

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received FEB 1 1985

date entered FEB 28 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bishop B. Blackwell House

and/or common Weldon House

2. Location

street & number 110 Parshley Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Live Oak

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 012

county Suwannee

code 121

3. Classification

Category

district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

public
 private
 both
Public Acquisition
 in process
 being considered
N/A

Status

occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress
Accessible
 yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military

museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert L. Wells, M.D.

street & number 1011 Jeffords Street

city, town Clearwater

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Suwannee County Courthouse

street & number Ohio Avenue

city, town Live Oak

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A

federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1910
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The 1886 Bishop Blackwell House is unusual when compared with other rural North Central Florida dwellings of the same period in that it has a brick veneer and is based on the single pile side hall plan. The urban character of the house was originally de-emphasized with a two-story veranda that encircled the house on all sides. This veranda was removed when the house was moved back one lot and replaced with a one-story front porch. Although one-story additions have been attached to the original building there is no access to the house from them and no walls have been disturbed. The main dwelling was divided into a duplex by the addition of a door next to the original front door but the basic floor plan is virtually unaltered. Therefore, although the original porch is gone and the additions are butted up against the main dwelling the original house is largely intact.

The Bishop Blackwell house is located in downtown Live Oak, one lot from the city's major governmental and commercial street, Ohio Avenue. The house originally faced this street but was moved back approximately 100 feet, and the post office occupies its original site. The lot it was moved to is long and narrow, and is crowded with the house, its additions, and a large two-story garage apartment. The remaining open area is neatly landscaped. Although the Blackwell house is brick, it blends nicely with the turn-of-the-century frame houses that surround it in the mixed commercial residential neighborhood.

The original building, constructed in 1886, has a two-story side hall plan which is seldom seen in nineteenth century North Florida houses, particularly with a brick veneer. The front doors and the windows on the front and sides of the house are emphasized by segmental relieving arches surmounted by brick drip labels with corbelled label stops. The back windows and back door do not have drip labels. The original dining room is the only room with paired windows topped by a single arch. The house has a hip roof with a central chimney.

The main facade has two sets of doors, one above another. The door on the second floor appears to be original. The lower half is paneled with a single lite above, and the door is flanked by sidelights. The first floor door, which had a transom as well as sidelights, has been removed and replaced with French doors. The second-story door leads to a deck surrounded by a simple slat balustrade which tops the portico around the main door on the first floor. A molding demarcates the capital of two battered columns that meet an architrave that echoes the original architrave under the roof line.

The major alteration to the facade, as noted above, was the removal of the two-story veranda that ran around all four sides of the house as documented by the Sanborn maps of 1903 and 1906. The 1912 and 1924 Sanborn maps show the house on its new site with a one-story porch across only the front facade. This full-length one story porch is also shown in a 1923 photograph. This porch was similar, although more architecturally detailed, to the one in place today. It had four paneled columns and two paneled pilasters with a matching paneled architrave. This theme was also carried out in the deck's columns, or piers, and they were joined by three horizontal railings. A turned balustrade was added to the veranda by 1923 but was not in place in a 1916 photo. The 1916 and 1923 photos also show the house with unpainted red brick.

Another alteration that came about as a result of the removal of the four-sided veranda was that a rear one-story wing (probably the kitchen) that was originally attached to the porch was butted up against the house and given a wide east-facing porch of its own. This porch has been closed in and was given an additional wing when it was made into a separate apartment in the early 1940s.¹ A bathroom was also carved out of the original kitchen to give the tenant on the first floor of the main house a bathroom

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) *
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

*Associated with prominent North Florida citizens.

Specific dates c.+1886

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bishop Blackwell House derives its primary significance from its association with the prominent B.B. Blackwell, politician, attorney, financier and utilities owner who had it constructed in 1886. If the architectural integrity of the house had not been comprised by alteration, moving and additions, its brick townhouse type of architecture would also be of prime consideration because of its rarity in North Florida.

