

BAYVIEW COMMUNITY
(Bayview Camp)
(Tennessee Coal & Iron Company Town)
Birmingham Industrial District
Off Birmingham Rd., eight miles
NW of Birmingham
Birmingham vic.
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-116

HAER
ALA
37-BIRM.V.
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
BAYVIEW COMMUNITY
(Bayview Camp)
(Tennessee Coal & Iron Company Town)
Birmingham Industrial District-Bayview
Off Birmingham Road, eight miles N.W. of Birmingham
Birmingham vic.
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-116

HAER
ALA
37-BIRM.V,
2-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
ALA
37-BIRM.
2-

ADDENDUM TO
BAYVIEW COMMUNITY
(Bayview Camp)
(Tennessee Coal & Iron Company Town)

HAER No. AL-116

Location: Off Birmingham Road (AL 269), eight miles northwest of Birmingham. Birmingham Vicinity, Jefferson County, Alabama. Located to the northwest of Birmingham, Bayview is reached by taking US 269-Birmingham Road eight miles to Mulga. Turn right onto 4th Street which becomes Bayview Drive. Proceed one mile to the residential community.

Present
Owner: Multiple private

Date of
Construction: 1911-1915

Builder/Architect
Engineer: TCI Land Department, James Baird, Supervising Architect

Description: The Bayview community includes 228 frame houses, a brick commissary and a teachers' cottage in a well-designed industrial community situated on Bayview Lake. The community plan conforms to the peninsular setting and includes two distinct and geographically separate sections: individual white and black camps encircling areas in which civic buildings were formerly located. Approximately 139 frame bungalow-type houses of four distinct variations, the frame TCI teachers' cottage (an enlarged bungalow-type structure) and the 35' x 50' one-story brick commissary (now vacant) are located along curving streets in the former white camp. Residences for mine management, set on slightly larger lots, are sited along Bayview Drive, at the entrance to the community. Ninety frame bungalow houses, of similar dimensions and types, are located along curving streets in the former black camp. In this camp, houses are sited to face the lake.

Project
Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Significance: Bayview reflects the adoption of "City Beautiful" planning ideals, first expressed in the District in the exemplary planning at Fairfield, by a major industrial entity --TCI-- which utilized these concepts for its worker camps. As a "model" mining community Bayview is the most fully-realized example in the District and also reflects the prevailing standards for geographic separation of race. The original plan defines two geographically distinct sections --one for white workers and one for black workers.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In 1911, the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, locally known as TCI, completed construction of a water system after damming the waters of Village Creek to form Bayview Lake. At Bayview, a 200-acre peninsula jutting into Bayview Lake, TCI began construction of a large shaft coal mine and its final "modern mining camp of model design" for an estimated population of 500 miners. The mine was put into operation in 1912. By 1915, 172 persons were employed at Bayview. In 1920, employment topped 500. Peak employment came in 1924 with 714 miners on the TCI payroll. The mine produced more than 400,000 tons that year.

In contrast to other TCI villages, which grew as mining operations expanded, Bayview was laid out as a complete entity anticipating a projected population. Land department engineers applied "Beaux Arts" planning principles first introduced at Fairfield (then under construction) to this camp site. Streets were laid out to fit the contour of the site. Two camps, with streets circling centrally located civic centers, housed white and black miners. In the white camp, a Foreman's Row was built on the ridge along Bayview Drive. The commissary, a church and a teachers' cottage were located in the white camp. TCI installed sewers and sidewalks in both camps and planted shrubs, trees and flower beds along the entranceway to the mines. Most houses were four-room bungalow style cottages with varied rooflines and porch placements.

Some houses were sited toward the lake to take advantage of the lakeside views. Meeting halls, tennis courts, an athletic field and the views of Bayview Lake enhanced the "well-appointed industrial community," of which one contemporary account stated, "not many resorts of the wealthy have a more delightful setting." Mining declined in the 1920s and many residents moved elsewhere. During a five week period in 1937, the Birmingham area Red Cross cared for more than 3,000 Mississippi River flood refugees at the deserted camp.

Sources Consulted

White, Marjorie, The Birmingham District, pp. 259-260

Auburn University School of Architecture Urban Design Studio
Inventory Project, Notebooks and Files located at Birmingham
Historical Society, Fall 1991-Winter 1992

Birmingham Historical Society, Industrial Community Files, Bayview

The Southern Pine Association, "Homes for Workmen," New Orleans,
1919, pp. 24-26