

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 O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by the Seaboard Coastline Railroad, Owens Street, 16th Avenue, and 6th Street
city, town Cordele () **vicinity of**
county Crisp **code** GA 081
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31015

() not for publication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:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	252	81
sites	0	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	253	81

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.

Richard Clowes

9.3.04

Signature of certifying official

Date

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

for

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. Lin *10/6/04*

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
DOMESTIC/MULTIPLE DWELLING
COMMERCE/TRADE/BUSINESS/OFFICE BUILDING
RELIGION/RELIGIOUS FACILITY/CHURCH

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING
DOMESTIC/MULTIPLE DWELLING
COMMERCE/TRADE/BUSINESS/OFFICE BUILDING
RELIGION/RELIGIOUS FACILITY/CHURCH

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY/GOTHIC REVIVAL
LATE VICTORIAN/ITALIANATE
LATE VICTORIAN/QUEEN ANNE
LATE VICTORIAN/RENAISSANCE/RENAISSANCE REVIVAL
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/COLONIAL REVIVAL
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/CLASSICAL REVIVAL
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/CLASSICAL REVIVAL/NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/COMMERCIAL
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/CRAFTSMAN
OTHER/FOLK VICTORIAN
OTHER/ENGLISH VERNACULAR REVIVAL
OTHER/CENTRAL HALLWAY
OTHER/GEORGIAN COTTAGE
OTHER/GABLED ELL COTTAGE
OTHER QUEEN ANNE COTTAGE
OTHER/NEW SOUTH COTTAGE
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/BUNGALOW
OTHER/ENGLISH COTTAGE
OTHER/AMERICAN SMALL HOUSE
OTHER/RANCH
OTHER/GEORGIAN HOUSE
OTHER/QUEEN ANNE HOUSE

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Section 7--Description

Materials:

foundation Brick; Stone
walls Wood/Weatherboard/Shingle; Brick; Stone
roof Asphalt
other Stone/Granite/Limestone

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District is located in Cordele, the county seat of Crisp County in south Georgia. The district encompasses the intact and contiguous historic residences, two commercial buildings, and community landmark buildings constructed between 1887 and 1954 that make up the middle- to upper-class neighborhood that developed adjacent to the downtown commercial area of Cordele. The neighborhood features a gridded street pattern, established when Cordele was laid out in 1887, with avenues oriented east-to-west and streets oriented north-to-south. Residential development is located on the avenues with service alleys running east-to-west between them.

Houses in the district feature one- to two-story height with wood, brick, or stone exterior wall surfaces. The district contains an excellent collection of houses constructed from the late 1880s to the early 1950s, representing a variety of architectural styles and house types. The larger high-style houses built during the late 19th and early 20th centuries are located along Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Avenues, with smaller more modest houses built from the early 20th century to the mid-20th century scattered throughout the district and located along the borders of the neighborhood on Eleventh Avenue and Sixteenth Avenue. The architectural styles and house types represented in the district have been identified as important in Georgia during the historic period in Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings, a statewide context. Also of note is the fact that several of the houses within the district were designed by noted Georgia architects T. Firth Lockwood, Sr. and T. Firth Lockwood, Jr. of Columbus, and W. Elliot Dunwody, Jr. of Macon.

The architectural styles represented in the district include begin with the Italianate style. It is characterized by two-story height, low-pitched roofs with wide overhanging eaves, decorative brackets, and tall, narrow windows (photographs 7 and 27, left) and appeared in Georgia in the late 19th century. A good example is located at 802 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 45). The Queen Anne style, Georgia's most popular 19th century style, features such characteristics as steeply-pitched roofs with an irregular configuration, a dominant front-facing gable, and an asymmetrical façade with a partial or full-width porch that is usually one-story in height (photograph 40, right). The house located at 315 Twelfth Avenue (photograph 12, background) exhibits some of these characteristics. Folk Victorian houses were built in large numbers across Georgia from the 1870s to the 1910s. The houses usually feature simple forms with porches with spindle work detailing, jigsaw trim, cornice brackets, and gable decoration (photograph 19, left). The house at 208 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 7, left) features a gable decoration applied to a Georgian cottage. The Colonial

