

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 14 1985
date entered SEP 12 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Alabama Midland Railway Depot

and/or common Ashford Depot

2. Location

street & number Midland Street NA not for publication

city, town Ashford NA vicinity of Congressional District 2

state Alabama code 01 county Houston code 069

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Empty

4. Owner of Property

name City of Ashford

street & number P. O. Drawer 428

city, town Ashford NA vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ashford City Hall

street & number P. O. Drawer 428

city, town Ashford state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Alabama Midland Railway Depot in Ashford, Alabama is a 142' x 26.5' one-story, wood frame structure built in 1892 by the Alabama Midland Railroad Company. The depot is built of yellow heart pine, grown and cut locally and brought to the site in wagons, and is even today showing little sign of decay. The building's frame, made up mostly of 12" x 8" beams, rests on a combination of pilings. The office and waiting room area sit on brick pillars while the wareroom and open shed area rest on large logs of an average foot in diameter. The depot sits approximately 32" above the ground.

The exterior walls are made of 8" pine boards with 3" slats, and are still in excellent condition, needing only a coat of paint. The front (south) side of the depot has a bay with three pedimented windows with square transoms, as well as a matching single window. The main entrance, situated adjacent to the bay, also has a transom and pediment. The main wareroom door, situated inches from the office door, is a 7' wide pedimented door with a transom above it as well. There is another 7' door 30' east of this one; however, it is plain without a transom. Beyond this is the open shed area which was enclosed in the 1930's by the Standard Chemical Company of Troy, Alabama, for use as a produce-receiving center. There are two 5' wide doors in this area on the south side of the building. The west end of the depot contains two doors which led to the waiting rooms. These doors are both pedimented and both have square transoms. One door is original, the other has been replaced; however, one of the original doors is stored underneath the building. The north side of the building contains 4 windows. Two of these, facing out of the north side waiting room, match the front windows, complete with pediments and transoms. The other two, facing out of the baggage room, are of unequal size and rather than having the four large panes found in all of the other windows, have 12 smaller ones (6 up and 6 down). Two 7' doors corresponding to the ones on the south side lead out of the wareroom, as well as two 5' doors opening off the enclosed shed area. The east side of the depot is in the worst shape of all. The board wall which had been added to the structure has been wind damaged and is only partially standing.

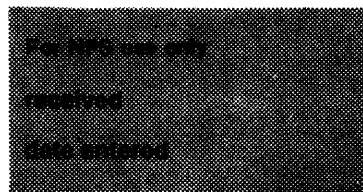
Beneath the eaves on the west side and on the exterior wall of the wareroom on the east side there is some gingerbread work in the shape of down-pointing arrows with cut-out crosses on the lower end. (See photo.) The trusses which brace the roof are decorative as well as functional and are held in place with very large bolts.

A 9' wide open platform with covered overhang runs the entire length of the front (south) side of the depot. A small loading dock (7' x 4') extends off the north side by a 7' door into the wareroom.

A gable roof in very poor condition covers the depot. The roof's decking is made of wooden boards and is covered with roofing shingles. The eastern end, above the open shed area is in the worst shape. There are large holes and separations in this area with both missing shingles and wooden boards. While the roof above the remainder of the building seems to be holding up relatively well, if this deteriorated area is not soon repaired, there is a strong possibility of damage to the rest of the structure. All of the shingles need to be immediately replaced to prevent any possible water damage to the interior. Two chimneys protrude from the roof, but they are no longer usable as the fire places have all been bricked over.

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The four windows facing the front of the building and the two facing the rear (north) out of the waiting room are all double hung, pedimented windows with square transoms. They each contain two 15" x 33.5" panes in each section and are original to the building. The two smaller windows have already been discussed.

There are no remaining mantels in the depot and no evidence that there were ever any. There are two back-to-back fireplaces in the double waiting rooms which have since been bricked up as has the small one in the office area which was probably a vent for an iron stove.

The windows and doors have interior facings of from 3" to 6". There seems to be no real pattern governing this. The two original doors are both made in the familiar design of four panels in the shape of an upturned cross.

Walls and ceilings are made of grooved yellow heart pine. A chair rail runs around all walls as well as an 8" floor board. Beneath the chair rail the wall boards run vertically while above this they run horizontally. The ceilings are at least 18' tall.

The original flooring remains in all rooms except for the agent's office area. In the two waiting rooms the floor is made of 4" heart pine which is in very good condition. The wareroom floors are 12" wide pine and also sound.

Most original hardware has been removed; however, a working scale made of wrought iron is still in place in the wareroom. Most of the original counters also remain in place.

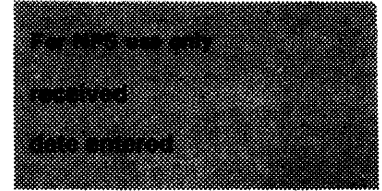
Over the years relatively few additions and alterations have been made to the Ashford Depot. Two interior doors have been added leading from each waiting room to the baggage and office area. The ticket window from the south side waiting room has been removed; however, the one in the north side waiting room is still in place. A window frame is missing from a window connecting the office with the wareroom. Two restrooms were added in the 1950's to the waiting rooms. Before this the facilities were located outside, a little west of the depot, hidden behind lattice work fencing. Near the privies were the stock pen and loading ramp. These buildings were torn down during the 1950's when the indoor restrooms were added.

In the 1930's the Standard Chemical Company of Troy, Alabama enclosed the open shed area for use as a produce-receiving center. Vegetables and other farm products were packed and shipped by rail and truck from this point.

In the early 1970's the Railroad closed down and Ashford Gin Company used the building until 1982 when they bankrupted and the City of Ashford took possession of the station. During Ashford Gin Company's tenancy several changes were made to the building. Doors were added leading from the waiting rooms into the baggage-agent's office areas, the steps going to the north waiting room were removed and both exterior waiting room doors were boarded shut. Wire burglar screens were added to the windows. Despite these changes the structure remains basically as it was almost 100 years ago.

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The depot faces south, just north of the railroad tracks, and is totally surrounded by a 25,300 square foot area of paved ground which is owned by the city. From photographic evidence, it is evident that other than the fact that the land around the depot is now paved, it has looked basically the same since 1892. While not aesthetically pleasing, this area was unimproved because it was packed with wagons and later trucks coming to sell, transport, buy or pick up merchandise. The city hopes to beautify the area as a part of their restoration.

The city of Ashford has hopes of using the waiting rooms, baggage area, and gent's office portions of the depot as a railroad museum, and the wareroom section as a community center for local activities.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criterion A - Transportation

The Ashford/Alabama Midland Railroad Depot is significant for its association with the Alabama Midland Railroad which was a major force in the development of the sparsely populated southeastern section of Alabama, primarily, Henry and, after its creation in 1903, Houston County. The depot was constructed in 1892 at the small lumber and naval stores producing village of Ashford as a shipping and passenger service station for the railroad. The railroad opened an avenue for the shipment of naval stores and lumber and later agricultural goods to markets which, up to the coming of the railroad, were not accessible. The accessibility of these new markets, by rail, attracted people living in the area around the town to settle near the shipping point of their products which stimulated the economic and physical growth of Ashford.

Criterion C - Architecture

The Ashford/Alabama Midland Railroad Depot is significant as a particularly fine example of a late 19th century small town frame railroad depot. The structure exhibits several characteristics of late 19th century Victorian railroad architecture such as exterior board and batten; matched board frieze with lightly embellished incised work; triangular pediments with drip molding and typical Victorian 2/2 sashing. A prominent element is also the cross brackets under wide overhanging eaves, a characteristic of the late 19th century so called "Stick Style" and a feature frequently employed to support the track-side shelters that were typical of railroad depots of this period. This depot is one of three depots of similar design and detail that were built for the Alabama Midland Railroad in Southeast Alabama during the 1890's that remain on their original sites. The Ashford/Alabama Midland Railroad Depot, built in 1892, is one of the oldest remaining depots in Southeast Alabama. It is also the only surviving building from the original downtown area of the town of Ashford which was totally destroyed by fire in 1915.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .10

Quadrangle name Ashford

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	6	6	7	9	6	0	3	4	5	1	0	0	7
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See red line on attached scale map. Includes depot and land immediately surrounding it that belongs to the city.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Bailey, Historic Resource Coordinator

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date December 27, 1984

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7-25-85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for

Entered in the National Register

date 9/12/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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For NPS use only

received

Date entered

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Ashford/Alabama Midland Railroad Depot

The city of Ashford, Alabama, second largest city in Houston County, was incorporated in June of 1891 with the idea of the depot as its heart, as is stated in the incorporation papers. These read that the town would be "in the shape of a parallelogram with the Alabama Midland Railway Depot in the center and extending one mile north, east, west and south." In 1888 the Alabama Midland Railroad Company and its Georgia counterpart consolidated in order to form an entire rail line from Bainbridge, Georgia to Montgomery, Alabama. The section of line between Gordon and Sprague, in Montgomery County, was completed in October of 1889. This section ran through Ashford. Alabama Midland purchased Northwestern and Florida's line from Luverne to Montgomery in December of 1889 and thus extended their operations into Montgomery. In July, 1890, the Plant Investment Company acquired a controlling interest in the Alabama Midland Railroad. The Plant System was absorbed by the Atlantic Coastline, now the Seaboard Coast Line, on July 1, 1902.

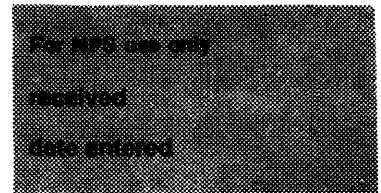
The depot, built in 1892 by the Alabama Midland Railroad Company, served as a meeting place for the local population to sell or trade their products and crops from their wagon (and later truck) beds, as well as to ship them to buyers elsewhere. Needed goods that could not be produced at home were brought in by rail, thus giving area residents a wider selection of merchandise to choose from. From this depot citizens were able to commute to areas of the country which would have otherwise been totally inaccessible to them. Because Ashford's citizens had a place from which to transport their products quickly, profits were made allowing local farmers to increase their economic standing.

Around the turn of the century Ashford was devastated by a fire, and all of the downtown area was destroyed. The depot, however, escaped. Downtown was rebuilt a block to the east of the previous site where it remains today.

Ashford's depot is typical architecturally of those built during this era, and it is one of the few remaining examples in the vicinity. The extra touches of gingerbread and pediments point to the care which went into the design of Ashford's depot.

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1. The Dothan Eagle, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1953
"Story of Ashford: A Bustling Town In Thriving Area"
"Coming of Railroad Followed by Gaines In Town's Expansion"
2. The Birmingham News, Feb. 9, 1930
"Houston IS Newest of Counties In State"
3. Industrial Survey of Houston County
Chamber of Commerce, Dothan, AL. January 17, 1929.
4. The Atlantic Coastline Railroad Industrial and Shippers Guide, 1915
Traffic Department, Atlantic Coastline Railroad, 1915
5. Alabama's Resources and Future Prospects, 1897
I. F. Culver, Commissioner of Agriculture
Roberts & Sons, Birmingham, 1897
6. Prince, Richard E. Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, Steam Locomotives, Ships and History, Green River, Wyoming: Richard E. Prince 1960.
7. Birney, Saffold Hand-Book of Alabama. Roberts & Son, Printers and Binders, Birmingham, AL 1892.
8. Symth, G. Hutchinson The Life of Henry Bradley Plant. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. The Knickerbocker Press 1888.
9. Warren, Dr. Hoyt P. Henry - The Mother County. Warren Enterprises, 1976, Auburn, Alabama.

6TH AVE.

60'

E street

0+00

4.82'

10.500'

70'

30'

5TH AVE.

60'

810'

1288'

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