

MAR 10 2006

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Acworth Downtown Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Southside Drive, Federal and Lemon streets, and Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue
city, town Acworth () vicinity of
county Cobb code GA 067
state Georgia code GA zip code 30101

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	32	8
sites	0	1
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	33	9

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

W. Ray Luce
Signature of certifying official

2-23-06
Date

W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 4-19-06

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

for
Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: correctional facility
GOVERNMENT: post office
EDUCATION: library
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
HEALTH CARE: medical business/office
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: office building
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
GOVERNMENT: post office
EDUCATION: library
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style
MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials:

foundation	BRICK
walls	BRICK
roof	ASPHALT
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Located approximately 10 miles northwest of Marietta, the county seat of Cobb County, the Acworth Downtown Historic District is a linear district located along Main Street and the CSX Railroad. The rail line bisects the downtown and runs parallel (east-west) between the two main roads through Acworth—Main Street on the south and North Main Street (now called Southside Drive) on the north.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Historic commercial buildings in the district area are generally one- and two-story, attached, brick commercial buildings constructed in the late 19th through mid-20th centuries. Most of the buildings within the district exhibit the simple detailing characteristic of the Folk Victorian style including decorative brickwork, ornamental cornices, and transoms over the storefronts. Community landmark buildings in the district include the 1935 Acworth Jail, the c.1890 Odd Fellows Hall, the 1964 International-style U.S. Post Office and Federal Building, and the 1966 International-style Acworth Branch Library.

FULL DESCRIPTION

NOTE: The following description was written by William Blankenship, Fort Mountain Preservation Services, and edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division, "Acworth Downtown Historic District," *Historic District Information Form*, November 16, 2004. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

The overall character of the Acworth Downtown Historic District is similar to small towns throughout Georgia. Commercial buildings in the district were mostly constructed between 1880 and 1920 and are one- and two-story attached and freestanding brick buildings (photograph 1). Land in the district is generally flat with a very slight slope beginning on the north boundary, sloping downward to the south. Buildings along Center Street (now called Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue) are approximately 20 to 30 feet lower in elevation than those along Southside Drive. From east to west, the land slopes very slightly upward in elevation, with the Lemon Street boundary approximately five to ten feet higher than those properties on the west boundary.

The district is bisected east to west by the CSX Railroad (formerly the Louisville & Nashville Railroad) (photograph 8). Main Street is the main east-west corridor through downtown Acworth. Most of the buildings in the district span the south edge of Main Street. Center Street (now called Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue) runs east to west one block south of Main Street. On the north side of the rail line is Southside Drive (formerly called North Main Street), which runs parallel to the railroad. Lemon Street, named for Smith Lemon the founder of the S. Lemon Banking Company, runs north to south and forms the eastern boundary of the district. Dallas Street lies perpendicular to Main Street and was the main route to Paulding County. Cherokee Street, formerly named the Old Canton Highway, linked Acworth with neighboring Cherokee County prior to the construction of Georgia Highway 92 and is located on the north side of Southside Drive. Lots in the district are generally 25 feet wide by 100 feet in length with buildings built out to the lot lines and are fronted by sidewalks.

Commercial buildings in the district are one-, two-, and three-stories; have brick or concrete block bearing walls with brick veneer; have narrow front facades with long side facades; flat roofs; and large plate-glass display windows in the lower floor with one-over-one or multi-paned windows in upper floors. Most of the storefronts have recessed entrances and decorative brickwork and cornices.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Landscaping in the district is minimal with cement and concrete sidewalks and some street trees. Streets within the district are constructed of asphalt paving. The present roads lie on top of preexisting historical roads that evolved from wagon trails to graded, graveled, and macadam roads. The railroad, which was laid in 1840, has undergone several upgrades in the intervening years. At first, the railroad bed was located at the same level as city streets are at this time. This was due in part to the railroad's grade, which at the point of intersection with Acworth was at the midpoint of a long elevation beginning near Kennesaw and continuing to Allatoona Pass, several miles north of Acworth. In the years following the Civil War, the grade of the rail bed was gradually raised along the southern portion of the railroad, until finally, the railroad bed was raised significantly higher than the surrounding features. At present, the rail bed stands approximately seven to nine feet above the grade of Main Street and is nearly even with Southside Drive.

Individual Property Descriptions

Address: 4801 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1895

Historic uses: General merchandise store, library, post office, and newspaper printing.

This building is the second to occupy this lot in the past 130 years. The first building on the lot was a wood building used as a storehouse for Hiram Butler. After this building was demolished, the present brick building was constructed on the lot c.1895. During the historic period, building was a general merchandise store (Northcutt, Abbott, & Grogan Store, 1895-1928), the Acworth Library (operated by the Carrie Dyer Reading Club), the E.W. Ray Printing Shop (home of the *Acworth Post*, 1928-1939), and the Acworth Post Office (1921-1963). Since 1963, the building is used for professional offices. The one-story, brick building is located on the corner of Main and Lemon streets with the entrance oriented to the corner. The building has double-hung, six-over-six windows and the front façade has fanlights above the entrance and windows (photograph 1).

Address: 4803 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1895

Historic uses: General merchandise store, pharmacy, post office, and professional offices

This building is the second to occupy this lot since the Civil War. The first building was a wood structure that was dismantled or otherwise destroyed prior to 1895. The current building was constructed as part of 4801 Main Street and later subdivided on town plats. At various times in its history, it has been the home of the Jesse Lemon Store (a general merchandising store), the F.C. Durham Pharmacy (first pharmacy in Cobb County), sorting room of the Acworth Post Office, and a doctor's office.

The one-story, brick building has corbelled brickwork on the cornice and a recessed storefront with non-historic windows and door (photograph 1).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

Address: 4805 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1895
Historic uses : General store and offices

This two-story, brick building was the home of the James Crittendon Stokely Store c.1895. Stokely was a photographer and jeweler, and also sold groceries, dry goods, and real estate from the building. Stokely was a city commissioner and mayor of Acworth for several terms. The building is constructed of brick bearing walls with four-over-four windows on the second floor. Lower floor alterations include single-pane plate-glass windows flanking an aluminum-framed door with a single pane glass. A half-floor addition extends the upper floor of the building; historic photographs estimate this addition occurring c.1940 (photograph 2, left).

Address: 4807 Main Street (noncontributing)
Year constructed: c.1880; second floor added 1912.
Historic uses: General merchandise

This building is classified as noncontributing due to extensive nonhistoric alterations to the front façade including the addition of nonhistoric stucco or cement over the original brick, nonhistoric and inappropriate storefront replacement, and nonhistoric and inappropriate windows and doors added (photograph 2).

Address: 4809 Main Street (noncontributing)
Year constructed: c.1882
Historic uses: General store and drug store

This building is classified as noncontributing due to extensive nonhistoric alterations to the front façade including the addition of nonhistoric stucco/Dri-vet over the original brick; nonhistoric and inappropriate storefront replacement; nonhistoric and inappropriate quoins added; and nonhistoric and inappropriate windows added to the second floor (photograph 2).

This building is most commonly known by long time residents as the Lacey Building. George Lacey is an area druggist that still operates the Lacey Drugstore in Acworth, though the location changed from this building to another location in 1980. The Lacey Drugstore was the second to be housed in the building; the Durham Brothers operated a drugstore in the building from 1904 until 1947. Durham Bros. is reputed in county histories as being the first modern drugstore in Cobb County. For several years prior, the building was known as the "Grange Store." Local documents do not mention this store, other than as a reference in deed records.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Address: 4815 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1888
Historic uses: General store, barbershop, and department store

First substantiated tenant of the building was J.H. Bate, (d. 1922, Bexar County, TX) an early businessman of Acworth. The J.H. Bate Store was a general merchandise and dry goods store. Other notable tenants were W.W. Tumlin (occupied west half of building, operating a barbershop), and Ronald Eaton, a local department store owner. Eaton's is still in business, occupying another building just outside the proposed district boundaries.

The building is one-story, constructed of red brick. The front façade of the building was modernized in the late 1940's by the Eaton Family. Windows were replaced with large plate glass windows, set in aluminum framing. Entrance doors are also plate glass surrounded by aluminum frames. There is little decorative detail on the building's facades (photograph 2).

Address: 4817 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1891
Historic use: Bank (1891-1952) and offices

This building is historically associated with the S. Lemon Banking Company, the first privately owned bank in Cobb County. The bank was founded by Smith Lemon in 1853, chartered as a state bank in 1906, and dissolved in the late 1950's after being merged with a larger local banking institution.

The building was constructed c.1891; prior to the construction, S. Lemon Banking Company operated from a building on present-day Northside Drive. Contractor for the building was probably J.C. Armstrong; Armstrong appears in historic record to be the preferred contractor for buildings in Acworth financed by the S. Lemon Banking Company and its holders. In this case, the building was constructed with funds derived from accounts of Smith and James Lile Lemon. The Lemon family arrived in Acworth during the late 1840's, from DeKalb County. By 1891, the Lemons were still the only banking family in Acworth, though they had already married into the Awtrey family. Upon the death of James Lile Lemon in 1924, the Awtrey family formally took control of the bank, though it should be noted that Orlando Awtrey had been president of the bank for several years previous. The building passed through the hands of three generations of the Awtrey family before being sold in 1999.

The one-story brick building has a later façade with Roman brick veneer, and the front façade entry and windows have been updated with single plate-glass windows with a plate-glass entry door (photograph 2).

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Address: 4819 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1890

Historic uses: Warehouse, hardware and general merchandise store

The one-story, brick Kitchen & Williams store building has retained its historic recessed storefront with display windows, iron posts, bulkheads, transoms, and entrance door with sidelights. The building also retains its decorative brickwork including the cornice and pilasters (photograph 2).

There are no previous mentions of other buildings occupying this lot previous to the construction of the present building. The original intent for use of this building was as a warehouse for the Lemon & Awtrey Co. Store; the main store was on present-day Southside Drive. Several business in Acworth constructed warehouses to stock extra goods, particularly dry goods and farm implements. The member of the Lemon family that is associated with this building is Jesse L. Lemon, a son of Smith Lemon, co-founder of the S. Lemon Banking Company.

Lemon was in partnership with Orlando Awtrey in the leading merchandiser in Acworth, as well as serving as an official in the S. Lemon Banking Company. Lemon later left the area after having severe financial setbacks, and according to his obituary, died in poverty in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After Lemon's assets were sold to satisfy bankruptcy debt, this building was purchased as a second location of the Kitchen & Williams Co. Kitchen & Williams was a successful hardware and general merchandise store for nearly forty years.

Address: 4823 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1900

Historic uses: General store, jewelry store, and Allen Brothers Five & Ten Store

The one-story, brick building was constructed c.1900 by W. H. Perkinson, who sold dry goods and groceries as well as operating a jewelry store in the building. The building has undergone some changes including three nonhistoric storefronts (originally the building probably had two storefronts), but retains its decorative brickwork including cornice, panels, and decorative corbelling above the storefronts. From 1946 until the late 20th century, the building was owned by H.B., J.O., and L.R. Allen and operated as the Allen Brothers Five & Ten Store (photograph 3, left).

Address: 4829 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: 1880

Historic uses: Medical office and retail store

The lot on which the building is set was purchased as a vacant lot, formerly the location of a "wooden storebuilding" (sic), in 1878. The property was purchased by Dr. J. R. Humphries, Sr., with the condition that a brick building be constructed on the lot within two years of purchase. The one-story, brick building was built in 1880 and remained the office of Dr. Humphries, Sr., until his death in 1900, then passed on to his son, Dr. J.R. Humphries, Jr. The second Dr. Humphries operated his office from this building until his death in 1924. The building was then sold to A.J. Clark, a local jeweler,

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

storekeeper, and clock repairer, who owned the building until his death in 1943. Both the Humphries family and Clark were active in city government; both Humphries were elected to several terms as city aldermen, and Clark served as an alderman and mayor for several years.

The building is located on the corner of Main and Dallas streets. The front façade has a nonhistoric aluminum storefront the plate-glass windows and double doors. The building retains its original cornice and decorative brickwork. The Dallas Street side of the building features a recently repainted Coca-Cola advertisement (photograph 3).

Address: 4835 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1895, 2nd & 3rd floors added 1906.

Historic uses: Offices, dry goods store, storage, and grocery store.

This building was constructed in two stages. The first stage was the construction of a two-story brick commercial building, by Dr. Eugene Bailey, a noted Acworth physician. Bailey subdivided the building immediately after its construction; Bailey kept a small office in the north section of the building, while renting to E.L. Litchfield and G.A. Putnam the southern portion of the building for use as a general store operation. Additionally, Bailey rented a large part of the northern portion of the building to Hiram Butler as a dry-goods storehouse.

The second stage of construction occurred after Bailey sold the building to J.C. Armstrong. Armstrong then constructed the second and ½ story himself. The building continued during this time to be rented to different commercial concerns, though for the bulk of Armstrong's ownership, the same tenants that Bailey had brought into the building remained. The purpose of the "third" story was as a storage area, for rent. Today, the third story is accessible but has been deemed by present-day building code to be unsuitable for its intended use. At present, the entire first floor of the building is utilized as a restaurant. The second story is currently vacant, but being offered for rent for office space.

As first built in c.1895, the building was a two-story, brick building with arched entry and window openings. In 1906, Armstrong removed the arched window openings and replaced them with flat-arched windows, and added the third half-story, which extends in graduated steps from the rear to front of the building. There is decorative corbelling on the cornice and capping the building is a cast-iron decorative sign inscribed with Armstrong's name and the date of the renovation (1906). The building has undergone no exterior changes since the time of Armstrong's renovation. The building retains its 1906 doors and window frames and cast-iron columns on the first floor storefront (photographs 3, right, and 4).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

Address: 4839 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1905
Historic uses: General store and bank

The one-story brick building was constructed c.1905 and owned by J.C. Armstrong until the building was purchased by the Bank of Acworth in 1925. The original early 20th-century front façade had red brick with four tall, rectangular one-over-one windows and a decorative cornice. The entrance was flanked by the windows and was the same height as the windows. In 1950, the Bank of Acworth rehabilitated the building to create a more modern façade. The front façade was covered with tan Roman bricks, the vertical windows were replaced with two horizontal windows flanking a recessed central entrance, and the façade is smooth with no decorative brickwork (photograph 4).

Address: 4841 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1895
Historic uses: Grocery store, bank, retail store, and pharmacy

Previous to 1895, a wood building occupied the lot, which burned in late 1895. The lot was then sold to Robert Nelson with the stipulation that a brick building be erected on the lot to replace the old building. Nelson constructed the current one-story brick building soon after. The building retains its decorative brickwork including cornice, corbelled details, and recessed panels and its historic storefront with curved display windows, transoms and recessed entrance. A thin layer of stucco was added to the building, covering the brick, in the late 1950s or early 1960s, however, the late 19th-century character-defining features are recognizable. The building was originally used as a grocery store called the Phillips Brothers General Store. In 1906, the Bank of Acworth purchased the building for use as a bank. The bank occupied the building until 1931, when it moved to its new location next door. The building then became the property of the Tumlin family, whom operated a retail store and pharmacy in the building for the next fifty years (photograph 4).

Address: 4843 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1900
Historic uses: Warehouse and hardware store

The building was probably constructed by the Phillips Brothers as part of their general store business located next door at 4841 Main Street. Deeds state that the building was known in its earlier history as the Phillips Warehouse & Storehouse. As the main Phillips Brothers Store was immediately east of this building, it is likely that the building was constructed shortly after their main store. The Phillips brothers were native to Acworth—both were born in the mid-1840s and both served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, as did one of their older brothers, and their father. After the war, they returned to Acworth, but came relatively late to commerce, given that by their establishment as general storekeepers, they were competing with several other storekeepers, all in a relatively small area. They did thrive at their location and C.C. Phillips served one term as mayor, soon after the town was re-charted in 1870.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The building was occupied by the Acworth hardware Company after the Phillips brothers retired in 1919. In 1929, the building was sold to R.S. Williams, son of another storekeeper in town (R.S. Williams, Sr., of Kitchen & Williams). The Williams family operated a store on this site for the next fifty years before renting the building to different commercial enterprises.

The one-story brick building has an entrance with a transom on the right side of the front façade and a plate-glass window on the left (photograph 4)..

Address: 4845 Main Street (noncontributing)
Year constructed: c.1890
Historic uses: Mercantile, groceries, livery stable, and office

The one-story brick building is classified as noncontributing due to the application of nonhistoric stucco over the brick. The thick coat of stucco is applied with a rough, unfinished appearance that both obscures the original brick and any decorative brickwork and also is an inappropriate finish for a late 19th-century commercial building (photograph 4).

The first function of the building was that of general merchandiser, which by this era was getting to be very competitive. It is not known how long Thomas Lunsford, owner of the building, was able to stay in business, but by 1905, Lunsford was no longer in business, at least at this location. Instead, the building was rented to G.W. McLain. McLain used the street-level part of the building as a meat market, and used the lower, basement portion of the building as a livery stable. The building is one of the few commercial buildings in Acworth that have a basement level.

Address: 4849 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1890, 1930s

The one-story brick building was constructed part of the T.J. Lunsford Building next door at 4845 Main Street. During the 1930's, an interior wall was constructed to separate the two buildings and a newer brick façade was added to the building to make it distinct from the original building (photograph 5, left).

Address: Legion Theater, 4851 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: 1929
Historic use: Theater

The property was purchased by V.S. Golden in 1929, and he immediately started construction on the Legion Theater, Acworth's only movie theater. Prior to the construction of the building, movies in Acworth were spotty events; traveling movie shows (often constituted by no more than a fellow getting off the train with a projector, sheets, and much used films) came to Acworth on the train. Any other movies Acworth citizens wanted to view involved a trip to Marietta.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

The building had seating for the entire town's population. The interior space had a concessionaire, projector booth, and two viewing areas. The first viewing area was the lower level; this area was accessed by the front of the theater. The second area was the balcony; this level was reserved for African-Americans and was accessible by a door located on the western façade of the building and a set of stairs. The theater remained in operation until the early 1970s, when multiplex theaters in nearby Marietta and other areas became readily available.

The Legion Theater Building is constructed of brick in a common bond configuration and formerly had a marquee and ticket booth. The marquee and ticket booth were removed from the front façade and plate glass windows were installed in the 1970s. The building retains its recessed main entrance, plate-glass windows, and original fenestration on the second floor (photograph 5).

Address: 4857 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1950
Historic uses: Warehouse and retail store

This is possibly the third building to occupy this lot since Reconstruction. One historic photograph taken in 1895 shows a large wood building on the site; signage indicates that the building was used as a livery. At some point between 1895 and 1910, this building was demolished. A second photograph shows the existence of another building, also constructed of wood. There is no signage on the building indicating its use. This building must also have been demolished; by 1921, there is no building on the site, according to *Sanborn Fire Insurance* maps from that date. Neither is there a building on the site according to 1931 updates of the *Sanborn* map; historic photographs also show a vacant lot. One historic photograph dated 1948 depicts a small one story wood building on the lot with advertising that suggests it was a restaurant, or a very small drive-in café.

The one-story, brick building was built by Hubert Allen c.1950 as a warehouse. The design of the building is functional with minimal details. Windows extend the length of the front façade and are plate glass set in aluminum frames. There are four front entrances to the building, and a large loading dock area at the rear of the building. The building has a partial basement area (photograph 5).

Address: Acworth Motor Company office, showroom, and garage buildings, 4867 and 4871 Main Street (two noncontributing buildings)
Year Constructed c.1920
Historic uses: Automobile-related

The Acworth Motor Company used this building and the building next door at 4871 Main Street (formerly one building but subdivided in 1946) as an office and garage with a capacity of 25 automobiles. The Acworth Motor Company operated here until 1946. Upon moving the building was sold as two separate buildings, both to W. Hilton Nichols, a notable business and political leader in Acworth. In 1953, Nichols sold the buildings separately to two different owners.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

The 4867 Main Street building is now classified as noncontributing due to nonhistoric and inappropriate changes to the front façade including a wood addition attached to the front brick façade, which is now covered with vinyl siding, and a faux western canopy overhangs the entire front façade.

The 4871 building is also classified as noncontributing due to the aluminum false façade covering the original brick building (photograph 6).

