



STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130
PHONE: 832-6621



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE
Nomination Form

COUNTY CHEROKEE

NAME: Present (3) PLEASANT GAP COUNTRY STORE Historic (1) M.L. BRASWELL GROCERY

LOCATION: Street and Number Co. Rd #8 (2) T.J. Pope Groc.

Town (Give directions if rural)

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

CATEGORY: Building (X) Structure () Object () Site () District ()

USE: Present GROCERY Historic GROCERY-POST OFFICE

OWNERSHIP: Public () Private (X)

Owner's Name Jerry McInnis

Mailing Address Rt 1 Box 283
Piedmont, Al. 36272

INTEGRITY: Original Site (X) Moved () When?

From where? (Give details in significance.)

CONDITIONS: Excellent () Good () Fair (X) Ruins ()

TREATS: No () Yes (X) By What? Age, weather

RESTORATION WORK: Being considered () Underway () Completed () Not planned (X)

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land () Woodland (X) Scattered buildings (X)
High building density () Commercial () Industrial ()
Residential () Rural (X)

Acreage 1

For all categories other than a district and object give a site plan with a North arrow. Show related buildings.

For a district give a verbal boundary description and attach a sketch map of the district.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Why is this landmark significant? (✓) associated with events, persons, or movements
Local (✓) State () National ()
() a good example of a type or style of structure
() other

Explain: (Briefly state why the above is true)

Local meeting place, post office, one-man barber shop - One of few such stores still in operation.

Date of Construction or Period of major importance. 1896 or earlier

Architect or Builder (Give name and biographies, if known)

John McDugan (see attached history)

Give a complete but concise history of the Landmark. Include information on important people and events associated with the landmark. (USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

Copy of history taken from Cherokee: Bits + Pieces attached

State sources of information, giving full bibliographical data:

See attached history, personal interviews with Pope family.

DESCRIPTION: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDMARK MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM.

Complete as directed below for each category.

BUILDING:

Number of stories 1 Foundation wood piers Basement No

Wall Material: (Note changes from one floor or wing to another)
(Clapboard) brick, stone, wood shingle, (board and batten), stucco over wood or brick, metal, logs)

Structural System: (If known)

Wood frame (X) Load-bearing masonry () Iron or Steel ()

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Roof Type: (Gable, Gambrel, Mansard, Flat, Hipped, Combination)

Roof Covering: (Wood shingle, Asphalt, Tile, Metal, Slate).

Roof Trim: (Cornices, bargeboard, brackets, etc.)

Porches: Front (type and description) Full width porch, floored with wide planks, flat columns (rough hewn)
Rear (type and description) None

Side (type and description) Wood porch with flat roof with 3 rough columns

Doors: Main entrance (location, description) Double doors on front porch

Other entrances (location, description)

Double doors on side porch One heavy door opposite side porch

Windows: Types and number of each floor of facade

2 long, with 4 panes each and rough wooden shutters

Types and number per floor for sides and rear

One on side porch side Two in rear (all with wooden shutters)

Interior: Describe mantels, stairways, wainscoting, plasterwork and any unusual features.

Ceiling, walls, floors, all built with 6" tongue & groove pine. Many merchandise shelves lining each side, with large wooden counters in center. 35 sm., handmade holes for hardware. Small cabinet (likely shadowbox) in rear, used as post office. 29 drawers under one side counter

Other: Use this space to describe any additions, alterations, outbuildings or other features of the structure and its surroundings.

A room was added to east side of building, (date unknown) later to be used as one-man barber shop. Interior is built from narrow tongue and groove. Has 4 large, single paned east windows and front double-door entrance

On an additional sheet make a sketch of the floor plan of the building, showing dimensions if possible.

THIS IS NOT REQUIRED!

Rectangular shape, approximately 30' x 90'

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

- STRUCTURE: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the structure. (See examples)
- OBJECT: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the object. (See examples)
- SITE: On a separate sheet of paper give the present description of the site and how the site is believed to have looked during its period of importance.
- DISTRICT: On a separate sheet of paper give a general description of the district. Also needed is a numbered list of the structures in the district corresponding to the sketch map. This listing should include a name for the structure, a date of construction, a brief description, a statement of why the structure is significant, if it is.

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

Map: A U.S. Geological Survey Map is preferred, but if you are unable to obtain one a county highway map may be used.

