

**May 13, 2019**

**Cowan Ramser House/White's Funeral Home**

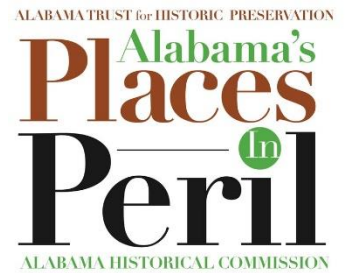
441 E. Barbour Street, Eufaula, Barbour County

c.1840

Nominator: Doug C. Purcell

Owner: Walter Lewis

Threat: The house has been damaged by storms repeatedly over the last several years. The building needs immediate repairs, or it risks destruction.



This property is a contributing structure in the National Register of Historic Places Seth Lore and Irwinton Historic District. It is also one of eight historic Eufaula structures recorded during the Historic American Building Survey in 1935. In addition, it is one of the oldest surviving Greek Revival residences in Eufaula. In 2017, the house's roof and several windows were severely damaged in a windstorm. That damage was exacerbated by Hurricane Michael in 2018. There is severe water intrusion and the damage continues with each passing day.

The owners have applied for an emergency loan from the Alabama Trust's Endangered Property Trust Fund, but this loan cannot cover the costs. The Eufaula Heritage Association is supporting the effort to restore this building. Places in Peril is listing this property to provide statewide awareness to the ongoing issue.

## Prehistoric Native American Trade Canal



Connecting Oyster Bay to Little Lagoon, Gulf Shores, Baldwin County  
500-600 AD

Nominator: Harry King

Owner: City of Gulf Shores

Threat: The trade canals are relatively unknown in the community. They risk being forgotten and covered by current development pressures in Gulf Shores. Awareness will bring support to the effort to locate and document the remaining portions.

The first known account of the Prehistoric Trade Canal in Gulf Shores was made in a report to Congress in 1827 by Army Captain Daniel E. Burch. There have been stories about this canal and others like it since the beginning of European settlement in North America. These canals were used to transport trade goods between large inland bodies of water all along the Gulf Coast, this canal was constructed and used sometime between 500-600 AD.

Currently, only two sections of the Gulf Shores canal are known, but much of the canal has been covered by current development. The City of Gulf Shores owns one section, at Little Lagoon and is currently trying to restore and interpret the area. This

canal is the only known canal this far west. Places in Peril seeks to elevate the awareness of the community about this site. Most of the canal is at risk from development pressures in the area and may have already been destroyed. It's imperative the community recognizes this site and its contribution to the history of the Gulf Coast.

## **Hotel Talisi**

14 Sistrunk Street, Tallasee, Elmore County

1929

Nominator: Suzannah Solomon Wilson

Owner: Wylie T. Troupe

Threat: A fire ten years ago and several failed renovations have left the building in a deleterious state. The City of Tallasee declared it a public nuisance and will decide to demolish it after a hearing on May 14th



The Hotel Talisi is under an immediate threat. After a devastating fire and failed rehabs, the community and state landmark has been condemned as a public nuisance and slated for demolition. A late appeal filed by the owner has delayed the demo through May 14, 2019.

There needs to be a considerable effort made stabilize the buildings and renovate it, so Tallasee doesn't lose this important place.

## **Oak Grove School**

142 Oak Grove Road, Gallion, Hale County  
1925

Nominator: Oak Grove School Heritage Center Committee

Owner: (see above)



Threat: There is a lack of organizational funding and deferred maintenance that overtime has left the school with urgent repairs they need to make. Places in Peril listed Rosenwald Schools as a collective nomination several years ago and this nomination allows us to revisit those important resources. Many of Rosenwald Schools still sit abandoned, vacant, and decaying.

Constructed in 1925 the Oak Grove school served the African American community in Hale County as a Two-Teacher School. The school relied on community investment when it was built and served the community until 1968. The building was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. Now, the school is owned by the Oak Grove School Heritage Center. They operate the building, currently as a museum, but years of deferred maintenance are starting to show. The group needs support with planning and funding.

## Oaklawn Cemetery



1800 Holt Road, Mobile, Mobile County  
1879

Nominator: Eddie Irby Jr, 92nd Infantry Div. Buffalo Soldiers Assoc. Of WWII

Owner: unknown

Threat: Constant deterioration and financial support. There is an active preservation organization for the cemetery, but more support is needed to bring it back from the brink of neglect.

