
THE LOG CABIN COMMUNITY IN
THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS



 **Blackberry
Mountain**



Blackberry Mountain

by Frances Carnahan



The front porch of the EAL cabin is one of several outdoor spots to sit and enjoy the surrounding woodland. The "great room" (above and opposite page) is the heart of the house—living room, dining room, and kitchen. The lone star quilt over the fireplace was made especially for the cabin and incorporates all the colors used in other furnishings. Furniture here and on the porch is from Habersham Plantation; upholstered pieces from The Museum of American Folk Art Collection by Pearson.



Early American Life traveled to northwest Georgia last year to visit a new log cabin community springing up on Blackberry Mountain, a wild and beautiful spot in the foothills of the Appalachians. Our purpose was to collaborate on the design and furnishing of a log cabin which would serve as a showcase house for the community and as an idea house for EAL readers contemplating log homes of their own. The results of our efforts appear on these pages.



“Nine miles east of Ellijay, just follow the signs.” In this remote corner of north Georgia, that direction to Blackberry Mountain seemed a prescription for getting lost. This is land blanketed with deep woods, periodically opened by high meadows and orchards on the flanks of old mountains, cut by abrupt rivers like the Cartecay that runs in a succession of still, green pools and explosive stairways of white water past Blackberry Mountain.

The road, occasionally lapsing into red clay, does lead to the clearly marked gateway of Blackberry Mountain, but the development itself, some 600 acres of woodland, open meadow, and new log cabins that serve as both vacation and year-round homes, is nearly invisible, its electrical wires buried, its roads curving gravel paths through the woods, the natural surfaces of its fences and log houses weathering into the view.

It is Indian land, home of a Cherokee tribe whose burial mounds can still be discerned in places on the forest floor. It is also gold country. A strike made in 1828 in nearby Dahlonega caused a flurry of excitement that lasted almost a decade and sent some million-and-a-half dollars in Georgia gold to the Philadelphia Mint. There are legends of Indian gold buried in the mountains when the tribes migrated west. Present-day settlers seem less concerned with ancient legends than with having found this patch of peacefulness two hours north of Atlanta, where the loudest sounds are birdcalls and the soothing roar of the Cartecay as it makes its descent south.

The *Early American Life* cabin, set on a bluff above the river gorge, looks small

Stairway leads to an open loft, which serves as guest quarters. The kitchen is under the balcony, separate from the great room, yet close enough to be part of it. Paint has been used to define the area. Tables and painted chest at the top of the stairs are from Habersham Plantation. The basket painting is by Georgia artist Charles Adkerson.

Opposite page: The loft is large enough to be both bedroom and sitting room. Double camel-back sofa is from Pearson, braided wool rug from Capel, paneled screen and other furnishings from Habersham Plantation.





The master bedroom (above and right) serves as a comfortable retreat, a quiet place for breakfast or a cup of tea. Painted furniture is from Habersham Plantation, wing chairs from Pearson; the rug a Dhurri from Capel. Curtains are muslin with tied-up calico side panels. In the bathroom, wallpaper and painted woodwork are used to contrast with log walls.

Photographs by John Corcoran



from the gravel road that leads past its front door, seemingly only a story and a half, with a porch stretching across its whole front. The cabin was built to take best advantage of the land, which slopes down to the river, so its size is deceptive. There are actually 1,900 square feet of living space (you wonder at the word "cabin"), starting at the peak of the house, which is a sleeping loft and bathroom, designed as guest quarters. Open stairs lead down to the main floor and the "great room," the heart of the house. It is living room, dining room, and kitchen, each area clearly defined but still part of the whole. The great room opens onto a balcony overlooking the river. Off to one side, separated by a bathroom, is the master bedroom, enough removed to seem very private. On the lower level, starting down the hill, is another large

room, with a brick floor, a woodstove on a raised hearth, another bathroom. This is flexible space, to be divided into smaller rooms or kept open as the eventual owner decides. It gives onto a second large deck, with steps leading down the hill to a third deck, then more steps which bring you to a platform built out over the swiftly moving waters of the river.

The EAL cabin, like the Blackberry Mountain community itself, is the work of a group of people. Developer Gil Dickey realized the potential of the area and came up with the concept and design for the unspoiled woodland community; it was he who suggested the location of the EAL cabin. The basic structure of hewn logs was erected on the site by Hearthstone Builders of Dandridge, Tennessee, pioneers in the log home field. A young Georgia contractor, Wally Stover,

did the finishing and the interior work, giving great attention to every detail, right down to finding old heart-pine boards for the floors.

Joyce Eddy of Habersham Plantation agreed to furnish the cabin with the country pieces her company makes, as well as with crafts collected from the area. Susan McGlennen, a designer from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, who often works with Joyce, designed the interior and chose all the furnishings.

Susan began in the great room, with its high raked ceiling and multiple living areas. The very thing that makes a log cabin appealing in the first place—all that beautiful wood—can become oppressive if not balanced with other colors, other textures. Susan did both, with a broad spectrum of "mountain" colors—blueberry, raspberry, plum, indigo, spruce

green—and variously textured fabrics—muslin and calico, handwoven wool, brushed corduroy, strong prints. Hanging over the fireplace, a lone-star quilt, which she had made locally, repeats all the colors found in the house. Much of the furniture is painted, again to provide contrast. Several pieces in a new Habersham Plantation bleached finish called "Santa Fe" stand out against the darker walls.

Because in this house you are always aware of the out-of-doors—the faint sound of the river is a constant—Susan paid special attention to curtains for the windows. They don't hide the view, rather frame it, keep it from intruding on the interior. In the great room, the same fabrics—plain muslin and calico—are used in a slightly different fashion at each of the three sets of windows, to add interest,

also to define the separate areas of the room.

In the same way, paint and wallpaper are used in the kitchen and in all the bathrooms, both to define and to counter-balance the all-over feeling of wood.

After a couple of long days in the cabin this past spring, helping Susan put things in order and taking pictures, we began to feel ourselves relaxing into Blackberry Mountain's slower rhythms. We liked the feeling. Most of all, we liked the neighbors and staff stopping by to talk and to see what we were up to. By the time we had to leave, the cabin felt like home.

BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN SOURCES

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Hearthstone Builders, Inc.
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Stover Homebuilders, Inc.
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Interior Design

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1024 Orlando Drive
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Furniture

Habersham Plantation
Box 1209
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Upholstery

Clyde Pearson Company
High Point, NC 27261

Rugs

Capel, Inc.
Troy, NC 27261

Accessories

The Marketplace
Clarksville, GA 30523
Blue Ridge Peddlers, Inc.
Toccoa, GA 30577

Window Treatments

Guydas Country Windows
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Quilts

Blueberry Mountain Crafts
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