

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter

Other names/site number: "The Little Brick"

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 20416 Alabama Highway 20

City or town: Courtland State: Alabama County: Lawrence

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C X D

Richard L. Ambrose Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer 21 May 2013

Signature of certifying official/Title: Date

Alabama Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

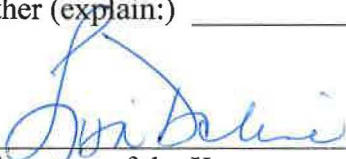
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

7/10/13
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Double Pen _____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter is a brick, gable roofed building comprised of two rooms. Its front façade punctuated by two original doorways (but no windows) faces north towards Alabama Highway 20. The small house occupies a low swell of ground just west of the entrance to the 230 acre Mallard Fox West Industrial Complex. The main plantation house associated with this dependency stood some 75 feet to the northeast on a low knoll. That house was demolished in the 1950s for the widening of the highway. Until the spring of 2011, a cluster of old cedars and crepe myrtle remained approximately thirty feet north of the structure, clearly remnants of 19th or early 20th-century plantings. These were destroyed by the storm which struck the area on April 27, 2011. Some ten feet west of the dwelling are traces of an early farm road which led to the cotton fields that once lay to the south. To the rear of the structure is a concrete-lined cistern, now filled in with debris. The building is in its original location. It retains its architectural integrity, despite some later alterations which are discussed below. It is the only extant resource associated with the Boxwood Plantation. The former plantation lands surrounding this outbuilding are being developed as an industrial park.

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Narrative Description

The Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter is a two-room brick, gabled rectangular structure facing north and measuring altogether approximately 37'-5" x 19'-4" [photo 1]. A chimney with stepped weatherings abuts each end of the dwelling. The brick walls themselves – the brick is reputed to have been “slave-made” – measure eleven inches in thickness and are laid in a rough common bond atop a shallow, stepped-corbel footing sunk less than a foot below grade. Here and there are traces of rough-cut limestone which was also incorporated into the foundation.

The front (north) elevation [photo 2] is punctuated by two doors (no windows), each door opening into a single room measuring seventeen-and-a-half feet square. Originally there were corresponding windows punctuating the rear (south) elevation. These, however, were converted to doorways [photo 3] when the structure was enlarged around 1960. Some time prior to 1960, the two rooms, originally accessible only from the outside, were connected by cutting a segmental-arched opening [photo 5] through the brick partition wall that separated them. And at an undetermined date, another window was cut into the west wall, to the south of the chimney.

Each room has a ceiling height of eight-and-a-half feet. Much of the original wall, floor, and ceiling surfaces are now concealed beneath later material – variously plaster (applied directly onto the brick) and wallboard. Since the brickwork itself is rough and porous, it appears that the present 20th-century plaster was applied to smooth and stabilize the walls. At this juncture in the investigation of the building, it is unclear whether the original walls were plastered or whether the brick was left exposed and perhaps whitewashed. The floors appear to have consisted from the beginning of heavy wooden joists overlaid with floorboards. Each room was heated by a single fireplace opening. In the west room [photo 6] an early (though not original) mantelpiece survives. The long-sealed fireplace opening in the east room [photo 4] has recently been re-opened and internally stabilized.

The roof framing visible in the attic area displays “false” or “raised-plate” construction, whereby the downward-sloping roof rafters are received by a lateral wooden plate, rather than being joined directly to the wooden ceiling joists beneath. The roof rafters rise from a lateral plate atop both the north and south walls of the house, and are lap-jointed and doweled at the ridge in a construction technique that dispenses with a ridge pole. These rafters were originally overlain with “skip decking” (that is, spaced decking which allows a roof covering to “breathe” – an important consideration when, as in this case, the original roof covering was very likely wooden shakes). The present metal roof covering may date from the early 20th century.

In the 1960s, the original structure was enlarged by the addition of a one-room gabled extension at the west front, abutted on the east side by a small wrought-iron porch, thus creating an asymmetrical façade which concealed the original character of the structure. About the same time, a shed extension was added across the rear, containing two rooms with a bath between. The original brick walls and wooden cornices above were also covered with synthetic siding,

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leaving only the two brick end chimneys exposed. These were, at some time in the past, covered with stucco – no doubt to mitigate the porosity of the original brick.

As part of a stabilization and reclamation effort commenced in early 2011, all the later additions have been removed, revealing the original two-room building. Long-range plans call for restoration of the exterior.

Behind the quarters is a concrete-lined, brick cistern. Its construction date has not been determined, despite extensive research. It is not believed to date from the period of significance and, in any event, has lost integrity due to its interior, concrete coating. It is a noncontributing resource.

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.)

- 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
-

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F. A commemorative property

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Archaeology

Period of Significance

c.1854-1865

Significant Dates

c. 1854

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

African-American

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter has statewide significance under **Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: Black** and **Criterion C: Architecture** as one of the very few extant slave quarters remaining in Alabama. It is also a rare surviving example in Alabama of raised plate construction which is an architectural vestige of the Chesapeake area. Boxwood's period of significance extends from c. 1854, its construction date, to 1865, the year that slavery ended with the Union victory in the Civil War.

The area immediately surrounding the Boxwood Slave Quarter is locally significant under **Criterion D: Archaeology**. While no formal archaeological survey has been made of this property, the potential for subsurface remains is high. Archaeological testing in front of a contemporaneous slave house at the nearby Pond Spring plantation, for example, has yielded significant material culture remains that have yielded significant information useful in interpreting the site.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: Black

On the eve of the Civil War approximately four million slaves lived on plantations across the American South—nearly half a million in Alabama alone. The field hands generally lived in log or rudely constructed frame houses grouped together near the plantation's agricultural or "crop" lands. Domestic servants on the other hand often occupied more solidly built quarters closer to the plantation "big house"—typically a short distance to the rear or side. The location not only facilitated access to the planter's family, but also denoted the middling status usually accorded the domestic staff.

