National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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1. Name of Property	APR 2 4 201
Historic name: Theresa Building	12
Other names/site number: <u>Tribbit Building</u> Name of related multiple property listing:	NAT REGISTERON-HISTORN
Name of related multiple property fisting:  N/A	VATITIMALPAHKSENV
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listin	g
2. Location	<del></del>
Street & number: 823 East Long Street	
	ounty: Franklin
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A	
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Prese	ervation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination X_ request for determined documentation standards for registering properties in the National meets the procedural and professional requirements set for	ional Register of Historic Places
In my opinion, the property _X_ meets does not meet the recommend that this property be considered significant at the level(s) of significance:	
nationalstatewide X_local	
Applicable National Register Criteria:	
<u>X</u> A <u>B</u> XC <u>D</u>	
Barbara Power DSHPO for Inventory & Regi	stration April 17, 2015
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection	-
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Governmen	
State of Federal agency/bureau of Tribal Governmen	
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Na	tional Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title: State or Federal age	ncy/bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification	
I hereby certify that this property is:	
ventered in the National Register	
_determined eligible for the National Register	
_determined not eligible for the National Register	
_removed from the National Register	
_other (explain:)	
Jor Elson & Beall	6-8-15
Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
5. Classification	
Ownership of Property	
Private: x	
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	
Category of Property	
Building(s)	
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

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Number of Resources with	hin Property	
	listed resources in the count)	
Contributing	Noncontributing	
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1	0	Total
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instr Commerce/Trade Business/Office building	uctions.)	
business/office building		
<b>Current Functions</b>		
(Enter categories from instr Commerce/Trade	uctions.)	
Business/office building		
business/office building		
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7. Description		
Architectural Classification		
(Enter categories from instructions.)		
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival		
<del></del>		
<del></del>		

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: <u>Foundation: poured concrete, walls: hollow core tile and brick, roof: tile and asphalt, other: wood and wrought iron</u>

# **Narrative Description**

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Theresa Building is a two-story brick Mission /Spanish Colonial Revival influenced commercial building featuring limestone trim, arched window and door openings and an overhanging tile roof with wood brackets and paneled wood soffits. The facade faces north and has four commercial spaces on the first story along with an arched central entrance. The facade's second story has five windows and two double doors that open onto shallow balconies. The building has a very high level of integrity, and features a highly intact exterior and a second story with a nearly intact original layout and a large quantity of remaining interior finishes.

The building is located at 821-827 East Long Street, near its intersection with Monroe Avenue. The Theresa Building is within the Long Street commercial corridor that sits east of downtown Columbus, Ohio. The building was constructed in 1925 and is surrounded by residential buildings and some empty lots. While Long Street, which runs east-west, is mixed residential and commercial in character, the surrounding north-south streets adjacent to the Theresa Building contain predominantly late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential properties. The Theresa Building is approximately one block east of the Lincoln Theater, an Egyptian Revival building constructed in the 1920s that was recently restored. (NR Reference Number 92001355)

The Theresa Building is bordered by East Long Street on the north, a brick alley on the west, an adjacent brick residential building on the south, and a vacant lot on the east. The nominated property includes the entire parcel that the building occupies; no parts of the parcel have been

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excluded. The original building has zero setback from the sidewalk and occupies the entire real estate parcel. The nominated property has no additional buildings or structures.

The period of significance is 1925, the date of construction to 1965, the closing date for significance under the National Register guidelines. The Theresa building continued to operate as a professional building for African American professionals, including descendants of the original tenants, until the 1970s, consequently the period of significance ends corresponds to the fifty year closing date.

#### **Narrative Description**

The Theresa Building has features of the early twentieth century Mission style/Spanish Colonial Revival, including brick walls, limestone door and window trim, arched window and door openings, decorative wrought iron work, and an overhanging tile roof with wood brackets. The facade faces north and features four commercial spaces on the first floor and a series of doors and windows on the second floor.

The building sits on a poured concrete foundation and has terracotta block structural walls veneered in variegated red brick. The first floor commercial spaces sit on a series of steel I-beams that in turn support a thin concrete slab. The nature of the structural supports underneath the second floor atrium and office spaces is unknown. A series of wood trusses support the building's roof. The main roof is flat and covered with an asphalt material, with small sections of decorative tile roof visible on the north, east and west walls of the building. A gabled metal and glass light well in the middle of the main roof provides light for the skylight of the second floor atrium.

The facade is a red brick wall and the northeast front corner of the facade is curved. The facade has limestone trim and an overhanging roof following the curvature of the wall. (Photograph 0001 and Photograph 0002) The four commercial spaces on the first floor feature original wood and glass doors with brass Mission-style hardware, except for the eastern commercial space, which has had the original door removed. (Photograph 0006 and Photograph 0010) Each commercial space also has a plate glass window with curved glass next to the door, topped in each case with a five, six, or seven-light metal transom. In the center of the facade is an arched door opening that leads into a small lobby. This entrance is trimmed with rusticated limestone blocks, but the doors are late twentieth century glass and aluminum replacements. (Photograph 0003)

The facade's second floor has a center section with five rectangular wood double-hung windows. Each window has a soldier course of brick above it with a small limestone keystone at the center. The central five-window section is flanked on each side by a wood and glass double door. Both double door sets have limestone trim and a very shallow decorative balcony with original wrought iron railings and limestone brackets. A limestone stringcourse ornaments the facade at the level of the window sills, and a second heavier limestone molding runs across the facade above the tops of the windows. The facade is capped with a low-pitched section of overhanging

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red Spanish tile roof. The deep overhang features a series of wood brackets and wood soffits with recessed panels containing a decorative circular motif. (Photograph 0004)

The side walls of the building are also clad in variegated red brick and feature a mixture of rectangular double-hung wood windows and door openings capped with brick round arches. The two limestone horizontal moldings of the facade extend to the east and west walls. The first floor of the east wall features four rectangular wood double-hung windows, one wood double-hung arched window, and one arched door opening that is boarded up. The second floor has six rectangular wood double-hung windows. The west wall has four rectangular wood double-hung windows and one arched door opening on the first floor and five rectangular wood double-hung windows on the second floor. The south (rear) wall of the building is partially covered up by an adjacent brick residential building; the remaining wall is composed of red brick with a series of rectangular wood double-hung windows. (Photograph 0005) A poured concrete stairwell on the south wall of the building leads to the basement door.

