

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 Thomasville Commercial Historic District (boundary increase, boundary decrease, and additional information)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Downtown Thomasville between Jefferson Street and Smith Avenue and between Crawford and Siexas streets.

city, town Thomasville () **vicinity of**

county Thomas **code** GA 275

state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31799

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

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

Category of Property:

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

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: See page 2.

Name of previous listing: Thomasville Commercial Historic District (1984); Thomasville Depot (1988); and B'nai Israel Synagogue (1997). **Name of related multiple property listing:** N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 3--Description

Number of Resources Previously Listed within the Thomasville Commercial Historic District (1984):

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	76	40
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	76	40

Newly Identified Resources within the 1984 Nomination (Additional Documentation):

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	15	2
sites	0	0
structures	1	0
objects	1	0
total	17	2

Newly Identified Resources within the Boundary Increase:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	32	23
sites	0	0
structures	2	0
objects	0	0
total	34	23

(continued next page)

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Section 3--Description

Total Number of Resources* (including previously listed and newly identified):

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	123	65
sites	0	0
structures	3	0
objects	1	0
total	127	65

*Total Number of Resources includes the Thomasville Depot (three contributing buildings) listed 1988 and B'nai Israel Synagogue (one contributing building) listed 1997. Both listings are located in the Boundary Increase.

Descriptions of Historic Properties Addressed in the Thomasville Commercial Historic District (boundary increase, boundary decrease, and additional documentation):

The original National Register form, completed twenty years ago, identifies as contributing only buildings that were built before 1930 so that buildings built during the Great Depression, World War II, and in the immediate post-War years were not considered historic. Many buildings in the original historic district that were not old enough in 1984 have now met the fifty-year requirement. Others have had false facades removed, which have restored their historic integrity. Several buildings located on the east, west, and south sides of the original historic district were not included within the boundaries because they were either less than fifty years of age or they lacked historic integrity when the district was listed in 1984. For other buildings, the reasons for their exclusion from the original nomination are not clear.

The purpose of the Thomasville Commercial Historic District (boundary increase, boundary decrease, and additional information) is fivefold:

- 1) to extend the period of significance to 1954;
- 2) to increase the boundary to the east, west, and south sides of the historic district;
- 3) to decrease the boundary on Jackson Street between Stevens and Oak streets;
- 4) to reevaluate the National Register eligibility of each property in the original Thomasville Commercial Historic District (1984) and;
- 5) to add as an area significance Ethnic Heritage: Black.

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.

Richard Coates
Signature of certifying official

8-31-04
Date

for 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

Daniel J. Vicia 10/28/04

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:

Domestic: single dwelling, hotel

Commercial/Trade: business, financial institution, specialty store, department store, restaurant, warehouse

Social: meeting hall

Government: courthouse, city hall, post office, government office, public works

Religion: religious facility

Industry/Processing/Extraction: manufacturing facility

Transportation: rail-related

Landscape: square

Current Functions:

Commercial/Trade: business, specialty store, restaurant, warehouse

Government: courthouse, city hall, government office, public works

Religion: religious facility

Industry/Processing/Extraction: manufacturing facility

Landscape: square

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian: Italianate, Romanesque

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Italian Renaissance

Late 19th and early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style

Modern Movement: International Style

Materials:

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Metal

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Summary Description:

The amended Thomasville Commercial Historic District encompasses the contiguous historic commercial and community landmark buildings in downtown Thomasville. City streets are laid out in a gridiron plan with Broad Street centered on and paralleling a low ridge which trends northwest to

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Section 7--Description

southeast across the city. The courthouse (1858, altered 1888), which is located at the north edge of the historic district, marks the center of the city, from which the commercial district grew in a southeasterly direction (photo 1).

The oldest buildings in the historic district, a number of which date from the 1880s, are located on Broad Street. The majority of buildings are one- and two-story masonry structures with some rising to five stories. They share party walls and uniform setbacks. Brick, the principal building material, is used both structurally and decoratively. In addition, cast iron, pressed metal, stone, terra cotta, and wood are frequently used for exterior and interior detailing. Architectural styles represented include Italianate, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, and the International Style. Landscaping in the district is limited to plantings around the courthouse and the post office. This amendment adds to the historic district a substantial number of commercial buildings located outside the bounds of the 1984 National Register district, including the Bracey Lumber Company (1879), Thomasville Depot (1914), and the city power plant (1922). A block along West Jackson Street where previously listed buildings have been demolished has been deleted. This amendment updates the period of significance for the entire historic district and reclassifies contributing and noncontributing resources.

General Description of the Historic District:

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District is characterized mostly by one- and two-story attached commercial buildings constructed between the 1880s and the 1940s. Although the town is centered on the courthouse, the historic commercial district developed two blocks to the southeast at the intersection of Broad and Jackson streets. The Thomasville County Courthouse lies in the city's center surrounded by six National Register-listed residential districts: the historically white Dawson Street, Tockwotten-Love Street, East End, Paradise Park, and Fletcherville historic districts to the north, south and east and the African-American historic district of Stevens Street to the west.

