

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

SEE HOW ONE DALLAS COUPLE SAVED
THE HUSBAND'S GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPARENTS'
LOG CABIN FROM DESTRUCTION BY
TRANSFORMING IT INTO A COUNTRY RETREAT

photography by LAUREY W. GLENN

SHAKY BONES
Years of neglect and a
leaky roof led to extensive
structural, water,
and termite damage and
made the home
uninhabitable; only the
log walls remained.

BEFORE



WE LOVE THIS!
Porch screens aren't historically accurate, but they're a must for year-round living.



Susan and Josiah Daniel

W

hen Susan and Josiah Daniel learned that a log house built by Josiah's ancestors was in serious disrepair and about to be sold, the history-loving couple swooped in and bought it themselves. With the assistance of Dallas architect Steve Chambers, the couple moved what little remained of the structure from Navarro County, Texas, to their East Texas farm 76 miles away. Here, they reconstructed the home as it had been built in 1856: a one-story, double-pen, dogtrot log house. The unexpected addition to their farm is now a treasured heirloom that the Daniels, and future generations, will enjoy for many years to come. "We never intended on having this house," says Susan, "but we couldn't let the logs leave the family."

what they did

THE EXTERIOR & PORCH

RESTORED THE LOGS

Following Steve's advice—and being patient throughout a yearlong process—the Daniels had the house frame disassembled and then the logs cleaned, fumigated, repaired, and transported to their farm for reassembly.

FIXED THE FOUNDATION

Originally, the home sat on tree stumps, but the Daniels wisely upgraded to a new

pier and beam foundation clad with stone. "We want the house to last 150 more years," says Josiah. "Now, it has a solid structure to do that."

INTRODUCED STONE

They used Arkansas sandstone to build the steps and chimney and to face the foundation. "It looks like rock a farmer or early settler would have picked up on a field," says Steve. "The point was to use something that didn't look finished or formal."

RECONSTRUCTED THE ROOF

Using materials from buildings dating back to

the time of the original log house, Steve oversaw the construction of a new steel roof assembled with period-perfect details: mortise-and-tenon framing, wood pegs in place of nails, and old Texas barnwood.

SCREENED IT IN

One of the changes the Daniels made to the historical design was to add screens to the open sides of the breezeway. "Texas is a very buggy place," says Susan. "They are not authentic to the original house, but they make the central porch vastly more usable."



WE LOVE THIS!
The antique furnishings throughout the home give it a collected look.

STYLING: ELIZABETH DEMOS



WE LOVE THIS!
The shelves, walls, and cabinets are painted Manchester Tan by Benjamin Moore.



THE KITCHEN

TUCKED IN A COOK SPACE

In 1856, meal prep happened outside or in a fireplace, so the home lacked a kitchen. A previous renovation constructed an oversize, oddly located kitchen. The Daniels rightsized that remodel with a discreet, 135-square-foot kitchen addition behind the living room.

CHOSE COMPLEMENTARY MILLWORK

Rather than try to match the 150-year-old chinked log walls, Steve finished out the kitchen with shiplap wood painted a rich neutral. Reclaimed heart-pine flooring and old barnwood ceilings echo the cabin's old-world soul.

LIMITED MODERN ELEMENTS

When possible, the Daniels disguised appliances behind cabinet fronts, so as not to take away from the centuries-old architecture. A farmhouse sink, zinc countertops, and a stainless steel range are all simple enough not to detract from the home's character.

BROUGHT IN LIGHT

The Daniels balanced the dark wood ceiling and floors by replacing old, solid wood doors with new sets of French doors that open onto the dogtrot. Now, sunlight pours into the kitchen.

OPTED FOR OPEN SHELVES

Rather than bulky upper cabinets, the Daniels chose wood shelves, painted the same color as the cabinets, to store their dinnerware.

"It's a really small room, and the shelves open up the space," says Susan.

WENT WITH NEUTRALS

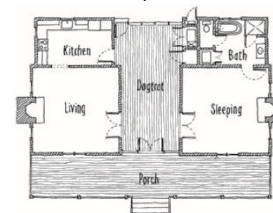
Warm shades of beige were chosen for the walls and cabinets. Crisper colors would have felt too modern in the cabin, and anything darker would have looked drab.

SIMPLIFIED THE FURNISHINGS

To remain faithful to the lifestyle of the 1850s, Susan adopted a less-is-more mentality without overlooking functionality. All-white dishes within easy reach and an antique farm table surrounded with rustic wicker chairs decorate the kitchen. The table and chairs can shift back and forth to the dogtrot for dinner.

THE FLOOR PLAN

Steve designed the new kitchen and bath additions so they are hidden off the backs of the identically sized living room and bedroom—preserving the symmetry of the cabin's original two-room, dogtrot layout.



NOTICE THE DETAILS

IT TAKES SMART DESIGN TO WORK MODERN COMFORTS INTO A HISTORIC HOME WITHOUT DIMINISHING ITS INTEGRITY



FURNITURE-LIKE CABINETS

The inset drawers and footed lower cabinets create a more modular effect in the kitchen. The double-fronted cupboard draws the eye up; it also conceals pantry space and a microwave on one side, the refrigerator and freezer on the other. Extra storage below hides glassware and pots, keeping shelves tidy.



CAREFUL CARPENTRY

When the new walls went up, the boards had to fit precisely into the corners because the adjacent logs were not uniform. "We had an excellent carpenter," says Susan, "and he took the time to fit each plank as snugly as possible to the logs."



USEFUL ANTIQUES

In such a small home, every piece must serve a purpose. This slightly rustic drop-front secretary provides storage and a writing surface when needed. The distressed sage green finish complements the white mortar between the logs, which has become an unintended, but much-loved, design element in the cabin.



UNDERSTATED LIGHTS

Small cable fixtures hung from the ceiling add overhead light without compromising the architecture. "With these, you don't have to cut into the ceiling and damage the structure," says Steve. "And they almost disappear, so you don't even notice them."

THE BEDROOM & BATH

REPEATED THE WALL TREATMENTS

Susan kept continuity with the kitchen by repeating the shiplap walls in the bathroom and using the same paint color (Manchester Tan by Benjamin Moore). "It is subtle and seamless and doesn't take away from the logs," she says.

DECORATED WITH ANTIQUES

Susan furthered the connection between these two spaces by selecting cream-colored furnishings and mixing antiques with reproduction pieces. In the bedroom, a white iron bed and an old, painted bedside chest play off the cast-iron claw-foot tub in the bath.

REPURPOSED TEXTILES

Old Belgian grain-sack pillow shams with a pop of red add textural interest to the crisp white sheeting on the bed. In the bath, tea towels with a crocheted edge were fashioned into cafe curtains that add softness and block out just enough light for privacy near the bathtub (see next page).

WORKED IN FAMILY MEMENTOS

Susan's grandmother made the quilt on the bed, and the towel basket in the bath was used by Susan's family as a bassinet for her when she was an infant. "Yes," she says with a laugh, "I used to be carried around in that basket!" A toolbox from Josiah's father rests on the shelf above the bathroom door.



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—HOMEOWNER SUSAN DANIEL



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Incorporate family
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