

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Toccoa Downtown Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Roughly bordered by Alexander Street on the west, Currahee Street on the south, Hill Street on the east, and Savannah Street on the north.

not for publication

city or town Toccoa

vicinity

state Georgia code GA county Stephens code 257 zip code 30577

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

David Crass

10-17-11

Signature of certifying official/Title Dr. David Crass Division Director/Deputy SHPO

Date

Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

David Crass

12/6/11

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
74	22	buildings
		district
		site
1	11	structure
2	3	object
77	36	Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

SOCIAL: clubhouse

GOVERNMENT: city hall

GOVERNMENT: post office

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

RELIGION: religious facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC: hotel

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument

INDUSTRY: warehouse

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

GOVERNMENT: city hall

GOVERNMENT: post office

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

EDUCATION: library

RELIGION: religious facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument

INDUSTRY: warehouse

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INDUSTRY: communications facility

LANDSCAPE: parking lot

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

LANDSCAPE: parking lot

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS: Classical Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK

walls: BRICK

STONE: granite

WOOD: weatherboard

roof: ASPHALT

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is the core commercial area of downtown Toccoa. Toccoa is the county seat of Stephens County, located in northeast Georgia, approximately 90 miles from Atlanta. The district includes both commercial and community landmark buildings, as well as several houses. The streets are laid out in a north-south and east-west grid pattern. The railroad tracks run east-west a block south of the courthouse square and serve to connect buildings on both sides of the tracks. Some of the landmark buildings in the district include the county courthouse (1908); the former post office, now city hall (1932); First Presbyterian Church (1925); and the railroad depot (c.1915). The central commercial core consists primarily of one- and two-story, attached, brick, storefront buildings. Outside of the downtown commercial core are residential and industrial areas, which are not part of the district.

Narrative Description

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is located in the northeast Georgia mountains not far from the Tugaloo River and the South Carolina border. The downtown commercial core is located on a ridge top. The courthouse sits atop a hill providing a prominent view of the surrounding area. The town was laid out after the 1871-1872 purchase of 1,765 acres of land by Dr. Oliver M. Doyle of Oconee County, South Carolina, and B.Y. Sage and Thomas Alexander, both of Atlanta. Their investment was surveyed into lots and opened for public sale on May 27, 1873.

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Overall, the district retains its historic grid layout. The physical development of the city was built incrementally around the railroad with the government and commercial centers built primarily north of the railroad tracks. The railroad tracks run east-west a block south of the courthouse square and serve to connect buildings on both sides of the tracks. The c.1915 depot is located on the north side of the tracks on Alexander Street.

With the arrival of automobiles in the early 20th century, the road system in Toccoa became more traveled and therefore more important to the economic development of the city. The streets within the district are laid out in a grid pattern forming typical city blocks. Downtown Toccoa is situated along seven principal roads: running east-west are Tugalo, Doyle, Foreacre, Railroad, Currahee, and Franklin streets; running north-south are Broad, Alexander, Sage, Pond, and Hill streets. Doyle Street, which has historically served as the main thoroughfare, runs in front of the Stephens County Courthouse.

The growth of Toccoa is typical for a city whose major economic development occurred in the early part of the 20th century. This growth, both near the depot and the courthouse, resulted in commercial buildings that are relatively compact and share common walls on city blocks. Most of the one- and two-story, attached, brick buildings date from the 1880s to the 1940s. The lots of the older commercial buildings are narrow which allows for many buildings on one block. The commercial buildings are laid out in a rectangular fashion with their narrower façades as the storefront. Approximately 10-foot sidewalks extend out from the front facades of the buildings and parking lots to the street. Buildings constructed in the 1950s tend to be larger and are often stand-alone buildings.

As part of an urban renewal project in the early 1970s, many of the commercial structures on the southern side of Tugalo Street between Sage Street and Hill Street were torn down to provide ample parking spaces. Buildings on the north side of Foreacre Street between Alexander Street and Pond Street were also torn down for parking. Therefore, the buildings facing Doyle Street between Alexander Street and Pond Street often have two entrances, one in the front and one at the rear facing the large parking lots. At this same time, concrete canopies were applied to buildings on Doyle Street to create a covered mall effect. The result was disastrous for business and the canopies were removed in 2007.

The contributing buildings in the district were built between 1880 and 1964. Doyle Street, between Alexander and Pond streets, contains the largest concentration of historic commercial buildings in the district. Most were constructed between 1890 and 1930 and are one- and two-story brick commercial buildings.

Noncontributing buildings in the district include those that were constructed after the end period of significance and those that have been altered from their historic appearance. Many of the noncontributing buildings have a false façade such as the Harper's 5 & 10 Cent Store on Doyle Street and the building located adjacent to it (photograph 28).

A bridge on Pond Street carries a city street and sidewalks over the railroad tracks. This bridge was constructed in 1949 to replace a timber bridge. It is a steel stringer bridge with composite deck that uses technology that was introduced in the 1930s and was noteworthy as a new type of structure that offered the advantage of utilizing economical materials. The bridge was identified in a 1995 statewide bridge survey as the only known use of the timber-concrete composite technology in Georgia before 1955 (photograph 23).

South of the railroad tracks, one- and two-story commercial buildings illustrate the growth of the city southward in the mid-20th century and include brick buildings housing an auto dealership, auto repair shop, a bus depot, a bottling plant, and a motel.

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Beyond the boundaries of the downtown commercial core, the buildings change to a mix of both historic and nonhistoric residential, institutional, and industrial buildings. The areas outside of the downtown core are residential to the east, west, and north. A nonhistoric commercial strip has developed along the highway south of the downtown core.

Community Landmark Buildings

The Stephens County Courthouse (National Register listed in 1980) is a large brick courthouse sited on the highest point of land in downtown. The courthouse is surrounded by a grassed lawn, a few trees, and walkways leading to each side of the courthouse. Designed by architect H. L. Lewman, who also designed the Cleveland County Courthouse in North Carolina, and the Appling and Irwin county courthouses in Georgia, the courthouse was completed in 1908 by Lewman's Fall City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky. The courthouse is a two-story brick building with Beaux Arts Classical and Classical Revival elements. The building cost just under \$40,000 to construct. A one-story clock tower featuring a four-sided clock sits atop the building (photograph 1). Monuments on the lawn include a noncontributing 1987 monument to the victims of the 1977 flood at nearby Toccoa Falls College; a contributing 1958 monument to the founders of the Toccoa Orphanage; a contributing 1922 monument to Confederate veterans; and an undated noncontributing monument to WWI veterans.

The First Presbyterian Church, constructed in 1925 and dedicated in 1926, is a Classical Revival-style, two-story, brick-faced, temple-front, T-shaped building located on Tugalo Street. In 1956 the sanctuary was enlarged and the educational building was begun. This construction was completed in 1958. Classical details include the four large Ionic columns that support the temple front, dentils, pilasters flanking the main entry doors, and arched window openings (photograph 2).

The Toccoa City Hall, located at 92 N. Alexander St., was built in 1932 as a U.S. Post Office. It is a one- and a-half-story Classical Revival-style brick building with a hipped roof. Classical details are evident in its symmetrical facade, central entrance pediment with Corinthian columns, and dentiled cornice (photograph 3). The city acquired the building after a new post office was constructed at the corner of Alexander and Savannah streets in 1964 (contributing to the district.) A noncontributing 1996 Olympic monument is located on the front lawn. A city hall annex was built next door in 1990.

The restored c.1915 railroad depot houses the Toccoa Historical Society, a World War II Museum, the Chamber of Commerce, the Visitors' Center, and the Amtrak office. The building is a wood clad, one-story, side-gabled building located on Alexander Street. The eaves extend beyond the structure and are supported by large decorative brackets. The low roofline and large brackets continue beyond the gable ends creating a wraparound cover to shelter passengers and freight next to the tracks. The gables have wooden shingles with a decorative diamond-shaped vent at the peak of the gable (photograph 4). Rear additions in 2005 and 2009 have provided additional space for the museum and historical society.

The 1964 U.S. Post Office, located at 128 N. Alexander Street and designed by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, is an International Style, one-story building with a flat roof. There is a double-door entrance covered by a metal decorative canopy on the front façade and a raised delivery bay on the rear (photograph 5).

