

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR 10 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Eleventh Street School

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 1026 Chestnut Street ~~at Eleventh Street~~ NA not for publication

city, town Gadsden NA vicinity of 4th congressional district

state Alabama code 01 county Etowah code 055

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name City of Gadsden

street & number 90 Broad Street

city, town Gadsden NA vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Etowah County Courthouse

street & number 800 Forrest Avenue

city, town Gadsden 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

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The present appearance of the building is the same as originally constructed although dilapidated through neglect. The building has survived unchanged with only one addition, constructed in 1926.

The building is a two-story structure with a partial above-ground basement level making the building appear almost three stories high.

The exterior walls are solid masonry with red brick facing and limestone trim. The front entrance features limestone columns and entablature of the Ionic order. Above the front entrance there is a Palladian-style window.

The interior consists of a front vestibule with staircases on the left and right leading to the basement and second floor levels. There is a wide center hall with classrooms on each side on the first and second floors. Additional stairs are at the rear with a rear exit facing 6th street and a side exit facing South 11th Street. The windows are typical 15 pane double-hung wooden units in the newer (1926) section and larger eight pane/transom type in the older section. Interior finishes consist of heart-pine floors, beaded wood wainscoting, plaster walls and tongue-in-groove ceilings.

The building is located on the original school grounds at the corner of South 11th Street and Chestnut Street near a downtown residential area.

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 type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1907 **Builder/Architect** J.A. McDonald, Builder/A.D. Simpson, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Education - Criterion A

The 11th Street School, the oldest surviving public school in Gadsden, is significant for its associations with the growth of public education in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and reflects the effect of steady population growth in the city that was due primarily to the rapid industrial development of the area. Built in 1907, and specifically for the purpose of relieving the overcrowded situation in the College Street School building, the 11th Street School operated as an elementary school until December, 1962, when its enrollment was merged with the Striplin Elementary School (built in 1910 at old College Street School site) and moved to a new school building (January, 1963, Queen City Elementary School).

* * * * *

A. D. Simpson, architect, was born in Scotland and came to America as a young man. He designed approximately 9 of the 13 Gadsden City schools built between 1901-30, and designed the additions to many of his early buildings. He designed both the first brick building in Gadsden, Disque High School (1901) and the 11th Street School (1907), as well as the addition to 11th Street School in 1926.

* * * * *

Situated near a downtown residential area that once strongly reflected the rapid growth of Gadsden, the 11th Street School survives as one of the major landmarks that recaptures the spirit of the city at the turn of the century. Evidence of this growth can be traced by the industrial development of the period.

Gadsden's abundance of natural mineral resources (coal, iron, manganese and limestone) and vast surrounding virgin forests encouraged the establishment of a variety of manufacturing enterprises. As early as 1879, industry began to attract new residents to the newly incorporated city. The sawmill of the Southern Lumber Co. brought in qualified personnel from Chattanooga to run the sawmill operation. Within the next three years the first iron blasting furnace was organized, shortly followed by the Elliot Car Works (1887), a railroad car building plant, and later the same year, another iron company. In 1888 a gigantic development program began and local real estate agents continued to do heavy business as large tracts of land surrounding the city were subdivided and plotted into lots which were placed on the market.

Along with the industrial development of the city came the concern for adequate public education. After years of notable, yet unsuccessful attempts to establish a free public school, the mayor, J. H. Disque, drew up a bill proposal for legislative approval to grant full authority to local administration for control of the schools. Passed in 1889, this bill was among the 1st acts permitting a small city to organize and operate the school within its corporate limits. However, it was not until 1895 that an actual organized school system was established.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.1650

Quadrangle name Gadsden

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots one, two, three, four, five, six, eight and forty (40') feet of lot seven of Block fourteen (14) of the Gadsden Land & Improvement Company's Survey in the city of Gadsden, Etowah County, AL. Lot size 200' x 252½' x 200' x 255'. (See red outline on attached scale map.)

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 Frank Tomasello, City of Gadsden, and Shirley Qualls, AHC

organization Alabama Historical Commission date 2/2/84

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 *Theresa J. ...*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/3/84

For NPS use only

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

J. Melrose Byers
 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 5/10/84

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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One of the major concerns of the school system was the inadequate school facilities. Immediate plans were made to expand the educational opportunities for the upper grade levels. In 1901 there was only one white and one black public school in the city of Gadsden. Each school offered elementary level work up to the 9th grade. In 1904 the 10th grade was added and five years later, the 11th grade was added. This 7-4 type division (7 years elementary, and 4 years high school) continued until 1938, when a 12-year program was organized and instituted. A new high school building was erected in 1902 (Disque High) and heralded as the first brick building in the city.

A. D. Simpson designed Disque High and later nine other public schools in Gadsden, as well as additions to several Gadsden schools. Little is known about Simpson except that he was born in Scotland and came to America as a young man.

Although Disque High met the immediate needs of the high school grades, there was still a grave overcrowded situation in the elementary grades. This overcrowding reached a critical stage in 1905, as evidenced in a number of newspaper articles. On Wednesday, January 1, 1906, the Gadsden Evening Journal ran an article titled "Some Relief Must Be Provided For Congestion of City Schools." In the article the school superintendent is quoted as saying that "some steps for providing accommodation for the white school children of the city will have to be taken in the immediate future as buildings are now overflowing, although every inch of available space is being utilized." The 25-year old, 10-room College Street School building housed 890 students and had turned many away. It became necessary to place two classes in the high school building, and two rooms in a residence across the street from the College Street School were rented for two other classes. The schools were so badly crowded in the next school year that the superintendent was authorized to locate a building and rent it in order to have the necessary classroom space to accommodate all the school-age children. A later newspaper article (January 24, 1906, Gadsden Evening Times) revealed that the overflow of the schools had created a problem that neither the school board nor city authorities had anticipated. It was thought that the facilities at Disque High School would suffice.

On March 5, 1906, the city council met and arrived at the conclusion that there were enough children in the 11th Street vicinity to form at least 4 primary grades. It was advised that a new building be placed somewhere near this point and that the building should accommodate all the children coming into the city for at least 12 months. The population increase had rose to 25%.

Foreseeing the school congestion as a "serious drawback" to the progress of the city, the support of the industrial companies was sought towards a special school tax.

By the early 1900s several new industries had organized in Gadsden. Among them were Alabama Steel and Wire Company (1903), The Gadsden Pipe and Foundry Company (1901), The Mecklan Wagon Works (1901), the Southern Steel Company (1906) and probably of most note is the Tri-City Gas Company (today known as the Alabama Gas Corporation). The representatives of the companies contacted voiced hearty support for the proposed tax of 10¢ on every \$100. The tax received a good majority vote, and plans were made to erect a new school building on the corner of 11th and Walnut Streets.

(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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West Gadsden (11th Street area) was the fastest growing section of Gadsden in 1907, and the citizens were elated over the rapid development of the area. On May 4, 1907 the Gadsden Evening Journal ran a full-page tribute/ad on "Fast Growing West Gadsden" which stated that, "In nothing is the rapid growth of the city more strongly reflected than in the quick appearance of a busy trading center, when a year ago there was only the proverbial grocery."

Three lots and 40 feet of another lot were purchased. Mr. A. D. Simpson, the city architect and designer of Disque High School, was commissioned as the architect with Mr. J. A. McDonald as the builder. The cost, excluding plumbing and heating, was \$12,775. Mr. McDonald was instructed to use Sibley and Mingle pressed brick No. 3 for all exterior walls. A public ceremony was planned for May 9, 1907 for the laying of the cornerstone, but because of rain it was postponed until May 13, 1907. The building was completed by September, 1907, at which time 282 students were enrolled. 11th Street was the first brick elementary school building erected in the city.

In 1926 eight classrooms, a lunchroom and two other rooms were added to the 11th Street School building. Again, A. D. Simpson was consulted to design the addition so that it would complement the original building. Mr. W. H. Mayben was contracted as builder and the cost was \$22,359.

The 11th Street School operated as an elementary school until December, 1962, when it merged its enrollment with Striplin Elementary and moved to a new building (Queen City), then for a time as an Adult Education Center and finally, a storage building for the present Gadsden City Board of Education. The building has been vacant for the past few years and has suffered deterioration due to neglect. There is an active campaign to restore the building as a Cultural Arts Center.

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Etowah County Centennial Committee. A History of Etowah County, Alabama.
Birmingham: Roberts and Sons, 1968.

Clyde A. Donehoo. Fifty-Six Years of Progress; 1895-The Public Schools-1951, Gadsden, Alabama. Clyde A. Donehoo/Gadsden City Board of Education, 1951.

Newspapers:

Gadsden Evening Journal, Jan. 17, 1906; Jan. 18, 1906; Jan. 24, 1906, March 1, 1906,
March 6, 1906

Jan. 1, 1907; May 9, 1907; May 13, 1907; May 14, 1907;
Sept. 2, 1907; Sept. 7, 1907

Interviews: By Frank Tomasello
with: Mrs. Nan Callen
Mrs. J. T. Robison (Eloise)