

PH0351253

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 1 1976  
DATE ENTERED OCT 8 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

\*\* Pearce's Mill

AND/OR COMMON

Pearce's Mill

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

County Highway 253, 1.7 miles south, U.S. 278

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

X VICINITY OF

4

STATE

Alabama

CODE

01

COUNTY

Marion

CODE

093

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Penny Long

STREET & NUMBER

Route 3

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Judge of Probate-Marion County

STREET & NUMBER

Marion County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

STATE

Alabama

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

A Historic Sites Survey of Marion and Winston counties, Alabama

DATE

1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Alabama Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Pearce's Mill Historic District is a rural complex of eleven structures and sites located in the heavily timbered hill country of northwest Alabama in a curve of the Buttahatchee River. The complex includes the sites of several mills as well as the stone dam on Pearce's Mill Creek, the family home, tenant farm house, an abandoned bridge, servants quarters, a general store, barn, sheds and the family cemetery.

The Pearce family home, a typical turn-of-the-century frame house located on the south side of the creek dominates the area. Constructed in 1878, after a fire destroyed their first home, the present house differs substantially from its original two room dogtrot configuration. Initially two rooms were added creating an L-shaped plan. In the early 1900's another room with a projecting three sided bay was added to the east facade which is now dominated by the uncut stone fireplace constructed in the 1930's by local WPA workers. Additional minor alterations occurred between 1916, after Mr. James Pearce died, and the 1930's when the present owner inherited the home. The second story was added in 1916 and back porches on both stories were enclosed in the 1930's. The three native stone fireplaces and foundations distinguish the relatively simple frame dwelling. Corner boards and clapboard siding were used throughout the house as each addition was made giving it unity.

While the house has been altered and maintained, the other structures in the vicinity were either dismantled or allowed to deteriorate. The three mills are now gone; however, the site of the grist mill is plainly marked next to the dam. One stone support pier, the partially submerged bed rock and the sluiceway remain. The dam, which is approximately 15 feet high and 40 feet long is intact and was repaired in 1972.

Despite its relatively poor condition, the general store, a two-story frame structure, is the most distinctly Victorian building on the premises. Erected in the early 1870's, the building follows a simple rectangular plan and originally had a small one-story office wing on the northeast corner. The steeply gabled roof is ornamented with carved cornice brackets and the side cornice with returns creates the illusion of a pediment. Clapboard siding is used throughout the exterior with the exception of the first story of the main entrance facade where shiplapped siding was utilized. Two double doors with three lite rectangular transoms provide the main entrances and there is one exterior end chimney on the opposite side of the building.

The interior of the store still retains many of its commercial accoutrements, painted grey, blue and red. Long display cases, counters, bins, the post office window and fireplace are all ornamented with simple wood moldings.

Two other structures from the late 19th century are located near the store on the north and south side of the road that enters onto the county highway. Both are simple one-story wooden buildings. On the south side and closest to the county highway is a double pen tenant farmer's house, and to the north of the road, closest to the store is a small rectangular garage that was once a blacksmith shop.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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On the north side of the creek, directly across from the family residence are two badly deteriorating out buildings, the barn and shed. These rectangular wooden buildings have gable roofs covered with tin.

The dirt road which bisects the district was once the main county road and when followed to the river, leads to another frame double pen dwelling, which is the re-located store office, the family cemetery and an abandoned 1910 steel truss bridge. The store office was converted to servant's quarters in the 1950's by the present owner, but is no longer in use.

Fortunately, the area has retained its heartily wooded rural character and the only visible intrusions are quite distant. They include the present highway bridge over Pearce's Mill Creek and a mobile home near the site of the first John Pearce homestead.

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INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES WITHIN PEARCE'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. SITE OF PEARCE HOMESTEAD (County Road 253): now occupied by mobile home.
2. TENANT FARM HOUSE (County Road 253 and Pearce's Mill Drive): one-story, frame, dogtrot style with shed porch roof, gable roof.
3. GARAGE (Pearce's Mill Drive north side): c. 1900, one-story frame, gable roof.
4. JAMES PEARCE HOUSE (Pearce's Mill Drive): 1878-1916, two-story clapboard, screened porches, both stories, uncut native stone fireplaces dominating three-sided bay wing, L-shaped.
5. PEARCE'S STORE (Pearce's Mill Drive, north side): c. 1875, two-story clapboard with gable roof, bracketed cornice with returns, two double door entrances.
6. GRIST MILL SITE (Pearce's Mill Creek, south side): c. 1845, originally a two-story frame water turbine mill, dismantled in 1970, stone support pier, bedrock and sluiceway remain.
7. SERVANT'S QUARTERS (Pearce's Mill Drive, south side): c. 1875, one-story frame, double pen building, originally attached to store and used as office.
8. BARN AND SHED (Pearce's Mill Creek, north side): one-story, frame, gable tin roofs.
9. CEMETERY (Pearce's Mill Drive and Buttahatchee River): 1878, burial ground for Pearce family, four spire type monuments, small section to the rear and north side for slaves and local residents.
10. BRIDGE (Pearce's Mill Drive and Buttahatchee River): 1910, steel truss, abandoned.
11. DAM (Pearce's Mill Creek): c. 1845, native limestone, approximately fifteen feet high and 40 feet long.

