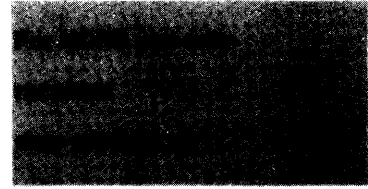


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



**1. Name**

historic \_\_\_\_\_

and/or common Railroad Avenue Historic District

**2. Location**

street & number Roughly bounded by 10th Street on the west, on the north by 1st Avenue, on the east by 7th Street and on the south by Avenue B. NA not for publication  
(See Continuation Sheet)

city, town Opelika NA vicinity of congressional district 3

state Alabama code 01 county Lee code 081

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lee County Courthouse

street & number 215 South 9th Street

city, town Opelika state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Lee County Courthouse/NRHP  
title Old Post Office & Federal Bldg./NRHP has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
Lee County Historic Sites Inventory  
date (State; 1980-1981)  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Railroad Avenue District has historically been the city's business center, an area equally distant from all city boundaries. The proposed historic district consists of 1 complete block and parts of 11 others, a total of 28.25 acres.

The district has two major focal points. The first of these is the Western Railway of Alabama, which divides the northern and southern portions in much the pattern of other southern railroad towns. The second focus is the Lee County Courthouse, sited on high ground two blocks south of the railroad. The courthouse, whose tower - and those of nearby churches - command the skyline of the city, faces east. The courthouse square does not conform to the pattern of other small towns organized around similar buildings. Here, a parking lot lies opposite the courthouse, and beyond that, the back of a line of buildings which face 8th Street.

Descriptions of the original appearance of the district indicate that it was a collection of small wooden buildings, with warehouses concentrated on both sides of the railroad and commercial buildings reaching up the hillsides. After the 1868 fire, one and two-story brick buildings, usually massed in solid blocks, replaced the earlier structures.

The district's major building phase occurred from the 1880s to the 1920s; the architectural character of the buildings is representative of the plain style of that period. Building forms are simple, with flat roofs and projecting cornices. Commercial structures are tightly massed in the center of the district (Block XV), in the 100 Block of South 9th, and in the 100 and west 200 Blocks of South 8th Street. Typical setback is 10 feet. Institutional buildings such as Lee County Courthouse and the Methodist and Episcopal Churches are set back farther from the street. Scale, too, is characteristically divided between the one and two-story commercial and industrial buildings, and the more monumental proportions of institutional buildings (exceptions here include the 3 three-story commercial buildings, and the one-story Episcopal Church). Most of the commercial and warehouse buildings represent a late 19th-early 20th century utilitarian approach to style. The materials are typically brick, with brick or stone articulation. Structures have projecting cornices, and flat arched windows or openings. Pattern books, rather than professional architects, probably provided distinctive details where they appear: terra cotta ornamentation, and Eastlake and Victorian wood work.

Seven of the buildings are significant structures. The Hudmon Brothers Building (53) has definitive stone articulation and a bolder expression of ornament than commercial buildings more typical in the district. The Courthouse (88), the First United Methodist Church (40), the Old Post Office and Federal Building (41), and the Old First National Bank (61) are Neo-Classical or Classical Revival buildings; the Emmanuel Episcopal Church has Gothic details and is the only stone building in the district. Two of these structures, the Lee County Courthouse, and the Old Post Office and Federal Building, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See the inventory listing for a detailed description of significant buildings.

In recent decades, efforts to modernize the appearance of the commercial buildings have included the installation of new glass and metal storefronts, and veneers of various materials. However, the period appearance of most of the buildings is retained at the second floor facade. In the 1970s a continuous, uniform wood shake sidewalk canopy was installed, further obscuring the period appearance of the retail buildings in the southern portion of the district (see scale map). The canopy, now itself deteriorating, could be removed.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Of the 105 structures in the district 73 or 69% are contributing elements because of period design and integrity. Ten, or 10% of the remaining buildings, conditionally contribute either because their period design has been obscured by reversible modifications or because a new storefront covers most of their one-story elevation. There are 22 buildings, or 21% of the district, judged to be non-contributing although these structures may date from the late nineteenth or early 20th century, and retain scale and cornice elevation of the period, alterations have been extensive and are probably irreversible. Buildings less than 50 years old are included in this group.

The present use of the district is predominately retail with other uses being light industry and offices. There are several areas of undeveloped land in the district, principally those sites along both sides of the railroad and opposite the courthouse. Although these are largely used for parking at present, there is potential for more appropriate development to enhance not only the district, but the city itself.

The district is roughly bounded on the west by 10th Street, with a boundary diversion which includes the old railroad and freight depots, on the north by 1st Avenue, including six buildings which face south on 1st Avenue, on the east by 7th Street, and on the south by Avenue B. The boundaries are drawn to reflect the city's old commercial district, a fairly high density of retail, industrial, and institutional structures. Immediately north and south of the district boundary there is a high concentration of late 19th and early 20th century residences; an overpass and major traffic route suggest a visual termination along the west, while the buildings east of 7th Street are generally out of character with the district.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE OPELIKA DISTRICT

1. Old Passenger Depot (1032 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1910-1924. L-shaped one-story, two tone Flemish bond brick building with stone and brick rowlock belt coursings; slate hip roof with a metal canopy supported by chains and metal brackets. Wood frame double-hung windows with transoms above.

The Freight Depot, a long rectilinear mix of new and older structures, stands about 18 feet from the east end of the old passenger depot. Steel trussed tin roof; gable filled with new brick.

2. Building (922 North Railroad Avenue): c. 1909; one-story brick building with corbeled dentil work on parapet; flat arched windows. Flat arched doors are boarded up; there is a new metal canopy.
3. Building (900 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): before 1924; this one-story brick building begins the facades of buildings #4 and #5. Some windows have been boarded up. New metal canopy.
4. Building (900 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): before 1924; this one-story brick building continues the facade of building #3. New metal canopy.
5. Old Wholesale Grocery Building (900 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): c. 1910-1923; one story. Although only the original exterior walls remain, the building's exterior brick wall construction and details (corbeled dentil brickwork at top of south facade, some small paned windows with well articulated flat arches) faithfully reflect the best character of the district. Metal ventilation grills. New metal canopy.
6. Building (816 North Railroad Avenue): before 1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; brick pilasters at upper level with corbeled brick cornice. Lower level opening filled with tile.
8. Winston T. Smith Building (812 North Railroad Avenue): c. 1910-1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction with stone base below storefront; decorative stone capped parapet with diamond shaped medallions; projecting brick coursing and decorative new glass and metal storefront at pedestrian level.
10. Building (800 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): c. 1880s, three-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade above first level. Wood panels and glass at street level; interesting fan shaped attic ventilation panels visible at rear of building.
13. Building (14 North 8th Street): before 1881; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with stucco. First floor east facade has new glass and metal frames on glazed tile veneer; boarded windows at second level have flat arches.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

14. Emmanuel Episcopal Church (800 1st Avenue): 1872; one-story stone rectangular building; wooden gable with barge boards. Gothic wooden arched windows are set in rectilinear wood frames; gothic arch inset in front gable. Adjoining structure is a recent addition; arched exterior passageway connects.
15. Old Opelika-Auburn News Building (700 Block of 1st Avenue, facing south): after 1924; two-story load-bearing brick construction with tile capped parapet; small paned windows; new wood shake canopy; some wood siding at 1st level.
16. Old Warehouse Building (700 Block of 1st Avenue, facing south): c. 1924; one-story brick load-bearing construction with round arched doors.
17. Old Farmers Alliance Cotton Warehouse (700 Block of 1st Avenue, facing south): c. 1910-1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction with arched doors; large metal gutter.
18. Building (706 1st Avenue): before 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; various brick patterns and textures on facade; wood siding infill.
19. Building (700 Block of 1st Avenue, facing south): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; flat arched windows; brick pilasters on upper facade.
20. Old Bank Building (1 North 8th Street): c. 1880; two-story brick load-bearing walls with chamfered southwest corner; second level facade is original with brick dentils and tile capped cornice. First level has new glass and metal storefront.
21. Building (7 North 8th Street): After 1924; two-story brick load-bearing walls; denticulated belt coursing on second level original facade. First level has new brick facing; new glass and wood frame windows.
23. Montgomery Company (713 1st Avenue): before 1898; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction with dentils. Metal awning.
24. Montgomery Company-Old Renfro Brothers Cotton Warehouse (700 Block of 1st Avenue, facing north): 1878, enlarged 1909-1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; round and flat arched openings; corbeled brick cornice. Part of the section of the building which dates from 1909-1924 has been removed. In 1978 a portion of the south facade (along North Railroad Avenue) was altered for a gift shop; however, the alterations have maintained the vernacular of the original building with a round arched shop window and retention of original round arched opening for a door; canvas awnings are new.
25. Building (700 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): Early 20th c.; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; sheet metal gutter.
26. Building (700 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): after 1924; one-story, high elevation, brick load-bearing wall construction; old windows filled with brick; corbeled brick cornice.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

