

# PRESERVATION

Alabama Historical Commission

## REPORT

VOL. 35, NO. 4

Summer / Fall 2008

## TALLASSEE MILLS

### *Endangered textile mill dating back to 1854 may be preserved for the community*

The textile mill complex in Tallassee is one of Alabama's most significant industrial treasures. The complex's central building, the 1854 stone duck mill, is among the Alabama's most endangered landmarks.

In a letter dated November 19, the 5-story duck mill was condemned by the city's building official.

The Talisi Historical Preservation Society, Inc. is considering numerous options for preserving the mill.

"We are examining various alternatives that could preserve the history of the mill and create community development opportunities for the city and surrounding areas," Larry Price, President of the Preservation Society, said.

According to local historian Bill Goss, the first mill began

operating in the Tallassee area in 1844. The last mill to operate as a textile manufacturing facility, the Mount Vernon Mill, closed in 2005.

The choices for the future of the mill include demolition for scrap materials, or preservation and redevelopment for the community's use.

Tallassee city officials, along with area residents and members of the Talisi Historical Preservation Society, will be determining the fate of the historic mill when they meet for the city council meeting scheduled for January 12.

The Preservation Society was created in the 1990s in part to help preserve and protect the mill complex. To date, the Preservation Society has restored the superintendent's house, the boiler room, and the 1844 stone factory building.



**Above:** The 1854 mill, which manufactured cotton duck, was Alabama's largest building when it was constructed, even larger than the state capitol. If preservation plans are not developed soon, it will be demolished.



**Left:** The 1854 stone mill interior was partially gutted in the 1990s by a company that resold the heart pine timbers.



**Above:** An artist's rendition of a textile mill complex in Valley. The City of Valley, which has a large collection of mill buildings, is preserving the area for future community use. The Valley Community Development Corporation is managing this comprehensive preservation and revitalization effort.

### City of Valley leads in mill preservation

Residents in the Tallassee area are looking to the City of Valley, Alabama for guidance on how the city might preserve the mill district for future community, retail and commercial uses.

Officials from Valley recently made presentations to the Talisi Historical Preservation Society concerning the design and progress of the city's mill restoration projects.

The mill district in Valley has been preserved for future use as a business and residential district. The city is in the site design phase now and is excited about the possibilities that exist for the property. For Valley residents, the mills represent

not only the history of their city, but also an anchor for future community development. The mill district revitalization in Valley is being led by Jim Jones, Executive Director of the Valley Community Development Corporation.

For Jones, it is as much about preservation of the past as it is about preserving the district for community use.

As Jones describes, "The preservation of the textile mills in Valley has provided a solid foundation for a new business district which will include retail and commercial office space. We are excited about what the mill district will offer to residents in the near future."

# Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage



*Above: The front entrance to the Alabama Bookstore as it appears today.*

## Listed in September

### The Alabama Book Store, Tuscaloosa

Located on University Boulevard next to the campus of the University of Alabama, the book store has served thousands of students at the university since 1944.

### Malbis Plantation Historic District, Baldwin County

Malbis Plantation was established in 1906 as a colony farm by two Greek immigrants. Soon the farm became a self-sufficient plantation and commercial enterprise known as Malbis Plantation, Inc.

### Brannon Springs Methodist, Etowah County

Located in the Southside area, the church is noted for its architecture and social history. Constructed c. 1900, the church was disassembled and moved to its present location in 1966.

### First Presbyterian Church of Aliceville, Pickens County

The church is noted for its social and religious history. According to the nomination, construction on the building was completed in 1908, and the congregation from Oak Grove Presbyterian Church in Franconia first worshiped in it.

### C.E. Hanna School (Old Calhoun County Training School), Calhoun County, Hobson City

This school was the only high school for blacks in Calhoun County until 1972 when area schools were integrated. It operated as an elementary school until 2006, when a new school was constructed. Although no longer being used as a school, a portion of the school complex houses the City Hall and other city services.

**Editor's note:** As the new editor of *Preservation Report*, I plan to resume our normal bi-monthly schedule starting with the January/February issue in 2009. I regret the gap in publication caused by staff losses and I look forward to continuing the high quality and standards set by our previous editor.

John Greene,  
Communication Coordinator

## Listed in September (continued)

### Old Fitzpatrick Post Office, Bullock County

Located in the town of Fitzpatrick, this building once served as a train depot for the area before it became a post office after the train route was moved.

### Coosa County Farmers and Civic Association Building, Coosa County

Built in c. 1940, the Coosa County Farmer's and Civic Association Building has served as the center of community, civic, and social gatherings for African Americans. It is the only building in Alabama known to have been constructed specifically to house the Black County Extension Agent and the Black Home Demonstration Agent.

### Boynton Residence, Dallas County

The residence was included for its association with Samuel and Amelia Boynton, prominent civil and voting rights activists, community leaders and business owners who played an active role in the planning nonviolent social resistance in Selma in the mid-twentieth century.

### Willis Estates, Etowah County

Dating from c. 1923, the Willis Estates (The Old Home House) is significant because it is a good representation of a Craftsman/Arts & Crafts style house that was built by Robert Willis, a local black carpenter who constructed a number of other homes in the area.

