

BELLEVILLE QUAD

Belleville 37

Settled by Samuel Buchanan in 1815, Belleville is one of the oldest communities in Conecuh County. The village itself was originally named "The Ponds because of the large number of them in the area. Believing that the water was responsible for sickness in the community, John Bell who came here in 1816, initiated a project to drain the ponds. Because of Bell's efforts, the name of the town was changed to Belleville in 1820. Other families who arrived before 1820 include the Richardsons, the Simpsons and the Crosbys. (Helen Barlow and Frances Lee Jones, "Events of Historic Belleville." A fort was located here to protect early settlers from the Indians. (Honoring the Conecuh Guards, p. 11) The first store in the county was opened here in 1818 by Robert C. Paine and Belleville Baptist Church, originally called Murder Creek Baptist Church was founded here By Alexander Travis and David Woods in the same year.(Barlow and Jones) The present building was constructed in 1851.(Inv. #562) A Methodist church known as Sardis Methodist Church at Belleville was initiated before 1820. A post office with John Sampey as postmaster was established here in 1823, the second earliest one in the county. The office was not discontinued until 1957. (Postal Service records) One of the first public roads in the state known as the "Old Stage Road" ran through Belleville and connected Cahaba with Pensacola. The "Old Wolf Trail," and Indian path, also ran near Belleville and connected Claiborne with the Chattahoochee River. (Barlow and Jones)

As early as 1818 a school was established by John Green, Sr. The school building itself was constructed around 1828 on land given by the Baptist Church. In 1854, the Alabama State Legislature chartered the Belleville Male and Female Academy. The school opened in 1855, in a two story school building constructed on land donated by Mr. Hawthorne. Belleville became known as an intellectual center with students coming from long distances and boarding in town to attend school. The school continued to operate during the Civil War while many others closed. (Barlow and Jones) While the school building no longer stands, the "teachery," the house where the teachers lived, remains in Belleville.(Inv. #828) WHEN DID THE SCHOOL CLOSE?

In 1844 a tannery was established near Belleville by J.R. Hawthorne and John H. Farnham.

Because of the school and its crossroads location, Belleville continued to remain a substantial settlement throughout the 19th century. Census data show that Belleville post office area, had the second highest white population in the county in 1860. The town had residents from four foreign countries and seven northern states. There were numerous physicians, teachers and merchants indicating that this was a thriving town. By the 1880s, Belleville was an incorporated town with a population of 250. There were numerous businesses here including five grist mills, a lumber mill, three stores, a hotel,

a blacksmithing establishment and a barber shop. (Barlow and Jones) By the early 20th century, Belleville, like many other small communities in the south, began to wane due to migration to the larger towns. Today Belleville is a crossroads community located at the junction of US 84 and county road 15.

Several ante-bellum structures remain in Belleville including Belleville Baptist church, the Dr. H.S. Skinner House (Inv. #827), the Hawthorne House (Inv. #559) and the Bradley House (Inv. #564). Other historic structures include several stores (Inv. #565,566,569) and one of the only remaining cotton gins in the county (Inv. #931).

NOTES: Newspapers - 8/1902, The Evergreen Courant - Caldwell's Mill ad; all types of timber.

Brantley Crossing *4*

Located at the crossroads of county roads 20 and 15, in the 19th century this place was known as Kyser. On a 1937 map of the county, it is still listed as such. A school by the name of Brantley Switch was located here as early as 1910. (Early Settlers Along the Old Federal Road) Today there is a modern store here, two 1940s bungalows (Inv. #555,588) and a house with a hip roof (Inv. #557).

Loree *14*

This area was originally known as Rural Hill. A post office by that name was established here in 1851. (Post office records) Arkadelphia Baptist Church was established near here in 1845. The present building was built in 1886. (Interview with Thompson) In the early 20th century, Loree had a sawmill, a cotton gin and a syrup mill. (Janice Hume, "Loree," Mobile Press Register, 1 March 1986) Another post office was established here in 1904 and named "Loree" after Loree Davis, daughter of the store owner where the post office was located. It was disestablished 5 years later and mail was then sent from Evergreen.