27. Dickson Building (100 South 8th Street): Before 1885; two-story brick load-bearing walls; west and north sides have common bond brick veneer. West facade has molded metal gutter; pressed metal dentil and frieze below parapet; small pane windows; pedestrian level has new glass and metal frames.
- 28 29. Hall's Clothing (106 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-tone yellow brick veneer on two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with original facade at second level; white stucco on north, east, and south sides. New glass and aluminum storefront.
- 24 30. Fleisher Dry Goods (108 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction has original rusticated and smooth brick facade at second level; pilasters and corbeling at upper level; new glass and metal frames.
- 25 31. Building (110 South 8th Street): Early 20th c.; two-story brick load-bearing walls with flat arch windows on original second level facade; new glass and metal storefront at pedestrian level.
- 26 32. Building (112 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story brick; large elliptical arch with fan light on original second level facade; new glass and metal frames at pedestrian level. Stucco finish at rear with flat arched windows boarded over.
- 27 33. Goodwill Building (116 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story brick with original facade at upper level; round arched windows. Recent wood infill and denticulation at second level; wood siding and glass and aluminum storefront at ground level.
- 28 34. Building (120 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story; stone masonry applied over brick at first and second level; parapet is brick. Original brick rear with flat arched windows and door.
- 29 35. Building (122 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; second level has original facade with brick dentils; painted brick at rear with flat arched windows, boarded over. Glass and aluminum at first level.
- 30 36. Diana Shop Building (124 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; one and two-story brick load-bearing walls; applied marble panels; glass storefront.
- 31 38. Building (128 South 8th Street): Late 19th c.; two-story masonry structure with stucco finish; wood shuttered windows on original 2nd level facade. New aluminum and glass storefront on west facade at street level.
- 32 39. Searcy Building (716 Avenue A): c. 1900; one-story load-bearing brick wall construction with high pyramidal roof; turret at northeast corner.
- 33 40. First United Methodist Church (702 Avenue A): Erected 1879; remodeled 1909; addition 1954; two and three-story classical revival with stucco over brick load-bearing walls; Corinthian columns on porch, recessed entry; pediments over doors; pilasters and belt coursings; moldings, soffit brackets and dentils; dome has copper roof.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

- 34 41. Old Post Office and Federal Building - U.S. Courthouse (701 Avenue A): 1915; three-story (and basement) brick load-bearing wall construction with two-story engaged brick columns; stone foundation and trim; stone denticulated eave with brick and stone balustered parapet. This building is listed on the National Register.
- 35 44. Building (707 Avenue A): c. 1909-1924; one-story building; original brick facade.
- 36 45. Building (200/202 South 8th Street): c. 1887; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; windows are flat arched with projecting brickwork and corbeled dentils on original second level facade; flat projecting parapet coping. Glass and metal frames on pedestrian level west facade.
- 37 46. Building (219 South 8th Street): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at 2nd floor; flat arched windows have been boarded up; brick dentils; solid brick parapet. New glass and aluminum frame storefront.
- 38 52. Top Dollar Store (207 South 8th Street): c. 1890s; two-story building with basement; frame and brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at 2nd floor has been painted; corbeled dentils on cornice; solid brick parapet. Store sign attached at 2nd floor; new aluminum and glass storefront.
- 39 53. Hudmon Brothers Building (201 South 8th Street): 1895; two-story building with basement; brick load-bearing wall construction. Upper level facade original; windows have round stone arches with keystones; rough cut stone belt coursing; sawtooth brick frieze; corner stone finials; pedimented identification stone; original chimneys are corbeled. Pedestrian level west facade has new aluminum and glass storefront.
- 40 54. Old Farmer's National Bank Building (127 South 8th Street): 1909; three-story brick load-bearing wall construction; chamfered southeast corner; first story has new glass and metal frames in polished stone panels. Original facade at second and third floors has round arched windows with wood infill; corbeled brick belt coursing articulates top of second and third floor and parapet.
- 41 56. Haynie's Drugstore (123 South 8th Street): c. 1880s, one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second floor has various brick textures and patterns; new glass and metal storefront.
- 42 58. Koplons (117 South 8th Street): c. 1880s; one-story building with basement; brick load-bearing wall construction; articulated brick cornice above metal and glass storefront; new stone panels at pedestrian level.
- 43 60. Goodson's Jewelers (South 8th Street): 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at 2nd level has textured stucco from a later period; flat arched windows with wood infill at 2nd level; new brick facade at 1st floor.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