Photographs: Black and white, glossy finish, 5 x 7, or 8 x 10, is preferred.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name DIANE MCGINNIS Date JULY 10, 1981
Address ROUTE 1 BOX 283 Telephone 447-8660
Town PIEDMONT, ALABAMA STORE-447-9629
Organization _____

For Alabama Historical Commission use only

STAFF COMMENTS:

MAP REFERENCE: MAP _____

U. T. M. Reference Zone Easting Northing

Thematic Category _____

Added to ALABAMA REGISTER _____

NATIONAL REGISTER Potential

ROCK RUN DISTRICT

SIGNIFICANCE

Rock Run was a thriving industrial and mining community around the turn of the century. Today there are only a few of the homes left and the old commissary building.

In 1874 Theodore and Alfred Boyer of Johnston, Pa., founded a blast furnace here for mining ore, but the furnace was not successful and passed to two other persons. Then John H. Bass of Bass Foundry and Machine Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana purchased the furnace for thirty thousand dollars and incorporated it under the name of Bass Furnace Company.

Iron was hauled by oxcart. Water was piped down from the mountains in pipe made of logs with a hole bored through them and notched together. But the furnace still didn't seem to prosper till 1890 when John M. Garvin was made general manager. and the furnace began to

Garvin made improvements, enlarging the furnace and built a tramway. In 1904 the furnace was built larger than before and the name was changed to Bass Foundry and Machine Company. Charcoal kilns were built. The wooden piping was changed to iron and a forty gallon water tank was erected. A spur railroad track was built to connect the foundry to the main line.

The foundry's largest production year was in 1919 when a half dozen cars or more of iron was shipped each day and the payroll reached more than \$40,000 a month.

After the death of John Garvin in 1926, the furnace began to decline. The furnace was blown in 1928 and was torn away in 1929. Today among the structures remaining include,

Bachelor Home - two story frame, used by John Garvin and also played host to any guest to the foundry.

Davis House - two story frame, with intricate lattice work, built by Edd Davis, it is said that the house was moved from Bluffton or Langton.

Judge Norton House - two story frame, birthplace of Fred Norton, local judge.

Commissary - two story frame, used as a general merchandise store, all supplies needed by the workers could be obtained here.

Written in 1976

Early Pleasant Gap

By Bill Anthony

In the late 1890's, Pleasant Gap was a busy center of activity. The community had several stores, a sawmill, gin, post office, grist and flour mill and a brick factory. Several freight trains and a passenger train made daily stops in Pleasant Gap. T. J. Pope, who operates the only business establishment in the community today, recalls that the railroad depot and telegraph office were quite busy every day in the early 1900's. Four or five trains ran northeastward out of Cross Plains (Piedmont) and made regular stops at Spring Garden, Pleasant Gap, Rock Run Station, Langdon, Bluffton and Tecumseh. At the time Rock Run was the center of the mining and blast furnace industry.

Much of the activity of early Pleasant Gap at the turn of the century centered around the Braswell Mill. The mill, located on Hurricane Creek, was used to grind corn and wheat. The old grist and wheat mill, one of the few buildings that marked the business district of this cross-roads community, still stands today. It is located off U. S. Highway 278 across from the T. J. Pope Grocery. A plaque in the ceiling of the old building today contains the following information: "A satisfied customer is our best advertisement. We do our best to please you."

The first mill was built soon after the Civil War by a man named Stock and was located above the present building near what is now the railroad trussel. This building was later destroyed and the present building erected about 1868-1870. Stock sold the property to John McGugan. In 1892 McGugan sold the mill, merchandise store, gin, sawmill and present Braswell farm to M. L. Braswell. Braswell ran the mill until his death in 1917 when his two sons took over the operation. A skilled miller was on hand and he knew how to set the rocks to get good meal and flour. It was operated by water power which was created by a turbine. The water came down the creek and was backed up by a dam to provide enough force to turn the turbine. Farmers first came by ox cart, but later they began to bring their grain in mule-drawn wagons, and finally by cars and trucks. Mrs. T. J. Pope recalls the days when the mill was active and the creek unruly. As a boy her husband came down the creek in a bateau, and later he came courting in a buggy. The mill ceased operating in 1924 when the dam washed away.

It is estimated that the oldest store in Pleasant Gap was first built by E. J. Estes in the 1840's. The present T. J. Pope Grocery is over 80 years of age. It was originally owned by M. L. Braswell as a general merchandise store. A post office was located in the back of the store. The warm atmosphere associated with the old-time "country store" still exists at Pope Grocery today. It is common to find people from the surrounding areas sitting around the old-fashioned coal-burning heater and talking about the days when the mill was active.