Housing for the 92 enslaved African-Americans who in 1860 worked Samuel Elliott's Boxwood plantation adhered to this pattern. The log and frame quarters of the field workers lay south of the main house, closer to the cotton fields themselves. Domestic servants—which on larger plantations like Boxwood might include a cook, laundress, maid, gardener and even a butler—are believed to have occupied the two-room brick quarter which is today the only structural evidence of the plantation. Facing north toward the site of the main dwelling some 75 feet away, the house adheres to the traditional plan for a two-unit servant house: a pair of front doors opening into two large side-by-side rooms with no internal access. Originally a single window, positioned opposite each door, illuminated each room. Oral tradition in the Neville family, who

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purchased the plantation from its original owners in 1907, dates the structure to 1854 and says the bricks themselves were slave-made. Masonry construction was the rare exception in slave housing. Ironically, however, the resulting durability has meant that proportionately more masonry than non-masonry examples of slave housing have survived.

Criterion C: Architecture

A variety of dependent structures—servants' quarters, kitchen, smokehouse, dairy, laundry house, barns, stables, sometimes a plantation "office," and so on—were a vital component of the typical southern plantation. In fact, early observers often commented on the brood of outbuildings that inevitably clustered about the plantation "big house." Today, however, such buildings have all but disappeared from the Alabama landscape. Even where a plantation house survives, its dependent structures have usually been lost. Conversely, in a few instances an outbuilding or group of outbuildings is all that remains of a notable plantation. The Boxwood dependency, believed to have originally housed the domestics who served the main house, is the last architectural reminder of one of the Tennessee Valley's notable estates. Its significance is heightened as a surviving example of a rare brick dependency and servants' quarter as opposed to much more common frame or log construction.

Of the housing stock that sheltered Alabama's 435,000 enslaved African-Americans in 1860, virtually nothing remains today, especially in those rural areas of the state once given over to large-scale plantation agriculture. The quarters for the field slaves usually were of log or, to a lesser extent, frame construction and most were so poorly built that they rarely survived even into the 20th century. John Finnely, a former Alabama slave, recalled in the 1930s that "Us have cabins of logs with one room and one door and one window hole."

The quarters built for the domestic servants, on the other hand, might be fashioned of better and more expensive materials such as brick. These dwellings usually consisted of either one or two large rooms. According to architectural historian John Michael Vlach, the double pen, typically a saddlebag, was the most popular building typology. He contends that, "The most common type of Big House quarter during the late antebellum period was a two-room structure that usually had its fireplace and chimney centrally located between the two rooms . . . This 'saddlebag' configuration was common all across the South, although occasionally the fireplaces were placed at the gable ends . . . That two separate slave families were likely to be housed in these double-pen buildings is indicated by the presence of two front doors, one for each half of the house." As an end-chimneyed example of this type of structure, the Boxwood quarter had its counterpart in the now-destroyed servants quarters documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey at Rocky Hill, Lawrence County's largest plantation house some twelve miles to the west.

The Boxwood dependency is one of eight known or suspected brick plantation quarters left in Alabama [1]. Today, it comprises the only tangible architectural reminder of any of the large cotton plantations that once existed in the fertile Hillsboro-Trinity district south of the Tennessee River, in northwestern Morgan and northeastern Lawrence counties [2]. Oral tradition in the Neville family, long identified with Boxwood plantation, dates the structure to 1854. This would coincide with the approximate date of the two-story brick main residence which stood about 75

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feet north/northeast [3]. In the late 1950s, the plantation house itself was destroyed along with the knoll on which it stood for the widening of Alabama Highway 20.

The Boxwood Slave Quarter is also architecturally significant for its raised plate (also called “false plate”) construction (described on p. 7.5). The only other local example of this roof framing configuration occurred at the nearby Murphey House, c. 1818, a National Register structure that was destroyed in the tornado of April 27, 2011. This “folk” framework-assembly technique is one of the indicators of the socio-cultural linkage between the inland and Gulf South and the southern Atlantic seaboard, specifically the greater Chesapeake area, from which came many early planters and artisans alike—including enslaved craftsmen. Unfortunately, the craftsmen working in this area during the early and mid-19th century remain nameless.

NOTES

[1] Other brick plantation quarters in Alabama identified by comprehensive survey work to date include: **Barton Hall** (Armistead Barton plantation, NHL, HABS), in Colbert County; **Sweetwater** (Robert Patton plantation, NR, HABS) in Lauderdale County; **Belle Mina** (Thomas Bibb plantation, NR, HABS) in Limestone County; **Willow Glen** (Allen Curry plantation), Talladega County; **Balsora** (Jacob Givhan Plantation), Dallas County; **Oakchia** (Boykin plantation), Choctaw County; **Kenworthy Hall** (Edward Carlisle plantation, NHL, HABS), Perry County; and the **Lewis Alexander plantation** (HABS), in Macon County.

The now-destroyed brick quarters of James Edmonds Saunders’s Rocky Hill plantation is partially visible in a 1935 HABS photo. Like the quarter at Boxwood, it was a two-room brick structure, though with additional half-story rooms. The two-room formula with matching exterior doorways recurs again and again in plantation quarters from Maryland and Virginia, across both the upper and lower south, as far west as Missouri. (See for example Doughoregan Manor, Howard County MD; Berry Hill, Halifax County VA; and Sappington Plantation, Saline County MO).

[2] Other area plantations, architectural vestiges of which existed until at least the 1950s, were that of Dr. William T. Minor (1836) and Dr. William E. Murphey (circa 1818), near Trinity; the “Forest Home” plantation of Ann Fennel Davis (1856), also near Trinity; and the “Dixie” plantation of Capt. Charles C. Swoope as well as the Thomas Holland plantation, both near Hillsboro. These were at that time the last of several other estates that once existed in this area. All have since been destroyed, along with the main residence at Boxwood. Both the “Forest Home” complex and the William Murphey house survived long enough to be listed on the National Register, however Forest Home burned in the 1990s and the partially-restored Murphey house was leveled by a tornado on April 27, 2011.

