

# Places in Peril

## Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2009

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

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### **Allen & Jemison Building in Tuscaloosa listed 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 2009.

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. This year's list includes 10 sites.

"*Places in Peril* is a valuable tool in directing public attention to the many cultural resources in Alabama 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 assets for community revitalization. They also represent one of the greenest approaches to providing places in which to live and work."

Named as one of this year's *Places in Peril* is the **Allen & Jemison Building** in Tuscaloosa.

The Allen and Jemison Building, also known as the Spiller Building, is a landmark in downtown Tuscaloosa. Occupying a prominent corner location on Greensboro Avenue, the massive 52,000 square foot, four-story brick building was constructed in 1903 on the foundation of the old 1826 Tuscaloosa courthouse. William Jemison, the nephew of Robert Jemison (one of the city's most prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century businessmen) and his

partner started a business here which became the largest hardware store in Alabama, according to contemporary accounts.

Today, however, the empty building is threatened by demolition. The current owners do not have the funding to maintain the building but they do not want to sell it either. Efforts to lease it – with the stipulation that the tenants make the repairs – have not been successful. “We are hoping that the owners can work with local preservationists to save this iconic building in downtown Tuscaloosa,” said Melanie Betz, an architectural historian with the Alabama Historical Commission.

In the meantime, the Allen and Jemison/Spiller Building is awaiting the wrecker’s ball this summer unless an alternative plan is devised and accepted by the owners. Local historians believe that mothballing the building may be a solution to buy a little more time.

The 10 sites listed as *Places in Peril* for 2009 are:

- . **Grove Court Apartments**, Montgomery, Montgomery County
- . **The Lyric Theatre and Office Building**, Birmingham, Jefferson County
- . **Wadley Depot**, Wadley, Randolph County
- . **Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church and Community Day School**, Hamburg, Wilcox Co.
- . **Allen & Jemison Building**, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County
- . **Historic Schools of Birmingham**, Birmingham, Jefferson County
- . **Prewitt Plantation Slave Cemetery**, Northport vic., Tuscaloosa County
- . **Uniontown Historic District**, Uniontown, Perry County
- . **Town of Hobson City**, Hobson City, Calhoun County
- . **Ogletree-Wright-Ivy House**, Auburn, Lee County

### ***Still Endangered Landmarks***

Two nationally significant historic sites have previously been listed as “Places in Peril” but are “Still in Peril”.

- . **Barton Academy**, Mobile (PIP 2005)
- . **Old Tallassee Mill**, Tallassee (PIP 1994; 2001)

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