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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for the National Register of Historic Places 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 Downtown Millen Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Along Cotton Ave. roughly bounded by N. Hendrix St.,
East Winthrope Ave., N. Masonic St., and the
railroad line.
city, town Millen (N/A) vicinity of
county Jenkins code GA 165
state Georgia code GA zip code 30442

(N/A) not for publication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	44	15
sites	0	0
structures	4	0
objects	2	0
total	50	15

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1

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.

Mark R. Edwards
Signature of certifying official

10/07/96
Date

Mark R. Edwards
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
Edson H. Beall

11-15-96 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:

() see continuation sheet

Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

INDUSTRY: waterworks

GOVERNMENT: courthouse, city hall, correctional facility, post office

COMMERCE: department store, specialty store, professional, financial institution, warehouse

RECREATION and CULTURE: theater

Current Functions:

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

GOVERNMENT: courthouse, post office,

COMMERCE: restaurant, department store, specialty store, professional

RECREATION and CULTURE: museum, movie theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER: Commercial Victorian Italianate, Stripped Classical

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival

Materials:

foundation Brick

walls Brick, wood, concrete

roof Metal, asphalt

other N/A

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Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Downtown Millen Historic District is located in the central business district of Millen, the county seat of Jenkins County. The district extends over portions of six city blocks along Cotton Avenue, stretching north over sections of North Gray and North Daniel streets and along several segments of East Winthrope Avenue. Its character is typical of a small railroad town commercial area. Its compact, linear nature is defined by the railroad line running in an east-west direction along Cotton Avenue. Railroad-related resources of particular significance are the two railroad depots, tracks, and a concrete water tower. The district's flat terrain is punctuated by the two strong vertical elements: the clock tower on the Jenkins County Courthouse and the concrete water tower at the town's western edge. While building stock in the district ranges in style, materials, and age, from the 1870s to post-World War II, the majority of historic buildings were constructed in the late 19th to early 20th centuries as commercial one- and two-story brick buildings. This common commercial vernacular ties together the stylistic variations into cohesive blockfronts. With several exceptions, the historic buildings retain their integrity, are in good to excellent condition, and continue to be occupied.

The settlement that was eventually named Millen came into being as a result of the railroad, and its layout reflects that origin. Millen's commercial and early residential district developed in a linear arrangement along the tracks. The buildings on Cotton Avenue, while on lots of varying sizes, share a common zero lot line setback. The town expanded to the north, developing according to a gridiron street pattern of non-uniform, rectangular blocks. The configuration is still in evidence today, with several changes. The sections of the five streets that lead south from East Winthrope Avenue to Cotton Avenue - North Hendrix, Gray, Daniel, Harvey, and Masonic - retain their slight yet discernible orientation to the northeast, opening onto Cotton Avenue at 90-degree angles. This orientation places Cotton Avenue parallel with the railroad tracks. Spatially, the area between Winthrope and Cotton forms a wedge or island shape, from which the streets north of Winthrope continue at 90-degree angles.

Changes made to the original town layout appear to have occurred between the years 1919 and 1930 and are reflected in the first two City of Millen maps as surveyed and drawn by Mr. J. E. Twitty. The lots along the north side of Cotton Avenue from Daniel Street to approximately 180 feet east of Gray Street bayed out approximately twenty feet into Cotton Avenue. By 1930, Cotton Avenue had been realigned by straightening this bayed area. The second significant change was the extension of several lanes between Winthrope and Cotton

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Avenue. Originally part of Burke and Screven counties, Millen became the county seat of newly created Jenkins County at its enactment in 1905. It was at this time that the need for a courthouse arose, and a rectangular block of land located in the approximate center of town, bounded by Winthrope, Daniel, Harvey, and College, was chosen. Since Millen became a county seat well after its establishment as a railroad hub, the courthouse and courthouse "square" were not part of the original layout.

The majority of historic buildings in the proposed district are one and two stories in height and constructed of brick in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For the most part lacking in distinctive elaboration, many share similar cornice detailing. The minor variations create visual interest and play a part in the architectural unity Cotton Avenue still presents (photographs 4, 7, 9, 14, 15). Other key factors include building abutments, storefront facades, and rhythmically spaced windows. There are a number of buildings, however, that do not conform to this typical description, including four wood-framed structures dating from the 1870s to the early part of the 20th century, several more elaborately detailed buildings, the depots, and water tower.

The four wood-framed buildings are the earliest buildings remaining in Millen. The earliest of these dates from 1872 and is locally known as the Holland House. Located on the southwest corner of East Winthrope Avenue and North Gray Street, the two-story, front-gabled Folk Victorian with modest porch detailing faces east on Gray Street. The house was built and lived in briefly by contractor John Edenfield, who constructed a number of other significant buildings in Millen. The Holland house was purchased by "Judge" Josiah Holland who was a Justice of the Peace and collections agent in the days before the town of Millen was incorporated. The wood-framed building to the south of the Holland House was built in 1888 as an office building for Mr. Holland. The one-story, front-gabled Folk Victorian shotgun with eave brackets and porch detailing is believed to have been constructed by John Edenfield (photograph 3). The building was used by the City of Millen as City Hall from 1928 to 1936 at which time a new brick City Hall was built on the lot just south of this building. The Dekle law office on East Winthrope Avenue is similar in design to the Holland law office. The Dekle building was originally located on the northeast corner of Gray and Winthrope but was moved to make way for the Lane Building in 1914. The fourth wood-framed building is the c.1875 commercial building on the corner of Cotton Avenue and North Masonic Street (photograph 17).

The three-story, brick Lane Building was constructed by John Edenfield and housed the Wayside Hotel at one point in its history and was the

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plant for the Millen News in the 1930s. Next to this building is a former one-story, brick, Plymouth car dealership (photograph 23).

There are several one- and two-story brick buildings and other structures that do not fit the typical building profile found throughout much of the district. These more distinctive and architecturally elaborate buildings include the 1928 N. P. Economos Building located on the corner of Cotton Avenue and North Harvey. Its asymmetrical, polychromatic facade is unique to the Cotton Avenue district. A second notable building is the three-story, brick, Kenwin building (photograph 8). Originally constructed as the Bank of Millen in 1893, its function changed to retail sales in 1954, when a new bank building was erected on the next lot east. It features a decorative pressed-tin parapet, herringbone-patterned brickwork in the upper story, and rusticated stone belt course; a Palladian effect is created in the upper stories by the arrangement of windows and arch. A decorative cast-iron exterior stairway leads to the second floor.

The late 19th-century, two-story, brick Daniel building on the corner of Cotton Avenue and North Gray Street features stencil-cut pressed-tin cornice, granite window sills, and segmental brick arches over second-floor windows (photograph 5). Next to the Daniel building is the two-story, brick Godbee building constructed in 1905 by John Edenfield.

A c.1900, two-story, three-bay building, known as the opera house, and the c.1903, one-story, brick Millen News building anchor the eastern end of the district along Cotton Avenue. The front facade of the opera house is articulated with three arched openings and corresponding arched openings above the windows on the second story. A decorative cast-iron exterior stairway leads to the second floor. The building, constructed by John Edenfield, was Millen's first theater.

Two New Deal-era public buildings include the 1938, one-story, brick United States Post Office located on the corner of East Winthrope Avenue and North Daniel Street and the 1936 Millen City Hall. The Colonial Revival-style post office features a front entrance with engaged pilasters and fanlight, marble trim, cornice, steps, and platform and a flat composition roof enclosed by parapet wall (photograph 22). The plans for the building were prepared by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. The Treasury Department awarded the construction contract to the Batson-Cook Company of West Point, Georgia.

Funded through the Works Progress Administration, the brick, Stripped Classical-style Millen City Hall is located on North Gray Street

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(photograph 3). Designed by Elroy G. Smith of Augusta, the building retains its original exterior light fixtures. A c.1900, one-story, brick jail is located directly behind the City Hall and retains its metal cellblocks. The 1936 city hall is now used for community meeting space. The former city waterworks is located near the railroad tracks. Constructed c.1900, the building was originally used as a Ford Motor Company car dealership before becoming part of the city's water system. A water storage tank is also located on this property. The waterworks operated until 1954.

