

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

294
MAR 14 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name South Main - South Lee Street Historic District
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Located south of W. Central Ave., along South Main
and South Lee Streets between Magnolia and Roanoke.
city, town Fitzgerald (N/A) vicinity of
county Ben Hill code GA 017
state Georgia code GA zip code 31750

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
 public-local
 public-state
 public-federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	127	19
sites	1	0 (public landscaping)
structures	1	0 (street plan)
objects	0	0
total	129	19

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official

3/1/89
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

entered in the National Register

Alvares Byer 4/13/89

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
RELIGION/religious structure

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
RELIGION/religious structure
COMMERCE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian: Queen Anne
Late 19th/20th century revivals: Classical Revival
Colonial Revival
Late 19th/20th century American Movements: Bungalow/Craftsman
Prairie

Materials:

foundation	brick, concrete
walls	wood, brick
roof	asphalt
other	granitoid

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The South Main-South Lee Street Historic District is a residential area of approximately 20 blocks in the city of Fitzgerald that was home to many of the city's most prominent citizens in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The planned community of Fitzgerald was surveyed and laid out in 1895 as a four-square plan with a grid pattern of streets and alleys for the purpose of serving as a colony of Civil War veterans and their families. Development of this residential area began immediately. The earliest houses were wood-framed, soon followed by houses constructed of brick and "granitoid", a rusticated, hollow-core concrete block manufactured locally. The larger houses are generally clustered along South Main Street, while more moderately sized dwellings are found along South Lee and the intersecting streets. Architectural styles and types represented in the district include Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman/Bungalow, Prairie, and Victorian Eclectic. Two religious buildings are also included in the district. Landscape features that tie the area together are the landscaped median running the length of South Main Street and the planting of many native southern trees and shrubs throughout the district.

The land division pattern was established in July, 1895 when the city's 1,000 acre tract was surveyed into four wards. Each ward comprised four blocks, and in the residential areas these blocks were

divided into sixteen lots. Blocks designated for commercial use contained twenty-eight lots. Upon completion, Fitzgerald's land division pattern contained 256 city blocks of identical size.

The city's initial "slab" construction quickly gave way to large frame, granitoid and later masonry residential buildings. By 1908, ten years after Fitzgerald's founding, South Main and South Lee streets were thickly populated with the heaviest development occurring from West Pine south to West Palm. By 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate this portion of the city had developed completely.

The South Main-South Lee Historic District is laid out in a gridiron pattern of streets and alleys corresponding identically with the land subdivision found throughout the remainder of the city. The district falls within the city's fourth ward. South Main Street is a 120' wide thoroughfare running north-south and designed with a central median. All remaining streets in the historic district are sixty feet in width. All streets intersect at right angles, and all squares are bisected by 20 foot wide alleys, running both north-south and east-west. North-south streets are named for Confederate generals, and east-west avenues are named for native southern trees. Generally speaking, dwellings located on South Main tended to be larger than dwellings on South Lee Street. As South Main housed many of Fitzgerald's most prominent families, this portion of the city was locally recognized as "silk stocking row."

The South Main-South Lee Street area is a very cohesive and uniformly developed residential neighborhood. The historic residential area basically begins south of Pine Street and ends at Roanoke Drive. Roanoke Drive was the southern most street platted within the city. Johnston Street borders the district on the west and South Main on the east.

The historic district consists of approximately twenty blocks of late 19th and early 20th century residential and church-related architecture. The proposed district contains 127 historic properties whose dates of construction range from c. 1897 to 1928. The neighborhood is comprised of one to two and one-half story frame, masonry, and granitoid structures. Buildings are often irregularly shaped and are constructed in a variety of architectural styles including Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman/Bungalow, Prairie, and Victorian Eclectic.

The Queen Anne style, most noted for its irregular massing, wrapped porches & turrets, is best reflected in the Harris House (c. 1897) shown in photograph #23. Good representations of the Neo-Classical style, prevalent at the turn-of-the-century, are seen along South Main in photograph #5. The early 20th century Craftsman/Bungalow style is found throughout the district. Photograph #10 illustrates the identifying features of low-pitched gabled roofs, wide eaves, and use of decorative braces under the gables. The Prairie style with its characteristic horizontal line emphasis and low-pitched hipped roof is reflected in the structure on South Main in photograph #6.