- 94 61. Old First National Bank Building (801 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; remodeled 1913; two-story Neo-Classical; brick load-bearing wall construction. Three bay south facade is articulated by raised brick pilasters with stone caps and plinths. Inside the central bay is an articulated stone door surround flanked by two engaged stone Doric columns. East facade has ornamental stone door frame and egg and dart and Greek key cornice frieze. The building has been recently restored and renovated; original double-hung windows have been replaced by fixed glass; canvas awnings.
- 45 62. Lazenby's Firestone (805 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second level has large round arched central window flanked by single bay round arched windows; all windows double hung. Rusticated brick; various brick patterns; infills at second floor openings; new glass and metal storefront.
- 46 63. Lazenby's Firestone (807 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second story has louvered windows; new glass and metal storefront.
- 47 64. Gallery of Frames (809 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; jaloused windows; unaltered original facade; pressed metal denticulated cornice; stucco on west upper level; addition at rear.
- 48 66. Dudley Hardware (813 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction has original facade; fan shaped ventilation openings at upper level; corbels; original wood and glass storefront; addition at rear.
- 49 67. ABC Board Building (815 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; new brick veneer replaces old storefront; new glass and metal frames; original terra cotta vertical chain ornamentation may have been reset in new brick. Although restoration/renovation is not entirely faithful to original, its sympathetic treatment makes this a contributing structure; addition at rear.
- 50 68. Building (817 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1900; one-story masonry load-bearing wall; this building shares a facade with #69; addition at rear.
- 51 69. Skinners Furniture Company (819 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story masonry load-bearing wall construction; original facade above new glass and metal storefront; sculpted parapet; addition at rear.
- 52 70. New Era Salon (821 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original wood frame storefront has some plywood infill; brick parapet may be original.
- 53 73. Mitchell Furniture (827 South Railroad Avenue): Late 19th c.; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade with small paned windows and dentils at 2nd floor. New glass and metal storefront at street level.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

- 54 74. The Church of Opelika (831 South Railroad Avenue): Late 19th c.; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction. This building may have shared a facade with #75; a second floor arched window has been bricked in and cut off by the facade of the building to the east; dentils; small paned metal frame windows at second floor replace bricked-in original round arched windows. Glass and metal frame storefront at 1st floor.
- 55 75. Opelika Pharmacy (833 South Railroad Avenue): Late 19th c.; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction. This building seems to have continued facade with #74 at an earlier period; later second store facade has dentils below parapet coping and corbels. Second floor windows have been boarded up; glass and metal storefront.
- 56 77. Building (108 South 9th Street): c. 1890s; two-story building with basement; brick load-bearing wall construction; the second story has a large three bay central flat arched window flanked by two single flat arched windows; rusticated stone sills; unglazed ceramic chimney pots date from the period of construction.
- 57 78. Building (110 South 9th Street, facing west): c. 1890s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second floor has flat arched windows; new brick veneer and glass and metal frames at street level.
- 58 79. Waites Furniture and Appliances (816 Avenue A): c. 1903-1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade above new glass and metal storefront has textured brick and sculptured parapet.
- 59 80. Paul's Jewelry (822 Avenue A): c. 1903-1924; one-story building with basement; brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade above new glass and metal storefront has two-toned brick.
- 60 81. Industrial Loan Service (824 Avenue A): c. 1903-1924; one-story brick building with basement; load-bearing wall construction; rusticated brick and brick dentils on parapet; new glass and metal storefront.
- 61 83. Old Wagnon-Samford Grocery Store (229 South 9th Street): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; largely unaltered storefront has small glass panels of several colors and Victorian and Eastlake wood work; wood and glass infill on facade at lower level.
- 62 84. Melton, Gunter, and Melton, Attorneys (228 South 9th Street): c. 1903-1909; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; pedestrian level facade has new brick veneer and new windows.
- 63 85. Building (225 South 9th Street): c. 1903-1909; although only the east facade, and portions of the north and south walls remain, its materials, scale, and ornamentation reflect the character of the district; door and windows have denticulated flat arches; pilasters and corbeling on upper facade; stucco on south facade.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 8

- 64 86. Building (223 South 9th Street): c. 1900; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; windows are boarded up; original 2nd floor facade. Stucco over brick at pedestrian level.
- 65 87. Lee Building (221 South 9th Street): c. 1909-1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with original facade at second level; flat arched windows and brick dentils. Pedestrian level has wood siding and new windows.
- 66 88. Lee County Courthouse (215 South 9th Street): 1896; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction. "Modified U-shape; central five-bay section with pedimented portico and two one-bay wings; almost flat-roofed. Decorative windows on wings have unique combination of Gothic and classical elements, ornate entablature, central clock tower. Neo-Classical Revival. Second courthouse on site." The National Register
- 67 90. Building (201 South 9th Street): c. 1903-1909; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at 2nd story with wood shutters and round arched windows; corbeled dentils at top and bottom of parapet. Renovated 1st floor has applied wooden mansard, small pane windows and new wood door.
- 68 93. Building (117 South 9th Street): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second level has dentil brickwork around flat arched window heads; pilastered and corbeled parapet. Glass panes with wood infill on first floor.
- 69 95. Building (113 South 9th Street): after 1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade at second floor; dentil brickwork below parapet. Glass and wood storefront at street level.
- 70 96. Building (111 South 9th Street): after 1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with original facade at second level; flat arched windows (boarded up) at upper level have corbeling below parapet. Glass and wood storefront at street level.
- 71 98. Building (901 South Railroad): c. 1880s; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade; some marble and cut stone trim; chimneys; denticulated frieze below projecting cornice; brick parapet; brick quoins.
- 72 101. Lee County Feed and Seed (911 South Railroad Avenue): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; pilastered and corbeled parapet has recessed panels; glass storefront.
- 73 102. Building (915 South Railroad Avenue): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; pilastered and corbeled parapet has recessed panels; some original woodwork. Glass and metal frames at pedestrian level date from a later period.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 9