Address: 4873 Main Street (contributing)
Year Constructed c.1921
Historic uses: Auto parts storage

The one-story brick building was used by the Acworth Motor Company for auto parts storage from 1932 through 1951. The building is utilitarian in design with a central entrance flanked by plate-glass windows (photograph 6).

Address: 4887 Main Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1900
Historic uses: Residence

The one-story, frame, gabled ell cottage is the only house in the district. The building retains its historic wood shingle exterior and Folk Victorian-style details. It is now used as a florist (photograph 7).

Address: 4548 Lemon Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1900
Historic uses: Doctors' office

The two-story, freestanding, brick building has decorative brick arches over the windows and doors and one-over-one windows on the first and second story. The front façade has three bays and an angled bay on the right side (photographs 12 and 13).

Address: 4551 Lemon Street (contributing)
Year constructed: c.1900
Historic uses: Offices

The two-story, freestanding, brick building has flat-arched brickwork over the doors and windows and a corbelled brick cornice. The building has three bays on the first floor and two bays on the second. The windows are one-over-one sash windows (photographs 12 and 13).

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Address: north side of Main Street (one noncontributing site and one noncontributing building)

Year constructed: 1987

Historic uses Site of former cotton gin, plane mill, and depot

This area is now used as a city parking area. Originally, there were three important 19th-century building on the property, a cotton gin, the Acworth Plane Mill, and Acworth Western & Atlantic Railroad Depot, all of which were demolished or moved in the 1980s. The cotton gin was one of three ginneries that operated in the city of Acworth from 1870 to 1950. Photographs of the building during the early 20th century depict a large brick building with several decorative features, including arched windows and doors. The Acworth Plane Mill produced finished lumber products, most of which were loaded on trains directly from the mill. This building was the largest of the buildings on the north side of Main Street. The gin and mill were placed with their proximity to the railroad tracks; the depot for obvious reasons, the gin by its proximity to the loading docks of the depot, and the plane mill by its proximity of the tracks.

During the 1980s, the buildings were either moved or destroyed by a city in need of parking solutions and because the buildings were badly deteriorated. The depot (which had stopped servicing passengers in the 1960s) was moved outside of the district boundaries and to date, the depot has not been put back together. The other two buildings were demolished. A nonhistoric building with a depot-like form was built next to the railroad (photographs 6 and 8).

Address: Acworth Jail, 4367 Senator Richard B. Russell Square (contributing)

Year constructed: 1935

Historic uses: Jail and police department

The Acworth Jail is a good example of a Works Progress Administration-funded project and is the only WPA-era building in Acworth. The lot was purchased by the city of Acworth in 1935, from B.F. Hammett, a local blacksmith.

During the 1930s, various programs were put into effect by the Roosevelt administration with the purpose of reviving America's economy in a time of economic uncertainty. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was one of the programs and funded many community projects throughout the country and construction of public buildings was one of the WPA's mandates.

Construction of Acworth's "calaboose" (as deed transfer documents term it) was completed by local contractors in 1935 based on a government-approved design. The building was constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond style—very unique in small town Georgia during this time—and was completed in two stages. The first stage was the construction of the main administration building, which contained the town marshal's office. The walls of this section of the building were constituted only of brick.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

The second section contained the same brick walls; however, another inner layer of concrete block was added to provide security against jailbreaks. The building retains its original six cells in the jail portion of the building, three on each side of a wide central hall. Windows (small 6 x 12-inch openings in the jail portion of the building and six-over-six double-hung windows in the front façade of the administration portion of the building) have remained unchanged since the initial construction. The only notable change is the front door, which has been replaced by an aluminum framed plate glass door. The roof is a hipped pyramidal roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The eaves are marked with exposed rafters reminiscent of the Craftsman style. All openings (doors, windows) are marked with stretchers (horizontal on the sides, vertical on the top) on three sides, and a brick sash with headers facing out vertically (photograph 14).

The building was used as Acworth's police department until the 1980s.

Address: 4381 Senator Richard B. Russell Square (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1920

Historic uses: Warehouse and gristmill

This building was constructed c.1920 and was a gristmill until at least 1930. The building also served as a warehouse. Gristmills remained relatively common in many North Georgia communities, especially those that relied on the production of agricultural products. This mill was primarily concerned with the grinding of raw corn, both for human and livestock use.

The building is constructed of brick in common bond configuration with a stepped parapet. The front façade has large plate-glass windows and a central entrance (photograph 14, right, and 15, left).

Address: 4591 Dallas Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1940

Historic uses: General merchandise

The one-story, brick building has a simple cornice and minimal decorative brickwork. The storefront is nonhistoric but is built in the same form as a historic storefront with entrance and display windows and the overall historic form and materials of the building are retained.

Address: 4368 Southside Drive (two contributing buildings)

Year constructed: c.1890-1900

Historic uses: General store, laundry (1921), shoe repair shop (1930), toy factory (1943),

Deeds conveying the land to W.D. Trippe specify the purchase of the vacant lot, "formerly the site of the Kitchen & Williams Store House." The wood buildings formerly on this lot had burned in 1890, and Kitchen & Williams moved their hardware business to Main Street. Two two-story, brick buildings were built on the site, one facing Southside Drive and one directly behind it facing Cherokee Street. The buildings are connected by covered walkways on the first and second floor. The building fronting on Southside Drive has a street level and a lower second floor that fronts onto

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7—Description

Cherokee Street. The street level has corner main entrance, brick detailing above the arched doors and windows with fanlights above, and brick corbelling and a decorative cornice. The rear two-story building fronting onto Cherokee Street has a street level entrance and windows on the first and second floor. The building has a decorative, corbelled brick cornice (photograph 10, right).

During the period of time that the buildings were owned by Trippe, different businesses occupied the rear brick building including a warehouse and cobbler's shop. At different times, shopkeepers would live on the second floor with their business on the street level floor. By 1930, according to *Sanborn Fire Insurance* maps, the rear building was being used as a residence, while the front building was the site of the Acworth Laundry (street-level floor was the public area, while the ground-level floor was the site of the laundry machinery).

It was shortly thereafter that the buildings were sold to Margaret Conway. Conway was interested in opening a manufacturing firm dedicated to producing stuffed animals and other toys. Conway was from Adairsville and was involved in selling homemade chenille products to travelers traveling along the Old Dixie Highway. Her toy business began after she sought a way to utilize the scrap chenille leftover from bedspreads and other products. After discovering a market for stuffed toys, she determined to produce the toys full time, and found the then vacant Acworth Laundry Building in Acworth.

Soon after moving to Acworth, she went into partnership with Fay Noland, a local manufacturer. Conway founded a partnership with Noland (Conway-Noland Toys) and began producing stuffed toys for retail sale. Conway and Noland were later married (1948), and continued to operate from the two buildings until the 1960s, when the business (now under a different name) moved to the old Unique Knitting Mill quarters (outside of the district).

Address: 4468 Cherokee Street (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1890

Historic uses: Odd Fellows hall, feed store, and cotton storage warehouse

The earliest recorded use of the building was in 1892 in a deed transferring the property and brick building thereupon from John Brolley to J.H. Perkinson, a well-known businessman and doctor. Perkinson utilized the first floor of the building as a feed store, and later, as a cotton storage facility. For a short time, the second floor was first rented to the city of Acworth as a meeting place, and later, the Evening Star Lodge #3776 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows used the second floor as a meeting hall. The Odd Fellows (white) used the upper floor for the next 33 years, then in 1932 the second floor was used by the African-American Acworth Lodge #257 "Colored Masons and Odd Fellows" while the first floor was still used as a warehouse. The building was sold to Annis Fowler, a local business owner, in 1945. By this time, the upper floor of the building was rapidly becoming unsafe due to deterioration, and has not been regularly occupied since.

The two-story, brick, freestanding building has five bays on the first floor, three wooden double-doors with transoms and two one-over-one windows, and four six-over-six double-hung windows on the

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

second floor. The front façade has a parapet roof with decorative brickwork along the cornice (photograph 11).

Address: 4358 Southside Drive (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1875

Historic uses: General store, feed store, and warehouse

This building is one of the earliest constructed, not only within this proposed district but also in Acworth as a whole. Merrill Awtrey, an early settler in Acworth, constructed the building. Awtrey arrived in Acworth during the early 1850s and went into partnership with various prominent men in Acworth, including Smith Lemon, J.R. Humphries, and J.C. Stokely. The men would impact Acworth well into the 20th century as persons responsible for Acworth's initial development, and later in Acworth's recovery from destruction incurred during the closing years of the Civil War. In part, Awtrey was responsible for the laying of Western & Atlantic Railroad tracks being laid in Acworth—his influences were felt as a result of his membership in the Georgia Legislature in the years preceding the Civil War.

The building was one of the first brick buildings constructed in Acworth following the Civil War, along with the rest of the buildings on the "Awtrey Block." At the time of its construction, this section of Acworth was considered the center of Acworth's downtown area; Southside Drive, in fact, was known at the time as Main Street. This building sat on the crossroads, which formed the center of the town, and was the first building encountered by travelers going north on the Old Canton Road (present-day Cherokee Street). The building was used as a general merchandise store during this era. Awtrey's residence was located directly behind the store (no longer extant).

It was during this era that Merrill Awtrey's nephew arrived in Acworth, as a teenager from Villa Rica. Merrill Awtrey immediately employed Orlando Awtrey as a store clerk. In 1890, Orlando Awtrey purchased the store building, along with others in the same block from his uncle and developed several other business ventures in Acworth. One such involvement was at least partly due to his relationship with the Lemon family, owners of the S. Lemon Banking Company. Awtrey was married to Isabella Lemon in 1881, a daughter of James L. Lemon. He was shortly thereafter declared an official of the bank, and was its official cashier until 1907, when he was elected its president. Moreover, Awtrey was Acworth's representative in the state legislature for nearly twenty years. Like most of his contemporaries, Awtrey's main issues dealt with economic issues in the state, and the promulgation of improved roads in the early years of the automobile.

