

## Benjamin H. Averiett Houses

## (Thematic Group)

Owner: Mr. and Mrs. James  
T. Pursell  
Post Office Box 540  
Sylacauga, AL 35150

Historic name: Goodwin/Hamilton House  
Common name: The Hamilton Place

Location: Talladega County approximately 2 miles south of  
Highway 8 on the east side of Marble Valley  
Road in the Fayetteville Community

Acreage: Approximately 22 acres                    UTM: A. 16/554/840/3664/590  
    B. 16/554/840/3664/070  
    C. 16/554/600/3664/190

Verbal boundary: Identified as Parcel 3 on the attached Plat Map. Boundaries reflect current ownership of approximately 22 acres.

Date of Construction: c.1850

Statement of Significance:

Criterion A - Agriculture

The Goodwin/Hamilton House is significant because of its place in the Averiett Family farming unit which is representative of Alabama's 19th and early 20th Century agricultural development. Benjamin Averiett's prosperity is reflected in the great tracts of land he accumulated for himself and his children between 1830 and 1860. Second generation cotton prosperity is reflected in this house built on a 1,000 acre tract about 1850 for his daughter, Marge Goodwin. The property remained a part of the Averiett Family farming unit until 1917.

Criterion C - Architecture

The Goodwin/Hamilton House is a handsome Greek Revival cottage of very simple, rural detail. Having a characteristic pedimented entry porch, the unembellished entablature is supported by six square Doric porch columns. The square massed house is covered by a low pitched gable roof. The classical house-type is ingeniously adapted to the climate with extremely high ceilings and bifold doors which refine the dog trot-like central

hallway. There is no other known surviving example of this house type in the southwest part of the county.

Integrity:

The Goodwin/Hamilton House retains its historic identity and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Development of the unfinished basement as kitchen, bath and utility space during restoration prevented major intrusion into the original spaces and fabric of the house. Plaster walls were, however, lost.

Description:

This Greek Revival Cottage has a wide central hallway flanked by two rooms on each side. A shed extension to the rear includes what used to be a central recessed porch flanked by two smaller rooms. The porch is now enclosed as a sunroom.

The clapboard house with gabled roof is covered with composition shingles. Brick piers form the foundation and exterior brick chimneys service the seven fireplaces.

Decoratively, the Benjamin Averiett and Goodwin/Hamilton Houses have much in common. Federal mantelpieces are identical in the two houses, as are the large 12/9 windows. Other similarities include paneled dado, four paneled bifold doors and evidence of graining which was present before restoration. The census for Talladega County reveals several apparently itinerant craftsmen staying with prosperous planters in 1850 but research has not yet revealed exactly who left his decorative handiwork on the Benjamin Averiett and Goodwin/Hamilton Houses. The Goodwin/Hamilton House has 6" pine floors and had plaster over lathe walls, which deteriorated during its use as a barn. The walls are now sheetrock.

The house is in excellent condition due to restoration in 1976.

Facing west, the house and its handsome brick smokehouse are, like the other Averiett houses, situated on a grassy knoll near a natural spring; this one feeding Periwinkle Branch which flows north to Cedar Creek.

Historical Summary:

As a young girl Marge Averiett migrated with her parents from newly formed Lowndes County to the Creek Indian Nation east of the Coosa River. In 1844, she married Thelston Goodwin. The Goodwin/Hamilton House appears to have been built for her about 1850.

Tradition holds that Benjamin Averiett built the house for his daughter and records substantiate that he did indeed help Goodwin acquire the 1,000 acre tract between 1846 and 1849.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note, too, that Goodwin and Averiett served on the church building committees together during that period.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after Marge Goodwin's death in 1856, Thelston Goodwin sold their home to another immigrant from Lowndes County, well-to-do planter, Moses Hamilton, Jr., whose sister, Margaret had married Benjamin Averiett's son, William. Ties between the two families remained close since two of Hamilton's children married two of William Averiett's children by his second marriage.

Remaining then in Averiett family ownership until 1917, the house has had several owners and long periods of vacancy since that time, leaving it in a state of severe deterioration when purchased and restored by the Pursell Family in 1976.

---

<sup>1</sup>Talladega Co. Records, Bk. E, p. 341ff, Bk. F, p. 123, Bk. F, p. 548. Goodwin subsequently ranks as one of the larger Talladega County farmers in the Agricultural and Slave Census records.

<sup>2</sup>Fort Williams Baptist Church Minutes.