

PICKENSVILLE STAGECOACH INN  
East side of Broad Street at Seymer Road  
Pickensville  
Pickens County  
Alabama

HABS AL-998  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### PICKENSVILLE STAGECOACH INN

HABS NO. AL-998

Location: East side of Broad Street at the intersection with Seymer Road (historically the Old Columbus Road) in Pickensville, Pickens County, Alabama.

The Pickensville Stagecoach Inn is located at latitude: 33.22483, longitude: -88.26608. The coordinate represents the main entrance of the Stagecoach Inn. This coordinate was obtained on February 28, 2011 by plotting its location on the 1:24,000 Pickensville, AL USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map. The accuracy of the coordinate is +/- 12 meters. The coordinate's datum is North American Datum 1983.

Significance: The Pickensville Stagecoach Inn, constructed ca.1820 and prominently located along the Old Columbus Road (also historically referred to as the Greensboro Road, and Seymer Road today), is considered a local landmark and believed to be the oldest surviving standing structure in the small town of Pickensville, the former seat of government in Pickens County. The two-story, white clapboard house is integrally associated with the early settlement of Pickensville, as well as to the early development and expansive years of the town, county, and region. In addition, the residence served as an Inn for passengers traveling along the various Stagecoach lines that operated throughout the region during the nineteenth century. The Stagecoach Inn is also an excellent surviving example of the Plantation Plain style house form, a variant of the traditional I-House, which characterizes much of southeastern rural residential architecture. Its modest Greek Revival-style detailing, interior design and workmanship, and subsequent alterations further contribute to the historic integrity and exceptional significance of the Pickensville Stagecoach Inn.

Description: The Pickensville Stagecoach Inn is a two-story, frame Plantation Plain style house, a variant of the I-House, two rooms high and one room deep with a central hall and an integral, rear, dropped shed extension. The shed extension, typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century, is one room deep and runs the length of the house. The concept of this shed addition, brought by settlers from Georgia and the Carolinas, is romantically referred to as Plantation Plain style. This variant to the I-House was a common expansion to vernacular forms throughout the southeastern United States. The one-story rear extension provided additional rooms on the first floor and prevented the reduction of air circulation throughout the second-story. The house is three bays wide (W, D, W). Unlike the exterior end chimneys common to the I-House and Plantation Plain style, the Pickensville Stagecoach Inn features two interior brick chimneys located along the rear slope. Windows are nine-over-six-light sash with teal-painted casings and pediment lintels. The house rests on a brick pier foundation.

The front (west) façade features a centered, partial width, one-story porch. The porch is wood and sits on brick piers. Four, tapered wood square columns support a relatively flat roof with standing seam metal. Full-length pilasters are situated at the corners of the front

façade, wrapping the corners to the north and south. The central door is most likely a replacement door in the Eastlake style (ca.1880-1900). The entry door features heavy, elaborate detailing, with a single pane surrounded by variable-sized smaller panes. A horizontal panel is located below the lights and features a heavy, detailed surround. The second floor window fenestration is out of line with those on the first floor, with the exception of the central window which is centered directly above the entry door. The second floor windows on either side of the central window are situated slightly more toward the center of the structure than those on the first floor.

The central hall extends through the rear shed extension with two rooms flanking either side of the hall on the first floor. All doors on the first floor feature faux-graining. The interior doors fronting the central hall (with the exception of the parlor door) contain two, full-length vertical panels and white, porcelain knobs, both typical of the Greek Revival style. The parlor features a more detailed, four-panel, Greek-Revival style door. All doors are faux-grain painted.

The former bedroom located at the southeast corner of the house was converted in 2005 into a workroom with bathroom, water fountain, sink, etc. The northwest room is historically the parlor space, and, as such, features more refined decorative detailing than the remainder of the rooms. The northeast room is believed to have been the dining room and was once directly accessible to the parlor.<sup>1</sup>

Each room on the first floor contains a fireplace and decoratively carved mantel, the most detailed of which is located within the parlor. Windows throughout the house (with the exception of the parlor) feature a modest window casing. Walls in the front bedroom are plastered while those in the dining room are flush board. Bead board siding is placed over the brick fireplace and above the mantel in the dining room. Ceilings in all rooms except the parlor are flush board. Unlike the other rooms on the first floor, the parlor window casings are much more elaborate featuring decorative corner blocks and resting on plinth blocks contiguous with the baseboard. A horizontal panel is located beneath the lower sash and is faux grained. The ceiling in the parlor is flush board; however, the ceiling features decorative, full-length, narrow strips of beveled wood. Walls are bead board and painted a pale pink color. The wood mantel is Greek Revival with decorative fluted columns and painted black.