Awtrey continued to operate his mercantile business from this and surrounding businesses until his retirement in 1939; however, he more or less delegated the running of the store and bank operations to his son, Lemon Merrill Awtrey. At Orlando Awtrey's death in 1943, this and surrounding properties of Awtrey were sold at auction. This particular building was sold to Annis Fowler, a local storeowner. Fowler continued a hardware store in the building into the late 1970s. The building then became host to several businesses over the next three decades, most notably the headquarters of Boyce Manufacturing, a later incarnation of the Conway-Noland Toy Company. The most recent occupant

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

was a pottery business, now defunct.

The building is constructed of brick configured in the running bond style. Windows are two-by-two over two-by-two, wood framed and cased. They extend from approximately two feet from ground level to six feet above grade. All windows are topped by a brick arch and fanlight. There are wooden double doors with single pane glass. The cornice is heavily decorative with alternating columns of header and stretcher bricks. The west façade of the building has a recently re-painted advertising mural (photograph 10, right, and 11).

Address: 4350 Southside Drive (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1880

Historic uses: General store, clothing store, and millinery

The one-story brick building is the site of an antebellum wood building that was the first location of the Humphries & Awtrey Mercantile Co. In the decades after the Civil War, Merrill Awtrey and J.R. Humphries retained ownership of the land, and this building was constructed with the expansion of Awtrey's store in mind. It served as a showroom for men and women's clothing and millinery items. Upon the death of J.R. Humphries, Orlando Awtrey, who already owned the remainder of the buildings on the "Awtrey Block" purchased this building from Humphries' heirs and continued to operate the building as a general merchandise store until his death. Awtrey's son carried on the business for several years after his father's passing, but finally sold the building to Margaret Conway (co-owner of Conway-Noland Toys) in 1948. Conway then sold the building to Ernest Collins, who used the building for storage.

The building is similar in appearance to the building immediately west. The front façade has three bays, a central entrance with wood double doors. Windows and doors match the types used on the west building, and arched windows top the rectangular windows below. Cornices are alternating, with rows of stretchers and headers being staggered. The roof is covered with a tar/gravel composite (photograph 9).

Address: 4346 Southside Drive (contributing)

Year constructed: c.1885

Historic uses: General mercantile, warehouse, and office

This building was the third of the buildings to be constructed on what is referred to locally as "Awtrey's Corner." This building was constructed as an expansion to buildings lying west of the location. The original use was warehousing; however, Awtrey, at various times operated other business enterprises from the building.

This building originally included the building to the east (designed and constructed as one building). After the building was sold to the Collins family (1948), the interior wall was closed in completely to create two separate spaces.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7—Description

The exterior of the building is typical of a late 19th-century commercial building. The building is one-story, constructed of brick, and has decorative detailing. The building has a very decorative cornice with brick corbelling, panels, and other decorative elements (photograph 9).

Address: Acworth Branch Library, Dallas Street (contributing)

Year constructed: 1966

Historic use: Library

The Acworth Branch Library is an excellent example of an International-style building in a small town. The rectangular building has Roman brick walls with slender metal supports holding up a wide, suspended, slab roof. The building has thin clearstory windows under the roof. The front entrance has double aluminum doors with a single large glass pane in each with a glass transom above (photographs 16 and 17).

Address: United States Post Office and Federal Building, 4915 Main Street (contributing)

Year constructed: 1964

Historic use: Post office and federal building

The United States Post Office and Federal Building located at the western of the district on Main Street is an excellent example of an International-style federal building in a small town. The one-story brick building has an asymmetrical front façade with asymmetrically placed vertical single-pane windows and a recessed entrance on the right side of the façade. There is a plain marble frieze that runs on each side of the building. A nonhistoric alteration is an enclosed glass entranceway (photograph 18). The building is no longer leased or owned by the General Services Administration but is still used as a United States Post Office.

The Acworth Downtown Historic District is surrounded by historic residential neighborhoods and some nonhistoric commercial development. On the north side of the district (north of Southside Drive) is a historic residential area including the National Register listed Bethel AME Church and a historic African-American neighborhood. To the west and east of the district are nonhistoric commercial and developments. South of the downtown is a large historic residential area of Acworth.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance:

1842-1966

Significant Dates:

1842—founding of Acworth with the construction of the western & Atlantic Railroad through town
1964—construction of the U.S. Post Office and Federal Building
1966—construction of the Acworth Branch Library

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

Similar to many small Georgia towns, Acworth was founded with the construction of a railroad. During the first half of the 19th century, the Western & Atlantic Railroad was being constructed from Terminus (present day Atlanta) to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and by 1842, a 39-mile stretch from Terminus through Marietta to Cassville in Bartow County was completed. Joseph Gregg, as civil engineer with the railroad, named Acworth after his hometown in Acworth, New Hampshire. Prior to the Civil War, Acworth was a thriving town with numerous stores, residences, and a cotton gin. Union soldiers occupying the city in June of 1864 burned the (wooden) downtown buildings to the ground and destroyed the railroad on their way to Atlanta. During Reconstruction, Acworth prospered with a transportation- and cotton-based economy. Similar to many small Georgia towns, the Depression and boll weevil impacted the town during the early 20th century. In the 1940s, Acworth's population increased with the general influx of residents to Cobb County drawn to work at the Bell Bomber plant in Marietta as well as other industrial jobs.

The Acworth Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its good collection of commercial and community landmark buildings dating from the late 19th century through the early 20th century, which represent the common types and styles of commercial and community landmark buildings constructed in Georgia. Commercial buildings in the district are generally late 19th- and early 20th-century, one- and two-story, attached or freestanding, rectangular, brick buildings with common setbacks along the sidewalks. The commercial buildings in the Acworth Downtown Historic District possess the character-defining features of the Commercial-Style including recessed entrances in the storefronts, large display windows, wood or brick bulkheads, transoms, decorative brick parapets and pilasters, second-story segmental- and arched-windows, and decorative brickwork on the cornices.

The district is also significant in the area of architecture for its excellent examples of the use of the International style for two 1960s community landmark buildings in a small town in Georgia. With its flat roof, asymmetrical plan, expansive areas of glass, and lack of traditional ornament, the 1964 Acworth United States Post Office and Federal Building is an excellent example of the International Style of architecture. In many small Georgia towns, the United States Post Office is the only representation of the federal government and national architectural styles of the time period. The 1966 Acworth Branch Library is an outstanding, intact example of the International Style in Georgia. The one-story brick building exhibits the use of innovative building techniques and the absence of reference to historical architectural styles that characterize the International Style. The use of the International Style in a traditional antebellum town such as Acworth is particularly unique.

The district is significant in the area of commerce as the center of commercial enterprises in this area from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. The historic central business district represents Acworth as a center of commerce in Cobb County during the 19th and 20th centuries. The downtown was historically the primary location for the trading, buying and selling of goods, services, and commodities on a local and countywide basis. The historic intact commercial buildings within the historic district are representative of all types of commerce that contributed to the town's economy

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

throughout its history. The one- and two-story, brick, commercial buildings in the district are typical of small Georgia towns and represent the mercantile, professional, and banking businesses commonly found in downtowns. Downtown buildings consisted primarily of downtown commercial spaces with upstairs professional offices. The majority of these buildings were built during the late 1800s and early 1900s and contained groceries, jewelers, drug stores, and other merchants. In the early to mid-20th century, businesses centering on the use of the automobile such as the Acworth Motor Company were built in Acworth.

Acworth Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development as a good example of a railroad strip-type town in Georgia. According to *Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types* (1989), a statewide context, a railroad strip-type town has the main roads running parallel to the railroad tracks with commercial development parallel to and often facing the tracks. Acworth's main streets run parallel to the railroad with commercial development on either side of the railroad. Acworth was founded with the development of the Western & Atlanta Railroad from Terminus (present-day Atlanta) to Cassville in Bartow County in 1842. Acworth was situated on an important transportation route for hauling freight and passengers from Tennessee to Terminus (later Atlanta), making the railroad vital to Acworth's agricultural-based economy.

National Register Criteria

The Acworth Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the center of center of commerce for Acworth and the surrounding area from 1842 to the end of the historic period. Also, the district is eligible for listing under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development as a good example of a railroad strip-type town in Georgia. The district is eligible for listing under Criterion C for good collection of commercial buildings dating from the late 19th century through the early 20th century, which represent the common types and styles of commercial building constructed in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The period of significance for the Acworth Downtown Historic District extends to 1966 and meets Criteria Consideration G in the area of architecture with the construction of two major community landmark buildings—the United States Post Office and Federal Building in 1964 and the Acworth Branch Library in 1966. Modern architecture was introduced to small towns in Georgia through building projects that involved public funds. These projects included the construction of schools, public health centers, and post offices. Modern International-style post offices were built in suburbs and in small towns that out grew smaller post offices. The United States Post Office and Federal Building and the Acworth Branch Library with their reliance on modern building materials including large expanses of glass, asymmetry, new methods of construction, and lack of reference to past architectural styles represents the confidence, enthusiasm, and optimism of the post-war building boom.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with 1842 with the construction of the Western & Atlantic Railroad through Acworth and the naming of the town by the railroad's civil engineer, Joseph Gregg. The original alignment of the Western & Atlantic Railroad is intact, only the grade has been raised over the course of time, and the original alignment of the railroad is directly associated with the development of Acworth as a railroad strip-type town. The period of significance ends with 1966 with the construction for the Acworth Branch Library.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing buildings within the historic district date from the district's period of significance and retain their historic integrity. The noncontributing buildings were constructed after the period of significance or have lost their historic integrity from nonhistoric alterations. All buildings were evaluated by members of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division's Survey and National Register staff in April 2005, and contributing or noncontributing status was determined according to the criteria of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division. The contributing structure is the railroad through downtown that retains its historic alignment and relationship to Acworth.

