

PH 0054593

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Alabama	
COUNTY: Bibb	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER NOV 20 1974	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Brierfield Furnace

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Brierfield Furnace

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
W of Brierfield

CITY OR TOWN:
Brierfield Vicinity Congressional District VII

STATE: Alabama CODE: 01 COUNTY: Bibb CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

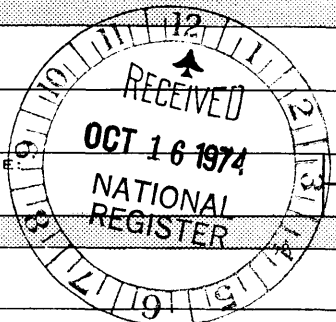
OWNER'S NAME:
Multiple, Public and Private

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Bibb County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Centreville

STATE:
Alabama

CODE:
01

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Brierfield Furnace site covers some 486 acres in Bibb County, much of which is wooded. Included in the nomination are the ruins of the furnace, the ore beds associated with the furnace, the tram tracks which lead from the furnace to the rolling mill site, the depot site, the commissary ruins, and the nail factory ruins. Also included in the district are the coke oven ruins, the Superintendents home, and the grist mill site.

The Bibb County Historical Society plans to acquire the entire area designated and maintain it as a historical park with trails and interpretive markers.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

5. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Brierfield Furnace, an early Alabama iron making facility, was the state's largest producer of iron during the Confederacy, providing most of the iron cast into heavy naval ordnance in Selma. Constructed in 1861, the furnaces continued to operate until the turn of the century.

In the early part of 1860 Colonel C. C. Huckabee and Jonathan Newton Smith began planning to build an iron furnace to supply the farmers and cotton planters with iron. The site of the first plant was selected and a company composed of Huckabee, Smith, S. G. Wilson, Gray Huckabee J. D. Nance and a Mr. Huntington was formed.

Large ore holdings and timber lands were acquired. Machinery was purchased in Montgomery and Brierfield, Mississippi and the first cold blast furnace was constructed in early 1861. Within a few months the furnace was turning out some 25 tons of first class iron a day. It was soon discovered that wrought iron was more profitable than cast iron, and a search began for a place convenient to a railroad for construction of a rolling mill. A site on Mahan Creek was secured and a tram road from the furnace over to the mill was constructed.

In July of 1863 the Confederate government purchased the plant by a forced sale. The purchase of the Brierfield works was instigated by a report from George Peacock who had been entrusted with the responsibility of selecting the pig iron that was to be cast into heavy naval ordnance. According to his report "the Brierfield iron was the toughest and most suitable iron for making guns and above any other in the South". Huckabee sold the plant for \$600,000.

Major Hunt was placed in charge of the works. His headquarters were in Selma but his assistant commander, Colonel Erwin, was in personal command of the plant and its operation until the works were destroyed during the War.

During the war the labor force was increased and the capacity of the plant was expanded by adding a new hot-blast furnace. The entire produce was appropriated for naval and military purposes during the remainder of the war. Of the sixteen blast furnaces operating during the war in Alabama, Brierfield had the largest daily capacity (25 tons) and was one of six operating a rolling mill.

After the war the property was seized as contraband of war by the United States government, and was sold at public auction in January of 1866 for \$45,000. Francis Strother Lyon purchased the whole outfit and the Canebrake Company was organized. Among the organizers was Gen. Josiah Gorgas, the instigator of the project.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Armes, Ethel, The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama, Birmingham: Chamber of Commerce, 1910.

Owen, T. M., History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography. Chicago: S. S. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921.

Vandiver, Frank, "Josiah Gorgas and the Brierfield Iron Works," Alabama Review, January 1950.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	33 ° 03 ' 07 "	86 ° 57 ' 18 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	33 ° 03 ' 09 "	86 ° 54 ' 13 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	33 ° 02 ' 16 "	86 ° 54 ' 13 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	33 ° 02 ' 14 "	86 ° 57 ' 18 "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 486

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



NO
COPY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: W. Warner Floyd

ORGANIZATION: Alabama Historical Commission DATE: 10-4-74

STREET AND NUMBER: 725 Monroe Street

CITY OR TOWN: Montgomery STATE: Alabama CODE: 01

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Mills B. Howard Jr.

Title SHPO Ala

Date October 9, 1974

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

A. R. Worlouse
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/20/74

ATTEST:

Charles A. Henry
Keeper of The National Register

Date 11-14-74

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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	NOV 8 1974

(Number all entries)

SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

Gorgas was elected superintendent and general manager, and T. S. Alvis was named iron master. Under the management of general Gorgas the works made pig iron and cotton ties until 1869 when the plant was leased by Captain Alvis and operated by him until 1873 when the manufacture of iron became unprofitable because of the financial panic of that year. The works were then closed down and remained idle until 1880.

At this time Senator J. R. Morgan became interested in the property and along with U. S. Senator Plumb of Kansas; U. S. Senator Morrel of Vermont; U. S. Senator Fair of California; and Thomas Jefferson Peter, a railroad contractor and mining man from Kansas, contracted for the purchase of the Brierfield rolling mill, foundry, machine shop and all its land, and also for the purchase of the Bibb furnace and its properties.

The Brierfield Coal and Iron Company was organized with Peter as President. A large nail factory was built and coal miners were imported from Pennsylvania. The Brierfield nails were popular in the Southeastern states, but the iron cut nails were soon supplanted by steel cut nails from Pittsburg. By 1888 the company was forced to go into the hands of a receiver.

Peter, who reorganized the plant as the Alabama Iron and Steel Company, converted the coke furnace to charcoal and during the next few years the property made a considerable reputation by its Bibb Charcoal iron.

In 1894 the company was again forced into the hands of a receiver and again Peter was appointed. Two years later Peter died and the company's affairs were subsequently reorganized by the heirs of Senator Plumb of Kansas and his associates.

The property now belongs to a number of owners, the largest of which is Kimberly Clark which uses the site for forest land.