The 1949 Courthouse Annex, originally the Sunday School Annex for the First Baptist Church, is a three-story, brick building with a flat roof located on Tugalo Street. The floors are divided by concrete banding. The front entry is a classical portico with Doric columns. Classical details include keystone motifs above the windows on the first floor and a Palladian window above the entryway (photograph 6). The building was designed by architects Bothwell & Nash and constructed by Brittain-Pattillo Co.

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Most of the community landmark buildings have some landscaping elements around them including grass, shrubs, planters, and trees. Both the church and city hall have well-maintained shrubs on either side of the entrance.

Doyle Street

The buildings along Doyle Street are primarily one- and two-story, brick, commercial structures constructed between 1880 and 1930. Buildings tend to be attached and aligned contiguously along Doyle Street, between Broad and Hill streets. Other character-defining features include simple rectangular forms; fronts that face directly onto the sidewalk, usually with a common setback; large display windows; architectural ornament primarily on the front and sometimes side facades; and parapet rooflines, some with recessed or decorative panels. Most are one story in height and brick is the most common material. A handful of two-story examples have second-story, segmental-arched windows and ornamented projecting cornices. Other stylistic elements include brick corbelling and dentils, patterned brickwork, frieze paneling, and transom windows (photographs 7-10).

Several of the buildings on West Doyle across from the courthouse historically housed prominent businesses. The large two-story building was the home of Harper's 5 & 10 Cent Store at 27 W. Doyle Street. The Citizens Bank building was located a couple of doors down the street. A classical pediment and pilasters surround the front door of the bank building. Another prominent building in this block is the Star Theater building, a two-story, brick building constructed in 1890. The *Toccoa Record* newspaper also has offices in this block (photograph 11).

In 1911 the Bank of Toccoa was chartered and began operation in the building at 12 E. Doyle Street (photograph 12). This bank was the only one in Toccoa to survive the Great Depression of the 1930s. The building has also housed a drugstore among other enterprises in its 100 years.

A large retail building occupies the northeast corner at Doyle and Sage streets (photograph 13). It is a two-story commercial structure, constructed c.1905, with a parapet roof and multiple retail spaces. The main retail space has a corner entry with transom windows and large storefront windows on either side of the entryway. The south and west elevations have additional retail entry doors. The upper level has double-hung wood windows. The building originally housed a bank and then Belk Department Store in 1937. Green's Department Store was located across the street at 32 Doyle Street.

The Stephens Federal Bank building, located on the southeast corner of Doyle and Pond streets, is a 1958 brick, one-story building with a central block with wings to the south and east. The building has a flat roof and recessed, large, plate-glass windows. Stainless steel accents include the entablature and raised bank lettering (photograph 14).

Nonhistoric landscaping along sections of East Doyle Street includes recent additions of landscaped planter beds, some with metal benches. These planter beds have been inserted into former parking spaces along the street (photographs 8, 9, 10, and 30). Brick sidewalks and new period-inspired lampposts have also been installed along Doyle Street (photographs 11, 12, and 13).

Residential

There are several houses located within the district, including those on Savannah Street, along with a couple of other houses scattered throughout the district. The houses date from the early 1900s to the mid-1950s and include a variety of types and styles including Craftsman bungalow and English Vernacular Revival cottages (photographs 17-19). Other residential buildings include the 1924 Alexander Apartments and the 1903 James B. Simmons House (National Register listed in 1983), which are located across from one another at the intersection of Alexander and Tugalo streets.

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The James B. Simmons House, located at 74 W. Tugalo Street, (National Register listed in 1983) is a two-story 1903 Queen Anne-style house (photograph 20). Details include the asymmetrical design, clapboard siding, and a low-pitched, hip roof with three decorative chimneys. The first-floor wraparound porch features ionic columns. The second floor continues the asymmetrical design. The house has several different window styles: bay, circular, oval, arched, and rectangular windows with stained, leaded, or clear glass. The house was built for James Bollinger Simmons, a pioneer in the furniture industry in Toccoa. E. Levi Prater was the architect. The house was the first residence to have indoor plumbing in Toccoa.

The Alexander Apartments building, located at 40 Alexander Street, was constructed in 1924. This brick, three-and-a-half-story building has a double-gabled roof, partial wrap porch, and both single and paired one-over-one windows (photograph 21).

Commercial

There are several former automobile related buildings in the district. A 1955 building at 67 E. Tugalo Street is a rectangular, one-story automobile service station with a flat roof. It has three, single-bay garage doors and a corner office with large windows. Another automobile service station building, constructed in 1941, at 102 E. Tugalo Street is typical of its time. The building is one story with a hipped roof that extends over the canopy. The hipped roof has exposed rafter tails. Large windows flank the main entrance. One of the garage service doors has been replaced with a door with two large sidelight windows covered by a shed roof awning. The other former garage entry has a large window. Currently latticework covers some of the original elements of the building.

Buildings facing the railroad on Foreacre Street between Pond and Hill streets include warehouse buildings that once served the railroad. Today these buildings operate as a multiple-use industrial complex. The tax assessors' information indicates that the building at 199-209 Foreacre Street dates to 1890; the other buildings date to the 1950s (photograph 22).

The following buildings are located south of the railroad tracks.

The Tabor Motor Company building, now Hayes Auto Dealership, located on S. Pond Street is a 1949 International Style, one-story, brick building with a flat roof constructed for the Tabor Motor Company dealership. There are two double-door entrances, both on Pond Street, with auto service bays fronting a side alley. The front façade has window walls separated by narrow sections of plain stucco. A narrow metal awning spans the front façade creating the feel of a modern entablature and columns (photograph 24).

The 1949 bus depot located on Railroad Street is a two-story brick building with a row of multi-light windows on the second floor. Two double-door entrances, separated by a plate-glass window, front Railroad Street (photograph 25).

The building at 40 Railroad Street is a 1945 two-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and rows of multi-light windows with stone lintels on the first and second story. A double entrance door and a single entrance door, both with flat metal awnings, front Railroad Street.

The two-story brick building, constructed in 1919 at 266 Railroad Street, has double-entry doors and rows of bricked-up windows with brick sills and lintels on the first and second story. The west elevation (fronting N. Alexander Street) has a stepped parapet wall. The south elevation includes a raised delivery bay.

There is a one-story, flat-roofed building, constructed in 1930, that is attached to the two-story structure at 266 Railroad Street. It includes a double-entry door, a single entrance door, and two boarded-up windows. The building abuts 40 Railroad Street.

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The Royal Crown Cola Bottling Company building is a 1946 two-story brick building located at 207 W. Currahee Street. It has plate-glass windows, a single-bay garage door, and entrance fronting Currahee Street. The side or east façade has a stepped parapet wall and two boarded-up windows on the second story (photograph 26).

The 1948 building at 122-124 W. Currahee Street is a one-story, multiple-retail commercial type building with a parapet roof. There are three bays with recessed front entrances, each with a double door and transom flanked by plate-glass windows. A simple, corrugated, flat, metal awning covers one bay.

The 1900 Mitchell-Herndon-Campbell House, located at the corner of Pond and Currahee streets, is a two-story house with Queen Anne-style elements. The house has a multi-gabled roof, decorative shingled gables, and a pedimented attic vent. It served as a residence until the 1960s when a motel was built along the west property boundary and the house was used for the motel office and motel keeper's residence (photograph 27).

A 1954 former Texaco service station building, located at 197 E. Currahee Street, is one-story with two single-bay garage doors, plate-glass windows with door to the office, and a skin of enameled porcelain blocks on all sides. Metal trim and red Texaco stars provide a decorative element on the entablature. The gas dispensers have been removed; however, the awning is intact.

Noncontributing buildings within the district include those buildings that have been significantly altered from their historic appearance or were constructed after the end of the period of significance. Examples include the Harpers 5 & 10 Cent Store located on Doyle Street that has been covered with stucco (photograph 28); 37 Doyle Street; a commercial building located at 19 East Doyle Street (photograph 30); and three buildings on Sage Street, south of the courthouse (photograph 29) that have been altered or built since 1964.

