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Pioneer farm preserves heritage

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TALLAHASSEE --- Florida's capital city now is a bustling metropolis. But traditionally it has been the center of great agricultural name of the community, which is derived from the Indians, means "old fields."

Modern generations are taking care to see that rural Florida heritage is preserved through the establishment of the Junior Museum and Pioneer Farm. It's located six miles south of town on Lake Bradford. Thousands of school children and other visitors beat a path to the interesting exhibit every year.

The layout of buildings and displays is on a 50-acre plot of cypress swampland and sandy soil woodland.

They call it "Big Bend Farm," the section devoted to the pioneer farm. Big Bend is the popular, nickname for the section of the peninsula where it "bends" and the "pandhandle" starts. The Farm is made up of nine log buildings, seven of which were moved to the Junior Museum from about 40 miles west of Tallahassee---thus they are authentic Florida rural architecture of the pioneer days.

They were built in the 1880's and are furnished with authentic tools, equipment and furnishings of the era. The smoke house and blacksmith shop were reconstructed, using old material. All the buildings are made of hand hewn logs except the chicken house, which is made of scrap lumber. The farm area is enclosed by a split rail stake-and-rider fence, also moved from the original farm site.