

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 93000421

**Date Listed:** 5/21/93

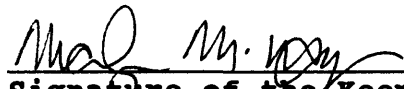
Beck, William King, House  
**Property Name**

Wilcox  
**County**

ALABAMA  
**State**

**Multiple Name**

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Keeper**

5/27/93  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 3.

This nomination is amended to show that the Alabama SHPO recommends that this property be considered significant locally.

The change was confirmed by phone with the SHPO (5/22/93).

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Beck, William King, House

other names/site number Bryant House

2. Location

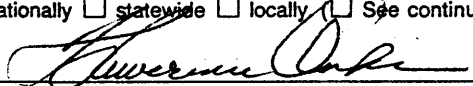
street & number N side Ala. 28, 3.2 mi. N. of Ala. 10 intersection  not for publication

city or town Canton Bend community, Camden  vicinity

state Alabama code AL county Wilcox code 131 zip code 36726

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 4-5-93  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)  
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

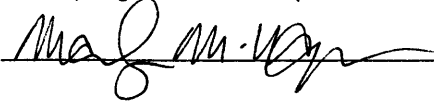
\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

 5/21/93

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

domestic: single-family dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

domestic: single-family dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: RAISED COTTAGE

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

C. 1845

**Significant Dates**

c. 1845

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Alexander J. Bragg (?)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

William King Beck House

Wilcox County, Alabama

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 30

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet.

UTM grid boxes 1 and 2 with labels Zone, Easting, Northing

UTM grid boxes 3 and 4 with labels Zone, Easting, Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert S. Gamble /Architectural Historian ; Melanie Betz/AHC Reviewer

organization Alabama Historical Commission date 1/20/93

street & number 725 Monroe St. telephone 205/242-3184

city or town Montgomery state AL zip code 36130-0900

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Don Bell (c/o Innovative Packaging)

street & number P.O. Box 548 telephone 205/368-4089

city or town Atmore state AL zip code 36504

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Wilcox County, AL

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Description of physical appearance:

The William King Beck house is a one-story, frame, hip-roofed structure resting on a high, brick-pier foundation. Rectangular in shape, the house is five bays wide and measures 52 feet across by 60 feet deep, including full-length porches at both front and (formerly) rear.

The high pyramidal roof covering the house originally terminated in a small, deck-like platform, physical evidence of which still survives in the attic. Probably because of leakage problems, this platform was later roofed over in the apex form seen today. The present corrugated metal roof sheathing probably dates from the early 20th century.

The facade of the house is composed of a full-width inset portico with six octagonal columns carrying a vaguely classical entablature. A heavily paneled, double-leaf central doorway with sidelights and transom is framed by a Greek Revival-style architrave, accentuated by a shallow raked pediment. Floorlength windows to either side, framed by eared architraves, are each some ten feet high and surmounted by a triptych of vertical panels. Sash throughout the house is nine-over-nine. Flush exterior sheathing at both front and rear elevations is "rabbeted" (a 19th-century term referring to what is today essentially shiplap siding). A pair of brick chimneys, each serving back-to-back fireplaces, projects from the lateral slopes of the metal (corrugated tin) roof. Across the rear of the house, the original porch -- simpler in design and lower (12'4") than its counterpart at the front -- was enclosed about 1940 to provide kitchen and bath facilities.

On the interior, a 12-foot wide central hall bisects the house from front to rear, with a pair of large rooms to either side. Each room measures a little over nineteen feet square, with ceilings that are 16'4" in height. Windows -- four to a room at the front and three in the pair of rear rooms -- have slits at the top of each jamb to receive the sashes, so that a nearly floor-to-ceiling opening can be created for ventilation purposes. Original heart-pine (5/4) tongue-and-groove floors survive throughout, along with paneled doors, molded baseboards and chairrails, a picture rail in the parlor (southwest room), and transitional mantelpieces that combine Federal and Greek Revival-style proportions and motifs. The low molded chairrails, especially, are unusual in a house of this period. That they date from the initial construction campaign is verified by their being secured directly to the partitional framing, with the wall plaster being applied around and flush against the chairrail.

