

# preserve

## ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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### **Bemiston Mill Village listed to the Alabama Register**

The Alabama Historical Commission recently listed the Bemiston Mill Village in Talladega to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. The Alabama Register is an official listing of buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. These properties, which may be of national, state, and local significance, are deemed worthy of preservation by the Alabama Historical Commission.

Bemiston was a model planned community first developed in 1927 when the Bemis Bag Company of St. Louis began construction of its new 700,000 square foot mill about 2 miles south of Talladega. At the time, the Bemis Bag Company was the leading maker of bags in the country. The company also provided housing for its employees as well as public buildings to provide for all their needs.

Today, there are over 200 residences in Bemiston and most date from 1927 until the early 1930's. There is some newer construction – mainly from the 1960s through the 80's - but the majority of the buildings contribute to the historic district.

The Bemis Bag Company's planned community provided well-built houses for its employees. Constructed of California Redwood, these houses included up-to-date features for its time including electricity, indoor plumbing, screens for the windows, and fireplaces in most rooms. Garages were also provided, which was especially visionary considering that there were only 3 automobiles in the community in 1927! Bemiston also had a K through 6 Elementary School, a commissary, gas station, a community center, and two churches. Streets were curbed and guttered. In addition, Bemiston had a village photographer, a free clinic, a village council, and even a company dairy farm which provided fresh milk and butter.

In 1979, the Bemis Bag Company plant closed the mill but it was later taken over by Master Brand Industries, a maker of cabinets. The community today is still thriving today with nicely kept houses and owners who take pride in their neighborhood.

Listing to the Alabama Register is an honorary designation and carries no restrictions or financial incentives.

*To protect, preserve, and interpret Alabama's historic places is the mission of the Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama's state agency for historic preservation.*

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