The interior of the building consists of a rough basement, first floor commercial spaces, and the second floor atrium and offices. The basement has concrete walls, ceilings and floors, with a few wood partitions. The first floor commercial spaces are rectangular in shape; each space mainly consists of a single narrow but long room. The west commercial space has a small partition at the rear with a restroom, (Photographs 0011, 0012, 0013) but the other commercial spaces are more open. (Photographs 0014, 0015) All of the commercial spaces contain a few original finishes and equipment, such as metal radiators and in some cases a small amount of original floor moldings, but in general the spaces have plain plaster or gypsum wall board walls and ceilings and concrete floors, non-original carpet, or non-original plywood sub-flooring. In some of the commercial spaces, a small amount of one-half inch wood subfloor exists in the front glassed-in display spaces on the north wall. The westernmost commercial space has a drop acoustical tile ceiling dating to the second half of the twentieth century.

The first floor interior also includes the central entrance, which features a small first-floor lobby space and a staircase leading to the second-story atrium. The lobby features newer tile floors, while the lobby walls are composed of a lower section with original wood trim and panels of original textured stucco, and an upper portion with a plaster finish that was originally colored, textured and scored to resemble limestone masonry. (Photograph 0018) The original rough-textured and stone masonry surface of the lobby walls is visible in a few places, but it has mostly been covered over with white paint. The lobby space also features an original wood door with a large stained glass panel. (Photograph 0017) This door leads into the commercial space that is east of the entrance lobby.

The entrance lobby opens into a staircase that leads to the second floor atrium. The staircase features original gray-pink marble treads and risers. (Photograph 0019) The wall treatment in the staircase is identical to the entrance lobby, with wood trim and rough textured plaster on the lower portion, and plaster finished to resemble stone masonry on the upper portion.

The top of the staircase opens into the second floor atrium. (Photograph 0020) This atrium is oval-shaped and has plaster walls that are scored and textured to resemble stone masonry,

retains its original metal radiators. (Photograph 0020)

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although the original plaster finish has been covered over with white paint. The plaster scoring pattern over the arched doorways simulates stone voussoirs. (Photograph 0030) The original flooring is composed of small white, gray and pink tiles laid in a random pattern on most of the floor, with a gray tile border around the edges of the room. (Photograph 0021) A concrete patch in the center of the floor marks the former location of a small fountain that can be seen in old photographs. The doors of the atrium are arched and paneled original units, and are composed of birch or fruitwood that was stained dark brown to resemble walnut. (Photograph 0022) This type of woodwork with its original dark walnut-colored finish can be seen throughout the second floor. The atrium also features black marble floor moldings and numerous scars on the walls indicate that electric sconces were once present. (Photograph 21) The atrium ceiling is lined with a plaster border that features a series of recessed panels with acanthus leaf and rosette motifs. (Photographs 0022-0025) The center of the ceiling contains a skylight consisting of dark brown wood mullions supporting original glass in a variety of pale colors such as light yellow and lavender. (Photograph 0026) The mullions of the skylight are for the most part square or rectangular, except for two fan motifs that appear at the two ends of the oval. The atrium also

The remainder of the second floor is divided into 18 small office spaces, two small restrooms, and three small corridor spaces. Most of the offices have the form of a rectangle that is nearly square, except for a few offices at the front of the building that are irregularly shaped because the western wall of the building is positioned at an angle parallel to Tallmadge Street. (Photograph 0027) Note that linoleum floor parallels the angled wall in the photograph. Most of the office spaces have paneled wood doors similar in design and finish to the atrium doors, except that they are not arched. The office doors are either solid 8-panel units or are wood and frosted glass 4-panel units. (Photograph 0028) For the most part, the doors have their original hardware. Most of the office spaces have their original lathe and plaster walls and original floor moldings in the same color and finish as the doors. Ceilings in the office are composed of textured plaster. Wall surfaces in the offices are plaster and lathe on wood stud walls, but rooms on the outside edges of the building have areas where plaster was applied directly to the inside face of the terracotta block structural walls.

Many of the office spaces had original chair rails that have been removed, leaving a small scar in the plaster. It appears that all or nearly all of the commercial spaces had linoleum flooring at one time but it has been removed in most of the spaces. The flooring below the linoleum is narrow tongue-and groove wood that appears to be made of pine or another type of softwood, and therefore may have functioned as a sub-floor for original 1920s-era linoleum. (Photograph 0027)

One office space on the second floor is different from the others, featuring a large built-in wall mirror surrounded with a decorative plaster band. This room also features rough-textured plaster panels that are now painted white, but areas where the white paint has flaked off reveal that the panels were at one time gilded. (Photograph 0029)

In addition to the offices and atrium, the second floor has two small restrooms and a few small corridor spaces. A restroom is positioned on each side of the building, one on the west wall and one on the east. The small restrooms have older metal stalls but the sink and toilet fixtures have

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been removed. One bathroom has original tile floors while the other has a linoleum floor. The second floor has very few corridor spaces. Each restroom is reached from the atrium via a small corridor with original tile flooring; a third small corridor extends from the northeast corner of the atrium. Otherwise, each of the office spaces is reached through a door in the atrium wall, or by passing through another of the office spaces.

Some new door openings have been cut into a few of the office walls. Some of the plaster walls are deteriorated or have had small sections of plaster removed, and older linoleum flooring has been removed in most of the offices. Other than this, most of the features and layout of the office portion of the building are remarkably intact.

The building's interior is topped with an unfinished attic space with wood floors and exposed wood trusses. The area in the attic over the skylight is capped with a double-pitched glass and metal light well that allows daylight into the atrium's skylight.

The Theresa Building has a number of Mission Style/Spanish Revival attributes including the tile roof, paired second story doors leading to a cantilevered balcony skirted with decorative wrought iron grille, and arched exterior door openings. Interior features include arched doorways with heavy wood paneled doors. The interior fountain in the second floor lobby, no longer extant, is also a common interior feature.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred Knopf, 2009, p. 417-418

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8. S	taten	nent of Significance
	<b>c "x"</b> i	e National Register Criteria in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register
x	A.	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B.	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
х	C.	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D.	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
		onsiderations in all the boxes that apply.)
	A.	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
	В.	Removed from its original location
	C.	A birthplace or grave
	D.	A cemetery
	E.	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
	F.	A commemorative property
	G.	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

heresa Building	<u>Franklin, Ohio</u> County and State
Areas of Significance	
(Enter categories from instructions.)	
Commerce	
Community Planning and Development	
Ethnic Heritage/Black	
<u>Architecture</u>	
Period of Significance	
1925-1965	
Significant Dates	
Significant Person	
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)	
( • F •	
Cultural Affiliation	
Cultural Arimation	
<del></del>	
Architect/Builder	
James Albert Jackson, Ruby Williams, developers	

George Abernethy, architect Frank Matthaes, contractor

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## **Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Theresa Building is significant under Criterion A for its role in Columbus African American history, specifically commerce during the period of the 1920s Great Migration. The Theresa Building is the last known extant African American-developed and owned office building associated with the Great Migration in Columbus. Constructed by African American entrepreneurs Ruby Williams and James Albert "Al" Jackson in 1925 and named after Jackson's wife Theresa, the Theresa Building provided modern office space for a class of black professionals that grew during the period of the Great Migration.

The Theresa Building is also significant under Criterion C as a Mission-style commercial office building that has retained the vast majority of its original interior and exterior features. The Theresa Building used the newest modern, often imitative, building materials to convey a sense of modernity. The nearly intact interior elements in the building's second floor offices—including scored plaster walls and tiled floors—convey an atmosphere of sanitary cleanliness that spoke of up-to-the-minute modernity in the 1920s, linking the building's owners and occupants to the Industrial Age.

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

#### **Historic Context**

African American residents originally settled the part of Long Street between North Fourth Street and High Street.<sup>2</sup> East of there, affluent whites built Victorian homes on Long Street west of Jefferson Avenue in the 1880s and 1890s. African Americans began to move eastward in the early 1890s, when Pennsylvania Railroad workers rented houses near the intersection of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Champion Avenue near the Pennsylvania Railroad yard.<sup>3</sup> White residents initially attempted to confine blacks to certain streets. However, African Americans quickly realized that buying a house on an otherwise entirely white block, while costing an inflated price, would prompt the remainder of the block to sell at fire sale prices enabling them to accumulate additional properties at lower costs, a strategy they started to use to great effect in the area.<sup>4</sup> However, one part of the neighborhood where white flight did not occur was the business district on nearby Mt. Vernon Avenue. There, eastern European Jews settled and opened businesses in the early 1900s with many maintained until the riots of the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the bulk of black-owned business and professional activity was concentrated on Long Street, where the Theresa Building would be constructed.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 2}$  Richard Clyde Minor, "The Negro in Columbus" (Ph.D diss. Ohio State University, 1936) p. 24

Mary Louise Mark, Negroes in Columbus. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1928, p. 17

Mark, p. 17
Marvin Bonovitz, Mt. Vernon Avenue: Jewish Businesses in a Changing Neighborhood, 1918-1999. Grove City, Ohio: Z-Enterprises/Columbus Jewish Historical Society, 1999, p. 11

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In 1904, African Americans built St. Paul A.M.E. Church at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Long Street, prompting increased eastward African American migration in the city. An additional impact on African American movement came in 1908, when Mayor George S. Marshall instituted an anti-vice campaign in the "Bad Lands" area of eastern downtown. Centered on Third Street and Naughten and extending to Fourth Street between Long and Naughten, the Bad Lands were a hotbed of prostitution, gambling and opium dens. While the campaign did not entirely eliminate vice in the area, it did force blacks to move eastward. <sup>6</sup>

Concurrently, the national Great Migration began: the mass movement of African Americans from the rural south to northern cities. European immigration was largely curtailed by the advent of the First World War, opening many job opportunities in heavy industry in northern cities. Concurrently, increasing racial segregation in the south, political disenfranchisement, a boll weevil infestation that destroyed the already meager prospects of tenant farming, and a southern labor depression in 1915 pushed African Americans north in search of jobs and a less restrictive social and political environment. New African American enclaves formed and grew in the north, defined by racial covenants and informal segregation. New York's Harlem, Chicago's Black Metropolis and Indianapolis' Indiana Avenue became the locations of a northern black renaissance. Letters from friends and relatives and black newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* spread the word in the south about northern job opportunities.

In Ohio, the Great Migration was most pronounced during 1915-1920, and in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati the black population grew. Columbus' African American population increased from 12,739 in 1910 to 32,774 by 1930. Columbus' foundries and manufacturing concerns provided jobs, albeit often dirty and dangerous, for new arrivals, with labor agents scouring the south for Columbus companies such as Ohio Malleable Iron. Long Street east of Jefferson Avenue became the main entry point for new arrivals from parts south, and the East Long Street District became the premier African American section of the city.

