

Helen Keller Home <sup>USE</sup>  
Tuscumbia, Alabama  
Colbert Co.

HABS No. <sup>ALA</sup> 16-317  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey  
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer  
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

HELEN KELLER HOME.  
Tuscumbia, Colbert County, Alabama.

Ownership:

Present Owner: Mrs. L. K. Lassiter.  
Selma, Alabama.

Present Occupant: Mr. & Mrs. G. A. Weitzel.

Previous Owners: David Keller.  
Captain Arthur H. Keller.  
Keller Estate.

Date of Erection: Approximately 1830.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: David Keller.

Present Condition: Good.

Materials of Construction: One story frame cottage; small front porch; small side entrance porch; pitched roof.

Other Existing Records:

See: Birmingham News, July 5, 1936.

"HELEN KELLER FOUND HOME BEAUTIFUL"  
By Varian Peare, (Mrs. E. Walter Burkhardt)

See: "HISTORIC HOMES OF ALABAMA & THEIR TRADITIONS"  
By Alabama Members of National League of  
American Pen Women.

Additional Data: The cottage proper is said to be considerably over one hundred years old. It was built by David Keller, a descendant of Casper Keller, native of Canton Berne, Switzerland, who came to the United States in the Colonial days.

David Keller was born in Hagerstown, Maryland in 1888, he moved west to Knoxville. In 1820, he came to North Alabama, acquiring large holdings in Franklin County. Moving to Tusculmbia, he served as agent of Tusculmbia's first railroad. Later he purchased ten acres of land and erected this home, the land purchased is said to have been made from tracts held by the University of Alabama.

An office was built in the yard near the house, and the plantation books kept there for the purpose of conducting business with the overseer, before the War Between the States. Later a dressing room and porch were added, and its occupants were the boys of the family. When Captain Keller brought his second bride home, it was daintily furnished and fitted for them as a bridal suite. Helen was born there. She called it the "Rose and Honeysuckle Home", and described the little porch as being hidden from view by the yellow roses, jasmine, and Southern smilax which hung in festoons; the haunts of hummingbirds and bees.

Here the rudiments of her teaching first took root, here obedience and love became attached terms. The history of Helen Keller is too well known to repeat here, but the efforts of Captain Keller for his child should not be overlooked. He carried her to Baltimore, and was advised by the famous oculist, Dr. Chisolm, to consult Dr. Alexander Graham Bell of Washington. Dr. Bell became keenly interested in her, and suggested that a teacher be sent to Helen from Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston. Anne Mansfield Sullivan (now Mrs. John Albert Macy) came, a woman almost as remarkable as her charge; and the world knows how she awoke "the divine spark in Helen's brain". A miracle it was, wrought by infinite patience and wisdom; and the homely pump in this old home was the medium through which Helen made connection with the world.

Source of Material:

Historic Homes of Alabama  
and Their Traditions.

Mrs. E. Walter Burkhardt.  
Auburn, Alabama.

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