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Wilcox County, AL

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Walls retain their earliest plaster finish, while all ceilings are sheathed, like the front and rear exterior elevations, with rabbeted boarding. (Such decorative wooden ceilings are a distinctive feature of mid-19th century architecture in this part of Alabama.) Recent investigation by the Alabama Historical Commission staff suggests that the heavily-paneled double-leaf front doors were apparently faux grained to simulate oak (evidence points to a naive "combed" treatment), with raised moldings and perhaps other elements highlighted in a cobalt blue. Needed at this point is further comprehensive investigation of all interior artistic treatments.

No original outbuildings survive, although the present owner has erected a small, pyramidally-roofed storehouse behind the main structure. As to landscaping, oral tradition maintains that the house was formerly approached by a long, on-axis lane running south from what is today Alabama Highway 28. Evidence of such a road still exists, although in recent years cultivation has heavily disturbed most of the acreage surrounding the house. Remnants of axial planting further corroborates the previous existence for such a layout. To the east and north of the house, the land falls steeply away to a small wooded valley watered by several hillside springs that were part of the original plantation.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3 William King Beck House  
Wilcox County, ALStatement of significance:

National Register Criteria C. The William King Beck house is an outstanding and little-altered example of a large, "raised cottage" type plantation house. Its overall form -- with hipped roof extending over a full-width, five-bay veranda -- was characteristic of a number of mid-19th century plantation houses that once existed across south central Alabama. The house is also important because it is believed to have been designed by one of southern Alabama's premier 19th-century builder/architects, Alexander Jackson ("Sandy") Bragg of nearby Camden.

Historical Summary. The first owner of the house was William King Beck (29 January 1802-21 May 1890). Born into a family long prominent in eastern North Carolina's Duplin County, Beck was the nephew of the Honorable William Rufus King, a U.S. diplomat who was elected vice-president during the Franklin Pierce administration. William King Beck emigrated to Alabama, along with other members of his family, during the early days of statehood. County court records confirm his presence in Wilcox County by 1830. Like many men of the Old South, William King Beck combined the practice of law with cotton planting, and achieved considerable local prominence. He was apparently married twice, his second wife -- whom he married in October 1847 -- being Anne Eliza Smith (26 April 1820-25 July 1895), daughter of a neighboring planter, Duncan C. Smith. [See Barefield, Records of Wilcox County, Alabama, p. 114; also "Camden Cemetery" (unpub.), p. 26]. The plantation house served as the Beck's principal residence until, according to local tradition, he, his wife and daughter moved into the town of Camden, three miles distant.

The land on which the Beck house stands was initially patented at the U.S. land office in Cahaba by Thomas Carter and Darling Glover on 25 May 1831 [see Wilcox County Platbook, p. 136]. Some years later Beck acquired the tract and probably built the present house around 1850. The 1860 U.S. census lists Beck with real property valued at \$13,405 and personal property (including slaves) worth \$72,115. On 18 April 1868 Beck conveyed to his wife, "in consideration of the natural love and affection which he has," lands amounting to 1,267 acres, including the 79-acre tract where his plantation house was situated. Also part of this conveyance was property in nearby Camden [Wilcox County Deed Record P, pp. 559-60].

Some time between 1868 and 1871, the Beck plantation house passed into the hands of J.D. Bryant [Wilcox County Tax Map, 1871]. Remaining in the Bryant family for several generations, the house eventually became the property of William E. Gault. In 1992 Gault's widow, Maxine, sold the house and 30 surrounding acres -- a remnant of the original tract -- to the present owner. The William King Beck house is now under restoration for use as a corporate entertainment center.



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Wilcox County, AL

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Historical Context. Plantation culture in antebellum Alabama produced several characteristic house forms. Of these, the one-story hipped roof house with inset, full-length porch emerged as among the most typical -- especially in the southern part of the state. Derived from larger and more formal Greek Revival-style prototypes, the galleried and hipped-roof plantation cottage evolved to meet the lifestyles and climatic demands of Deep South plantation life. Thus features normally associated with the form were a broad, high-ceilinged central hall, tall windows (often reaching to the floor), and large rooms that were few in number but spacious and airy. Displaying all these traits, the William King Beck house is one of the best among a dwindling number of such houses remaining in Alabama today.

