

# PRESERVATION Alabama Historical Commission REPORT

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## Friends of Joe Wheeler Home contribute to restoration project with generous gift

The Friends of the General Joe Wheeler Home Foundation recently donated \$200,000 to the capital improvement project at Pond Spring – The General Joe Wheeler Home. The donation is in memory of Ray Coffey, past President of the Foundation. The gift will enable the restoration of the Wheeler House to be completed in 2011. The money will specifically fund exterior renovations.

Efforts to raise money for the home's restoration began three years ago with the help of Lucy LeGrand Walser and family. Ms. LeGrand Walser is a direct descendant of General Joe Wheeler.

"The Historical Commission is grateful for the foundation's gift and continued support. We value our relationship as a partner with the foundation in the ongoing preservation at the Wheeler Home," said AHC Executive Director Frank White.

The project involves restoring the Wheeler House

and preparing for the reinstallation of 30,000 furnishings and artifacts. Major work includes: installing a new HVAC system and a fire detection system; repairing plumbing fixtures and piping; repairing or replacing wood siding, exterior doors, windows, trim, and shutters; painting exterior; providing ADA accessibility; adapting attic for offices and collection storage.

"Wheeler Plantation is much beloved in Lawrence County and northern Alabama. Annie Wheeler was a great friend to the community, opening up her house and garden often to the public," states Dr. Milly Caudle, foundation president.

Pond Spring is the post-Civil War home of General Joseph Wheeler, a Confederate major general, a U.S. congressman, and a Spanish-American War general. Following the Civil War, General Wheeler became a national symbol for reunification and reconciliation.

Wheeler's daughter, Miss Annie Wheeler, served in three wars as a Red Cross nurse.

In 1977, the National Park Service listed the home to the National Register of Historic Places. General Wheeler's descendants donated the home and 50 acres to the AHC in 1993.

While the restoration project continues, staff will

conduct tours of the grounds, including a restored slave quarters, a burial ground for 120 slaves and freed blacks, and three historic family cemeteries.

The Friends of the Joe Wheeler Home Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization formed in 1989. The foundation meets in Wheeler Chapel on Highway 20, the Joe Wheeler Highway.



The Wheeler House (above) is the focus of the 50-acre Pond Spring complex near Courtland. The two main houses are closed for restoration, but the grounds are open to groups by appointment. For more information, contact Melissa Beasley at 256.637.8513 or [wheplan@hiwaay.net](mailto:wheplan@hiwaay.net).

## Black Heritage Council drawings help to save historic places

In 2008, the Black Heritage Council (BHC) developed the Historic Building Architectural Rendering Program. This is a matching grant program that funds an image of a historic building's potential for rehabilitation and reuse. The BHC initiated the program to help citizens communicate their vision to community leaders, elected officials and funders.

The BHC is working with an architect to create images that are presented to the public for their unlimited use. To date, the BHC has completed four project renderings.

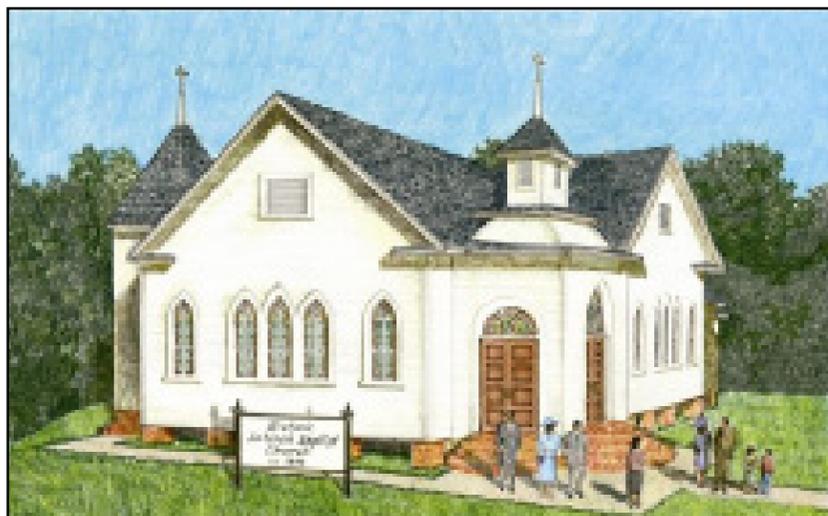
The first project was the Coosa County Farmers and Civil Association building in Rockford. The two-story, stone building was constructed in c. 1940 and is the only known building that

and is one of the oldest black churches in Camden. It was the site of mass meetings and voting rights activities during the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at the church in the 1960s.

