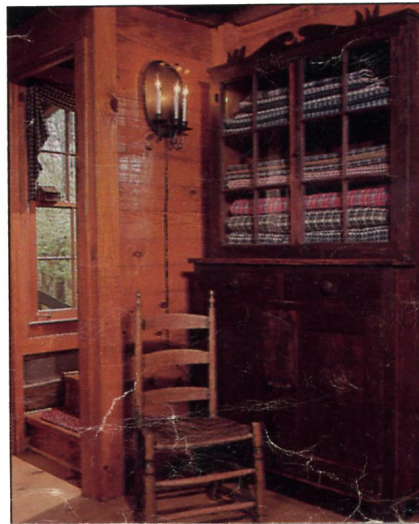
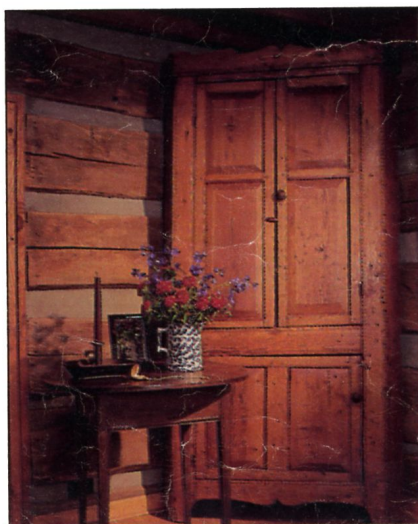
Finding the right home was important. The chilly contemporary cluster house he shared with lifelong friend Bobby Dent, coworker in a computer firm, simply was not a consanguine spirit. And Jim was tired of warehousing his vintage finds in the garage.





Near right: *The living room's corner cupboard was the first major piece purchased by the homeowners. Next to it stands a beaded tapered-leg table with poplar top and yellow pine base from a Cherokee Indian home in northeast Georgia.*

Far right: *One of the home's best Southern antiques is a circa-1860 country Chippendale broken-pediment cupboard in the living room.*



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"It took three years of looking before we found this house," Jim says.

This actually means three historic houses in one.

In a display of Southern ingenuity, three log cabins—one from Kentucky, two from Tennessee—had been dismantled and moved to the suburban Atlanta property, then connected by newly constructed dogtrots to form one home.

All the reassembly work to connect the cabins had been done by the previous owner, with only some fine-tuning and personal-preference changes required by the new buyers.

By virtue of number alone, the transplanted cabins more than compensated for Atlanta's deficiency of antebellum houses: Here was not only one, but three historic structures to call home.

And what was good for the homeowners also was good for the home. The dismantling and relocation of the cabins was, in fact, their elixir. The old buildings more than likely would have

been demolished or ignored and allowed to disintegrate.

The three-in-one feature has another bonus: Each cabin brings its own unique history to the home.

Built around 1800, the cabin that composes the front of the home is a 1½-story structure originally located in Thomasville, Kentucky. In its new Georgia digs, it serves as the living room and the upstairs bedroom.

Also at the front of the home, and to the left of the central Kentucky structure, is a circa-1820 cabin that was moved from Carthage, Tennessee. This one-room cabin now serves as the downstairs bedroom.

The Tennessee cabin's original function, however, was as a country schoolhouse. It then was used as a church and, finally, as a modest home before becoming a pinion in today's larger three-in-one domicile.

Despite its minuscule size, the Tennessee cabin hosts a surprisingly assertive past: Resounding reminders of its history include the word "Christ"



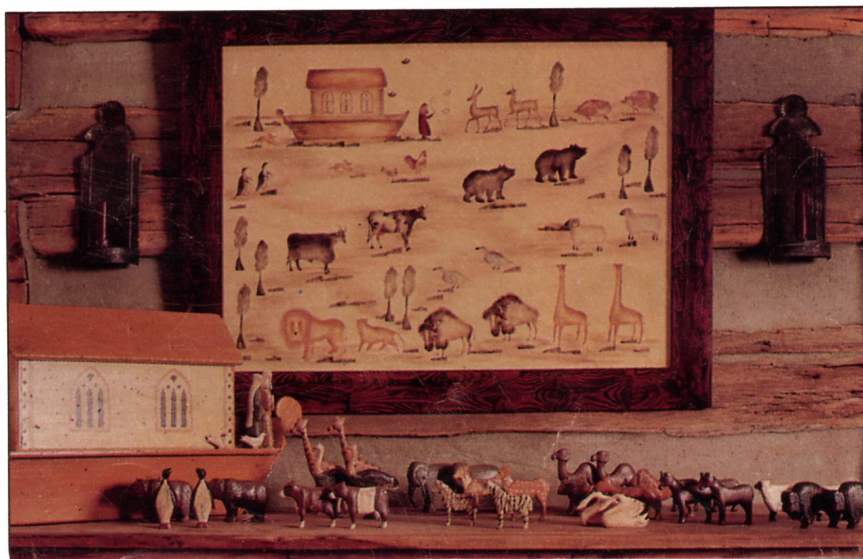
Right: Favorite collections of homeowner Jim Lord include antique children's shoes and, displayed Shaker-style from pegboard, children's chairs still bearing their original paint.

Above: The focal point of the living room is a flagstone fireplace with a wormy chestnut-log mantel. The worktable turned cocktail table was purchased for its original paint, as was the secretary.



Above: A collection of Southern pottery including pitchers, jugs, face jugs, and forms is displayed in the dining room window. The pieces work well with an old farm table in its original paint and a stepback cupboard from Dooley County, Georgia, that still boasts its original red color. The light fixture is a reproduction.

Right: A reproduction Noah's ark by Charlie Royston, of Atlanta, rests on a hunt board.



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carved into one of the interior logs, from the cabin's early days as a church house.

The third cabin constitutes the back of the home—the kitchen and keeping room. Built in 1830, it was moved to Georgia from Smithville, Tennessee. It, too, is a testament to the past.

“When that cabin was built, it was a common practice of the day to line the logs with newspaper,” says Bobby. The Smithville cabin was no exception. One newspaper liner of particular interest—and which, thankfully, was left intact during a recent cleaning of the logs and chinking—is an article on Andrew Jackson.

Even though the three cabin components of the house aren't indigenous to Georgia, their roots are purely Southern. That, and the warm country character of the rustic logs, make the home an ideal showcase for robust Southern antiques.

“When I first started collecting these pieces, my roommate thought I had lost my mind,” recalls Jim. “We

lived in an ultra-contemporary home, and I was bringing in things that he thought were firewood.”

Eventually, though, the country collectibles proved too inviting. Bobby's anti-antiques foothold, and with it, his bias favoring contemporary design, was slipping. Soon he was a country devotee in his own right, planting a purchase solidly amid those furnishings and accessories that smack of the past and of the primitive.

“He fell in love with Southern country antiques, and his passion for collecting matched my own,” says Jim.

Getting to that point took some time, however. “I'm the kind of person who doesn't like a lot of change,” says Bobby. “I was accustomed to a stark, contemporary home. But after a while, I started appreciating country. Although I'm now developing a taste for more formal country, I appreciate it all. There will always be a place in my life for country.”

Bobby's particular penchants extend to graniteware and country

*Right: The homeowners spend most of their time in the keeping room, which combines the kitchen work area with comfortable seating space. Filled with blue-and-white enamelware, the room is dominated by chairs (in their original blue paint) from Laurens County, Georgia, and an old two-board top table with tapered legs. Between two upholstered chairs stands a Virginia chest decorated in its original sponge paint.*



