

Places in Peril

Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2010

**Alabama Historical Commission
Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation**

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Cricket Theatre in Collinsville named as a *Place in Peril*

In observance of National Historic Preservation Month, the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation (ATHP) announce Alabama's most endangered places for 2010.

Since 1994, the AHC and the ATHP have joined forces to sponsor *Places in Peril*, a program designed to highlight some of Alabama's most significant endangered historic sites.

"Places in Peril is a valuable tool in directing public attention to the many historic places in Alabama that are under threat from neglect or demolition," said Frank White, executive director of the AHC.

David Schneider, executive director of the ATHP states, "This list reminds us that much remains to be done to help Alabamians recognize that our historic places are essential community assets. These places represent one of the greenest approaches to providing places in which to live and work."

Cricket Theatre

113 W. Main Street, Collinsville

"It's a Wonderful Life," "The Big Sleep," and "The Best Years of Our Life" were among the top movies of 1946, the same year the Cricket Theatre opened. In 1946, more than 80 million people attended the movies every week – almost sixty percent of the total population. The \$60,000, 800-seat theatre was built just as television was emerging in the decade following World War II.

Boasting the largest chairs, modern rest rooms, and air conditioning, the building is typical of the streamlined designs of the movie palace era. Throughout its heyday, the Cricket welcomed crowds who often considered the air conditioning as much of an attraction as the western that was playing. Local theatres were central to the social and entertainment life of most small towns during this time. It was also a time when African-Americans had to use side entrances to segregated balcony seats, or attend a separate theatre altogether.

The Cricket eventually succumbed to the competition from television and closed its doors in October, 1964. The Collinsville Historical Association recently purchased the building, and they are trying to raise \$90,000 to repair the collapsed roof. Only time will tell if the old Cricket marquee will once again blaze with lights and bring back some of its former excitement to Collinsville's main street.

2010 Places in Peril

- . **Auburn Train Depot**, Auburn, Lee County
- . **Bankhead House**, Sulligent, Lamar County
- . **Bankhead-Shackelford House**, Courtland, Lauderdale County
- . **Coosa County Farmer's and Civic Association Building**, Rockford, Coosa County
- . **Cricket Theatre**, Collinsville, DeKalb County
- . **Kelly-Stone-Hill House**, Carrollton, Pickens County
- . **Magee Farm**, Kushla, Mobile County
- . **Old Federal Road**, multiple counties
- . **Shorter Cemetery**, Eufaula, Barbour County
- . **Cotton Mills**, statewide
- . **Historic Wood Windows**, statewide

The Places in Peril list carries no formal protection, but it does build awareness in local communities about endangered sites, and can help generate support to preserve these places.

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