[3] Note in the papers of the late Eloise Neville Parks, granddaughter of William Vinkley Neville, who purchased Boxwood in the early 1900s from the Elliott family. Papers today in possession of Mrs. Parks’ niece, Susan Basden, of Decatur, Alabama.

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Criterion D: Archaeology

The Boxwood Slave Quarter is locally significant under National Register criterion D: Archaeology. While no formal archaeological survey has been made of this property, the potential for subsurface remains is high. There is the potential that archaeological remains associated with this dwelling may provide information about both domestic and agricultural activities on the former Boxwood Plantation. This is particularly important since the plantation site has lost a great deal of integrity over the last several decades. No other historic buildings or structures associated with the plantation are extant. Additionally, there has been extensive ground disturbance due to the widening of AL Highway 20 and the more recent development of an industrial park on the plantation site.

Narrative History

Soon after the War of 1812, incoming settlers from Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia to the east, and Tennessee and Kentucky to the north, began taking up the fertile cotton lands in the "Great Bend" of the Tennessee River, in what would a few years later become northern Alabama. Among the choicest of these tracts were the alluvial lands stretching westward for some sixty miles along the south bank of the Tennessee, from present-day Decatur to within a few miles of the boundary with the state of Mississippi. Official Federal land sales did not begin until 1818, but eager land speculators, aspiring planters, and "squatters" alike had already begun to impinge on the native Chickasaws, crowding them relentlessly off their ancestral domain.

Over the next two decades, a slave-based plantation culture rapidly developed and would flourish until the Civil War. After the War and Emancipation, tenant farming and sharecropping enabled a semblance of this culture to survive for another century. Beginning as early as the 1920s, however, and accelerating after World War Two, profound socioeconomic changes – the coming of the Tennessee Valley Authority, gradual industrialization, and pell-mell urbanization -- would radically alter both the landscape and an agrarian way of life.

U.S. government land records reveal that Thomas Bibb, Alabama's second governor, acquired the future site of Boxwood plantation at the federal land sales of 1818. Bibb's purchase was probably a speculative venture, since he had taken title to other holdings elsewhere in the Tennessee Valley, and was at this time developing his own princely plantation seat, "Belle Mina," across the river in neighboring Limestone County. In any event, the tract – identified as the north portion of Section 12, Township 5 South, Range 6 West--returned to federal ownership within the next eleven years under the provisions of an 1828 Congressional Act "for the relief of purchasers of public lands that have reverted for non-payment of the purchase money." Thus in 1831, the northeast quarter of the same tract, comprising 160 acres, was again purchased from the United States government by Kentucky-born Edward Rice Harvey, who would linger in Alabama only a few years before succumbing, like countless other antebellum southerners, to the allure of Texas. The following year, the northwest quarter of the same section twelve was bought by Peyton Harrison Lile. Born in North Carolina to parents who had come from Tidewater Virginia, Lile represented a leading pioneer family of the Decatur area. It was the Lile parcel, combined with the Harvey tract to the east, that became the nucleus of Boxwood plantation in the mid-1840s after passing into the ownership of Samuel Elliott. Under Elliott,

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Boxwood would flourish in the 1850s as one of the outstanding country estates south of the Tennessee River, between Decatur and Tuscumbia.

Samuel Elliott (1809-1870) was born in Middle Tennessee's Wilson County, along the Cumberland River just east of Nashville. After purchasing land in what was still the Alabama territory in the fall of 1818, Elliott's father -- likewise named Samuel Elliott -- brought his family south to the Tennessee River Valley. The choice 240-acre tract lay in northeast Lawrence County, some three miles west of his son's future Boxwood place. The elder Elliott's household appears in the Lawrence County census of 1820: Elliott and his wife, along with five children -- most destined, it seems, to die in early childhood. The census discloses that Elliott was also the owner of six slaves.

Born in County Antrim, Ulster, according to his much-damaged tombstone, the elder Samuel Elliott may have been among those Protestant Irish emigres -- of which there were a number in the Tennessee Valley -- who made their way to America in the 1780s and 1790s, and rose to prominence on the Old Southwestern frontier. After settling in Alabama, he continued to expand his holdings in both land and enslaved workers over the next two decades, possessing thirty-three slaves by 1830 and, by 1838, over a thousand acres of land.

At the elder Samuel's death in 1844, his thirty-five year old son and namesake inherited much if not all of his father's estate (unfortunately, no testamentary papers have surfaced from county court records). Five years later, county tax assessment records indicate that Samuel Elliott owned 2,120 acres including the 480-acre tract by then identified as "Boxwood." At the same time, the tax assessor enumerated 46 enslaved men, women, and children by age and name, including an enslaved blacksmith -- "Ned" -- whose value as a skilled craftsman was put at \$1,000. The 1850 census a year later listed Elliott with 55 slaves, a number which had nearly doubled ten years later, in 1860, to ninety-two. This placed Samuel Elliott among the dozen largest slaveholders in Lawrence County (Richard Prewitt of Oaks Plantation was the largest, with 207 bondspeople). His "real property" -- land and buildings -- was valued at \$36,000, far above the average agriculturalist in the county and nearly a million dollars in today's currency. In 1858, Elliott's exemplary husbandry earned Boxwood a "First Premium" under the category "Plantations" at the North Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical Fair.

Having lost his first wife, leaving him with two young children, Samuel Elliott married Elizabeth Pearsall in the mid-1840s. Born in 1821, she was the daughter of another prominent Tennessee Valley planter, Edward Pearsall (1785-1853) of Pond Creek plantation in neighboring Franklin (now Colbert) County. Colonel James Edmonds Saunders (1806-1896), who personally knew the Pearsalls, would recall them in his Early Settlers of Alabama as "good Presbyterian people, cultivated, refined and hospitable" -- describing Elizabeth's grandfather, Jeremiah Pearsall, in particular, as one who "not only squared his conduct by the law, but by the golden rule." From eastern North Carolina, near Wilmington, the Pearsalls had come to Alabama the same year of Elizabeth's birth after a brief sojourn -- as with the Elliots -- in Middle Tennessee. Between 1848 and 1860, Elizabeth Pearsall Elliott would bear seven children, four of whom would live to adulthood. These, together with their parents and older step-siblings, would comprise the Elliott household.

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Like other large plantations, Boxwood consisted of a scattering of structures variously used for domestic purposes and farm-related activities. Both physical architectural evidence and oral tradition suggest that the brick dependency and the now-vanished plantation "big house" it served date from the mid-1850s. Mary Wallace Kirk of Tuscumbia, an Elliott cousin who remembered Boxwood prior to 1900, would recall that there were additional brick outbuildings on the place. But these had disappeared by the mid-20th century. The main residence and its dependency, now the sole surviving structure from the complex, faced north toward the Decatur-to-Tuscumbia road, while to the south, bordering the east-west line of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, lay the barns, stables, and cotton storage houses, plus the crude log and frame quarters which housed the field workers or "hands."

In overall form the Elliott residence at Boxwood resembled several other plantation houses in the area: that is, a main block of "I" configuration (two stories high, one room deep) with a wing or "ell" to the rear. [Note: Nearby examples, all now destroyed, included the 1836 residence of Dr. William T. and Frances Washington Minor -- burned about 1970; Walnut Grove, the residence of James Fennel, likewise built in the 1830s and razed in the early 1900s; and neighboring Forest Home, constructed in 1856 by Fennel's widow, Mary Curtis King Fennel, for a daughter, Ann, and her husband, the Rev. Absalom Davis. Listed on the National Register, Forest Home fell victim to arson in 1992.]

Unlike its counterparts, however, Boxwood was of brick rather than frame construction. And departing from the predictable neoclassical detailing that distinguished the other houses, Boxwood's facade was given a "Gothic" demeanor by tall, pointed sash windows with stone sills, centering upon a Tudoresque main doorway with narrow sidelights and overhead transom. This unusual "Gothicizing" treatment of an otherwise conventional and straightforward design hints at a possible linkage between Boxwood and another, more thoroughgoing and elaborate Gothic-style house along the railroad line to Memphis: namely Airliewood, in Holly Springs, Mississippi.

A lone surviving photograph showing the front of Boxwood and taken in the 1940s, after the house had entered decline, reveals a rather severe facade made more so by the removal of the long, one-story piazza which had originally fronted the house. Inside, a pair of lofty rooms on each floor flanked the usual central hallway from one side of which ascended an ornately-neweled stairway. Flush end chimneys served the fireplaces of the main rooms as well as the ell. Mary Davis Henry, who grew up at nearby Forest Home and often visited Boxwood in her girlhood, recalled its brick-paved basement kitchen and dining room.

As Union and Confederate forces struggled over control of the vital Memphis and Charleston rail line linking the Confederacy from east to west, the countryside around Boxwood was repeatedly ravaged, from the spring of 1862 until the end of the Civil War. The war's direct impact on Boxwood is unknown, but it apparently escaped the depredation visited on a number of the neighboring farms and plantations -- including Elizabeth Elliott's girlhood home, Pond Creek, which was burned to the ground.

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A small private school, "Box Wood Academy," was established nearby soon after the war. It was taught by Absalom Davis, a Confederate veteran -- North Carolinian by birth -- now married into the local plantocracy. A June 29, 1866, notice in the Methodist *Christian Herald* (Nashville) mentions commencement exercises "consisting of compositions and speeches" being "conducted in the beautiful grove near the residence of our esteemed citizen, Samuel Elliott." Three years later, on September 12, 1869, Elizabeth Pearsall Elliott died at the age of forty-seven. Just ten months afterward, Samuel Elliott followed his wife to the grave at age sixty-one. He had anticipated his death, and so made specific provisions for his three youngest children, Randolph, Catherine, and Annie, who were still minors. His brother-in-law and executor, Tuscumbia attorney John D. Rather, was entrusted with their education according "to his own discretion and judgment." Samuel's oldest son, Jeremiah Pearsall Elliott, inherited the plantation itself. Four months after his father's death, he married Fannie Baker, the daughter of a neighboring family, and settled down to life at Boxwood.

Jeremiah Elliott had attended the University of Virginia as well as the University of New Orleans, and local tradition remembers him as a physician. Still, the 1880 census lists him simply as a "Farmer." (Like numbers of educated southerners in the nineteenth century, he may have combined a profession -- law, the ministry, or in this case medicine -- with agricultural pursuits.) By that time he and Fannie had four young children. Two mulatto house servants are also noted: Melvin Young, age 28, and Mary Young, age 23 -- presumably husband and wife and possibly occupants of the antebellum brick quarter to the rear of the house. Several adjacent African-American households were very likely tenants living on the plantation. Oral history as well as accounts passed down in the Neville family, who purchased Boxwood in the early 1900s, confirm that the level land to the south of the main residence remained in cotton production at this period, with crude tenant and sharecropper houses scattered across the broad fields.