Thomasville developed along a ridge that trends southeast to northwest with Broad Street running along the ridge crest. The city streets form a gridiron plan that follows the ridge in a roughly northeast to southwest direction. Broad and West Jefferson streets are the only streets in downtown Thomasville to retain their early brick paving (photo 3). West Jackson Street between Broad Street and the Seaboard Coastline Railroad is an African-American commercial district known as "Sandy Bottom," or the Bottom," because of its location at the bottom of the Broad Street ridge. Industrial resources in the historic district are located at the west end and at the south end along the rail line.

Buildings in the densely developed historic district line the streets and fill their buildings lots. They front the sidewalks with no historic landscape features. Bradford Pear trees were planted along the streets in recent years. Nearly all of the building lots have been subdivided into several smaller parcels. Most buildings were constructed along the lot lines on the front with party walls along the sides and varying depths at the rear. The buildings are mostly concentrated in the center of the district along Broad and Jackson streets. The edges of the historic district contain free-standing

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commercial and industrial buildings.

Beginning with the founding of Thomasville in 1826, the business district developed southeast of the county courthouse. Commercial corridors formed along Broad, Madison, and Jackson streets. By 1885, the layout of the current commercial district had been established. Later, at the beginning of the 20th century, a commercial corridor developed along West Jackson Street. Between 1890 and 1910, many one-story brick commercial buildings with cast-iron storefronts were constructed along the major downtown streets alongside larger, more elaborate buildings (photos 7-13). From the 1910s through the late 1940s, several older buildings on prominent street corners were replaced with newer buildings, such as the Steyerman Building built at the corner of Broad and Jackson streets in 1926 (photo 10, center right), the Bank of Thomasville built at the corner of Broad and Jackson streets in 1926 (photos 8-9), and the Municipal Building constructed at the corner of Jackson and Crawford streets in 1940 (photo 26).

Sandy Bottom on West Jackson Street is distinct from other areas of the historic district because it served as the African-American commercial district (photos 16-19). This district contains mostly one-story attached commercial buildings that were constructed in the first decades of the 20th century. The neighborhood once included a theater and commercial establishments for the use of African-American patrons. This area also included an ice plant, two foundries, a lumber mill, and a planing mill. Many of the African-American workers lived in the nearby Stevens Street neighborhood.

Architectural styles represented in the historic district include Italianate, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, and International Style (photos 4, 9, 10-11, 26, and 29). These buildings are constructed of masonry with storefronts occupying the first floor and double-hung sash windows on the floors above. The entablatures are defined by either molded wood, pressed metal, or corbeled brick cornices. Significant buildings in the original historic district include:

Thomas County Courthouse, 225 North Broad Street, 1858, 1888 (photo 1). Designed by local architect John Wind in 1858, it is the third courthouse to occupy the site since 1827. It was built for about \$15,000 by the Bowen Brothers who were local contractors. Wind's design for a cruciform-plan Greek Revival building surmounted by a cupola was significantly altered in 1888 to its current Italianate appearance. A Confederate monument in the form of a marble obelisk is located on the courthouse square. The monument, completed in 1879, was moved from the intersection of Broad and Remington streets to its current location in 1947.

Commercial building at 103 South Broad Street (photo 9, center). Among the most exuberant Italianate commercial buildings in the historic district, the building's stepped parapet, oriel window, and decorative brickwork make this an excellent example of its style. The interior ceilings and walls are covered with decorative pressed tin. 103 South Broad was rehabilitated in the 1980s.

Mitchell House, 101-121 North Broad Street, 1885 (photos 10, center right and 4, left). The original wood frame hotel building from 1875 was destroyed by fire and rebuilt of brick in 1885 by local

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contractors Eaves and Chase. The Mitchell House, designed by J. A. Wood, was an elaborate Victorian eclectic building with polychrome brickwork and multiple turrets and towers. It included the most modern building systems, such as gaslights and steam heat. Prices for the over 200 rooms started at \$4 a day. The Mitchell House was one of several large resort hotels built in Thomasville during the 1880s to cater northern tourists. In 1907, after the decline of the winter tourist business, the three-story hotel was used as an office building and a department store. The exterior has been dramatically altered but most of the hotel's interior remains intact. The Mitchell House, which is Thomasville's last surviving 19th-century tourist resort, is classified as noncontributing although a more thorough future evaluation may indicate that it has sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the National Register.

Upchurch Building, 123-127 North Broad Street, 1915 (photos 3 and four, left). The five-story Upchurch Building is Thomasville's tallest building. Local businessmen A. H. Williams and W. J. Upchurch constructed the building to serve as two stores on the first floor and professional offices above. The building is framed with steel and clad in brick with cast-stone and terra-cotta ornament. The building was rehabilitated in 1998.

United States Post Office, 135 North Broad Street, 1916 (photos 3-4, right). The two-story brick building served as post office on the first floor and federal offices on the floor above. A small loading dock at the rear was used for loading and unloading mail. The fanlights, pilasters, and decorative panels make this an excellent example of the Neoclassical Revival style. This building type was constructed throughout the country in the 1910s and 1920s by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. By 1964, the building was used as a public library, and since 1997 it has served as the Thomasville History, Genealogical and Fine Arts Library.

