

In 1888 a railroad depot was built in Ashford, Alabama. An Ashford resident and property owner, L.C. Cochran, recognized the need for a hotel and built a three-story structure that was opened for business in 1894, the only hotel between Montgomery, Alabama and Bainbridge, Georgia. Mr. and Mrs. C.C. McArthur purchased the hotel in 1916 and resided there until the death of Mrs. McArthur in 1961. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Harriman Summerford (daughter of the McArthurs) acquired the old house-hotel and lived in it until 1984. The structure was vacant for three years until 1987 when another Ashford businessman, Tom Shirley, purchased it. In 1988 Mark Fellows, who contracted with Donald Hussey & Sons to relocate the building, purchased the structure.

Donald Hussey & Sons specializes in moving historic buildings

A dollar a day is all it took to get Donald Hussey of Alabama into the house moving business a half century ago.

In 1955, the going rate for plowing a mule in L.A. (Lower Alabama) was \$3 a day, according to Hussey, which he was doing. He discovered that the rate for helping a friend move a house was \$4 a day. So, he traded his plow lines for one dollar a day more in pay.

Five years later, Hussey founded his own moving company in Elba, Alabama, in the south central portion of the state. Now, almost 50 years later, Donald Hussey & Sons, Inc. continues the trade, which barely resembles the industry of half a century ago.

Back then, according to Hussey, most of the structures were shotgun houses or barns moved on farm to market roads for the county government. "If you moved the structure on Saturday or Sunday, you didn't even need a permit," Hussey said.

It was not until 1975 that Alabama began requiring a permit, which you could get over the telephone in about 20 minutes, according to Hussey. Today, however, we are "eaten up" with regulations, he said. "We no longer deal with the utility companies, but with contractors, who delay the process sometimes by days. Also, the

costs of fuel complicated with pollution regulations and insurance have impacted the business considerably."

Hussey's three sons are now also in the business with their dad. Casey runs the company's shop, that manufactures many of the tools and equipment needed for the now highly specialized moves. Donnie and Jeff anchor the moving process although each of them

performs various duties depending on need.

Hussey still operates with one crew, made up usually of seven people. While most of the company's work is done within a 200-mile radius, Hussey said, "We'll go wherever the job is needed."

Through the years, the company has earned a repu-



Company principals: Jeff Hussey, Treasurer, Donald W. Hussey, Vice President, long time employee Donald Davis and Donald Hussey, President inspecting a new dolly on display by Telkamp Transport Systems at the IASM annual conference products and services exposition.

By JACK E. BRYMER, Contributing Editor

tation for moving historic buildings, which Hussey accepts with delight. "We pride ourselves in moving historical buildings for various museums all over the state," he said. In fact, Hussey himself might be classified historic as he has been in the business half a century.

In fact, Hussey has become a benefactor to historical preservation in the state. One is the Pioneer Museum of Alabama in Troy that features

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