### Macedonia Seventeenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham

This church represents neoclassical architectural design exterior and Corinthian interior. Constructed by the Calvary Baptist Church, the church was sold in 1965 to the Macedonia Seventeenth Street Baptist Church, a black congregation who continue to use and maintain it.

*The May 2008 Alabama Register listings will be included in the January/February 2009 issue.*



*Above: The Greek Orthodox Church, located in the Malbis Plantation Historic District, was dedicated in 1965.*

# 2008 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Alabama Historical Commission and the Black Heritage Council presented preservation awards during the 2008 Alabama Preservation Conference in Point Clear, October 9-11.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to individuals and groups whose contributions demonstrate excellence in historic preservation.

### Redstone Arsenal Cultural Resource Management Program: Danny Dunn, Beverly Curry, and Carolene Wu

By federal law, Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal was required to survey the arsenal's vast site and produce a preservation plan. With the guidance of Danny, Carolene, and Beverly, a new survey and preservation management plan was created for the arsenal. Their work received national recognition.



**Above:** Danny Dunn, Beverly Curry, and Carolene Wu



**Above:** James Willoughby, with Commissioner Ann Bedsole and Executive Director Frank White.

### James Willoughby Fuller, Montgomery

James Fuller has dedicated much of his life to preserving Montgomery's history and landmarks. Fuller helped revitalize a declining neighborhood by restoring an older commercial building and opening a business there. This area, known today as Cloverdale, is now a thriving neighborhood with a diverse retail landscape.

### Dr. Mildred Caudle, City of Athens

The Park and Speak Gulf Station and the College Inn were acquired by a private owner and a few years ago, and the buildings were in placed peril. Retired history professor Dr. Mildred Caudle led the community's efforts to save the structures. Today, the buildings are city-owned and located just a few blocks away from their original location.



**Above** Dr. Mildred Caudle, along with Earl Glaze and Larry Underwood, city craftsmen who worked on the project..

## ROY SWAYZE AWARD

This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the restoration of a major Alabama landmark.

### The John W. Izner Museum, Ashville

The 1852 Greek Revival home of Lt. Col. and Judge John Washington Inzer is being restored by the museum board and volunteers who have spent the past ten years meticulously restoring the exterior and interior, as funds became available. The museum is now open, staffed with volunteers, and is a major tourist attraction in the Ashville area.



**Left:** Ben Hestley accepts the award on behalf of the Izner Museum Board. Joining Hestley are Executive Director Frank White and Commissioner Ann Bedsole.

## IDELLA CHILDS AWARD

The Black Heritage Council recognizes preservation projects that highlight Alabama's African-American history and culture.

### Doral Finley, Black Heritage Trail, Mobile

Mobile has a rich legacy of African-American culture. Its churches, music, food, schools, and homes contribute to this legacy. Dora Finley recognized these treasures as something everyone should be able to easily visit. From this recognition came Mobile's Black Heritage Trail, a 37-site tour that is guided by markers, print, and audio materials linked to public transportation routes.



**Above:** Dora Finley accepts the award from Frazine Taylor, along with Congressman Jo Bonner.

# FROM THE COMMISSION

## Staff Updates

In October, the AHC welcomed **John Greene** as Communication Coordinator. John has served the state in various capacities, most recently working in the Executive Planning Office as a strategic planning analyst. He has five years experience in public affairs, non-profit development, marketing, regional planning, and higher education. He graduated with his MPA degree from Auburn University in 2007, with a concentration in public policy.



John Greene

In September, **Kara Long** began serving as a Curator at Pond Spring. Previously, Kara worked as the Assistant Curator of Exhibits at the Museum of Mississippi. She received her B.A. in history from the University of Alabama, and an M.A. in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University.

**Rebecca Whitson** is the new Museum and Admissions Aid at Fort Morgan, and started serving in October.

**Christopher Conway**, was hired in November and is involved with landscaping and site maintenance at Fort Morgan.

**Joseph Glazar** began serving as the Transportation Enhancements Coordinator in September. Prior to his current position, he worked at the AHC as a cultural resources specialist, working on a Katrina and Rita recovery grant.

**Susan Enzweiler** began serving as the National Register Coordinator in August. Prior to starting in her new role, she was the transportation enhancements coordinator for the AHC. She has a B.A. from the University of Dayton, and an M.A. from the University of Cincinnati, both in history.



## FORT MORGAN CANDLELIGHT TOURS SELECTED AS ONE OF SOUTHEAST'S TOP 20 EVENTS

The annual Candlelight Tours at Fort Morgan has been selected by the Southeast Tourism Society as one of the Southeast's Top 20 Events for the month of June 2009. Over 1,600 newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, AAA, and other media outlets receive the Top 20 listings every month. CONGRATULATIONS to all of the Fort Morgan staff. For more information about the designation, visit: [www.southeasttourism.org/top20](http://www.southeasttourism.org/top20)

Next Commission Meeting  
February 4, Montgomery  
Capitol Building Auditorium

## PRESERVATION REPORT

Alabama Historical Commission

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468 South Perry Street / P. O. Box 300900  
Montgomery, AL 36130-0900 / (334) 242-3184

**James P. "Ike" Adams** *Chair*  
**Frank W. White** *Executive Director*  
**John Greene** *Editor*

**The AHC apologizes for any address errors.**

**Please e-mail corrections to: [jgreene@preserveala.org](mailto:jgreene@preserveala.org)  
or call (334) 230-2680**

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