After the rendering was completed, the church received community support for rehabilitation of the church, including donated paint, supplies and labor. For their efforts, the congregation was awarded an Idella Childs Award by the Black Heritage Council. (See page 3 for more pictures.)

Other projects have included the Thomaston Colored Institute in Marengo County and the Sandtown High School in Millbrook in Elmore County.

The grant requires a 50-50 community match for the cost of the rendering, which is \$500. For more information, call Dorothy Walker at 334.230.2665, or e-mail her at [dwalker@preserveala.org](mailto:dwalker@preserveala.org). In 2010, application information will be available at: [preserveala.org/blackheritagecouncil.aspx](http://preserveala.org/blackheritagecouncil.aspx).



# Additions to the National Register of Historic Places



## Hurtsboro Historic District, Russell County

listed on October 19, 2009

The Hurtsboro Historic District is located 23 miles southeast of Tuskegee and is comprised of a collection of buildings dating from the mid-19th century up through the early 1950s. Taken as a group, these resources illustrate small town development in east central Alabama. There are a number of Greek Revival houses in the district, including two antebellum residences, the Joel Hurt House and the Nimrod Washington Long House.

The most prominent commercial building is the two story Owens Mercantile Block built on Main Street c. 1910. The earliest, extant industrial building is the Hurtsboro Gin and Mill Building, which dates from the 1890s. Also included in the district are the Art Deco style Farmers and Merchants Bank, the Neoclassical Revival First Baptist Church (1873) and the late Victorian Gothic Hurtsboro Methodist Church (1906).



## Charles Denby Garrison, Sr. House, Prichard

listed on September 9, 2009

Constructed in 1941, this Mobile County house was the home of lumberman Charles Denby Garrison, Sr. until his death in 1949. The house was designed by the architect Kenneth R. Giddens and constructed by the builder Charles Guy Durham. It is a completely intact, unmodified residence with everything up to its original roofing and down to its original furnace still in place. It sits on 80 beautifully landscaped acres in a pristine setting.

Architecturally, the Charles Denby Garrison, Sr. House is a fine example of American residential design from the interwar period that incorporates elements from both the Craftsman style and Colonial and Classical Revivalism. After World War II, modern styles such as the Ranch house would dominate the American housing market.



## Monroeville Downtown District, Monroeville

listed on September 16, 2009

Generally located on the streets bordering the courthouse square, the historic district is comprised of governmental and commercial buildings dating from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. Its centerpiece is the 1903 Classical Revival courthouse (pictured above) with its striking octagonal dome.

Another prominent government building is the US Post Office. Constructed during the Great Depression, it features a 1939 mural by A. L. Bairnsfather. Tucked away on North Alabama Avenue Alley is the F. Metts Store. This is a rare example of a late 19th century, wood frame store that used to be common in small towns. Across the state these buildings either burned down or were torn down to make way for larger, more impressive, brick commercial buildings.



## J.W. Shreve Addition Historic District, Andalusia

listed on September 9, 2009

The J.W. Shreve Addition Historic District is important for its fine collection of residential, academic and religious architecture dating from around 1905 through 1940. The styles found here include Queen Anne, Craftsman and Colonial Revival. In addition, both the First United Methodist Church and the J.W. Shreve House (pictured above) illustrate the Neoclassical Revival style. Andalusia's City Hall, originally built as the East Three Notch Street School, is an excellent example of an early 20th century school building.

## 2009 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Alabama Historical Commission and the Black Heritage Council presented preservation awards during the annual Alabama Preservation Conference in Auburn, October 8-10.

