

Places in Peril

Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2009

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

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Prewitt Slave Cemetery in Tuscaloosa 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 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 **Prewitt Slave Cemetery** in Tuscaloosa County.

Slave cemeteries are significant, yet largely forgotten, historic resources in Alabama. Many cemetery locations are unknown, and those that have been identified are often abandoned, neglected and in peril. While the location of the old Prewitt Slave Cemetery near Northport has been known for generations, it is still an endangered site, with nature, logging, limited access and even development pressures (the cemetery is

located near prime lakefront property) threatening its future survival.

Plantation owner and major slave trader, John Welch Prewitt, whose estate once covered more than 6000 acres, established the 2-acre burial ground in the 1820's. Possibly the largest known slave cemetery in Alabama, the Prewitt slave cemetery became the final resting place for 300 to 500 slaves and their descendents.

Hand-cut river rock markers and crude etchings, flat rocks, and solid slabs of arched stone and footstones are located throughout the cemetery, along with an unknown number of unmarked graves. The markings range from initials scratched into stone to full names and dates going back to 1819, the year Alabama became a state.

Today, access to the old Prewitt Slave cemetery is a major concern, but efforts are now being made to resolve this issue. Prewitt family descendants, both black and white, are determined to keep up the cemetery and deal with the forces of nature and man that have damaged many of the markers.

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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