While many of the new arrivals came from eastern seaboard states such as North Carolina and Virginia, large numbers also came from southern Ohio. The new residents' sudden arrival disrupted the delicate racial social fabric of Columbus for both blacks and whites. Newly arrived southerners imagined that northern states were paradisiacal places of freedom and opportunity. As noted in 1921:

"He has been anxious to leave his supposed bondage and enjoy the freedom that the north affords. Upon his arrival he is confronted with similar rules and customs that held him so closely suppressed while in the South and in his attempt to try out his newly acquired freedom runs into the solid roots of the well-established northern social order." <sup>10</sup>

Ohio State University, 1921) p. 13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Minor, p. 178

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Giffin, pp. 10-11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Giffin, p. 232

J. S. Himes Jr. "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio." The Journal of Negro History Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 1942) p. 135
Ralph Garling Harshman, "Race Contact in Columbus, Ohio" (master's thesis,

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The new arrivals tested what they thought were newly acquired, but were in reality non-existent, freedoms. This caused social frictions among new arrivals, whites, and long-term black residents. Among long-term black residents, recent African American arrivals were reputed to have both capital and business acumen, which caused animosity between new and longer-term residents as new class divisions were created. In addition, working-class Great Migration arrivals were thought to be too boisterous on Columbus streetcars, which caused discomfort for both whites and long-term black residents. Some whites felt it was the duty of black residents to get out of whites' way on the sidewalks and would push newly arrived blacks into the street if they were not quick to comply. Consequently, segregation became the force that re-delineated social, economic, and political boundaries.

Institutional segregation was quickly implemented. The Columbus Public School board president advocated segregated schools in 1907. <sup>12</sup> Changes to the Columbus City Charter in 1912 effectively curtailed black political power. <sup>13</sup> Settlement houses were segregated by 1920. Movie houses and theaters implemented varying degrees of seating policies based on race. Tony downtown hotels began to refuse service to African Americans. <sup>14</sup>

White-led grass-roots efforts at racial containment were initiated. The Long Street Improvement Association was formed by white businessmen with real estate interests in the immediate area to discourage blacks from continuing to move to the Long Street area east of Jefferson Avenue.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the Association lobbied to change the name of Long Street to Commerce Street east of Jefferson Avenue to avoid any association with African Americans.

The burgeoning segregation forced African Americans to form a parallel economy centered on Long Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue. Many recent arrivals in the Great Migration had owned businesses in the South or been engaged in trades. Their message and actions of black self-determination, especially economic, caused friction between long-term black residents and recently arrived southerners. Nonetheless, in 1918 African American businessmen formed the Business and Professional Men's Club at the black Spring Street YMCA. <sup>16</sup> Thousands turned out on September 25, 1923, for a parade led by Marcus Garvey and the officers of the Universal Negro Improvement Association down Mt. Vernon Avenue. Approximately 2,300 people, including leading business and professional community members, turned out to see Garvey speak in Columbus the same day. <sup>17</sup>

Harshman, p. 39

Jacobs, Gregory. *Getting Around Brown: Desegregation, Development and the Columbus Public Schools*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998, p. 13-14 Himes, p. 137

Harshman, p. 32

hard Allen. "East Long Street" The Crisis Magazine, November, 1922, p. 13 Minor, The Negro in Columbus, p. 42

Mark Christian, "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA): With Special Reference to the "Lost" Parade in Columbus, Ohio, September 25, 1923. The Western Journal of Black Studies. Vol. 28, No. 3, p. 431

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In approximately 1920, African American businessman James E. Williams constructed an eponymous office building at 679-681 East Long Street. In 1922, the Adelphi Savings and Loan, a black lending institution, built an office for itself at 922 East Long Street. It was noted that over one hundred African American businesses, including haberdasheries, photographers, music studios, optometrists and corporations, were clustered on East Long Street although this may have extended farther towards the east towards downtown than to the more residential west. <sup>18</sup>

The Great Depression started a slow decline on the east side. As residential segregation began to subside in the 1950s, middle-class residents began to move from the neighborhood. During the 1960s, over 14,000 residents were displaced by interstate highway construction through the area. In 1967, a civil rights demonstration turned violent and numerous stores were destroyed on nearby Mt. Vernon Avenue, prefacing a sharper rate of decline for the neighborhood through the 1970s. Revitalization efforts began in the 1980s, and the extravagant 1929 African American associated Lincoln Theatre, located at 769 East Long Street was restored. Additional public and private investment continues to revitalize the area.

## History of the Theresa Building

The Theresa Building was developed by James Albert "Al" Jackson and Ruby Williams. Jackson was born in Waverly, Ohio, on February 2, 1876. (Figure 6) When he was fourteen he worked for a farmer in Madison County, and when he was sixteen, he moved to Columbus, where he delivered the Columbus Dispatch to newsstands. Ruby Williams was the Columbus-born widow of Jackson's former business partner, James "Ernie" Williams. Ernie Williams was a transplant from Virginia, and like Jackson, traded in real estate to make his fortune.<sup>20</sup>

Jackson made his foray into real estate at the turn of the century by taking advantage of a dispute between white neighbors, one of whom sold his property (where the Theresa is now located) at a deep discount. Jackson and Ernie Williams opened a feed store at the location.

Williams eventually left the partnership and opened a competing feed store at North Champion Avenue and Long Street, although there appeared to be no ill will between the two. It was surmised that Jackson saw the automobile spelling the end of the feed business—thought to be another instance of his business acumen. Jackson sold his feed business, and with a portion of the profits he opened a pool hall in the Oddfellow's Building during the First World War. <sup>21</sup> Called the Ritz, Jackson's new business was the largest pool hall that catered to African Americans in the city. Pool halls at the time were a thinly, if at all, disguised front for gambling. An account of Jackson's Ritz in 1926 describes seven pool tables, one billiards table and two card tables. A crowd of 20, mostly young men just over eighteen, watched the tables' occupants play Hearts for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Allen, p. 14

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth J. Groves and Gordon Braithewait. Lincoln Theatre Economic Impact Study. Columbus: Feinknopf, Macioce, Schappa, 1982, p. 11
20 Lucius E. Lee "The Al Jackson Story: Son of Truck Farmer Made Financial History" The Ohio State Sentinel June 25, 1955, Section 2, p. 2

Lucius E. Lee "The Al Jackson Story: Son of Truck Farmer Made Financial History" The Ohio State Sentinel June 25, 1955, Section 2, p. 2