There are 11 nonhistoric parking lots that are counted as noncontributing structures in the district. Most of the parking lots were constructed in the 1970s. The pre-1955 bridge over the railroad tracks is counted as a contributing structure. Four of the objects in the district are monuments located on the courthouse lawn. Two are noncontributing - one is undated and the other dates from 1987, which is outside of the period of significance. The other noncontributing monument is located outside of city hall. The monument was erected after the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCE

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1873 – 1964

Significant Dates

1873 – railroad completed to Toccoa

1874 – city chartered

1875 – city incorporated

1905 – Toccoa becomes county seat

1908 – date of completion of courthouse

1964 - date of construction of USPO

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bothwell & Nash (architect)

Cunningham, John H. (architect)

Lewman, H.L. (architect)

Prater, E. Levi (architect)

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Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1873, the year the railroad arrived and ends in 1964, the date of the last public building constructed within the historic period. The railroad line was completed to Toccoa in 1873 and the tracks have been in continuous use since that time.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Toccoa had its beginning in 1871 when three men - Dr. Oliver M. Doyle of Oconee County, South Carolina, and B.Y. Sage and Thomas Alexander, both of Atlanta - purchased 1,765 acres of land in what would become the town of Toccoa. Their investment was surveyed into lots and opened for public sale on May 27, 1873. While only a few properties sold that day, they continued to offer lots for sale for the next two years. With the arrival of the railroad that same year, Toccoa began its rise into a major shipping center for northeast Georgia. The city was chartered in 1874, and when Stephens County was formed in 1905, Toccoa became the county seat.

Toccoa Downtown Historic District is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C. In the area of transportation, the significance lies in the role the railroad played in the development of the town as an important wholesale, manufacturing, and shipping center in northeast Georgia. With the arrival of the Atlanta & Richmond Air-Line Railroad (later Southern Railway and today Norfolk Southern Railway) in July 1873, Toccoa began its rise from a small village with a community grocery store to an important transportation center. Many manufacturing industries including furniture and casket companies, as well as cotton processing industries such as cotton gins and mills relied on the railroad. Toccoa is also significant in politics/government for the presence of important buildings directly related to local government activities, such as the courthouse and city hall. It is significant in architecture for the good representative examples of several types of commercial, government, and railroad buildings commonly found in small Georgia towns in the late 19th and the mid-20th centuries. The district is significant in community planning and development as an intact historic town plan that is representative of a cross-rail town and for its well-defined commercial area. The greatest period of growth was from the 1880s through the 1940s as reflected in the establishment of businesses and construction of buildings. The district is significant in commerce for its role as the commercial center of Stephens County. Typically the county seat fulfilled this role and provided for the day-to-day needs of nearby rural residents with retail stores, offices, and professional services.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is significant in transportation for the role the railroad played in the development of the town as an important wholesale, manufacturing, and shipping center in northeast Georgia. With the arrival of the Atlanta & Richmond Air-Line Railroad (later Southern Railway and today Norfolk Southern Railway) in July 1873, Toccoa began its rise from a small village with a community grocery store to an important regional transportation center. Many manufacturing industries in Toccoa including furniture and casket companies, as well as cotton-processing industries such as cotton gins and mills, relied on the railroad to ship their products. The arrival of a branch rail line to Elberton in 1878 further strengthened Toccoa's transportation options. The line served Eastanollee, Avalon, and Martin in Stephens County and extended to

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Elberton in Elbert County 50 miles away. The crossroads became a coaling station for the increasingly busy line between Atlanta and states to the north. Within a few years, there were 13 trains serving Toccoa, six going northeast from North Carolina to New York, and seven to Atlanta.

With the expansion of the railroad, Toccoa's economy shifted from subsistence agriculture to the processing and shipping of cotton. Industrial growth also followed the success of the railroad line. In the late 1800s, about 80,000 bales of cotton were processed in Toccoa annually. Cotton processing, an industry that was aided by an increase in freight lines, produced satellite industries such as cotton gins, cotton distribution, and cotton goods manufacturing. While some of these buildings are extant, they are located outside of the downtown commercial core and are not included in the district.

Today the rail line is still used for both freight and passenger trains. Amtrak picks up passengers on a daily basis and numerous freight trains use the line. The c.1915 depot has been recently restored to its early 20th century appearance; it has also been expanded to serve as a visitor's center and museum, in addition to its use as a passenger depot.

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent collection of intact 19th- and early to mid-20th-century commercial and community landmark buildings that represent prevailing design and construction traditions of cities and towns in Georgia. Toccoa has many good intact examples of commercial architecture that date from its period of greatest growth during the late 19th century into the 1940s. The central business district is concentrated in the blocks surrounding the courthouse and railroad tracks, as is common in many Georgia towns. Commercial buildings in the district include both freestanding and attached one- and two-story buildings. Buildings tend to be attached and aligned contiguously along Doyle Street, between Broad and Hill streets. Other character-defining features of many of the late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial buildings include simple rectangular forms; fronts that face directly onto the sidewalk, usually with a common setback; large display windows; architectural ornament primarily on the front and sometimes side facades; and parapet rooflines, some with recessed or decorative panels. Most are one story in height, and brick is the most common material. A handful of two-story examples have second-story segmental-arched windows and ornamented projecting cornices. Other stylistic elements include brick corbelling and dentils, patterned brickwork, frieze paneling, and transom windows.

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is also significant in architecture for its community landmark buildings including the National Register-listed Stephens County Courthouse. The courthouse is a two-story brick building with Beaux Arts Classical and Classical Revival elements designed by architect H. L. Lewman. A one-story clock tower featuring a four-sided clock sits atop the building. Other community landmark buildings include the courthouse annex (originally the First Baptist Church Sunday School building), city hall (the former U.S. Post Office), the 1964 U.S. Post Office, and the First Presbyterian Church. Public architecture, such as the WPA-funded U.S. Post Office, now city hall, tends to be influenced by classical antecedents. The church is also a good example of a classically inspired building.

The International Style Stephens Federal Bank building, completed in 1958, is one of two International Style buildings within the district. John H. Cunningham, a Gainesville, Georgia, architect designed this building. The building is a good example of a style that was rarely used in Georgia as its different approach conflicted with prevailing conservative architectural traditions. The 1964 United States Post Office in Toccoa is an excellent example of the International Style because its simple compact massing, emphasis on modern building materials and techniques, and lack of ornament represents the confidence, enthusiasm, and optimism of the postwar building boom.

One of the few identified local architects who worked in Toccoa was E. Levi Prater. Prater was a Hall County native and self-taught builder who moved to Toccoa in the 1890s. He constructed a number of homes,

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including the Simmons House, the earliest known structure built by Prater (built 1903 and National Register listed), the Walter-Davis House, located outside of the district (1906 and National Register listed), and public buildings including the Stephens County Jail and Sheriff's House and the First Baptist Church (no longer extant).

Bothwell & Nash, a noted architectural firm from Atlanta, designed the Courthouse Annex, originally the Sunday School Annex for the First Baptist Church. The firm established their reputation for public buildings and completed many hospitals, churches, and schools in Georgia from the founding of their partnership in 1938. Some of the many Georgia church commissions the firm completed are the Oakhurst Baptist Church, Columbia Presbyterian Church, and Decatur Presbyterian Church in Decatur; Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta; First Baptist Church in Rockmart; and the First Methodist Church in Toccoa.

In the area of community planning and development, the Toccoa Downtown Historic District is significant for its historic town plan. As defined in *Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types*, Toccoa is a cross-rail town. The town was established in anticipation of the coming of the railroad and laid out in a grid pattern in 1871. When Toccoa became the county seat for the new county in 1905, the courthouse was constructed in the commercial area along the main street. Reinforcing the importance of Toccoa as the county seat is the concentration of historic commercial and community landmark buildings near the courthouse and along the principal streets. This creates a distinct downtown or central business district. This pattern of development represents the traditional way in which Georgia's county seats grew and developed over time.