The one noncontributing site is the former location of a historic cotton gin, lumber planing mill, and depot, all of which were demolished in the late 1980s.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following developmental history was written by William Blankenship, Fort Mountain Preservation Services, and edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division, "Acworth Downtown Historic District," *Historic District Information Form*, November 16, 2004. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Prior to white settlement, Cherokee and Creek Indians occupied the land that is now the city of Acworth. At the time of early white settlement and exploration, the Creek population had already been pushed southward toward the Flint River basin, south of present-day Atlanta. This was the result of internecine wars among the Creeks; additionally, the Cherokee peoples had played a part in the expulsion of Creeks from the area.¹

White Settlement and the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery

During the colonial years of Georgia's settlement, there were scant legal grounds for whites to move into Cherokee areas. However, a lack of legal justification did not necessarily stop the

¹ Theda Purdue & Michael D. Green, eds. *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 1-5.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

encroachment of whites into the area. In some cases, military skirmishes took place; the results usually favored the whites through treaty concessions. Most of these treaties that allowed whites to settle in the area occurred in the southern and central parts of Georgia; north-central Georgia was generally left alone by white settlement during the colonial years.² The American Revolution changed this—the Cherokees were by and large attracted to the British side of the conflict by promises that the British, upon putting down the American rebellion, would honor earlier treaties that expressly forbid white settlement in the area.³

The 1790 Georgia Constitution was an early harbinger of white intentions concerning Cherokee lands in North Georgia. The constitution made clear that the State of Georgia considered Cherokee land to be part of Georgia's territory, and the state constitution left open the option of white settlement and eventual Indian expulsion from those lands desired by whites. Throughout the 1820s, after the federal and state governments wrangled over whom had rights to the land, it was clear that the Cherokees would be pushed from the land, and sent west.⁴

The real indicator of the first stages of the Cherokee Removal occurred that same year when state surveyors entered Cherokee territory and began to mark plots. These plots, measuring either 160 acres (in the case of "Land Lots") or 40 acres ("Gold" Lots), were to be distributed by means of lottery, the last of several lotteries that took place in Georgia from 1805 to 1832.⁵

The Cherokee Land Lottery occurred in late 1832. Surveyors had previously split land to be distributed by this lottery into sections, districts, and land lots. Smaller divisions would later be decided by property owners and municipal governments, and were not applicable during the initial distribution. The land on which downtown Acworth is situated, for example, were identified as being in the 2nd Section, 20th Land District, 31st & 32nd Land Lots.⁶

The winners of the land lots in the downtown Acworth area were William Blackstock and the orphans of Berry Jones. Blackstock was from DeKalb County, owned nearly ten times the land he won in the 1832 lottery, never occupied Land Lot 31, and probably sold the land almost immediately, as did many other winners of the lottery.

Winner of Land Lot 32 were the orphans of Berry Jones, of which little is known, either of Berry Jones, or his children. Jones did reside in Bulloch County, was a small landholder in that county, and served in the War of 1812 as a member of the Georgia Militia. Again, like Blackstock, the orphans of Jones probably did not occupy the land; more than likely, the land was sold by administrators of the orphans, like the majority of other lands granted to orphan children involved in

² Ibid., 7-9.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 51-60.

⁵ James F. Smith. *The Cherokee Land Lottery, Containing a Numerical List of the Names of the Fortunate Drawers in Said Lottery* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1838)

⁶ Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

the land lotteries.⁷

These were only two of the 18 lots, which today make up the city of Acworth. Geographical features on the land lots on which the proposed district rests was generally flat, but sloping slightly upward from a low spot on the north edge of Land Lot 32, to a high point on the northern edges of Land Lot 31. At the time of white settlement, soon after the land lottery took place, the two land lots were heavily wooded. According to surveyor maps of the era, the dominant trees were pines and poplar; and an Indian trail crossed on a diagonal northwest-to-southeast through Land Lot 32. However, this map states that no Indian dwellings were extant on the two land lots in 1832, when the area was surveyed.⁸

Earliest white settlers after the completion of the land lottery were farmers; Alexander Northcutt was one the first to reach the area and begin to cultivate land for agricultural use. Northcutt did not live on Land Lots 31 or 32, but his presence is significant nevertheless. Northcutt's presence is significant because his land hosted the first water station for stage lines and the coming railroad, and when Joseph Gregg arrived in the area to survey land for railroad tracks, the entire area was being referred to as Northcutt Station.⁹

First, however, issues remained concerning the existing Indian population in the area. Referring to the map above, surveyors did not note any Indian dwellings on the proposed district land lots. However, several other Indian dwellings were located immediately to the south of the proposed district. In the years from 1832 to 1838, the Georgia legislature took steps to consolidate and organize its new territory while simultaneously fighting legal battles that would effectively remove those Indians still in the territory to another location. By 1838, it was clear that state authorities had won the battles—despite losing its bid to remove Indians in the Supreme Court. The federal government would take no steps to enforce the Supreme Court decision, and remaining Cherokees in Acworth and the rest of Georgia were forced to leave the state.¹⁰

By 1840, Acworth had begun to establish itself as a community dependent upon agricultural production, as well as commerce associated with agriculture. The 1840 Federal Census lists 176 residents of the Acworth area, most of them farmers. Few of the names listed in the 1840 Census stand out as having great influence on the Acworth Downtown Historic District as it pertains to its era of significance; however a few names are worth mentioning. Joseph Gregg, who bestowed the name Acworth on the former Northcutt's Station is listed among the population, as are the Carnes family (who figure in the development of downtown Acworth by the 1880s), as well as the Phillips' and Terrys'. Other families who figure prominently in the development of the district arrived soon after the 1840 census.¹¹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Carrie Dyer Women's Club. *Acworth, Georgia: From Cherokee Country to Suburbia* (Acworth, Georgia: Star Printing, 1976) 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Scott, 51-60.

¹¹ United States of America. *Sixth Census of the United States*, located on microfilm, Georgia Room, Cobb County Library, Marietta, Georgia.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Arrival of the Western & Atlantic Railroad

The Western & Atlantic Railroad was a Georgia chartered company, funded by the state legislature and designed to connect Atlanta (then called Terminus) and Chattanooga, Tennessee. The railroad, which was in fact owned part and parcel by the State of Georgia, was surveyed during the late 1830s and 1840s by civil engineers hired by Western & Atlantic, and was completed in 1850. However, sections of the road were completed prior to this time, including a thirty-nine mile stretch that included Terminus (its beginning point), Marietta and Acworth in Cobb County, and Cassville in Bartow County, this occurring in 1842.¹²

Joseph Gregg, a civil engineer from Acworth, New Hampshire, surveyed the section of railroad that crossed Acworth (Land Lots 30-33). Gregg arrived in Acworth in 1837, not long after the state legislature approved funding for the construction of the railroad. Gregg had worked on several other railroad projects during his life—he was mainly responsible for the survey of a rail bed that stretched from the coast of Maine to the St. Lawrence Seaway, for example, one of the first of its type. When Gregg sited the location of the Western & Atlantic depot (at the corner of present-day Lemon and Main streets), he renamed the town, from Northcutt Station to Acworth. Gregg stayed on in Acworth for the remainder of his life; he was killed some years later in Jacksonville, Florida, by a person professing to be his best friend.¹³

The construction of the Western & Atlantic changed the face of Acworth almost immediately. Wood buildings and structures were quickly built—these buildings were mostly one-room affairs; commercial buildings were erected on present-day Main Street (then known as the Cassville Road), however the first commercial buildings were constructed the north side of the railroad on then former Main Street (now Southside Drive). The town's churches were also located within the business district. None of the buildings constructed during this early period of development are extant, although a few residences that are not part of this proposed district still remain.

By 1850, Acworth had several commercial interests. There was cotton gin, for example on the north side of Cassville Road (no longer extant). The town also had hatters, merchants (general merchandise sales), a physician, and cobblers; additionally, Acworth had a banking institution, an undertaker (funerary supplies, as were other manufactured goods, were delivered by Western & Atlantic freight trains), and other ventures dedicated to the production of agriculture. Later, the railroad would play an even greater role in Acworth's history by helping fuel the redevelopment of the town following the destruction of Acworth during the Civil War.¹⁴

¹² Un-credited. "Western & Atlantic Railroad," *Railroad History* (located @ <http://www.railga.com>.)

¹³ Merrill, Reverend J.L. *History of Acworth with the Proceedings of the Centennial Anniversary, Genealogical Records and Register of Farms* (located @ <http://ftp.rootsweb.com>), 1869, 223.

¹⁴ Clerk of the Superior Court. Cobb County Deed Room, Marietta, Georgia.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Civil War

Acworth prospered in the years following the construction of the railroad. New businesses sprung up all around the central downtown core. Residential construction blossomed in the area, and a subtle shift became apparent as the number of farmers in the immediate area of Acworth dropped while the population of those holding jobs other than agriculture increased. By 1860, occupations listed in the census for Acworth included blacksmiths, carpenters, wagon-makers, cobblers, millers, a hotel operator, railroad employees, hatters, teachers, a physician, and merchants. Most prominent in the area of mercantile operations was the Lemon, Stokely & Awtrey Store, which opened in the late 1850s.¹⁵

Lemon, Stokely, & Awtrey was a merchandise store, selling agricultural supplies, such as cottonseed, tools and other implements, a limited amount of grocery items (flour, etc.) and patent medicines, among other goods. Smith Lemon, a one-third owner in the store was the first to arrive in Acworth, in 1843, from DeKalb County, via Marietta in Cobb County. In addition to his interest in the store, he was also the founder and president of the S. Lemon Banking Company, the first privately held bank in the county, and in all of the former Cherokee land. Stephen Stokely was also an early arrival to Acworth, from Tennessee, and like Lemon, would be active in Acworth's early municipal government. Merrill Awtrey was from the Villa Rica area, and moved to Acworth in the mid-1850s.¹⁶

With Acworth's early and substantial development, a movement arose to incorporate. Corporate limits of Acworth, like many other towns with railroads, were centered on the railroad depot, and extended ½ mile in every direction from that center point. There were no provisions in the original charter for the election of a mayor; rather, an elected board of commissioners was responsible for the governance of the municipal affairs. On December 1, 1860, Stephen Stokely, Merrill Awtrey, Joel Britt, Samuel Robertson, and Smith Lemon became the first commissioners of the city of Acworth.¹⁷

The Civil War would have disastrous effects on Acworth. At the beginning of the conflict, it appears through records that Acworth's citizens were in support of the effort to secede from the Union. Many Acworth citizens served during the war, many of which went on to reestablish Acworth after its destruction. Initially, 155 volunteers enlisted in the regular Confederate army as part of Company A, 18th Regiment of the Georgia Infantry. Additionally, up to one hundred more served as part of local and state militia groups.¹⁸

Among these were Smith and James Lemon. The Lemons played a prominent role during the war; Smith Lemon was the first of the brothers to enlist, though it was his brother James that saw the bulk

15 United States of America. *Eighth Census of the United States (Population)* located on microfilm, Georgia Room, Cobb County Library, Marietta Georgia.

16 Un-credited. "Acworth Pictured As An Ideal Place For Factory Sites," *The Marietta Journal: Acworth Section*, Volume 62, Number 18, 9 May 1929. 49-56.

17 Ibid., & Carrie Dyer Women's Club, 17-21.

18 Temple, Sarah Blackwell Gober. *The First Hundred Years: A Short History of Cobb County, in Georgia* (seventh printing, Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society, 1935, 1997), 234-248.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

of combat during the war. Smith Lemon, who by this time had established his banking company, foresaw the result of the war; he is reputed to have buried gold amounting to five thousand dollars before reporting to duty, knowing that Acworth would be invaded and destroyed one day. It is not known whether other citizens in Acworth shared his pessimism, but Lemon's actions were prophetic. The Western & Atlantic Railroad and the towns that served that line would indeed be prime targets of any invading Union force and strategy; in order to break the Confederate will to resist a return to the Union, methods of supplying food and other vital materials to Confederate armies would necessarily have to be destroyed or otherwise neutralized.¹⁹

General Sherman and his army were the fulfillment of this strategy. After battles in northern Georgia at Chickamauga, Dalton, and Dallas, Sherman's army was able to occupy Acworth without assault. The objective was Atlanta, thirty miles to the south, with the final objective being Savannah. The people of Acworth were not overly happy to be occupied by Union soldiers. Union soldiers were quartered in local homes and commercial buildings, while trains laded with supplies for the army trundled along the Western & Atlantic railroad. Union flags reportedly flew along the main streets of Acworth; one woman was reputedly tried for treason for refusing to walk underneath the flags as she did her shopping, though she was acquitted. Pews from area churches were ripped from the floors, and reassembled as horse troughs, and Union foragers liberally appropriated goods and foodstuffs from local farms and residents.²⁰

The Union army arrived in Acworth on or near June 29, 1864, and soon after the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, left the area with the intention of taking Atlanta. Whatever perceived depredations the citizens of Acworth endured under Union occupation were nothing in comparison to the destruction wrought on the town upon the army leaving. First, the entire downtown area was burned to the ground. At this point in Acworth's development, all of the downtown buildings were constructed of wood; it did not take very long for the buildings to burn. The downtown area was not the only section of Acworth to suffer—six residences survived the conflagration, but only as a result of one Union army officer, who was assigned to keep enlisted soldiers from indiscriminately destroying the entire town.²¹

As the refugees of Acworth began to trickle slowly back into the area (several families had fled Acworth on news of the approaching Federal army), they were greeted with scenes of devastation. With one or two exceptions, formerly affluent Acworth citizens were now facing financial ruin. None of the buildings in the downtown area had survived the fires set by leaving Union forces, the Western & Atlantic railroad was nearly destroyed, roads were nearly impassable, and communications with the outside world were chancy at best. For several months after the Union army left the area, returning residents gathered what materials they could to construct makeshift homes; some residents lived in their former slaves' quarters.²²

¹⁹ *Marietta Journal*, 49-56

²⁰ Carrie Dyer Women's Club, 46-60.

²¹ *Ibid*, 49.

²² *Ibid*, 58.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Post Civil War Recovery: 1865-1880

Those citizens who returned to Acworth, and those who had remained through the occupation by Union forces found that materials to rebuild the city with were in short supply. The Western & Atlantic Railroad was in ruins, destroyed for miles on either side of Acworth. To add insult to injury, almost immediately after the war, Reconstruction policies of hard-line Republicans in Washington made life even more difficult, not only in Acworth, but throughout the south.²³

Acquiring food was also a difficult problem. Union forces quartered in or near Acworth had completely depleted the area of crops; confiscation of any item that might be used to aid the Confederacy was an official policy among Union officers and enlisted men alike. With the railroad destroyed, food that might have been transported to the area to relieve the harsh conditions went undelivered. Acworth might well have disappeared, with its inhabitants scattered in towns more capable of sustaining its population, but this was not the case. According to the late Earl Awtrey, Smith Lemon had foreseen the destruction of the South, or had at least hedged his bets by burying five thousand dollars in gold just before he departed to serve with Confederate militia groups.²⁴

When Lemon returned, according to Awtrey, he dug up the gold and used it to reestablish the S. Lemon Banking Company. Lemon originally established the bank in 1853; earlier, he was a one-third owner of the Lemon, Stokely, & Awtrey Store, but he had had grander visions upon his return to Acworth. After digging up his hoarded gold, he began to make small interest loans to farmers and merchants in the area in and around Acworth, and slowly, Acworth began to recover from the war.²⁵

The buildings constructed after the war were based on the pattern of earlier development. The buildings were wood, usually one room and one story in height. Most of the buildings were utilized as mercantile operations, serving agricultural production. In the Acworth area, cotton was the main crop in the years following the Civil War. A cotton gin was reestablished in the downtown area (now a city parking area on the north side of Main Street), and Acworth finally began in earnest to recover from the war by exploiting natural resources, such as timber. In another section of town (not within the proposed district), a brick-making operation was chartered. Early brick buildings in Acworth would be constructed with bricks from this manufacturer, which was incidentally owned by Smith Lemon. From intensive study of local deeds, it appears that one of the earliest brick buildings still extant in Acworth is the building at 4468 Cherokee Street, the former white and later African-American Oddfellows Hall.²⁶

Numerous sources state that Cherokee Street and Southside Drive (formerly called Main Street) was considered the downtown core in the earliest period of Acworth's history, and was actually closer to

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid, 58-60, & *Marietta Journal*, 49-56.

26 Cobb County Deed Records.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

the railroad tracks than those businesses that would later develop on the south side of Cassville Road (now Main Street).

Fires were a constant fear in the Acworth downtown, as it was in most towns during this time. With buildings in such close proximity, it was not uncommon for a fire to start in a single building, and then turn into a conflagration that would consume surrounding buildings before action could be taken to subdue the flames. This would also account for the switch to more fire resistant building materials. However, Acworth did not have a formal firefighting force until 1907. What the early building owners had were night watchmen. These watchmen were usually the night watch of the police force—Acworth had two police officers (a marshal and a deputy); the marshal would work during the day, while the deputy would patrol the area at night. The city would pay, in addition to the deputy's salary (which was a paltry sum, even for the latter years of the 19th century), an allowance for watching for fires, and calling out for volunteers to fight fires, if necessary.²⁷

The development of the area surrounding present-day Southside Drive and Cherokee Street was fueled further by the owners of the properties. Foremost among them was Merrill C. Awtrey, one of Acworth's earliest and most prosperous merchants. It was Awtrey, along with Smith Lemon and James Stokely that opened the first successful mercantile in Acworth (Lemon, Stokely, & Awtrey Company). Awtrey was also involved in the politics of the area, serving as an early commissioner of Acworth and was also represented the area as a state legislator. By 1873, Awtrey was well reestablished as a merchant in the area; by 1875, he was selling his interests on the block named for him to close relatives, perhaps in preparation for his retirement. Most of the property was sold to Orlando Awtrey, one of Merrill's nephews, who would figure heavily in Acworth's development throughout the remainder of the 19th century, and well into the 20th.²⁸

District Development: 1880—1940

Most of the buildings included in the proposed district were constructed in the 1880s to 1930 time period. This period, put into context with the redevelopment of the southern states affected by the Civil War, makes Acworth a typical representative of its type and time. By 1880, many towns affected by the Civil War were beginning a sort of commercial renaissance, fueled in large part by the ascendancy of the cotton culture and other agricultural production.

Acworth did especially well in cotton production. By the 1870s, Acworth had erected buildings dedicated exclusively to the production of cotton—there was the aforementioned cotton gin located on present-day Main Street, and another, smaller gin opened north of this location in the 1880s. The owners of the gins also operated as cotton brokers, selling the material to cotton mills in the northern states, and in a few cotton mills that were beginning to sprout up throughout the south.

The methods of cotton production had changed little since cotton was first produced in the area.

²⁷ Clerk of the City of Acworth. *Minutes Books of the City of Acworth* (1901-2004 inclusive; maintained by the Clerk of the City of Acworth, and located in the Archival Vault of the Acworth City Hall). 1907-1916.

²⁸ Carrie Dyer *Women's Club*, 57-58.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Cottonseed was sold by operators of the mercantile stores, and then planted by farmers in the surrounding area. Merchants obtained the seed directly from the cotton gin operators, who would obtain seed from the very cotton it processed.

Another factor in the success of cotton in the area was the repair of the Western & Atlantic railroad. Documents do not state an exact date that the railroad was repaired through Acworth, however rail-bed repair began almost immediately after its destruction. By 1870, Acworth did have a new depot (no longer extant), replacing the one destroyed by Union soldiers after the occupation of Acworth. This depot was constructed on the same lot as the previous one and was much larger than the original.

The depot had to be much larger, to accommodate the loads of cotton bales that were loaded from its docks. Historic photographs portray some of the chaos that reigned in downtown Acworth during cotton harvesting time; streets surrounding the cotton gin were full of wagons bearing cotton loads, and hundreds of 600-pound bales lined the street, waiting for the freight trains to arrive and carry the cotton to points north and south. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s brick buildings replaced earlier wood buildings. News accounts from the era do not survive; it is unknown if the buildings were demolished to make room for the brick buildings, or if the brick buildings replaced wooden buildings destroyed by other means, such as fire. One historic photograph, however, does show one stage of the transition from wood to brick buildings. The photograph, taken from the north side of the Western & Atlantic tracks shows an earlier Acworth, with brick buildings steadily infilling spots where wood buildings had previously existed.

The railroad, during this time, also began to show alterations. The grade from the south, beginning in Kennesaw, and extending to Allatoona Pass to the north was steep, steep enough, in fact to warrant a change in the grade. The track was thus raised in Acworth and points south at varying times through the years, beginning in the late 1890s. The result was the creation of an obstructed view from one side of the tracks to the other in downtown Acworth. Today, buildings on the north side of the tracks are barely seen from the south side of the tracks. In some places, those buildings cannot be viewed at all.²⁹

This obstruction changed the character of Acworth's downtown areas. Before the grade changes occurred, the main commercial district of Acworth was on the north side of the track; gradually, this began to change. Part of this was due to the number of residential buildings quartered around Awtrey's Block—several homes were present to the east and north of the block, few of which exist today, with none of these within the proposed district. With the north side of the tracks filled, aspiring commercial merchants found it necessary to construct their buildings on the south side of the tracks.