Resources of pivotal significance to the theme of railroad transportation in Millen are two depots and an associated water tower. The depot in current use as a freight depot by the Norfolk Southern Railroad was built c.1910. The building's Craftsman-inspired construction features a hipped roof, pronounced triangular knee braces, and decorative window treatments (photograph 6). The second depot, constructed in 1900, is farther east on Cotton Avenue and served as the old freight depot (photograph 10). It is currently a museum and offices for the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Commission. The depot's hipped roof and knee braces echo those of the freight depot. Until at least the 1930s, the present freight depot served as the passenger depot and vice versa. These functions are recorded on both the 1919 and 1930 city maps.

The four-story railroad coal chute, which was built in 1925, was demolished in 1995 (photographs 10, 11). Constructed of cast-in-place concrete, it was the only such coal chute constructed on the Central of Georgia Railroad and it was one of only three that remained in the state.

The massive, 1918 water tower that anchors the western boundary of the district is constructed of cast-in-place concrete. Located near the railroad, it provided water for the steam locomotives (photograph 1).

The 1910, Neoclassical Revival-style courthouse, designed by architect L. F. Goodrich, was listed in the National Register in 1980 (photograph 21). The courthouse square features two commemorative stone monuments. The Civil War monument, placed in the square in 1909, is a granite obelisk surmounted by a standing figure of a Confederate infantryman. The second monument, which dates to the late 1920s, is a rough-hewn granite stone with a plaque that honors the women who worked at the Wayside Home for Confederate Soldiers.

Landscaping in the district is minimal with grassed areas around the freestanding commercial, transportation-related, and governmental buildings. One historic residential building, now used for offices,

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located along E. Winthrope Avenue, is included within the district (photograph 20).

As a whole, the Downtown Millen Historic District retains its cohesion, scale, and integrity as a historic commercial district whose character and identity are rooted in its relationship with the railroad. A few noncontributing buildings, such as the 1954 Millen Bank and the 1960s Pal Theater, all on Cotton Avenue, may be eligible for inclusion in an amended district in the future, if they retain their present degree of integrity.

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
Commerce
Community Planning and Development/Transportation
Politics/Government

Period of Significance:

1835 - 1946

Significant Dates:

1835 - Settlement "79", later called Millen, established.
1839 - Central of Georgia Railroad built from Millen to Savannah.
1852 - Augusta & Savannah Railroad built from Millen to Augusta. Name
Millen first appears in records of Central Railroad and
Banking Co.
1881 - Town of Millen incorporated.
1905 - Jenkins County formed with Millen as county seat.
1906 - Town of Millen becomes City of Millen.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

John Edenfield (contractor), Godbee Bldg., Opera Hse., Holland Hse.
L. F. Goodrich (architect), Jenkins County Courthouse
Elroy G. Smith (architect), City Hall
Louis Simon (Supervising Architect of the Treasury), Post Office

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

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Downtown Millen Historic District is an excellent example of a railroad-related commercial district with a large number of intact historic resources which illustrate the types and styles of buildings used in a south Georgia city during the late 1800s to 1945. Because the district contains various intact railroad-related resources, includes rare, wood-framed commercial buildings, and has few nonhistoric resources, the district is significant at the state level.

The Downtown Millen Historic District is significant in the area of architecture. Just as the railroad was a catalyst to economic and commercial development in Millen, its influence was also reflected in Millen's architecture. The district contains a variety of historic commercial buildings which are representative of their dates of construction. A majority of the buildings are typical one- and two-story brick storefront buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; consequently, the district is very representative of this commercial architectural period. There are also a number of more architecturally distinctive resources, including Stripped Classical-style Millen City Hall, a Colonial Revival-style post office, two Craftsman-inspired depots, and a cast-in-place concrete water tower. In addition there are four wood-framed buildings, three of which display Folk Victorian decorative elements. These buildings create a cohesive historic district.

The historic district is significant in the area of commerce. From its earliest beginnings as a result of the railroad, Millen has been known for its commercial resources. The railroad continued to serve as a catalyst for Millen's growing commercial district, changing its economic structure from a localized one to an economy of more national scope. Downtown Millen is significant as the historic commercial center of the surrounding area, which provided a variety of local retail and professional services, banking, and rail-related services.

The district is significant in the area of community planning and development/transportation. The district is significant as a 19th-century railroad town laid out using a linear street pattern with the major commercial street, Cotton Avenue, parallel to the rail line. Millen was established as a result of the railroad. The Central Railroad Company was granted a charter to build a line from Savannah to Macon via Millen in 1834. By 1835, the first inn had sprung up along what would become Cotton Avenue. Built and operated by Robert Hendricks Gray, the inn originally served stage travelers, eventually

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catering to railroad personnel and passengers alike. Then known as "79" because the station was 79 miles from Savannah, the settlement continued to grow as the line was completed from Savannah to Millen in 1839 and completed to Macon in 1843. The area continued to expand with the addition of a north-south line from Millen to Augusta built by the Augusta and Savannah Railroad in 1852 which is also the first time the settlement appeared in railroad records as "Millen Junction." Because of its status as an east-west and north-south railroad hub during the War between the States, Millen Junction was burned by General Sherman in December of 1864 and the tracks to Savannah, Sherman's next destination, were destroyed. The town and railroad rebuilt. A second wooden depot was constructed in 1867; the old freight depot was built in 1900, and the current freight depot dates from c. 1910. The 1918 water tower stands in tribute to the coal and steam era of the railroad. In the late 19th- to early 20th-century, the railroad served as a major link between Millen and points in all directions. As a railroad hub, goods, materials, products, and passengers flowed through Millen to and from a wide geographical area. New lines continued to be laid during these years, connecting an increasing number of places with Millen and shaping and influencing its growth and development in a variety of ways.

The district is significant for the theme of politics/government because the city hall, the county courthouse, and the U.S. Post Office which represent the presence of the city, county, and Federal governments in the community.

National Register Criteria

The district is significant under National Register Criterion A as the railroad hub and commercial center of the city of Millen and as the governmental seat of Jenkins County. It meets the "broad patterns of American history" because, as a railroad hub, Millen was a meeting point and a dissemination point for goods, materials, products, peoples, and cultures.

The district is significant under National Register Criterion C as a commercial area representative of architectural styles and character typical of a small railroad hub that experienced increased economic growth and development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and became the county seat. The majority of buildings remain intact and retain their scale and massing.

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Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

The period of significance for the Downtown Millen Historic District is 1835-1946. The period of significance begins in 1835 when the first commercial building was constructed in the settlement of "79", the station 79 miles from Savannah which would become Millen. The 50-year cut-off period of 1946 is the ending period of significance.

Brooks Chevrolet and Pontiac dealership on Cotton Avenue (photograph 2) is counted among the contributing resources. Although constructed in 1947, less than one year following the period of significance, it contributes to the significance of the historic district under Criteria A and C in the areas of architecture, commerce, and transportation. The building has been altered but retains most aspects of historic integrity.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

Overview

Millen, Georgia, originated as "79", the railroad post 79 miles from Savannah, the "Mother City of the Central Railroad," as it was called. Growing slowly from one inn established by Robert Hendricks Gray in 1835, Millen's growth accelerated in 1851 when it was chosen as the site for the junction of the line between Savannah and Augusta. Soon after, warehouses and other buildings were constructed in keeping with the major station Millen had become. A permanent depot was erected in 1860 at the cost of \$580, but it was burned four years later by Sherman on his "March to the Sea." Commercial Millen Junction, as it was then called, was destroyed in early December 1864, including Gray's Inn, the railroad buildings, and the warehouses. The track between Millen and Savannah was also destroyed by Union troops. Recovering slowly through the period of reconstruction, Georgia was readmitted to the Union in 1870. By 1881, incorporated Millen was again prospering. Its railroad-based economy had firmly established itself, and commercial activity, while diversified, revolved around cotton, its growing, processing, and shipping. Anxious to continue its prosperity and development, citizens petitioned for a new county to be closer to the seat of government. The county of Jenkins was formed in 1905 with Millen as its county seat. Millen's growth, both commercial and residential, accelerated in the early part of the 20th century as a result of becoming county seat, but the failure of the cotton economy followed by the Great Depression was prohibitive to continued widespread change and expansion at that time. The 1940s brought a return to commercial and industrial development, although largely outside of the area included in the proposed historic

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district. This trend continued through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, with at least one major new commercial or industrial development or expansion occurring in each decade. The Cotton Avenue commercial district reflected this growth and the changing times. A majority of historic buildings were "modernized" primarily by means of reversible facade coverings. The historic district, however, retains its historic integrity as the late-19th- and early-20th-century commercial center and railroad hub of Millen.