BUILDINGS WHICH CONDITIONALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE OPELIKA DISTRICT

37. Eleanor Shop (126 South 8th Street): early 20th c.; one-story brick load-bearing walls; stucco covers most of facade; aluminum and stucco storefront.
43. Building (709 Avenue A): 1909-1924; newer section after 1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with hip and gable roof; a building constructed between 1909-1924 forms the rear of this structure; flat arched windows visible on east facade. Newer front portion faces street; stucco completely covers north facade.
49. Lee's Discount Store (213 South 8th Street): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade above pedestrian level glass and aluminum frame storefront.
55. Opelika Variety Store (125 South 8th Street): after 1924; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction; second level has awning windows; new glass and metal storefront.
57. Now and Then Gift Shop (121 South 8th Street): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; articulated brick cornice above metal and glass storefront; new stone panels at pedestrian level.
71. The Graphics Shop (823 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction with original facade above glass and wood frames at pedestrian level; storefront windows, possibly original, covered by wood panel.
82. Brown Lung Association (826 Avenue A): c. 1920s; one-story brick building with basement; load-bearing wall construction with original facade above new glass and metal storefront.
94. Casey Furniture (115 South 9th Street): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; original facade above glass and wood storefront.
103. Building (917 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1880s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; new brick facade; most of pedestrian level woodwork is original.
105. Ennis Grocery (923 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1885; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction with solid brick parapet; new brick facade; glass and metal frame storefront.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 10

BUILDINGS WHICH DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE OPELIKA DISTRICT

7. Meadow Gold Dairies (800 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): c. 1920s; two-story brick building with stucco and wood finish; awning windows.
9. Building (800 Block of North Railroad Avenue, facing south): early 20th c.; one-story; new brick facade with wood infill.
11. Building (800 North Railroad Avenue): less than 50 years old; one-story building with stucco finish; glass and metal frame storefront.
12. Botsford-Knight Insurance (8 North 8th Street): c. 1903-1909; one-story; a new brick veneer completely covers east facade of original structure; mansard roof.
22. Southern Electronics (11 North 8th Street): after 1924; one-story, brick load-bearing wall on north side; painted metal panel covers entire west facade of building. Glass and metal frames at pedestrian level.
28. Duke's Clothing (104 South 8th Street): c. 1970; one-story brick and concrete block load-bearing wall construction. Plywood siding and glass storefront at pedestrian level.
42. Farmer's National Bank (707 Avenue A): 1963; one-story concrete frame structure with concrete aggregate infill panels; bronze tint screens over windows. Drive-in window building to southeast.
47. Expeditions (217 South 8th Street): c. 1905; one-story building; facade has been completely renovated; mansard with cedar shakes above plywood panel and aluminum storefront.
48. Building (215 South 8th Street): after 1924; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; stucco covers upper level of facade; new glass and aluminum storefront.
50. Covered walkway - Between 209 South 8th Street and 213 South 8th Street.
51. Betty's Uniform (209 South 8th Street): c. 1950; one-story building with basement; brick load-bearing wall construction; glass and metal frame storefront.
59. Goodson's Jewelers (115 South 8th Street): early 20th century; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; new brick facade, glass and metal storefront.
65. Stone Clothiers (811 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1950s; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; glass and metal storefront; addition at rear.
72. Building (825 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1950s; one-story masonry load-bearing wall construction; applied stone panels and glass and metal storefront.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 11

76. Building (106 South 9th Street): c. 1905; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction.
89. Walker Building (205 South 9th Street): 1940; two-story brick load-bearing wall construction with pedimented facade; 1st floor renovated with stucco, small pane wood frame windows, and applied mansard.
91. Otasco (121 South 9th Street): c. 1970; one-story concrete block building with brick veneer facade; aluminum and glass storefront.
92. Lounge (119 South 9th Street): c. 1950; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; east facade has new brick veneer above glass and metal storefront.
97. Building (107 South 9th Street): c. 1950; one-story brick load-bearing wall construction; new glass and wood frame storefront.
99. Summer Shoe Shop (905 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1930s; one-story building has been altered with stucco, wood panel, and glass facade. Some Art Deco detail.
100. Vacant area between 905 South Railroad Avenue and 911 South Railroad Avenue.
104. Building (921 South Railroad Avenue): c. 1950s; this one-story building continues the facade of #105; brick load-bearing wall construction with solid brick parapet; pedestrian level glass and metal storefront.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Jack Holt built the first store, a small wooden shack, and David Watson was the earliest dry goods merchant. The post office was established in 1839. John G. White built a tannery at about the time the railroad was completed from Montgomery to Opelika in 1848. When the railroad was completed to West Point in 1851, trade which would have gone to markets in Columbus and Savannah was attracted to Alabama.