With this expansion, the center of the downtown shifted south. Main Street (on the north side of the railroad) became Southside Drive, while Canton Road became referred to as Cherokee Street.

²⁹ Bretherton, Thomas. Interview, June 2004. Notes on file at Fort Mountain Preservation Svcs., Woodstock, GA.
Acworth Downtown Historic District, Cobb County, Georgia

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Cassville Road became present-day Main Street and with the introduction of the automobile some years later, Main Street became part of the Dixie Highway.

With more room for construction, and with the destruction or demolition of wooden buildings on the new Main Street, new development flourished. As stated, a majority of the brick buildings now present on the street replaced earlier wood buildings, and in some cases, early examples of brick construction, destroyed by fire. This was the case in the construction of the c.1895 Acworth Post Office, on the corner of Main and Lemon streets, which replaced an earlier brick building.

The new Main Street developed relatively quickly. The bulk of the brick buildings on this street that are within the proposed district were constructed between 1895 and 1910, indicating an era of prosperity in the town, mostly funded by two banks, the S. Lemon Banking Company and the Bank of Acworth, chartered in 1906 and 1905, respectively. The S. Lemon Bank was founded in 1853, initially, reestablished in 1865, and approved as a state chartered bank in 1906. Funds on hand in the two banks varied; for example, in 1907, the S. Lemon Banking Company boasted capital in excess of thirty thousand dollars, while the newer Bank of Acworth stated capital of sixteen thousand dollars. This money was loaned to buyers of lots with the express interest of building commercial concerns in the town.³⁰

Buildings along Main Street were constructed by local labor. The buildings were constructed with two basic uses in mind—either as buildings catering to shoppers or as warehouses for stock that could not be stored in the small, public buildings. The “shopping” buildings averaged a width of 20 to 25 feet and a length of 60 to 90 feet. The one-story buildings consisted of one room, usually floored with pine and walls sheathed in plaster over brick. Ceilings were either covered with decorative tin sheeting or a white cardboard material. Sixteen-inch on center roof joists were the common roof joist support, and the roofs were typically sheathed with an asphalt sealant.

Two-story buildings were different. Usually, the first floor was split into two basic rooms, separated in some cases by a common brick wall with openings cut to permit passage between the two rooms. In some cases, the two rooms were completely separated, as was the McMillan and Armstrong Buildings, which had two separate tenants. In the cases where the rooms were not completely separated, one side of the building was used for shopping, while the other side was used for storage or warehousing.

Second floors were accessible through one of three methods and in some cases, a combination of the three. The second floor might be accessed either through a stairwell built into the original construction by installing a door leading to a staircase on the front façade of the building, or by way of stairs constructed within the building, accessed by going inside the store. A third method was to install stairs on the rear façade of the building, as did the Legion Theater. Separate stairs were a fixture in public buildings in the time of Jim Crow laws. African Americans could not enter through the front doors of many establishments, but might access the buildings through rear entrances. In

³⁰ *Marietta Journal*, 49-56.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

the case of the Legion Theater, African Americans entered the building through the rear second floor entrance because the viewing area set aside for African Americans was the balcony.

The McMillan Brothers Store was one of the first large two-story buildings to be constructed on Main Street that is still extant. The building was constructed in 1896; it featured two floors, both with walls running the length of the building. These walls had wide openings; it might be speculated that these walls were load bearing due to the 60-foot span of the roof structure. On the first floor of the building, both rooms (each 3000 square feet) were open to the public. The left side of the first floor was used for groceries, hardware, and farm implements, while dry goods, apparel, and shoes occupied the right side. The upstairs, in the case of the McMillan Brothers Store, was also used for shopping; more apparel was displayed in the upstairs, as were house furnishings. McMillan Brothers had a separate warehouse to store overflow stock.³¹

Built previous to the McMillan Brothers Building, the S. Lemon Bank Building was located on Main Street. This building is a one-story brick building, constructed c.1890, and home of S. Lemon Banking Company from its construction until the bank ceased operation. For a short time, McMillan Bros. and the S. Lemon Banking Company shared the building.³²

Downtown Acworth continued to develop through the first 30 years of the 20th century. There was a short lull that lasted between from c.1915 to 1925; however this only applied to commercial buildings. Residential construction continued regularly through this era. The commercial slowdown is attributable to several factors. One factor was the steep decrease in raw cotton prices immediately following World War I. As demand for cotton fell in the wake of relative peace in western European nations and the Americas, prices declined to an average of three cents per pound. In some cases, prices fell to as low as one cent per pound. In combination with falling prices, the South was attacked by boll weevils, which rendered many cotton crops in North Georgia and other regions useless for production.

Acworth farmers were not immune to falling cotton prices and the boll weevil. Small farmers surrounding the Acworth area were either forced out of business or were compelled to subdivide their lands and follow the tenant model. By 1920, tenant farms were plentiful in Acworth and surrounding areas. By this time however, commercial businesses in Acworth (especially those that dealt heavily in cotton) were unable or unwilling to risk capital in cotton. For a time in the 1920', the Acworth cotton gin closed, and Acworth, which had began the 1910s with three gins operating at full capacity, could barely support a ginning business.³³

The fall of cotton prices in Acworth sent ripples throughout the commercial district. For a community as agriculturally-oriented as Acworth, any adverse affects on agriculture could spell disaster for all related businesses, which in Acworth, meant all businesses. After cotton gins in town closed, mercantile, dry-good, and warehouse businesses were hard hit, and in some cases, went out of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Acworth Society for Historic Preservation, Inc.. *Images of America: Acworth* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 51.

³³ Cobb County Deed Rooms.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

business. The hardest hit were cotton warehouses. Cotton was still coming in to Acworth from surrounding farms; yet, with cotton prices so low, farmers were forced to try and produce more cotton to make up the cash shortfall. This surplus cotton could not be sent to a marketplace that did not want it, so the cotton would ordinarily be stored in cotton warehouses, of which Acworth had a plentitude. Before long, there was little room left for any surplus cotton—the warehouses had filled quickly with surplus, and with farmers being forced out of business or forced into other crops (some which yielded even less money than cotton), cotton warehouse operators found themselves between two bad situations. On one hand, too much cotton was coming into town. On the other, buyers from outside of Acworth refused to buy surplus cotton at any price.

There were bright spots in the economy of Acworth, however. One of the brightest was the advent of the automobile. Acworth is situated on what used to be the main wagon roads going north-south and east-west through the lower Cherokee Country. The north-south route was known as the Old Cartersville—Kennesaw Road, while east—west route was known as the Old Dallas—Canton Road. The proximity of Acworth, which sat almost squarely in the middle of a diamond between those cities, made the automobile an ideal mode of transportation for the region, especially for an improved north-south route.

The north-south route was the most obvious route to construct improved roads for automobile traffic. Any southern route would naturally lead to Atlanta, while northern routes would lead to the next largest city north of Atlanta, Chattanooga, Tennessee. An additional attraction in constructing a north-south route was the presence of the old Western & Atlantic Railroad, which was now under control of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. As automobile traffic increased in the South, the influence of the railroad in transporting passengers began to wane. This phenomenon had already become irreversible prior to plans being laid to pave what would become known as the Dixie Highway.

The Dixie Highway brought new economic possibilities to Acworth. Among its more obvious benefits, like making automobile traffic more feasible, it was a natural advertisement for the utility and pleasure of driving. With these two factors, the public began to seriously think about owning their own cars. Up to this time, those citizens of Acworth who might consider owning their own automobile had to go to Marietta or Atlanta to shop for a car. In 1927, this changed. Carl Butler (a descendant of early Acworth settlers) opened a garage and dealer showroom in Acworth, at the east edge of downtown. At first, Butler sold what cars he could procure (which meant used cars), but then became the authorized Chevrolet dealer in the area.³⁴

Butler had constructed a new building in Acworth, one dedicated to the automobile. His shop featured a showroom of new arrivals (the cars were shipped by train and off-loaded at the Acworth Depot—it is ironic that the train would transport machinery that would one day end a major part of its identity; that being passenger service), a full service garage, a parts building, and an office. This

³⁴ Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

was the first new commercial construction in Acworth in several years.³⁵

By the time Butler developed his dealership, downtown Acworth was nearly built out. Downtown now consisted of all brick buildings—G.W. McLain's wood livery stable had burned the year before—with one exception being the depot. Louisville & Nashville Railroad was still a leading factor in the transportation of goods and services in and out of Acworth, but its role in being the lifeblood of Acworth had begun to wane. It still continued passenger service; however, the numbers of passengers began to drop, until it became unprofitable for the railroad to include passenger service in the 1950s, and service was dropped.

Freight service continued, however. Despite the drop in cotton prices, cotton was still being shipped out of Acworth—except now, it was being shipped as finished goods. Outside the proposed district, textile mills (three of them in operation by the 1940s) were taking local cotton and producing finished goods. It was cheap labor and tax incentives that brought these operations to Acworth—unions and other factors had caused the price of production in northern production centers to rise, and with improved transportation from the south to north, along with city governments willing to extend welcoming arms to manufacturers, had caused many northern textile firms to move south.

These firms settled to an area just inside the city limits, but outside the proposed district boundaries. One business, within the proposed district boundary, was the Conway-Noland Toy Company. Founded by Margaret Conway in 1942, the factory produced stuffed animals. Conway was from Adairsville, an area that was experiencing a huge increase in economic fortune due to the production of chenille products. Conway, like many other individuals, had produced chenille products from her home and realized that from the scraps of the blankets she made, other products could be produced. She soon began manufacturing toy animals from her chenille scraps, and when it became necessary to open a business exclusively dedicated to their production, she moved to Acworth.³⁶

The Acworth Laundry had been long closed by this time—Acworth was recovering from the Great Depression, albeit slowly. The long vacant laundry building, as it was known, was in the older part of downtown Acworth, but would make an excellent location for a factory. She purchased the building and opened operations almost immediately. Soon, she had several employees, one of which was Fay Noland. Conway and Noland eventually wed, and the company name was changed to Conway-Noland Toys.³⁷

Conway-Noland Toys arrived in Acworth just in time to fill a vacuum. Orlando Awtrey, along with a good majority of the founding families of Acworth, had been hit hard by the Great Depression. Awtrey himself was forced to sell off a lot of his land holdings, and the Lemon Family, with their bank and land holdings in Acworth, were also feeling the pinch. As a result of this and the increasing age of these town patriarchs, along with the rise of the aircraft industry in nearby Marietta, a shift in the character of Acworth began to occur.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Acworth Society for Historic Preservation, Inc., 66-67.