Historic Context

The vicinity of Millen, Georgia was first occupied by Native Americans. It is believed that the Southern Algonquin or the Shawnee were the first tribes to inhabit the general area. Prior to the arrival of the English in 1733, the Uchee or Yuchi, one of the tribes of the Creek Nation, occupied the territory that would become Jenkins County. This territory was part of the first tract of land ceded to General James Edward Oglethorpe by treaty with the Creeks in 1733. By 1750, the Yuchi had left the area, and white settlement began.

The earliest documented white settler in what would become Jenkins County was Francis Jones who arrived in 1764, six years after the division of Georgia into parishes in 1758. The land that now comprises Jenkins County, formed out of Burke and Screven counties in 1905, was part of St. George Parish. Burke and Screven counties were created in 1777. The earliest known communities in the Millen vicinity were Birdsville (circa 1820), Scarboro (circa 1840), and Brinsonville (circa 1840). White's Historical Collections of Georgia published in 1849 lists Brinsonville and Scarboro but omits the earlier Birdsville. Located about one- and one-half miles from Millen, Brinsonville, no longer in existence, was home to the large and influential Brinson family. Scarboro developed as station number seven on the Central railroad and had grown to prominence by 1840. It was a major refueling point for the wood burning engines of the time. Birdsville, home to the Phillip Jones family, also served as post office and stage stop on the Old Louisville Road. By 1850, Lawton or Lawtonville had grown up five miles north of Millen. The 40-acre Fort Lawton prison stockade, which was surrounded by a twenty-foot-tall wall enclosed the forty two acre camp, was constructed on Magnolia Springs near Lawton during the War between the States.

The site that became Millen had its origins in the history of the railroad. Railroading was less than ten years old in 1834 when the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia (later the Central of Georgia Railroad) was granted a charter by the state legislature to construct a line from Savannah to the interior of the state. A survey of the projected route was undertaken, and work began on the line to

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Macon in 1835. The route would go through what was soon to become Millen. The itinerary was chosen both to accommodate the more productive counties in route and to negotiate the best Ogeechee River crossing. The route would have gone through the body of Burke County and not through Millen except that the river crossing of choice did not permit any greater deviation than Millen's present site.

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Early Period as Station Post "79", 1835-1850

Before the line was completed to post "79" (later called Millen) in 1839, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hendricks Gray had established an inn on the Old Louisville Road in the vicinity of what is now Cotton Avenue. The inn served stagecoach traffic between Louisville and Savannah but also served railroad personnel and passengers after the line to Augusta transformed "79" from a station post into a junction. Robert Gray was named Postmaster in 1842, and the Gray family's role in the history of Millen is kept alive in the name of Gray Street, one of the first two streets to be named in the town.

In the same year that the Central's line was completed between Savannah and Millen, the state legislature granted another charter which would figure prominently in Millen's history. A group of stockholders incorporated under the name of the Waynesborough and Augusta Railroad was granted a charter to extend the existing line between Augusta and Waynesborough to connect with the Central line, with the stipulation that a junction be made somewhere in Burke County. After almost ten years, the money was raised and "79" was chosen as the junction. Upon completion, the line was leased to the Central.

MacPherson B. Millen of the Central served as superintendent of the project, staying at Gray's Inn in 1850. It is widely believed that Millen was named in honor of Mr. Millen, who played a major role in the development of the railroads in Georgia, and his sister Mary.