Today's district clearly reflects Toccoa's beginnings. The layout of the downtown is virtually unchanged with Doyle Street still accommodating the majority of commercial buildings. The courthouse continues to function as the focal point of the commercial area though it is not the geographical center of downtown. The majority of the buildings located around the courthouse square date from the late 1890s through the early 20th century and represent the evolution of commercial development in Toccoa. As the town grew, residential development moved away from the commercial core to the periphery of the downtown. The growth of Toccoa away from the central business district reflects the major periods of community development influenced by various social and economic factors. Most of the oldest residential areas are located on main streets near the downtown. As the physical framework of the town expanded, later housing moved to the periphery, but also filled in vacant lots near the center.

In the area of commerce, Toccoa is significant as the historic commercial center of Stephens County and the surrounding area, as was typical for a county seat. It has an intact concentration of commercial buildings centered on Doyle Street. Commercial activity included the distribution of dry goods, general merchandise, clothing, produce, and other commodities to county residents. Along with retail activity, professional service providers, such as lawyers, bankers, and pharmacists, also utilized the downtown buildings. Communications-related activities are represented by both the current post office on N. Alexander Street and the former post office, now city hall. The early establishment of hotels downtown near the railroad depot testifies to the importance of downtown as a crossroads for commercial activity. These hotels are no longer extant. By the 1920s automobile sales and servicing shops also appeared, including several service stations and automobile dealerships.

The arrival of the railroad in 1873 greatly contributed to Toccoa's development, financial success, and development. Warehouses and hotels sprang up near the depot. Local industry consisted mostly of cotton processing and furniture manufacturing. These types of business enterprises tended to appear along the railroad corridor, particularly on the western side of town (outside of the district).

The Toccoa Downtown Historic District is also significant in the area of politics and government as the county seat of Stephens County, and because of the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events

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associated with local county government. Throughout much of Georgia's history, the county has been the most important and powerful form of local government. County governments made and enforced laws through county commissioners, sheriffs, and judges, who were traditionally the most important local political figures. County governments also provided essential public services including building and maintaining roads and water/sewer systems. They were responsible for administering important aspects of the legal system such as the court system, birth and death records, wills and probate, and property deeds and taxes. Through county school boards, they provided for public education throughout the county. County government buildings in Toccoa include the 1908 courthouse and the annex building. The former federal WPA-built U.S. Post Office, now city hall, is another local government building; the 1964 U.S. Post Office is the only federal government building in the district.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Early Settlement

Stephens County is located in the far northeast corner of Georgia, along the Tugaloo River and South Carolina border, approximately 92 miles from the city of Atlanta. The settlement of northeast Georgia was predicated on the movement of people along the trading routes of the Tugaloo River and the later development of the railroads along the Atlanta to Richmond, Virginia, axis. What is today Stephens County was originally part of Franklin County when it was created in 1784. Stephens County, Georgia's 143rd county, was named in honor of Alexander Hamilton Stephens, a Georgia statesman. Settlers moving inward from Georgia's coast and down through North and South Carolina, migrated to what became Toccoa in the late 18th century. The town was originally a frontier community called Dry Pond, so named because of a pond that stood by the crossroads and was dry in summer. Numerous Native American villages were located along the Tugaloo River at this time. Early white settlers included Joseph and Ann Whitehead who settled in Dry Pond in 1798. After 1800 there was an increase in white settlement, particularly along the established Indian trails. With the removal of the Cherokees and Creeks from Georgia, an 1820 lottery awarded their lands to white settlers. Many of the early settlers in the Toccoa area had Scottish, Irish, English, and German ancestry and almost all were subsistence farmers. Pig raising, salt curing, and whiskey production were major agricultural activities. Thomas Addison Richards, a 19th-century landscape artist, sketched and painted Georgia scenery. His print of Toccoa Falls, located about two miles from today's downtown Toccoa, appeared in his 1842 book, *Georgia Illustrated*, perhaps spurring outside interest in the area.

Between October 1871 and May 1872, Dr. Oliver M. Doyle of Oconee County, South Carolina, and B.Y. Sage and Thomas Alexander, both of Atlanta, purchased a total of 1,765 acres in the Dry Pond area for \$3,500. Their investment was surveyed into lots and opened for public sale on May 27, 1873. In addition to other lots, a public square was set aside for a courthouse to be built, even though the town was not a county seat. The three entrepreneurs brought in excursion trains full of interested investors and fed them barbecue the day of the sale. Because the railroad stopped three miles from the new town, the landowners brought the potential investors to Dry Pond by wagon. While only a few properties sold that day, they continued to offer lots for sale for the next two years. By 1876, 41 lots had been sold.

Doyle, Sage, and Alexander felt their efforts at developing Dry Pond would be hampered unless a better name was chosen for the town. They settled on "Toccoa," thought to be a Cherokee word meaning "beautiful." However, according to James Mooney, author of *Myths of the Cherokee*, the word means Catawba Place, and was named for a tribe of Indians who used the area for trading. Regardless of whether the town was "beautiful" or "Catawba Place," it received a boost in publicity from the *Atlanta Constitution*, which explained in 1873 that "a number of houses are being put up in Toccoa City, giving the place a town-like appearance already."

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Among the founding families of Toccoa were Captain Andrew H. Ramsay, brother-in-law of Dr. Oliver Doyle, and his wife, Sally Azalea Jarrett Ramsay (Miss Zaidee). Ramsay bought the first lot at the land sale and built a two-story building downtown that housed his mercantile business on the first floor and living quarters on the second. The Ramsay's daughter Lida was the first child born in the new city. Captain Ramsey also helped found the First Presbyterian Church. At the time of Miss Zaidee's death in the 1930s, she was the oldest living citizen in Toccoa and the only living charter member of the church.

Essentially a small village with a community grocery store, Toccoa's future changed with the arrival of the railroad. With the completion of the Atlanta & Richmond Air-Line Railroad (later Southern Railway and today Norfolk Southern Railway) to Toccoa in July 1873, Toccoa began its ascension as an important wholesale, manufacturing, and shipping center.

The town was chartered in 1874 as Toccoa City and incorporated in 1875. The streets were laid out on a grid pattern, with three of the streets aptly named Doyle, Sage, and Alexander for the enterprising businessmen who had brought the town to fruition. A post office was soon established and government officials were elected to run the new town. In addition to Captain Ramsay, the first merchants were H. W. Jones, J. L. Dance, and T. S. Davis. Dr. Oliver Doyle and Dr. L.J. Brown owned the first drug store. Other early businesses included harness and buggy makers, mercantile stores, a guano dealer, an undertaker and furniture dealer, a jeweler, a bar, and the Falls House hotel.

S.W. Crawford was elected the city's first mayor. Elected town councilmen were A.H. Ramsay, J.F. Steele, H.W. Jones, and Littleton Edge. Improvements were soon underway and the small village began to develop commercially. In the early years, wooden buildings in the downtown area faced the railroad. The town had dirt streets and wooden sidewalks. Kerosene street lamps were installed by 1883 and electric lights by 1908.

In December 1878, the Elberton branch of the Atlanta & Richmond Air-Line Railroad was completed from Elberton to Toccoa. The line served Eastanollee, Avalon, and Martin in Stephens County and extended to Elberton in Elbert County 50 miles away. The crossroads in Toccoa became a coaling station for the increasingly busy line between Atlanta and states to the north. Within a few years, there were 13 trains serving Toccoa, six going northeast to from North Carolina to New York, and seven heading south to Atlanta.

With the expansion of the railroad, Toccoa's economy shifted from subsistence agriculture to the processing and shipping of cotton. In the late 1800s, about 80,000 bales of cotton were processed in Toccoa annually. Aided by the increase in freight lines, the cotton processing industry produced satellite industries such as cotton gins, cotton distribution, and cotton goods manufacturing.

Newcomer, Edward Schaefer who had arrived in Toccoa in 1873, operated the first cotton compress. Schaefer was introduced to the cotton broker family of Atlanta, the Inmans, and influenced them to build a compress in Toccoa. The Inman, Acres, and Inman Company of Atlanta operated in Toccoa with Schaefer as manager. Called the Toccoa Compress, it later became part of Coats and Clark, Inc. Schaefer, in 1897, built the first large industry in Toccoa, the Toccoa Cotton Mill. It was located on East Currahee Street. Initially 100 workers were employed in the mill; however, that number had risen to 160 by 1916 when the mill had 8,000 spindles and 256 weaving looms. A mill village and commissary were built nearby for employees, but the mill was sold in the 1920s and after changing hands several times, it went out of business. It is currently vacant and is outside the proposed district. T.A. Capps built a second cotton mill on West Doyle Street. Coats and Clark, Inc. purchased it in 1937. The mill is also located outside the district. Other associated industries such as the Toccoa Shuttle and Bobbin Works on W. Currahee Street were also built near the railroad line and are outside of the district.