The Victorian Eclectic style is represented in many of the residential buildings. This group also utilizes the "T" and "L" shaped plans and includes minimal detailing. The T-shaped plan was used in single story construction (701 S. Lee) as well as two and two

and one-half story dwellings (401 and 516 S. Main). Although T-shaped and L-shaped dwellings were generally of frame construction, there are some T-shaped structures built using granitoid. An example of the L-shaped plan is found at 508 South Main.

Outbuildings are found throughout the district and tend to be located behind the houses, often immediately adjacent to the city's alley system.

In 1901, the frame Methodist Episcopal Church (photograph #17) was erected on S. Lee Street. In the late 1930s or 1940s this building was veneered in brick and used as a synagogue; because of the extent of these changes, this building is currently designated noncontributing. The First Christian Church (photograph #18), a contributing building, was constructed in 1906 using granitoid.

In 1900, Civil War veterans built the Women's Relief Corp (W.R.C) Hall at 216 South Main Street (photo #14). This two-story, simple, rectangular frame building was a division of Fitzgerald's Grand Army of the Republic Post (G.A.R.) and was used as a meeting place.

While residential lot layout and street design in the South Main-South Lee Neighborhood is standardized, the setback on individual building lots varies widely. On single lot building sites, buildings are drawn close to the sidewalks, and side lots are minimal. As the number of individual lots increase for a building site, setback increases to the range of twenty to thirty feet. Broad side yards characterize most multiple lot building sites.

The natural terrain of the district is a raised level plain lying immediately north of a southwesterly running stream known as Turkey Creek. P. H. Fitzgerald chose the city's site due to the natural drainage system occurring on the city's eastern and southern boundaries. The streets and center median of South Main are lined with large water and live oaks, magnolias and other native southern species, presenting an informal garden type appearance. The district also features extensive use of hexagonal sidewalk pavers which were produced locally by the Fitzgerald Granitoid Company.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

architecture
community planning and development
landscape architecture

Period of Significance:

1895-1928

Significant Dates:

1895

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The So. Main-So. Lee Historic District represents a typical but unusually well preserved residential district in a small Georgia city. The So. Main-So. Lee neighborhood of Fitzgerald is located in south central Georgia. It contains a variety of historic residential and church-related buildings all arranged according to a grid street pattern.

Architecture

The district is significant in terms of architecture for its fine collection of late 19th and early 20th century residential and church related buildings. These structures represent prevailing designs, construction principles and practices used in architecture, commonly found in small Georgia cities at the turn-of-the-century. While buildings in the district generally utilize historic building materials, an unusual local building material--granitoid--is evident. The district also reflects a wide variety of vernacular interpretations of popular national styles used during this time period.

Among the buildings are good examples of Neoclassical Revival, Prairie, Craftsman/Bungalow, Queen Anne, and Victorian Eclectic styles. These styles are good representatives of local interpretations and adaptations of national styles which prevailed during the district's period of development. Characteristic features found throughout the district are gabled or hipped roofs, monumental porticos, wrapped porches, cantilevered balconies and spindle posts.

The district is also unusual in the number of one and two-story folk Victorian structures using the T- and L-shaped floor plans. While the plans are commonly found throughout south Georgia, the majority of Fitzgerald's residential buildings utilizing these plans differ in scale and ornamentation from neighboring dwellings. The structures that use such plans tend to be smaller and less detailed.

Most of the buildings are of wood-frame construction, which is typical in Georgia, although some are built of brick veneer, and others are entirely of granitoid, a rusticated, hollow concrete block. Granitoid although used as a building material in many other Georgia communities, the residential areas of Fitzgerald contain a heavy concentration of this unusual building material. One trend practiced throughout the district is the utilization of varying exterior building materials for buildings of similar age, style, and plan. An example of this is found in the two vernacular folk Victorian structures located at 601 and 613 South Main. Both dwellings are single story and feature a Georgian plan, using a symmetrical floor plan divided by a central hall. While both structures contain central doorways and paired facade gables, one is built with granitoid and the other is frame construction.

While the district contains a number of large residences, particularly along South Main, the majority of the district's

dwellings are represented by moderately sized buildings. Another unique feature is the various styles of architecture represented throughout the district. No one particular street or block is dominated by any particular style. These types and styles of residences are interspersed throughout the various streets and blocks and show the quick development of the area and the popularity of these prevalent styles at the time they were built.

The district also contains two religious structures. The First Christian Church, constructed in 1906, is a gothic revival style built entirely of granitoid by the Fitzgerald Granitoid Co. The North Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1901, is now used for the Fitzgerald Hebrew Congregation. Originally a frame structure, the building was veneered in red brick during the late 1930s or early 1940s. Because these extensive changes were made outside the period of significance of the district, this building cannot be considered contributing at this time. The red brick building is designed in a cruciform plan with arched, opalescent glass windows.

