ROLLING MILL HABS No. GA-2411
Northwest corner of intersection of State Route 53,
Washington Street and Francis Street
Braselton
Jackson County
Georgia

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
100 Alabama Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROLLING MILL

HABS No. GA-2411

Location:	Northwest corner of intersection of State Route 53, Washington Street & Francis Street, Braselton, Jackson County, Georgia. U.S.G.S. Auburn Quadrangle (7.5) Georgia – Jackson County Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.245137.3777599
Present Owner:	Braselton Ventures LLC
Present Occupant:	Vacant
Present Use:	None
Significance:	The Braselton Rolling Mill is a contributing historic resource in the Braselton National Register of Historic Places District and represents the agricultural and industrial significance of the district. Located at the center of commercial and industrial activity throughout the historic period, the mill served as the primary processing location for agricultural products for portions of three counties, including western Jackson, northwestern Barrow, and southeastern Hall counties. The Rolling Mill is also architecturally significant as an extant example of an early twentieth century rolling mill in northeast Georgia. Character-defining features of the building include its two-and-a-half-story height, front-gable metal roof, weatherboard exterior siding, and one- and two-bay side additions.

PART I. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Braselton Rolling Mill is a two & one-half story rectangular-shaped commercial building with one- and two-bay two-story additions at its sides. A one-story three-quarter shed-roof addition is located at the rear (north) of the building. The mill is sited east to west and oriented south toward Francis Street on a 2.78 acre parcel of land. It is representative of an early-twentieth century rolling mill in northeast Georgia.

The building is of wood frame construction and the exterior walls are clad with unpainted wood weatherboard. Corner boards of flat wood are located at the exterior corners of the building. Sections of the siding are broken and displaced. The foundation consists of square timber and triangular cement piers.

The central front gable roof is clad with standing seam metal roofing, as are the shed roof side sections. The roof has a wide overhanging eave with a simple fascia board forming the eaves. The gable ends have a raking cornice comprised of a flat wood board.

The mill has three exterior doors on the south elevation (façade). These doors are comprised of vertically-oriented wood doors that open toward the interior of the building. The doors have simple casings of flat wood at the jambs and head. A second-story opening is located above the central door on the façade.

Windows are six-over-six double hung wood sash and frame. The windows have wood sills and simple wood casings at the jambs and head. A 1” x 2” trim caps some of the windows. There are no shutters on the windows. Several windows have been infilled with weatherboard and many have broken and missing sash and panes. The side addition rooflines bisect the second story windows of the original building.

The site is moderately sloped from the front (south) to rear (north) away from Francis Street and consists of a grass yard around the mill with a wooded area to the rear (north).

There is a one-story rectangular-shaped outbuilding located to the west of the mill. This building is wood frame with vertically-oriented sheet metal siding and a front gable roof with metal roofing. It is in poor condition with a partially collapsed roof.

The current condition of the rolling mill is poor. Abandoned for some unknown period of time, the building has not been properly maintained and is in a deteriorating state.

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Braselton Rolling Mill was constructed ca. 1900. While the architect and builders are unknown, the mill was constructed by the Braselton Brothers. The mill has a two & one-half

story rectangular-shaped plan and faces east toward State Route 53. It was historically used for agricultural and industrial purposes as a rolling mill. Though the mill is currently unoccupied, it retains the potential for continued use as an educational facility interpreting the agricultural and milling history of Braselton. The mill has been owned by Braselton Ventures LLC since June 2005. Previous owners include Madison Ventures LTD, Limex LLC, and Braselton Acquisitions.

Braselton is located in southwestern Jackson County in northeast Georgia. Jackson County is the state's twenty-second county, created in 1796 from portions of Franklin County that was originally the home of the Cherokee and Creek Indians.

Jackson County
Following the end of the Revolutionary War, veterans and other pioneers began settling in parts of Franklin County, one of Georgia's original eleven counties, in 1784. As the population increased, citizens in the southwestern portion of the county made application to the state assembly for the creation of a new county. On February 11, 1796, Georgia Governor Jared Irwin signed the act creating the new county.

The county was named Jackson for James Jackson, who was a Revolutionary War general and Georgia statesman. Jackson served six years with the Georgia state forces and participated in the unsuccessful defense of Savannah in 1778, the Battle of Cowpens in 1781, and the recoveries of Augusta (1781) and Savannah (1782). He went on to serve in the Georgia Legislature after the war and was elected to the first Federal Congress, where he became one of the first Jeffersonians in opposition to Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists. He later served in the U.S. Senate before returning to Georgia to overturn the Yazoo Act that had sold Georgia's western lands to unscrupulous speculators. He later served as Georgia's Governor from 1798 to 1801.

Early Towns
The first settlement in Jackson County was Groaning Rock in 1784. The town changed its name to Harmony Grove in 1825 and again to Commerce in 1904. The Native American community of Thomocoggan was renamed Jefferson after Thomas Jefferson and became the new county seat in 1806 following the creation of Clarke County from portions of Jackson County in 1803. Other communities developed along the pattern of railroad lines in Jackson County, including Maysville in 1879, Arcade, Nicholson, Pendergrass, Talmo, Hoschton, and Braselton.

Braselton
Braselton was founded in 1884 following the marriage of William Henry Braselton, Sr. to Susan Hosch on December 11, 1867. The Braselton's lived in Hoschton, Georgia on the Hosch family plantation for a number of years following their marriage. It was there that their first two sons, Henry and Green, were born.

The Braselton family first began farming the present site of Braselton after the Braselton's purchased 800 acres of land near the Hosch home from G.W. Smith on December 8, 1876. The

family lived in a log cabin on their property, where a third son, John Oliver, and two daughters, Belle and Lena, were born.

Braselton Stores
The Town of Braselton began when John Oliver Braselton, the youngest son of William and Susan, decided at the age of eight years old that he would become a storekeeper. In 1887, John's father, William Braselton, built a small six-by-six foot structure to be his son's store. From this small building in the front yard of their house, John sold some foodstuffs including sweet crackers and sardines, snuff and tobacco, and rock candy to local farm hands. John sold a grand total of $97.41 worth of goods and merchandise in his first year of business.

After the first store was destroyed in 1888 by a runaway horse and buggy, a second larger store measuring 14' x 16' was constructed. This second store was large enough to have a window. (3Bs, 60) That same year, John invited his older brother, Green Braselton, to join the store. And by 1891 the oldest brother, William Henry, Jr. joined the business. They became locally known as the Three B's. The house currently located in the overgrown lot on the northeast corner of State Route 53 and State Route 124 behind the Post Office was originally built as John Braselton's second one-room store. This building was later enlarged into a residence during the historic period.

With their continued success, the Braselton's replaced the second store with a larger third store in 1891 measuring 22' x 50'. As business continued to increase, the brothers added twenty-two additional feet to this third store.

The Braselton Brothers built their stores close to the junction of State Route 53 and State Route 124 and the Gainesville, Jefferson and Social Circle Railroad. The roads had been in place for some time prior, but the rail line had been built in 1882 and spurred growth in the area. Local farmers had access to shipping and receiving large cargoes of agricultural goods. Before the completion of the railroad through Braselton, farmers used the freight station located in Hoschton, a town just south of Braselton.

In 1902, a side-track of the railroad was installed along what is today Wall Street behind the store. The brothers had erected a large 24' x 120' warehouse along the spur track to store merchandise that they purchased by the railroad car-load.

Business continued to increase so the brothers erected a fourth store. Construction began on the new brick building on March 1, 1904 and was completed on September 1st of that same year. An article in the February 18, 1907 *Atlanta Saturday Evening News* entitled "The Wonderful Progress of 3 Young Men" described the new store as having "every modern convenience and is the most substantial up-to-date and prettiest storehouse in northeast Georgia." This article also described the building as follows:

> "This handsome new brick store is 60 x 95 feet, with 14 feet walls and a basement 30 x 60 feet. The main floor is divided into three departments—one for dry goods, notions and shoes; one for millinery and clothing; one for groceries and the basement for heavy groceries. It has a solid plate glass front of 60 feet with iron columns made at the Winder Foundry and Machine Works, which firm had to compete with a large plant in Evansville, Ind. to secure this contract for furnishing the columns. The entire building, including basement, is lighted by acetylene gas, requiring 730 candles. This is the brightest light known and makes this large store, with its different departments, a thing of beauty when lighted up at night. The building also has two handsome and well arranged offices, one of them being the private office. The dry goods department is one of the prettiest store rooms in Georgia, being 36 x 60 feet. The Millinery and Clothing department, 20 by 60 feet, is a model of beauty and artistic design. The grocery department 30 x 36 feet, is equal in appearance to most stores and is fitted with heavy groceries. Mr. S.B. Baker, who superintended the building of this magnificent store, can afford to feel proud of the construction and workmanship, as it cannot be surpassed." [1]

By the time this new brick store was constructed, the business had expanded from candy to dry goods, notions, shoes, millinery, clothing, and groceries. Already the largest building in Braselton, the store was expanded to 28,000 square feet in 1910 with the addition of a three-story building to provide additional space for the store and offices.

