

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **AUG 2 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Bona Allen House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 395 Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Buford N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Gwinnett code 135

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Larry R. Bailey

street & number 400 North Avenue

city, town Buford N/A vicinity of state GA 30518

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Gwinnett County Courthouse

city, town Lawrenceville state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey: Gwinnett County, GA has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, GA Dept. of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state GA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bona Allen House is a two story, brick house built in the Italian Villa Style with a red-tile roof and a side porch. It has a varied array of outbuildings on landscaped grounds.

The house is built of cream or tan colored brick with a three-arched entrance in front that leads through the porch to the main foyer. Exterior details include an elaborate roof overhang supported by brackets resting on a granite string course, granite sills under the windows, and exterior granite steps. The front windows are flanked by original trellises. There are two tall, plain chimneys, one on either end of the main block of the house, and two other plain ones on the kitchen wing. The interior of the first floor consists of a foyer off of which open several large rooms. Off of these are several other rooms. A library and dining room are to the left of the foyer and a more formal dining room and smoking room are located off of these. To the right of the foyer is a bedroom suite. Behind the foyer at the rear of the house is the kitchen, a porch, and the formal stairs leading to the second floor. There is an interior balcony created by the stairs on the second floor overlooking the foyer. Floors throughout are of oak. There is a stained glass window at the landing of the stairs. The wall facing the entrance door is covered with a large scenic painting hung over a large fireplace and mantel. The foyer also includes a bust of Bona Allen, Jr. Large oak paneled doors lead from the foyer to the library. The library has leaded glass bookcases, a large fireplace, natural oak paneling, and heavy oak dentil moulding. The dining room and its mantel are painted; the mantel is more Neo-Classical in style than the oak ones in other rooms. The second floor consists of a central stairhall with surrounding bedrooms and their auxiliary rooms and porches. The stairhall has Corinthian columns supporting the entablature over the foyer/stairway, oak wainscoting, and natural wood trim around the doorways. Some of the bathrooms retain their original fixtures. The house retains its original coal operated boiler system, now converted to gas, and has five large ceiling fans. Except for bathroom modernization, no major changes have been made to the house.

The grounds around the house include over 100 magnolia and oak trees. There are wrought iron gates at the three entrances to the property and brick walkways throughout the property. There are five garden terraces behind the house. The property also includes a number of historic outbuildings. Close to the house is a brick well house with a pyramidal roof. The area directly behind the main house is square shaped with a carriage house at the far end. Within this driveway-encircled area are found a one story brick smokehouse, a one story cookhouse with red tile roof and columned porch, a one story root cellar, and a rectangular one story brick carriage house with a red-tile roof, double garage entrances, and a historic gas pump. North of this area are the terraced gardens and a frame one story gardener's house. Built in 1933, the gardener's house has four rooms and arched front doors and windows. To the south of the main outbuilding area is a small, one story frame flower house with large glass panes for light. The main house sits perpendicular to Main Street in Buford, befitting the original owner's social position as the "number one" citizen of the town, directly across from homes of his near relatives, and only a few blocks from his still-existing tannery and other factories. The house's semi-rural setting and large expanse of land tend to dilute the effect of its actually being at the end of a downtown commercial area adjacent to a major highway and railroad track.

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 checked="" 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/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1911-1912 **Builder/Architect** Haralson Bleckley, Architect
T.C. Wesley and Sons, Contractors

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bona Allen House is significant in architecture and commercial history. Architecturally, the house is significant as an outstanding example of an Italian Villa Style home in Georgia and as a work of the renowned Atlanta architect Haralson Bleckley. Important stylistic elements of the house include the use of cream or tan colored brick (also characteristic of many of Bleckley's other works), red tile for the roof that is reminiscent of Italian villas, the entrance foyer and open balcony that create a great hall with large fireplace, and classical details. It is also significant for the large number of surviving outbuildings that were built with the house. Very few homes of this era have surviving outbuildings and very few as intact as these. As a work of Haralson Bleckley (1870-1933), the house is an even rarer commodity as few of his works have survived. He is best known for his Bleckley Plaza Plan for downtown Atlanta, a cause he pursued from 1909 until his death. He received some major public commissions, including that for the State Agricultural and Mechanical School System in 1904-5. His best known house to date is "The Crescent" in Valdosta, which he designed in 1899 with Harry Nelson Tyler. Thus the Bona Allen House stands as a major monument to the individual skills of Bleckley, who trained in Europe and was a major proponent of art and architecture in Atlanta during the period this house was built. He was serving as president of Georgia's only chapter of the American Institute of Architects at the time this house was completed. In commercial history, the house is significant as the home of Bona Allen, Sr. (1846-1925), a Civil War veteran who moved to Buford in 1873 and established a tannery that became the town's major industry. The company that grew out of this venture eventually included, besides the tannery, the production of horse collars, harnesses, saddles, glue and shoes. He became known as the "first citizen" of the county. His business success was attributed to his "ideal" or series of rules of conduct by which he ran his operation. The business was operated by three of his sons after his death in 1925. The house became the home of Bona Allen, Jr. (1877-1964), until his death.