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Revival style was popular in Georgia for a very long period of the time, the 1890s through the 1950s. The character-defining features of the style include a symmetrical façade, accentuated front door with pediment supported by pilasters, fanlights, sidelights, and double-hung-sash multi-pane windows that may be paired (17, left, 30, left, and 35). The house located at 507 Twelfth Avenue (photograph 31, right) is an excellent example of a mid-20th century Colonial Revival-style house. Classical Revival style is also represented in the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District. Common features of the style include a symmetrical façade, dominant entry portico supported by classical columns, and double-hung-sash windows (photograph 46, right). One of the only examples of the style in the district is located at 805 Fourteenth Avenue. There are several examples of the Neoclassical Revival style in the district, which was popular in Georgia from the 1890s through the 1930s. The character-defining features of the style include a symmetrical façade, full-height entry portico coupled with a one-story porch, classical columns, and a porte cochere or side porch (photographs 11, left, and 34, foreground). An excellent high-style example of the Neoclassical Revival style is located at 806 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 47). The English Vernacular Revival style was common in Georgia in the early 20th century. It is characterized by steeply pitched gable roofs, half-timbering, masonry walls, variety of materials, and tall, narrow windows (photographs 16, 36, and 43). The house located at 801 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 46, right) features many of the characteristics of the English Vernacular Revival style. The most popular style in Georgia in the early 20th century was the Craftsman style. Houses of this style were built across the state in rural, small town, and urban settings from the 1910s through the 1930s. Features of the Craftsman style include the use of a variety of materials, low-pitched roofs that can be gabled or hipped, wide eave overhangs, exposed rafter tails, and porches with short square columns on heavy masonry piers. Several excellent examples of the style are located in the district, including 301 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 14), 619 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 37), and 602 Fifteenth Avenue (photograph 39). Many other Craftsman-style houses are located within the district (photographs 13, 21, right, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, background, 32, 33, 34, background, 38, 40, 41, and 57).

House types are also important when describing the housing stock of an historic district. The overall form and layout, or floor plan, can be a clue to the period in which a house was constructed. Many different house types spanning the historic period are represented in the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District. The Georgian cottage, possibly the single most popular and long-lived house type in Georgia, was constructed in almost all periods of Georgia's history, mostly between 1850 and 1890. The plan is square, or nearly so, and consists of a central hallway with two rooms on either side, and chimneys are usually between each pair of rooms (photograph 1, foreground). Several good examples of this house type exist in the district, including the house at 202 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 7, right). The gabled ell cottage was popular in Georgia in the late 19th century. In plan it is T- or L-shaped and usually has a gabled roof. It consists of a gable-front at one end of a recessed wing (photograph 31, center). The L-shape plan of the house located at 109 Thirteenth Avenue (photograph 5, left) is clearly visible. The Queen Anne cottage derives its name from the architectural style that it is most associated with, but the house type also occurs with elements of other styles. It has a square mass with projecting front and side gables. The rooms are asymmetrical and there is no central hall (photograph 25, right). These houses were built during the 1880s and 1890s, and a good example is located at 401 Eleventh Avenue (photograph 18,

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background). The New South cottage was a very popular house type between the 1890s and the 1920s. It resembles the Queen Anne cottage with the notable exception of its emphasis on symmetry. It has a central square mass and gabled projections, but with a central hallway plan. The central hallway is flanked by pairs of rooms (photographs 4). The house located at 315 Eleventh Avenue (photograph 9, right) exhibits the central square mass and gable projections common to this house type. The bungalow was very popular in all regions of Georgia from 1900 to 1930. It is most often associated with the Craftsman style. The house form is long and low with an irregular floor plan of rectangular shape, and integral porches are common. This house type is very common in the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District (photographs 24, 27, center, 29, 30, background, 32, 37, 38, 39, and 40, left). Excellent examples can be found at 301 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 14), 415 13th Avenue (photograph 21, right), and 613 and 617 Thirteenth Avenue (photograph 57). The English cottage is most closely associated with the English Vernacular Revival or Tudor styles. It is commonly asymmetrical with steeply pitched roofs and gables (photographs 16, 43, and 46, left). The house located at 615 Fourteenth Avenue (photograph 36) features all of the characteristics common to this house type. The ranch house was an extremely popular house type in the mid-20th century. It is characterized by a long, narrow, rectangular shape that may or may not have projections. The roof is typically low-pitched and there is a garage or carport at one end. An excellent example of the ranch house is located at the southeast corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Hickory Street (photograph 48). It is the only example of the house type in the district. The American Small House became a popular affordable solution to the housing shortage after World War II. This house type usually consisted of a living area, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bathroom, arranged in various ways. This type of house began to emerge not only in Georgia, but nationwide during the housing boom of the mid-1940s (photograph 17, left). A Georgian house is the two-story version of the Georgian cottage. It was also popular throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century although less numerous than the cottage (photographs 7, right, 11, left, 34, foreground, 35, 42, 45, 46, right, and 47). Good examples of this house type can be found at 501 Thirteenth Avenue (photograph 27, left) and 601 Twelfth Avenue (photograph 30, foreground). The Queen Anne house, like the Georgian House, is the two-story version of the cottage that bears the same name. The house was popular during the same time period, 1880s and 1890s, but it was more often found in towns and cities rather than rural settings (photograph and 40, right). As with the one-story version, the Queen Anne house is most closely associated with the Queen Anne style (photograph 12, background).

There is one apartment building in the district (photograph 22). It is a two-story, gable front building with a full-height entry portico and a full-width porch on the first and second floors.

The historic houses in the district share common setbacks (photographs 1, 27, 30, 38, and 41) although lots vary in size (photographs 7, 21, 25, and 46). Landscaping in the district includes mature trees, foundation plantings, grass lawns (photographs 1, 9, 28, and 45), sidewalks, and walkways leading to houses, and some historic granite curbing is visible (photographs 5 and 15). Some houses also retain their historic outbuildings (photographs 12, 14, background, and 27, center).

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The district contains two commercial buildings. Both buildings exhibit characteristics of the Commercial style and were constructed in the early 20th century. Character-defining features of the style include decorative brickwork in the cornice, large display windows, and a parapet wall at the roofline. The former Hotpoint Appliance store (photograph 49) is a one-story brick building with a parapet wall and decorative brickwork above the central entrance and infilled display windows. The former telephone exchange (photograph 50) is a two-story brick building with decorative brickwork in the cornice and bays divided by brick pilasters. Both buildings are located on the edge of the district closest to downtown Cordele. Once an integral part of the historic central business district, they were separated from downtown by intervening nonhistoric commercial development during the second half of the 20th century.

The district also contains several community landmark buildings. Christ Episcopal Church (photograph 53), constructed in 1897, is a Gothic Revival-style, wood-framed building with a front gable. Characteristic features of the building include the pointed arch window and door openings and the steeply pitched roof. The First Methodist Church (photograph 55), constructed in 1914, is a Renaissance Revival-style building with a rounded chancel, two domed entrance towers, and a central dome. Other character-defining features of the style include masonry walls, rounded arch window with keystone, and cornice moldings. The First Baptist Church (photograph 54), also constructed in 1914, is a Neoclassical Revival-style building with full-height entry porticos and a central dome. The symmetrical entrance façades are dominated by the entrance porticos that are supported by Doric columns. The First Presbyterian Church (photograph 56), a gable-front building with a central steeple, was constructed in 1947. Its architectural features are somewhat restrained, which is typical of mid-20th century churches. Adams Hospital (photograph 51), constructed in the early 20th century, is a Colonial Revival-style building that has been converted into apartments. The character-defining features of the style include the symmetrical façade, three-over-one and six-over-one double-hung-sash windows, quoins, and fanlight details in the gables. O'Neal School (photograph 52), was constructed in 1957 and is nonhistoric due to recent alterations. It was an International style building with features including a flat roof, ribbon windows, and flat, unadorned wall surfaces. At the time of this nomination, a hipped roof with dormers was added to the building. The lot on which it stands was donated to the city by B.P. O'Neal, an early entrepreneur in the area for whom the school is named. It is the fourth school to stand on the site.

One significant alteration in the district was the construction of a railroad overpass circa 1975. The bridge spans the railroad tracks that form the northern boundary of the district. The bridge enters the district at the intersection of 5th Street and 11th Avenue (photograph 10).

The areas outside of the district boundaries include modern commercial development along 16th Avenue to the south (photographs 24, left, and 44, background) and east of Owens Street, nonhistoric industrial resources to the north (photograph 33, background), and the Cordele Commercial Historic District (listed on July 6, 1989) to the north and west.

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
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance:

1887-1954

Significant Dates:

1887-City of Cordele laid out including the grid street pattern which forms the developmental framework for the O'Neal School Neighborhood

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Charles Edward Choate-architect, First Methodist Church
W. Elliot Dunwoody, Jr.-architect,
T. Firth Lockwood, Sr.-architect
T. Firth Lockwood, Jr.- architect

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District is a large residential district with two commercial buildings, churches, and a school, located southeast of the central business district of Cordele. This area developed along the railroad tracks of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway and as a business venture beginning with the Americus Investment Company and Macon Construction Company in the 1880s and through several later development companies including O'Neal Land and Development Company.

The O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent collection of late 19th- to mid-20th-century residential architectural styles, including Italianate, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Neoclassical Revival, English Vernacular Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman, and for its good examples of a variety of house types, including central hallway, gabled-ell, Georgian cottage, New South cottage, bungalow, English cottage, American Small House, Queen Anne house, and Georgian house. All of the above styles and types have been identified as significant in Georgia architecture in Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings, a statewide context study. The district is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent examples of community landmark buildings. These buildings (four churches and one hospital) generally reflect architectural styles, such as Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Neoclassical Revival, not well represented by the district's residential buildings. The district is also significant for its association with noted regional architects during the historic period.

The district is significant in the area of community planning and development as a large middle- to upper class, white neighborhood in the city of Cordele that developed immediately southeast of the central business district. The district is also significant for the gridded street pattern that has existed since the city was laid out in 1887. Grid plans dating from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century are found throughout Georgia in subdivisions, neighborhoods, and entire communities, but they are especially prevalent in south Georgia with its flat terrain.

National Register Criteria

O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development as a middle-to upper-class white neighborhood that developed east of downtown Cordele and for its intact gridiron plan. The district is eligible for listing under criterion C in the area of architecture for its excellent and intact collection of house styles and types popular in Georgia during the historic period.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District begins in 1887. The land on which the neighborhood now sits was subdivided into lots and sold off beginning in 1887, the same time period in which Cordele began to develop. The area continued to develop as a middle- to upper-class neighborhood, adjacent to downtown Cordele, through 1954, the end of the historic period. The gridiron street plan just laid out in 1887 provided the physical framework for development in the area and retains a strong presence in the neighborhood today.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The overall degree of historic integrity of the resources in the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District is very high. The historic street plan, lot layout, placement of houses, and residential landscaping remain intact. Most of the buildings in the district are houses that exhibit a high degree of integrity with few alterations. Some minor alterations to a small number of houses include artificial siding (for example photographs 4, center; 17; 20, right; and 57, right), partially enclosed porches (for example photographs 18, background; 23; 29; 31, center; and 40, left), and sensitive or historic additions (for example photographs 9, left; and 20, background). However, these changes do not compromise the historic integrity of the buildings. Contributing resources in the district are those constructed during the historic period that are significant in the areas of architecture and community planning and development. These resources include residential, commercial, and community landmark buildings, that have retained their historic integrity and contribute to the historic context of the district as a whole. The contributing structure in the district is the gridiron street plan that was laid out when the neighborhood began to develop in 1887.

The majority of noncontributing resources in the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District were constructed after the period of significance. There are very few dramatically altered houses. Noncontributing resources in the district include those constructed after 1954 (for example, photographs 3, center; 4, foreground and background; 8, left, 11, center; 52; 54, background; 55, left; and 56, background) and those that have lost historic integrity due to alterations (for example 10, left; and 39, background). Significant alterations within the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District include substantial additions to historic resources and loss of integrity of materials through the removal and replacement of historic exterior materials .

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

****NOTE: The following history was compiled by Julie C. Groce, consultant, December, 1992; updated by Susan Barge, resident, April, 2002. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

The area now designated as Crisp County was originally inhabited by the Creek Indians. During the War of 1812, a portion of the Blackshear Trail ran through present-day Cordele to the Flint River. Six miles below Cedar Creek's junction with that river, Fort Early was established as a border fort to

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

guard against Indian attack. The last recorded Indian skirmish took place in 1818, and in 1821 the First Treaty of Indian Springs deeded the land to the State of Georgia.

A huge expanse of acreage (now covering the boundaries of more than six counties) was chartered by the State legislature on May 21, 1821, as Dooly County. Encompassing 1296 square miles, Dooly County was so large that it was referred to as "the State, of Dooly." The earliest settlers arrived about 1826 and were farmers and cattlemen. A land lottery was held, and by 1830, the population was set at 2025 persons. J.S. Pate, S.W. Coney, and W.C. Hamilton were among the first landowners and all three held large tracts of acreage. The closest trading area was at Hawkinsville, in present-day Pulaski County northeast of Cordele, but crossroads communities sprang up throughout the county. Pateville and Coney were among the earliest settlements noted.

The area received no particular attention until the Civil War. In November 1864, Governor Joseph E. Brown refuged with his family from the capital at Milledgeville to a plantation at the present site of Cordele, and from there, directed the affairs of the state of Georgia. Earlier, Brown had paid \$50,000 in Confederate money to purchase 1200 acres from W. C. Hamilton as a safe haven for his slaves when Sherman's troops entered north Georgia. A previously constructed two-story dogtrot log house stood on the present site of the Suwannee Hotel, located in downtown Cordele. Until the fall of the Confederacy, Brown traveled between Macon, Milledgeville and this plantation as government activities demanded. After the war was over, he offered the land to his former slaves, but they wished to return to north Georgia, and he sold the land for \$3,500.

Sometime after the war, Americus resident H.C. Bagley acquired the former Brown plantation. Bagley was president of the Americus Investment Company, which was developing the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railway. In 1887, that railway was built partially through Bagley's land. Since Bagley was heavily involved in developing town sites along the railroad route, he sold his land to the Americus Investment Company for future use. At the same time, he negotiated a deal with the Macon Construction Company which was then building the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway, in which they agreed to intersect the Savannah, Americus & Montgomery rail line on his plantation rather than at the planned junction several miles east on the W. C. Hamilton plantation. In return for this change, the Macon Construction Company received an undivided half interest in 200 acres in the center of this planned settlement.

In 1888, the Americus Investment Company surveyed the land and applied to incorporate the planned settlement as the town of Cordele. Although most local sources agree that the town was named in honor of Cordelia Hawkins, daughter of Colonel Samuel H. Hawkins, who was president of the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railroad, some historians maintain that the town was named for Colonel Hawkins' wife, also named Cordelia.

Bagley noted of the proposed town site:

As I now recall, the first lots were sold by me, at a public sale conducted on the site of the future town, on November 9, 1887. Cordele was located some 33 miles from the

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

nearest town and was reached only by private conveyance. These lots, which were fifty by one hundred feet each, were offered at a level price of \$100 per lot, half cash and the remainder in two months. Similar lots were offered in the residence section for \$50 per lot on the same terms. Purchasers were given the privilege of selecting any of the unsold lots shown on the plat and in this way future bank sites were chosen according to the somewhat variant judgments of pioneer investors.

The first building constructed and paid for by the Americus Investment Company in Cordele was a school, built as a condition for the state's approval of the town's incorporation. A small frame gabled building, the school stood on the northeast corner of 7th Street and 12th Avenue and also served as a house of worship for several denominations during the early years of Cordele's development.

Construction of a railroad through this section of the state was made more urgent by the rise of the naval stores industry in the region. As timber resources in the neighboring Carolinas became depleted, timber companies and private investors rushed to acquire virgin timber acreage at cheap prices in Georgia's Wiregrass region. Land in Dooly County and Wilcox County was considered prime timber acreage. Among those investors who purchased land in Dooly was B.P. O'Neal. In search of a healthier climate and ready to make his fortune, O'Neal came with his young bride from his native McDuffie County, in east central Georgia, in 1887. Deed records show that he established a turpentine and timber business called O'Neal and Gross, and that the firm began purchasing land as early as 1889. Many of his earlier purchases were from other timber companies such as Wilcox Lumber Company, Bulloch, Peacock & Company, Parrott Lumber Company, and Rochelle Land Company. Several deeds state that he had five years to remove the turpentine and timber from specific acreage. O'Neal's holdings increased until he held land in at least three districts, including parts of Cordele, Penia (established in 1887 and originally called Pinia for the pines in the area), and Richwood (established 1889 and named for the abundant timber resources). O'Neal established sawmills at all of these towns.

During the early 1890's, business flourished in Cordele. Lumbering was such a common practice during the early years of Cordele's development that a law was passed prohibiting the cutting of trees on town streets or near homes because of the danger to pedestrians. The railroad assured the town's success as a trade center, and residents from around the county brought their goods to market and purchased their supplies in Cordele. During this decade, the town gained its first fire protection, a necessity since many frame buildings burned during the early years of Cordele's development. A business panic in 1893 caused the bankruptcy of the Americus Investment Company, and the Suwannee Hotel was sold at a significant loss for only \$11,000. Several personal fortunes were lost in this panic, but the town of Cordele survived. That same year, telephone service was installed in town, and by 1895 service was extended to Vienna, north of Cordele in present-day Dooly County. The Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches all established buildings for their congregations during this time.

The earliest residential development in Cordele was primarily on the western side of town, beyond 8th Street. Houses were built primarily of wood and were heavily influenced by the Queen Anne and

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Folk Victorian styles. One of the best-known residential sections was called Gunboat Hill. Journalist Nelson Shipp recorded his boyhood impression of the area and it is quite revealing, not only of Gunboat Hill, but also of the whole town:

The Hill received its name from the unusual hulk of a structure located on its crest and shaped like a war vessel. Known as the Gunboat House, it was built by Englishman Smith, as he was called. [He] was one of the various human species who came down into our big-pine country to lose themselves or to find themselves. Down beyond the foot of the Hill spread the merchants' little shops and the bank and the hotel of our bustling village, which was a rugged sort of frontier settlement. It was truly "a six-gun town" considering the readiness with which some of its residents went for their artillery when opinions differed.

Building continued in Cordele during the early twentieth century. Several names of local builders and contractors were remembered by early residents, including Comer and Bumey (who designed and built the Suwannee Hotel), Robert George, Little & Phillips, and H.L. Finger. In 1903, an ordinance was passed to pave the sidewalks and to number businesses and residences. The streetscape began to take on an appearance not unlike that of today. The Beaux Arts and Classical Revival styles became popular, and several commercial and institutional structures dating from this period reflect that influence. The second Carnegie library in the state of Georgia was completed in Cordele in 1903-04. The Beaux Arts building was designed by the Atlanta firm J.W. Golucke and Company and featured a cupola that was later lost to weather or taken down during construction of a 1917 addition.

During the years after the formation of Dooly County in 1821, the State of Georgia broke off certain lands to make additional counties, including Pulaski County and Wilcox County. Between 1888 and 1900, Cordele's population swelled from around 300 to at least 6000. Such rapid growth prompted discussions of once again partitioning a portion of Dooly County. By 1905, a movement had gained momentum around Cordele to form a new county from the south portion of Dooly with Cordele as the county seat. Community leaders mounted a major campaign for such action, and took numerous glass slides for use in a presentation to the state legislature. These slides, presented by Judge U.V. Whipple, vividly recorded both the commercial and architectural progress of Cordele. The movement was successful, and the newly formed county was named for Georgia Senator Charles F. Crisp.

By 1900, B.P. O'Neal had made nearly \$1 million in profits from his sawmills. As O'Neal and Gross finished cutting all of the timber from their parcels, the firm marketed and sold the acreage through the O'Neal Land Development Company, offering tracts varying in size from one town lot to many hundreds of acres. Early on, some of this land was sold for little more than \$1 per acre, with individuals purchasing larger tracts and parceling them for resale. It is apparent however, that as residential development continued to expand along with the city limits, O'Neal saw the value of his holdings and had the property surveyed, streets laid out, and lots delineated.

In 1904, O'Neal donated a tract of land to the City of Cordele for use as a school lot. This lot on the

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

corner of 2nd Street and 15th Avenue became the site of two schools, built in succession and named in O'Neal's honor. The second school building was moved across the street in order to construct a larger brick building in the Renaissance Revival style. The former school building became the city's first sanatorium and was later destroyed by fire in 1915. In time, this area came to be known as the O'Neal School neighborhood.

The school lot donation and the surrounding neighborhood development were O'Neal's legacy to Cordele, because in 1906 he and his family moved to Macon. There, he pursued numerous business interests, including banking, lumber, and textile manufacturing. O'Neal continued to have business dealings in Cordele for several years. Land sales by the O'Neal Land and Development Company are recorded in deed books until 1921, and O'Neal served as president of Cordele National Bank until at least 1915.

Cordele became known as "The Magic City of the Pines." The town flourished. A visitor's letter to friends in Atlanta points out, however, that life in southwest Georgia differed somewhat from life in a bigger city: "I like very well but my my [sic] there is more soot here than up there for they burn rich pine for wood all the time and the wind blows sand all over everthing [sic]."

By 1915, the city of Cordele covered 4 miles. U.S. Highway 41 connected the city to the entire eastern seaboard. A list of business concerns included the following breakdown:

225	retail stores	2	bottling plants
12	wholesale houses	2	cottonseed oil mills
4	railroads	2	sash, door and blind factories
4	banks	1	ice factory
4	hotels	1	leather works
3	cotton warehouses	1	carriage works
3	fertilizer plants	1	variety works
3	newspapers	1	cotton compress
		1	machine shop and foundry

The city also had electric lights, a sanitary sewerage system and water works, a new post office and federal government building, a modern telephone exchange, several churches, and numerous social clubs. In only ten years, the population increased by 100 percent, business increased by 270 percent, and thanks to residential development like that of the O'Neal School neighborhood, the city's taxable property increased by 298 percent.

By this time, the O'Neal School neighborhood had begun to take its final shape. A 1910 map attached to a land deed shows the area parceled into lots as far east as Owens Street the limit of residential development today. The Methodist Church had constructed a new house of worship on the corner of 5th Street and 12th Avenue in 1905, and the Baptist Church completed its new sanctuary on the corner of 6th Street and 13th Avenue in 1911. Residents included doctors, lawyers, businessmen, merchants, and civic leaders. Houses were large and set on large, well-landscaped

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

lots. Newer houses reflected the Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Prairie, and English Vernacular Revival styles.

Although development continued in the O'Neal School neighborhood even through the Depression, the district suffered a severe blow by natural disaster on April 2, 1936. Touching down numerous times over a fifty-one-block area, a tornado swept through Cordele. The storm killed twenty-five people, demolished 276 homes, and damaged 212 homes. Two schools were totally destroyed and a small number of churches and businesses were damaged. The tornado struck about daybreak in the southwestern section of the city on Gunboat Hill and moved through the O'Neal School neighborhood toward the southeast edge of the city. The downtown business district was not affected. Damage approached \$1 million. Gunboat Hill was at this point in time a racially mixed neighborhood. Almost all of the large Victorian homes in that area were leveled and were replaced with much smaller vernacular cottages. The O'Neal School neighborhood was by this time the finest residential section in the city, and most of the homes damaged in this area were replaced with comparable large homes featuring elements of high architectural styles. Rebuilding was made possible by insurance payments, FHA loans, WPA funds, and generous corporate and personal donations. A news release written two years later gave testament to the rebuilding process: "Today the whole tornado section, filled with modern homes, looks like an entirely different place. Many of the beautiful trees are gone, but younger ones have been transplanted. If a stranger who knew nothing about Cordele visited this section he would think that a new town had just begun to flourish."

After World War II, the O'Neal School neighborhood experienced its last real surge of growth. The smaller bungalows and ranch style houses from this period blend for the most part into the canvas of the neighborhood. The most serious erosion of the district has taken place in the last twenty years along its boundary with the downtown business district at 6th Street. The loss of several commercial and residential buildings to make way for parking lots has created holes, as has expansion by both the Baptist and the Methodist Churches. Increased traffic on 16th Avenue between Interstate 75 and Lake Blackshear has created a commercial strip along the south edge of the proposed district, resulting in the demolition of many historic buildings and the adaptation of remaining buildings for commercial and professional uses. Current plans by the Georgia Department of Transportation to widen 16th Avenue threaten to further erode the district from the south with even more commercialization. Businesses are now attempting to move onto nearby 15th Avenue, and neighborhood residents have united under the Cordele-Crisp Heritage Association to oppose inappropriate zoning applications, retain the cohesive qualities of their neighborhood, and preserve much of its historic appearance.

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National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

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National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

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 152 acres

UTM References

- | | | | |
|----|---------|----------------|------------------|
| A) | Zone 17 | Easting 238332 | Northing 3540191 |
| B) | Zone 17 | Easting 238332 | Northing 3539550 |
| C) | Zone 17 | Easting 237079 | Northing 3539576 |
| D) | Zone 17 | Easting 237082 | Northing 3540215 |

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the proposed historic district is indicated on the attached maps by a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District encompasses the remaining and contiguous historic residential, commercial, and community landmark resources associated with the development of the neighborhood.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

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organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
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telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** August 16, 2004
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Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

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

name/title Susan Barge
organization O'Neal Neighborhood Association
mailing address 814 14th Avenue
city or town Cordele **state** Georgia **zip code** 31015
telephone
e-mail

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

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Ben Horton, President
organization (if applicable) O'Neal Neighborhood Association
mailing address 805 East 14th Avenue
city or town Cordele **state** Georgia **zip code** 31015
e-mail (optional)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: O'Neal School Neighborhood Historic District
City or Vicinity: Cordele
County: Crisp
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: July, 2003

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 57

1. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
2. Eleventh Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
3. Corner of Twelfth Avenue and Sixth Street; photographer facing southeast.
4. Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
5. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
6. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Sixth Street; photographer
7. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
8. Intersection of Fifteenth Avenue and Sixth Street; photographer facing east.
9. Eleventh Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
10. Fifth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
11. Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
12. Fourth Street; photographer facing northwest.
13. First Presbyterian Church, at right, Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing east.
14. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Fifth Street; photographer facing north.
15. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

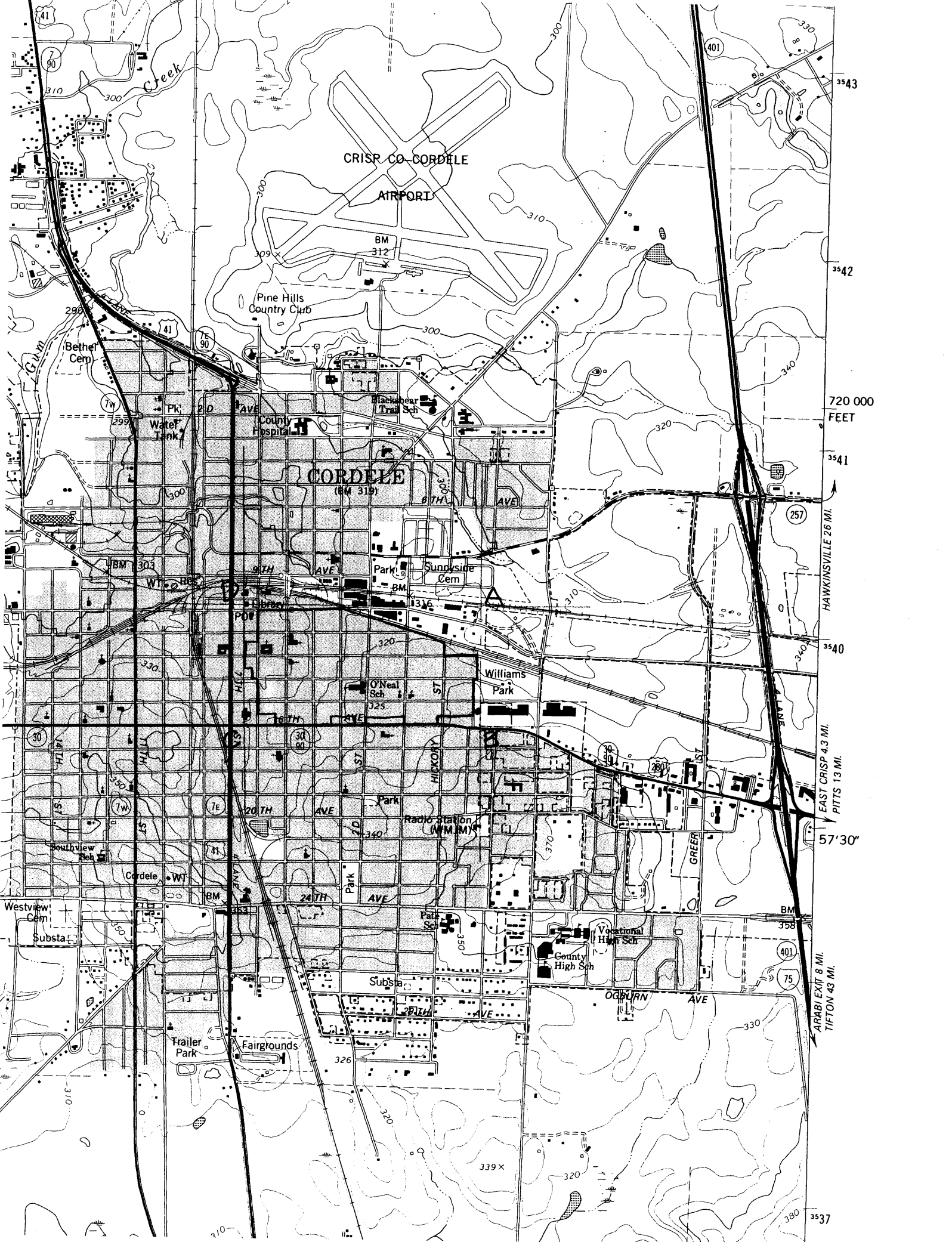
16. Fifteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
17. Sixteenth Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
18. Eleventh Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
19. Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing east.
20. Corner of Third Street and Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
21. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
22. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Fourth Street; photographer facing southwest.
23. Corner of Third Street and Fifteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
24. Sixteenth Avenue; photographer facing west.
25. Corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing northwest.
26. Corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing northwest.
27. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
28. Corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing south.
29. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing west.
30. Corner of Twelfth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing northeast.
31. Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
32. Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
33. First Street; photographer facing northwest.
34. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing west.
35. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing northwest.
36. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
37. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and First Street; photographer facing northwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

38. Fifteenth Avenue; photographer facing west.
39. Corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Second Street; photographer facing southwest.
40. Intersection of Thirteenth Avenue and First Street; photographer facing southwest.
41. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing west.
42. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
43. Corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Hickory Street; photographer facing southwest.
44. Sixteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
45. Corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Hickory Street; photographer facing south.
46. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
47. Fourteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
48. Corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Hickory Street; photographer facing southwest.
49. Sixth Street; photographer facing southeast.
50. Sixth Street; photographer facing northeast.
51. Former Adams Hospital, Fifteenth Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
52. O'Neal Elementary School; photographer facing southwest.
53. Christ Episcopal Church; corner of Fifteenth Avenue and First Street; photographer facing northwest.
54. First Baptist Church, Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
55. First Methodist Church, Twelfth Avenue; photographer facing southeast.
56. First Presbyterian Church, at right, Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing east.
57. Thirteenth Avenue; photographer facing northwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)



CRISP CO. CORDELE

AIRPORT

Pine Hills
Country Club

CORDELE
(BM 319)

Williams
Park

Radio Station
(WVIM, MW)

Vocational
High Sch
County
High Sch

720 000
FEET

HAWKINSVILLE 26 MI.

EAST CRISP 4.3 MI.
PITTS 13 MI.

ARABI EXIT 8 MI.
TIFTON 43 MI.

57°30'