The South Lee-South Main Street Historic District is an excellent example of residential architecture commonly found in Georgia's smaller cities at the turn-of-the-century. The overall architectural integrity of the neighborhood remains fairly cohesive and well maintained.

Community Planning and Development

In terms of community planning and development the district is significant as a substantive portion of a planned community laid out in a grid pattern within a four-square town plan. The developer, P. H. Fitzgerald, had organized this colony as a settlement for Civil War veterans from across the country. Development of the residential core began in 1895 following the completion of the city's survey. The South Main-South Lee Street Historic District is located within the fourth ward.

The historic district retains much of its original plan with most blocks maintaining the original 16 squares. The north-south streets inside this district are named for Confederate generals and the east-west avenues for native southern trees. While residential lot layout and street design is standardized, setbacks on individual building lots vary widely. On single lot building sites, structures are built close to the sidewalks and side lots are minimal. As the number of individual lots increase for a building site, setback increases to a range of 20-30 feet. Broad side yards characterize most multiple lot buildings sites.

The idea for a planned Civil War community is unique; however, the grid pattern used typifies town development in many of Georgia's smaller cities and towns. The divided street pattern is also an unusual feature not found in the majority of gridiron planned communities. The South Main-South Lee Street Historic District is a good example of a cohesive residential planned community which has maintained much of its original design.

Landscape Architecture

The district is significant in landscape architecture for the landscaped center median of South Main Street and the tree lined streets set within the town's grid pattern. Lined with large water and live oak, magnolias, camellias and other native southern species, the landscape displays an informal garden appearance as well as a major unifying element for the residential district.

The landscaped median along South Main Street is surrounded by the original granite curbs. The use of such a median is unusual for a town of this size, since they are commonly found in larger cities. Another dominant landscape feature is the use of hexagonal sidewalk pavers which were locally produced and have remained fairly intact in some sections.

The landscaping within this historic district is representative of the informal, continuous landscaping most notably seen by the usage of trees in the front yards and along the streets. This is representative of a late 19th and early 20th century landscaping practice found in many of Georgia's smaller cities.

National Register Criteria

The district meets Criteria A as it is associated with the events making a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The South Main-South Lee Historic District is a part of a planned residential community and reflects the panorama of American life. The residential and church related buildings show the lifestyles of a growing community at the turn-of-the-century. These historic buildings, all arranged according to a gridiron street plan are representative of a vital residential community that contributed to the successful establishment and development of Fitzgerald.

This district meets National Register Criteria C for its relatively intact concentration of late 19th and early 20th century structures representing particular styles, plans and construction methods commonly used during this time period. The district contains good examples of local interpretations of architectural styles--including Neoclassical Revival, Prairie, Craftsman/Bungalow, and Victorian Eclectic--that represent important architectural periods and all of which are characteristic of historic residential districts found in Georgia's smaller cities. The district also contains in its landscaped, gridiron streets, significant plan features and historic landscaping.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The First Christian Church is a historic religious property within the South Main-South Lee Historic Street Historic District. This building qualifies as an integral part of this district because of its historical importance and relationship to the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

1895-beginning of Fitzgerald's development
1928-end of residential building within this district

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

Fitzgerald, Georgia, was founded in the summer of 1895 when settlers from across the United States began moving into what was then the north central portion of Irwin County. One hundred thousand acres of South Georgia's timberland had been purchased by the American Tribune Soldier's Colony Stock Company, a stock company organized by Philander H. Fitzgerald, editor of the Indianapolis, Indiana, American Tribune.

Fitzgerald conceived the idea of a colony in the south for Union veterans and their families as an escape from cold winters, economic depression, and drought ruined farmlands. He wrote of this concept in his newsletter, a publication which enjoyed wide circulation. Letters flooded the newspaper urging Fitzgerald to begin the colony.

Philander H. Fitzgerald was a nationally recognized Civil War veterans claim prosecutor. A resident of Indianapolis, Indiana, Mr. Fitzgerald invested heavily in real estate. By 1891 he had constructed thirty-five pieces of prime commercial property. His business interests grew to such lengths that at times thirty-five clerks were needed to handle his correspondence. As one of the founders of the Indiana Mutual Building and Loan Association, he served as a director and later as treasurer.

In 1887, Fitzgerald expanded his business interests by purchasing a small newspaper known as the Veteran's Review. Upon purchasing the publication, Fitzgerald immediately changed the paper's name to the American Tribune. Within the first year circulation rose from 300 to 5,000 papers. By 1891, the newspaper's circulation had increased to 26,000 and was still growing. The American Tribune would be the vehicle by which Fitzgerald would advertise his desire to establish a colony for Civil War veterans and their families. Upon publishing an article expressing his desire, Fitzgerald's office was flooded with letters urging him to begin the colony. Why was the state of Georgia ultimately selected as the site for the proposed colony? In 1894, Richard H. Edmonds, editor of the Boston Manufacturer's Record wrote of the thousands of midwesterners who were struggling to survive crop failure and a two-year drought. The State of Georgia, under the leadership of former Governor William J. Northen, responded by sending twenty-one box cars filled with hay and corn to Lincoln, Nebraska. Known as "the friendship train," Georgia's humanitarian effort was brought to P. H. Fitzgerald's attention. He immediately contacted Governor Northen.

As former governor and general manager of the Georgia Immigration and Investment Bureau, Northen was privy to public records locating state and privately owned lands which were available for sale. Governor Northen responded to Fitzgerald's request by assisting Mr. Fitzgerald's recently formed American Tribune Soldier's Colony in purchasing 50,000 acres of land in Irwin County, Georgia. Later

purchases doubled the acreage. According to the colony's charter, investment and allotment stocks were sold at \$10 per share and were limited to ten shares per stockholder. Should the stockholder improve or occupy his property, the parcel would then be acquired gratis.

The proposed colony was located at Swan, a small turpentine and saw-mill community situated approximately fifteen miles west of the Ocmulgee River. The community had been named for The Swan, the small boat which had brought the four Drew brothers and their families from Darien in 1880. The Drews subsequently purchased thousands of acres and established a post office, commissary, and naval store operation.

In the spring of 1895, David, Jesse, Ben and Henry Drew agreed to sell Swan and the surrounding land to the American Tribune Soldier's Colony Company. Purchase of the property was consequently advertised in Philander H. Fitzgerald's The American Tribune. While all "good people" were invited to join the colony, Union veterans predominated. Although Fitzgerald cautioned that settlers should not arrive until January, 1896, colonists from as far away as Nebraska, Kansas, and Michigan began arriving in the summer of 1895.

In a matter of months, Swan's population had swelled from forty persons to 2,500. By the fall of 1895, 5,000 colonists were camped around Swan waiting for the colony's survey to be completed. Newspaper articles describing the colony's planning phase appeared in the Chicago Tribune, New York Herald, New York Times, Sioux City Journal, Baltimore Manufacturer's Record, and The Washington Post. The name "Swan" soon gave way to "Shacktown". The community was described this way:

Shacktown lined both sides of the wagon rode running along the crest of a long, pine clad hill west of the Drew building and post office...

People were living in all manner of habitations... The more fortunate had tents and of these there were not a few. Many...had brought no protection against the weather, and these lived in such hastily constructed emergency lodging as their ingenuity suggested... Some of the best ones were of rough plank nailed straight up and down to pine pole frames... Some were constructed of pine slabs with the bark still on...

The colony survey began in the spring of 1895 and required the assistance of 462 men and 72 teams of horses. Determined to have a four-square city, surveyors moved the colony's central stake three times when southern property owners refused to sell acreage to the stock company. Divided into four wards, the city was intersected by Main Street (running north and south) and Central Avenue (running east and west). Each ward was subdivided into four blocks and each block into sixteen squares. Of the 256 resulting squares, four were reserved for schools, 36 for commercial purposes, 48 for factories. The remaining 168 lots were designated residential.

Both Main Street and Central Avenue measured 120 feet wide and were designed with landscaped medians. The remaining thoroughfares (28 in number), measured 60 feet in width. There were seven avenues north and a like number south of Central. The former were named for Georgia rivers, the latter for southern trees and plants. The streets east of

Main were named for Federal generals while Confederate commanders were remembered in those streets west of Main. The city was named Fitzgerald in honor of its founder.

From the outset P. H. Fitzgerald had determined that the colony would be both self-sufficient and a place where the bitterness of the Civil War would be forgotten. To facilitate self-sufficiency, Fitzgerald ordered that tracts of land measuring five, ten and twenty acres each be established along the colony's perimeter. Once surveyed, these tracts were farmed to provide food for the colony. The colony's streets and avenues were named for Union and Southern commanders, Georgia rivers, and southern vegetation. By equally commemorating commanders from opposing forces of the Civil War, P. H. Fitzgerald illustrated his desire for founding a colony where participants of that war would live together in harmony.