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money. Pool players were also engaged in gambling. In a testament to Jackson's good community relations, the Ritz was never raided by the vice squad, unlike others in the area.<sup>22</sup>

In 1920, Jackson and Ernie Williams opened the Empress Theatre on Long Street. Williams' wife, Ruby, had received a substantial inheritance from her uncle, who had owned property downtown in the area occupied by African Americans in the late nineteenth-century before they moved eastward on Long Street. (Figure 6) It was thought in some circles that Jackson's stake came from the Ritz's gambling profits; rumors circulated that the Empress was built on "Saturday night envelopes," the pay packets of Jackson's pool hall customers. However, other accounts attribute Jackson's fortune to purely real estate ventures. In any case, however, financing and credit were difficult or impossible to obtain for African Americans at the time. In addition, the transition from gambling enterprises to entertainment venues and political power was already a well-worn path in larger cities with Great Migration population increases like Chicago.

The Empress Theatre thrived. While blacks had been allowed to enter all movie houses with the exception of the Keith's chain, many of the venues banished blacks to the rear of the balcony or maintained arbitrary seating practices.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the black-owned Empress became a safe harbor from the vagaries and indignities of growing institutional segregation. The Empress was the place to see and be seen for African Americans in the Roaring Twenties.

Jackson noticed a shortage of office space, the byproduct of increasing segregation for black professionals combined with an increasing population of those professionals as a result of the Great Migration. Although Ernie Williams had opened the Williams Building, which housed physicians and insurance companies at 681 Long Street, in 1919-1920, the market was hardly saturated. Between 1920 and 1930, the number of black physicians in Columbus increased by 46 percent and the number of black lawyers doubled. So Jackson partnered with Williams' widow, Ruby, to build the Theresa Building in 1925 (Williams had died in 1922). The Theresa Building was named after Jackson's wife. An advertisement in the *Columbus Evening Dispatch* noted that the Theresa "consists of as modern and attractive offices and storerooms as available anywhere in the city." (Figure 7)

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 22}$  Richard Clyde Minor. "Negro Recreation in Columbus." (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1926) p. 6

Lucius E. Lee "The Al Jackson Story: Son of Truck Farmer Made Financial History" The Ohio State Sentinel June 25, 1955, Section 2, p. 2

4 Barta, p. 66

Minor, The Negro in Columbus, p. 72

Haller, Mark H. "Policy Gambling, Entertainment, and the Emergence of Black Politics: Chicago from 1900 to 1940." The Journal of Social History. Vol. 24, No. 4 (Summer 1991) p. 723

Ralph Garling Harshman, "Race Contact in Columbus, Ohio" (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1921) p. 35

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Giffin, p. 232-233

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Giffin, p. 233

Franklin County Auditor, Assessment Sheet, Map Book 14, Page 58

Theresa Building Adverstisement. The Ohio State Journal, April 21, 1925, p.

Theresa Building Franklin, Ohio Name of Property County and State

The Theresa Building was designed by Columbus architect George W. Abernethy. Abernethy was born in 1892 and worked as a draftsman for Columbus architect J. A. Jones beginning in 1917. In 1918, Jones took Abernethy on as a partner in the practice. 32 Abernethy maintained an office in downtown Columbus until 1932, when the Great Depression appears to have cut short his private practice. In 1937, he became an inspector for the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). He later became the chief architect for the FHA district office in Columbus, where he remained until his death in a car accident in 1946 at the age of 54.<sup>33</sup>

The Theresa Building was constructed by Frank Matthaes. Unlike the architects and contractors of other predominant African American-owned buildings on East Long Street (such as the Lincoln Theater, which was designed and built by Carl J. Anderson of Dayton, an African American), both Abernethy and Matthaes were white. The choice of whether to use black design and construction professionals divided the black community into those who chose to support black businesses and those who sought to cement their elite black status by hiring the foremost white professionals.<sup>34</sup> Although Jackson and Ernie Williams used Dayton's Carl J. Anderson for the Empress Theater, in the case of the Theresa Building, Jackson and Ruby Williams chose both a white architect and a white builder.<sup>35</sup> Their reasons for this are unknown.

Jackson's first office tenants were a powerhouse of Columbus' African American community and business leaders, including the dentist Dr. R. M. Tribbitt and the physician Dr. W. M. Method. Tribbitt and Method were also associated with Great Migration arrivals. In the early 1920s they had started the Alpha Hospital on Long Street in response to not being able to practice medicine in segregated Columbus hospitals. However, the venture failed in 1922 and the Alpha Hospital was transformed into a social service agency. <sup>36</sup> Both Method and Tribbitt were well-connected community members. They were chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the Spring Street YMCA management committee. In addition, Method was a Columbus Urban League board member.<sup>37</sup> Method would later become the only African American staff physician at a Columbus hospital.<sup>38</sup> The Theresa Building's initial group of office tenants was rounded out by the Coleman Service Company, an employment agency whose proprietor was a former deputy clerk of courts.<sup>39</sup> John Logan, another one of Jackson's real estate partners was another initial office tenant. Jackson also maintained his own office in the building.

In 1927, Jackson learned that the Oddfellow's Lodge was going to open a competing theater across the street from the Empress. This brought out a longtime business tendency in Jackson: "He couldn't stand competition and when it looked like competition was raising its head, Al tried

Barta, p. 67

<sup>&</sup>quot;Notes" The Western Architect, Vol. 27, 1918, p. 278

<sup>&</sup>quot;Man Dies After Crash" The Sandusky Register, Sept. 25, 1946, p. 9 Barta, For a discussion of attitudes concerning African Americans

patronizing other African businesses see pp. 57-64 Lucius Lee, "The Al Jackson Story: Empress Theater Born, Finest in its Day" The Ohio State Sentinel. July 2, 1955, Sec. 2 p. 2

Allen, p. 14 William Giffin, African American and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915-1930.

