

RECEIVED

AUG 27 1996



Alabama Register Property Information

Ala. Historical Commission

1. Name

historic BECK, WILLIAM KING, House

and/or common BECK-CRESWELL House

2. Location

street & number 500 BROAD ST. Sec. 19, T 12N, R 8E; on Ala. Hwy. 28, 1 mi. N of Ala Hwy. 41

city, town CAMDEN, _____ vicinity of

state ALABAMA county WILCOX

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

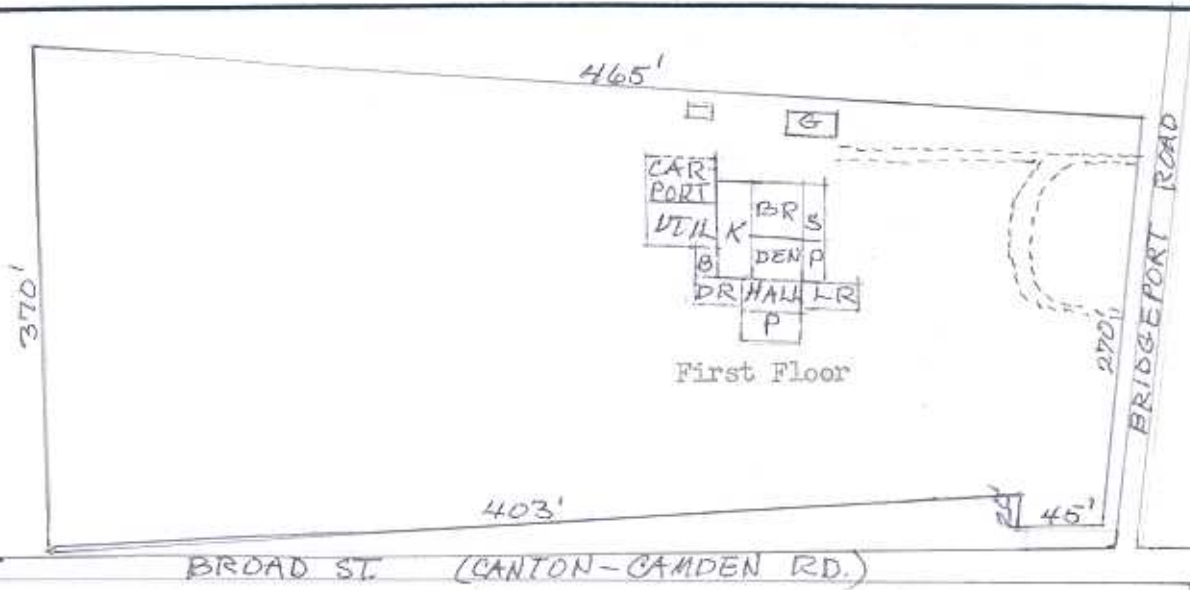
4. Owner of Property

name ROBERT M. & GRACE M. CRESWELL

street & number 500 BROAD ST.

city, town CAMDEN, _____ vicinity of state ALABAMA

5. Please use space below to sketch floor plan/site plan.



6. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

House is a two-story frame structure with Federal influences and double central portico, c. 1835. Original structure consisted of 6 rooms and 2 halls and 2 single porticoes. Kitchen was in a separate building at NE corner of house. After sale by the Beck heirs, kitchen was connected to main house and bath rooms added. A V-crimp metal roof was applied over cedar shake roof, probably in the 1930's. A 2-car garage was built in rear of main house from used materials.

Central portion of house has 12-foot ceilings and other rooms have 9-foot ceilings; thus, it is necessary to descend two steps into the second floor side bedrooms.

House is of pegged-mortise and tenon frame construction with cypress weatherboarding and heart pine cornices, door and window treatment. Interior walls have original wood lath and plaster and doors are original 2-panel pine units. Floors are heart pine 5-quarter tongue and groove planks nailed to pine joists. Foundation was brick pillars.

Few changes were made to original house during early years but present owners undertook a 5-year project in 1969 to preserve the original structure but also make it a livable place in which to raise a family. Original bath rooms were retained, a sizable addition added to rear of house, necessitating closing of several windows, converting one first-floor room to a library-den, adding a modern country kitchen-breakfast room, a first-floor bedroom and bath and a sewing room. Original kitchen was made into a utility room with shower and sink. A carport was added. Crumbling brick pillars were replaced with concrete block units. House was completely re-wired. Floors were repaired and refinished.

Original plaster walls were retained where possible and new walls contain sheetrock. Den walls are of antique heart pine as are ceiling beams.

Garage has been restored and is used as a workshop. Site has been cleared of undergrowth and is kept mowed. Shrubs have been planted around foundation and as cedar trees of the former cedar lane to front door have died or been damaged by storm, they have been split and used for a rail fence. House is served by city water and sewage systems.

House with alterations contains 4,660 sq. feet of living space, of which 1,420 sq. feet are centrally heated and air-conditioned. Remaining 3,240 sq. feet are heated by space heaters. There are 3 chimneys with 2 fireplaces served by each. One fireplace is usable. House is served with natural gas by Wilcox County Gas District.

7. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture, Plantation	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)			

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Specific builder/architect is unknown as is the exact date of construction. G. W. Dunn gave 12 acres of land for the establishment of the town of Barboursville (now Camden) and Thomas Dunn received a patent from the USA (Martin Van Buren, Pres.) for 79.95 Acres on 8/1/37. The first house built in Camden was G.W. Dunn's, built in 1831. John Dunn MacArthur and wife conveyed 7 acres where the Beck-Creswell House now stands to Augustus Terlinson, Book N, pg. 187. Pleasant and Louisa Armstrong, a carriage-maker from Canton, conveyed 6 acres to Francis Corzelius on 1/8/58, Book M, pg. 634. Henry Gordon and L. G. Gordon conveyed the property to W. K. Beck on 2/17/60, Book N, pg. 508. William King Beck and wife moved from the Pressly Bryant House in Canton Bend to subject house following the Civil War. His daughter, Ada Beck moved to the Wilcox Hotel and sold the property consisting of 12 acres to James N. Miller on Sept. 8, 1904, Book JJ, pg 245. His son, James P. Miller et ux and John Haas Strother et ux sold a two-third interest and a one-third interest respectively to present owners, consisting of 3.86 acres on Dec. 1, 1969. William King Beck and his brother, Franklin King Beck, were nephews of William Rufus DeVane King, former Vice-President of the U.S. and former minister to France as well as a member of U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Subject house is believed to have been built about 1838-39 since it has the same milling of window sash as the Masonic Hall, the former Baptist Church, the Franklin King Beck House and others.

[1849-51]

[1855?]

8. Major Bibliographical References

- "Recollections Of Early Canton Bend" Alice Vivian Strother, WILCOX PROGRESSIVE ERA 6/29/22
"History Of Wilcox County" Tootie Slade, 18 pgs. 5/6/44
"Beck-Creswell House", Circa 1830-40, Camden, AL, 3-pgs., Louis Finley, 1975

9. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 3.87 Ac.

Quadrangle name CAMDEN, NORTH

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification On 2-story dwelling and 3.86 acres bounded on the South by Bridgeport Road, on the West by Canton Road (Broad St.), on the North by the J. M. Watson property and on the East by the Will Liddell property (Dec. 1, 1969).

10. Form Prepared By

name/title	ROBERT M. CRESWELL	Owner/Occupant
organization		date Sept. 10, 1988
street & number	500 BROAD ST.	telephone ³³⁴ (205) 682-9576
city or town	CAMDEN, AL 36726	state

11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.

12. Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form to:

ALABAMA REGISTER COORDINATOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY ALABAMA 36130

BECK-CRESWELL HOUSE
500 Broad Street
Camden, Wilcox

Property Owner:
Mr. Robert M. Creswell
500 Broad Street
Camden, AL 36726
334-682-9576

SUMMARY:

The Beck-Creswell House is a two-story frame building constructed c.1850-60 in a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style. Featuring a T-shaped plan, it has a dominant half-hipped central block flanked by two slightly shorter half-hipped wings. A two-story portico extends across the width of the central block. Additions on the rear include a slightly lower gabled element and several shed roof elements. A detached kitchen, possibly original, was attached to the house in the early twentieth century.