Loree had three school buildings at various periods in its history. The first was located near Arkadelphia Cemetery. The other two were at different places nearby. The school was eventually consolidated with Repton School in the early 20th century (History of Repton High School, 1885-1989)

Historic structures that remain in the vicinity of Loree include Arkadelphia Church (Inv. #548), the Ivey House, a mid 19th century I-house (Inv. #545), bungalows (Inv. #547), other 1940s cottages (Inv. #551,552), and a spraddle roof house with a stone chimney (Inv. #549).

located east of the church, near the site of the original church building.³⁹

FULL DESCRIPTION

Inv. #559 Hawthorne House

This two story extended I-house was built in the mid 19th century by Ezra Plumb for Joshua Hawthorne, a settler originally from Robson County, North Carolina who came to Conecuh County from Wilkinson, Georgia in 1817. After Hawthorne moved to Pineapple in Wilcox County, the house was bought by Dr. John L. Shaw who lived in it until 1858. Since that time, at least five other families have lived in the house. It is one of the most architecturally significant houses in the county not only because of its association with Ezra Plumb, but also because it is one of few I-houses left in the county.⁴⁰

FULL DESCRIPTION

Inv. #560 Belleville Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery

This cemetery is located next to a modern church building. The church itself began in the early 1800s south of Belleville. Slaves in the community would meet here in small groups and worship under a grape arbor. Other slaves attended the white Belleville Baptist Church with their owners. In 1866 members of the white Belleville Baptist Church gave the original log church to the blacks. The two black groups combined to create one church and named it the Belleville Missionary Baptist Church No. 2. The Rev. Alexander Travis, the founder of numerous white Baptist churches in the county, is believed to have helped the blacks create their church. Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, the church sought to purchase land and build a new church. They bought three acres from a Mr. Newton where the present church stands today. The cemetery is significant because it is a remainder of one of the first black churches in the county.⁴¹

Inv. #561 Daisy Goldthrift School

This cement block school was built in 1947 by members of the black community in Belleville. The school is named after Daisy Goldthrift, an African-American and native of Conecuh County. She taught school in the county for 38 years until her retirement in 1981. She was responsible for making improvements to the original black Belleville school and persuading the REA to install electricity in order to hold night classes for community members. She also worked diligently to convince the county to build a new black school in Belleville. She and other members of the community worked to construct the present school. When it was completed, Harvey Pate, the County School Superintendent, recommended that the school be named after her. It was the first school in the county to be named after an African-American. The school is no longer used.⁴²

⁴⁰ Helen Barlow and Frances Lee Jones, "Events of Historic

4. Hawthorn House (#559)
Belleville Vcn
.7 miles north of jct. with county road 23
Total number of slides 18
6- exterior
12- interior
Built in the mid 19th century
No floor plan or detailed architectural description

#559 The Hawthorne House

R22 N16-19
R43 N34 outbuilding
R63 N20-24

The Hawthorne House in Belleville is a ca. 1830s two story extended I house with a shed roof front porch. The side gable house is sheathed in weatherboard and rests on original stone piers and newer brick piers. A one story shed roof porch shelters the five bay facade with flushboards. Two exterior end chimneys of cut stone flank the house.

The central hall plan extends through the rear shed extension where the stair is accessible. Three single doors with sidelights and a 14 light transom lead to the central hall. Windows on the upper level and shed extension have 6/6 sashes while those on the lower level have shuttered 9/9 sashes. The porch is supported by six octagonal posts and a balustrade. There are pilasters between the sidelights and the doors.

