



STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
725 MONROE STREET  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104  
PHONE: 832-6621



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

COUNTY CHOCTAW

PRESENT NAME Bladon Springs Historic District HISTORIC NAME \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION (Street and number) \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN (Give directions if rural) Bladon Springs

PRESENT USE State Park & Residences HISTORIC USE Health Resort and Residences

OWNERSHIP: Public () Private () Public acquisition being considered ( )

OWNER'S NAME Multiple Owners

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CONDITION: Excellent ( ) Good ( ) Fair () Ruins ( )

INTEGRITY: Original site () Moved ( ) When? \_\_\_\_\_

From where? \_\_\_\_\_ Give details in significance

THREATS: No ( ) Yes ( ) By what? \_\_\_\_\_

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

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land ( ) Woodland () Scattered buildings ()

Highway building density ( ) Commercial ( ) Industrial ( )

Residential ( ) Rural ()

If there are numerous buildings in the area, could this structure be part of a Historic District?

**Yes**

SIGNIFICANCE: Why is this important () associated with events, persons, or movements  
Local ( ) State () National ( )

( ) a good example of a type or style of structure

() other Popular resort

Explain: Was the vacationing spot for many of the most famous and influential people in the state of Alabama.

BLADON SPRINGS  
SIGNIFICANCE

Bladon Springs, the most important spa in Alabama, was often referred to as "the Saratoga of the South." Named for the original owner of the land upon which the mineral springs were discovered, the curative properties of the springs had become well known and were opened to the public by its owner James Conner in 1838. In 1845, Professor Richard T. Brumby, state geologist, analyzed the water and reported "the constituents of the water". The springs consisted of six fountains of water, each differing slightly in their deposits and characteristics. The virtues of the waters were fully attested for many years and were confidently recommended for "the cure of gout, rheumatics, scofula, skin disease, dyspepsia, diseases incident to females, dropsy, and general debility. The waters were especially recommend to all suffering from diseases incident to warm climates, such as liver complaints, affections of the bowels, kidneys, and all diseases arising from impure blood. The water acts as an alterative, restoring the organ affected to their natural healthy functions."

The grounds where the springs were located were enclosed in a large park where stood enough cottages to house and one of the largest wooden hotels in the state, sufficient for 200 guest. There were various places of amusement for guest, including a skating rink, bowling alleys, billiard rooms, a bar in the basement, croquet grounds and swings under the oaks. A latticed summer house was built around the chief spring and from this a flight of steps led to a long pergola, also latticed. Around the estate belonging to the springs, clustered the village of permanent residents of Bladon Springs. Their homes were large and beautiful, indicating culture and refinement. Many of these people had visited Bladon Springs as invalids and found the valuable mineral ingredients of the water so beneficial that they chose this place to establish their permanent residences.

The Bladon Springs Hotel, with its colonnade, great white pillars, spacious rooms, large ballroom, beautiful stairways and mullioned windows, was constructed and ready for occupancy for the summer season of 1846, the cottages had been built earlier. The hotel was a two-story structure, with a full basement. A front veranda

extended the length of the building on the first and second floors. The dining room, with a seating capacity of 200, used also as a ballroom, had no central columns. The interior walls of the hotel were plastered and beautifully decorated, as were the walls of the cottages. Windows extending to the floor were used on the first floor of the hotel.

Peter Flint, a master carpenter from Maine, came to Bladon Springs and took charge of the construction of the hotel and also built several of the homes in the village of Bladon Springs. Flint skilled in the construction of windows that extended to the floor placed many of these in the buildings he constructed.

Advertising was Mr. Conner's successful method of attracting patronage and restoring prosperity to the once-popular resort, which had suffered from the Civil War and Reconstruction. The hotel remained open in a limited way during the war. At the close of the war a regiment of Black troops was stationed at Bladon Springs. Unrestricted by their officers these troops overran the town, committing numerous crimes including burning houses and shooting their occupants. Sometimes the fear of these soldiers was so great that women and small children were hidden in the woods at night. By 1870, the hotel was again in full operation. Again there came the fashionable clientele from Mobile, New Orleans, and other southern cities and also literary and musical people found rest and pleasure in this retreat. It welcomed Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, and Madame LeVert, the leader of Mobile society, whose presence drew so many to whatever abode she selected that the proprietor refused any remuneration. Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson and Madame Adelaide de Vendal Chaudron, Mobile authors, chose Bladon Springs for their summer residences. The Old Bladon Springs water was perhaps the most famous of any spring water in the state and it was advertised accordingly. Bottles, holding about 5 gallons, were shipped to many parts of the United States, but it was advised that invalids should come to the springs whenever possible to obtain the full medical effects of the water.

In 1887 James Conner sold the property to Dr. James Whitfield of Demopolis, who leased it to W. A. Turner of Bladon Springs. Turner reconditioned the hotel building, provided new furniture and improved the grounds. Time, with its changes and modern improvements, gradually left Bladon Springs out of the scheme of things,

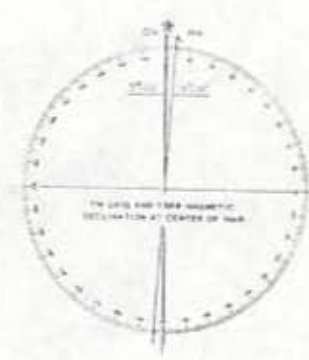
and the management found it harder and harder to attract guests. Because of the lack of patronage, the condition of the hotel fell below standard. Bladon Springs Hotel did not pass out of existence all at once. After it was closed to guest, a lumber company leased the building for use as sleeping accommodations for their logging crews. In 1934, the State of Alabama bought the property for a state park and converted the hotel building into an apartment house for state workers, till 1938, when the building was destroyed by fire. The only original building remaining at the present time is the summer house near the springs, but it has been stripped of its lattice.

The district includes:

1. BLADON SPRINGS STATE PARK - 385 acre park on the site of the famous Alabama health spa, summer house is all that remains of the original buildings.
2. BLADON SPRINGS METHODIST CHURCH - 1874, frame church with original belfry tower, built by Peter Flint.
3. HOLCOMB HOUSE - Circa 1840's, one-story frame with a Greek Revival portico, is believed to be the oldest residence in Bladon Springs, built by Peter Flint it has full-length windows across the front.
4. STANFORD HOUSE - Springs Avenue, circa 1840's, one and a half story frame house with Gothic Revival trim was built by Peter Flint.
5. TURNER HOUSE - Springs Avenue, circa 1840's, two-story board and batton house with Gothic trim believed to have been built by Peter Flint, was partially burned by Union troops encamped at Bladon Springs immediately after the Civil War.



Bladen Springs  
Historic District



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 STATE OF ALABAMA HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
 BUREAU OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING  
 MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

# GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

# CHOCTAW COUNTY

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