T. J. Pope recalls that his grandfather, William T. Pope (called "Billie"), ran a store above the mill in the early 1900's. The store sold everything from needles to wagon spokes. Jake remembers that many products such as sugar, coffee, flour, meal, lard and even crackers were stored in large barrels and people came from miles around to purchase their month's supply of rations. Jake recalls that his grandfather sold beautiful cloth of many colors and designs. Pace and Jim Roberts ran another store near the railroad and depot. The earliest school was located near what is now the Jack Jordan property near highway 278. It was later moved to the area between the bridge on Hurricane Creek and the Walt Gowens home. It was called Hanks School because it was located on the Hanks property. Blacks attended school near where the present Mt. Pleasant Church is located.

George Hanks was an original settler of Pleasant Gap. His children were John, Ed and Dave. He owned a large amount of property and was a leader in his community. The present Walt Gowens home is what was originally the Hanks place.

Edmund Roberts was active in the early settlement of Pleasant Gap. Pace White (who married Ola Hughes) was his son. Another son, James Edmund Roberts, married Ella Braswell. John T. Roberts married Marshall Alexander.

Rev. Silvanus Minton came to Alabama from the 96th

District of South Carolina in 1831. His father, John T. Minton, was a tanner by trade. Silvanus Minton settled on Hurricane Creek and established Salem Baptist Church. This church was one of the charter churches of the Tallasahatchie Association formed in 1834.

Abel Pope moved his family from DeKalb County, Georgia, to Pleasant Gap in the 1850's. Abel Pope was born in 1810 in North Carolina and died in 1871. He married Rhoda Gowens (1823-1905) in 1843. Children born to the two were: William Thomas (Billie) (1844-1925), John Calvin, Maria Lydia, Martha Anna (1851-1906), Sarah Elizabeth, Polly Ollie Ann (1856-1952), James Waldon (1860-1947), Frances Emaline (1862-1914) and Louiza Jane (1869-1947).

William Thomas Pope was the oldest son of Rhoda and Abel Pope and moved to Cherokee County with his parents from Georgia in the 1850's. He was born in 1844 in DeKalb County, Ga. He married Rose Rebecca Jane Hardin in 1863 at Rock Run. Children born to the two were: John Henry Jackson (Johnnie) (1865-1939) and Thomas Alton (1868-1899). "Uncle Billie and Aunt Jane," as they were often called, lived near Rock Run Station. He ran a prominent business in Pleasant Gap in the early 1900's. They were honorable, devoted Christians who contributed to the cultural and religious life of their county. According to Roy Marcus Pope, a grand-nephew of Billie and Jane Pope, as a young lad he often visited in their home and found Aunt Jane smoking a long-stemmed pipe. She carried her home-grown tobacco in the pocket of her dress that reached the floor. She often would place a coal of fire on her pipe and enjoy a smoke after meals. Roy Marcus remembers Uncle Billie taking him on his knee and telling about the battle of Gettysburg, the Wilderness Campaign and other battles. Billie lost a toe in combat while serving in the Confederate Army. Billie and his brother John Calvin Pope helped cut the trees to build Union Grove Methodist Church in the late 1860's.

The Brittain and Davis family were prominent in the early economic development of Rock Run Station. Will J. Brittain was the father of the former Probate Judge of Calhoun County, Clyde Brittain. W. J. Brittain and E. R. Davis ran a general merchandise store in the early 1900's. E. R. Davis also served as Justice of the Peace.

