

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

William Barker Whiskey Bonding Barn Listed in National Register *Late 19th century structure housed aging whiskey before sale.*

ATLANTA (June 10, 2008) – The William Barker Whiskey Bonding Barn, located on Old Zebulon Road in the Molena vicinity, Pike County, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 12, 2008. The nomination is supported by the property owners, Pike Historic Preservation, Inc., who also prepared the nomination materials.

Bonding barns or warehouses for the storage of whiskey were established by Congress in 1868 across the whiskey-producing region in order to delay the payment of federal excise taxes while the whiskey was aging for up to four years. The whiskey was stored in charred oak barrels until it was ready for sale.

William Thomas Barker (1839-1902), a farmer in Pike County, built the whiskey bonding barn circa 1870. An 1898-1899 *Georgia Gazetteer* lists at least five distilleries in Pike County. This building most likely served as the local bonding warehouse for those distilleries. The barn served as a bonding barn from the time of its construction probably until the late 1800s or early 1900s when the 1897 Bottled-in-Bond Act established more rigorous stipulations for whiskey production. The barn is significant in the area of commerce for its association with the production and sale of whiskey in Pike County.

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Upon Barker's death in 1902, the barn passed to his wife, Amanda, who used it for cotton storage. The property then passed through several family members until it was sold in 1951 to Jack Pilkenton who raised turkeys on the property. In 2005, Pike Historic Preservation, Inc. purchased the barn plus three acres with plans to rehabilitate the barn for use as event space and photograph gallery. The organization recently received a Georgia Heritage Grant from the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources to repair the barn's floor.

The William Barker Whiskey Bonding Barn is significant in the area of architecture as a good, intact, and relatively rare example of a brick barn in Georgia. The barn was constructed with thick brick walls and limited access which increased security and provided insulation for the aging whiskey. The barn retains its historic exterior and interior materials, craftsmanship, and design and has changed very little since its construction in c.1870.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. According to Richard Cloues, deputy state historic preservation officer, listing in the National Register recognizes a property's significance and ensures that the property will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, owners of income producing National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives.

For more information on the National Register and other preservation programs, contact the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources at 404-656-2840 or visit our Web site at www.gashpo.org.

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