

TRUSTEE

A publication of the ALABAMA TRUST for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

FALL 2008

PLACES IN PERIL UPDATE...

Winter Place becomes a passion of preservation for Drescher

In 2004, one of Montgomery's most distinctive homes, Winter Place, found itself listed on Alabama's Places in Peril list compiled each year by the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation and the Alabama Historical Commission.

Winter Place, located in the Cottage Hill District just a few blocks from the heart of downtown, is two conjoined homes situated on 3.5 acres. Built in 1855

by Col. Joseph Samuel Winter and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Winter, the home is believed to be designed by Samuel Sloan, one the country's leading architects of the period. Sloan designed Col. Winter's first home in Philadelphia, Pa., and the Governor's Mansion in Raleigh, N.C.

An 1880 census shows the Winter family living in the North House while their daughter, Sally Gindrat Winter Thorington, was living in the South House with her husband, Robert D. Thorington and her family. The South House has remained in the Thorington family ever since, while the North House was out of the Winter family from 1946-1951, but has been in the Thorington family ever since.

By 2004, Winter Place had long since past its glory days. However, the dream of what it once was remained -- at least for Maj. Craig Drescher, a former Navy aviator turned Navy recruiter. Drescher spent two and half years negotiating with the Thorington family before he purchased Winter Place in 2006.



Winter Place newly-refurbished tower, August 2008

"The purchase was anything but a simple real estate transaction. We have a rehab agreement with a 10-year plan and the Alabama Historical Commission is the third party overseer. Luckily, my vision, the family's vision, and the AHC's vision all lined up," explained Drescher.

The purchase also includes a life estate agreement allowing present occupant, 82-year-old Joseph Winter Thorington, Jr. to live at Winter Place as long as he desires.

Winter Place has been listed on the Alabama Registry of Landmarks and Heritage since September 2005. The home was added to the National Registry of Historic Places in mid-June 2006.

Drescher is quick to acknowledge the help he has received with his project. Some of these "helpers" include work by co-workers and their children like Lt. Col. Marcus Puccini and his son Marcus II who needed an Eagle Scout project. Marcus

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PRESERVATION EFFORTS HONORED



Dick Hudgens, Garland Smith, Jo Bonner



Larry Goodson, Garland Smith, Jo Bonner



Garland Smith, Jo Bonner, Bradley Hale



Betty Gaines, Elizabeth Crosby, Garland Smith, Jo Bonner

THE ALABAMA TRUSTEE

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The Alabama Trustee encourages submissions of articles, photographs, and correspondence relating to historic preservation issues within the state of Alabama for consideration in its publication.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Bryce Hospital billed as architectural and landscape treasure

When one thinks of Alabama, cutting edge architecture doesn't automatically come to mind. But, here in Alabama in 1861, a building was built in Tuscaloosa which with its architecture revolutionized the care of the mentally ill.

Bryce Hospital was the first institutional building in Alabama dedicated solely for the care of the mentally ill. This alone should be enough to preserve this grand old building.

When Bryce Hospital was first built, people from other areas came to look and study this then-unique design. Bryce is the oldest and most intact Kirkbride hospital still in existence.

At Bryce, the citizens of Tuscaloosa and Alabama have a wonderful opportunity to preserve not only historical cutting edge architecture but a historical landscape also. This is rare all across the U.S. but extremely rare here in Alabama. The landscape was part of the treatment at

Bryce, making it important also in the overall preservation of this complex.

It is true that Bryce has fallen into a regrettable state of disrepair, but it is not beyond saving. Perhaps our society's stigma attached to mental illness makes it hard to see Bryce as important as nearby Denny Chimes or the President's Mansion at the University of Alabama.

Citizens of Alabama need to wake up and recognize Bryce, and it's importance to the nation. Bryce Hospital should and must be restored and once again attract people from other areas to come study and marvel at the beautiful architecture and landscape. The Governor should support citizen efforts underway to study the situation to preserve this historic Alabama and National landmark before it's too late.

A concerned Citizen
Will Ponder
Dadeville, Alabama

ARCHITECTURE 101 TOURS MONTGOMERY



In May during Preservation Month, the Historic Architecture Group took an Architecture 101 class tour in downtown Montgomery.

The tour guide for the day was Robert Gamble with the Alabama Historical Commission.

Robert Gamble (shown center holding notepad) explains the placement of downtown buildings to Alabama Trust members.



President looks back on successful year, forward to another

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I report to you on the progress and accomplishments of the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation for this year.

1. We have begun three affinity groups for those with like interests. The Garden affinity group, chaired by Barbara Adkins, Mike and Paula Rushing; the Historic Architecture group led by Barbara Adkins and Bob Gamble with Alabama Historical Commission; and the Decorative arts group, led by Emily and Jack Burwell have enjoyed tours in Selma, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa.
2. Membership has increased as we now have close to 750 individual members and 19 corporate members. We will continually strive for more.
3. As a partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we are offered the opportunity of a grant to help sustain our organization by employing a professional with expertise in historic architecture or engineering. This person will advise property owners with their questions relative to retaining historic character. To this end we have raised \$105,000 to be matched by the National Trust of an equal amount. The grant is entitled the "Partners in the Field grant," and we are hopeful to receive it as we do need a director with field experience!
4. A list of friends/members has been formed on a county-wide basis to enable us to respond to issues of general interest and legislation, etc. in an advocacy role. We are most interested in obtaining tax credits for homeowners, as well as those for income-producing properties, which already exist. (Many states utilize homeowners' credits.) Shirley Hammond, chair of Legislation, has worked diligently on this list.
5. We have accepted a façade easement on a home in the Hollywood area of Birmingham, guaranteeing the historic character of that residence in perpetuity.
6. Five new Board members have been added representing different quadrants of the state with needed expertise in a variety of areas. David Walker has served as Nominating Chairman.
7. The Alabama Trust has been involved in the planning and execution of the Preservation Leadership Training, conducted by the National Trust. For this event, 40 leaders in preservation

are selected from around the nation, convening in Birmingham in January, 2009. A preservation project will be selected, and the challenge will be to determine a feasible use for the property. We are particularly excited about national leaders attending this conference in Alabama. Alice Bowsher, Pat Camp, Bo Grisham and David Fleming and Mary Alison Haynie, these latter two with Main Street Birmingham, have worked tirelessly to make this project a reality.

8. We continue to be involved and support cultural heritage tourism in the state. Our Board meetings are held in different areas and the Board gets to sample these strategic and important landmarks: Westervelt-Warner Museum, Wetumpka's Jasmine Hill Gardens, Chapman in the central part of the state, and with our next meeting to be held in Clarke, Washington and Wilcox counties. The Alabama Black Belt Heritage area is pursuing a formal designation. Linda Vice and Tina Jones are intricately involved in this endeavor.
9. We are continuing to raise funds for the: a). Alice Bowsher Operating Reserve and the b). Intervention and Revolving Fund, which can be used for impending emergencies when a building is about to be lost, or by purchasing historic resources and then returning these funds when the building is sold with protective covenants. This fund enabled us to make a difference in the historic Tallassee Mill this summer in an effort to at least delay the demolition of the Mill. The ultimate outcome is still to be determined.
10. A website has been maintained and updated www.alabamatrust.info. Thank you Mike Rushing.
11. Will Ponder has been hard at work collecting commitment signatures for the "Alabama Historic Preservation" license plates (1,000 are needed in order to commission a design).
12. We partnered with the Alabama Historical Commission's Bob Gamble and Melanie Betz to announce the year's "Places in Peril". And in conjunction with this, Will has spearheaded the effort to have these and former "Places in Peril" documented as notecards to be sold to constituents and to the public.
13. As an educational endeavor, we plan to partner with Susan DuBose at the



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- Alabama Archives to hold a workshop to assist fourth graders with their research on state history. Their created notebooks are tremendously important as this is the only place in Alabama curriculum that the state is included. Thank you Tina Jones.
14. Many long hours were spent planning our annual conference held on the Eastern Shore of Mobile October 9-11. In addition to raising sponsorship dollars, the Board's activities have included inviting speakers and implementation of logistics. AHC's Ellen Mertins and Dorothy Walker are the continuity and backbone of this yearly experience, as the Alabama Historical Commission and the Black Heritage Society are co-sponsors. We could not do any of this without dedicated volunteers, and led by our two Board members Susie McGowin and Devereaux Bemis of the Mobile Historic Development Commission.
 15. We are pleased with and proud of our association with the University of West Alabama (UWA). The Center for the Study of the Black Belt along with our offices are housed in historic Choctaw Tavern on the campus of UWA. Through this association, we are able to share support staff as well as secretary Monica Newman Moore, and Dr. Tina Jones who has scores of related responsibilities. UWA enables many functions of the Alabama Trust to come to fruition.

For next year, we hope to hire an Executive Director, strengthen our "young professionals" on the Board, acquire 1,000 membership commitments, and hopefully begin to be a central advertising point for historic homes and buildings for sale. Our Newsletter is sent to 850 individuals and the website visited by many more!

Spread the word about Places in Peril and join the Alabama Trust and its effort to save Alabama's treasured buildings



Purchase your Places in Peril note cards today. They make great stocking stuffers for everyone on your list.

Each set features 8 color note cards with envelopes for only \$15⁰⁰

Sites featured include:

John Drish House • Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa County)
 Log Cabins • pre-1860s (Statewide)
 Lewis-Young House • Dadeville (Tallapoosa County)
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church • (Dallas County)
 Ramsay-McCormack Building • Ensley (Jefferson County)
 Oak Place • Huntsville (Madison County)
 Winterboro High School • Winterboro (Talladega County)
 Old Pratt Gin Factory • Prattville (Autauga County)

To order call (205) 652-3497, or email alabamatrust@uwa.edu
 The Alabama Trust is a 501(c)3, all donations are tax deductible.

WINTER PLACE *from page 1*

He arranged and oversaw the clearing of a 150-year-old, 300-ft. wall on the property that had practically disappeared from view. Thirty other scouts helped and the project was completed in a day.

In addition, Drescher recognizes Robert Gamble and Melanie Betz of the AHC who helped with the complicated negotiations involved with the acquisition of the property, and who requested Winter Place's listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Drescher doesn't forget the mayor's office and the Landmarks Foundation, the organization that runs Old Alabama Town. According to Drescher, these "helpers" and their expertise are invaluable because contrary to popular belief there's little funding available for renovation of historic properties especially by private owners.

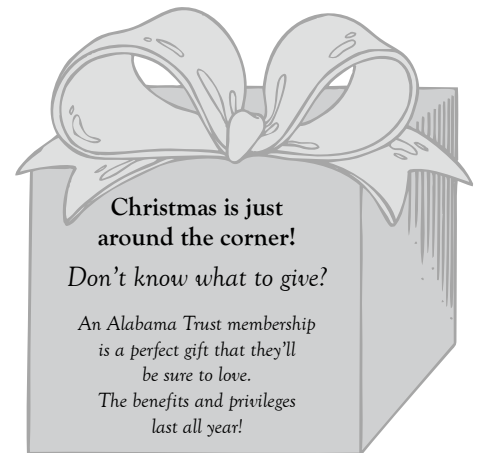
The daunting task of restoring Winter



Winter Place restored back porch

Place to a place that people wish to stop and come in has not deterred Drescher. He feels lucky to be working on a house with a story to tell and finds it rewarding to be turning the house into a home for a family to enjoy.

To learn more about Drescher and his quest to restore Winter Place, go to www.historicwinterplace.com.



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2009 PLACES IN PERIL DEADLINE: Monday, Feb. 16, 2008

Is there an irreplaceable historic building or site in your area that is highly threatened by demolition or neglect? This is your opportunity to help save it! *Places in Peril*, a joint program of the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, recognizes Alabama's most endangered historic resources. Each submission is to be evaluated for its significance and threat.

Please provide clear photographs of the site. Nominations will not be considered without at least one visual representation.

Mail to: Melanie Betz, Alabama Historical Commission
P. O. Box 300900, Montgomery, AL 36130-0900

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip Code/ County: _____

Date Built: _____

Ownership: Public Private

Designation: National Register State / Local Designation

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of other local contacts/nonprofit organizations:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

On a separate page, briefly answer the following questions:

Why is the site significant? Is it architecturally significant? Historically significant? Contributes to a district? What makes it unique or different? What is the history of the site? Provide a brief (1-3 lines) historical summary. Why is the site threatened? For example, is it poor maintenance, improper development, proposed demolition, lack of funding? How imminent is the threat? Who are the property owners and what is their attitude towards the property? Provide their contact information. How well known is the site? Is it private or open to the public?

Alabama Trust recognizes outstanding efforts in preservation

At the 2008 Preservation Conference in Point Clear, Ala., the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation presented the Gwyn C. Turner Award, The Restoration Award, the Rehabilitation Award and the Preservation Service Award. Each year, the Trust seeks to recognize individuals and organizations who work to preserve the historic integrity and cultural memory of Alabama through its buildings and landscapes.



Bradley and Anne Hale

Alabama native Bradley Hale was recognized with the Trust's highest award, the **Gwyn C. Turner Award**. Named for lifelong preservation leader Gwyn C. Turner of Demopolis, Ala., this award recognizes lifetime achievement in the field of preservation.

A longtime supporter of preservation in Alabama, Hale has led efforts on many occasions to raise awareness of the benefits of preservation in the state. His leadership led to the establishment of the Gwyn Turner Fund to support Alabama preservation projects. This fund helps makes the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation a partner with the National Trust in having a tool to deliver assistance to worthy projects

in the state. Also through his efforts the Vine and Olive wallpaper was placed at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Ala.

Hale was elected to the Board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1997. He served as vice-chairman for the National Trust's campaign for America's Historic Places which raised more than \$125 million for the National Trust in its first capital campaign. He is a retired senior partner at the law firm of King & Spalding where he served as managing partner. He was an early chairman and longtime trustee of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, the nation's largest statewide preservation organization. He is a National Trust Advisor Emeritus from the state of Georgia, serving on the Board of Advisors from 1984-1990. Mr. Hale is past Chairman of the Atlanta Historical Society as well as past Vice-Chairman of the board of Sweet Briar College. He is a Trustee of the Alabama Archives and History Foundation. Mr. Hale is a graduate of the University of Alabama, college and law school, and holds an M.B.A from Harvard University.

The 2008 Restoration Award was presented to Betty Burnett Crosby and Elizabeth Gaines Crosby for their restoration efforts on Roseland Plantation in Faunsdale, Ala.

The restoration of the Roseland Plantation (Frank Gaines' Place) site has been an unusual undertaking for the Gaines family. Their endeavors demonstrate the importance of retaining a sense of place in restoration efforts. The Roseland Plantation was added to the National Register for Historic Places in 1994 (after the collapse of the main house) as part of the National Trust's emphasis on

disappearing places at that time. The property was also featured in the 1994 program, Plantations of the Canebrake, sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania.

The property represents early Alabama history, in that it was created in 1825 and has remained in the same family. The original purchaser of the property was James H. Fitts, originally of North Carolina. Fitts moved to



Elizabeth Gaines Crosby and Betty Burnett Gaines

Alabama in 1816 near Washington County and purchased the Marengo County property in 1825. The property originally encompassed more than 2000 acres and today retains 800 of the original acres. The property continued as a farm until 1925. The property is now used for hunting and recreation.

The family is restoring the original house site to the appearance of the 1840s working plantation. The most unique structure is the dairy cooler that features an underground limestone cistern with limestone steps leading to the water source.

The family has been careful to use meticulous craftsmanship to retain the character of the out buildings while making them functional for entertaining and hunting. The family is creating a unique environment for visitors to experience a little of early

historic
PRESERVATION
the original green



Covenant Community Church in Elba

Alabama history while enjoying the beauty of Alabama's Black Belt.

The 2008 Rehabilitation Award recognizes the efforts of an organization who saw potential in a building when others did not.

In July 2007, Covenant Community Church and the community of Elba began what quickly became a labor of love rehabilitating a building located on the main square of the town. The dream was a multi-functional meeting place for all ages, where friends and neighbors meet, get a cup of coffee, and share conversation, as well as participate in cultural events, entertainment, art, and most especially community – the result was Just Folks Coffeehouse.

The coffeehouse is located in a building constructed in the late 1940's for the "Claire Theater," which operated until around 1952. Other businesses used the space, but after the town flood of 1990, the building remained empty and full of debris. After nearly twenty years of neglect, the building was donated to Covenant Community Church.

Cleanup of debris and demolition of some interior walls, that were added after the "Claire" closed, was undertaken by CCC and interested members of the community.

One section of a wall has the original paint from "The Claire" and has been preserved as a "conversation piece" reminding the community of its heritage. In the future, the community hopes to make the upstairs of the coffeehouse into a private meeting room/library.

Even though bare walls and floors remained, CCC and the community cleaned, decorated, and opened its doors for the first time on Dec. 8, 2007 for the Elba Chamber of Commerce's annual "Breakfast with Santa." This event marked only the first in a slate of exciting events that have brought friends and family together at the coffeehouse. For their efforts the CCC

has received awards from the Elba Chamber of Commerce and the National Society of the Daughters of the Revolution.

The 2008 Preservation Service Award, given to Auburn Rural Studio, recognizes the unique contribution of both the students, faculty and administration of Auburn University in creating environments in which individuals can learn, live, and socialize in stimulating environments that contribute to the overall well-being of a community.

In the early 1990s, when Samuel Mockbee conceived of the idea of the Rural Studio and D.K. Ruth, chairman of architecture at Auburn hired Mockbee as a full professor, two minds were joined in the idea that architectural education could provide strong academic instruction, community engagement, and priceless hands-on experience simultaneously. Over the last 15 years, the structures created by the students of the Auburn Rural Studio have become iconic pieces of the landscapes in the communities in which they are housed. From the Butterfly House in Hale County to the Thomaston Rural Heritage Center in Marengo County, the students and their teachers have utilized innovative techniques that incorporate salvaged and recycled materials to create well-insulated, inexpensive dwellings. Demand for the Rural Studio and its energetic students has only increased and developed the need for other programming efforts along similar lines.

The initial design of the program paired teams of second-year and fifth-year thesis students with county residents as architects

Auburn Rural Studio projects in Perry (right) and Hale (below) counties



and clients. The students designed and built a home or other structure, primarily with donated and found materials, at a rough cost of \$20,000 to \$40,000 per project. In 2001, the studio opened an outreach program that allowed students from other architecture programs and disciplines to participate. Mockbee's vision continues today under the direction of Andrew Freear, who came to Auburn after practicing and teaching architecture in Chicago. Under his direction, the Rural Studio has become broader in impact. And although, the Studio may not rely on the funky materials of its beginnings, they continue to be concerned about pragmatic issues and sustainability.

In an interview for *ARCHITECT* Magazine, Freear said, "It's phenomenal—we've done about 60 buildings now. And we can look at those buildings and see where we've done a good job and where we've done a bad job." In fact, says Freear, the 14-year inventory of Rural Studio buildings has become one of the program's key teaching tools.

At the beginning of each year, new students are taken to visit the earlier buildings, and the result is a heightened emphasis on craft. "I've tried to up the ante with the detailing." In addition, the students have taken on larger scale projects to create public spaces that are enjoyed by many. The Rural Studio does not just talk about sustainability and its benefits to impoverished communities, it demonstrates daily that green building works on any economic level.

The Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, a 501c3, serves as the voice of Alabama's historic buildings,



neighborhoods and places so that they may be enjoyed by future generations. The Trust is also a statewide partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

For more information about these awards and other events of the Trust, call (205) 652-3497 or visit the website at www.alabamatrust.info.



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