

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GAINESVILLE  
SUMTER COUNTY, ALABAMA

LAURA WATSON HOUSE

N side Sumter Co. 21 (Epes Road) approximately 1.1 mile SE of junction with Spruce Street

Gertrude Watson  
Box 33  
Gainesville, AL 35464

Block 1, parcel 1 UTM: 16/392100/3631070  
Tax Map: #60-08-01-11-4  
Less than 1 acre

Date of construction: c. 1900

Builder/Architect: Unknown

Description:

The Laura Watson House is a one-story frame, basically rectangular house that is built to a two-room plan with separate doorways and has shed room directly behind. It has a gable roof with exterior end chimneys, a full length front porch and a shed extension across the rear.

Statement of Significance:

Criterion C - Architecture:

The Laura Watson House is significant architecturally as an unusually intact example of a turn-of-the-century black freeholder house in Alabama. The house is also a good example of a spraddle roof, porch across the front and shed across the rear vernacular house.

Historical Summary:

Built around the turn of the century if not earlier, this house is a good example of a rapidly vanishing folk-type dwelling of the kind which might have been occupied by a small black freeholder at the turn of the century in Alabama. Whitewashed, with shuttered windows the house is part of a complex that includes several small dependencies, such as an old-fashioned privy and corncrib. The house and yard are enclosed by a weathered fence built of cedar from a long-vanished mill which stood nearby. Although the lean-to was reconstructed several years ago, it apparently maintains the lines of the earlier shed extension. The house was built for the Watson family and was occupied by Laura Watson and her son Booker. The tiny house is maintained in good condition.