

Places in Peril

Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2009

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

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Hobson City in Calhoun County 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 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 Alabama Historical Commission.

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."

Hobson City in Calhoun County has been named as one of this year's *Places in Peril*.

This year marks the 110th anniversary of the founding of Hobson City, the oldest black incorporated municipality in Alabama. Celebrations will commemorate this event, but there will also be concern about the town's future. Despite its historical significance, Hobson City is now struggling to survive as a municipality. Businesses have left the community and basic services such as trash collection and public safety are now covered by volunteers and the County Sheriff.

Many of Hobson City's early-to-mid 20th century housing which includes bungalows, shotgun houses, L-cottages and even a few late Victorian dwellings, are vacant, deteriorated or have been demolished in recent years.

Before the turn-of-the-century, Hobson City had been was part of the city of Oxford in an area called Mooree Quarter. After a black Justice of the Peace was elected from the area, the mayor of Oxford redrew the boundaries of the city to exclude Mooree Quarter. This area, renamed Hobson City, became an incorporated town on July 20, 1899, with a population of 135 families.

At its peak during the 1920's, the city grew to about 1900 people, probably due to the construction of the new Calhoun County Training School of 1923. Funded by the Rosenwald Initiative, this school was later renamed the C.E. Hanna School after its first principal, Edgar Hanna.

Today, two groups are working to improve the community: the Hobson City Community and Economic Development, Inc., and the Concerned Citizens of Hobson City. Frazine Taylor, Chair of the Black Heritage Council comments, "Both organizations share a common mission of wanting to revitalize the town through economic development so that it may prosper and continue to be a municipality. Furthermore, these groups want the history of Hobson City to be known to all."

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

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