The second floor features a single room on either side of the central stair hall and a full-length attic along the rear. The attic space runs the length of the rear shed addition. The bedrooms located on either side of the stair hall on the second floor are modest with slightly lower ceilings than those on the first floor. Window casings are very simple - almost reaching floor level. Ceilings are flush board. The bedroom located on the south side of the hall features bead board walls painted a similar teal to the window trim on the exterior of the house. The door features two, full-length panels similar to those on the first floor. The mantel is modestly carved and painted white with a concrete hearth.

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<sup>1</sup> The space between the parlor and dining room was enclosed during a 2005 restoration project.

Unlike the south upper room, the door leading to the north upper room features six panels: two small panels located near the top of the door with four larger panels below. The mantel was removed during the 2005 restoration; however, it remains in the room and matches that of the south room on the second floor. Walls in the north upper room are unpainted, flush board with bead board surrounding the fireplace. Although an excellent restoration has been completed on the exterior and first floor of the house, much work remains to be done on the second floor; however, the surviving materials, form, and design retain a significant degree of the structure's historic integrity.

History: The Pickensville Stagecoach Inn was constructed ca. 1820. The property on which the Stagecoach Inn is situated was initially granted to Edward Sims and T. Rogers on April 22, 1824 (Certificate No. 2344), approximately four years following the construction of the Stagecoach Inn. It is unknown who initially constructed the Pickensville Stagecoach Inn in 1820. Surviving deed records<sup>2</sup> suggest that the house was owned by the Gray family as early as 1880 (Deed Book B, Page 49). Fannie Gray, wife of A.W. Gray purchased the property and house at auction on October 20, 1880. According to the same document, it appears that Guardians of Callie Gray (a widow) and Angela Doss were involved in the transfer of the property. It is unknown what the relationship between the two women was and whether or not they shared ownership of the property at this time. In 1893 the property and house were conveyed to T.H. Wilbourne (Deed book E, page 327). The Wilbourne family retained ownership for over 100 years when in 1997, they sold the property to Pickens County (Deed book 96, Page 187).

Due to its convenient location along the Tombigbee River as well as a principal transportation route between Demopolis and Eutaw, Alabama and Columbus, Mississippi, Pickensville quickly became an important business and trading center throughout the region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that the two-story residence was built to serve as a stagecoach stop on the Eutaw-Columbus Stagecoach Line. Whether constructed as a residence, Inn, or both, it is evident that the early owners of the two-story house took advantage of Pickensville's central location by offering rooms to travelers. The Pickensville Stagecoach Inn quickly became a prominent stop-over for passengers along the historic stagecoach lines which passed through Pickensville, as well as travelers arriving by steamboat and ferry.

Due to the introduction of the railroad in the latter years of the nineteenth century, the resulting decline in Stagecoach Lines and steamboat travel, and the contemporaneous transfer of ownership to the Wilbourne family, it is probable that the house ceased operation as an Inn by the time the Wilbourne's acquired the property in 1893.

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<sup>2</sup> The Pickens County Courthouse fire of 1876 destroyed all records prior to this date.

Sources:

General Land Office Records. Land Patents. Bureau of Land Management.

Hudges, Richard B. Architects. Architectural & Restoration Drawings. 2005

Interview, Spell, Catherine. *History of Pickens County*, 1986 Oral Interview conducted by Randy Hamilton and transcribed by Scott Owens in 2002.

Interview, Spell, Catherine. *Willett Wilbourn's Reminiscences*, oral interview conducted by Leroy Speeds, 1986, Transcribed by Scott Owens in 2002.  
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~alpicken/pcearlyhist.htm>. Retrieved 8/12/2010.

Pickens County Probate Records. Wills, deeds, plats, and newspaper records. Pickens County Courthouse, Carrolton, Alabama.

Public Information Files. Alabama State Archives, Montgomery, AL. "Pickens County," "Pickensville."

Robert Jemison, Jr. Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library. University of Alabama; 1797-1993.

Historian: Jaime L. Destefano, *Environmental Corporation of America (ECA)*, 2011

Project

Information: Jaime L. Destefano conducted the research and field work and prepared the documentation, including the measured drawings and historical report. Michelle K. Taylor of *ECA* assisted with the on-site measurements. Large-Format photographs were taken by Wayne Robinson of *True Americana*. Processing of the negatives and prints was completed by *Automated Darkroom* in Atlanta, Georgia.

The documentation was completed by Environmental Corporation of America for the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) and for donation to HABS.