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Beginning in the 1870s, in addition to cotton industries, others took advantage of the town's rail and shipping capabilities, including furniture-manufacturing plants, saw mills, and tanneries. Factories sprung up in an area located between West Currahee, Broad Street, and Elberton Street, southwest of downtown, to take advantage of the railroad and abundant local timber.

The first furniture manufacturer was James B. Simmons, who arrived in Toccoa in 1876 and built a factory producing kitchen safes and cupboards on East Tugalo and Boulevard Street, east of the district. He enlarged his operation in 1893 by locating the factory more favorably between the railroad lines on the west side of town. A second company, the 1907 Toccoa Furniture Company on Elberton Street, was built in the same area, followed by Trogdon Furniture Company owned by George Trogdon, in 1920. Other furniture factories included the Currahee Furniture Company, Master Furniture Company, Toccoa Novelty Company, Imperial Furniture Manufacturing, and Lyman Matheson Furniture Company. None of the companies are still in business today and many of the buildings are no longer extant. While these factories were located beyond the boundaries of the proposed district, they are discussed here to illustrate the extent to which industrial growth contributed to the overall growth of the city.

In addition to industry and shipping, Toccoa's income was derived in summer from tourists visiting the area. The natural beauty of the surrounding mountain area and the promise of a growing town lured hotel operators to Toccoa. Tourists were drawn to Toccoa Falls, located two miles west of the town, where Isaac Haddock had built a large inn. Early downtown hotels included the Falls House operated by Mrs. C.S. Simpson; the Crawford Hotel, later named the Toccoa Inn, was operated by Colonel John Thrasher on the southeast corner of South Sage and Railroad streets; the Davenport House, run by S.V. Davenport and located on the northwest corner of Alexander and West Doyle streets; and the Swift House, located on South Alexander Street across from the depot. None of these hotels is extant. Another popular type of accommodation was the boarding house, including Dance House, Tabor House, Wilbanks House, Simpson House, and Cook House. The only extant hotel, now apartments, is the Alexander Apartments. Built by Mrs. J.O. Freeman after a fire destroyed the previous building, she operated the hotel with her daughter, Lou Mae Freeman Collier, until Mrs. Freeman's death in 1945. By 1967 R.V. and Laura Murray had bought the hotel and then converted it to apartments.

The town's growth came to a halt following a fire early in 1883 that destroyed most of the businesses in an area bounded by Doyle, Alexander, Foreacre, and Sage streets. Merchants rebuilt, but used brick instead of wood for their businesses. Bricks for the new buildings were shaped and fired in a local brickyard owned by the Hitt family. The brickyard was located near Hill Street and Collins Road, outside of the historic district. It is believed that most of the older brick buildings in the county were built from bricks made at the brickyard.

Among the early builders in Toccoa was E. Levi Prater, a master builder. Prater, a Hall County native and self-taught builder, moved to Toccoa in the 1890s. He constructed a number of homes, including the Simmons House, the earliest known structure built by Prater (built 1903 and National Register listed), the Walter-Davis House (1906 and National Register listed, outside of the district) and public buildings including the Stephens County Jail and Sheriff's House and the First Baptist Church (no longer extant).

Congregations, including Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterians built houses of worship inside the district. Today only the First Presbyterian Church, constructed in the 1950s, is located in the district. The others have built larger buildings outside of the district. The Jewish inhabitants had to go to Atlanta or Anderson, South Carolina, to worship.

From its beginning, Toccoa educated its children. A one-teacher school was built in 1873, and in 1883, the electorate passed a referendum on a \$6,000 bond issue and a city school system was established. White and black students attended separate schools. White trustees were A.H. McAllister, Edward Schaefer, W.R.

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Bruce, T.C. Vickery, and J.P. Newman. Black trustees were Sharper Lincoln, Commodore Ellington, Nathaniel Williams, Zack Williams, and Richard Prather. None of the historic school buildings are extant. In 1971 the city and county schools were consolidated and a new facility built, outside of the historic district.

The town grew rapidly and by 1890 Toccoa had 900 residents, 600 of whom were listed as white and 300 as black. There were hotels, banks, churches, schools, 24 stores, 125 houses, three doctors, and three lawyers. Businesses included a maker of harnesses and buggy umbrellas, a guano dealer, dry goods stores, an undertaker, furniture dealer, livery stables, mercantile stores, bars, a jewelry store, general merchandise stores, department store, hotels, boarding houses, saw mills, grist mills, corn mills, cotton seed and cotton oil mills, a tannery, canning plant, and brick kiln. Sanborn maps from 1897 and 1906 show warehouses, loading docks, and cotton storage facilities located along the railroad tracks.

Soon after the town was established, A.H. Mills and Morgan McJunkin started a newspaper, *The Northeast Georgia Herald*, in 1874. The equipment was brought from Clarkesville to Toccoa. Mills died not long afterward and the paper was sold to Thomas Crymes and J.M. Freeman who renamed it *The Toccoa Herald*. The office was on South Public Square. Edward Schaefer bought it in the 1880s and renamed it *The Toccoa News*. The office was then at the corner of N. Sage and E. Tugalo streets. When Stephens County was formed in 1905, the paper was named *The Toccoa Record*, and in 1906, the offices moved to Doyle Street, where it remains today.

Infrastructure improvements followed the development of the town with the years between 1890 and 1920 being Toccoa's greatest period of building. The first telephone system, the Toccoa Telegraph and Telephone Company, began to serve the public in 1896. In 1911, L.P. Cook sold it to Edward Schaefer. Schaefer changed the name to the Stephens County Telephone Company. The system was originally located upstairs in the large building located on the northeast corner of Sage and Doyle streets. Georgia Continental Telephone Company purchased the system in 1939 and soon there were approximately 400 lines. Another means of communication was the radio. The main studio for the station was located in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church with a separate studio in the Albermarle Hotel. This radio station operated from 1928 to 1933 at which time it moved to Athens. The district has one theater building, the Star Theater, located on West Doyle Street in a 1890s building across from the courthouse.

In 1899 the city granted a franchise to E.P. Simpson to establish the Toccoa Falls Light and Power Company for the purpose of providing power to the city. By 1901 electric streetlights were operational in Toccoa. In 1915 the city established its own power plant on Toccoa Creek called Toccoa Power and Light Company. A city waterworks system was established in 1907 with the water supply originating from a 20-acre spring-fed lake on top of a nearby mountain.

The 1906 *Cyclopedia of Georgia* boasted "the inhabitants (of Toccoa) enjoy the very best school and church privileges." The town featured "an international money order post office with rural free delivery, many successful business houses, a leather manufacturing company, a sash and blind factory, furniture works, saw-mills, a cotton seed oil mill, fertilizer works, two banks and a cotton mill of 5,000 spindles."

The city's charter was revised in 1898 and the name changed from its chartered name of Toccoa City to Toccoa as part of the movement that began for the town to become the county seat. By 1905 Toccoa's population was about 2,800 people, which was more than the population of Clarkesville, the county seat of Habersham County. A popular movement to split away from Habersham County resulted in the formation, by the state legislature, of the separate county of Stephens with Toccoa as the county seat. Stephens County was formed out of Habersham and Franklin counties on August 18, 1905. The mayor of Toccoa in 1905 was T.A. Capps; city council members were N.L. Garland, E.E. Mitchell, H.T. Moseley, and Dr. John H. Edge. G.T. Goode was city clerk and C.H. Dance city treasurer.

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As the county seat, Toccoa needed a courthouse and jail to fulfill its role as the administrative and judicial center of the county. The jail, built by the Pauly Jail Building Company of St. Louis, Missouri, in 1907 on North Pond Street, is no longer extant. Founded in 1856 by P.J. Pauly, Sr., the Pauly Jail Building Company is still in business today, operating as the oldest professional correctional facilities contractor in the United States. A contract for the construction of the courthouse was awarded to Falls City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky. Architect H.L. Lawson designed the Neoclassical building (National Register listed). Ground was broken in April 1907 and the courthouse completed in 1908.

The population of the town reached 3,500 in 1910 and by 1911, Toccoa could boast of four major banks: the First National, Farmers and Merchants, Toccoa Banking Company, and the Bank of Toccoa. By the end of the Great Depression only the Bank of Toccoa had survived. The Stephens Federal Savings and Loan Association started in 1933 out of a one-room rental facility on Sage Street. In 1935 it became the Stephens Federal Savings and Loan Association. The bank grew at a rapid rate and purchased the First Methodist Church property at the corner of Doyle and Pond streets in 1955. Construction of a new building was completed in 1958.

Community clubs included the Toccoa Woman's Club organized in 1916 by 23 local women concerned about civic affairs. Their first clubhouse was located on W. Doyle Street in the center of the block across from the courthouse. They sold the clubhouse to the American Legion and moved to Savannah Street. Their Savannah Street clubhouse was in use until 1956 when they gave the clubhouse to the county and city for use as a library, and it was used as such until 1970 when the building was torn down and a new library constructed on the site.

The public library had begun as a WPA project in 1937 and was originally housed in a corner of the Toccoa High School library. The library moved again in 1939 to W. Doyle Street; later they moved upstairs in the Terrell Building (Harper's 5 & 10 Cent Store); and then moved upstairs over the city hall building at Sage and E. Tugalo streets. Here they remained until 1956 when the woman's club offered their clubhouse at N. Alexander and W. Savannah streets as a permanent home.

The Toccoa Lodge Number 309 of Free and Accepted Masons was incorporated in 1876. Their original home was in the old city hall building (not extant) located at Tugalo and Sage streets. The Masons moved out of the city hall building after a fire in 1942 damaged the building. They then constructed a new building at the corner of Sage and Railroad streets at that time (no longer extant). In 1984 the Masons moved to a building at the corner of Broad and Savannah streets (outside of the district).

The formation of a small Jewish community in Toccoa brought merchants to the downtown area. Jewish-owned stores included Metz's 5 & 10 Cent Store (56 E. Doyle St.), Green's (32 E. Doyle St.), Skodnik's, Blumenthal's (46 E. Doyle St.), and Sal Hartman's dry goods stores. Mr. and Mrs. Max Green owned Green's Department Store, one of the largest stores in town that carried quality clothing for the entire family. From 1940 to 1960, these stores thrived and provided goods to shoppers; however, a combination of attrition and the construction of downtown canopies in the 1970s, led to the demise of the Jewish-owned businesses in the downtown area. By 1996 Jewish merchants had abandoned downtown Toccoa.

The first African Americans arrived in the Toccoa region with the Jarrett and Prather families in the 18th century. Their descendants later ran cafes and barbershops or worked with the railroad and local hotels. Some of the African-American citizens who lived in Toccoa in the late 1800s and early 1900s included Bryson Prather, a bricklayer; Professor J.J. Taylor, an educator; Ike Gilliard and Hosea Clay who owned and ran local restaurants; Dr. J.N. Latimore, Toccoa's first black doctor; Reverend Allen, founder of an independent black school; and Jim White, owner and operator of a barber shop for whites.

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An African-American business district was located behind the former Belk Department Store building at 142 N. Sage Street, adjacent to the alley that is located between Sage and Pond streets. The alley is now named Rice-Lewis-Gilliard Way, in recognition of some of the African-American businesses that were located along the alley. Milton Rice had a barbershop, Sam Lewis owned a shoe repair business, and Earl Gaines operated a blacksmith shop. These businesses were located along the alley and were demolished during the urban renewal project of the early 1970s.

Two other well-known African Americans in Toccoa were Leroy Roberts, Jr. and Bobby Byrd. Roberts was born in 1921 in Toccoa. Roberts served as a Tuskegee Airman in the 32nd fighter group in Italy during World War II and later in the Korean War. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Air Force Commendation, and retired as a lieutenant colonel. Byrd was a bandleader, arranger, and pianist for James Brown's band until 1970. Byrd, Brown, and others originally formed a band known as James Brown and the Fabulous Flames, a musical group that was to propel Brown to fame.

The proliferation of the automobile in the 1920s spelled the end for local livery and blacksmith businesses and began the expansion of auto sales showrooms and filling stations. By 1929 all of the principal business and residential streets in the city had been paved. The earliest car dealer was Dolf Fricks, who was the town's first Ford dealer. Other car dealers were W. C. Edwards who sold Lincolns, the Farmer Brothers, Claude Groover, Schaefer Lawson, and Marvin Tabor, Sr., who founded his Chevrolet motor company on Foreacre Street near the depot in the 1920s. A filling station, constructed in Toccoa in the late 1920s at the corner of Pond and Tugalo streets, is still extant and now houses a gift shop. A 1954 filling station is located on the corner of Hill Street and East Currahee Street and represents the corresponding change in architecture as automobile designers built larger cars.

Boosting the Toccoa economy in the 1930s was the arrival of two new plants. The J. & P. Coats Thread Company plant, located west of downtown, and the R.G. LeTourneau Road Equipment Company provided employment to many.

A Works Progress Administration guide to Georgia in 1940 described Toccoa as "a trading center for the surrounding productive farm and orchard area. Four furniture factories utilize the oak, pine, and poplar timber from the mountain forests and the abundance of hydroelectric power generated at the near-by Yonah Dam. Textile mills manufacture a coarse grade of cotton cloth, work pants, and riding breeches."

World War II provided an economic boost to Toccoa's downtown due to the establishment of Camp Toccoa, a 270-acre U.S. Army training camp. The camp, located about six miles south of downtown near Currahee Mountain, housed and trained approximately 17,000 men during the course of the war. Camp Toccoa had been established in 1938 as a training camp for the Georgia National Guard. After World War II broke out, the War Department chose the location for a training camp for the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment under Colonel Robert Sink. The 506th later became part of the 101st Airborne Division and served in Europe.

Camp Toccoa was unique in that volunteers went there directly from civilian life and took paratrooper basic training. When the first paratroopers arrived, the camp consisted of tents lined along dirt streets. The army brought in personnel to upgrade the facilities and build more permanent barracks. The men who trained at Camp Toccoa survived 12-hour days of push-ups, pull-ups, and runs of three miles up and three miles down Currahee Mountain. When the men were not training, they caught the bus into Toccoa where they mingled with townspeople and frequented local businesses.

One of the units trained at Camp Toccoa has since gained fame as the "Band of Brothers" who jumped into Normandy behind Utah Beach on D-Day and who were the subjects of an HBO movie by the same name.

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The 1st Platoon, Company E, of the 506th paratroopers unit arrived in England in 1943 where preparations were underway for a buildup of military strength to free Europe of Nazi occupation. One of the immediate problems was inadequate housing for the troops and so arrangements were made to house the men in private homes or unused horse stables. Able and Easy Companies lived in a six-bay stable in Aldebourne, Wiltshire, England, prior to D-Day. In 2004 the stable was disassembled and brought to Toccoa where it was reassembled and placed in a specially built extension of the World War II museum attached to the railroad depot.

Dismantled soon after the war, the land (outside of the district) on which Camp Toccoa had operated was deeded by the state of Georgia to the local government for an industrial park. In some areas, concrete foundations, floors, and streets are visible reminders of the camp that trained thousands of servicemen for a vital role in our nation's history.

After the war ended, the nation and Toccoa began to recover. A bus depot was constructed south of the railroad tracks on the corner of Sage and Railroad streets in 1949. The RC Bottling Plant at 207 West Currahee Street and the phone company building at 166 East Tugalo Street were also built in the postwar years. New bank buildings, such as the 1958 Stephens Federal Bank, designed by Gainesville architect John H. Cunningham, were completed. Regions Bank and 1st Franklin Financial Corporation were constructed in the late 1960s. The downtown area continued to prosper as a center for dry goods, groceries, and services such as dental and medical care. With the completion of the new U.S. Post Office building in 1964, the city moved its operations into the former WPA-era post office building on Alexander Street. Growth also resulted in the building of a new hospital and high school, located outside of the district. A new public library was also constructed in the district in the early 1970s.

