

THE ALABAMA TRUSTEE

A publication of the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation

Summer 2011



Alabama Trust Acquires Two Imperiled Places!



The Jemison-Turner House, in Talladega County

Historic DeKalb County, AL

Friday, Nov. 11 - Saturday, Nov. 12, 2011

Come for the fall color and explore late 19th century Appalachian Alabama in Historic Mentone, a summer retreat and spa for affluent citizens of the era, and Historic Fort Payne, a planned city of the 1880s.

For information: www.alabamatrust.info

Historic Mobile, AL

Friday, Jan. 20 - Saturday, Jan. 21, 2012

Join the ATHP in the exploration of the multicultural history of Mobile with site visits to the city's African American Heritage Trail. Learn more about Africatown, then and now. Escape winter winds to enjoy the warm breezes of the Mobile Bay

HOLD THE DATE - MAY, 2012

ALABAMA
PRESERVATION
2012 CONFERENCE

To celebrate National Preservation Month and to explore Alabama's historic theatres, the conference is moving from fall 2011 to spring 2012 at a date soon to be determined.

Proposals for conference programs and/or tracks should be e-mailed to alabamatrust@uwa.edu

BIRMINGHAM, AL

The Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation is taking a hands-on role in the preservation of two of this year's Places in Peril through the acquisition of the Powell School and the Jemison-Turner House.

"These are significant opportunities for the Alabama Trust to make a direct difference in saving two highly significant Alabama landmarks," stated Tina Jones, president of the ATHP. "Both will be challenging projects but this is what we are here to do – to preserve the historic places that matter to Alabama."

Historic-Jemison Turner House

The Julian and Judy Holmes family of Talladega County donated the Jemison-Turner House to the ATHP. "On behalf of the membership of the Alabama Trust and all of those who care about Alabama's rich architectural heritage, I want to extend a special thanks to Mrs. Judy Holmes for making

this donation possible," ATHP Executive Director Schneider stated.

The Holmes' plan to restore the house, which is located on land held in a family trust, did not materialize. Further complicating its preservation, the family trust prohibits sale of the land on which the historic structure is located. Conversations with the ATHP about listing Jemison-Turner House as a 2011 Places in Peril lead to discussions about how it could be preserved as an important historic landmark, yet not violate the directive of the family trust.

The donation agreement involves the house only and requires that the building be relocated to another site. "This is an exceptional piece of Alabama architecture with an unusual form that retains excellent exterior detailing and fine interiors," Schneider continued. "It is clearly one of the places Robert Gamble (Alabama Historical Commission, Senior

Continued on Page 5

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

by Tina N. Jones, Ph. D

At the Monroeville Lyceum in April, I had the pleasure of having my eight-year-old daughter, Jordan, join me as the Alabama Trust explored Monroeville and the El Camino Corridor. Her young eyes helped me see many of these "old" buildings in a new way.

I've spent many years of my adult life learning about Alabama's landmark buildings and hoping to generate interest in their preservation by sharing their stories with others. I have written grants explaining to people why these buildings needed to be saved. I have used such rhetoric as "simple neoclassical trim inside and out complements an original paneled pulpit" and "offers us a glimpse into how our forefathers lived their everyday lives."

Yet, for my daughter, the building material did not matter. She did not care if the structures were created from cinderblock, brick or wood. It did not matter whether they were "architecturally significant" or not. To her, these structures represented people and how they lived and interacted with one another. These buildings and places were part of the very fabric that made up that community, and she was curious to understand how a child would have played or gone to school in such buildings.

For her, these spaces were opportunities to experience time travel and imagine living in a world where people walked to the store or did homework by candlelight. In these spaces, she saw people and their daily lives unfold. She wondered why a room had two doors, or who would have occupied the bedroom upstairs.

As I watched her drink in sites we visited or walked a part of the Old



No, It's Not Tina - It's Jordan!
Contact tnj@uwa.edu

Federal Road, I remembered why I continue to write the grants that seek to "save" a building or talk to interested community members about the "value" of a building located along their town square. These places-edifices of wood, brick, and stone - matter because they connect us.

We share a common bond in the physical places that we share. By preserving buildings, we help preserve the connections between today and tomorrow. I can describe and even show my daughter pictures of the past, but taking her inside a church building that dates to 1835 and letting her sit in a pew provides a tangible connection that words and pictures fail to describe. I think those tangible connections are too important to lose, don't you?



Summer Lyceum Participants Tour Idlewild Plantation House in Talladega County

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SPEAKING OUT

by David B. Schneider, ATHP Executive Director

Historic Buildings Matter to Us

Great architecture has only two natural enemies: water and stupid men.

I suppose we should update that quote by Richard Stanley Nickel (1928-1972) to read “stupid people,” but the sentiment is clear. Nickel was a tireless Chicago preservationist and his statement rings far too true these days as important Alabama landmarks slowly disintegrate below failed roofs, while others disappear from neglect and apathy. The joy derived from saving Cedarwood in December was short-lived, tempered by the devastating January fire that almost destroyed Birmingham's historic Powell School.

To many (most of us, I trust), historic buildings are like old friends. While I was wandering around my old house recently, I was struck that the reasons I love the house are multifaceted. While it is certainly not a museum, all of the many people who have lived in the house over the past 121 years have left their marks and little bits of their own stories behind. It all adds up to a place that fits me like an old shoe - a place where I find comfort, that's familiar to me, and in which I will certainly leave a little piece of myself for future generations to puzzle over (my guess!).

So when we as preservationists see a great old building moldering away for lack of anyone's care or attention, or lost to a wrecking ball or fire, keep in mind that it had meaning to someone - perhaps even many. In the end, such losses are a loss to us all. That's part of why the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation does what it does and why

preservationists, such as you, are an integral part of the effort to promote the fact that “Historic Places Make Life Better” - they do, we all know it, and it's our task to help others to understand it.

Since I'm in a quoting mood, I'll end this with a favorite 1876 quote by Englishman William Morris that I end many of my slide presentations with:

These old buildings do not belong to us only, they belong to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our own property to do as we like with them. We are only trustees for those that come after us.

Shuffle Off to Buffalo!

Let me make a personal plug for this year's National Preservation Conference in Buffalo, New York. I had the opportunity to tour the city a couple of years ago and was amazed by its rich architectural legacy and the diversity of its preservation challenges and opportunities.

All the “great masters” of American architecture and landscape design are represented there - Richardson, Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Olmstead Brothers to name a few. The city reminded me of a smaller, more intimately scaled version of Chicago, and it is certainly a “must see” for anyone who cares about historic preservation.

The weather should be great that time of year, and the conference should be a memorable.

Contact David Schneider
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Thank You!

Cedarwood

- Alice Bowsher, Endangered Properties Trust
- Valerie Burns, UWA
- Sam Frazier, Endangered Properties Trust
- Robert Gamble, Endangered Properties Trust
- Richard Holland, UWA
- Tina Naremore Jones, ATHP, UWA
- Edward Whatley, property owner

Jemison-Turner House/Powell School

- Alice Bowsher, Endangered Properties Trust
- Mayor William Bell, City of Birmingham
- Sam Frazier, Endangered Properties Trust
- Robert Gamble, Endangered Properties Trust
- Julian and Judy Holmes Family

Summer Preservation Lyceum, Talladega

- Elizabeth Cheeks, Brian Muenger, City of Talladega
- Lynn Hanner, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind
- Dr. Billy Hawkins, Nicola Lawler, Talladega College
- Frank Hubbard, First Presbyterian Church
- Jemison-Carnegie Heritage Hall Museum
- Ed King, Silk Stocking Historic District
- Nancy Lutchendorf, Joe Power, Talladega Historic Preservation Commission
- Evelyn and Bill McGehee, Historic Dogwood House
- Meg McGehee Paulon, Idlewild Plantation

Places In Peril

- Melanie Betz, AHC
- Donna Castellano, ATHP
- Robert Gamble, AHC
- John Greene, AHC