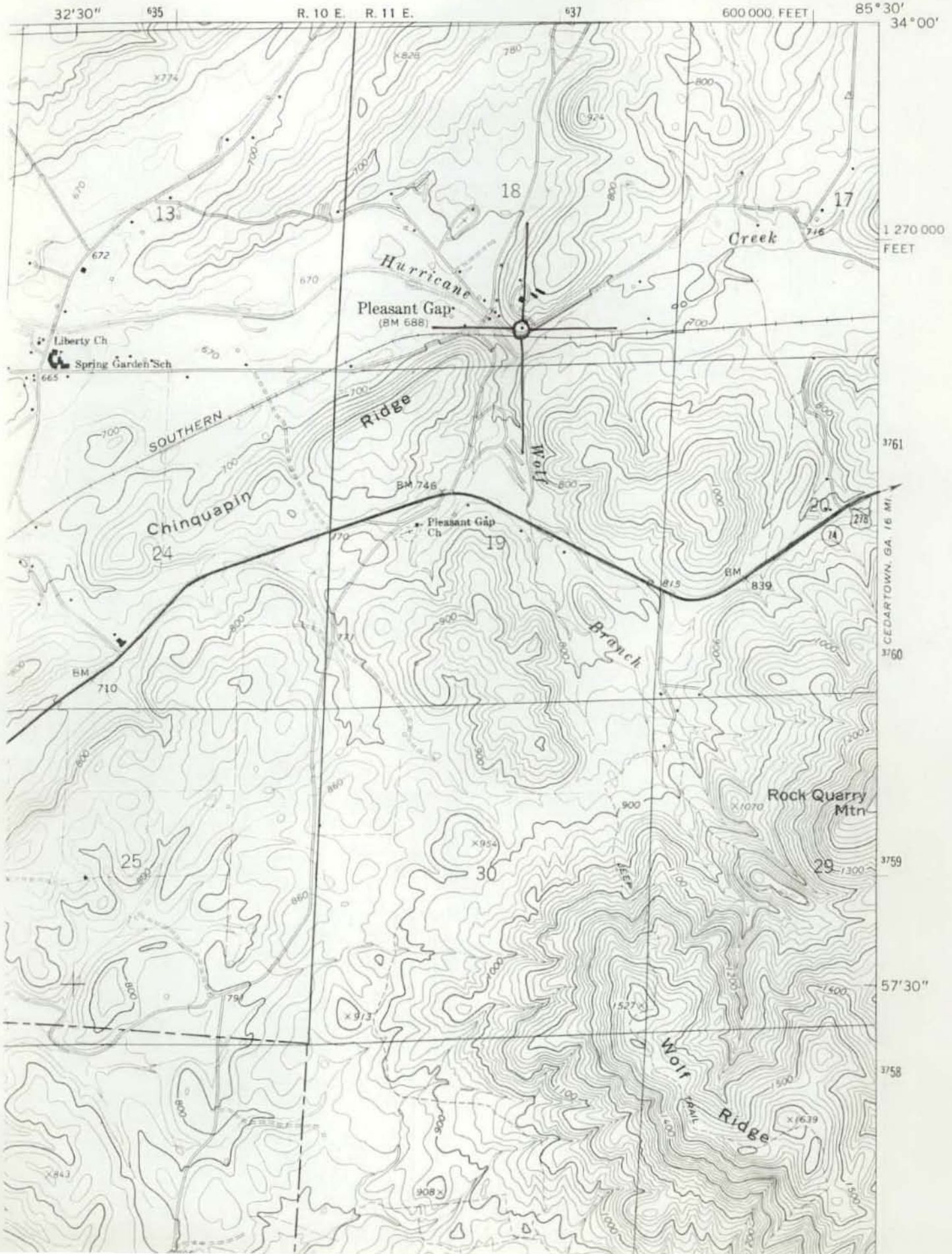
The W. J. Brittain home was originally the Davis Place, built in the 1850's by Buzz Davis. This is probably the oldest home of the area. Mr. Paul Davis remembers hearing stories of the days of the Civil War when the Settlers lived in fear of the Yankees coming. The young boys who were too young to work in the fields would watch for the Yankees. If they saw the Soldiers coming, their parents would take the mules and horses and valuables to the swamp to hide. The Bobby Prince family now reside in the original Ed R. Davis home, constructed in the 1890's at Rock Run Station. The home was built in the Victorian Style of Architecture.



Pleasant Gap Country Store

PIEDMONT QUADRANGLE
ALABAMA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3962 III SW
(INDIAN MTN.)