The first burial in Oaklawn Cemetery dates from the 1870s. This cemetery is a significant place for the African American community of Mobile. Located in North Mobile, the burial ground is the final resting place for many. While the number of burials unknown, it is estimated that as many as 10,000 people are buried there. The cemetery contains burials of veterans from all branches of the military including, the Merchant Marines, from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars. Also buried there are Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Silver Star Recipients, as well as Buffalo Soldiers, Tuskegee Airmen, and others. There are also significant individuals that served their community in other ways.

Recently, the cemetery was listed to Alabama's Historic Cemetery Register and received a marker associated with that listing. However, the cemetery continues to deteriorate and needs serious care. Currently, there is no support from the City of Mobile, it is entirely a volunteer effort. That effort needs technical and financial support. Places in Peril seeks to bring a level a statewide awareness, but also connect the volunteer effort with historic cemetery experts.

## **Rural Training & Research Center**

575 Federation Road, Epes, Sumter County

C.1970

Nominator: Federation of Rural Coops

Owner: Audrey Haksin

Threat: Age and deferred maintenance. The federation is a significant organization but needs publicity to elevate this significant resource to attract support.



*Special note: This site is a significant agricultural learning center for self-supporting African American farmers in West Alabama. With the decline of single family-owned farms, the Federation of Rural Coops, through the Rural Training & Research Center supports, educates, and provides a community for small-time farmers.*

The Rural Training and Research Center has a complicated past steeped in the quite Civil Rights movement of West Alabama. Overshadowed by the events in Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham a legal battle played out between African American tenant farmers and white landowners, resulting in the tenants being evicted. The community came together and formed the Panola Land Buying Association. The goal was to build a place that was theirs. As part of that movement, the Federation of Rural Coops supported the farmers along the way. In 1970 the PLBA formally purchased around 1,100 acres in Epes, Sumter County, Alabama and the Federation of Rural Coops opened the Rural Training and Research Center, supporting and educating farmers across the South.

Today, the center is still in operation, but with the decline of small-time farming and rural communities, it needs support. Its facilities are suffering from years of deferred maintenance, but they remain useful. The preservation of this site is more important because of what it represents. The triumph of a resilient community and a focus on preserving rural communities. Sumter County along with the rest of the Black Belt suffer from economic and agricultural decline. Their way of life is increasingly at threat from a culture that is progressing at a rapid pace. It seems, with the proper support, the Rural Training and Research Center can help these communities move forward with sustainable goals.

## **The Pink House/The Bridges House**

214 Edgewood Boulevard, Homewood, Jefferson County

1921

Nominator: Homewood Alabama Historical Preservation Society, Inc.

Owner: Patrick O'Sullivan

Threat: In 2017/2018, the owner wanted to demolish the house and gardens, to develop several new houses in a prime location in Homewood. The preservation community in Homewood rallied and applied pressure to get the owner see the benefits of historic preservation. Now the property is at risk of being sold and its fate is unknown.

*Special note: The owner is aware of this nomination, they did not expressly disapprove of it and is aware the publicity associated with PIP can bring an appropriate buyer, who will preserve the property.*



The Bridges House, or affectionately known as the Pink House by the residents of Homewood, Alabama in Jefferson County, has been the center of local controversy for at least a year. The Bridges designed and built the house and the gardens over the course of the middle twentieth century. The house was meant to be an artists' retreat for the two of them. Despite this fact, the couple was known for entertaining over the years and the home developed a cosmopolitan reputation despite the modest suburban nature of Homewood. The house is listed as a contributing building to a National Register district. However, given the significance of the property to the community and the design significance of the house and the gardens, it could be individually eligible for the National Register.

Two years ago, the property was purchased by a developer who planned to demolish the home and gardens, subdividing it, and selling it to build new, contemporary houses. This mindset is slowly changing Homewood's historic character. The expansion and altering of historically significant homes with insensitive additions, contemporary design trends, altering facades, and floor plans are changing the

historic character of Homewood's neighborhoods. Like many places in Alabama, Homewood has faced the demolition of historic homes for the contemporary idea of constructing larger, new houses, that consume the modest lots and dramatically alter a neighborhood's design. These new homes fail to sensitively blend with the historic design aesthetic of the community. This is a trend seen all over Alabama. It's happening in Huntsville, Mountain Brook, Auburn, Opelika, and other places benefiting from the economic progress around the state.

The owner of the Bridges House has responded to the overwhelming public pressure and recognized the significance of the house and the gardens to the community and to the state. They are now looking to sell the property, in its entirety, to an owner willing to preserve the property. Hopefully, Places in Peril can help bring awareness to this special place.