Columbus: The Ohio State University, 2005, p. 186

<sup>&</sup>quot;Columbus News" Pittsburgh Courier, April 4, 1925, p. 11

Theresa Building Franklin, Ohio

Name of Property

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to buy it out of existence."40 Jackson obtained the rights to operate the Ogden Theater, but made a strategic error by betting on the continued success of vaudeville productions. At the same time, he refused to believe that movies with sound, known as "talkies," would succeed and continued to book silent movies at the Empress. 41 Both schemes lost customers, and Jackson's crowds moved to other theaters for more modern forms of entertainment. Jackson began to lose money, and in 1929 he and Ruby Williams began to liquidate their real estate holdings. Jackson lost control of the Odgen Theatre but retained the Theresa Building until he sold it in 1931 to the Hamilton Realty Company.

Jackson died in 1934 at age 59 after a brief illness. 42 The Pittsburgh Courier, an African American newspaper of regional, if not national, importance, referred to him as "one of our greatest race leaders." A "race leader" was defined by an editor of the *Chicago Defender*, another regional black newspaper, as having a "staunch loyalty to his race against charges of inferiority, demand for recognition of equality, and the power to influence a mass population."44 The term also referred to Jackson's ability to not just succeed but thrive economically and politically within the growing atmosphere of segregation and discrimination. In addition, a race leader provided a positive example, not only to the African American community but also to Columbus' white power structure. An important corollary to providing a good example was ensuring that others followed that example. In 1922, Columbus Urban League leader Nimrod B. Allen wrote in *The Crisis* that the block of East Long Street between Hamilton Avenue and Garfield Street was becoming "a rendezvous for 'hangers-out' night and day. The passersby are forced off the sidewalk...and passing remarks [are made] concerning pedestrians." There was concern that this behavior would cause additional racial problems in the city.<sup>45</sup>

In 1945, Hamilton Realty Company sold the Theresa Building to Sanford A. Smith, who had been Jackson's harpist at the Empress. Sanford sold the building to Holmes O'Connor, who had been the organist at the Empress. 46 O'Connor then sold the building to Robert Tribbitt in the same year. Tribbitt was the son of the dentist R. M. Tribbitt; he and later his wife Blanche owned the building until 1975. Doubtless the Theresa Building's high level of integrity can be attributed to the fairly long terms of ownership over the life of the building by owners who had been familiar with it from the very beginning.

The Theresa Building is an excellent example of a post-1915 twentieth-century Missionstyle/Spanish Revival commercial office building. The exterior retains a high level of integrity and exhibits common features for this particular style and time period including the tile roof,

 $<sup>^{\</sup>scriptscriptstyle 40}$  Lucius Lee, "Era of the Ogden Theater and the Crystal Slipper." The Ohio State Sentinal July 9, 1955, Section 2, p. 2

41 Lucius Lee, "Era of the Ogden Theater and the Crystal Slipper." The Ohio

State Sentinal July 9, 1955, Section 2, p. 2

42 Mary J. Reynolds, "James A. Jackson, Owner of Empress Theatre in Columbus,

Metz T. P Lochard, "Phylon Profile XII: Robert S. Abbott-"Race Leader" Phylon. Vol. 8, No. 2 (2nd Quarter, 1947) p. 124 Allen, p. 16

Lucius Lee, "Empress Theatre Born, Finest In Its Day" Ohio State Sentinal, July 2, 1955, Sec. 2, p. 2

Theresa Building Franklin, Ohio

Name of Property

County and State

arched doors and the cantilevered wrought iron balcony grille.<sup>47</sup> The second floor interior is an excellent example of a 1920s modern office interior and also demonstrates common features for this particular period and class of resource. The elliptically shaped lobby leads into offices each consisting of an anteroom followed by a separate office, providing increasingly restrictive levels of privacy starting from the lobby. The lobby ceiling's pressed plaster work, arched doorways and scored plaster walls are indicative.

The wall and floor material palette of decorative plaster and tile convey modernity by using contemporary materials and imitative decorative treatments. The stone-finished plaster walls used in the staircase and lobby were considered admirable for "halls and passageways," "suggest[ing] strength and durability" in a cost-effective manner. <sup>48</sup> That these materials embodied "progress and democracy" carried extra weight considering the time they were constructed and who constructed them. <sup>49</sup> The interiors reflect an equality not readily available to professional African Americans elsewhere in Columbus.

The Theresa Building is the last known surviving African American professional office building built by and for black professionals in Columbus during the period of the Great Migration. The Williams Building was demolished in the early 1960s during the construction of Interstate 71. The Adelphi Savings and Loan building was converted to a funeral home with additions and a mansard roof in the 1950s and has lost all historic integrity. In addition, although vernacular commercial and office spaces are often periodically updated by owners and developers to attract new tenants, the Theresa Building's intact office interiors still reflect their original association with black professionals in the 1920s.

While Columbus has no other National Register–listed professional buildings developed for by and for black professionals as a result of northern segregation during the Great Migration, others are present in the Midwest. Chicago's Black Metropolis also turned inward to provide space for black professionals; its Overton Hygienic Building was constructed in 1922 by Anthony Overton for black office space in response to growing segregation. Indianapolis Indiana Avenue is home of the Walker Building, home of Madame C. J. Walker's African American hair treatment products empire. In each instance, African American entrepreneurs worked and overcame the growing system of northern segregation. The Theresa Building is an example of that struggle, and victory, in Columbus, Ohio.