Despite Toccoa's resurgence in the 1950s and 1960s, the business district faced the loss of downtown businesses by the early 1970s as retail shops left downtown Toccoa for the suburbs and new shopping areas located on Highway 17, east of the downtown core. To counteract the business deficits, Toccoa's leaders promoted a novel idea that they hoped would attract customers to shop downtown. A flyer from the early 1970s promoted the idea of a downtown shopping mall created by canopies overhanging the storefronts, which would create walkable shopping similar to the malls that were pulling shoppers from the downtown district. The flyer declared that there was "No Time For Delay" and featured a photo of a downtown street in 1966 with an artist's conceptual drawing of the street with a canopied mall. The idea caught hold and work soon began on the central business district. Planning consultants for the project were Harland Bartholomew and Associates; economic consultant was Julian Diaz; and architectural consultant was J. Harold Townes, Jr. Concrete canopies were installed on Doyle Street from Alexander to Pond streets and on Sage Street from Tugalo to Foreacre streets. It was a major urban renewal project, which was completed in 1972 at a cost of \$1.8 million. Rather than reviving the downtown business district, the canopied mall had the opposite effect. While the canopies attracted recreational walkers, the result for downtown businesses was calamitous and profound. Downtown Toccoa suddenly became an ineffectual location for shopping. In the ensuing years, the mall deteriorated to the point that walkers often had to dodge pieces of concrete falling from the overhanging canopy.

In 2007 the canopies were removed and the downtown returned to its original configuration. The removal of the canopies has opened the city's downtown commercial center to new life. Many of the buildings have rehabilitated storefronts and plans for other buildings are underway. The World War II museum in the expanded railroad depot, festivals, and other events are drawing shoppers and visitors once again to downtown Toccoa.

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Toccoa. Files, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia. Stephens County Library, Toccoa, GA.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ Stephens County Courthouse (listed 1980)
☒ James B. Simmons House (listed 1983)
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

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

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 45 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 17 285960 3828870
Zone Easting Northing

C 17 286600 3828400
Zone Easting Northing

B 17 286600 3828860
Zone Easting Northing

D 17 285950 3828410
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is indicated with a heavy black line on the attached National Register map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the intact, contiguous, historic resources associated with the downtown commercial area of Toccoa.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynn Speno

organization Historic Preservation Division, DNR

date August 2011

street & number 254 Washington Street

telephone 404-651-5911

city or town Atlanta

state GA

zip code 30334

e-mail Lynn.speno@dnr.state.ga.us

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Stephens County, GA
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Toccoa Downtown Historic District

City or Vicinity: Toccoa

County: Stephens State: Georgia

Photographer: Charlie Miller

Date Photographed: March 24, 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. Stephens County Courthouse on West Doyle Street. Photographer facing northwest.
2. First Presbyterian Church, 105 Tugalo Street. Photographer facing north.
3. Toccoa City Hall, 92 Alexander Street. Photographer facing west.
4. Railroad depot, 160 Alexander Street. Photographer facing northwest.
5. U.S. Post Office, 128 Alexander Street. Photographer facing west.
6. Courthouse Annex, 12 Tugalo Street. Photographer facing north.
7. 25-79 Doyle Street. Photographer facing northwest.
8. 42-46 Doyle Street. Photographer facing south.
9. 33-41 Doyle Street. Photographer facing north.
10. 12-20 Doyle Street. Photographer facing southeast.
11. Doyle Street across from courthouse. Photographer facing southeast.
12. Sage Street. Photographer facing southeast.
13. Doyle Street. Photographer facing east.
14. Stephens Federal Bank, 12 Doyle Street. Photographer facing east.
15. 145 Alexander Street. Photographer facing east.
16. 157 Pond Street. Photographer facing northwest.
17. 77 Doyle Street. Photographer facing north.
18. 23 Savannah Street. Photographer facing northeast.
19. Savannah Street. Photographer facing northwest.

Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Stephens County, GA
County and State

20. 74 Tugalo Street, James Simmons House. Photographer facing north.
21. Alexander Apartments, 40 Alexander Street. Photographer facing west.
22. Foreacre Street. Photographer facing west.
23. Bridge on Pond Street. Photographer facing east.
24. Car dealership on Pond Street. Photographer facing east.
25. Bus depot on Railroad Street. Photographer facing south.
26. Bottling company plant on Currahee Street. Photographer facing southwest.
27. Motel and Mitchell-Herndon-Campbell House, corner Currahee and Pond streets. Photographer facing south.
28. 27 and 37 Doyle Street. Photographer facing southeast.
29. Sage Street. Photographer facing northwest.
30. 11-39 Doyle Street. Photographer facing northeast.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple owners
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Toccoa Downtown Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: GEORGIA, Stephens

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/21/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/06/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000879

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12/6/11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Commercial downtown district Pos
example of a cross rail town plan. 1873-1964*

RECOM./CRITERIA As C

REVIEWER Antoine

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 12/6/11

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 1 of 30



**Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 2 of 30**



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 3 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 4 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 5 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 6 of 30



**Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 7 of 30**



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 8 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 9 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 10 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 11 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 12 of 30



**Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 13 of 30**



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 14 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 15 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 16 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 17 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 18 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 19 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 20 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 21 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 22 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 23 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 24 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 25 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 26 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 27 of 30



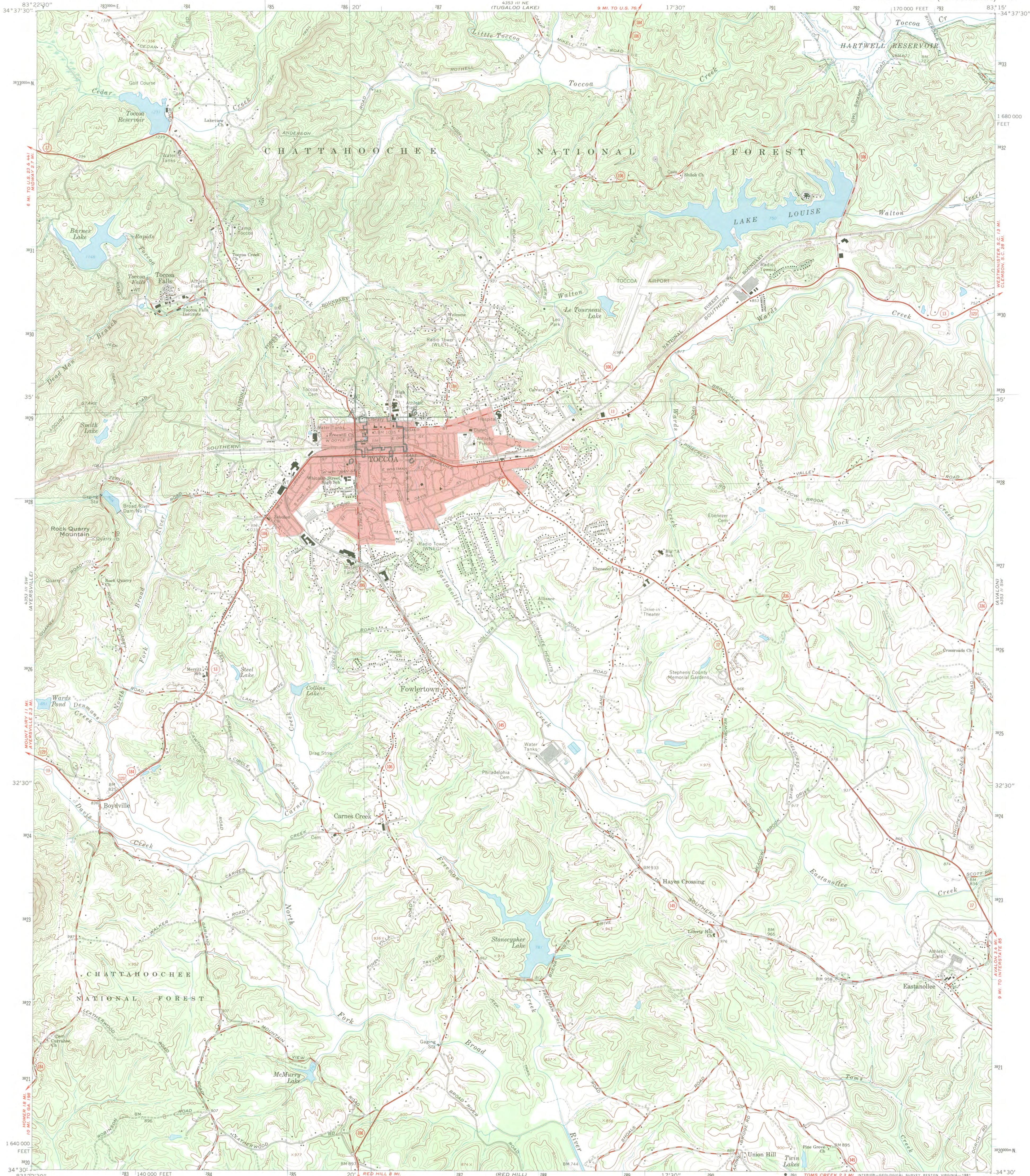
Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 28 of 30



Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 29 of 30



**Toccoa Downtown Historic District
Stephens County, Georgia
Photograph 30 of 30**



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Georgia Geodetic Survey

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs

taken 1956. Field checked 1964

Polyconic projection.

10,000-foot grid based on Georgia coordinate system, east zone

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,

zone 17, shown in blue, 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983

move the projection lines 9 meters south and

11 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field

lines where generally visible on aerial photographs

This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings

are shown

Hartwell Reservoir reservation boundary from maps

by U. S. Corps of Engineers

Area covered by dashed light-blue pattern is subject

to controlled inundation by Hartwell Reservoir

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of

the National or State reservations shown on this map

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

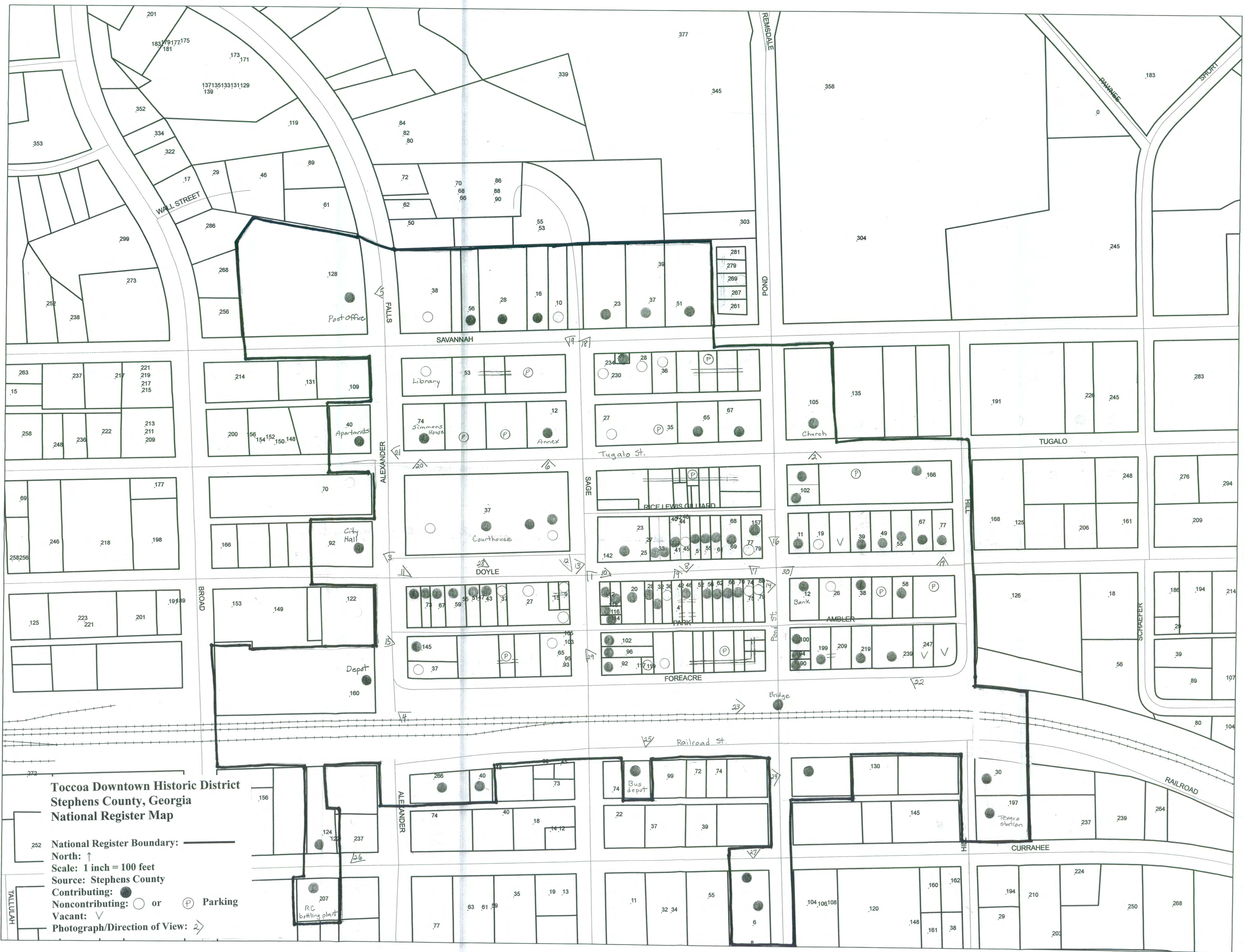
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TOCCOA, GA.

N3430—W8315/7.5

1964

AMS 4353 III SE—SERIES V845





HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS
DIVISION DIRECTOR

September 14, 2011

Mr. Dallan C. Wordekemper, CCIM
Federal Preservation Officer
Real Estate Specialist
United States Postal Service
475 l'Enfant Plaza, SW
Suite 6670
Washington, DC 20260-1862

RE: United States Post Office, located at 128 N. Alexander Street, Toccoa, Georgia
Toccoa Downtown Historic District, Toccoa, Stephens County

Dear Mr. Wordekemper:

We are writing to inform you that the above-referenced historic district nomination was presented at our Georgia National Register Review Board meeting in June 2011. The United States Post Office located at 128 N. Alexander Street is a contributing building located within the district. The Board recommended that the State Historic Preservation Officer sign the nomination and submit it to the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for final review and listing in the National Register.

The 1964 United States Post Office in Toccoa is an excellent example of an International Style public building constructed in a small Georgia town. Modern architecture was introduced to small towns in rural Georgia through building projects that involved public funds. These projects included the construction of schools, public health centers, and post offices. Modern post offices were built in suburbs and in small towns that out grew smaller post offices. The United States Post Offices in Pembroke (1959) and Butler (1963) are typical of post office built in the decades following World War II. They are small, free-standing, masonry buildings located near the center of town and are contributing properties to their respective National Register-listed historic districts. The post offices are excellent example of the International Style because their simple compact massing, emphasis on modern building materials and techniques, and their lack of ornament represent the confidence, enthusiasm, and optimism of the postwar building boom. For these reasons, the United States Post Office in Toccoa contributes to the significance of the Toccoa Downtown Historic District.

Our office is preparing the final nomination materials to send to the National Register. Enclosed is a copy of the portion of the nomination citing the property under your jurisdiction. If you wish to comment on the nomination, please send your comments to me before October 15, 2011, when we will forward the nomination to the National Register.

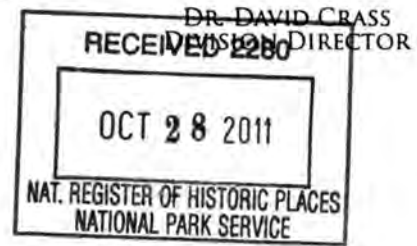
Sincerely,

Richard Cloues
Historic Resources Section Chief and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER



October 17, 2011

J. Paul Loether
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W. 8th floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the following nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for your consideration:

Toccoa Downtown Historic District (Stephens Co.)

Sincerely,

Gretchen Brock
National Register & Survey Program Manager