There are no houses known to be older than Bishop Bascom Blackwell's house in Live Oak, and a visual survey of other dwellings dating from the same time period indicates that no other house used brick as a primary building material. The house was probably constructed in 1886 since the Blackwells purchased the lot in February of that year for \$75.00.¹ Further evidence to substantiate this date of construction is the fact that Blackwell was the state senator from Live Oak in 1887, and according to tradition, his son, John Lindsey, was born in the house in August 1889.² Blackwell had his house constructed in a style barely seen in the rural south. The brick veneer single pile side hall plan which is more commonly found in densely populated cities was adapted to the Southern climate with a two-story veranda that completely encircled the house.³ When the federal government required that the house be moved back one lot in 1910, the two-story veranda was replaced with a one-story porch across the front of the house. However, the original brick veneer exterior and the interior floor plan have been unaltered little since the time of construction.

B.B. Blackwell was near the peak of his career in law, politics and banking when he had this house constructed. Blackwell began his practice of law in 1872 after receiving legal training under Judge John F. White of the Third Judicial District of Florida.⁴ In 1883 he was elected to the State Assembly to represent the people of Hamilton County and, after the Constitutional Convention of 1885, he was elected to the Florida Senate as representative of the 26th District in 1887.⁵ As an indication of Blackwell's wealth and power he personally lent Hamilton County \$5,000 to build their new courthouse in 1891.⁶ He then turned his talents to banking and opened up an unincorporated bank in Jasper in 1893 and an incorporated bank in Live Oak in 1895.⁷ Meanwhile, his interest in law and politics continued. Blackwell served a term as State Attorney for the Third Judicial Circuit, was a member of the Democratic Executive Committee for several years, and served as a presidential elector from Florida.⁸ Blackwell also ventured into the utility business when he bought the Lake City Water and Light Company.⁹

Dr. William S. Airth purchased the house in 1894 for \$1600.¹⁰ He had graduated from the University of Louisville in 1884 and was certified to practice in Suwannee County in 1890.¹¹ Dr. Airth became a member of the Florida Medical Association in 1892 and was active in the Medical Association of Suwannee County as the corresponding secretary.¹² He specialized in the treatment of the eye and ear.¹³ In June 1900 Dr. Airth was shot to death at his place of employment, Barclay and Groove's drugstore, by the husband of a deceased patient.¹⁴ His widow was left with two small children and when the United States Government offered her \$7000 for the lot on Ohio Avenue exclusive of the house, she accepted the offer.¹⁵

(See Continuation Sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1

Quadrangle name Live Oak East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	3	2	9	9	7	0	3	3	5	2	8	4	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melanie Barr/ Diana Primelles, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives

date January 7, 1985

street & number The Capitol

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

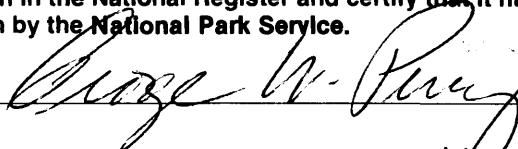
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer

date Jan. 15, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 2-28-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service**

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around the early 1940s or late 1930s also. Another addition occurred between 1937 and 1939, when the owners of the house returned after their move from Lake City and added a one-story wing on the west facade for use as the owner's dental office.² It has since been converted to an apartment. A small cellar, or basement, is located under this wing.

Most of the interior alterations appear to have taken place in the 1930s. The only major changes were to the doors of the house. The original front door on the first floor (as shown in the 1923 photo) was completely removed and replaced with two French doors to enable each tenant to enter their own apartment separately. One door leads to the staircase and the other opens into what remains of the hallway. The partition wall that divided the hall from the parlor has been removed, as indicated by a paneled joist and a seam on the north parlor wall. French doors were added throughout the house, and the two bedrooms upstairs were each given double French doors. The front bedroom has folding French doors while the rear bedroom does not.

The woodwork in the house is extensive and the entire first floor has a painted wainscoting. The wainscoting in the room below the staircase has boards wider than the narrow beaded board which is found in the rest of the house. This beaded board wainscoting also runs up the staircase and around the hall and bathroom on the second floor. The front bedroom is made up entirely of beaded board. There are two mantels in the house, both on the first floor. The plain parlor mantel with a mirror is purported to be original, while the stained oak mantel in the dining room is said to have been added. However, it is very similar to the parlor mantel and may also be original. Other original features are the turned corner beads in the corners of the bedrooms and second floor hall ceiling, and the balustrade around the stairwell on the second floor.

The only outbuilding on the site is the large frame two-story garage apartment. The first story is an open double garage with a screened patio at the rear, while the second story is living quarters. The door to the apartment is reached by an outdoor staircase with a balustrade that appears to be identical to the one found on the front of the Blackwell house in 1923. In 1953 an addition was placed at the rear to create a family room for the apartment and the screened patio below.³

FOOTNOTES

¹ Interview: Hickman by Barr, Live Oak, FL, October 29, 1980.