McAlester, p. 417-418

Nancy McClelland, "The Practical Book of Decorative Wall Treatments" Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1926, p. 218

Pamela H. Simpson, Cheap, Quick & Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials: 1870-1930. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999, p. 159
 National Park Service, "Chicago: A National Register of Historic Places

<sup>&</sup>quot;National Park Service, "Chicago: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, electronic document, www/nps.gov/nr/travel/Chicago/c19.htm

Theresa Building	Franklin, Ohio
Name of Property	County and State

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Theresa Building Franklin, Ohio Name of Property County and State

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Simpson, Pamela H., Cheap, Quick & Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999

Theresa Building	_	Franklin, Ohio
Name of Property		County and State
Previous documentation on file (NPS)		
preliminary determination of indiv	vidual listing (36 CFR 67) has be	een requested
previously listed in the National R	=	1
previously determined eligible by	•	
designated a National Historic Lar		
recorded by Historic American Bu		
recorded by Historic American En	•	_
recorded by Historic American La	-	
Primary location of additional data:		
State Historic Preservation Office		
Other State agency		
Grief State agency Federal agency		
Local government		
Local government University		
Other		
Name of repository:		
rume of repository.		
Historic Resources Survey Number (i	f assigned). Ohio Historic Inve	entory form
FRA-483-19	Lussigned, Somo Installe Inv.	chtory rorm
1105 17		
10. Geographical Data		
Acreage of Property Less than one ac	cre	
Use either the UTM system or latitude/l	ongitude coordinates	
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates		
Datum if other than WGS84:	<u> </u>	
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)		
1. Latitude:	Longitude:	
2. Latitude:	Longitude:	
3. Latitude:	Longitude:	
4. Latitude:	-	
4. Lannae:	Longitude:	

Theresa Building		Franklin, Ohio
Name of Property		County and State
Or		
<b>UTM References</b>		
Datum (indicated on US	GS map):	
X   NAD 1927 or	NAD 1983	
1. Zone: 17	Easting: 330964	Northing: 4425778
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)  The property consists of Lots 4-5 of the T.S. Gates Plat, Parcel No, 010-023992. The building is located at the southeast corner of East Long Street and Tallmadge Street.  Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)  The boundary matches the legal parcel boundary. The Theresa Building has a zero setback and the building footprint corresponds to the legal parcel boundary.		
11. Form Prepared By		
name/title: Rory Krupp/ historian	nistorian and Roy Hampton	/architectural
organization: _Owen &	Eastlake Ltd	
street & number: P.C		
city or town: Col	<u>umbus</u>	state: Ohio zip
code:43201		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	eastlake.com	
telephone:614-439-90		<del></del>
date: <u>Dec. 30, 2014</u>	<u> </u>	

Theresa Building	Franklin, Ohio
Name of Property	County and State

#### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### **Photographs**

Name of Property: Theresa Building

City or Vicinity: Columbus

County: Franklin State: Ohio

Photographer: Rory Krupp

Owen & Eastlake Ltd P.O. Box 10774 Columbus, Ohio 43201

Date Photographed: October – December, 2014

1 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0001)

Theresa Building east elevation, facing west

2 of 30 (OH Franklin County Theresa Building 0002)

Theresa Building east and north elevation, facing southwest

3 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0003)

Theresa Building north elevation, facing south

4 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0004)

Theresa Building, Soffit detail at northwest corner of building, camera facing southeast

5 of 30 (OH Franklin County Theresa Building 0005)

Theresa Building, north and west elevation, camera facing southeast

6 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building \_0006)

Theresa Building, Exterior storefront, western half of building, camera facing south

7 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0007)

Theresa Building, wrought iron balcony detail, camera facing south

8 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0008)

Theresa Building, basement, view of steel joists, steel mesh and skimmed concrete with tongue and groove subfloor, camera facing south and looking up.

Theresa Building	Franklin, Ohio
Name of Property	County and State

9 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0009)

Theresa Building, basement, Detail of poured basement walls, camera facing northeast

10 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0010)

Theresa Building, First floor retail space exterior door hardware, camera facing south

11 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0011)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, westernmost bay, arched window on west elevation, camera facing west.

12 of 30 (OH Franklin County Theresa Building 0012)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, westernmost bay, retail entrance, camera facing northeast

13 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0013)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, westernmost bay, camera facing south

14 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0014)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, inner western bay, camera facing south

15 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0015)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, easternmost bay, camera facing south

16 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0016)

Theresa Building, first floor retail space, inner eastern bay, detail of exterior wall interior showing exposed hollow tile, camera facing south.

17 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0017)

Theresa Building, Showing door to first floor retail space from lobby, camera facing northwest.

18 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0018)

First floor lobby and stairway to second floor showing scored plaster wall treatment, camera facing east.

19 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0019)

Theresa Building, view up stairway to second floor showing marble treads and risers.

20 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0020

Theresa Building, view of second floor lobby, camera facing east

21 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0021)

Theresa Building, detail of floor tile, tile border and baseboard

Theresa Building

Name of Property

Franklin, Ohio
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22 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0022)

Theresa Building, office doors, camera facing east

23 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0030)

Theresa Building, detail of plaster ceiling, camera facing southeast

24 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0024)

Theresa Building, detail of plaster ceiling

25 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0025)

Theresa Building, detail of plaster ceiling

26 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0026)

Theresa Building, second floor lobby skylight, camera facing east

27 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0027)

Theresa Building, northwest corner office with original linoleum floor and balcony doors, camera facing north

28 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0028)

Theresa Building, office doors, camera facing south

29 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0029)

Theresa Building, gilded room, camera facing northeast

30 of 30 (OH\_Franklin County\_Theresa Building\_0030)

Theresa Building, arched doors in second floor lobby camera facing north

#### **List of Figures**

Figure 1

Exterior Photo Key

Figure 2

Interior First Floor and basement Photo Key

Figure 3

Interior Second Floor Plan and Photo Key

Figure 4

USGS 7.5 Minute Southeast Columbus Quadrangle Map

Figure 5

Bing Locator Map

Figure 6

Photograph of James "Al" Jackson

Figure 7

Detail of Theresa Building advertisement illustrating the second floor lobby.

