

BRASELTON

HABS No. GA-2404

Main intersection of State Route 124 and State Route 53

Braselton

Jackson County

Georgia

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

100 Alabama Street, SW

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## BRASELTON

HABS NO. GA-2404

- Location:** The Braselton National Register Historic District is located at the intersection of Georgia State Route 53 and State Route 124, Braselton, Jackson County, Georgia.
- U.S.G.S. Auburn Quadrangle (7.5)  
Georgia – Jackson County  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
- A. 17.244539.3777956
  - B. 17.245657.3777997
  - C. 17.245717.3777799
  - D. 17.245189.3777380
  - E. 17.244554.3777547
- \*See resource location map on page 15.
- Present Owner:** Various private and public owners, including the Town of Braselton
- Present Occupant:** Various private and public entities
- Significance:** The Braselton National Register of Historic Places Historic District is an excellent example of a late nineteenth and early twentieth century Georgia town founded by a single family and supported on the strength of agricultural production. Braselton is significant in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, agriculture, industry, commerce, and community planning and development.
- The town is significant in community planning and development for the direct relationship between the Braselton family and the development of the town. Braselton is significant in architecture and landscape architecture for its excellent collection of residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial buildings from the late nineteenth and twentieth century in their landscaped settings.
- Braselton is significant in agriculture and industry for its collection of residences with associated agricultural outbuilding and agricultural/ industrial buildings, including the John Braselton House and associated outbuildings, Cotton Gin, Cotton Seed Storage Building, and Braselton Rolling Mill. The town is significant in commerce for its role historically as a commercial

center for retail goods and services in the region. It is significant for its collection of attached and free-standing commercial resources representing the economic boom of cotton during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the automobile-related resources representing the use of Georgia State Route 53 as a popular north-south transportation corridor.

## PART I. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Braselton Historic District encompasses the historic commercial, agricultural, industrial, community landmark, and residential resources of Braselton, Georgia within an approximately sixty acre area constructed from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century. The district is located around the intersection of State Route 53 and State Route 124. This area was historically the commercial center of town, located adjacent to the Braselton Brothers Store and other commercial buildings.

### *Commercial Buildings*

The historic commercial buildings are located near the center of the district. The primary group of commercial buildings is located at the southeast corner of State Route 53 and State Route 124 and is oriented facing north towards Georgia State Route 124. These buildings, constructed during the first half of the twentieth century from 1904 with additions in 1910, 1940s, and 1950s included the Braselton Brothers Store and associated buildings. This collection of attached one-story brick masonry and one-story free-standing frame commercial resources were the fourth set of commercial buildings constructed by the Braselton family. Prior to these buildings, earlier wood-frame buildings built by the Braselton brothers were located on this site. The existing historic commercial buildings are architecturally distinguished by stepped parapet roofs with terra-cotta coping, bands of large display windows with transoms, recessed entrances, and historic commercial signs.

The Braselton Brothers Store is architecturally significant as an excellent representative example of the multiple resource type of historic commercial buildings as defined in the Georgia Resources Survey guide. This type of historic resource typically includes two or more one-story attached units built together with identical facades and storefronts, and usually three-bays wide. This commercial building type was generally built in Georgia from the 1890s into the 1930s. The character-defining features of the Braselton Brothers Store include a row of one-story brick stores with flat roofs and parapets, terra-cotta coping, historic signs, bands of windows with transoms, large display windows, recessed main entrances, and three-bay front facades.

A second group of historic commercial resources is located at the southwest corner of State Route 53 and State Route 124. These buildings, constructed in the early twentieth century, are associated with the increased use of the automobile during the historic period, and include a historic Gas Station, the Scott Building, Braselton Tire Company, and Auto Garage. The 1925 Gas Station is an excellent example of an early-twentieth century gas station with its low-pitched hipped roof with incorporated canopy, overhanging eaves, and three-bay central block. The ca.

1920 Auto Garage is a good example of an early twentieth century automobile garage with its one-story height, front gable roof, wood frame construction, and two large bay openings. The 1935 Braselton Tire Company is another good example of an early twentieth century auto garage with its one-and-a-half-story height, front gable roof, wood frame construction, and a large single-bay garage opening.

#### *Agricultural and Industrial Buildings*

The historic agricultural and industrial resources, constructed between 1900 and 1930, are located throughout the district and are primarily associated with the production of cotton during the early twentieth century. These buildings include the John Braselton House and Agricultural Outbuildings, the Braselton Rolling Mill, Cotton Gin, and Cotton Seed Storage Building. Cotton was the primary cash crop in the Braselton area and the increase in production during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century stimulated the growth of Braselton. Although not a county seat or the largest community in the county, Braselton served as a commercial and industrial center for portions of three counties, including western Jackson, northwestern Barrow, and southeastern Hall. Its regional prominence was due in part to its location along the railroad and in part to the aggressive marketing and salesmanship of the Braselton brothers. From the 1890s through the mid twentieth century, Braselton served as a processing, market and shipping point for agricultural products, particularly cotton and flour.

The John O. Braselton House with associated agricultural buildings represents the agricultural development of Braselton. The complex consists of the house, built in the Colonial Revival style in 1904, transverse barns, smokehouses, tenant house, and shed. Historically, the town had agricultural fields both within and outside its city limits. Intact historic examples of terraced agricultural fields remain within the district.

Historically, the Gainesville Midland Railroad (a section of the Central of Georgia Railroad) was located along State Route 53 with a spur rail located along Wall Street. To complement the cultivation of cotton in Braselton, the Braselton family constructed several cotton-related buildings along the railroad spur. The Braselton Rolling Mill, Cotton Gin, and several cotton warehouses and compresses to store and process flour and cotton. The ca. 1900 Braselton Rolling Mill is significant as an example of an early twentieth century rolling mill with its two-and-a-half-story height, side-gable metal roof, weatherboard exterior siding, and one-bay side additions. The ca. 1900 Cotton Gin is significant as an example of an early twentieth century cotton gin with its two-story height, side-gable metal roof, metal exterior siding, covered wagon entry, and wrap-around porch. The Cotton Seed Storage Building is significant as an example of an early twentieth century agricultural warehouse with its two-story height, side-gable roof, and timber/wood frame construction. The railroad spur and cotton press and warehouse buildings are no longer extant.

#### *Community Planning and Development Buildings*

The district is significant in community planning and development for the direct relationship between the Braselton family and the development of the town. The Braselton area was settled

by W.H. Braselton and his wife Susan Frances Hosch in 1876. Thereafter, the Braselton family was responsible for the construction of several of the residences that housed members of the Braselton family and their employees. The family was also responsible for the construction of the commercial row, Braselton Rolling Mill, cotton gin and compress; and financed the construction for the Braselton High School and Gymnasium.

The remaining community landmark buildings and sites include the steps and site of the former Braselton High School, former Home Economics Building (now Braselton Heritage and Visitors Center), the Old Jail/Pokey, and the Braselton Cemetery.

The high school was constructed in the 1920s with funding provided by the Braselton family. Built in the late 1920s, the Visitor Center building was once the Home Economics Building for the high school and later served as the Braselton Library. Despite this change in use, the Visitor Center serves as a good representative example of the type of school building used in early twentieth century Braselton, and exhibits such character-defining features as a front-gable roof, wood-frame construction, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, and six-over-six double-hung windows, projecting gable-roof front porch, and wood shingle siding.

The high school has been demolished, but the concrete steps leading to the school and parts of a low concrete curb that outline the school remain intact. The site of the school has not been developed and the spatial relationship between the site of the school and the former Home Economics Building is still clearly discernible. A gymnasium constructed in 1926 that was historically associated with the high school existed adjacent to the school site until 2005 when it was demolished.

The Braselton family cemetery is located in the far northwest corner of the historic district off of Jesse Cronin Road. The cemetery was founded by the Braselton family in 1929. The entrance is marked by two stone decorative markers featuring square bases supporting large rubble-faced cylindrical spheres. A similar marker, smooth in finish, is located near the center of the cemetery with the inscription "BRASELTON 1929." The cemetery features large mature hardwood trees, foundation shrubs, curvilinear roads, and decorative stone headstones in various sizes.

### *Residential Buildings*

The historic residential resources are located along the roads radiating from the commercial, agricultural, and industrial center of town. The historic residential buildings within the district date from 1890 to the late 1950s. They vary from wood-framed vernacular buildings to high-style buildings with formally landscaped yards. The significant building types represented within the district include central hallway, gable ell cottage, saddlebag, Georgian cottage, Queen Anne cottage, Georgian House, bungalow, and ranch. The architectural styles represented within the district include Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, English Vernacular Revival, Craftsman, and Folk Victorian. These residential resources share common site features, including equal setbacks and informally landscaped yards with mature trees, foundation plantings, and grass lawns.

While the majority of residential dwellings are one-story wood frame and brick masonry dwellings, three large historic residences associated with the Braselton family are intact in the district. The two-story John Braselton House, constructed in 1900, is a two-story Georgian House type built in the Colonial Revival style. Architecturally, it is an excellent representative example of the Georgian House building type and the Colonial Revival architectural style. The Georgian House building type generally features a two-story height and square floor plan; the roof is usually hipped but sometimes gabled, and chimneys are sometimes in the exterior walls but usually in the interior of the house. The interior plan typically features a central hallway with two rooms located on either side of the hallway. The Georgian House type was popular from the first decades of the nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. Most examples, however, were constructed during the years 1850-1860 and 1900-1930.

Most houses designed in the Colonial Revival style of architecture are symmetrical, with a central entryway elaborated with a pediment supported by pilasters or columns. The roof may be hipped or side-gabled with dormers. Windows typically have double-hung sashes, usually with six-over-six or nine-over-nine panes and may be paired. The Colonial Revival style was popular in Georgia for a long period from the 1890s through the 1940s and beyond.

The character-defining features of the John Braselton House include its truncated hipped roof with dormer, interior chimneys, full-width one- and two-story wrap-around porches supported by columns with Ionic capitals, one-over-one double hung windows and entrances featuring slender columns, fanlights and sidelights.

The John Braselton House is also representative of the “landscape of work” historic residential landscape. This type of landscape typically includes a farmhouse, outbuildings, outdoor activity areas, well, small “kitchen garden” in a side or rear yard, agricultural fields and woodlots, and sometimes a small grove of fruit or nut trees, all typically linked by networks of paths, fences, and functional sight lines. The landscape of work occurs primarily on farms of all sizes dating from the eighteenth century to the present. Character-defining features of this landscape type present at the John Braselton House include concrete and stone retaining walls, stone piers marking the main drive, large hardwood trees, grass lawn with foundation plantings located near the house; agricultural fields and wooded lots and a system of roads and walks connecting the main house to the outbuildings and fields.

The Green Braselton House is located on State Route 53 to the north of the John Braselton House. Constructed in 1910, this house is another excellent example of the two-story Georgian House type built in the Colonial Revival style. Its character-defining features include its hipped roof, interior chimneys with decorative patterned brickwork, slightly projecting second-story front bay, single and paired nine-over-nine double hung wood windows, one-story wrap-around porch with wide entablature supported by single and paired classical columns, and trabeated main entrance. The landscaping includes large mature hardwood trees, grass lawn with foundation plantings, and circular driveway.

The third Braselton residence, the W.H. Braselton House, was constructed in 1913 to the south of the first two houses in the Neoclassical Revival style and is today used as the Braselton City Hall. The W.H. Braselton House is an excellent example of the two-story Georgian House built in the Neoclassical Revival style. The Neoclassical Revival style, popular in Georgia, was part of the revival of interest in classically inspired architecture as well as a reaction to earlier Victorian styles. The most common feature of the style is a dominant full-height front portico with classical columns. The full-height entry portico is often coupled with a one-story full-façade porch. Other architectural features typically include classical cornice with dentils or modillions, low-pitched and hipped roof with a balustrade, porte-cochere and side porches supported by columns, one-over-one double hung windows, and elaborate main entrance with pilasters, columns, fanlights, sidelights, and transoms. This style was built in Georgia's rural areas, small towns, and cities from the 1890s through the 1930s. Character-defining features of the W. H. Braselton House include its low-pitched roof with balustrade, classical cornice with modillions, dominant full-height front portico with classical columns and second-story center bay balcony, one-story side porches supported by classical columns, one-over-one double hung windows, and trabeated main entrance.

The historic district is also comprised of several good examples of vernacular building types, with varying degrees of stylistic ornament. One of the oldest buildings remaining with the historic district was built ca. 1887. It is located in an overgrown lot on the northeast corner of State Route 53 and State Route 124 behind the existing Post Office. Originally built as a one-room store by John Braselton, the building was later enlarged to function as a central hall residential dwelling. The central hall is a common house type found throughout Georgia. Primarily constructed during the hundred years from 1830-1930, many central hall residences were constructed during the periods of 1840-1860 and 1870-1890. The central hall is typified by the central hall interior floor plan with gable roof and exterior end chimneys. The character-defining features of this house include the interior central hallway, side-gable roof, weatherboard exterior cladding, and gable-end chimney.

Another good example of a vernacular residential dwelling is located on Jesse Cronic Road (formerly known as Liberty Church Road) to the north of its intersection with State Route 124. This ca. 1900 house is an example of the saddlebag house type. The saddlebag is one of the most distinctive and easily recognizable house types in Georgia, and has a one-story, one room deep floor plan with a central chimney flanked by two rooms and a gabled roof. Saddlebags were generally constructed during three time periods in Georgia, including the earliest saddlebag houses constructed in rural areas during the 1830s and 1840s; saddlebags constructed in the late-nineteenth century on the outlying fringes of Georgia towns; and during the period of mill village construction from 1910-1930. The character-defining features of this saddlebag include its side-gable metal roof, weatherboard exterior cladding, full-width shed porch, centrally located chimney, and two-bay front façade with each bay featuring a main door and window.

Residence A, located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Jesse Cronic Road and State Route 124, is a good example of a side-gable bungalow with Craftsman-style elements. The

Craftsman style, the most popular early-twentieth century style in Georgia, was a break with the popular revivals of historical styles. Craftsman style houses were constructed throughout Georgia in rural, small town, and urban settings from the 1910s through the 1930s, and generally included a low-pitched gabled or hipped roof, wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, decorative brackets or braces, porches with short square columns set on piers, and windows with multi-pane sashes over a single-pane sash. The character-defining features of this bungalow include its side-gable roof, overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, wood eave brackets, projecting-gable front porch, and irregular floor plan.

Another good example of vernacular building types is the 1957 Telephone Exchange Building. Architecturally significant as an example of the gable ell building type with Craftsmen elements, the building includes character-defining features such as its gable roof, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters. This building is further significant as the home of the Braselton Telephone System beginning in the mid-1920s.

The historic Evans House, located on the northwest corner of the intersection of State Route 124 and Pinecrest Lane is a good example of a front-gable bungalow with Craftsman-style elements situated within an intact historic landscape design known as the ornamental yard. The character-defining architectural features of this house include its low-pitched front-gable roof, overhanging eaves, enclosed integral front porch, wood eave brackets, and wood porch supports on brick piers. The historic setting of this residence is a good representative example of the ornamental yard, exemplified by the stone walls of the walkway from State Route 124 to the elevated front yard, low concrete wall outlining the yard, and foundation plantings and grass yard.

The house located at 9630 State Route 124 (north side of State Route 124) is a good example of a Georgian Cottage house type located in its historic landscaped setting. The Georgian Cottage is the most long-lived house type in Georgia, and consists of a central hallway with two rooms on either side, and typically has a hipped or gabled roof with interior chimneys. The character-defining features of this ca. 1900 Georgian Cottage include the side-gable roof, square-shaped floor plan, and interior central hallway. The setting of the house includes ornamental yard elements such as the low concrete and stone wall with steps leading to the elevated front yard and grass yard with foundation plantings.

## PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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 Braseltons 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.”<sup>1</sup>

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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.

### *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 “Three Bs,” 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.<sup>3</sup> They produced and distributed hundreds of tons of their own private label brand of fertilizer known as the BBB brand.

---

<sup>1</sup> Leta G. Braselton. *Treasured Memories of the Braseltons “3B’s”*; Atlanta, Georgia: The Conger Printing Co., Inc., 1974; 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 76

<sup>3</sup> Robbie L. Bettis. *Passing: Stories through the history of Hoschton and Braselton, Georgia*. Auburn, Georgia: NHB Publishing, LLC, 2006; 82.

### *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.”<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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 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.<sup>6</sup>

### *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.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 82

<sup>5</sup> Braselton, 61

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 75

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

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 “Three B” 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 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.

---

<sup>8</sup> Braselton, 92

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.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bettis, Robbie L. *Passing: Stories through the history of Hoschton and Braselton, Georgia*. Auburn, Georgia: NHB Publishing, LLC, 2006.

“Braselton”, *New Georgia Encyclopedia*: (January 2009),  
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-3517&hl=y>

*The Braselton Historic District*; National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1998: on file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Braselton, Leta G. *Treasured Memories of the Braseltons “3B’s”*; Atlanta, Georgia: The Conger Printing Co., Inc., 1974.

Braselton, Leta G. *Yesterday and Today: The Braselton Family Album*. Atlanta, Georgia: The Conger Printing Co., Inc, 1982.

“Cotton Ginning and Rural Life in Georgia.” A booklet from the Georgia Agrirama (the State Museum of Agriculture) and Westville Historic Handicrafts, Inc.

Dak, Mary Braselton, ed. *Ancestors and Descendants of William Henry Braselton*. Gainesville Litho Company: Gainesville, Georgia, 1974.

Elrod, Frary. *Historical Notes on Jackson County, Georgia*: Jefferson, Georgia, 1967.

Gary, Angela and Jana Adams. *Our Time and Place: A History of Jackson County, Georgia*. Jefferson, Georgia: Main Street Newspapers, Inc., 2000.

*Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings*, 1991; on file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Harris, Tina, ed. *Portraits of a Southern Place: A Pictorial History of Early Jackson County, Georgia*. Jackson County Historical Society: Commerce, Georgia, 2006.

“Jackson County”, *New Georgia Encyclopedia*: (January 2009),  
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2351&hl=y>

Jackson County Tax Records; Jackson County Administrative Center

Steward, William C. *Gone to Georgia: Jackson and Gwinnett Counties and their Neighbors in the Western Migration*. Washington, D.C. 1965.

*Tilling the Earth: Georgia's Historic Agricultural Heritage*, 2001; on file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

White, W.E., ed. *The Early History of Jackson County, Georgia*. Atlanta 1914.

#### 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.