² Letter: Johnson to Crapps, October 1980.

³ Interview: Hickman by Barr, Live Oak, FL, October 29, 1980.

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In May of 1910 a Tampa contractor moved the Blackwell House back one lot and turned it to face Parshley Street.¹⁶ Construction of the new post office was not begun until 1916.¹⁷

The Blackwell House was occupied by tenants until 1923 when Dr. Ernest Weldon and his wife, Mildred Smithson Weldon, moved into it. Mildred was given \$3750 to buy the house as her 24th birthday present by her father Gelon B. Smithson, a physician in the town of Wellburn and president of the Wellburn Bank.¹⁸ Dr. Weldon operated his dental practice in Live Oak until 1932 when the Weldons moved to Lake City.¹⁹ It was during this time that changes were made to the house although the interior remained basically unaltered. The house was converted to a duplex and, after their return from Lake City around 1937, a small wing was added on the house's west side for Dr. Weldon's dental office. The garage apartment was built in the late 1930s and the kitchen wing converted to an apartment during the same period.²⁰ Mrs. Weldon moved out of the house after her marriage to Walter Johnson in the early 1960s.²¹ In 1977 she sold the house to Jasper banker John Crapps who lived in Live Oak. Mr. Crapps sold the Blackwell house in 1982 to a Clearwater physician Dr. Robert L. Wells who plans to restore the house and make it his home. This continues the tradition of the house being owned solely by bankers, attorneys and doctors.

FOOTNOTES

¹Warranty Deed, Nancy Parshley to B.B. Blackwell, February 11, 1886, Deedbook J p. 43, Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak.

²Senate Journal: A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the First Legislature of the State of Florida Held Under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention in 1885. (Tallahassee N.M. Bowden State Printer, 1887) pp. 11-14; The Jasper News, December 20, 1901; Interview: Hickman by Barr, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.

³The Sanborn Map Company, Map of Live Oak, Florida, 1903; The Sanborn Map Company, Map of Live Oak, Florida, 1906.

⁴W.T. Cash, The Story of Florida, Vol. 4 (New York: American Historical Society, 1938), p. 503; The Jasper News, December 20, 1901.

⁵Assembly Journal: A Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida of the Twelfth Session of the Legislature. (Tallahassee: Charles E. Dyke, State Printer, 1883), p. 3; Senate Journal, pp. 11-14; Allen Morris, ed.; The People of Law Making in Florida 1822-1879 (Tallahassee, Florida: Florida House of Representatives, 1979).

⁶The Jasper News, October 23, 1891.

⁷Ibid., November 3, 1893; November 10, 1893; June 25, 1895.

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⁸W.T. Cash, p. 503; Harry G. Cutler, History of Florida: Past and Present, Vol. 3 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1923), pp. 228-229.

⁹The Jasper News, February 17, 1899; The Suwannee Democrat, February 18, 1899.

¹⁰Warranty Deed, B.B. and Ella Blackwell to William S. Airth, February 10, 1894, Deedbook P, p. 491, Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, Florida.

¹¹Medical License, William S. Airth, July 9, 1890, Deedbook N, p. 475, Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, Florida.

¹²Proceedings of the Florida Medical Association Session of 1893 (Jacksonville: The Garret Printing Co., 1893), p. 32.

¹³The Suwannee Democrat, October 18, 1895; November 20, 1897.

¹⁴The Jacksonville Florida Times Union, July 1, 1900.

¹⁵Warranty Deed, Nellie Airth to the United States Government, March 16, 1910, Deedbook GG, p. 548; Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, Florida.

¹⁶The Suwannee Democrat, May 13, 1910.

¹⁷Photographs taken by the United States Government of the construction work on the new post office, dated January 1916.

¹⁸Letter: Johnson to Crapps, in possession of John Crapps, Live Oak, Florida, October 1980.

¹⁹Interview: Hickman by Barr, October 29, 1980.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.; North Florida Telephone Co., Live Oak Telephone Directory (Live Oak, 1961); Live Oak Telephone Directory (Live Oak, 1966).