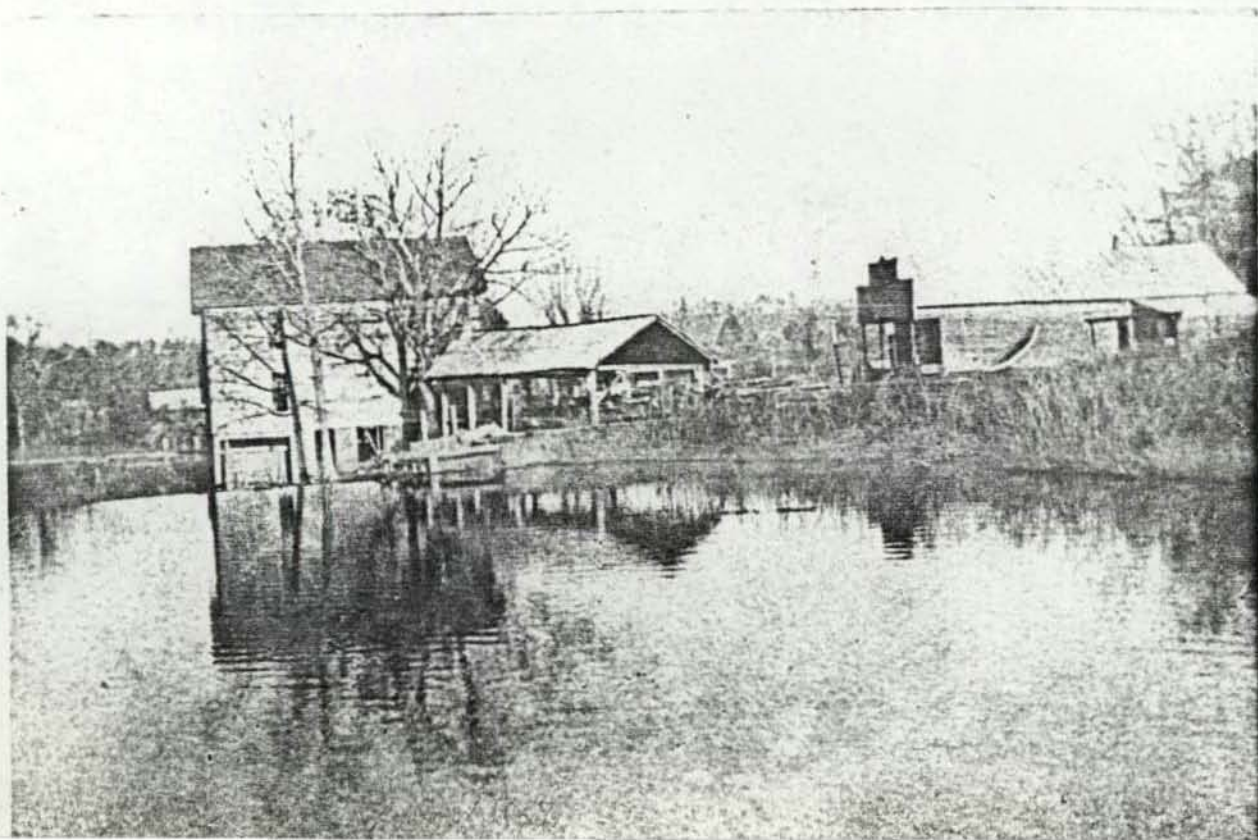




Millhouse as it now appears



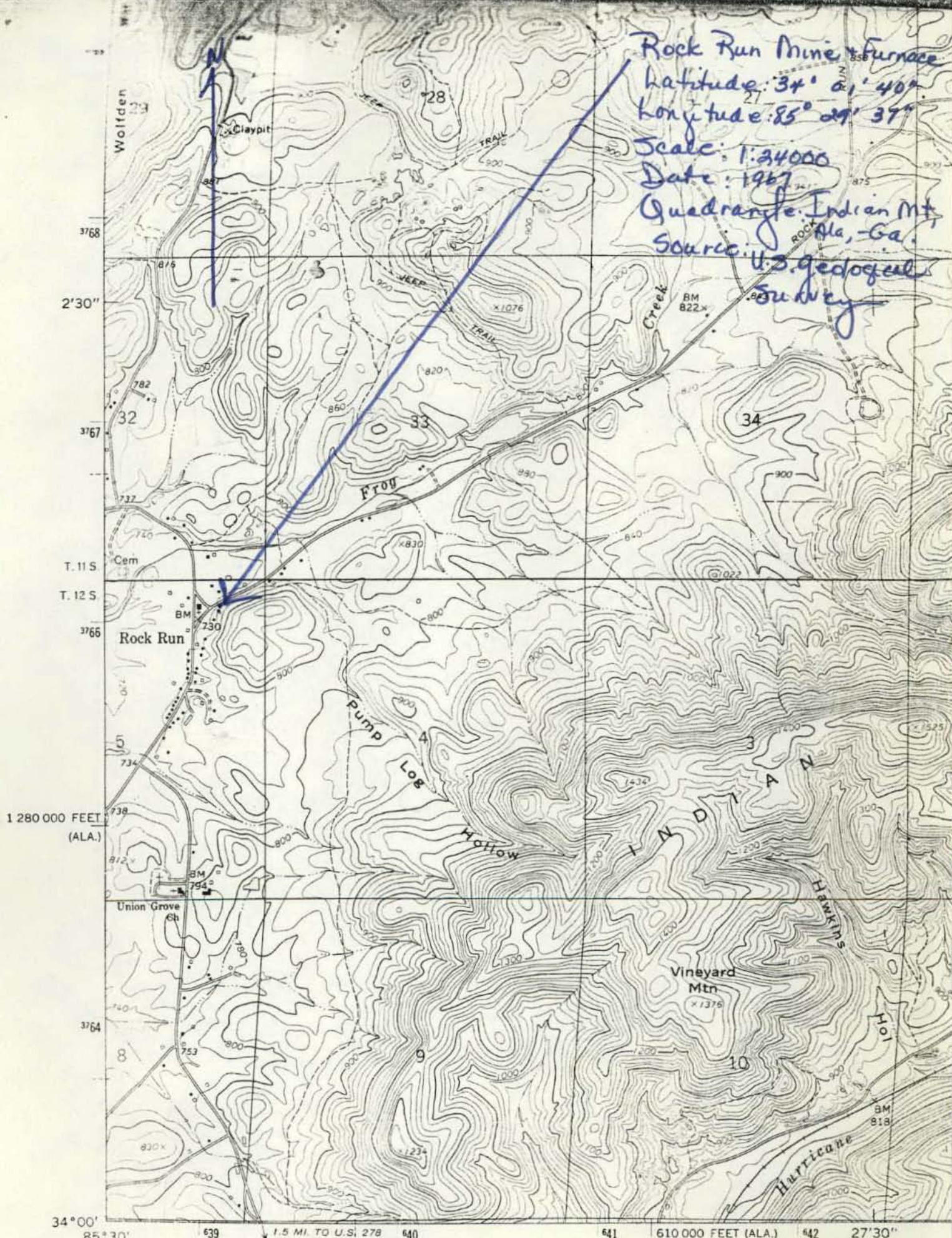
Store as now appears



*Millhouse
in
operation
early
1900's*

*Store on
right*

Rock Run Mine & Furnace
 Latitude: $34^{\circ} 01' 40''$
 Longitude: $85^{\circ} 29' 37''$
 Scale: 1:24000
 Date: 1967
 Quadrangle: Indian Mt., Ala., -Ga.
 Source: U.S. Geological Survey



1 280 000 FEET (ALA.)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and Georgia Geodetic Survey

PIEDMONT
251 1 AE

★
MN
1

SITE PLAN

Meth. Round
CAMP GROUND
ON
HILLSIDE

BLACK
SMITH
SHOP

STORE

Co. RD #8

MILL
HOUSE

BRIDGE

DWELLING
HOUSE

COLONIAL
DWELLING
HOUSE

PREDMONT, AL. ← HWY 278 → CEDARTOWN, GA.

4

may for ARL & H (corrections)

COMMENTS ON AND CORRECTIONS TO A FEATURE ARTICLE IN THE ANNISTON STAR, SEPTEMBER 5, 1976 ON THE ROCK RUN CHARCOAL IRON FURNACE, CHEROKEE COUNTY, ALABAMA.

The feature article is well prepared and substantially factual. The writer is to be commended for assemblage of information which largely exists only in hearsay outside of the family and records of David J. Jarvin and, more importantly, the records of his brother, John M. Garvin.

Few people are living today who remember the Rock Run furnace in its greatest years and of these, none had association with the economics, the trials and the pride in making charcoal iron that, to quote Walter Jones, State Geologist of Alabama "brought the highest price on the Sheffield England market". Such an accolade is not only to the efficiency of the furnace nor alone to the analysis of the product but also to the men, supervisor or laborer whose integrity was sealed in every cast.

So thanks is extended to those who have contributed from their memories or legends but it must be also said that true history is a story of facts and it is for this purpose that these comments and corrections are made.

It is unfortunate that ^MJim Garvin's first employment at Rock Run should be described as "helper boy" since nothing could be more distant from the truth. In a sense this is pardonable since probably no one living today was present at his appearance so recourse must be made to old documents in possession of the Garvin heirs.