Membership

- Barbara Adkins
- Wimberly Comer

Jemison Turner Work Day

- Beverly and Jerry Barnett
- Jay Embry
- June Holloway
- William Kimbrough
- William Salters
- Michael Schneider
- Travis Wesson
- Oxford Lumber



Logo for the 2011 National Preservation Conference in Buffalo, New York

PRESERVATION IN THE FIELD

Endangered Properties Trust

The Endangered Properties Trust (EPT) originated as a joint program of the ATHP and the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC). The EPT is managed by the ATHP with oversight by three designated trustees: one representative each from the ATHP and the AHC and one at-large member appointed jointly by both organizations. The trustees make recommendation to the board of directors of the ATHP regarding projects and expenditures drawn from the EPT fund.

With revolving assets of approximately \$100,000, the EPT is



charged with two primary functions: to serve (1) as a monetary source for emergency rescue efforts relating to significant historic properties, primarily through loans, and (2) as a revolving fund for the acquisition, covenanted resale, preservation and rehabilitation of threatened landmarks. Over the past two years, the EPT has been involved in the following projects, among others:

- an emergency grant to the City of Selma for a consulting engineer to assess the condition of the landmark YMCA Building resulting in a report that was instrumental in the denial of a demolition permit by the city's historic preservation commission;
- the purchase of an option on historic Cedarwood, an 1818 house near Moundville, and its subsequent resale to the University of West

Alabama, which will relocate the house to its campus for restoration; and

- an emergency loan to the Cawaco RC&D Council Inc. for the relocation of the Cardiff High Sheriff's House to Brookside, where it is being Rehabilitated for use as a visitors center.

For additional information, call David Schneider at 256-310-6320 or email dbschneider@bellsouth.net.

Mail contributions to the Endangered Properties Trust fund to Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation. Mail to ATHP, UWA Station 45, Livingston, AL 35470.



*Marion Elementary School, Marion,
Loan for Emergency Repairs*



*Cardiff High Sheriff's House
Brookside, Jefferson County*

Update: Partners In The Field

Since the spring edition of The Alabama Trustee, the ATHP's executive director continued to actively support historic preservation initiatives throughout the state in 18 towns and 16 counties, as well as participation on five regional or statewide issues.

Among the highlights for this period are site visits to the following:

- **Lowndesboro Colored School**, Lowndesboro, Lowndes County to assist with a nomination to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage;
- **2011 Places in Peril** site visits statewide to evaluation nominations for the 2011 Places in Peril selection;
- **The Cedars**, Munford, Talladega County, study architectural similarity to the Jemison-Turner House;
- **Tornado Damage Assessments**, Cullman, Walker and Marion counties and the Hackleburg community for inventory and evaluation of storm

damage to historic districts;

- **Camp Hamilton**, Sherman Rivers House, Anniston, Calhoun County for nomination to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage;
- **Gurley Historical Association**, Gurley, Madison County, to provide technical assistance, presentation to city officials; and



*Florey House, Vincent - Could be
Threatened by Proposed Ordinance*

- **Clay Cemetery**, Gurley, Madison County, to provide technical preservation advice.

Other activities include a meeting to assist in planning the National Trust for Historic Preservation's **National Rosenwald School Conference** to be held in Tuskegee in June 2012 and a letter to the mayor of Vincent regarding a potential historic district and the need to consider its resources as the town seeks to enact a proposed nuisance property ordinance.

PRESERVATION NEWS

April Storms Damage Alabama's Historic Places

The tornadoes that hit Alabama on April 27 took an immense toll in terms of lives and property.

Unfortunately, the storms also damaged or destroyed a large number of historic buildings across the state. In the weeks following the storms, the staff of the Alabama Historical Commission and ATHP Executive Director David B. Schneider began documenting the damage to the state's historic places.

Direct hits in the historic districts in Tuscaloosa, Cullman, Pratt City and Cordova caused extensive damage. In Tuscaloosa, three neighborhoods being



Marshall House (Ca. 1905), 601 4th St., Cullman Historic District



Eddleman Building (Right, ca. 1900), 200 Block 4th St., Cullman Downtown H.D.

considered for historic designation were hit, with one of the districts suffering the loss of a majority of its contributing resources. The two other historic districts lost more than a third of their contributing resources.

In Morgan County, the Dr. William E. Murphy House, one of the oldest frame houses in the area was destroyed.

The ATHP and the AHC are still gathering information about lost or seriously damaged historic resources. Anyone with information is asked to contact the ATHP at alabamatrust@uwa.edu

More photographs of the tornado damage to Alabama's historic places can be found on the Alabama Trust's Facebook page.

Trust Acquires Two Imperiled Places, continued from page 1

Architectural Historian) and I call 'too important to lose,' and it is worthy of every effort we can make to save it."

Funds made available through the Endangered Properties Trust will stabilize and protect the house from weather damage and market it for sale and relocation.

Historic Powell School

Ownership of the Powell School, along with a portion of the insurance proceeds from a January fire, has been transferred to the ATHP.

Immediately following the devastating fire, Sam Frazier, National Trust for Historic Preservation Advisor to Alabama and chairman of Birmingham's Design Review Committee, took action. After months of complex negotiations, the Birmingham City Council passed a resolution June 7 authorizing Mayor William Bell to execute the



Redevelopment Agreement, which requires the Alabama Trust to stabilize the building using a portion of the insurance proceeds. In addition, the ATHP agreed to find a buyer for the building. A condition of its sale to a third party is the purchaser must agree to restore the historic structure.

Powell School was constructed in 1888 to replace Birmingham's first public school erected in 1879. The school was named for Col. James R. Powell, President of the Elyton Land Company, which donated the property.

The structure is the oldest school building in the city and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Its Victorian-Gothic style architecture is distinctive. "The Powell School is truly one of the most significant architectural landmarks in Birmingham," stated Schneider, "and the ATHP will develop a broad coalition of partners to help save it for future generations." One community partner, Mike Calvert, former Executive Director of Operation New Birmingham, has volunteered to serve as the project manager.

For additional information about either property, call David Schneider at 256-310-6320 or e-mail dbschneider@bellsouth.net.

PRESERVATION: PLACES IN PERIL

Saved

A twelfth-hour rescue has spared Cedarwood. After more than a year of effort to find a suitable new site for this significant circa 1819 house, the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation exercised its option to purchase Cedarwood in December 2011 and immediately sold the house to the University of West Alabama, which will relocate the house to the Livingston campus.

To save it from ruin in the 1970s, Edward P. Whatley, Jr., a descendant of

the house's builder Joseph Blodgett Stickney, relocated Cedarwood to his farm just south of Moundville. His plans to restore the historic family home never came to fruition.

Robert Gamble, Senior Architectural Historian for the Alabama Historical Commission, approached Whatley about saving the house. After these discussions, the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, through financing by an allocation of the Endangered Properties Trust fund, acquired an option to purchase the house in August 2009.

During a sluggish economy, the ATHP persisted in seeking a buyer for Cedarwood - one that would relocate and restore the structure. Given the uncertainty of the marketplace ATHP was reluctant to acquire the house without first having identified a buyer.

UWA, which is known for its preservation programs and where the ATHP office is located, purchased Cedarwood immediately after the

ATHP assumed ownership. UWA will relocate the house to its campus where it will be nestled among other historic buildings and function as a guest cottage for the campus.

"It was a difficult and time consuming process," stated ATHP Executive Director David B. Schneider, but in the end, the Trust was successful thanks to the cooperative spirit of the owner and the quick action of the university.

The ATHP extends its appreciation to Mr. Whatley, the EPT Trustees (Alice Bowsher, Sam Frazier, and Bob Gamble), UWA President Dr. Richard Holland, Dr. Tina Naremore Jones - who skillfully wore two hats, one for UWA and another for the ATHP - and Valerie Burnes, also with UWA. The hard work and enthusiasm of these preservationists prevented the loss of this significant piece of Alabama's historic legacy.

This was very special way to end 2010!



*Cedarwood
Hale County*

Progress

The **Lowndesboro Colored School** (2008), Lowndesboro, Lowndes County is one of the few remaining 19th century African-American schools in Alabama; it is the oldest documented black school in Lowndes County and the only school for blacks in Lowndesboro. The school and the nearby Colored Methodist Episcopal Church are tangible reminders of the historic black community of the area.

The Elmore Bolling Foundation recently received a grant from the

Gwyn Turner Preservation Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to complete a historic structures report as a first step toward the eventual restoration of the school.

A site visit by David B. Schneider, ATHP executive director, and Elizabeth Brown, deputy state historic preservation officer with the Alabama Historical Commission, in April found the school to be an excellent candidate for restoration.



*Lowndesboro Colored School.
Lowndesboro, Lowndes County*

Lost



*Avondale Mill,
Sylacauga, Talladega County*

The **Eva Jane mill** at the **Avondale Mills**, in Sylacauga, Talladega County, was destroyed by fire on June 22. Constructed in 1913, the plant operated until 2006. "This is an unfortunate example of why the thematic grouping of cotton mills was listed in the 2010 Places in Peril," remarked ATHP Executive Director. The mill was the centerpiece of the Avondale complex and was directly related to the 2011 Places in Peril listing for the Mignon Mill Village.

Dr. William Murphey House, in Trinity vicinity, Morgan County, was destroyed by a tornado on April 27. Built circa 1818-1820, the house was featured in Robert Gamble's book *Historic Architecture in Alabama: A Guide to Styles and Types* (pages 4-5) in which he remarked that the house is "a humble reflection of high style Georgian tendencies, filtered down to the level of folk building." Prior to the storm, the house had been stabilized with the help of Nucor Steel.

KUDOS

Cary-Pick House Given to Auburn

by Ralph B. Draughon, Jr.

To honor her family, Frances Pick Dillard has donated an Auburn treasure, the historic Cary-Pick house, to Auburn University. Important both for its architecture and its historical associations, the antebellum raised cottage contains a particularly striking solid mahogany free standing circular staircase, which is noted for its structural design.

Noted also for its association with leaders in education, science, the

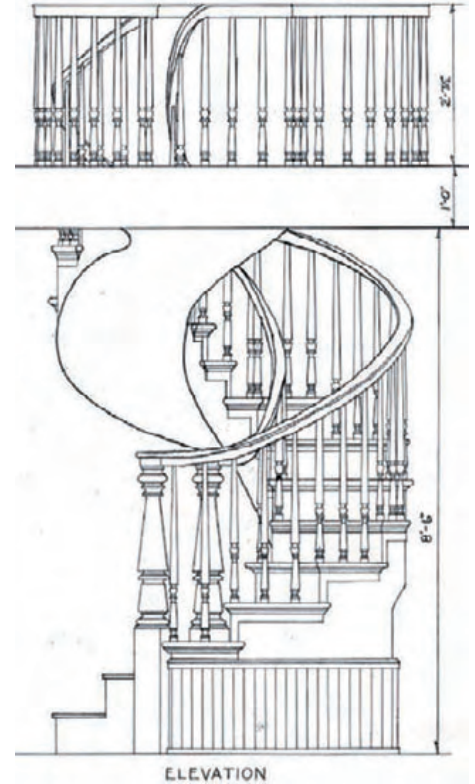


Carey-Pick House Facade
Auburn, Lee County

military and historic preservation, the house will contain the archive of Dr. Charles Cary, the founder of the university's veterinary college - the first in the South. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Dr. Cary's pioneering efforts improved the lot not only of the region's farm animals, but also (through state regulation of meat and milk products) of Alabama's city dwellers.

Besides its function as the Cary archive, the house also will serve as headquarters for the Women's Philanthropy Board by which Auburn's College of Human Sciences promotes the endeavors of women to enhance worldwide efforts benefiting human well-being.

As a member of the philanthropy board, Mrs. Dillard has provided a noteworthy instance of altruism by donating her historic family home to the college. All of Alabama's preservationists join together to applaud her generosity.



ELEVATION
H.A.B.S. Drawing of Staircase
Library of Congress

Too Important To Lose - Commentary by David B. Schneider

Every year during national Preservation Month in May, the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation team up to select a list of Places in Peril (PIP).