By August, 1895, the colony's population reached 2,500. Jay Schrader, author of "The New Canaan! Fitzgerald and The Old Soldier Colony", estimated that 60% of the colony's population was composed of midwesterners. Southerners represented 30% of the overall population. The remaining 10% was distributed evenly between far western states (5%) and other states (5%). When school began in the fall of 1895, students represented 38 states and two territories. Of the school's twelve teachers, only one had been born in the south. The majority of colonists were, or had been farmers.

P. H. Fitzgerald's original audience had consisted of pensioned Civil War veterans who subscribed to the American Tribune. As a direct result, the colony's early population was dominated by pensioned Union veterans who were well passed middle age. These were colonists who were not dependent upon wages for survival. In December, 1895, it was estimated that government pensions provided the colony with \$50,000 per month. This sum provided an annual economic base of \$600,000, a figure which helped guarantee the colony's success.

Historians of the day reported that fervent discussions of the Civil War were common. First hand accounts of Chancellorsville, Chickamauga, Gettysburg, and Kennesaw were prevalent. Generally, these conversations were not hostile. In May, 1896, 300 Fitzgerald Union and Confederate veterans traveled to Andersonville to lay flowers on the graves of the soldiers buried there. On April 27, 1897, Fitzgerald veterans of the Civil War joined together to form the Blue and Gray Battalion, Number 1. The battalion was commanded by a former Confederate commander and former Union adjutant, officers whose positions alternated every year.

In the city's first year, ten sawmills were established. In late 1896, the Fitzgerald Brick and Tile Yard was open. Settlers moved onto colony lands with the idea of making Fitzgerald their home. The construction of homes and the establishment of businesses soon resulted.

P. H. Fitzgerald proposed that the colony be a permanent settlement. With new settlers arriving from other parts of the country, Georgians who had lived within the settlement's environs moved into town to open businesses, build homes and educate their children.

In April 1896, J. D. Small began a modest novelty plant. Mr. Small manufactured sash, doors, blinds, molding, scroll sawing and turnings. His business was so successful, that by 1910 he expended \$10,000 on a new plant and employed fifteen full time employees.

The Fitzgerald Novelty Works was begun in 1905 and became the city's largest novelty plant. Owned and operated by F. L. Bigham, this company produced mantels, brackets, columns, balusters, and window and door frames. With such buildings as the Lee-Grant Hotel and the Holtzendorf Office Building to his credit, Mr. Bigham employed eight full time workmen and shipped his products as far north as central Illinois.

The Fitzgerald Granitoid Company was established in 1905 by C. W. Hayes. Advertising themselves as "heavy contractors," Fitzgerald Granitoid manufactured concrete door and window sills, arch blocks, keystones, chimney and sidewalk tiles, sewer pipe, porch columns, ornamental brick, lattice work and coping. The plant was located on the corner of Pine and Lee Streets and occupied 37,000 square feet. Employing fifty full time employees, Mr. Hayes boasted that his firm could and did produce anything in "concrete stone." Two residential examples of granitoid construction are 714 S. Main (c.1915) and 613 S. Main (c. 1915). The firm was responsible for constructing ten miles of the city's hexagonal sidewalk paving.

Community leaders expressed a strong interest in increasing Fitzgerald's population and in cultivating a tourist trade. This goal was approached from two directions. In 1897, a three story, 108 room frame hotel was constructed on Central Avenue. Known as the Lee Grant Hotel and measuring 100' x 240', the structure was intended to house visitors during the winter months. The hotel's construction also provided badly needed work for the colony's unemployed. In the years following Fitzgerald's initial settlement, the colony experienced an economic recession. Between 1897 and 1899, property values plummeted, prompting unemployment and a decrease in the colony's population. Construction of this privately owned hotel provided work and pumped new life into the colony's sluggish economy. Completed in 1898, the Lee-Grant Hotel was painted Confederate gray. Rooms rented for \$8 per day. The colony's economy stabilized in 1901 marking a period of steady growth.

The colony's second marketing attempt occurred in 1908 when the Traffic Department of the Atlanta, Birmingham, and Atlantic Railroad issued a brochure entitled, Fitzgerald, Georgia: The Magic City.

In 1902 the "railroad shop" (repair division) of the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic (ABA) Railroad located their offices in Fitzgerald. As this division of the railroad employed approximately five hundred Fitzgerald citizens, the ABA was anxious to promote the community. Just as its predecessor New Canaan! Fitzgerald and the Old Soldier Colony in Irwin County, Georgia had experienced nationwide distribution, Fitzgerald, Georgia: The Magic City enjoyed the same privilege. This twenty-seven page booklet boasted the city contained four newspapers, a cotton factory, city-owned water works, and a railroad system which led in six directions. The community's population now reached 5,000.

Ben Hill County was created on July 31, 1906. The new county, named for Georgia Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill, (1823-1882), was created when land formerly belonging to Wilcox and Irwin counties was combined to form the new county. The City of Fitzgerald, easily the county's largest city, was designated county seat. The residential and commercial structures erected within the city reflected the prosperity Fitzgerald enjoyed.

In a brochure published in 1908, the City of Fitzgerald was described as the most successful colony ever established in the South. Between October 15, 1908 to July 1, 1909, the city was scheduled to expend one million dollars in public and private improvements. Projects included, but were not limited to, construction of school buildings, the installation of a sewerage system, the establishment of an electric street railway, and doubling the capacity of the cotton mill. Fitzgerald in 1908 was radically different from the Fitzgerald which had been described in 1899 as "resembling a western mining town with all the men carrying guns."

Fitzgerald's commercial core developed in a T-shaped corridor along the north-south course of Grant Street and the east-west course of Pine Street. In 1898, Grant Street was thickly developed with frame commercial structures. Although East Pine contained several commercial buildings, residential development became predominant as one moved eastward toward the intersection of East Pine and South Logan Streets. At this date in the city's history, the primary residential area entered in the first and second wards along Oconee, Sheridan, and Sherman streets. By 1908, the city's commercial core was centered along Central Avenue, Grant and Pine Streets. In the ten years between 1898 and 1908, Fitzgerald had added two bottling works, a large livery stable, and an undertaker to its collection of bakeries, grocery, and furniture stores. The city's industrial growth remained in step with commercial development.

By 1928, Fitzgerald's commercial and residential areas were solidly developed. The city's commercial core was based primarily on those squares bounded by Central, Pine, Main, and Grant streets. While the downtown was basically surrounded by residential development, Fitzgerald's primary residential sections occurred to the northeast and southwest of the commercial core. The residential area bordering South Main, South Lee and South Johnston streets contained most of the city's most elaborate housing and wealthiest citizens.

Maud and Isidor Gelders, publishers and editors of The Fitzgerald Herald recorded that the years 1905-15 were good years for the city. They wrote that this ten year period "were years of peace and progress. All lines - civic, business, social, fraternal...city building and improvements were on the upward bend." This "era of good feeling" ended in July 1914 with the outbreak of World War I. The effects of the war were felt almost immediately in Fitzgerald.

The City of Fitzgerald had become primarily an agrarian based community. With much of its economy tied to the exporting of its cotton crop, the city was practically paralyzed when the war's onset prevented cotton exportation to Europe. On August 22, 1914, one hundred Fitzgerald farmers congregated on the courthouse lawn to discuss the cotton problem. Local leaders pledged that the crop would be gathered and held until the price climbed well above the current

7.5 cents per pound. A second meeting, conducted by the ABA employees, endorsed a measure requiring local firms to wrap shipping materials in cotton fiber rather than in jute. On October 24, 1914, a second mass meeting was conducted by local farmers on the courthouse lawn. They agreed unanimously to begin diversified farming practices and to reduce current cotton acreage. The economic crisis was felt across the community.

On November 11, 1918, the city celebrated the end of World War I by staging "a brilliant street celebration in which the mayor and a band of musicians took part. Bon fires, torches, and auto lights supplemented the city's street lights. Exercises were held around the flag pole at Main and Central...The jubilation of the crowds could not be restrained."

The city's joy was dimmed later in the month when an epidemic of Spanish Influenza slowed the economy and required the closing of city schools, churches and places of business. The outbreak was stemmed several weeks later and business resumed as before.

The city's public library was begun in 1915 with the acceptance of Carnegie matching grant funds for public library development. This represents the city's commitment to developing library facilities for its community. Three years later, in 1918, the program was expanded to include county service.

Fitzgerald's development had slowed with the advent of World War I and halted with the Great Depression. During the Depression, Fitzgerald, as did other American communities, participated in public works projects. In 1936, the first W.P.A. project involved expansion of the Fitzgerald High School auditorium which was originally built in 1926. The building currently houses the city's junior high school.

The city's second W.P.A. sponsored project began on September 2, 1940. On the evening of September 2nd, the Fitzgerald City Commission resolved to appropriate \$5,000 so that a supervisor of W.P.A. workers could be hired. As the city was beginning the segmental concrete paving of many of the city's streets (South Main, South Lee and their intersecting streets were involved), a person who could supervise recruitment and certification of W.P.A. workmen was required. The city commission stipulated that a woman staff this position. In this particular instance the commission felt a woman would be much more honest than a man in recruiting and certifying workers. The project was begun before year's end and provided for paving of many of the city's streets.

By the late 1930s, Fitzgerald began recovering from the depression years. This was evidenced by the construction of the Grand Theatre. Located on the northern end of South Main Street, this art deco style building replaced the Grant, an earlier theatre, destroyed by fire on September 4, 1935. The Grand Theatre was closed in 1977.

The City of Fitzgerald is unique in its history and pattern of land subdivision. It is also unique in that for several years it may have been the only community in the nation which celebrated two Memorial Days; April 26th observed Georgia's Confederate Memorial Day; May 31st commemorated the memory of the Union dead. The city was founded and

later developed as a result of cooperation of people from almost every state in the Union.

9. Major Bibliographic References

- 1) Bryant, Helen. "Marble Monument Honors First Newspaper Woman." Fitzgerald Herald, January 31, 1980, p.2.
- 2) Byron, Dora. "Friendly Enemies - Town In Georgia Was Built on Blue-Grey Cooperation." The American Legion Magazine, September, 1976, pp. 4, 48-49.
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Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- () recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 61 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 17 Easting 286450 Northing 3510640
- B) Zone 17 Easting 286520 Northing 3509760
- C) Zone 17 Easting 286100 Northing 3509760
- D) Zone 17 Easting 286100 Northing 3510640

Verbal Boundary Description

The South Main-South Lee Historic District is located in the fourth ward of Fitzgerald, Georgia and is an area south of Pine Street, west of Grant Street, east of Johnston Street and north of Roanoke Drive. The National Register district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the district sketch map.

Boundary Justification

The district boundary is drawn to include the concentrated area of relatively intact historic residential structures that constitute the historic South Main-South Lee neighborhood of Fitzgerald. Excluded from the district are areas of nonhistoric development, and severely altered historic buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher
organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone 404-656-2840 **date** 1/10/89

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

PHOTOGRAPHS
Section number _____ Page 1

South Main Street-South Lee Street Historic District
Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative filed with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date: March 1988
Description:

- 1 of 32: Intersection of Grant Street and Ronaoke Drive; photographer facing northwest.
- 2 of 32: West view of South Main Street, north of Roanoke Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 32: East view of South Main Street, north of Lemon Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 4 of 32: West view of South Main Street, north of Lemon Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 32: East view of South Main Street, north of Lemon Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 32: East view of South Main Street, north of Cypress Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 7 of 32: Southwest corner of South Main and Orange Streets; photographer facing northwest.
- 8 of 32: Northeast corner of South Main and Orange Streets; photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 32: Northwest corner of South Main and Palm Streets; photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 32: East view of South Main Street; north of Palm Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 32: Southwest corner of South Main and Jessamine Streets; photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 32: Southeast corner of South Main and Jessamine Streets; photographer facing northeast.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Section number _____ Page 2

- 13 of 32: West view of South Main Street, north of Jessamine Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 14 of 32: West view of South Main Street, north of Magnolia Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 15 of 32: West view of Lee Street, north of Magnolia Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 16 of 32: West view of Lee Street, south of Magnolia Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 17 of 32: East view of Lee Street, south of Magnolia Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 18 of 32: Northeast corner of Lee and Jessamine Streets; photographer facing northeast.
- 19 of 32: View of Lee Street, north of Palm Street, photographer facing north.
- 20 of 32: Southeast corner of Palm and Johnston Streets; photographer facing southeast.
- 21 of 32: Northeast corner of Orange and Johnston Streets; photographer facing northeast.
- 22 of 32: Northeast corner of Lee and Orange Streets; photographer facing northeast.
- 23 of 32: Southwest corner of Lee and Orange Streets; photographer facing northwest.
- 24 of 32: East view of Lee Street south of Orange Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 25 of 32: East view of Lee Street south of Cypress Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 26 of 32: West view of Lee Street, north of Lemon Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 27 of 32: West view of Lee Street, north of Roanoke Drive; photographer facing northwest.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