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Books

- Cash, W.T., The Story of Florida, Vols. 3 and 4. New York: American Historical Society, 1938.
- Cutler, Harry G., History of Florida Past and Present, Vol. 3. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1923.
- Dovell, Junius, Florida: Historic, Dramatic and Contemporary, Family and Personal History, Vol. 3. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co.
- Gray, R.A., My Story: Fifty Years in the Shadow of the Near Great, n.p., 1959.
- Morris, Allen, ed., The People of Law Making in Florida, 1822-1879. Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 1979.
- North Florida Telephone Co., Live Oak Telephone Directories. Live Oak: 1949-1977.
- Polk, R.L., ed., Polk's Live Oak and Suwannee County City Directory, 1926-1927. Richmond, Virginia: R.L. Polk, 1926.
- Suwannee County Centennial, Live Oak: The Suwannee Democrat, 1958.

Interviews

- Airth, Aldred by Melanie Barr. Interview, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.
- Henry, J.D. by Melanie Barr. Interview, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.
- Hickman, Mary L. by Melanie Barr. Interview, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.
- Leech, Henry by Melanie Barr. Interview, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.
- Rees, Herbert by Melanie Barr. Interview, Live Oak, Florida, October 29, 1980.

Journals

- Proceedings of the Florida Medical Association Session of 1893. Jacksonville, FL: The Garret Printing Co.

Maps

- The Sanborn Map Company. Sanborn Maps of Live Oak, Florida: 1903, 1906, 1912, and 1924 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1903, 1906, 1912, and 1924).

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Newspapers

The Jasper News, September 18, 1891; October 23, 1891; February 7, 1896; November 3, 1893; November 10, 1893; November 17, 1893; July 6, 1894; August 7, 1894; December 2, 1894; June 28, 1894; February 17, 1899; December 20, 1901.

The Suwannee Democrat, October 18, 1895; November 20, 1897; February 18, 1899; December 20, 1907; February 15, 1909; February 26, 1909; January 28, 1910; March 11, 1910; December 16, 1910.

Official Records

Assembly Journal: A Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida at the Twelfth Session of the Legislature. Tallahassee: Charles E. Dyke State Printer, 1883.

Senate Journal: A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the First Legislature of the State of Florida held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Tallahassee: N.M. Bowen, State Printer, 1887.

Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, FL. Warranty Deed, Nancy Parshley to Bishop B. Blackwell, Deedbook J, p. 43. February 11, 1886.

Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, FL. Medical License, William Airth, Deedbook N, p. 475. July 9, 1890.

Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, FL. Warranty Deed, B.B. and Ella Blackwell to William S. Airth, Deedbook P, p. 491. February 10, 1894.

Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, FL. Nellie Airth to the United States Government, Deedbook GG, p. 548. March 16, 1910.

Suwannee County Courthouse, Live Oak, FL. Nellie Airth to Mildred Weldon, Deedbook G, p. 76. January 2, 1923.

Unpublished Documents

Letter: Mildred W. Johnson to John Crapps. Letter in possession of Crapps, Live Oak, Florida, October, 1980.

Suwannee County Chamber of Commerce, Brief Facts on Live Oak and Suwannee County, FL. Live Oak: 1965 (typewritten).

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Begin at a point on the North side of Parshley Street 132 feet West of the West side of Ohio Avenue and thence run Northward, parallel with Ohio Avenue, 133 feet; thence Westward, parallel with Parshley Street, 78 feet; thence Southward, parallel with Ohio Avenue, 133 feet to Parshley Street; thence Eastward, along the North edge of Parshley Street, 78 feet to point of beginning; said lot being in the South end of Block "I" in City of Live Oak, Florida, in Section 23, Township 2 South, Range 13 East; AND

Begin at a point 133 feet Northward from the North side of Parshley Street and 90 feet Eastward from the East side of Pine Street in the City of Live Oak and in Block "I", running Northward, parallel with Pine Street, 47 feet; thence Eastward, parallel with Parshley Street, 55 feet; thence Southward, parallel with Pine Street, 47 feet; thence Westward, parallel with Parshley Street, 55 feet to the point of beginning; in Section 23, Township 2 South, Range 13 East.

SAID PARCELS BEING SOMETIMES DESCRIBED AS: Lot 19 and the East 55 feet of Lot 17, Block I, of the City of Live Oak, according to the plat prepared by Geo. G. Ehrenborg Co. and appearing of record in the office of the Tax Assessor in and for Suwannee County, Florida.