The house also displays idiosyncratic features associated with the designs of Alexander Jackson Bragg, a master builder whose corpus of work was among the most distinctive produced by any rural 19th-century Alabama craftsman. For instance, Bragg's characteristic liberty with conventional classical motifs is clearly reflected at the Beck house in the use of octagonal columns with capitals composed of corbeled banding (a device seen in other Bragg designs); likewise, Bragg's predilection for attenuated Greek Revival-style "eared" architraves framing both doors and windows -- sometimes accented by paneling above the opening itself. While no written documentation has yet surfaced to confirm Bragg as designer of the Beck house, such features along with the fact that Bragg lived in nearby Camden strongly suggests his involvement. This intrinsic physical evidence linking the Beck house with a prominent regional builder/architect further enhances the significance of the structure.

**Archeological potential:**

Although no formal archeological survey has been made at the William King Beck property, the potential for subsurface remains may be high. Properties of this type were sited within a constellation of dependencies such as kitchens and other outbuildings. Buried portions may contain significant information that may be useful in interpreting the entire property.

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Bibliography:

Barefield, Madge Hahn. Records of Wilcox County, Alabama. Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1988.

Sam Davis Chapter, UDC. "Camden Cemetery, 1838-1986." Unpublished MS, 1986.  
Ala. Dept. of Archives and History.

Wilcox County Probate Office. Deed Records (Book "P").

Wilcox County Probate Office. 1871 Tax Map.

Wilcox County Probate Office. Original Township and Range Tract Book.

Wilcox County Probate Office. Old Sectional Index of Ownership, 1898-1901.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 6Geographical Data  
William King Beck House, Wilcox Co., AL

## UTM REFERENCES:

- A) 16/468340/3545490
- B) 16/468510/3545530
- C) 16/468470/3545250
- D) 16/468300/3545140

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Commence at the NW Corner of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2, T-12-N, R-7-E, Wilcox County, Alabama and run South 443.1 ft.; thence run East 749.3 ft. to the SW Corner of the Wilcox County Rescue Squad 1.0 acre lot, recorded in Book 6-T, page 36; thence run South 61°-45'E along the South line of said lot 48.2 ft. to the point of beginning of the tract herein described; thence run S 61°45'E, 160.5 ft. to the SE Corner of said Rescue lot; thence continue S 61°45'E, 352.8 ft. to an iron pipe corner; thence run S 2°05'W, 833 ft. to an iron pipe corner; thence run N 87°55'W, 90 ft. to an iron pipe corner; thence run S 2°05'W, 234.54 ft. to an iron pipe corner; thence run S 71°05'W, 933.60 ft. to an iron pipe corner on the ROW of Alabama Highway No. 10-28; thence run N 33°32'W along said ROW 286.4 ft. to an iron pipe corner at the intersection of the North ROW of Alabama Highway No. 10-28 with the East ROW of a County Road; thence run in a Northerly direction along the ROW of said County Road 1280 ft., more or less, to an iron pipe corner on the South Margin of the Rescue Squad access road; thence run N 55°21'E, 134 ft. to an iron pipe corner; thence run N 48°36'E, 137.2 ft. to an I.P. corner; thence run N 71°36'E, 69.4 ft. to an I.P. corner; thence run N 83°27'E, 80.4 ft. to the point of beginning.

The above described tract containing 30.0 acres, more or less, lying and being partly in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  and partly in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2, T-12-N, R-7-E, Wilcox County, Alabama.

This being according to the survey of James C. Crisman, Jr., Reg. L.S. #9975, as recorded in Book 7-L, page 228, Probate Office, Wilcox County, Alabama.

Deed Reference: Deed Book 7-L, page 227.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The legal description was used to delineate the boundaries of the property.

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National Park Service

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William King Beck House  
Wilcox County, AL

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PHOTOGRAPHS - WILLIAM KING BECK HOUSE

Camden vicinity (Wilcox County)

Photographer: Robert Gamble, January 1993

Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission

- 1) Front facade looking north
- 2) Front facade and west side, looking north by northeast
- 3) Detail of column and balustrade, looking southwest
- 4) Facade showing rabbeted weatherboarding, looking east
- 5) Main doorway, looking north
- 6) Main doorway, detail of paneling, looking north
- 7) East side elevation and rear, looking west by southwest
- 8) West side elevation and rear (north elevation), looking east by southeast
- 9) Detail of architrave in parlor, looking south by southwest
- 10) Mantelpiece in parlor (southwest room), looking northwest
- 11) Mantelpiece in southeast room, looking northwest