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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bailey House reflects characteristics typical of frontier plantation houses in the mid-nineteenth century. The house is of wood frame construction with some hand-hewn beams with mortised and pinioned joints. The building is one and a half stories high and symmetrically laid out. The foundation is dressed native coguina stone and the two chimneys are coquina and brick. There is a porch on the front of the house, the railing of which appears to be the original, The doorways have simplified Greek Revival details. Windows are nine light double hung sash with wooden louvered shutters. The roof has a double pitch and gabled ends: roofing is of There are three gabled dormers facing south. sheet metal. Alterations on the house include the replacement of the shingle roof with tin. Bathroom and kitchen facilities and a ramp at the front have been added and outbuildings and exterior stairs have been removed. The entire structure is painted white and the fabric is in excellent condition.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Major James B. Bailey was one of the pioneer settlers of Gainesville. Having acquired extensive acreage within the original boundaries of northwest Gainesville, Major Bailey began construction of his home about 1848, thereby making the house one of the oldest in Gainesville.

Public records indicate that Major Bailey was a very prominent citizen of early Gainesville. He was County Treasurer of Alachua County for six years, was a member of the Patrol Committee and was the man appointed by the County Commissioners to decide on a site for the new jail and then to design the building. It also seems likely that Major Bailey was instrumental in having the county seat moved from Newnansville to Gainesville. In 1852, the legislature passed an act calling for a county-wide vote for the selection of a new seat of government. One source states that "Major Bailey desired the removal of the county seat from Newnansville for he owned a large part of the land on which the new town and the courthouse would be built". In 1854 Major Bailey did sell 63¹/₄ acres of land to the Alachua County Commissioners to be used in part for a public square and for the erection of a courthouse. The present courthouse still stands on that site.

In March of 1862, at a special meeting of the citizens of Alachua County, a motion by the Honorable David L. Yulee was adopted which sent Major J.B. Bailey as a special messenger to Richmond, Virginia to impress upon the Government of the Confederate States the importance of keeping an army in East Florida. At the same time, Bailey was to confer with General Lee and urge him to leave the troops already in East Florida there. Major Bailey died in 1864 while working on fortifications at Baldwin, Florida. In a letter dated March 22, 1864, a friend of Bailey's wrote to General Jernigan that "our worthy townsman Major James B. Bailey is dead".

The Bailey homestead remains today as an excellent example of early plantation architecture and the home of one of Gainesville's most important pioneers.

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