Opelika was incorporated in Russell County in February, 1854, with city limits extending a mile in every direction from the Montgomery and West Point railway station. A year later, a branch railroad from Opelika to Columbus gave Opelika railroads running in three directions. As goods came into Opelika, new retail outlets opened, a hotel was built, and the little town became a cotton storage and shipping point. Nevertheless, Opelika's growth was modest: in 1860 there were only fifty voting citizens.

In 1864 and 1865 during the Civil War, Opelika's government supply warehouses, its depot, rolling stock, and railroads were a target of Federal raiders Rousseau and Wilson. Train service from Atlanta to Montgomery was reestablished in September, 1865.

When Opelika, population roughly 500, became seat of the newly formed Lee County in 1866, the commercial district was a collection of wood buildings. A fire destroyed most of these buildings in 1868. The present character of the district dates from the long period of rebuilding. The boundaries of the business section were planned; buildings were now predominately brick, two-story, and massed in a more urban character. While the building scale and styles are representative of the pattern of growth in southern railroad towns and trade centers of moderate size, their conservative appearance may also reflect stringencies more unique to Opelika. During Reconstruction, Opelika was one of three Alabama cities and the seat of one of five counties bankrupted by railroad bond issues. In the 1880s-1890s unfavorable freight rates cost Opelika merchants trade and the city's fight against such discrimination made a famous case in the complex struggles between the state railroad commission, competing railroads, and the communities in which those roads had an interest.

Opelika successfully carried its rate case to the Interstate Commerce Commission in the 1890s. Despite the lack of support from the railroads during the '70s and '80s, despite massive debt and civil disorder which cost the city its charter in 1883, Opelika continued to grow. In 1870 its population was 2500; thirty years later it had reached 4,245.

The physical rebuilding of the district probably began in the 1870s. The Emmanuel Episcopal Church (14) was built in 1872; the first street lights appeared in 1877; and the old Renfro Brothers Cotton Warehouse, now the Montgomery Company (24), was completed in 1878. Railroad traffic encouraged other business as well - in one 15-day period in 1872, 275 travelling businessmen and drummers registered at the Opelika House, one of at least three hotels in the district at that time.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Tallapoosa (9th Street) was the core of the city's business district at the beginning of the 1880s. On that street in about 1884 J. E. Wagon built a one-story brick grocery store on the corner of Tallapoosa and Adams (Avenue B). Essentially unchanged in use and appearance, it remained open until the 1970s. In 1886 the business district replaced its old wooden pavements with the first brick paving; the wooden sewers were replaced by brick ones at about the same time. Messrs. Hudmon Brothers, a successful drygoods firm through the 80s, built a new brick two-story building (53) in 1887 on the corner of Chambers (8th Street) and Jefferson (Avenue A) at a cost of \$5,000. Originally a general merchandise store with offices for The Opelika Democrat and others on the upper floor, the Hudmon Building later housed Hagedorn's Clothing Store until the 1970s, when it became the Alabama Office Supply.

In 1887 also, a new double brick building with plate glass windows was constructed by John Dorsey on the corner opposite the Hudmon Building (45). In that year, The Opelika Democrat noted a "solid, substantial, and permanent boom" in the city, citing the diversity and division of businesses. The paper noted that "a number of houses in Opelika do more than \$200,000 worth of business", with a "total volume estimated at \$3,000,000 and growing." Cotton receipts had reached 27,000 bales in 1886; the Democrat claimed that, with five large cotton warehouses, "Opelika has more and better warehouse room in proportion to her cotton receipts than any city (except) Mobile."

In 1890 the South's largest interior cotton press stood a short distance from the district. This press, with its capacity of 50,000 to 75,000 bales per year, and the availability of warehouses on an important railroad, reduced freight costs for area cotton growers and increased business in the Opelika commercial district. Other early Opelika industries grew up near the district: a planing mill (1873) and furniture factory, an iron foundry (c. 1882), a knitting mill, and a lime works - all gave impetus to the steady growth and prosperity of the downtown area.

Reflecting the city's growing influence in the region, a substantial new courthouse replaced the old one in 1896. This Neo-Classical Revival building was designed by the architectural firm of J. B. Ryan. In 1909 Farmer's National Bank constructed a new three-story brick building on the corner of Avenue A and 8th Street. The First National Bank of Opelika remodeled a two-story brick commercial building on South Railroad Avenue (61) and moved there in 1913. Two years later, the architect James A. Wetmore designed a new building for the Post Office and Federal offices at the corner of Avenue A and 7th Street (41).

Now receiving rate parity with other major competitive points, Opelika had become the railroad capitol of east Alabama. The number of passenger trains coming into Opelika grew: in 1873 five trains changed cars at mid-day; by the 1920s there were twenty-four daily passenger trains. The Union Passenger Depot, constructed by the firm of Floyd and Stevens in 1890, was replaced between 1910-1924 by the present building (1).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

During the 1960s other means of shipping and transportation began effective competition with the railroads; the last passenger train discontinued its Opelika terminus in 1970, although freight traffic remained significant. More harmful to the commercial district, however, was the shift in shopping patterns brought by the shopping centers and, later, a successful mall between Opelika and Auburn. Nevertheless, Opelika's downtown district remained a focus of retail sales into the 1970s; most of the buildings in the district remain occupied.

Although most of the buildings have deteriorated, and two survive as shells, private citizens have undertaken the restoration and adaptive reuse of three buildings (a portion of 24, 64 and 61). Moreover, the Opelika Historic Preservation Society has been formed to encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of structures within the Railroad Avenue District. Its success in saving buildings from demolition or destructive alterations will depend, in large part, upon tax incentives available with certification of the district by the National Register.

Significant people who were associated with Opelika during the late 19th and early 20th centuries include one of the youngest generals in the confederate army, George Paul Harrison (b. 1841). After the Civil War, Brigadier General Harrison practiced law in what is now the Railroad Avenue Historic District and elsewhere in Alabama. He served two terms as United States congressman from the third district (1894-1898) and helped establish for Opelika one of the first free rural mail delivery routes in the south.

William J. Samford who drafted significant portions of the state constitution, and served in the forty-eighth Congress, kept law offices in the Samford Building (45). He was elected governor in 1900. Governor Samford's son, T. D. Samford, served as administrative aide to Governor Samford and later became one of the most influential figures in the administration of Governor Jelks.

Early in the 20th century, Dr. W. J. Love, whose offices were in the district, worked with an Auburn veterinarian in the discovery of a method for treating gas gangrene which was credited with saving lives in the first world war.



# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

**Specific dates** 1872-1930      **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Criterion C: Architecture - The district contains one and two-story brick structures representative of the commercial and warehouse buildings of the region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Opelika was the trade and railway center of east Alabama. Most of its institutional buildings, too, are characteristic of the period in their monumental use of the Neo-Classical style. The scale and expressive eclecticism of the courthouse's Classical and Baroque elements reflect the city's pride in its growing regional influence at the turn of the century.

Criterion A: Commerce - Opelika's Railroad Avenue district has historically formed the commercial core of this important east Alabama trade center. Early in its history, adequate railway and warehouse facilities prompted the growth of local industries and retail outlets, and made area cotton manufacture more profitable. As traveling businessmen and "drummers" passed into and through the district, Opelika strengthened its commercial contacts with a wide area.

Criterion A: Transportation - During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Opelika was the railroad center of east Alabama. Its juncture of important rail lines during the Civil War made the tracks, railroad facilities, and government supply warehouses a target of Federal raids; after the war, reconstruction railroad bonds bankrupted the town and county. In the 1890s the city played a small but significant role in the political history of regional railway transportation when community leaders representing the interests of the district successfully argued its rate discrimination case before the newly formed Interstate Commerce Commission.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Creek Indian Nation ceded the last of its lands east of the Mississippi to the United States in March 1832; at the southern most tip of the ceded area was the site of what would later become Opelika (the name is probably taken from the Indian words Opilu, swamp or waterhole, and Taka, large). In 1834, soon after the Creek cession opened the "New Alabama" to development, wealthy planters sought, and got, a railroad charter from the state legislature. Their immediate goal was to bring trade from Georgia and the Upper Tennessee Valley to Montgomery and Mobile. Two surveyors for the projected railroad from Atlanta to Montgomery, Charles Byrd and L. P. Grant, became interested in the village of Opelika as a trading center and terminus for the railroad; they bought 80 acres on each side of the railroad there. Grant established a land company and sold lots, donating a lot for each denomination to build its church.