If not the first, Rock Run was certainly the second charcoal furnace in Cherokee County with Round Mountain vying for the number one position. Literature available today does not prove the point. After the destruction of Rock Run furnace early in the Civil War, it lay dormant until 1874, when it was built anew on the design of the successful furnaces in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York. There followed six years of financial and other failures until in 1880 John H. Bass, president of the Bass Foundry and Machine Company of Ft. Wayne, Indiana bought the property.

Again there followed nine years of local mismanagement with none of the financial return of which Rock Run gave so much promise. In late 1889 Mr. Bass went to the Salisbury District of New York to seek a manager for his ailing Alabama operation. There he found and employed John M. Garvin, a charcoal furnace supervisor, young but with ten years experience at the Millerton, New York furnace.

"J. M." arrived at Rock Run on January 1, 1890 as manager and with the driving force and acumen which characterized his life in Alabama, he started the furnace on the road to success. By 1895 he had modernized the plant, installed a steam engine driven electric generator, replaced the tram line to Rock Run Station three miles away with a standard guage railroad and built railroads to the mines. Other additions were made such as cast iron pipes from Pump Log Hollow Spring to a 40,000 gallon storage tank above the furnace to supply clean clear water for the operations, company houses and the fire plugs throughout the community. This was only the beginning of achievement which led to another statement by Dr. Walter Jones almost a half century later that "J. M. Garvin's name is emblazoned in large letters among the famous charcoal iron makers of Alabama."

The statement that the D. W. Gilmer loghouse was the first at Rock Run to have electric lights and inside bath is obviously incorrect. When J.M. installed the electric generator the plant, company office and the two executive homes were wired for electric lighting. Other homes were added later. Not one to take halfway measures, he also had baths installed with flush toilets in the executive houses as they are called on the early property inventory list. As a matter of interest, J.M. lived in the home next to the office all of his life at Rock Run. This was known as the manager's house and not the bachelor's house as some have said. The other executive house on the hill was occupied by D. J. Garvin, assistant manager, after his marriage in 1903 until 1926. After J.M.'s death, Dave Garvin moved

his family to the manager's house which they occupied until 1932 when they moved to Rome, Georgia.

To return to the 90's. With the growing success of the furnace operation, Mr. Bass decided to incorporate Rock Run as a subsidiary of the Bass Foundry and Machine Company. According to the records of the Alabama Secretary of State, the Rock Run Iron and Mining Company was incorporated on December 28, 1894 with a capitalization of \$400,000.00. The incorporators were John H. Bass, President, John M. Garvin, Vice President and General Manager, Frank L. Lightfoot, Sec'y Treasurer. Records show that much confidence was placed in Rock Run since J.M. Garvin had authority to buy and sell lands and equipment, borrow and lend money, in fact to operate more or less autonomously.

By 1895 the operations were expanding and J.M. was "spread thin". For relief he brought in his brother David J. Garvin as bookkeeper and to manage office affairs. D. J. Garvin, six years younger than J.M., had also gained experience in the Salisbury District but in the area of accounting. As time elapsed, he took over more and more of the supervisory, financial and contractual operations with the big decisions left to J. M. Highly competent, he always operated in the broad shadow of his older brother.

It is interesting to reflect that J.M. so valued the quality of the furnace product that for many years he employed a full time graduate chemist to insure the high quality of the Rock Run iron. It is also a tribute to his compassion and regard for his employees and their families that for years a full time doctor was employed. The same spirit caused the construction and operation of a grade school at company expense. Many living today will remember learning their three R's at the Bass Institute of which Mr. Evans Burns was principal for 25 years. *ADD:*

Then came Rock Run's golden years in the first two decades of the 20th century. While the fires of other charcoal furnaces dimmed and turned cold, at Rock Run they burned the brightest. The furnace at Tallapoosa, Georgia

ADD: Night classes for adults possibly among the first in Alabama were conducted where members of the parents learned to read and write some of whom later became supervisors in the widespread operation.

was acquired and charcoal kilns were built or purchased at Cedar Bluff, Alabama and Cox, Alabama. A limestone quarry for flux stone was operated at Oolteway, Tennessee. Mining operations were even more widespread. Supporting the local economy were a cotton gin, flour and grist mill and a saw mill and thousands of acres of land were farmed. Railroad boxcars unloaded on a spur directly to the commissary platform and ice was brought in and stored in the ice storage house nearby.

