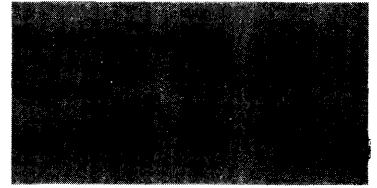


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Southern Railway Depot

and/or common Southern Railway Depot

2. Location

street & number 701 Railroad Street, N.W.

___ not for publication

city, town Decatur

___ vicinity of

congressional district 5

state Alabama

code 01

county Morgan

code 103

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Southern Railway

street & number 101 Gay Street, N.W.

city, town Knoxville

___ vicinity of

state Tennessee 37902

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Morgan County Courthouse

street & number Lee at Ferry Street

city, town Decatur

state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? yes no has been requested

date 1978-present

___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery

state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 Decatur Southern Railway Depot is a one-story, brick structure composed of a central rectangular main block with flanking subordinate wings. The middle or main portion of the building is seven bays in length, as in the north wing, while the south wing is four bays long. A shallow hipped roof with widely overhanging eaves crowns the main block, the wings each being capped by a broad gable. The roofing material is terra cotta tile. A low hipped dormer with a horizontal three-part window breaks the east slope of the main roof above a projecting porte-cochere.

Exterior embellishment is confined to the decorative variation of brick wall surfaces through simulated brick quoining and a broad watertable extending upward to the level of the stone windowsills. The watertable is corbeled two courses out from the principal plane of the exterior walls. Otherwise, adornment is achieved only through the use of heavy wooden brackets at the eaves level, interspersed with horizontal clerestory windows set into a wide friezeband articulated by a corbeled beltcourse. The main window openings, surmounted by splayed brick lintels, appear originally to have contained two over two sashing, although the lower half of the windows is now filled with 16-light sash.

The porte-cochere, or vehicular entrance, with its segmentally arched openings and low brick parapet concealing a flat roof, repeats, in the treatment of the piers, the quoining of the main structure. From the porte-cochere, glazed wooden doors open into a narrow foyer leading, on the left, to a large waiting room formerly designated for white patrons only, and on the left to a smaller room designated for "colored" patrons. Between the two waiting rooms and back of the foyer lies the ticket sales area. Heavy ornamental iron grilles covered ticket windows opening onto the foyer and the primary waiting room, while the secondary room is served by a smaller window screened with a plain grille. Both rooms contain wooden oak benches and are adorned only by a continuous wainscot made up of a narrow, beaded vertical boarding trimmed by a chairrail, and by a wide band of molding at the ceiling level, above the clerestory windows. Floors are scored concrete.

The south wing contains two restrooms with marble flooring. Beneath this wing is an excavated basement, entered by means of outside steps at the south end of the building. The basement was probably used originally as a furnace room. The larger north wing housed the freight office and storage of the depot. The west side of the depot presents a continuous unbroken facade, protected by a cantilevered shed, to the railroad tracks. Parallel to this shed and extending over the tracks were formerly two rows of passenger sheds. These were demolished a number of years ago.

Except for cosmetic changes, replacement of deteriorated sashing, blocking of several of the frieze windows, and a covering of pale grey paint over the original russet colored brick, the depot stands substantially as it has since the beginning of the century.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1904-1905 **Builder/Architect** Frank Milburn (?)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Southern Depot in Decatur is significant for its association with the development of railroads in Alabama. A successor to the first depot at the terminus of the first railroad in Alabama, the present station was constructed in the early years of the 20th century by Southern Railway shortly after that company had emerged as one of the two principal railroad systems in Alabama. The building was constructed as part of a series of new depots to replace the inadequate facilities. There is some indication that the station was designed by the noted Southern architect Frank Milburn and this may well be the only such structure designed by him in Alabama.

In 1834 the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Road reached this point, bypassing the Muscle Shoals of the Tennessee River and providing the valley-area cotton planters with an obstacle-free route of transportation to cotton markets at New Orleans. Decatur thus became a primary rail point in the mid-South. Later the line was extended by the Memphis and Charleston Railroad over the nearby Tennessee River via an iron and wooden bridge in the early 1850s, with the crossing being a significant military target during the Civil War. The development of the Nashville and Decatur Railroad (later part of the Louisville and Nashville) in the 1870s made the town a four-direction hub of rail transportation. The depot replaced the structure from which President McKinley spoke in 1901. The depot served as the focal point of Decatur business and commerce from its construction until the 1950s. Six hotels surrounded the depot because the station was the primary point of departure for commercial and pleasure travel until the rise of automobile travel and construction of motels on the major highway in the city. It functioned as a railroad depot until October of 1979, when Amtrack cancelled its Floridian passenger train, the final passenger route in North Alabama.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Decatur 7.5

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	0	1	2	4	0	3	8	2	9	9	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Bounded on the east by Railroad Street (200' frontage) on the south by Vine Street, on the west by the railroad tracks; the lot measures 200' by 80'.

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 / Lee Sentell (Morgan County Historic Preservation Society)

organization Alabama Historical Commission date January 7, 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 Miss B. Howard Jr.

title SHPO - Alabama date January 7, 1980

For HCERS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

W. Ray Lane date 3/10/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Carl A. Aubie date 3/3/80
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 JAN 14 1980
DATE ENTERED 10, 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

The New Decatur Advertiser, Jan. 4, 1904.

The Decatur Daily, Oct. 14, 1979.

The Historic Decatur Picture Book, Morgan County Historic Preservation Society,
1976.

Wodehouse, Lawrence. "Frank Pierce Milburn (1868-1926), A Major Southern Architect",
the North Carolina Historical Review, volume 3, 1973.