Steyerman Building, 104 South Broad Street, 1926 (photo 10, center). Located at the intersection of Broad and Jackson streets, the Steyerman building is a two-story Mission Revival-style building clad in gray stucco and characterized by Mission-style parapets at the corners, red terra-cotta roof tiles, and delicate ornament above the windows and in the frieze. The building was rehabilitated in 1998.

Bank of Thomasville, 101 South Broad Street, 1926 (photos 8 and 9). Designed by Atlanta architect A. Ten Eyck Brown, the Bank of Thomasville is a Neoclassical Revival-style building located at the prominent corner of Broad and Jackson streets. The massive, two-story rectangular stone building includes pilasters in low relief, a heavy projecting cornice, and a balustraded parapet. The building is currently used as a Thomas County records annex.

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Description of Boundary Increase

The boundary increase resulted in the addition of 32 contributing buildings on 40 acres that have been added to the original 20-acre Thomasville Commercial Historic District. The boundary is divided into three tracts to the east, south, and west.

East Area: South Crawford and Remington streets.

This area includes the addition of several one-story commercial buildings that characterize much of the original downtown historic district (photo 8), several two-story frame houses (photo 30), and the B'nai Israel Synagogue on South Crawford Street (photo 20), which is individually listed in the National Register. Completed in 1913, the Romanesque Revival-style synagogue is a small one-story, brick building constructed for Orthodox worship with a rear balcony for women's worship. The synagogue, which retains a high level of historic integrity, is among roughly a dozen surviving synagogues built before World War II in Georgia. The two houses in this area are located at 128 and 130 West Remington Street (photo 30). They were absorbed into the commercial area of Thomasville as a result of the growth of the central business district during the first half of the 20th century. These commercial buildings are similar to those in the previously listed commercial district.

Other community landmark buildings in the east area boundary increase include the Municipal Building on Jackson Street, which was constructed in 1940 (photos 25 and 26). Built through the Federal Emergency Administration, the Municipal Building replaced the city hall building that was constructed in the 1880s. The large, rectangular brick building was designed in the Colonial Revival style with a temple-front entrance supported by engaged columns raised on an arcaded base. The entablature, belt courses, and other elements are delineated in contrasting stone. The Municipal Building contained city hall, the fire department, and library on the first floor and a 1,500-seat auditorium on the second floor. Macon architect W. Elliot Dunwoody Jr. designed the building, which was constructed by the local contractor B. L. Brewton and Son.

The Southern Bell building on Remington Street, built in 1948, is a large, three-story brick building with massive communications equipment located on the roof (photo 29). The rectangular building is laid in Flemish bond and includes a three-part façade with a Greek Revival-style entrance.

West Area: North Stevens, North Madison, and West Jefferson streets.

This area includes a cluster of five historic one-story commercial buildings typical of the free-standing commercial buildings found throughout the historic district (photo 20). These include large and small buildings constructed of brick and block in the first half of the 20th century.

Other major buildings in the west area boundary increase include the Bracey Lumber Company on West Jefferson Street (photos 22 and 23). Built in c.1879, the lumber company is a large, brick

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building lined with arched windows and topped with a monitor roof. The flat-roofed front office was added later. A frame, gable-roofed warehouse is also located on the site.

Thomas County Health Department, 225 West Jefferson Street, 1951 (photo 21). A one-story, brick building constructed in the International Style. The building features a flat roof (which has been partially modified), bands of windows, flat-roofed entrances, and no references to past historical styles, all characteristics of the International Style. By 1993, the building was converted to a county office building named for Elijah Hill, a county commissioner and brick mason.

Located adjacent to the health department building is the city water tank, constructed in the late 1920s (photo 21). The tower, which serves visual landmark in Thomasville, is composed of curved steel panels joined by rivets. The drum is capped by a conical roof and held aloft on six reinforced steel legs.

South Area: West Jackson, West Remington, Fletcher, and Fleming streets.

This area, which is the largest of the three boundary increase areas, includes commercial and industrial resources. Three commercial buildings associated with the Sandy Bottom commercial area have been included (photo 36). Located at the corner of Jackson and North Remington streets, these buildings include two one-story stores and a corner gas station built in the 1920s. The gas station comprises a small office and brick canopy, which has since been enclosed.

South of the rail line, the south area boundary increase includes the Thomasville Depot (photos 37 and 38), which is individually listed in the National Register. The depot is a one-story brick building constructed in the Mission Revival style. The long, low structure features a hip-roofed main block flanked by wings capped with Flemish gables. Its five-part plan includes passenger waiting areas, a restaurant, freight room, and ticket office. Two additional railroad-related building are identified as contributing in the Thomasville Depot nomination and considered contributing in this amendment. The first is the one-story brick Railway Express Agency building (photo 38) located on the west side of the property. The second is the open train shed (photo 37) between the depot and the tracks that sheltered activity on the train platform. The frame shed is composed of frame bracing that supports a gable roof. The rail line between the depot and Fletcher Street, not included in the Thomasville Depot nomination is included as a contributing structure in the historic district amendment.

North of the rail line along West Remington Street are located several one-story brick and block warehouses associated with the railroad (photos 32-34). These large, sprawling buildings from the early 20th century typically feature large freight openings, few windows, and gable, flat, or bow-truss roofs.

The power plant on Fletcher Street was built in 1922 and operated until the 1960s, when the city began to purchase its electricity (photo 39). The site consists of several structures including the main building, which is a two-story brick building with steel-frame windows. The main entrance is

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ornamented with pilasters and a small pediment. An integral tower constructed of glazed tile is located at the rear of the complex.

Description of the Boundary Decrease

The boundary decrease area represents a small portion of the original historic district. The decrease area is limited to one block on the west side Jackson Street between Oak and Stevens streets (photo 18). The decrease results from the demolition of a block of 10 buildings (seven contributing) since the Thomasville Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1984. The historic buildings were replaced by a one-story brick commercial building that spans the entire block.

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
Politics/Government
Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance:

1826 – 1954.

Significant Dates:

1826 – Thomasville laid out as the seat of Thomas County.
1858 – Thomas County Courthouse built in the Greek Revival style.
1861 – Rail line from Thomasville to Savannah completed.
1888 – Thomas County Courthouse altered to its current Italianate appearance.
1907 – City roads paved with brick.
1922-1957 – City-owned power plant supplied electricity to residents of Thomasville.
1940 – Municipal Building completed.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

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Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Bowen Brothers, builder.
Brewton, B. L., builder, Thomas County Courthouse, 1858.
B. L. Brewton and Son, contractor, Thomas Co., Courthouse Annex, 1937; Municipal Building, 1940.
Brown, A. Ten Eyck, architect, Bank of Thomasville, 1926.
Cobb and Hammell, builder, Masonic Building, 1873.
Dunwoody, Jr., W. Elliot, architect, Municipal Building, 1940.
Eaves and Chase, contractor, Mitchell House, 1886; Thomas Co., Courthouse alterations, 1888.
Fetner, S. Ralph, architect.
Galliher, C. F., architect, power plant, 1922.
Jinright, Prince E., architect, Thomas County Courthouse Annex, 1937.
Jinright, Robert R., builder, Neel's Department Store (Mitchell House), 1979.
McCauley Co., contractor, Bank of Thomasville, 1926.
Miller, William, builder.
Noonan, William, architect, Mitchell House, 1875-1883.
Preacher, G. Lloyd, architect, Steyerman Building, 1926.
Van Ormer, C. H., builder, Steyerman Building, 1926.
Wind, John, architect, Thomas County Courthouse, 1858.
Wenderoth, Oscar, architect, United States Post Office, 1916.
Wood, J. A., architect, Mitchell House, 1886.

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District as amended is the historic central business district in Thomasville. The earliest period of development, which occurred in the 1820s, when the city was incorporated, is represented by the gridiron plan and courthouse square. Historic buildings in downtown Thomasville were built from the middle of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. The historic district is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, politics/government, and black ethnic heritage.

The Thomasville Commercial Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its collection of 19th- and 20th-century commercial and civic buildings that represent prevailing design principles of the period and illustrate how nationally popular architectural styles are interpreted in small Georgia cities. The city's late-19th and early 20th-century one- to five-story commercial buildings were built in the Italianate, Beaux Arts, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, and International Style. Most buildings in the historic district are attached one- and two-story masonry commercial buildings

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

located along Broad and Jackson streets. These buildings are typical of commercial buildings built in Georgia downtowns from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th century. The first floors are defined by plate-glass windows, sometimes supported by cast-iron columns, with sash windows on the above floors, and capped with corbeled brick cornices. These buildings often include Italianate elements, such as brackets and arched windows. Many one-story buildings include only glass display windows flanked by narrow brick walls and a brick parapet above the storefront. The city's commercial buildings reflect the economic prosperity of Thomasville at the turn of the 20th century with fine embellishments, such as pressed-metal cornices, marble pilasters, polychrome brickwork, and glazed terra-cotta details.

The historic district is also significant because of its community landmark buildings, such as the Italianate-style Thomas County Courthouse, built in 1858 and altered in 1888. The courthouse embodies local government and is among the most ornate buildings in the city, prominently sited on a park-like square. The United States Post Office, built in 1916 in the Neoclassical Revival-style, represents the importance of the federal government in facilitating communications throughout the country. The adjacent five-story Upchurch Building, constructed in the Classical Revival-style, is an important community landmark building because, as the tallest building in the historic district, it represents the rise of commerce in Thomasville at the beginning of the 20th century.

Resources in the boundary increase areas are typical of many buildings listed in the original National Register documentation, especially commercial buildings. These are located on Jackson, Remington, Madison, and Stevens streets. The boundary increase areas include industrial resources, such as the Bracey Lumber Company and several one- and two-story, brick-and-frame warehouses. These buildings, located on Stevens and West Remington streets are typical of warehouses associated with rail-related transportation built throughout Georgia in the decades before World War II. The power plant is characteristic of power plants that were constructed in small rural towns in Georgia in the decades before hydroelectric power resulted in the consolidation of the power industry. The two individually listed buildings in the boundary increase area, the Mission Revival-style Thomasville Depot and the Romanesque Revival-style B'nai Israel synagogue, are excellent examples of their style and type.

The historic district is significant in the area of commerce because it served as the commercial center in Thomasville and southwest Georgia, especially following construction of the rail line to Savannah in the middle of the 19th century. The buildings in the historic district reflect the city's prosperity in their use of expensive building materials and architectural ornament. Much of the city's wealth was derived from the late-19th-century resort era when northern tourists spent winters in Thomasville. This spurred the economy and resulted in the construction of large resort hotels. The only surviving 19th-century hotel is the Mitchell House. Commercial buildings, which continued to be built in downtown Thomasville through World War II, represent the city's role as a commercial center through the 1950s.

The district is significant in the area of community planning and development because its gridiron

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plan of streets is organized around a courthouse square, which is common to many county seats laid out during the 19th century in Georgia. A sizable portion of the original plan, laid out in 1826, is included in the historic district. The commercial district developed along Broad Street, which followed a ridge crest. The commercial district developed in a linear pattern along Broad Street with the courthouse at the northwest end, unlike most commercial districts, which are centered on a courthouse square. The historic plan includes the city's central business district and industrial buildings to the south and west. Newly identified historic commercial buildings are located in each of the three areas included in the boundary increase. The industrial resources are located south of downtown along the rail line at the foot of the Broad Street ridge. It was typical to place the railroad and the industrial district at the outskirts of town when the railroad was introduced after the city plan was developed.

The historic district is significant in the area of politics/government because Thomasville served as the center of political and governmental activity in Thomas County as represented by the Thomas County Health Center, now the Elijah Hill Governmental Complex, and the United States Post Office, which now serves as the Thomasville, Genealogical, History, and Fine Arts Library. Additionally, the power plant and water tower represent the important role of government in providing utilities to its citizens.

The district is also significant in the area of black ethnic heritage because it includes the historically African-American commercial district on Jackson Street between Madison Street and the rail line. Known as "Sandy Bottom," the area includes rows of attached one- and two-story commercial buildings. For most of the 20th century, many towns in Georgia had racially divided business districts. Some were contiguous while others were separate. Because the African-American downtowns in many communities has been lost, the Sandy Bottom district is an important survivor of Georgia's racially segregated business districts.

Industrial enterprises located in Sandy Bottom included the Thomasville Iron Works, Thomasville Ice & Manufacturing Co., Thomasville Variety Works, and the Williams Machine Shop. C. L. Thompson, owner of Thomasville Iron Works, was responsible for much of the development along West Jackson Street. The Bracey lumber Company is the only industrial operation remaining in the area.

National Register Criteria

A and C.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A.

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Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1826 when Thomasville was laid out in a gridiron plan centered on a courthouse square. The square and the street plan, both of which survive, formed the framework for the development of downtown. The period of significance ends in 1954, the last year within the fifty-year guideline in which activities associated with the historic themes of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, politics/government, and black ethnic heritage were conducted.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Contributing resources in the historic district are those constructed between 1826 and 1954 that are significant for the themes of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, politics/government, and black ethnic history and which retain historic integrity. This includes commercial, industrial, and community landmark buildings in the historic district. Contributing commercial buildings will remain largely intact and unobscured by false facades. Although the storefronts may have been reconfigured, the brick frame, which includes the sides and upper parapet, must survive. Free-standing community landmark buildings, such as the courthouse, post office, and the Municipal Building, will retain their historic design, materials, and craftsmanship. Especially important is the retention of the principal facades and in the case of the courthouse, all four facades.

The noncontributing buildings were built after 1954 or have lost sufficient historic integrity so that they no longer convey their historic significance. This includes several commercial buildings in which stucco coverings obscure the historic facades (photo 10, left). New construction in the historic district includes a small restaurant on the corner of Broad and Remington streets (photo 12, right) and a larger restaurant at the corner of Broad and Smith streets (photo 15, right).

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

***Note: The following history was compiled by Paul Forgey, preservation planner for the South Georgia Regional Development Center, in August 1998. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.*

Early Development of Thomasville

The city of Thomasville, county seat of Thomas County, Georgia, is located in the southwestern part of the state. Thomasville is the largest city in the county, with a population in 1990 of 17,554. Southwest Georgia was opened for white settlement in 1818, and as the population increased, the larger counties were subdivided. Thomas County was created by the state legislature in 1825 and

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

the city was laid out the next year.

Antebellum Thomasville was the center of business and social functions in Thomas County. Businesses varied, although the majority catered to the agricultural needs of the county. By 1860, the town had the services of doctors, dentists, druggists, lawyers, and two architects. Its business establishments included mercantile and grocery stores, a millinery, jeweler, book store, and two newspapers. There were also several restaurants including an oyster saloon, called the Red House. It was located on Jackson Street across from the post office. The red House no longer survives.

Most banking was undertaken in Tallahassee Florida, about 35 miles to the south, which put Thomasville's businesses and the county's farmers at a disadvantage. Travel to a bank in Florida was a two-day round trip which, when added to the fees the banks charged, made it an expensive venture. Finally, in December 1861, Thomasville got its first bank, the Cotton Planters Bank of Georgia.

The road system in Thomas County gave Thomasville an economic advantage over Tallahassee. Early roads in the county were poor, but in better condition than those in Florida. For this reason, many Florida farmers traveled to Thomasville to sell their products. Roads in the commercial district were unpaved until 1907, when were paved with brick. There were many concrete and plank sidewalks within the district, and most intersections had boardwalk crossings. In 1866, men between the ages of 16 and 45 had to work 5 days a year on the streets or pay a five-dollar fee.

Three churches had been established in Thomasville before the Civil War—Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Various schools were established in Thomasville during the antebellum period, some with denominational affiliations. One day after Thomas County was created in 1825, the legislature passed a subsequent act that provided for the establishment of an academy later known as Thomasville Academy. Other important educational institutions included the Fletcher Institute (operated by Methodists), Union Academy, Thomasville Female Seminary, and Young's Female College.

Thomasville was among first cities in the region to establish a library. Prior to the Civil War, there existed an active group known as the Young Men's Debating Society, whose object was improve and cultivate the city's residents. The group purchased sets of classics and subscribed to national magazines. In 1866, the Ciceronian Debating Society was formed. This club absorbed the older society and their book collection formed the nucleus of a new library. In 1876, the Ciceronians filed a petition for a charter as the Thomasville Public Library Association. In 1879, they began to raise funds for a permanent building, and a year later the new library was built. It was a two-story, wood-framed, Italianate-style building, located on Crawford Street between Jackson and Remington streets. In 1940, the library was moved to the Municipal Building. The Italianate-style library was demolished in 1968.

Thomasville's other civic and cultural institutions included the Knights of Pythias, the International

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Order of Odd Fellows, and the Young Men's Christian Association. African Americans established Saint Thomas Lodge, Number 49, in 1893. An opera house, which erected on South Broad Street in 1888, was destroyed by fire in 1899.

When the Civil War began in 1861, Thomasville and Thomas County were in a period of prosperity. The 1860 census documents slaves consisting of 72.4 percent of the total population (10,766). Thomasville had six lawyers, six doctors, two dentists, two hotels, one architect, and a strong retail business district. A new courthouse had been built in 1858 and a street pavement program had begun. Thomasville served as the center of an affluent planter society, and its Southern patriotism was evident in its support of the war.

The city's prosperity began to wane during the first year of the war. Blockades on Southern ports caused substantial shortages. Businesses began to fold, not because of problems selling merchandise, but because of the difficulty obtaining it. Food was often hard to obtain, and extremely expensive. By 1862, fields, which had been primarily planted in cotton, yielded edible crops. Prices, however, remained inflated and supplies were scarce.

Thomasville and Thomas County had supported the Confederacy during the war and its residents were anxious to resume their lives. Federal troops occupied the town in May, 1865. Colonel William K. Kimball of the Twelfth Missouri Volunteers was commanding officer in Thomasville and quickly appointed a "county court" composed of loyal local citizens. In September 1865, all military forces withdrew, leaving the county's government affairs to the unorganized inferior court. By October, the military returned under the command of Major William C. Manning.

In 1866, upon the resumption of local control over government affairs, the city limits were extended one mile in all directions from the courthouse. Authority was given to the police and the city, which could tax improved lands. Also in 1866, the city designated a fire district, in which wood buildings could no longer be built. In 1868, the city required tin or other fireproof materials on all roofs. By 1871, Thomasville had three volunteer fire departments, which were replaced by a professional fire department by 1895.

Thomasville's Era of Northern Tourism

In 1861, the rail line between Thomasville and Savannah was completed, and in December 1867, the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad was completed to Bainbridge. A line was completed to Albany in 1869, after the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad purchased the South Georgia and Florida line. In 1879, the Atlantic and Gulf went bankrupt and was bought by Henry B. Plant of Augusta. The name was changed to the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad, and by 1888 a line was completed to Monticello, Florida.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the railroad brought northern tourists to Thomasville. The rise of Thomasville as a haven for mostly northern industrialists led to the improvement of churches,

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schools, transportation networks, and other institutions. Two major factors that contributed to Thomasville's success as a winter resort were its mild, dry climate, and its receptiveness to tourists. During this period no less than 19 hotels and boarding houses operated in town. Among the largest hotels were the Mitchell House, the Piney Woods Hotel, and the Masury Hotel. The three-story Mitchell House, which occupied the block southeast of the courthouse on Broad Street between Jackson and Jefferson, was completed in 1875. It was the first hotel in Georgia to use an electric bell system to call for room services. In August 1883, the Mitchell House was destroyed by fire. In 1886, a second Mitchell House was built on the Broad Street site in the Queen Anne style.

Shortly after the original Mitchell House was built, a second luxury hotel was built in Smith's Grove, later known as Paradise Park (located outside of the commercial district). The 150-room Piney Woods Hotel opened in January 1885 and was an immediate success. The Piney Woods may have even surpassed the Mitchell House in its reputation for elegance and excellent service. It was built from local long leaf pine. The Piney Woods burned in 1906 and was not rebuilt.

The third luxury hotel, the Masury, was completed 1888 with 80 rooms. Located on the corner of Broad and Jefferson streets, located opposite the Mitchell House. At times, both were operated under the same management, but the Masury could not compete with the Mitchell House or the Piney Woods and was demolished in 1949 to make way for the Scott Hotel (now the Pear Tree Park).

During this period, Thomasville hosted dignitaries, including governors, railroad magnates, and wealthy elites from northern states. In addition to its mild winter climate and its excellent accommodations, visitors also came for the pine-scented air, which was thought to have medicinal qualities. Popular past-times included picnics in the woods and drives through the countryside. In the 1880s, Henry Sanford surveyed and built a perimeter road around Thomasville that became known as Sanford Boulevard. This was a favorite drive for the winter tourists because of the natural beauty of the pines, oaks, Spanish moss, and open fields. In the 20th century, the name of the road was changed to Pine Tree Boulevard.

By the turn of the 20th century, Thomasville was known as a delightful resort town for "Northern Invalids and Pleasure Seekers." It not only attracted tourists, but also seasonal residents who built winter cottages in the city. Thomas County had the sixth largest population in Georgia, which reflected its growth following Reconstruction. However, in the first decade of the 20th century, Thomasville's resort industry declined as Florida became the preferred tourist destination. A second blow came on April 13, 1906, when the Piney Woods Hotel was destroyed by fire. The next year, the Mitchell House was converted to stores and offices.

By 1900, an African-American commercial district had developed on the west side of town on West Jackson Street down to the rail line. Known as the "Sandy Bottom," the area included rows of attached one- and two-story commercial buildings as well as several industries, such as the Thomasville Iron Works, Thomasville Ice & Manufacturing Co., Thomasville Variety Works, and the

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Williams Machine Shop. These businesses were located on West Jackson between Madison Street and the rail line. C. L. Thompson, owner of Thomasville Iron Works, was responsible for much of the development along West Jackson Street.

Several theaters were built in the Thomasville in the early 1900s. In 1906, the Grand Theater was built in the rear wing of the Mitchell House on Madison Street. The Rose was built on the corner of Crawford and Jefferson streets in the 1930s and was the first theater in the region to have air conditioning. In the late 1930s, two more theaters were built, the Mode on Broad Street, and the Ritz on West Jackson in Sandy Bottom. No historic theaters remain in Thomasville. The Rose was demolished in 1973 and the Ritz in 1996. The Mode was converted into retail space.

Thomasville in the 20th Century

During the first half of the 20th century, Thomasville developed a large affluent class which was not dependent on the northern tourists. Major downtown buildings constructed during this period include the United States Post Office (1916), the Upchurch Building (1916), the depot (1916), East Side School (1916), Steyerman's Department Store (1926), the Bank of Thomasville (1926), and the Thomasville Municipal Building (1940).

In 1882, the city began its municipal utility system with an artesian well near the courthouse square. Contracts for the first water mains were let in 1884, and the next year the city issued bonds for a water works and sewage system. The first Thomasville power plant was a small wood-frame building located built at Jefferson and Stevens streets (now Bracey Lumber) in 1888. On January 1, 1906, the city assumed ownership of a new power plant on Fletcher Street, which housed a dynamo and an engine. Electricity was furnished to the city only at night. The property of the water and light systems were combined later in 1906 when a well was drilled at the power plant property on Fletcher Street. The plant had two dynamos that operated under steam power with a Stilwell Pierce and Smith Vaile pump and two air compressors. A 40,000-gallon reservoir and a coal pile sat at the rear of the property. In the late 1920s, the a steam turbine replaced the steam engine and electric motors replaced the older water pumps. The existing power plant building was constructed in 1922. In 1924, the first water softener for a public water supply in Georgia was completed with a capacity of 1.5 million gallons a day. In 1928, construction included a chimney, a third boiler, and a third turbine.

In 1933, voters approved a general revenue fund in which 20 percent of net profits of the utility were deposited. This provided the company with financial security during the Great Depression. In the 1950s, the city began to purchase power from the Georgia Power and Light Company rather than further expand the power plant. In 1955, natural gas was added as a third utility. In 1958, the machinery was removed from the plant, and in October 1960, the city power plant shut down after 55-years of service. Currently, the building serves as the control center for feeder lines into the city and parts of the county and a storage space for the utility department.

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Thomasville was severely affected by the Great Depression. In the late 1920s, saw mill operations began to run out of timber, which led to the demise of the large lumber brokerage businesses in Thomasville and Thomas County. The next blow occurred when the Florida real estate boom collapsed and speculative investors, including many in Thomas County, lost money in dubious land purchases in South Florida. In January 1932, the county's oldest and largest of its four banks closed its doors. Within a year two more banks closed. The Commercial Bank, which served mostly farmers, is the only Thomasville bank to weather the Depression. The Thomas County Federal Savings & Loan Association was established in 1934 as a local lending institution with government capital participation. The chamber of commerce organized the savings and loan, and its directors served without pay in an effort to make it of service to the community. Thomasville began to emerge from the Great Depression by 1940 when the Municipal Building was completed with financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Administration.

Following World War II, commercial strip-type development built along major downtown corridors. Convenience stores, neighborhood offices, and businesses located on Madison, West Jackson, and Crawford streets, Smith Avenue, and later East Jackson Street. In effort to compete with the strip development, businesses built new buildings, such as the Steyerman Block, constructed on Broad Street in the 1940s. Some businesses sought to make their older buildings appear current and modern with new metal or stucco facades.

In 1966, as a reaction to what was considered by many in the community to be historically inappropriate changes, a group of residents incorporated under the title of Thomasville Landmarks, Inc. Landmarks has become a major force behind preserving the historic character of the city. Their accomplishments include the preservation of the "Big Oak" on the corner of Crawford and Monroe streets; preservation of the brick-paved streets in downtown; acquisition of the Lapham-Patterson House at 626 North Dawson Street, which is now open to the public as a state historic site; acquisition of historic Thomasville houses for resale with preservation covenants; publication of a historic sites survey in Thomasville and Thomas County; publication of Landmarks: The Architecture of Thomasville and Thomas County, Georgia, the restoration of the Hardy Bryan House at 312 North Broad Street; and the creation of Thomasville's Main Street program in 1981.

Since Thomasville's designation as a Main Street City, many buildings within the commercial historic district have been rehabilitated. This activity has primarily been focused on Broad Street, although some work has occurred on Madison and Jackson streets. Most of these rehabilitations have been historically appropriate and contribute to the historic character of the district. Losses have occurred in the historic African-American commercial corridor, which has been diminished by several demolitions and the construction of a sprawling brick medical facility. Also, the Scott Hotel on Broad Street has been altered from its 1951 International Style appearance so that it no longer retains historic integrity. More than many Georgia communities, Thomasville has been successful in preserving its past through the preservation of the historic buildings and structures that comprise its commercial historic district.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) 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 40 acres (boundary increase). The boundary decrease is approximately one acre.

UTM References

A)	Zone 17	Easting 215040	Northing 3415315
B)	Zone 17	Easting 215213	Northing 3415081
C)	Zone 17	Easting 214792	Northing 3414656
D)	Zone 17	Easting 214438	Northing 3414811
E)	Zone 17	Easting 214478	Northing 3415129

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic district boundary increase is indicated by dashed black lines on the attached tax parcel map, which is drawn to scale. The boundary increase is located in three separate areas. The boundary decrease is indicated by hatched lines. The original National Register boundary (1984) is represented by a solid black line.

Boundary Justification

The historic district boundary includes the intact historic downtown, including the historic African-American commercial district and the railroad depot and power plant located along the Seaboard Coastline Railroad.

11. Form Prepared By

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organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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() **property owner**

() **consultant**

(X) **regional development center preservation planner**

() **other:**

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Photographs

Name of Property: Thomasville Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Thomasville
County: Thomas
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: May 2002

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 39

Views in the Thomasville Commercial Historic District (1984)

1. Thomas County Courthouse, photographer facing west.
2. West Jefferson Street, photographer facing south.
3. Broad Street, photographer facing southeast.
4. Upchurch Building and United States Post Office, Broad Street, photographer facing south.
5. Madison Street, photographer facing south.
6. West Jackson Street, photographer facing east.
7. Broad Street, photographer facing north.
8. East Jackson Street, photographer facing northeast.
9. Broad Street, photographer facing southeast.
10. Broad Street, photographer facing northwest.
11. Broad Street, photographer facing west.
12. Broad Street, photographer facing northwest.
13. Broad Street, photographer facing south.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

14. Broad Street, photographer facing northwest.
15. Broad Street, photographer facing northwest.
16. West Jackson Street, photographer facing northwest.
17. West Jackson Street, photographer facing northeast.
18. West Jackson Street, photographer facing southwest.
19. West Jackson Street, photographer facing northeast.

Views in the Thomasville Commercial Historic District Boundary Increase

20. Stevens Street, photographer facing northwest.
21. Thomas County Health Department (Elijah Hill Governmental Complex), West Jefferson Street, photographer facing east.
22. Bracey Lumber Company, Stevens Street, photographer facing west.
23. Bracey Lumber Company, Stevens Street, photographer facing southeast.
24. East Jackson Street, photographer facing north.
25. East Jackson Street, photographer facing northeast.
26. Municipal Building, East Jackson Street, photographer facing southeast.
27. Remington Street, photographer facing north.
28. Remington Street, photographer facing northeast.
29. Southern Bell building, Remington Street, photographer facing east.
30. Remington Street, photographer facing southeast.
31. B'nai Israel Synagogue, South Crawford Street, photographer facing west.
32. Madison and West Remington streets, photographer facing west.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

33. Madison, photographer facing southeast.
34. Fletcher and West Remington streets, photographer facing southwest.
35. West Remington Street, photographer facing southwest.
36. West Jackson Street, photographer facing northeast.
37. Thomasville Depot, photographer facing northeast.
38. Thomasville Depot, photographer facing northwest.
39. Power plant, Fletcher Street, photographer facing east.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)