Four trains a day, two up and two down, operated on the Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad with a connection three miles away at Rock Run Station, so that poor roads were no deterrent to communication with the outside world. Mail service was twice daily--first by horse and buggy, later by the more progressive Model T. Truly Rock Run was urbanized rural living.

In those days Fred Norton was head bookkeeper and payroll clerk. He and his family lived next door to D. J. Garvin. He left Rock Run in 1926 and later became Probate Judge of Cherokee County. ^{Ward} Rutherford was in charge of the machine shop and all plant maintenance. ~~Ed Hays was~~

Foundryman; that is, he supervised the furnace and casting operation
~~Dr. Charles Williams~~ was the company doctor. Frank Mitchell was called the "wood sheriff". He was in charge of buying wood for the charcoal kilns. He marked the cord wood with paint so it couldn't be sold twice to the furnace hence his nickname of wood sheriff. In addition, he looked after the renting of company farm land. D. W. Gilmer operated the commissary and was the postmaster.

But even in the brightest years the future loomed dark and foreboding. For years, because of its high quality iron, Rock Run was able to hold its own against the improving economy and technology of the coke furnaces. It held its ground with such customers as the Mesta Machine Works of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania who made rolls for, believe it or not, the coke iron steel mills.

Other darkening clouds, the most worrisome of which was the

disappearance of wood for charcoal, the energy food of the furnace. Wood and charcoal were hauled from further and further away by ^{road} ~~rail~~. It is again interesting to note that J. M. Garvin, following the lead of the conservationists of the early twentieth century urged federal and state tree planting programs. This was but a voice crying in the depleting wilderness. On his own and his brother's lands trees were planted with the resulting saw timber stands of today.

The real punch was delivered in World War I in Alabama with the establishment of army cantonments at Anniston and Montgomery. With all of the coal in Alabama, the army used wood for the heating and cook stoves. War time prices were fixed on almost everything. Despite the pleas of the furnace operators, cord wood already a high cost resource, doubled in price against a fixed price iron product.

In 1919 came the next blow. Rail rates on ores, wood, charcoal and pig iron which had been frozen, were increased three and one half times after the war.

So began the death dirge dim and distant but increasing in presence. To say that Rock Run died with J. M. Garvin is a total injustice to his foresight and genius. He had looked ahead and warned, but J.H. Bass had died several years before in his 80's leaving the ownership in his own company and Rock Run to others. On January 1, 1926 J. M. wrote a long letter to the new president of the Rock Run Iron Company outlining the warnings of the economic situation at the Rock Run furnace. In itself, it is a classic historical summary of the demise of the charcoal furnaces of the nation. Most of the great ones were gone. Rock Run alone remained even though operating at half capacity.

The Bass heirs seemed no longer interested in the furnace so ^{J.M.} ~~he~~ suggested a sale to the "Pittsburgh People" but nothing came of this. The last and most heartbreaking alternative was the scrapping of the plant. Thus, as

though seeing the final end to a life's work, J. M. Garvin died of a heart attack in his sleep in March 1926 at the age of 60.

Dave Garvin, not D. W. Gilmer, took over as Vice President and General Manager and remained in charge even though the Rock Run Corporation was formally dissolved December 29, 1927. The last pigs were cast Christmas Eve 1928. Only the cotton gin and saw mill were operated until 1932. It must have been a sad Christmas.

There now remained only the last alternative outlined in J.M.'s summary of January 1, 1926; to scrap the furnace and divide the proceeds among the heirs of John Bass and J. M. Garvin. D. J. Garvin was left in charge of this task, heartrending because of all of the men and their families who had depended on Rock Run for their livelihood and their dreams. So widespread was the operation that it took over three years to dispose of the various plants, railroads and buildings leaving only the land and houses. His work sorrowfully done, D. J. Garvin moved his family to Rome, Georgia in 1932.

D. W. Gilmer remained as caretaker for the Bass heirs of the lands and houses. The last of these and the mineral rights were sold in 1946.

Thus seems to end the Rock Run furnace story. However, it only seems because iron, like any element, is indestructible. It may change form but it is still iron. Who knows but that today there is still Rock Run iron with us. It may have been melted and remelted, cast and recast, rolled and rerolled into our bridges, automobiles, household appliances and everywhere about us. The integrity of the men cast into Rock Run iron cannot be eroded nor destroyed. It remains always.

Lillian Garvin Habenstein