A signature, "Jeremy Elliott," found scrawled on a brick by the east door of the old quarter may be that of Jeremiah Pearsall Elliott, Jr. -- suggesting that some time in the late 1880s, the building was converted into a sort of *garconniere* for him and his two younger brothers, Samuel and Council Baker Elliott. This would seem to corroborate the recollections of their cousin, Mary Wallace Kirk of Tuscumbia, who vividly if perhaps over-romantically describes childhood visits to Boxwood in her autobiographical memoir, *Locust Hill* (1972):

We usually went by train [from Tuscumbia] to Trinity, where we were met by a surrey and driven the seven miles to the plantation. In winter the roads were always muddy, and I can remember during the long drive watching the mud stick to the wheels . . . then plop off into the slush as the wheels turned. Sometimes we drove up in our carriage, but that trip would be in the summer and took all day. Courtenay [our driver] would drive Mother and me, and we would leave early with a lunch that we ate on the banks of Big Nance Creek, where there was a spring and tall cedar trees. I still remember the pungent fragrance of those cedars in the noonday heat and the great stillness of the place, broken only by the chirping of birds.

Boxwood was an old brick house with pointed windows like a Gothic church, and there were two big magnolia trees in front of the porch, and the yard was a maze of boxwood, some of it so tall that Mother could not see over the top -- a wonderful place for playing

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hide-and-seek. There was an old, overgrown garden be big forest trees and festoons of wild grape vines where 'swinging in the grape-vine swing' was alluring because precarious. In the garden nearer the house were flowers that kept coming back year after year – zinnias, then called 'oldmaids,' phlox, verbena, hollyhocks, ragged robins, and larkspur

There were many outbuildings on the place and an office in the yard where the boys stayed in summer. And there was a winter and summer kitchen. The winter kitchen was in the basement where the dining room was located, but the summer kitchen was in one of the outside brick houses In the basement across the hall from the dining room was the storeroom which, always under lock and key, seemed a kind of holy of holies, particularly as it had a swinging shelf loaded with all manner of good things – chocolate cake, coconut cake, muffin cakes, tea cakes, pickles, preserves, jellies, custards, and pies

. . . .

To Mary Wallace Kirk, the Elliotts were “a typical antebellum family, clinging to the old manner of life. . .”

There was Cousin Jerry . . . his wife, Cousin Fannie, and their two sons. . . . In addition there were Cousin Fannie's two sisters, Miss Kate and Miss Jimmy . . . perfect examples of unmarried Southern gentlewomen – delicate in build, with placid faces, gray hair always in place, voices . . . never ... raised in anger or excessive joy, and small hands skilled in needlework. In summer they were immaculate in sprigged muslin, crisp and cool, with ruffles and lace, a brooch at the neckline and a black velvet band around the throat. These two were indispensable members of the household, for it was Miss Kate who kept house and managed the servants. She was the more dignified of the two and always wore a bunch of keys fastened at her belt. Miss Jimmy had a little twinkle in her eye and a merry laugh. She loved children, and you felt that she would have liked to have some fun.

But the 1890s would again see sadness and loss at Boxwood. On the Fourth of July, 1891, the younger Jeremiah Elliott died at age seventeen. His death was announced in the Nashville *Christian Advocate*, with a tribute from his Sunday school class at the Methodist church in Trinity. Only two years later his sister Elizabeth (“Lizzie”) died and then, in 1896, his brother Samuel. Barely a year later, in February 1897 Dr. Elliott himself passed away. When his wife Fannie died, in 1904, her surviving son, Councill, and his spouse, Mary Echols Elliott, held on to Boxwood three more years before selling the plantation to William Vinkley Neville. Meanwhile, family furnishings and possessions were dispersed by the terms of Fannie Elliott's will.

The new owner, William Neville, had farming interests in the area and a cotton gin at Trinity, and both he and his wife, Elizabeth Blackwell Neville, came from prominent local families – descendants of the antebellum planter regime that still held sway in the area. (The handsome Blackwell plantation home, built for Elizabeth's grandfather in the 1830s, became the Decatur Country Club in the 1920s and would survive until after World War Two.)

In a depressing repetition of events, however, Neville, too, succumbed only a year after acquiring the Elliott place. In his will, he left to “my beloved wife . . . my plantation known as

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter

Lawrence, Alabama

Name of Property

County and State

Boxwood.” And like Dr. Elliott, Neville also provided in his will for the education of three minor children – Julia Blackwell, William Vinkley, Jr., and Charles Tyler – with rents from the estate to go toward their education.

Three generations of the Neville family owned Boxwood for the next seventy years, living intermittently on the plantation and at their home in Trinity. Eventually, when the land was divided, Charles Tyler Neville (1894-1972) inherited the residential portion of the estate, including the main house and its brick service dependency.

The widening of Alabama Highway 20 in the late 1950s claimed the plantation house and even the knoll where it stood. However, the dependency was spared. Remodeled and enlarged, it served as a dwelling in its own right. In 1980, Charles Tyler Neville’s heirs sold this remaining portion of the original Boxwood estate to G.T. Hamilton of Hillsboro, Alabama. While the dwelling itself was rented, the surrounding acreage continued to produce cotton. In a further subdivision of the land in 2010, a fragmentary parcel including the Boxwood dependency was sold to the Industrial Development Board of Lawrence County as part of the 1250-acre Mallard Fox West Industrial Park. The Board, however, agreed to preserve the two-room servants’ quarter as an historical landscape feature recalling the rapidly-changing area’s agrarian past. Subsequently, a local history aficionado, Lisa Keown Lentz, spearheaded an effort to remove the later additions, including a poured concrete front porch, in order to reclaim the antebellum form of the structure. Mrs. Lentz and her husband did much of the work themselves. As part of this process, a local mason also stabilized the collapsing east chimney – the work being funded by a small grant from the Southeast Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation through the Alabama Trust. Meanwhile, Lisa Lentz has developed a small exhibit inside the structure about the history of Boxwood plantation.

Future plans call for exterior restoration of the structure as funds become available.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Axford, Faye Acton. *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1976.

Basden, Susan, and Paula Sutton, Decatur, Alabama. Miscellaneous material including family reminiscences, photographs, and genealogical information on the Neville and Blackwell families of Morgan and Lawrence counties, Alabama.