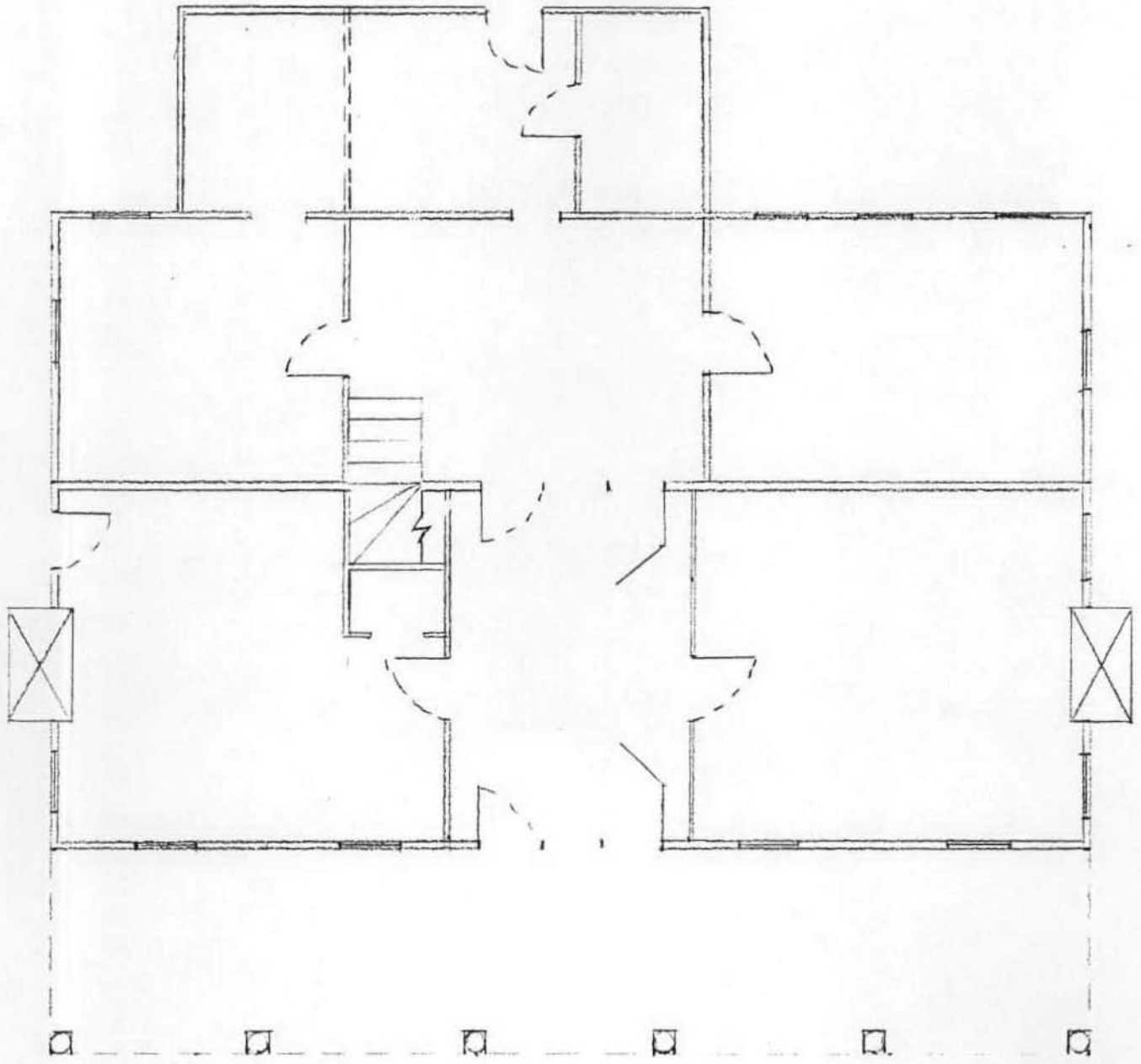
The interior has simple details with four Greek Revival mantels and paneled wainscotting on the first level. The stairs were once accessed through the open porch on the shed extension. The open stair leads to a door and turns to continue a closed stairwell.

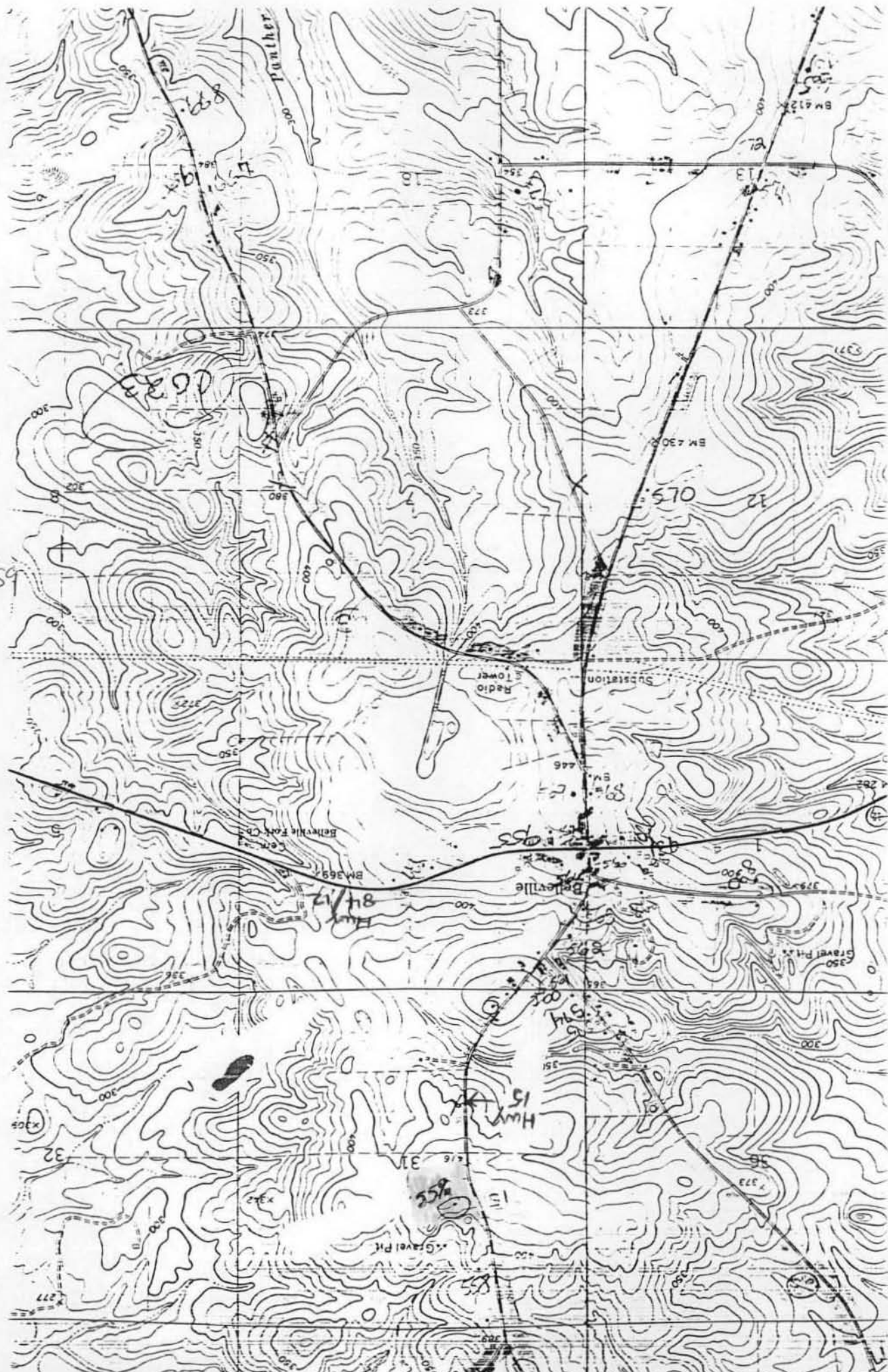
The property includes four other outbuildings. A second dwelling has two rooms, a front gable roof with porch, and drop siding. There is also a barn, garage, and shed. The Hawthorne House is significant as one of a few I houses in the county.

HAWTHORNE

HOUSE

1/8" SCALE





Hawthorn House # 559

Hwy 84/17

Belleville

Radio Tower

Substation

Gravel Pit

Hwy 15

Panther

84/17

12

075

32

31

15

13

12

11

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9

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