These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Historical Narrative

(prepared by Dianne M. Frix)

Mr. Bona Allen, Sr. (1846-1925), a native of Dacula in Gwinnett County, came to Buford, Georgia, around 1873, and opened up a small tannery business. His was the first real industry to come to Buford. His tannery was later expanded to include a horse collar factory, harness factory, saddle factory, glue factory and shoe factory, which provided employment for about 2,500 people in the bleakest of the Hoover years. He had a reputation for fair play in business dealings and humane treatment of employees. He was married in 1866 to Louisa Jane Stanley, whom he relied upon in his business matters.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 7.5
Quadrangle name Hog Mountain, GA and Suwanee, GA Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>776680</u>	<u>3779750</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of an intact portion of acreage historically associated with the house and that contains all the known structural and landscape improvements thereon. It is marked on the enclosed Site Plan/Plat Map.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section date July 27, 1983
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

street & number 270 Washington St. telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

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 Elizabeth A. Lyon

Elizabeth A. Lyon date 7/27/83

title State Historic Preservation Officer

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

John A. Brown Entered in the date 9/1/83
Keeper of the National Register National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Bona Allen House Item number 8 Page 1

They had six children. Upon her death in 1918, he married her youngest sister, Bettie Stanley. Mr. Allen was described as a very erect, upright, athletic person, whose firm chin and deep-set eyes conveyed fierce pride and intense determination. He was also very fond of horses.

The Allen mansion was built in 1911-12 by Bona Allen, Sr.'s sons for their father. The home is outstanding in workmanship, craftsmanship, architecture, and design. One interesting fact about the construction of the home is that it was constructed so that the center of the home looks directly down Main Street. One person interviewed stated that at the time the home was constructed, Main Street was a narrow dirt road, but it was still built so they could see the center of Main Street. Haralson Bleckley was the architect and T.C. Wesley & Sons was the contractor.

Bona Allen, Sr., was regarded as the first citizen of the county and its most successful, powerful business man. In addition to his industries which provided him with vast wealth and prestige, he owned large tracts of real estate and other investments. At one time, he owned about 75% of the City of Buford.

After Mr. Allen's death in 1925, his son Bona Allen, Jr., purchased the other children's interest in the mansion shortly after Bona Sr.'s second wife disclaimed her life interest in the property. Bona Jr., was described as a slender, fashionplate of a man who had acquired large holdings in real estate and other investments in his own right, in addition to being a main heir in his father's estate. Besides the Allen mansion and other property in this county, he owned 13,000 acres in Florida. He was named president of Bona Allen, Inc. after his father's death and was active in its management until his death. He was described as the son most like his father with a very lovable character, deeply emotional and somewhat of a dreamer.

It was often said that Bona Jr. held many lively parties in the mansion together with other social functions.

He was also known for his generosity to the City of Buford. Bona Allen, Inc. donated land to Buford's two high schools and built the gymnasium at the Greenard-Watson School. The site of the Buford General Hospital was also contributed by the company. They also donated 10 acres for a Catholic Church and property for a library.

Bona Allen, Jr., did not have any children and left the bulk of his estate to his nieces and nephews at his death in 1964. In his will he bequeathed the homeplace to the City of Buford "for the purpose of establishing a public playground and recreation and cultural center for the citizens of Buford, Georgia." For reasons unknown, the City of Buford quitclaimed their interest in this property, and it reverted to Bona Allen, Inc.

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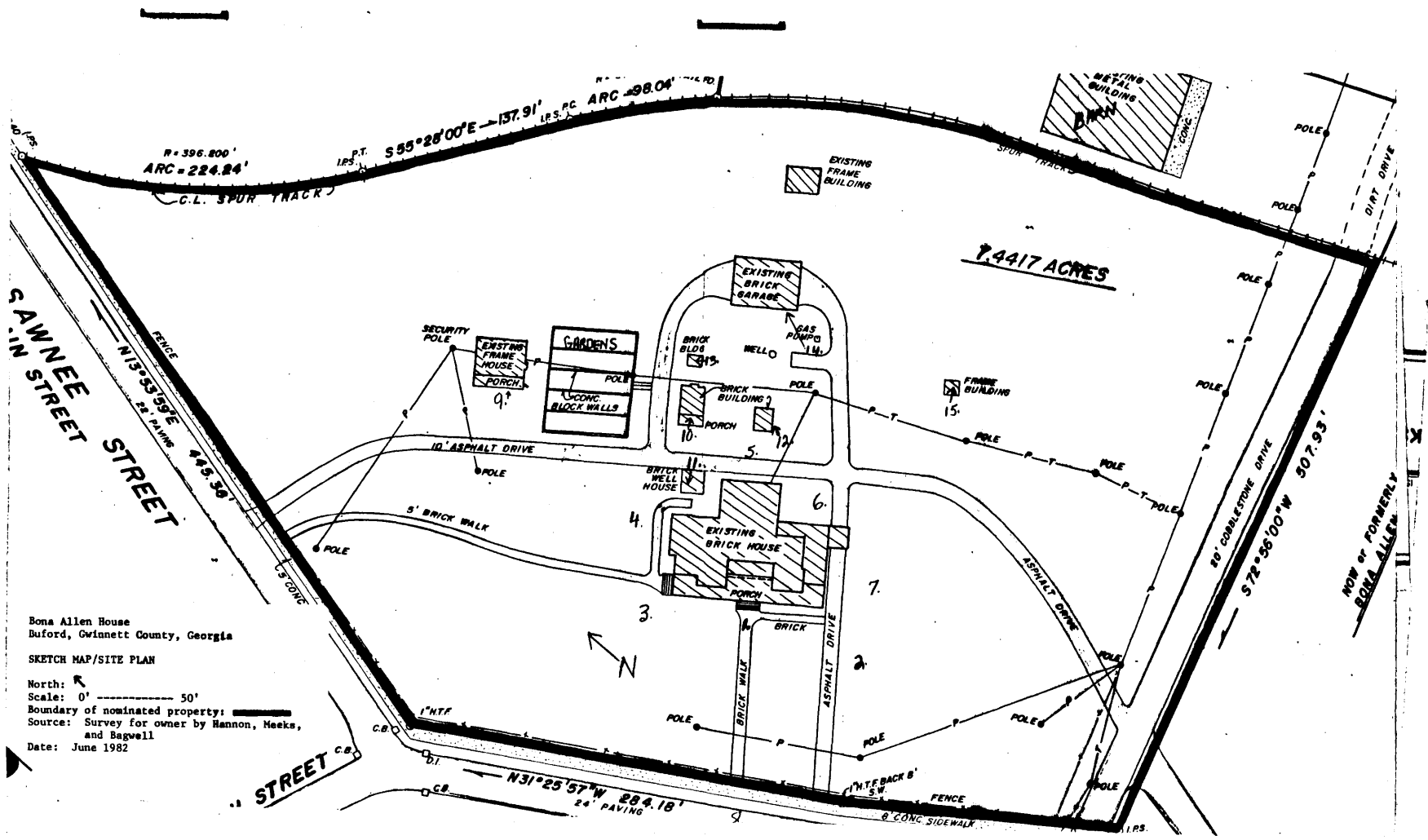
Continuation sheet Bona Allen House Item number 9 Page 1

Bleckley, Haralson, Architectural File, located in Historic Preservation Section Files.

Frix, Dianne M., "Historic Property Information Form", 1982 based on county history, interviews, county records, newspaper clippings, etc.



Wilson, John A., "America's Outstanding Tanneries: Bona Allen, Inc.", Hide and Leather, August 21, 1937.

Bona Allen, Inc. Centennial Publication, 1873-1973.



Bona Allen House
 Buford, Gwinnett County, Georgia

SKETCH MAP/SITE PLAN

North: 
 Scale: 0' = 50'
 Boundary of nominated property: 
 Source: Survey for owner by Hannon, Meeks,
 and Bagwell
 Date: June 1982