Bergstresser, Jack and Enzweiler, Susan. Field visit to Boxwood, Lawrence County on May 6-7, 2013 and field notes of Dr. Bergstresser.

Henry, Mary Davis. *One Mile from Trinity*. Athens, Alabama: Strode Publishers, 1958.

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter
Name of Property

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County and State

The Annals of Ann Fennel Davis. Privately published, 1962.

Kirk, Mary Wallace. *Locust Hill.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1972.

Lawrence County Archives, Moulton, Alabama. Probate Court records (deeds, wills, estate inventories); tax record (including Tax assessment books, 1848-49). Researched and compiled for this project by Lawrence County Archivist Myra Borden, 2011-12.

Lentz, Lisa Keown, Trinity, Alabama. Personal collection of local historical material including interviews, unpublished genealogies, photographs, newspapers, material gleaned from the internet, etc., pertaining to Boxwood and surrounding area.

McDaniel, Deangelo. "Historic Home Hiding in Plain Sight," *The Decatur Daily*, 26 October 2010.

Saunders, James Edmonds, and Elizabeth Saunders Blair Stubbs. *Early Settlers of Alabama* New Orleans: L. Graham and Son, Ltd., 1899.

U.S. Census records, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1820-1880. Available online through Lawrence County Archives, Moulton.

U.S. Government Land Office Records, Lawrence County, Alabama. Available online through the Bureau of Land Management.

Vlach, John Michael. *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter
Name of Property

Lawrence, Alabama
County and State

Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property < 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.633966 | Longitude: -87.113708 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary begins at a point on the western edge of the recently built construction access road that is due east of the long, low pile of stones just north of the Boxwood Slave Quarter. From this point, the boundary extends west until it reaches a point on the western edge of an

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter
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old plantation dirt road. The boundary continues south along this road's western edge for approximately 150 feet. The boundary then heads east until it reaches the western edge of the access road. The boundary continues north along this road back to the beginning point.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were drawn to include any potential archaeological remains and also to include the small knoll upon which the quarter sits.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Robert Gamble (AHC Senior Architectural Historian), Jack Bergstresser (Archaeologist) & Susan Enzweiler (AHC NR Coordinator)

organization: Alabama Historical Commission

street & number: 468 S. Perry Street

city or town: Montgomery state: AL zip code: 36104

e-mail: susan.enzweiler@preserveala.org

telephone: 334/230-2644

date: October 23, 2012

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter
Name of Property

Lawrence, Alabama
County and State

Name of Property: Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter

City or Vicinity: Courtland

County: Lawrence State: Alabama

Photographer: Susan Enzweiler

Date Photographed: February 18, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0001)
Façade (north elevation), camera facing south

Photo 2 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0002)
Façade (north elevation) and east (side) elevation, camera facing southwest

Photo 3 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0003)
Rear (south) and west (side) elevations, camera facing northeast

Photo 4 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0004)
East wall of east room, camera facing east

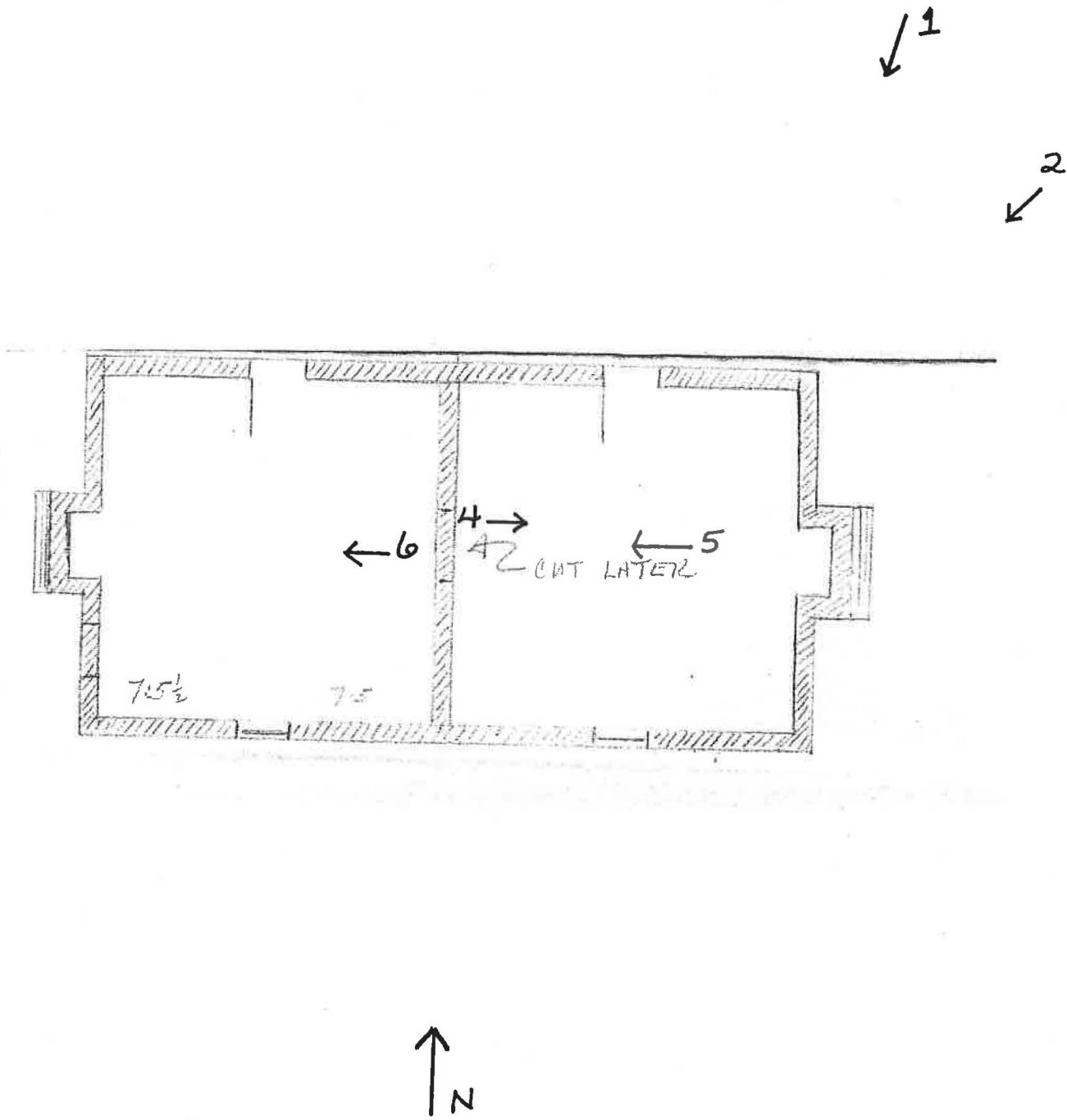
Photo 5 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0005)
Opening in the interior wall that divides the east and west rooms, camera facing west

Photo 6 (AL_LawrenceCounty_BoxwoodPlantationSlaveQuarter_0006)
West wall of west room, camera facing west

See floor plan drawn by Robert Gamble on following continuation sheet.

Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter
Name of Property

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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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Boxwood Slave Quarter

Lawrence County, AL



Google earth

feet 1000
meters 300



latitude: 34.633966
longitude: -87.113708

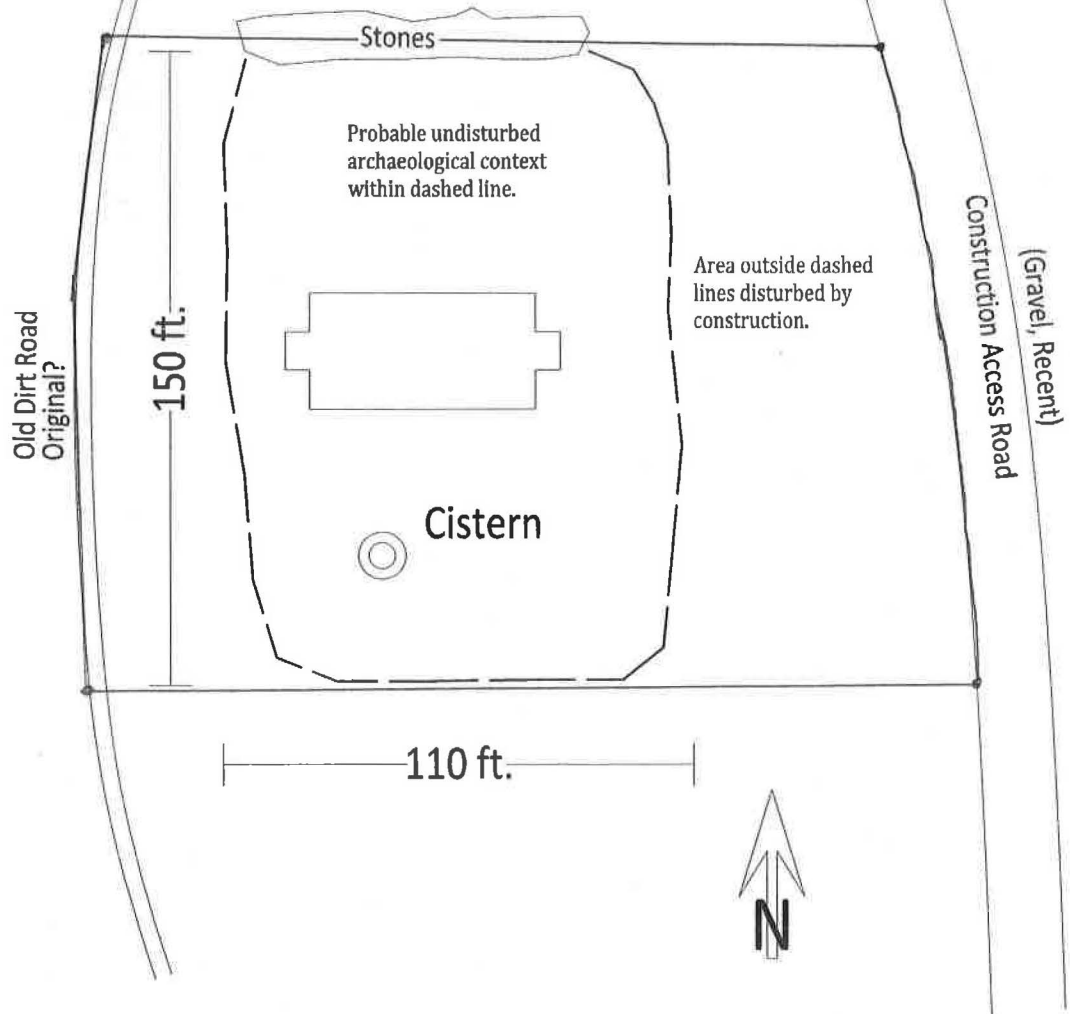
Jones Cross Roads USGS Quad Map
512-T55-R6W