DESCRIPTION:

See description prepared by Nathan Farris.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Beck-Creswell House is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criteria C, architecture. It depicts a good example of the Greek Revival in rural Black Belt Alabama and possibly was styled after one of the popular pattern books of the day, Minard Lafever's Modern Builder's Guide. When constructed, it was among the finest homes in the community, and it remains today as a rare example of an early house type.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

The property on which the Beck-Creswell House stands was first patented August 1, 1837 by Thomas Dunn. Records following this (as furnished by the current property owner) are unclear, until William King Beck purchased the property from Henry Gordon & L.G. Gordon on February 17, 1860. Staff architectural historians believe that the house was already constructed by this time and that it likely dates from around 1855.

William King Beck is believed to have moved into the house during the Civil War or shortly thereafter. Beck came to Alabama at least by 1830, as confirmed by county records, though other sources believe as early as 1819. As the son of John and Margaret King Beck, he was born (1/29/1802) into a prominent family from eastern North Carolina's Duplin County. He was the nephew of the Honorable William Rufus King, a U.S. diplomat who

was elected Vice President in 1852, during the Franklin Pierce administration. Like many men of the Old South, Beck combined the practice of law with cotton planting, and achieved considerable local prominence. He built a house around 1850 at Canton Bend (the William King Beck House, listed on NR 5/21/93), and maintained a plantation there. In 1860, U.S. Census records lists him with real property valued at \$13,405 and personal property (including slaves) at \$72,115. Beck had moved into the Camden house during or following the Civil War, and he sold the Canton Bend property by 1871. He remained in Camden until his death May 21, 1890.

The house remained in the Beck family until September 8, 1904, when WKB's unmarried daughter (his only child) Ada Beck sold the house and 12 acres to James N. Miller. Miller maintained it until December 1, 1969, when the current owners (Robert M. & Grace M. Creswell) purchased the house and 3.86 acres. At this time, the property had been subdivided and the house scheduled for demolition, and the Creswells began an ongoing effort to restore it as their residence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Creswell, Robert M. Biographical information, deed research, and descriptive material.

Farris, Nathan. Written description.

Gamble, Robert. Biographical information found in National Register nomination of William King Beck House, Camden vic., Wilcox County (listed 5/21/93).

(3.86 acres)

The William King Beck townhouse is located on a sizable and fairly level town lot in Camden, Wilcox County, Alabama.

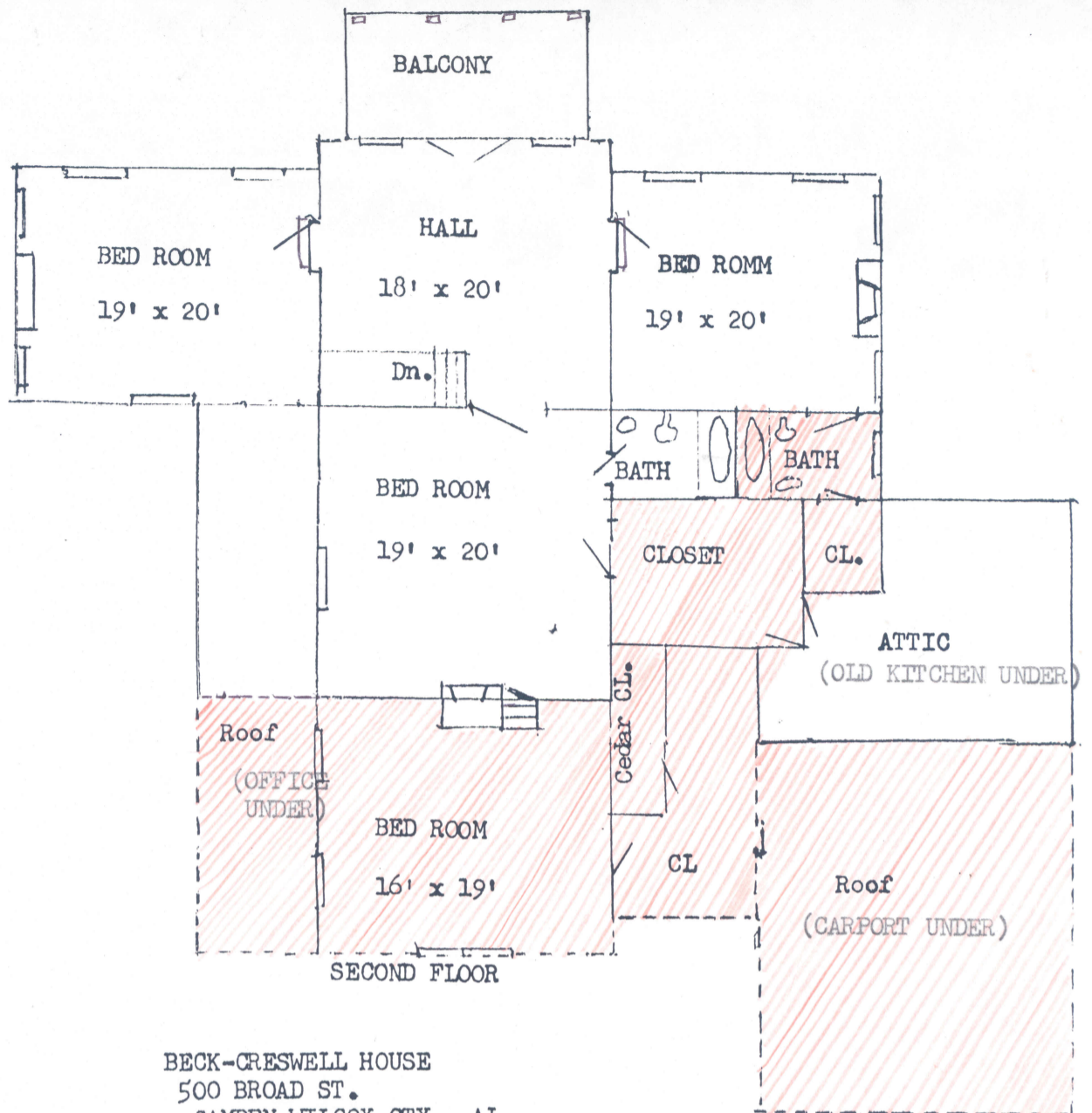
The Beck townhouse is a two story frame structure dating from c. 1850-60. The house possesses an overall "T" shaped plan with a front-oriented three bay wide central block flanked by two slightly shorter wings, which are both two bays long. The wings have hipped metal roofs and the central element is also clad in seam metal with a hipped front gable and a regular gable in the rear. The wings terminate in two interior brick chimneys. The central element originally terminated in the rear with an exterior brick chimney, but it has subsequently been inclosed by a room added in recent times. The house has a brick pier foundation. The front portico is as wide as the central block and has a hipped roof. The portico roof and the second story of the front porch are supported by rectangular piers. Two one story shed porches flank the central block in the rear. The front doors on both stories have sidelights and transoms. The fenestration consists of six over six sash windows. Louvered shutters flank the windows on front and side facades. A small kitchen building abuts one of the rear shed porches. The north rear porch has been inclosed to house a kitchen and other living spaces. The plain trim is overall Greek Revival in its origins, though one of the mantles inside the house has decorative brackets recalling a slight Italianate influence. The interior doors are of the two paneled "Regency" sort. The staircase is compact and panelled, with plain rectangular ballusters.



JAN 1971

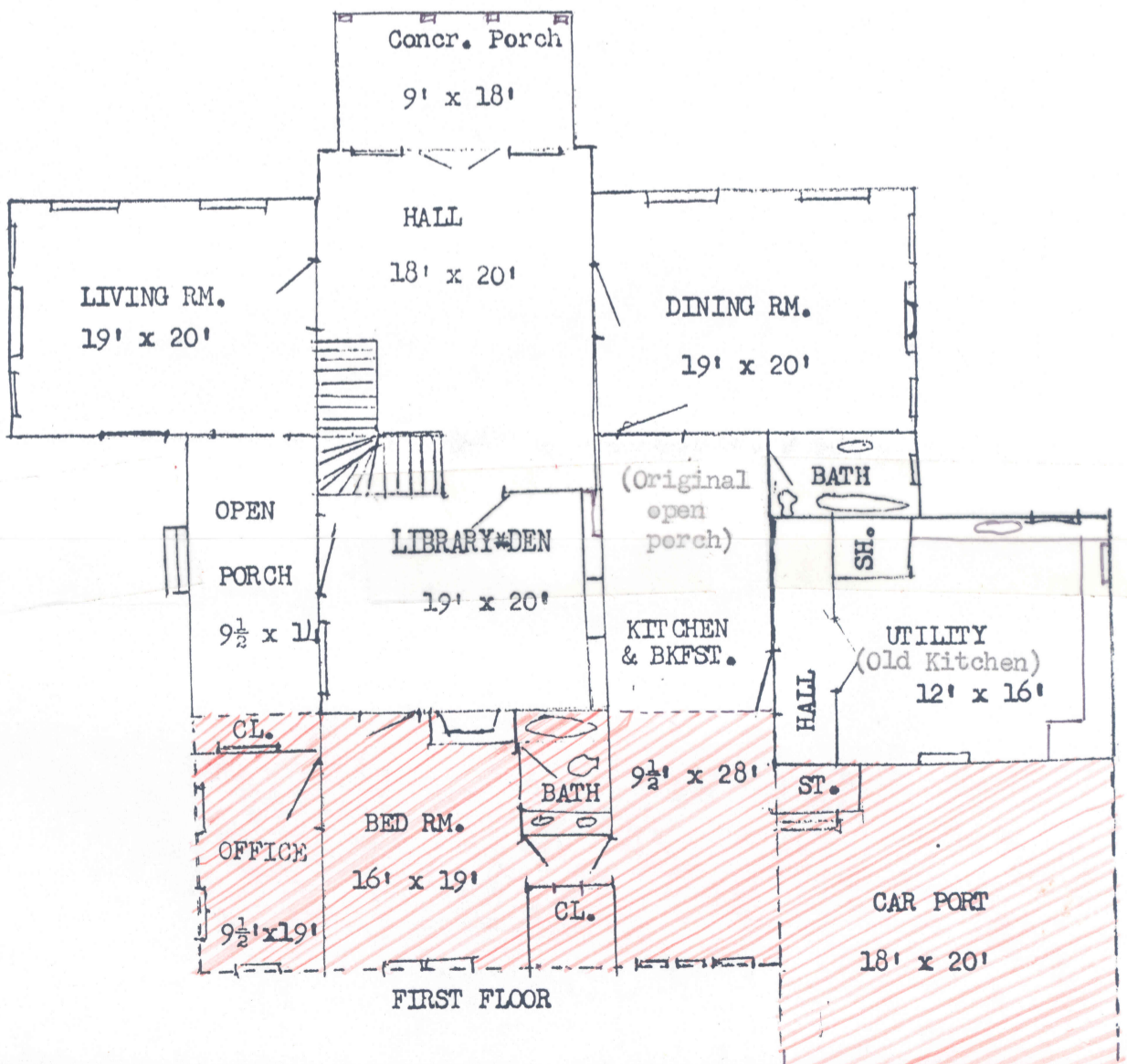


0261 NVT



BECK-CRESWELL HOUSE
 500 BROAD ST.
 CAMDEN, WILCOX CTY., AL.

Note: Additions &
 Alterations, 1971
 Dimensions are approximate



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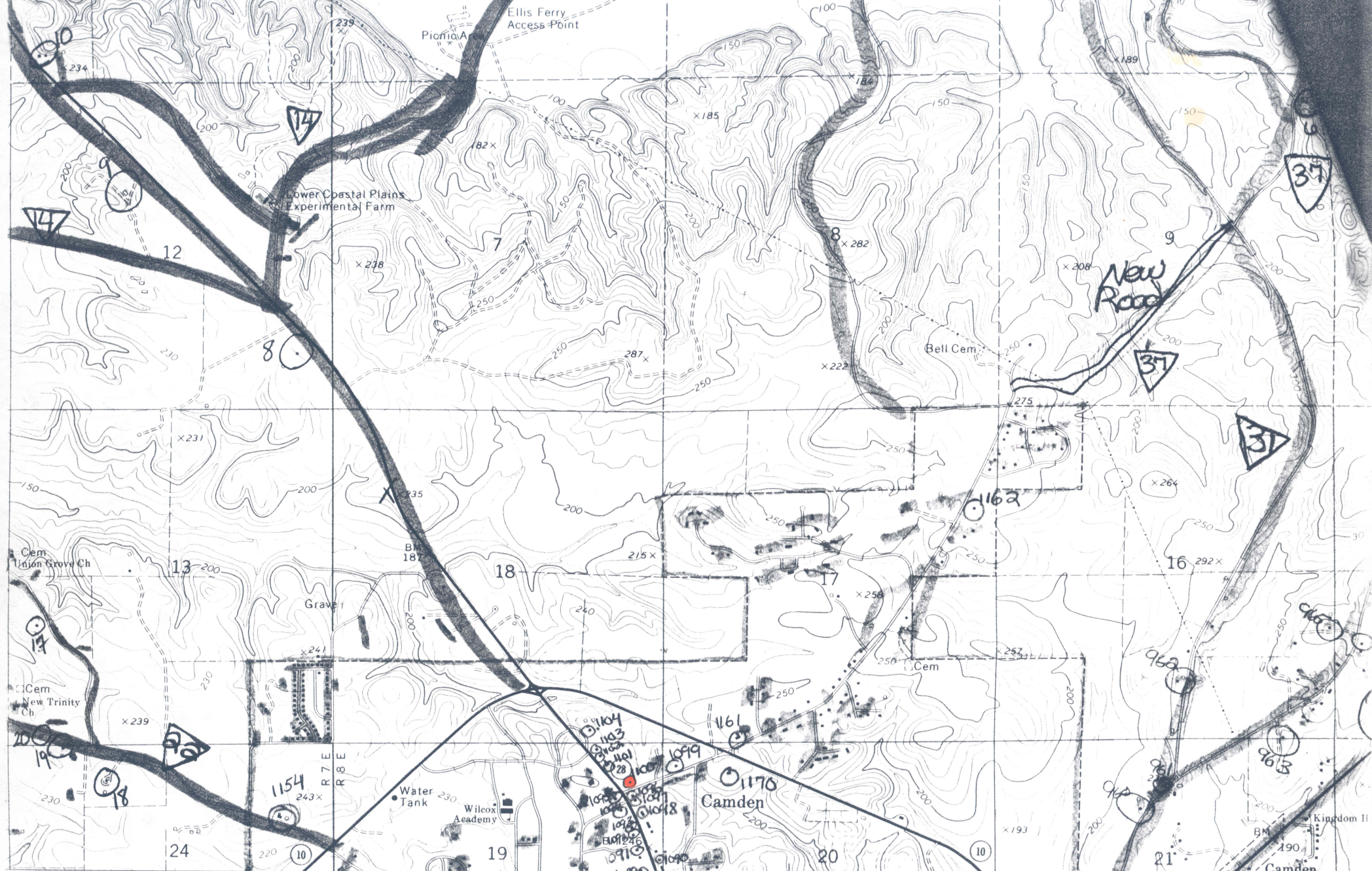
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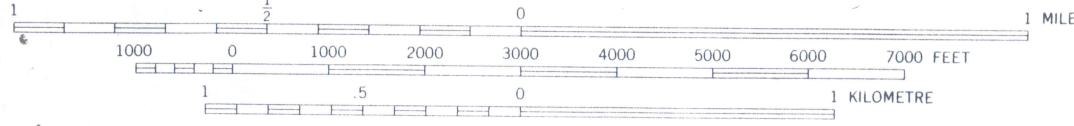
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469 YELLOW BLUFF 11 MI. (CAMDEN SOUTH) 471 13 MI. TO ALA. 21 472 17'30" ESTELLE 4.8 MI. GREENVILLE 42 MI. PEBBLE HILL 6 MI. MONROVILLE 38 MI.

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS

ROAD C

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Interior - Geology