PHOTOGRAPHS
Section number _____ Page 3

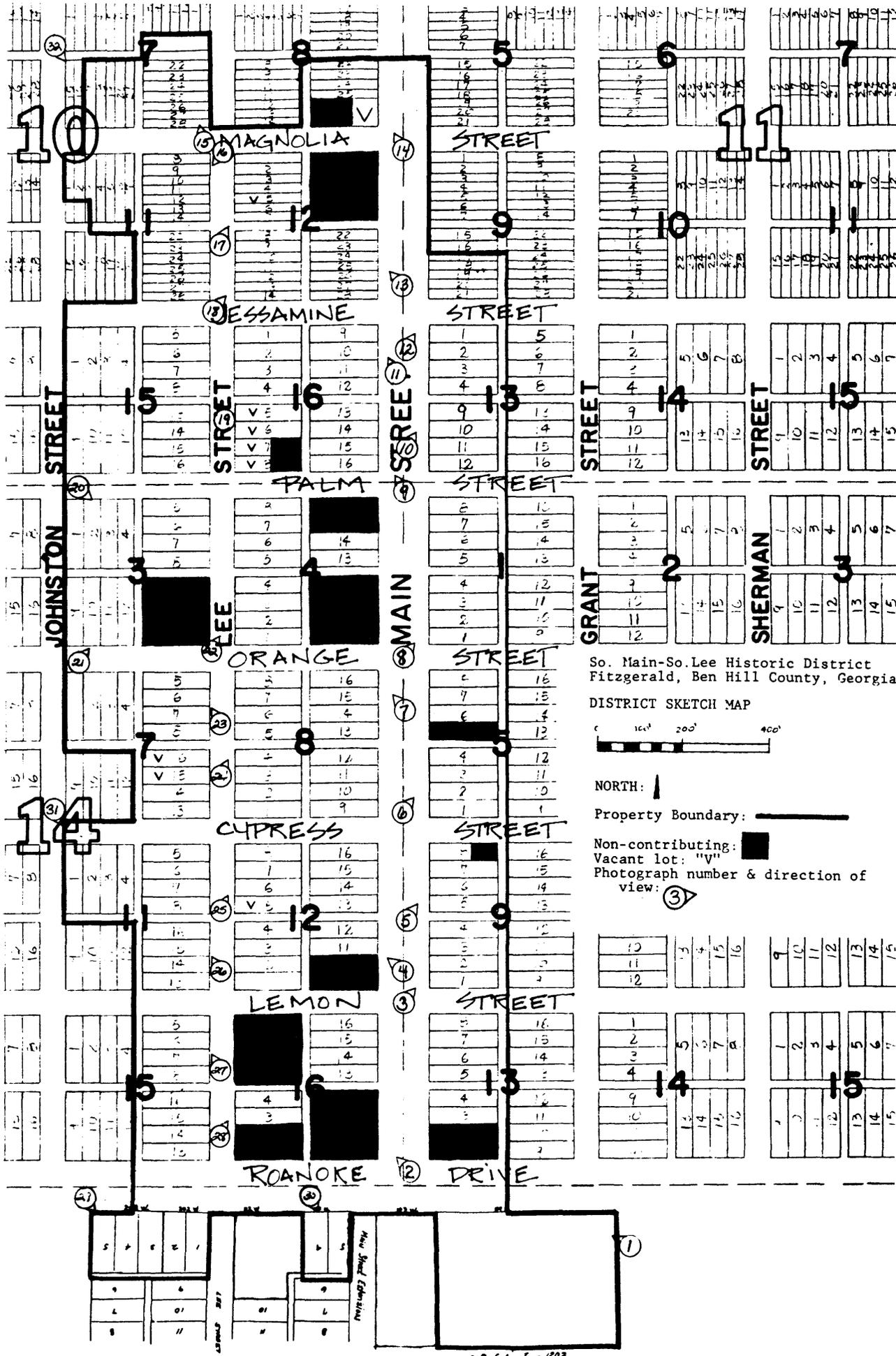
28 of 32: East view of Lee Street, north of Roanoke Drive;
photographer facing northeast.

29 of 32: South view of Roanoke Street, east of Sadie Street;
photographer facing southeast.

30 of 32: South view of Roanoke Street, east of Lee Street;
photographer facing southeast.

31 of 32: Southeast corner of Johnston and Cypress Streets;
photographer facing southeast.

32 of 32: Southeast corner of Johnston and Magnolia Streets;
photographer facing southeast.



So. Main-So. Lee Historic District
 Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, Georgia
 DISTRICT SKETCH MAP



- NORTH: ↑
- Property Boundary: ———
- Non-contributing: ■
- Vacant lot: "V"
- Photograph number & direction of view: (3) ↘

See Main Street Reform
 Suppression

0-0 5 Ave. Rev. 1922