

corner of 11th and High streets. The congregation is one of the oldest in North Alabama, established at the end of the Civil War by the Elder W. E. Northcross. Northcross was a Colbert County native, born in 1840 and ordained into the Baptist ministry in 1867 by Rev. Slater (white) and Rev. Henry Bynum (African American). Cited for pioneering many churches in Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, and Morgan counties, Northcross often worked alongside Dr. Joseph Shackelford, a white minister. He is credited with establishing the African American Baptist churches in Tuscumbia, Sheffield, and Barton in Colbert County.

The church originally had no particular meeting place, but eventually was able to purchase a lot on the corner of 11th and High streets. A building was constructed on that corner in 1892. The church grew quickly and became the largest African American congregation in the county. The church also served as a school for African Americans at the turn of the 20th century. The church is defined on a 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance map as a large brick building across the street from Tuscumbia Colored College, later Trenholm High School.

## 10 ■

### Glencoe Plantation\*

The Glencoe Plantation was located just south of Tuscumbia in the early days of Colbert County, when it was Franklin County. The plantation was owned by Col. James T. McDonald (1781-1827), a veteran of the War of 1812, known to his military men as "Bully" McDonald. He married Eliza Aylette Moore, sister-in-law to David Keller (1788-1837), the grandfather of Helen Keller. The Keller and McDonald families both moved to the Tuscumbia area about 1817. McDonald purchased a large plantation that he called Glencoe after an ancestral castle of the MacDonald clan in Scotland.

The only piece of the plantation left is the Glencoe (Plantation) Cemetery. Now located in the center of

an open mining operation, the cemetery was added to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in 1986. The cemetery contains Col. James McDonald and Col. David Keller as well as six other members of the Keller-McDonald family. The sign over the cemetery states it was established circa 1816 and according to the grave markers, the last burial was in 1854.

The cemetery was rediscovered in 1983 on the property of Walker Lumber Company, leased to Vulcan Materials Company. The Vulcan Company restored the cemetery with permission from the descendants. According to the Alabama Register nomination form, Vulcan "tore down the surrounding wall, removed the tomb stones and cut out all trees and vines. [Vulcan] then put one foot of good top soil on the site, planted sod and replaced the tombs in the exact spot they came from. [Vulcan] then reconstructed the wall back to original size and put up a steel gate." The restoration helped to maintain the cemetery and clearly mark it from future disturbances. The original stone wall was cut and laid by slaves of the Glencoe Plantation, but has been replaced by a reconstruction.

## 11 ■

### High Street Church of Christ

Located in a historically African American neighborhood in southeast Tuscumbia, the High Street Church of Christ was one of the "branches" of the "Mother Church," Ricks Church of Christ. The congregation met in various places as it grew. First, in the house of one of its members, before moving to the Odd Fellows Hall, and then to Trenholm High School. Plans for a permanent home began about 1921. Located at the southwest corner of 9th and High streets, the church was first recorded in this location on the 1936 USGS/TVA topographic map. The building that stands today is the same late 1920s church.

**(Right) Front of Old Slave Kitchen at Helen Keller House, 1935 (Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress)**

## 12 ■

### Ivy Green

Ivy Green is a plantation in Tuscumbia. The house was built in the early days of the state of Alabama by David (1788-1837) and Mary Fairfax Moore Keller (1796-1875) in 1820. David and Mary were the grandparents of Helen Adams Keller (1880-1968), who was born on the property. In 1830, the household of David Keller included 47 slaves. David Keller passed away in 1837, but his widow, Mary F. Keller, owned 35 slaves in 1840. Although the Kellers lived at Ivy Green their whole lives, records for 1850 and 1860 were not located. The house was given to David and Mary's son, Arthur Henley Keller (1836-1896). By 1880, Arthur owned 430 acres of land with his wife, Catherine Everett Adams Keller (1856-1921).

In addition to the age of the house and its unique Southern Virginian architecture, the story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan and the "miracle" breakthrough in communication that occurred on the property lead to Ivy Green's inclusion in the Historic American Buildings Survey (AL-317) in 1934. The City of Tuscumbia acquired the property in 1954 and opened it to the public as a museum. In 1970, the property was added to the National Register for Historic Places (#70000101) with the main house, cottage, and water pump as contributing features to the property. The property also includes what is now called the "Cook's House," but was referred to as the Old Slave Kitchen in 1934.

The Slave Kitchen/Cook's House is a simple frame structure with two rooms containing the kitchen and the cook's living quarters. According to a survey of African American history in the Muscle Shoals



#### KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

\* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource