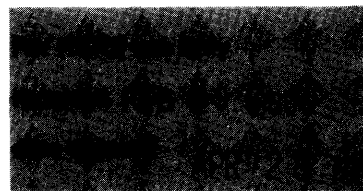


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Water Tower

and/or common Old Water Tower

**2. Location**

Seymore St.

street & number North side of Seymore, middle of block between Jackson and Sherrod  not for publication

city, town Florence  vicinity of                      congressional district 5

state Alabama code 01 county Lauderdale code 077

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Florence, Water and Sewer Board (Mr. Jim Hughes)

street & number P. O. Box 98

city, town Florence  vicinity of                      state Alabama 35630

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lauderdale County Courthouse

street & number                     

city, town Florence  vicinity of                      state Alabama 35630

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1978-present  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery  vicinity of                      state Alabama

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## 7. Description

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

---

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

The Florence Water Tower consists of a wrought iron tank resting on a stone masonry buttressed tower. The iron tank, which is forty feet in diameter, thirty feet high and has a capacity of 282,000 gallons, is composed of six 5 foot rings, single rivetted horizontally and double rivetted vertically in the lower rings. The masonry tower is seventy feet high, fifty feet in diameter at the base and forty feet at the top. A hollow masonry center column measures thirty feet in diameter. An interior stair consists of 2 x 10s mortered into the walls. Many of the boards were removed to prevent children from climbing into the tank after it was closed. The tank is supported by forty-five 12" I beams. The intake and outlet pipe measured 16 inches while the overflow pipe measures 10 inches.

The tank is located on an elevated plateau, sixty feet above the height of the city and two miles north of the center of the town. The elevation of the top of the tank was 240 feet above the pumps, 150 feet above average city distribution, and 139 feet above the highest point necessary at any time to deliver the water. The tank gave a 65 pound pressure on the average. It now sits on a 3/4 acre plot adjacent to the 1935 tank.

## 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1889 - 1891

**Builder/Architect** Jeter and Boardman Gas & Water Ass.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This masonry water tower is significant as a large and well executed example of one form of masonry water tower popular in the 1870s and 1880s. Although numerous towers with a central masonry pier support system were built during that period, few are believed to survive. The Florence tower is also significant for its association with the development of the community for which it was erected, and for its association with the expansion of water works practice in the United States in the late 19th century. Its construction by a private water company and later transfer to the community also parallels a national trend in the water works field in the 1890s, when a shift from private to public ownership of water works facilities occurred.

The Florence tower was constructed at a time when the majority of smaller communities erected either metal standpipes or metal or wooden tanks supported on less expensive brick towers or timber trestles. This structure represents the last generation of elaborate masonry water towers. Within ten years, the elevated tank supported on an exposed metal trestle had been introduced and was gaining in popularity because of its superior engineering and lower cost in many areas.

The design of the Florence tower reflects the level of technology of the late 1880s. Because self supporting curved bottom tanks had not yet been introduced in the United States, the flat bottom tank required considerable, uniform support. One method of accomplishing this was the use of a solid or hollow inner masonry pier and a grid of metal or timber beams to distribute the tank and water weight to the tower. The space enclosed by the tower insulated the inlet and outlet pipes; in northern climates the brick or stone outer tank wall often extended upward to enclose the metal tank itself, although in Alabama's milder climate this was probably judged to be unnecessary.

During 1889 and 1890 Florence experienced a period of boom activity. The city limits were extended by two miles and those living in or buying land in these areas (many real estate transactions occurred during the boom) desired water service. Even within the older city limits water service, provided by the Cypress Water Company, was "indifferent" and "inadequate". This company was dissolved and the Florence Water Company established in 1889. On July 13, 1889 the City of Florence franchised the Jeter and Boardman Gas and Water Association to construct a water works system. Jeter and Boardman were granted the franchise amidst fierce competition as rumors of the boom had brought several such promoters to Florence.

The City took advantage of the situation and set rigorous terms in the contract with Jeter and Boardman "in respect of the character, kind and quality of material to be used in the construction and production of the water plant." Also, "the City and citizens were determined that the grantee of the privilege should be compelled to put in a plant of ample capacity and completeness for the then demand, as well as for the prospective requirements based upon what was at the time believed, would shortly result

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Appraisal of the Florence Water Co." W. H. Weiss Co., Consulting Engineers. Kansas City, Mo., 1915. Original in office of Water and Sewer Board, Florence.

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property c. 3/4

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Florence 7.5'

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 16 436820 3853620  
 Zone Easting Northing

B                    
 Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 13,14,15 & 16 Block 851, measures 200 feet by 160 feet. Includes area surrounded by chain link fence.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mertins

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date February 21, 1980

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone (205) 832-6621

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 Milo B. Howard Jr.

title SHPO Ala.

date Feb. 20, 1980

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>W. Ray Juice</u>	date <u>4/25/80</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>Carol Dubic</u>	date <u>4/24/80</u>
Chief of Registration	

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 29 1980
DATE ENTERED	APR 28 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

in a city of from 35,000 to 50,000 population". At the time, Florence is estimated to have had a population of 12,000 to 15,000. It appears that the entire operation was in accordance with high standards for the time. In the Weiss appraisal of 1915 the tower itself is described as "one of the strongest and handsomest structures of its kind in the country".

By 1891 the boom had ended and the population fell to 6,000 leaving few consumers of the water service. The old water tower was phased out of use shortly after a new tank was constructed in 1935. City officials, however, would like to restore the tower to provide additional water to the city.