

National Relators Association Diversity and Inclusion Grant

Add the following sites to the Baldwin County Historic Driving and Walking Tours App:

Bottle Creek Indian Mounds – Mound Island, Alabama

Bottle Creek is one of the most important prehistoric Native American sites in Alabama, second only to Moundville. Located on Mound Island, in the heart of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, it is the largest mound complex on the northern Gulf coastal plain, a site that contains more than 18 Indian mounds, the tallest rising approximately 16 meters (52 feet) above the swamp.

Bottle Creek was occupied from about 1250 and probably served as the principal political and religious center for what is now called Pensacola culture for the three centuries prior to European contact. Bottle Creek continued to be Mound L an important site for local Indians, such as the Mobilians, well into the eighteenth century, and French explorer and founder of Mobile Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, is believed to have visited the site in 1702.

Now owned by the state of Alabama, Bottle Creek was declared a National Historic Landmark on March 10, 1995, joining Moundville Archaeological Park as the only other Native American site so recognized in the state of Alabama. It is administered by the Alabama Historical Commission.

Baldwin County Training School – The Baldwin County Training School was the only high school for African American students from 1889-1950. The Baldwin County Training School was founded in 1889, by Reverend S.B. Bracy, one of the most respected community leaders in the Baldwin County Community of Daphne. From its beginning Baldwin County Training School was a powerful force in improving public education for blacks in Baldwin County.

The Baldwin County Training School had a powerful effect—educationally, economically, and socially—upon the people it served during a time of racial segregation and financial inequity. The community of Baldwin County Training School consisted of all the black people served by the school, which was all of Baldwin County for a time, because Baldwin County Training School was the only black high school in the entire county.

Mr. Walker J. Carroll was the school principal. The peak enrollment of the school was around 1,200 students in all grades; approximately 64% of the graduates attended college. In spite of segregation, the graduates did very well.

In 1954, Brown decision did not affect the dual school system in Baldwin County until 1965 when the Board of Education directed Board Attorney J.B. Blackburn and Superintendent Candler McGowan to develop a plan for gradual desegregation for the county. The three-year plan was adopted by the Department of Health Education and

Welfare on August 25, 1965. No distinction was made in the final budget for the school year 1963-64 of white and black. Teachers were still listed on the county roster by color, but they were not labeled according to color. For the first time in 1966, the salaries of black and white high school principals were the same: \$11,100.00. Faculty desegregation began in the school year 1967-68. The last graduating class at Baldwin County Training School was 1970. The next year the school was reorganized and became Daphne Middle School.

It is now preserved as the African American School Museum in Daphne. The building is located at 1000 Main Street on the campus of WJ Carroll Intermediate School, Daphne, AL 36526.

Anna T. Jeanes School – In 1907, Quaker philanthropist Anna T. Jeanes endowed one million dollars to create “The Jeanes Fund” to provide better educational opportunities for black children in the segregated schools of the South. The funds were designated for ‘Jeanes Supervisors’. The program was carried out under the trusteeship of Booker T. Washington, President of Tuskegee Institute and Hollis B. Frissell, President of Hampton Institute in Virginia.

In 1913, a community school was built on the present-day site. It was the only school in the nation bearing Anna T. Jeanes’ name. The four rooms in the concrete and cinderblock building remain today.

Anna T. Jeanes School’s only Rosenwald building for grades 1-3 was built on Bells Lane in 1922-123 with an addition in 1927. Financial contributions to construct the three-room school came from the Black community, Baldwin County, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

In 1947, Carrie E. Beaucham Smith and Randolph Smith sold 10-acres, to the state of Alabama for “public school purposes for *Anna T. Jeanes School, Baldwin County, State of Alabama*.” Principals included J.A. Kitchens (1926), Hillard Smith, Roosevelt Anderson, Sr. (1945), and Vera Denton Herman, interim principal. Alvin E. Boykin served as the principal for 23 years, beginning in 1947 until 1970.

In 1954, the Rosenwald building burned and grades 1-3 relocated to the Knights of Pleasure Lodge on Twin Beech Road until a brick addition, circa 1956-1957, was added to Anna T. Jeanes school’s original concrete and cinderblock building.

The school, grades 1-9, served as a “feeder” school for Baldwin County Training School, Daphne, Alabama where students continued their studies through the 12th grade.

In 1970, with desegregation of public schools in Alabama, Anna T. Jeanes became Fairhope Intermediate School.

The Houstonville/Tatumville Communities— Two black communities in the Fairhope are included: Houstonville, established by the Houston family including widowed mother Pauline Houston (born 1910). Tatumville also known as “Big Head Gully” was a historic Black community that bordered the shorelines of the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. Tatumville was established by Mack Tatum who was born in Greene County, Mississippi, in 1890.

Free Blacks settled in in these vicinities before the Civil War and began paying property taxes on otherwise unoccupied land. The Houston, and Weeks families settled first, hence the name Houstonville. After Emancipation of slaves in 1865, Houstonville and the surrounding communities grew with the influx of he Fagans, Lewis, Mitchell, Henry, McConico, Hankins, Sellers, Harris, Kirkman, Young, Bonner and Wilson families. Men found employment as turpentine hands. Men and women worked on farms and picked up pecans. Most had family gardens and shared their bounty with the community.

Life centered on Church and close-knit families. The community Brush-Arbor Church, named Zion Chapel, was founded in 1867. The name was later changed to Twin Beech AME Zion Church and it remains active today. The Twin Beech Cemetery, one mile southwest, has served the community since its founding in 1817. Young, Sledge, and Nichols Streets honor early families with descendants still living nearby.

The Houstonville and Tatumville Communities relied partly on a sweet potato farm where many resident children worked within a sharecropping system. Most African-American businesses of Fairhope’s downtown area were located at the intersection of Young and Middle Streets, and included Klummp Motor Co., Allen’s Fish Market (also functioned as a night club), McGrue Gas, Starlight Club, and a laundromat and taxi cab company owned by Phillip Micher. One of the most recent research efforts regarding African American life in the area arose through resident Darwin Harris’s discovery of his great, great grandmother Gertrude Buchanon’s gravesite under an azalea bush near the Paddock Estates subdivision in 2016. Darwin Harris along with many others have combined efforts since that period to document the heritage of those interred including early Creole residents.