# 8 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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pearce's Mill Historic District, at one time a complex of mills, a store, residences, post office and cotton gin, became the center for economic recovery in central Marion County during the post Civil War decades. In 1865, James P. Pearce returned to the mill his father had built in the 1840's, on the Buttahatchee River and found a ravaged country-side. He gradually rebuilt the farm and turned it and the mill into a trading center. Pearce became one of the largest single landholders in Alabama and gained enough power and influence in local political affairs to represent his county at the state Constitutional Convention in 1901. He was not unlike hundreds of other men throughout the South who were instrumental in restoring the social and economic life in the rural areas of the state.

By the early 1870's, Pearce's operation included the original grist mill, a large two-story frame general merchandise establishment with post office, a saw mill, planer, wheat flour mill, cotton gin and freight service. Two or three times weekly Pearce ran his two top quality mule teams from his gin to Tusculumbia offering the only such service in this rugged, isolated country. For many years, he openly opposed the improvement of county roads fearing they would destroy his store and freight business.

Pearce's Mill did decline when roads improved, railroads reached the towns and Hamilton, the county seat, became more accessible as a trading center. However, Pearce had developed his land holdings, largely through foreclosures, sufficiently to offset the gradual decline. When he died in 1915 he left almost 60,000 acres to his only surviving son and two grandsons. His business enterprises included not only the complex on the Buttahatchee River but also a mill in Texas, Alabama, and stores in Carbon Hill.

Although store operations ceased by 1930, the mill continued to serve the neighborhood until 1959. Land holdings gradually diminished until the present estate includes only 2,000 acres.

At present Pearce's Mill is owned by Mrs. Penny Long, James Pearce's daughter-in-law. She resides on the property in the Pearce family home which was built in 1878 by Pearce's employees after a fire destroyed his first home. The original two room dogtrot dwelling is barely recognizable as such today. It is now a two-story frame L-shaped building with 14 rooms and enclosed porches.

The remaining buildings on the property from the historic period also include the store with many display cases and bins intact, its office which was moved and converted to servants quarters, a tenant farm house, an elaborate pigeon house, two large barns, and several sheds. At one time the dirt road through the property was the main road and

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Birmingham News, Sunday Magazine, March 1, 1964.

Interviews with: Mrs. Penny Long, owner, Pearce's Mill, Alabama.

Mrs. Haidee Strickland, Pearce's Mill, Alabama.

Mrs. Vina Price, Hamilton, Alabama.

Family papers in possession of Mrs. Penny Long.

Marion County Journal, July 29, 1971.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 15.25

UTM REFERENCES

A	1.6	4	2.3	1.0	0	3.7	7.4	8.2	0	B	1.6	4	2.2	9.4	0	3.7	7.5	5.0	0
	ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING		ZONE		EASTING		ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING				
C	1.6	4	2.2	4.4	0	3.7	7.5	9.6	0	D	1.6	4	2.2	5.2	0	3.7	7.6	0	4.0
	ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING		ZONE		EASTING		ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The northern boundary of Pearce's Mill Historic District begins at a point 250 feet east of county road 253 on the north boundary line of Section 7, Twp 11, S, R 12, W, then runs northwest 2000 feet stopping on the north bank of the Buttahatchee River where it turns southwest and runs 375 feet along the river bank. Turning southeast, the line runs 2250 feet to county road 253 where it turns north and runs 11250 to the beginning point of the boundary.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director and Donna C. Hole

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

March 19, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama 36130

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Miss B. Howard, Jr.*

TITLE

*SHPO Ala.*

DATE

*March 19, 1976*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*10/8/96*

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

*9/29/76*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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crossed the Buttahatchee River. The support structure of a steel bridge is intact a few yards from the family cemetery.

While the grist mill as well as the remnants of the smaller mills were dismantled in 1970 for safety reasons, the stone dam, bedrock, sluice and support post still remain to mark the site.