US Hwy 72

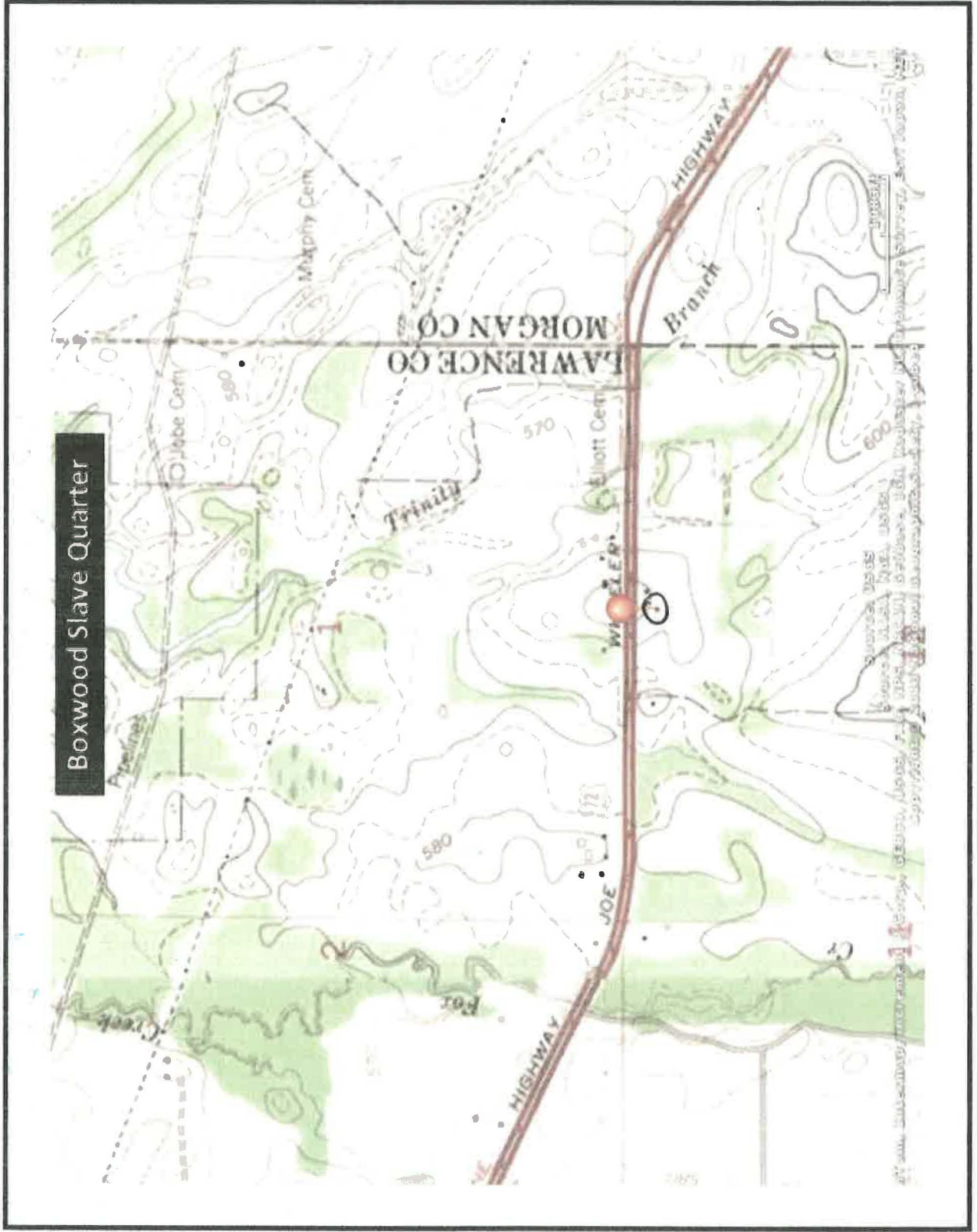
Boxwood Quarter

Appx. Measurements

J.R. Bergstresser, Sr. *GIS*
7 May 2013



Lawrence County, AL



Jones Crossroads USGS map SL2-TSS-RAW













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Boxwood Plantation Slave Quarter

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ALABAMA, Lawrence

DATE RECEIVED: 5/24/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/18/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/03/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/10/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000470

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: Y PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7/10/13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

A.C. & D. rare surviving double pen slave quarters from former Boxwood Plantation.

RECOM./CRITERIA A.C. & D.

REVIEWER Lindie

DISCIPLINE Hof

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 7/10/13

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Lawrence County

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
ALABAMA • USA



Susan Enzweiler
National Register Coordinator
State of Alabama Historical Commission
468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-0900

March 12, 2013

RE: The National Register Nomination for Boxwood Slave Quarter,
20416 Alabama Hwy. 20, Courtland, Lawrence County

Dear Ms. Enzweiler:

I am pleased that the Boxwood Slave Quarter is being considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. We are fortunate that this property has weathered the storms of time and literally, the tornado of 2011 that destroyed nearby structures. The Industrial Development Board of Lawrence County welcomes the opportunity for a National Historic Landmark to reside on its property and we appreciate the efforts of the State Historical Commission to make this a reality.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony R. Stockton".

Tony R. Stockton
Executive Director
Lawrence County Industrial Development Board



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900



May 21, 2013

FRANK W. WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TEL: 334-242-3184
FAX: 334-240-3477

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
U. S. Department of the Interior, NPS
Cultural Resources
National Register, History & Education Programs
1201 "I" Street NW (2280)
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear ~~Ms. Shull:~~ *Carol:*

Enclosed please find the nomination and supporting documentation to be considered for listing the following Alabama resource in the National Register of Historic Places:

Tabernacle Baptist Church
Selma, Dallas County, Alabama

Your consideration of the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nomination is appreciated.

Truly Yours,

Elizabeth Ann Brown
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

EAB/sme/nw

Enclosures

Recommendation: SLR Return Action: SLR Return None

Documentation Issues-Discussion Sheet

State Name: AL County Name Lawrence Resource Name Boxwood Plantation Slave...

Reference No. 13-476 Multiple Name _____

Solution:

Edson - Change Arch. Classification to 19th century:
of resources → 1 noncont. structure, not bldg
send to new disc 7/10/13
10 iter: double per

Problem:

Disc only contains shortcuts, not images.
2 types of category listed, coded "buildings" yes

Resolution:

SLR: Yes No

Database Change: