

The Little Red Schoolhouse:

The Little Red Schoolhouse was built in the Bromley/Blakeley Community in the early part of the twentieth century by the citizens in that area. The African American families there provided the lumber and labor to construct the building according to the Alabama State Plans for one room buildings in rural communities throughout the state. The school system then provided the teacher salary and support for the classes, grades 1-8 held in the building.

The school was built in 1920. The students had been going to school in some homes in the area prior to this. Ms. Rebecca Burke Thompkins was instrumental in having the school built on Magnolia Church Road for children in the area, many kin to her. She taught at the school until the Douglasville School was opened in 1950 and she was transferred there. Her husband converted a farm truck to go pick up children in the Bromley area. He would cross Bromley Creek when there was no bridge. The school was built with the state approved plan for one room schoolhouses and most likely funding was provided by the Julius T. Rosenwald Negro School Fund. The Black schools in the county numbered 14 at one time, and were supervised by a "Jeanes Teacher", Ms. Nellie Clarke. The Anna T. Jeanes fund was a program in conjunction with the Rosenwald fund to provide teachers for children of former slaves. Mr. and Mrs. Tompkins were employees of Baldwin County School System.

The local residents call this school Bromley, but the school system records name it Blakeley. Bromley School was for white children and was across Hwy 225; it is now Cook Chapel Presbyterian Church. The Little Red Schoolhouse was moved to White House Fork in about 1970 to accommodate the extra kindergarten classes added at the time and as a part of the integration movement. It served as a kindergarten classroom there until Delta School was built in 1990; and the school building was saved from demolition by Dr. Leslie Smith, former superintendent and Mr. Sam Watson, descendant of the Tompkins. The Little Red Schoolhouse Foundation was instrumental in its preservation and furnishings during the early 1990s.

The rationale for moving the school to its new home at the Baldwin County Bicentennial Park is the historical significance of the building which is of major importance to the heritage of Baldwin County. Bicentennial Park affords a more historical setting in nature, complimenting the Historic Montpelier Methodist Church, the General Store and the Blacksmith Shop already on the premises. For almost 100 years, The Little Red Schoolhouse has played an important role in Baldwin County's history. The Baldwin County Commission hopes to continue to preserve its legacy for decades to come.