

9-18-1971

# A Monument To Time



Woodward Log Cabin — A Monument To Time

## McDonald

(continued From 1-C)

Antiquity?

It's amazing what one can learn, especially in the company of experts who can "read" the signs of the past.

Harmon — the acknowledged authority on log cabins in South Carolina — pegged the cabin's date at around 1770.

Later, he said, other rooms were added to it. One room was also used for storing meat — salt meat — and to this day deer still come to the cabin and lick the underside of the flooring where the salt

(I saw the deer tracks.)

Inside the cabin, there were numerous remembrances of things past, and some not so old: rusty tins of smoking tobacco, for instance, which Dr. Edgar said were now "collectors' items," and dress patterns cut from brown paper sacks. (The dress patterns, Dr. Edgar said, would be of especial interest to the Fields Museum in Chicago, which specializes in such things.)

All in all, I discovered that rummaging through a log cabin brings out the sleuth in every man. (Can you determine the age of the cabin through

WOODWARD — It is hidden two miles off a dirt road, past a field of pine and in a clearing overgrown with broom.

It hits you in the eye — very much as you'd expect a dinosaur to hit you in the eye.

Decrepit. Tired. Weather-beaten. Out-of-place.

Decrepit?

It is 200 years old — as best as can be determined — and a succession of families have lived in it, the last moving out in 1957, claiming it was "haunted."

(Who knows for sure?)

A fellow named "Cork" built it in the 1770s — a basic, one-room log cabin of the era — and in your mind's eye, you can see him, perspiring freely, cutting beams, hewing logs and "tongue- and-grooving" the wall panels in a way that keeps out the harsh, wintry air.

I should say, however, that that's all prologue.

Gary Anderson of Irmo, whose father-in-law, Bill Patrick, owns the property on which the log cabin stands, "stumbled" onto the cabin three or four months ago. He and his wife, Ruth, were out walking one day, and there it was.

wooden pegs as late as the 1850s? Such stuff as that.)

And I wouldn't have swapped a thing for the experience.

The great pity, of course, is that the cabin has been vandalized, but Gary Anderson says he will "make do" with what is left.

Later, we stopped at Brice's store in this little community, where we had a soft drink and chewed the fat about how things must have been in the old days.

(We even discussed the possibility of getting up a posse to go in search of



There it was, and so Gary, an industrial supply salesman, decided that in the interest of things historical — how many 200-year-old log cabins are there in this New World of ours? — decided to restore it.

No small feat.

He applied for a building permit, checked with the local health department (Fairfield County) about a septic tank, talked with the officials at the electric co-op about running power lines to the cabin, then telephoned the University of South Carolina to see if they'd be interested in taking a look at it, which they were.

He even discussed with an expert in bottle digging the possibility of determining the history of the cabin through bottles.

And then the tragedy occurred.

Over the weekend, thieves or vandals — or thoughtless lovers of antiquity — trespassed on the property and removed most of the cabin's flooring and six-foot wide wall paneling. (I should interject here, too, that they don't make paneling like that anymore, and if they did, you'd pay a king's ransom for it.)

The incident is now being investigated by the Fairfield County Sheriff's Department.

Anyway, I went along Tuesday afternoon with Anderson, Dr. Walter Edgar of the University of South Carolina's History Department and Horace Harmon, director of the Lexington County Museum.

(It is the type of venture one approaches timorously, with feet placed tentatively on creaky flooring and ever mindful of the possible invasion of wasps.)

(See McDONALD, 20-C, Col.1)

those TRESPASSERS