³⁷ Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Downtown Acworth: 1940-2000

A shift of purpose had begun to occur in Acworth by the 1940s. World War II was causing great upheavals in the fabric of small town life—Acworth was rapidly switching from an agrarian focus to one more suited to the modern age.

It was not just Acworth that was changing as a result of the Second World War. Marietta, ten miles south of Acworth, was transformed during the war years by the introduction of war industries; impacting Marietta and the rest of Cobb County was the establishment of the Bell Bomber Plant, which produced wartime aircraft, including the B-24 and the B-29 long range bomber. At the close of World War II, Bell was producing 650 aircraft per year.³⁸

The end of the war did not mean the end of wartime prosperity. The aircraft manufacturing plant did not stop producing aircraft—with the beginning of the Cold War in sight, Lockheed began to produce new generations of aircraft. Acworth benefited from this continued prosperity and began to shift from an agrarian-oriented small town to the bedroom community of Marietta and Atlanta that it is today.

The result was mixed, so far as the downtown area was concerned. There was really no need for downtown Acworth to have several stores dedicated to farm supply by this point. The working population of Acworth was now split between two major sources of employment and neither source relied on wholly on agriculture. Employment for the general population of Acworth now meant either working in highly sought-after aircraft jobs, or in the booming textile mills that surrounded the downtown area.

Thus Acworth's economic focus shifted as well as its social context. Several factors were involved in economic changes, chief among them the rise of higher-paying jobs. Housing development began to boom in Acworth almost immediately after the war. The problem was that few of these developments lent to the development of the downtown area. Buildings began to go vacant; Awtrey's Corner during this time began its slow deterioration—a deterioration that would continue until the late 1980s. The planing mill closed; lumber from other sources was much cheaper and readily available. The last remaining cotton gin closed, until its demolition in the late 1980s, it was occupied by several small businesses, none of which ever fully utilized the huge space the building offered.³⁹

Main Street buildings began to be vacated by long-time occupants. Attempts were made to fill the buildings, and during a brief time of renewal in the 1950s, measures were taken by building owners to spruce up the buildings by adding large overhead canopies, redesigning front facades, and removing small outbuildings behind the main buildings. Few of these improvements helped; by 1960, very few of the downtown buildings had occupants. One exception was the Collins Furniture Company, which was during the 1950s and 1960s, the largest of businesses to occupy buildings in

³⁸ United States Air Force. "Boeing B-29 "Superfortress," *U.S.A.F. Museum* (located at <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum>).

³⁹ Cobb County Deed Rooms.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

the downtown area.⁴⁰

Smaller businesses became the norm in Acworth. Most of these specialized in specific, rather than in broad-based services. One example was the E.L. Collins Furniture Company. This business, in addition to selling and repairing furniture also operated a funeral business. The difference during this era, however was that prior to the post-war period, Collins would have operated the both or all of their businesses in one or two attached buildings, as in the example of the Awtrey family. During the post-war period, Collins' businesses occupied several different buildings in and out of the proposed district area. The furniture business operated out of three storefronts on Main Street. The warehouse operation connected with the furniture business was located at another location off Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue, and the funeral home was located north of the proposed district area.⁴¹

General mercantile businesses became more specialized as well. General mercantile operations were all-encompassing—it was one of the things that made these businesses so competitive. Now, general stores began to give way to more specialized businesses. Meat departments were spun off to separate stores; sections of the general stores dedicated to clothing branched off and found enough of a market that successful clothing stores began to open. All manner of goods once sold by general stores evolved to the concept of specialized shops; however, there were other goods sold by general stores that fell out of favor.

First among these goods in Acworth business establishments were agricultural supplies. Cottonseed, livestock feed, farm implements, and medium to large farm equipment had become unneeded in Acworth, and this spelled the end of the general store business in Acworth. Dry goods stores became obsolete in the area; as grocery stores dedicated exclusively to the sale of food items began their advent, dry goods sold in bulk were no longer needed.

Commerce in Acworth has followed this pattern to the present. For the most part, it is the larger businesses that have had the most in the way of marked success, however. Companies like Collins Furniture and Eaton's Department Store did well during this period; however, smaller companies more susceptible to the whims of regional and national economic woes did not fare so well. Eventually, those buildings thought too small (in terms of size of storefronts and overall square footage) either sat vacant for long periods or were occupied by commercial enterprises that needed little space, such as barbershops and medical offices. The turnover rate for occupancy of the other buildings of this type was very high, and by the 1980s, these buildings were vacant much more of the time than occupied.

By the late 1970s, a shift toward moving businesses out of the Main Street locations was at an apex, especially after the destruction of large buildings just outside the proposed district opened land for other commercial development. Most notable of this land was at the southeast corner of Lemon and

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8—Statement of Significance

Main streets, the former location of the Acworth Inn. Eaton's was one of the first to relocate; it had outgrown its location on Main Street, along with other factors. One such factor was the inevitable deterioration of the building in which it was housed. These buildings were susceptible to all manner of problems due to aging. Roofs leaked due to tarring material reaching an advanced age and cracking and allowing water to seep through the roof, rotting the structural members below, causing structural as well as cosmetic damage. Wooden bulkheads, sitting on top of street level concrete and exposed to weather and insects, were damaged beyond repair. When this problem occurred, the most common solution was to rip the old bulkheads out. A natural conclusion to arrive at by the property owner at this time was to completely remodel the front façade, and most of the buildings that historically had recessed facades were remodeled to their present appearance.

By 1984, most of the downtown had emptied. Eaton's was at its new location, as was Lacey's Drugstore. A larger grocery store had opened in the same complex as the aforementioned stores; as a result, the last of the small grocery businesses in the downtown district had closed. A small auto repair shop now occupied the cotton gin site. The initial boon caused by the creation of Lake Acworth a few blocks south had run its course for the time being and with the condition of the buildings in the district approaching critical, it became difficult to attract commercial enterprises that could sustain themselves. Competition from outlying commercial development added hardship to those operating the few businesses left in the district.

A shift began to take place during the late 1980's. City officials, building owners, and local citizens began to take steps to revitalize the downtown area. Given a movement to take full advantage of Acworth's historicity as a means to attract heritage tourism, quality commercial enterprises, and local shoppers, the city embarked on programs meant to improve the economy of Acworth. One of the first steps taken by city government was to take an active interest in the downtown infrastructure. The revitalization appears to have been carried out in three major areas: repair and maintenance to infrastructure, evaluation and demolition of buildings too far advanced in deterioration, and the rehabilitation of downtown buildings still structurally sound. Infrastructure improvements were the first priority. Streets and sidewalks in the downtown area were of paramount concern. The sidewalks present had been laid between 1907 and 1910 and were in sore need of repair or replacement. In the end, the decision was made to replace all the downtown area sidewalks. The project, which carried on for over a year, was accomplished in 1987. The streets within the proposed district were another concern, particularly Southside Drive, which were in serious disrepair. Moreover, traffic patterns between the two sides of the downtown area were skewed, due to railroad crossings that no longer made sense given the amount of traffic in the area. Ultimately, the Cherokee/Dallas Street crossing was closed to traffic, and a new traffic crossing was created at the intersection of Lemon Street and Main Street. This improved traffic flow through town, although it required the demolition of the historic cotton gin, planing mill, and train depot.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

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Temple, Sarah Blackwell Gober. *The First Hundred Years: A Short History of Cobb County, in Georgia*. United States of America: Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society, Inc., seventh printing, 1997.

Interviews:

Bretherton, Tom. Interview conducted by William Blankenship; interview notes located at Fort Mountain Preservation Services, June 2004.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register**
- previously determined eligible by the National Register**
- designated a National Historic Landmark**
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #**

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 14 acres.

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A)	16	714063	3771834
B)	16	714419	3771748
C)	16	714314	3771586
D)	16	714055	3771701

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary is indicated on the attached district map drawn with a heavy black line, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the intact, historic, and contiguous resources associated with the historic commercial development of downtown Acworth.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Gretchen A. Brock/National Register Coordinator
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 34 Peachtree Street, Suite 1600
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** February 23, 2006
e-mail gretchen_brock@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)() not applicable

name/title William Blankenship
organization Fort Mountain Preservation Services
mailing address 307 Cardinal Drive
city or town Woodstock **state** Georgia **zip code** 30188
telephone (678) 357-1723
e-mail fortmtn@mindspring.com

- () **property owner**
() **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
() **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) N/A
organization (if applicable) Acworth Historic Preservation Commission
mailing address 4415 Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue
city or town Acworth **state** Georgia **zip code** 30101
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property: Acworth Downtown Historic District
City or Vicinity: Acworth
County: Cobb
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2005

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 18

1. View of Main Street; photographer facing west.
2. View of Main Street; photographer facing southwest.
3. View of Main Street; photographer facing southeast.
4. View of Main Street; photographer facing west.
5. View of Main Street; photographer facing southwest.
6. View of Main Street from railroad; photographer facing southeast.
7. View of 4887 Main Street; photographer facing southwest.
8. View of nonhistoric depot and Main Street; photographer facing southwest.
9. View of Southside Drive; photographer facing northwest.
10. View of Southside Drive at Cherokee Street; photographer facing northwest.
11. View of Cherokee Street; photographer facing south.
12. View of Lemon Street; photographer facing west.
13. View of Lemon Street; photographer facing northwest.
14. Jail and police department; photographer facing west.
15. View of Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue; photographer facing west.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

16. Acworth Branch Library; photographer facing west.
17. Acworth Branch Library; photographer facing north.
18. United States Post Office and Federal Building; photographer facing southwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)