Figure 8

Second story lobby interior at building opening in 1925



Figure 1 Exterior Photo Key

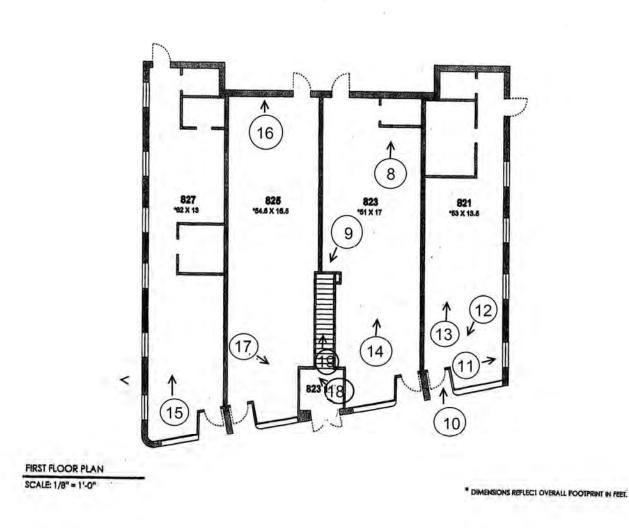


Figure 2 First Floor and Basement Interior Photograph Key

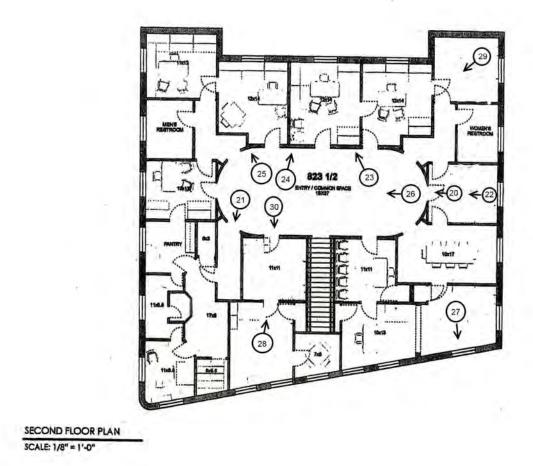


Figure 3 Interior Second Floor Photo Key

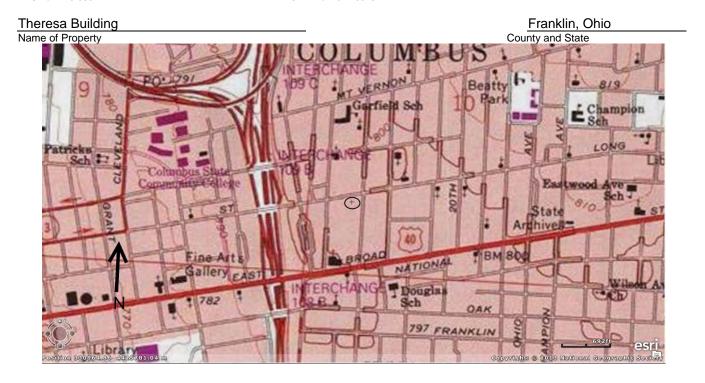


Figure 4 Southeast Columbus USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map

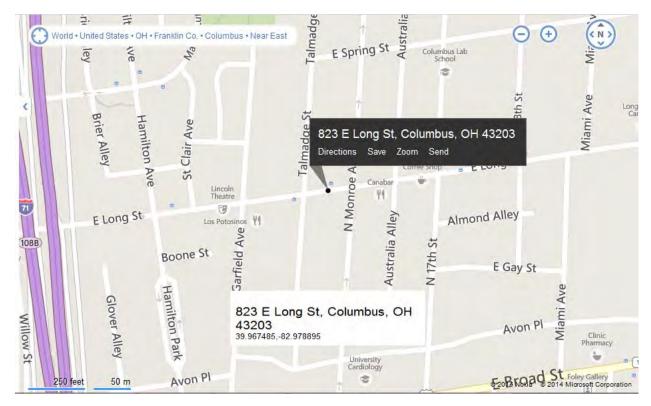


Figure 5 Bing Map showing location of the Theresa Building



Figure 6 Locator Map for buildings and neighborhoods discussed in Section 8



Figure 7 Theresa Building co-developer James Albert Jackson



Figure 8 Second story lobby interior at building opening in 1925





























































## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINAT	l'ION
PROPERTY Theresa Buildin	ıg
MULTIPLE NAME:	
STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Fra	anklin
DATE RECEIVED: 4/24/ DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/03/ DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:	
REFERENCE NUMBER: 1500032	4
REASONS FOR REVIEW:	
	N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL:
COMMENT WAIVER: NACCEPTRETURN	REJECT 6'8'15 DATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:	
	Entered in The National Register of Pistoric Places
RECOM./CRITERIA	
REVIEWER	DISCIPLINE
TELEPHONE	DATE
DOCUMENTATION see attached	d comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
	ed to the nominating authority, the

nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





April 17, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs National Park Service National Register of Historic Places 1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl. (2280) Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find five (5) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATION	<u>COUNTY</u>
Drexel Theatre	Franklin
Graham, A. B., House	Franklin
Theresa Building	Franklin
United States Carriage Company	Franklin
West Fourth Street Historic District (Amendment)	Hamilton

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nominations for the <u>Graham, A. B., House</u> and the <u>Theresa Building</u> nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

The West Fourth Street Historic District (Amendment) corrects an error in the historic district boundary for the West Fourth Street Historic District (Boundary Increase), NR Reference No. 07000028.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

**∖**Lox A. Logan, Jr.

Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer

Ohio History Connection

Enclosures

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

## OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

800 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue Columbus, OH 43211 (614)-298-2000

The following	materials are submitted on Apr:117, 2015
For nomination	materials are submitted on <u>Apr:117, 2015</u> on of the <u>Theresa Building</u> to the National Register of
Historic Place	5: Franklih Co, OH
	Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form Paper PDF
***************************************	Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
<b>**********</b>	Paper PDF Multiple Property Nomination form
1/	Paper PDF
	Photographs Prints TIFFs CD with electronic images
	Original USGS map(s) Paper Digital
	Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s) PDF
	Piece(s) of correspondence Paper PDF
<del></del>	Other
COMMENTS:	
***************************************	Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
	The enclosed owner objection(s) do do not Constitute a majority of property owners