In 1837, Daniel Bullard built Lebanon, a Methodist Church, of split logs and boards, two miles from Opelika. The church, whose membership moved to Opelika in 1851, formed an important nucleus for the early growth of the village. First settlers included Amos Mizell, the Reverend Luke Mizell, William Mangrum, David Lockhart, and Obijah (Abigah) Bennett.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 28.25

Quadrangle name Opelika West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A 

1	6
6	5
2	0
2	0

3	6
1	3
4	4
4	0

B 

1	6
6	5
2	2
2	0

3	6
1	3
2	3
0	

C 

1	6
6	5
2	0
8	0

3	6
1	2
9	3
0	

D 

1	6
6	5
1	6
7	0

3	6
1	2
8	8
0	

E 

1	6
6	5
1	6
4	0

3	6
1	2
9	2
0	

F 

1	6
6	5
1	8
8	0

3	6
1	3
3	8
0	

G 

1	6
6	5
1	9
5	0

3	6
1	3
4	5
0	

H 




**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See Line on 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 Mary M. Gwin, Architectural Consultation; William R. Gwin, AIA; Michael Bailey  
Opelika Historic Preservation Society and

organization Alabama Historical Commission date February, 1984

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205 261-3184

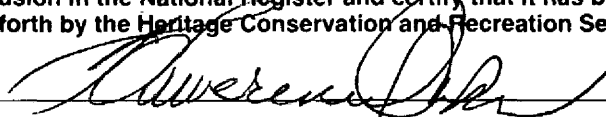
city or town Montgomery state Alabama 36130

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

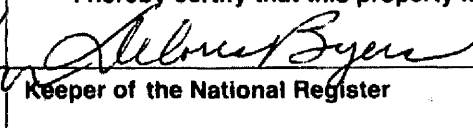
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 26, 1984

<p><b>For HCRS use only</b></p> <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register</p>	
<p>                  Keeper of the National Register</p>	<p>Entered in the National Register                  date <u>8/30/84</u></p>
<p>Attest:</p>	<p>date</p>
<p>Chief of Registration</p>	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

1. Black, H. Ray and David M. Hall. Lee County: How It All Began. n.p., n.d.
2. Blackmon, Wilbur. Typescript of Opelika History. Collection of the author.
3. Cates, William N. A Waterhole in Dixie: The History of Opelika, Alabama from 1832 to 1967. Typescript. Collection of the author.
4. Doster, James F. Railroads in Alabama Politics, 1875-1914. University of Alabama Studies, No. 12. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1957.
5. Fleming, Walter L. Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama. 2nd ed. 1905; rpt. New York: Peter Smith, 1949.
6. History of Alabama and Her People, Vol. III. Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1927, pp. 727-728
7. Jeane, D. Gregory. The Architectural Legacy of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley in Alabama and Georgia. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1978, pp. 202-205.
8. Kidd, Wheeler, and Plosser. Opelika Downtown Revitalization Study: Phase I. Birmingham: KWP, 1981.
9. McMillan, Malcolm C. The Land Called Alabama. Austin, Texas: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1975.
10. Moore, Albert Burton. History of Alabama. Tuscaloosa: Alabama Book Store, 1951.
11. Nunn, Alexander, ed. Lee County and Her Forebears. Montgomery: Herff Jones, 1983, pp. 1-58.
12. Opelika Alabama Centennial: Souvenir Program. n.p., n.d.
13. The Opelika Democrat, 15 September, 1887.
14. The Opelika Observer, 1872.
15. -----, 24 June, 1880.
16. -----, 20 January, 1881.
17. Owen, Thomas McAdory. History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Vol. III. Chicago: The S. S. Clarke Publishing Co., 1921, p. 760.
18. Sanborn Fire Maps. New York: The Sanborn Map Company, 1885; 1888; 1893; 1898; March and July, 1903; 1909; 1924.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

19. Weldon, Florence. History of Opelika. A typescript of this work is in the Alabama Room, Draughon Library, Auburn University.
20. Whiffen, Marcus and Frederick Roeper. American Architecture Vol. I: 1607-1860; Vol. II: 1860-1976. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1983.
21. Woodward, C. Vann. Origins of The New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.

Further information has been provided in interviews or taken from transcribed interviews with W. L. Bryan/Joe Dean, Mr. Floyd Likins, Mr. Penn Montgomery, Mr. Clement Torbert, Ms. Jena Varner, Mrs. Jacob Walker, and Mrs. Frank Whatley.

Architectural assessment and consultation: William R. Gwin, AIA

INCLUSIVE STREET NUMBERS

North Railroad Avenue: 700 Block - 816; 900 - 922

1st Avenue: 700 Block; 800

North 8th Street: 1-14

South Railroad Avenue: 801-1032

Avenue A: 700 Block; 816-826 (even)

South 8th Street: 100 Block; 200-202; 201-219 (odd)

South 9th Street: 106-110 (even); 107-121 (odd); 200 Block facing east on west side  
(including both even and odd nos.)