The Victorian store is structurally sound, the family home is continually maintained and the area surrounding Pearce's Mill has retained its rural character.

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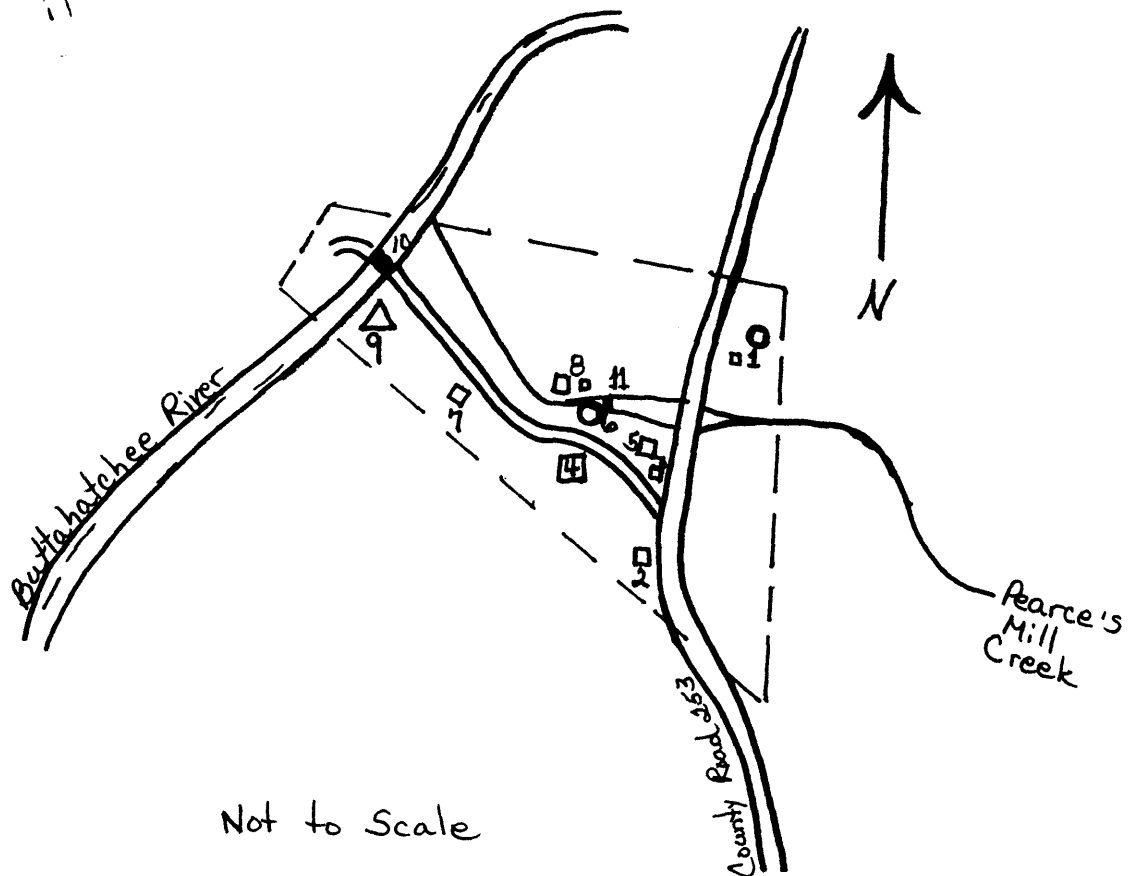
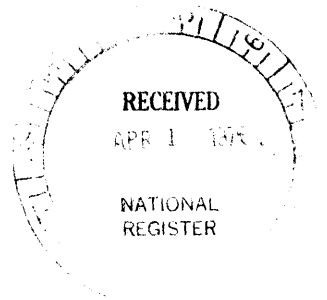
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Owen, Thomas, History of Alabama and Dictionary of Biography, Vol. IV.



PEARCE'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. Site of John Pearce Homestead (mobile home)
2. Tenant farmhouse
3. Garage
4. James Pearce Home
5. Pearce's Store
6. Grist Mill Site
7. Servant's quarters (formerly store office)
8. Barn and shed
9. Family cemetery
10. Abandoned bridge
11. Dam



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Pearce's Mill  
AND/OR COMMON  
Pearce's Mill

**2 LOCATION**

CITY TOWN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VICINITY OF	COUNTY	STATE
Hamilton		Marion	Alabama

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE Alabama Historical Commission

SCALE Not to scale      DATE 1976

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
- 1 PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
- 2 NORTH ARROW
- 3 UTM REFERENCES