While the name Places in Peril is catchy and readily recognizable, it really does not capture the full intent of the PIP program, which focuses more on preservation opportunities than it

does on threats to individual properties. For as much as many of the sites truly are "in peril" for a variety of reasons, most are also opportunities that await some creative thinking.

Over several issues of *The Trustee*, the ATHP has featured many success stories that involved places that made the list and have since been rescued and returned to productive service. Also worthy of note, is the Alabama Trust's active role in finding solutions for Places in Peril on the listings as well as those imperiled, but not officially recognized as such on the list. Historic sites in peril, whether on the PIP list or not, serve as something of a priority for ATHP advocacy efforts.

As the PIP selection committee prepared the 2011 list, members of the team were keenly aware of the number of factors involved in the situations surrounding each and every nomination.

The underlying purpose is to ensure the preservation of the resources included in the list. Making a positive



Westwood, Uniontown, Perry County
A Landmark Too Important to Lose

case for preservation is of paramount importance, as publicity can generate unintended consequences.

Overcoming the potential stigma that listing as a PIP will reflect badly on those who control the fate of a particular property is often a factor to be negotiated. While the PIP committee goes to great lengths not to have that happen, the stigma is sometimes hard to break.

As it plans for the 2012 PIP, the committee is considering ways to give the PIP program a "positive" tone, while still calling attention to the urgency of the threats facing the resources selected.

keep us posted

The Alabama Trust wants to hear about your local issues and successes. Please send information to the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation
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Livingston, AL 35470
or alabamatrust@uwa.edu

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Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation

Places in Peril

Alabama Old House Lovers

Monroeville and Talladega Lyceums – Great Successes!

The spring and summer Preservation Lyceums in Monroeville and Talladega opened the doors to many special places in Alabama. In April, preservationists from around the state explored the historic highways and byways of Monroe County and in July the architecture of public and private historic buildings in Talladega County. Friday evening events at Monroe County's historic Meadow Banks Plantation (early 1800s), home of Ann Bedsole, and Talladega's Dogwood (1901), home of Evelyn and Bill McGehee, enabled Lyceum participants to meet local preservationists as well as those from other Alabama communities.

In Monroe County, participants traveled the Old Federal Road, with Ann Bedsole, and saw important sites along its route: the Claiborne-Purdue Masonic Lodge (1823) and William B. Travis House, with Agee Broughton, and Monroe County Courthouse with Stephanie Rogers and Nathan Carter. "Traveling the Highways and Byways

of Alabama" by panelists Mark Dauber (photographer, *Exploring the Old Federal Road in Alabama*); K.T. Owens (Monroeville Historic Preservation Commission); Joe Watts/Linda Vice (Alabama Scenic Byways Advisory Council); and Wimberly Comer (Alabama Black Belt Nature and Heritage Trail) provided perspectives on the importance of historic roadways then and now. A visit to the Governor John Murphy House (1825) with restoration architect Nick Holmes and a wine and cheese soiree at the Russell-Harper House (1849) completed a perfect spring weekend.

In Talladega, participants toured the restored Historic Ritz Theatre (1936) with Bill McGehee and neighboring historic buildings along Courthouse Square with McGehee and Brian Muenger, city manager; Idlewild Plantation (1828); Talladega College's Swayne Hall (1857) and DeForest Chapel (1903) with President Dr. Billy Hawkins and Nicola Lawler; the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and



Attendees tour the Old Federal Road

Blind's Manning (1858), Grace (1878) and Jemison halls, with Institute historian Lynne Hanner; and private homes in the Silk Stocking Historic District. Also, opening its doors to members of the Trust were the First Presbyterian Church (1854) and the Jemison-Carnegie Heritage Hall Museum (1906). Presentations by Nancy Lutchendorf and Joseph Power of the Talladega Historic Preservation Commission, a field trip to the Jemison-Turner House (circa 1836) and a private reception in the historic Arts and Crafts bungalow (1908) of Ed King completed the weekend.