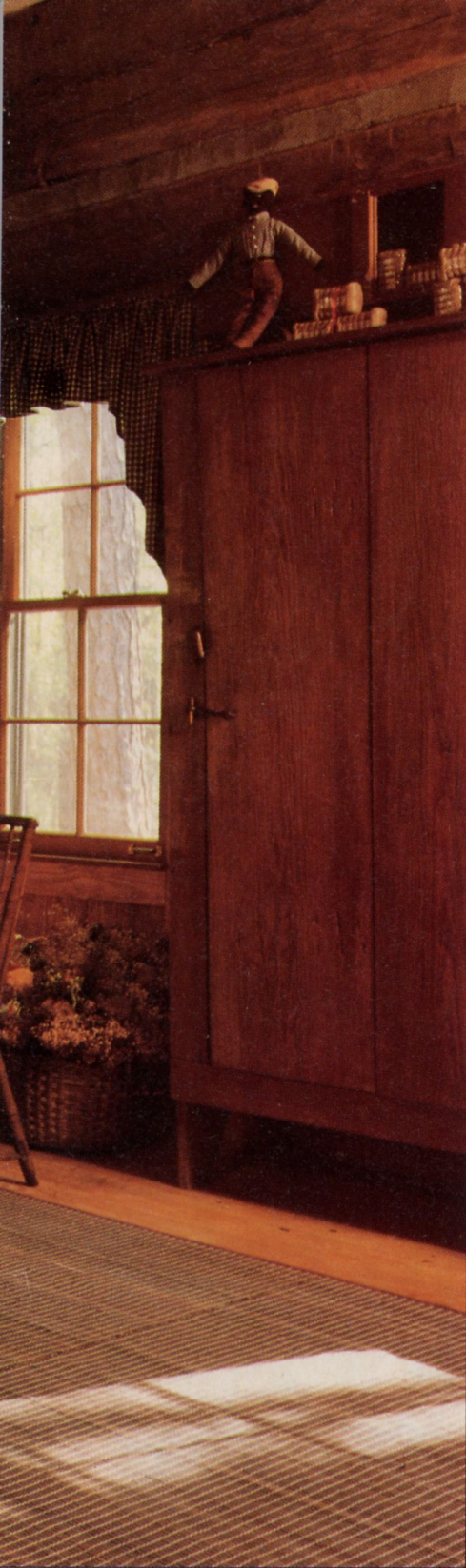


Above: The downstairs bedroom, just off a short hallway from the living room, features the same unfinished pine flooring found throughout the home—but is topped with an Amish rug. As elsewhere, reproductions meld with antiques: The bed is a reproduction Georgia piece, while the footboard's yellow pine chest from Habersham County, Georgia, dates to 1850

or 1860. A mustard secretary is from Newton County, Georgia, circa 1870, and was purchased from a physician's office. The rocking horse is Jim's favorite. Right: Jim's mother quilted the bedroom's stellar schoolhouse quilt as a housewarming gift. An early find was the red chest of drawers from Houston County, Georgia; it is made of walnut, with yellow pine as a secondary wood.



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Right: With half-timbered, under-the-eaves walls and collections of children's chairs and clothing, the upstairs bedroom is especially cozy. A reproduction rope bed is an exact copy of a Georgia antique. Dressing it is a red star quilt from Kentucky that is signed and dated 1880. Old rag rugs—flea market finds—were stitched together to form the floor covering.

textiles—he's responsible for most of the calicoes in the home.

Jim, in contrast, thrives on change. Once he made the leap from contemporary to country, he couldn't collect quickly enough, or with enough range of diversity.

"I would have to classify myself as a compulsive collector," he admits.

Proof is his collection of children's chairs, many of which hang, Shaker-style, from pegboard on the wall. "I love children's chairs," Jim begins. "It was amazing to me that here was something very, very affordable, and with its original paint."

Instead of gradually assembling a collection, Jim "bought twenty or twenty-five children's chairs in a short time, then saw something else I liked and pursued that," he says.

"I like all of the antiques in the home an awful lot, but none I've bought are life or limb to me. Furniture is not to die for—it's a material possession. It's exciting to find something new and different, and to change pieces," Jim adds.

He is not totally fickle, however. A

few collections such as blue-and-white enamelware and children's shoes have enjoyed a greater longevity with him. "These I find continually intriguing," he says.

Regardless of what's next on the horizon in Jim's ever-changing landscape of collectibles, there is one constant: "My real love is for the impractical. Rocking horses, wagons, antiques that are absolutely useless," he says.

This really is more than just a predilection: It's a philosophy. "You can fill up a room with fine furniture, but it's the accessories that make it interesting and that make it home," says Jim. "Entering a home that's decorated in this manner is certainly not like going to a department store."

To facilitate his goal of frequently switching or augmenting collections, Jim started his own antiques business while continuing his career in the computer industry. "The plan was to just become involved with antiques shows so that I could be aware of what was going on, and to make enough money to be able to buy a piece now and then," he says.





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Above: *Jim Lord (seated) and Bobby Dent are lifelong friends, having grown up in small Georgia towns 20 miles apart where one's father was a country preacher, the other's, a car dealer. Below: Spacious porches grace the cabin.*

His sharp eye for quality, and his specialization in Southern furniture, however, have garnered considerable reputation and respect for Jim among serious collectors and dealers.

For their home, Jim and Bobby buy from houses and dealers. Their furniture is Southern, but many accessories are from Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Typically, they buy furniture in the rough—pieces that require cleaning and restoring. “There’s no crime in saving furniture,” says Bobby.

Nor do they find it objectionable to intersperse a few reproductions with

antiques. “I wish everything was old,” reasons Jim, “but I don’t have unlimited money. Can I really afford to pay two thousand dollars for an old sampler, or am I happy with the look, for thirty-five dollars?”

After a cluster contemporary home and now this current cluster of log cabins, what next?

“It’s off to the Texas Hill Country to open an antiques shop and become innkeepers at the Comfort Common, a limestone B&B in Comfort,” says Jim.

As for the style of the historic inn, he confirms: “Pure country.” □