By 1921, the Braselton Brothers Store housed the store as well as the local post office, the offices and freight depot of the Gainesville Midland Railroad, the local express office, Braselton Bank Company, Braselton Chamber of Commerce, a wholesale general merchandise company known as the Braselton Commission Company, and space for over 500 bales of cotton in the warehouse section of the building. By 1922, the Braselton Mercantile Company was doing $250,000 per year in business and the company motto was "Dealers in Everything." [2] With the rise in the automobile, the Braselton Brothers slogan changed to "It will pay you to drive miles to our big store and save money." By 1944, additional businesses included undertaker, barber shop, filling station, garage, planing mill, and blacksmith. Also during the 1940s and 1950s, the brothers added two additional one-story masonry sections to the side of the original building. The first section (now the middle section) housed the Super Market department and the second section (now the far left section) housed the Furniture and Appliance departments.

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[1] Leta G. Braselton. *Treasured Memories of the Braseltons "3B's";* Atlanta, Georgia: The Conger Printing Co., Inc., 1974; 61.
[2] Ibid, 76

Agriculture
Agriculture has played a dominant economic role in Georgia's history for more than 250 years, beginning with the settlement by General James Oglethorpe and the English colonists in 1733. Early crops that were grown include corn, silk, indigo, and rice. Cotton and tobacco became the primary crops after the Revolutionary War, with cotton soon dominating agricultural production following the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 in Savannah. By 1860 there were 68,000 farms in the state producing some 700,000 bales of cotton. Cotton continued to dominate production after the Civil War, with more than 725,000 bales produced in 1870.

Braselton was one of the richest and most fertile farming sections of Georgia during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Crops grown in the region included corn, pea-hay, sugar cane, and cotton. William Henry Braselton, father to the 3Bs, had been a successful farmer during his lifetime, and the brothers continued that success. They continued to produce crops on their farm of 1,800 acres and produced on average anywhere from 700 to 800 bushels of wheat, 150 to 200 bales of cotton, and thousands of bushels of corn per year. [3] They produced and distributed hundreds of tons of their own private label brand of fertilizer known as the BBB brand.

Industry
The presence of the railroad spurred industrial development to take advantage of the agricultural production of the area. In 1900, the Braselton Brothers had constructed the large rolling mill to the south of the store on the west side of State Route 53. The rolling mill, known as the Enterprise Flour and Grist Mill, was one of the earliest fully-operating rolling mills in northeast Georgia and survives today as a rare representative example of an early-twentieth century steam-powered rolling mill in Georgia. According to the 1907 article in the Atlanta Saturday Evening News, the rolling mill had the capacity to produce 50 to 75 barrels of flour and 300 bushels of meal per day. The brothers sold their products under the labels of the "Three B's" and "Fast Flyer." [4]

Following the construction in 1902 of the railroad spur along Wall Street described above, the Braselton Brothers constructed a Cotton Gin along the siding during the early 1900s. The gin contained a complete Murray suction ginning system and had the capacity to gin some 2,000 bales of cotton per season. [5] The ability to ship cotton directly from Braselton made it possible to keep more money in the community rather than pay dealers in Gainesville, Jefferson or Athens to process the cotton. This led to an expansion of the family businesses and an overall increase in wealth for the Braselton family and residents.

The Braselton Brothers played the central role in bringing the new technology of the telephone to Braselton in the early-twentieth century. In 1912, the brothers partnered with Judge R. B. Russell

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[3] Robbie L. Bettis. *Passing: Stories through the history of Hoschton and Braselton, Georgia*. Auburn, Georgia: NHB Publishing, LLC, 2006; 82.
[4] Ibid, 82
[5] Braselton, 61

of Winder to purchase an existing telephone system from Hoschton that had begun there in 1907. The Hoschton Telephone Company headquarters with its "plug or drop" system switchboard were later transferred to a small two-room house in Braselton in 1927. The telephone service grew from just five subscribers in the early 1900s to some 230 by 1957. [6]

Braselton Incorporated

Braselton was incorporated on August 21, 1916, with W.H. Braselton as mayor. The town limits were defined as follows upon incorporation:

> "The inhabitants of the territory, embraced within the limits of one half of one mile in every direction (except the southern limits herein after described) from the center of the crossroads of what is known as the Hog Mountain and Hurricane Shoals public road, and the Gainesville and Monroe public road, said crossroads being near the store of Braselton Brothers, in the county of Jackson, and the southern limits on the southeast shall run south." [7]

Shortly after incorporation, the Braselton Brothers paid $40,000 for the construction of a high school in 1919 (though the school was destroyed the following year during a storm). Braselton continued to grow during the 1920s with the construction of more housing and commercial buildings.

The next year, 1920, was one of the worst years for the Braselton Brothers. Not only did the cotton market crash in Georgia and the south, but a tornado swept through Braselton destroying the brand new school, the rear fourth of the brick store, and the old frame store, among other buildings in town. In addition to the $110,000 loss from the physical destruction caused by the tornado, the Braselton Brothers lost $150,000 from customers unable to pay their bills at the store.

While the financial losses from the cotton crash and tornado were devastating, the Braselton Brothers would recover, not only due to their continued tenacity but also with help from many people from bankers to their customers. When the time came to pay their loans to the banks, the bankers told them not to worry and sent $500 to help with repairs to the store. In addition, many of their customers sent money, usually in nickels and dimes. All told, they received some $8,000 in gifts to help rebuild their damaged store. But in true 3B fashion, the brothers did not spend any of this money on the store, but instead donated it toward the rebuilding of the school that had also been destroyed by the tornado.

The depression in the 1930s posed little threat for the local economy because the agricultural products were comprised of staples rather than luxuries. The Braselton Brothers' businesses

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[6] Ibid, 75

[7] Angela Gary and Jana Adams. *Our Time and Place: A History of Jackson County, Georgia.* Jefferson, Georgia: Main Street Newspapers, Inc., 2000; 2-4.

continued to thrive during this period as their customers came from surrounding counties. As in most agricultural areas, the local businesses extended credit through the year and were paid when the crops were sold. Braselton did better than most communities in this endeavor because the Braselton Brothers charged much less than other merchants for this carrying fee. When most Georgia merchants were charging $8.00 to carry a sack of flour worth $5.00, the Braseltons were charging their customers $5.50. The net result was that more people came to Braselton to transact their business rather than going to other nearby towns of similar and even larger size.

In 1939, Braselton was a thriving town in northeast Georgia. In addition to the store, the Braseltons were operating the warehouse for cotton, cotton seed, and fertilizer; the rolling mill and gin; shops; filling station; marble yard; depot; post office; private bank; and the high school.[8]

While cotton production was declining during the late 1930s and 1940s, Braselton residents transitioned from agricultural to manufacturing jobs. Textile mills, manufacturing plants, and poultry dressing plants moved into the area. Poultry production began in the county around 1927 and has increased tremendously over the past forty years such that Northeast Georgia has become one of the nation’s leading poultry-producing regions.

Following the end of World War II, the importance of Braselton shifted from a regional agricultural business center to that of a more regional shopping center. Braselton was an established mid-point between Gainesville and Winder, which resulted in commercial traffic moving through the town. Braselton became a convenient shipping and mercantile center for produce and goods during the mid twentieth century. Following the establishment of the large regional shopping malls, the Braselton commercial core slowly started to decline.

As late as 1990, the Braselton Brothers Store still housed a grocery, hardware, furniture, appliance, and dry goods store. Today, the Braselton Store houses several retail stores including the Braselton Tile Company and Braselton Antiques Shop.

Despite the changes to the Braselton commercial core, the town has grown both physically and economically in more recent years. Having expanded its boundaries, major attractions and companies located in Braselton, turning the once rural farming community and commercial center into a thriving residential and manufacturing area in northeast Georgia. These major attractions and companies include Chateau Elan, a 3,500 acre resort and winery; the Panoz Motor Sports Group and Panoz Auto Development Company that builds the handmade Panoz Esperante sports car; the International Motor Sports Association; the Mayfield Dairy Visitors Center; and Haverty's Distribution Center.

[8] Braselton, 92

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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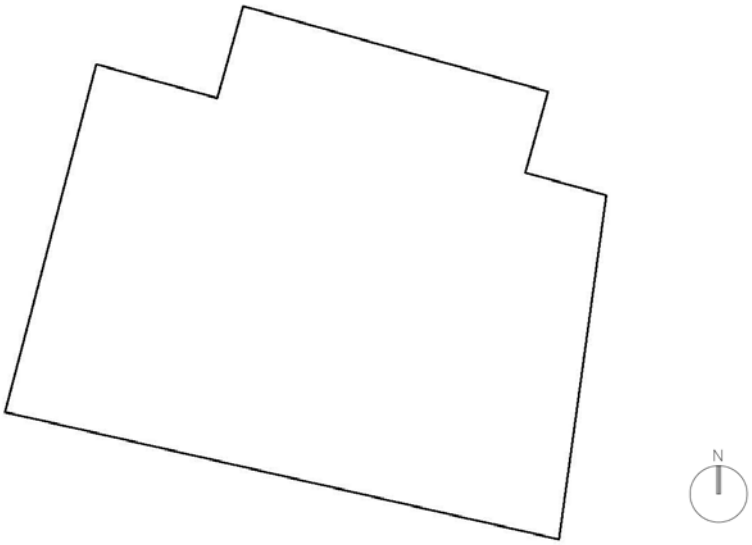
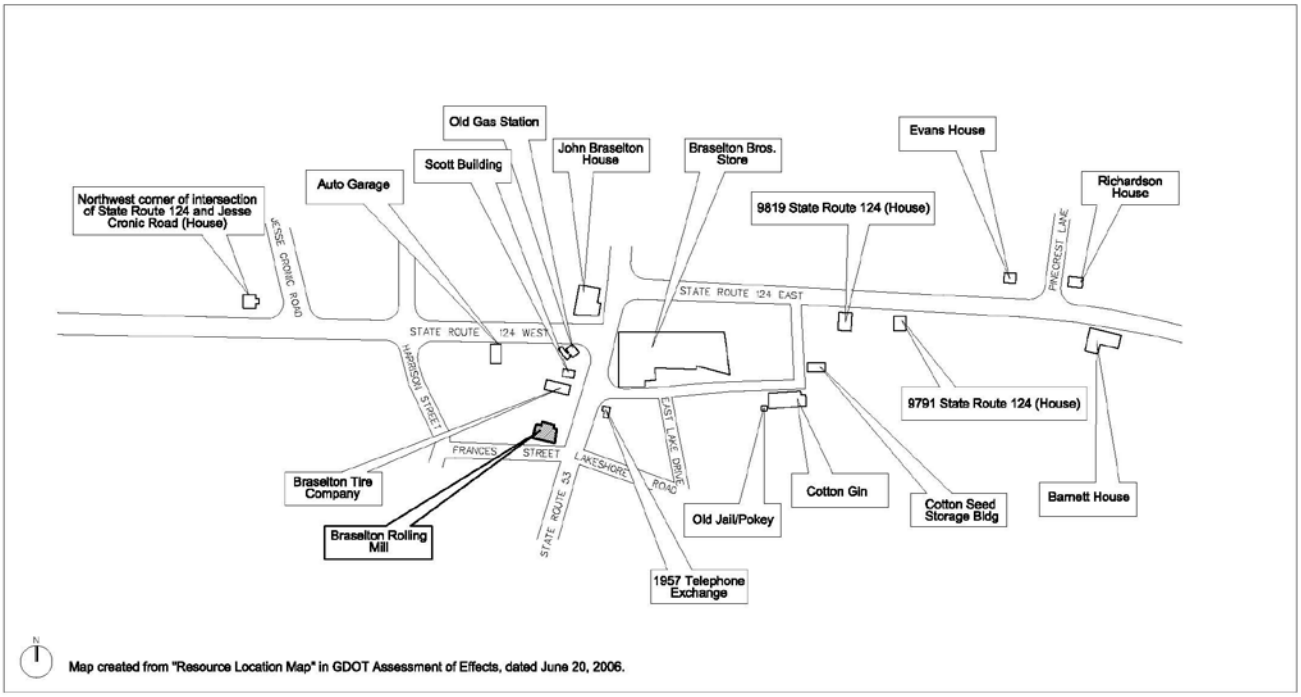
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS documentation was completed as mitigation for the National Register of Historic Places listed Braselton Historic District that is being negatively impacted by the Intersection Realignment of State Route 53 and State Route 124, Project Number TSAPO-S006-00(782), P.I.N. S006782, HP 050621-004, Jackson County, Department of the Army (DA) Permit Application Number 200501831. The measured drawings were prepared by Jihan Stanford, preservation architect with Lord Aeck Sargent, Inc. The photography was produced by David Diener, director of graphics and photographer with New South Associates. This report was prepared by Glen H. Bennett, preservation planner with Lord Aeck Sargent, Inc. These records were produced in 2009-2010.

Sketch Plan:
Delineator: Jihan Stanford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