### IDELLA CHILDS AWARD

The Black Heritage Council recognizes individuals and groups whose contributions demonstrate excellence in historic preservation.

#### Antioch Baptist Church, Camden



Deacon James Anderson and Rosetta Anderson

The members of the church and its leaders are awarded for restoring one of the oldest African-American churches remaining in Camden. Antioch, originally constructed in 1885, features Gothic style architecture and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The church was the site of mass meetings in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. It was also used as a staging site for protestors leading marches to the Wilcox County Courthouse to register to vote. Dr. Martin Luther King spoke at a meeting in the building in the 1960s.



Antioch Baptist Church, before restoration



Antioch Baptist Church, after restoration

#### Dr. Yvonne Phillips



Dr. Yvonne Phillips has worked for years to restore the Darden House in Opelika. The house is named after Dr. John W. Darden, who was the first black physician in Opelika. Dr. Phillips worked with a strong coalition of individuals and groups to preserve the house on Auburn Street. The house served as Dr. and Mrs. Darden's home, as well as being a medical office. Dr. Phillips worked to get it listed to the National Register of Historic Places. It is now a museum and a community health center.

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to individuals and groups whose contributions demonstrate excellence in historic preservation.

#### Elizabeth Sims

Ms. Sims is recognized for her work in documenting, restoring and promoting the historic Shiloh Rosenwald School near Notasulga.

Sims has been working with architecture students from Auburn University and Tuskegee University to restore the c.1921 school. An alumnus of Shiloh, she formed the Shiloh Community Restoration Foundation in 2006 and received a \$50,000 grant from the Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation.



Elizabeth Sims

#### Alabama's Main Street Organizations



Alabama's thirteen Main Street organizations are demonstrating that historic preservation plays a key role in downtown revitalization and economic development, in tourism, and in a community's health. Main Street is not only helping utilize historic buildings as assets, but it is helping to make Alabama a better place to live and visit.



Christy Gustin, Junior League of Mobile

#### Junior League of Mobile

The Junior League's Downtown Walking Tour takes students through historic downtown Mobile. Tours are directed by Junior League volunteers, and stops include notable landmarks such as Christ Church Cathedral, City Hall, and Fort Conde-Charlotte. Students learn about the history of existing downtown buildings and develop an appreciation of historic preservation.

# STATEWIDE REPORT

## Commission welcomes two new interns

Coming to the AHC from Buford, GA, Maurice Allen started working as an intern for the Black Heritage Council (BHC) in August. In addition to working with the BHC, he assists with outreach projects and has helped with the newsletter database. He also conducts research for

various outreach projects. Allen is a Junior at Alabama State University, where he is studying history. While Allen serves as an intern for the BHC, he hopes to build new relationships and gain experience that will further develop his studies in history.



Maurice Allen

Allen remarks, "I am excited about the opportunity that I have been given to intern with the BHC. I have been learning some new and interesting facts about the history of Alabama. My time as an intern has just started, but I am enjoying working at the commission."

Richard Jones is from Montgomery and is studying elementary education at Troy University's main campus. Jones is working with AHC Architect Mae Washington in the Historic Sites Division. He is currently assisting the division with various administrative projects. In addition to his duties at the commission, he also is a substitute teacher for the Troy and Pike County school systems.

I am striving to gain experience in a variety of areas, which is why I don't limit myself to any particular field," said Jones.

His future plans are to become a school teacher and eventually serve in an administrative leadership position in a school system.



Richard Jones

"Since I have been working at the Alabama Historical Commission, I have truly been enlightened about the history of this great state that I was born in.

**By the numbers . . . visitation at historic sites**

**Fort Morgan Candlelight Tours:** 3,356, averaging over 400 people a night

**Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Frontier Days:** 11,500 people over five days

**Old Cahawba Haunted History Tours:** 190 people from AL, GA, TX, and FL

**State Capitol:** 8,370 visitors, (6,730 students) from September - November

**PRESERVATION REPORT**  
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 Preserve, Protect, and Interpret Alabama's Historic Places