Millen Junction, Antebellum Period, 1851-1860

November 24, 1851, marked the opening of the line between Millen and Waynesborough. The settlement was now a junction point of the east-west line from Savannah to Macon and the north-south line from Millen to Augusta. The settlement became a major station. Warehouses and other railroad buildings were constructed, and a permanent depot was built in 1860 at the cost of \$580.

The first public record of the name "Millen" being used in reference to the new junction appears in a Central superintendent's report to his Board of Trustees on December 14, 1852:

The Central Rail Road should, as early as practicable, be placed among the first class Rail Roads of the Union--Besides full preparation for freighting business, (our great source of revenue), we should not fail to attract passengers by furnishing proper accommodations for them throughout the line. As soon as the Augusta and Waynesborough line shall be opened through to

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Augusta, it is reasonable to expect that the great crossing of travel through Georgia, will be over our road from Millen to Macon. . .

Thus, after 1852, the settlement was known as Millen or Millen Junction. The town began to prosper, and in 1860 it had, beside Gray's Inn, two residences, a store, and various railroad buildings, including a new passenger depot. It was located about a quarter of a mile west of the present depot and about 100 feet from Gray's Inn which sat in the forks of the "Y" made by the junction of tracks. It was a wood frame structure approximately 200 feet long, open at the sides, the roof resting over the tracks and supported by wooden arches built from wood columns. A small station house used as a ticket office and refreshment stand was also constructed just east of the depot.

War between the States and Reconstruction Period, 1861-1880

Millen and Jenkins County played a significant role in the War between the States. As a railroad junction connecting Augusta and the Carolinas with Macon and the West as well as Savannah, Millen became one of the Confederacy's most vital arteries. Central of Georgia records show the railroad operating at peak capacity during 1861-1863. No records from 1864 are extant.

In 1863, the Wayside Home, a soldiers' rest home, was built in Millen south across the tracks from Gray's Inn. Since troop movement passed through Millen, it was selected as a site for a Wayside Home. There were several Homes throughout the South during the War. The Millen establishment kept one nurse and three cooks on duty and offered the Confederate soldiers rest, medical attention, good food, and company. Jane Gray (Mrs. Robert) and Mrs. J. H. Daniel contributed generously to the maintenance of Millen's Wayside Home.

In 1864, the prison stockade, believed to be the largest erected during any war, was constructed at Fort Lawton, five miles north of Millen. It was built under the direction of General Winder. The stockade was also called "Millen Pen." By late 1864, the area had become a major military objective for General Sherman on his "March to the Sea." Two months after its completion, Sherman's march caused Fort Lawton to be evacuated.

Sherman arrived in what is now Jenkins County on December 1, 1864. On December 3, he burned Millen Junction, including Gray's Inn and the original railroad depot. An account from the diary of a Union soldier describes the buildings before they were destroyed. Major Henry Hitchcock, one of Sherman's adjutants, made the following entry:

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But there are hardly any - that is were hardly any but railroad buildings here. Over the R. R. track when we came a really fine frame R. R. depot, - - of which Davis is making a capital sketch for Harper's Weekly (Appeared January 7, 1865) was large two story frame hotel, with many rooms, large dining hall, and quite a number of outbuildings, also a gasometer and gas apparatus in the yard and the house lit with gas. In the front of this was a yard or garden filled with handsome trees, bushes, etc.

The handsome trees were the Gray's long rows of Osage orange trees which formed an avenue leading up to the inn. They survived the burning of the hotel and stood for many years marking the site of the first building in the settlement that became Millen. A second wood frame passenger depot was built in 1867. (The present brick depot was constructed c.1910.)

The thirteen years leading up to Sherman's march were the most active in Millen's history. The years from 1862 to 1864, were especially productive. Millen struggled through the period of reconstruction. While very little has been recorded about these years in Millen, the following petition to the General Assembly of the State of Georgia in 1866 from the part of Emanuel County which would become Jenkins County leaves little doubt that the situation was grim:

The petition of the undersigned . . . embraced with the territory covered by the Raid of Gen. Sherman, respectfully shewith (sic) unto your Honorable body, that their condition, as the result of said Raid, is one of much privation in all cases & of peculiar dependence in many cases. A year of the most impropitious seasons, have rather aggravated than relieved our distresses; we are unable to live upon the products of the present year, through the next--with nothing to sell & with the burden of obligations of debts rendered necessary by the exhaustion of our supplies by the Raid, we ask ourselves with gloomy fears, whence are we to procure the means in purchasing provisions from distant markets? to carry us through the comeing (sic) year--Added to these troubles and distresses, many of us are now threatened with the loss of our homes under the sheriff's hammer

Millen rebuilt following the devastation brought by the Civil War. The Grays built another hotel on what would become the Daniel Sons and Palmer block on Cotton Avenue. James Daniel, who had married the Grays daughter Mary Hendrick, opened a business firm in 1876 that would eventually become one of the most influential commercial enterprises in Millen. The Daniel Sons and Palmer block of Cotton

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Avenue ran from Gray to Daniel Street. The late-19th century, two-story brick building on the corner of Gray and Cotton included in the proposed district is believed to have been a Daniel building.

A second Gray daughter, Jane Luke, married George Dwelle, a cotton buyer, who would also become influential and prosperous in Millen's new commercial district. Gray Street is named for their oldest son, Gray Dwelle, and Winthrope Avenue was named for another son, Winthrope Dwelle. It was George Dwelle who bought the Gray's hotel after their deaths in the 1870s. A third Gray daughter is believed to have married a Brinson, one of the oldest families in the area.

Mrs. Rosabel Mills, daughter of W. V. Lanier, first Jenkins County Superintendent of Schools, summarizes this period in the following way:

a sort of road back, as it were, from the desolation of 1865 to the promise of the New South and the Twentieth Century. It was an important period that established here a new agronomic system to replace that the war had taken away

Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century Period, 1881-1928

The Town of Millen was incorporated in 1881 by act of the General Assembly. Section one begins with these words:

Be it enacted by the authority of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, that the territory lying and being in the counties of Screven and Burke, in said State, and through which the Central Railroad passes, and said territory sometimes known as Millen Station, be, and the same is hereby, declared an incorporated town

The year 1893 witnessed two important events in Millen's history. The inaugural run of the "Nancy Hanks" between Savannah and Atlanta took place. Named for the fastest trotting horse in the world from 1892-94, the train was the fastest in the South and ushered in a new era of speed and technology in railroading. The Bank of Millen was established in 1893 as part of a system of banks affiliated with Mr. W. S. Witham. Millen was again beginning to prosper as is evidenced by its commercial vigor during this period. A newcomer to town in 1895 noted a population of 400, a bank, a fifty-room hotel, ten stores, four bar rooms, a livery stable, drug store, school, and seventeen residences. Shortly after the turn of the century, a new freight depot, opera house, and newspaper (The Millen News) had been added to Millen's expanding commercial district along Cotton Avenue.

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A cotton mill, which was constructed west of town, reflected the continued importance of cotton in Millen's economy.

In order to continue growing, prominent Millen citizens in both of the counties whose dividing line cut Millen in two, petitioned for a new county to be formed. On August 17 1905, Jenkins County was formed from portions of Burke, Screven, Emanuel, and Bulloch counties, by act of the General Assembly; Millen was the new county seat. On January 1 of the next year, the Town of Millen became the City of Millen by act of General Assembly.

As the seat of government and a railroad hub, Millen continued to experience growth and prosperity. Doctor's and lawyer's offices, more general and specialty stores, another theater, several hotels, a bottling works, a telephone exchange, two telegraph offices, and a new passenger depot were constructed. The western block of Cotton Avenue, locally called Front Street, was known as "Mullet Row" during this time because of the fish market located on the street. The Jenkins County Courthouse was built in 1908 in the block north of East Winthrop Avenue bounded by North Daniel and Harvey streets in 1908. It was destroyed by fire 1910 and was rebuilt. Much of the expansion occurring at this time was still in the area of the proposed district. Though primarily commercial, the area was the site of a number of residences of influential Millen families until later in the 20th century.

Driving this period of prosperity in the first quarter of the 20th century was the railroad. The Millen rail complex expanded four times between the 1900 and 1925. The old freight depot was constructed in 1900; the freight depot was built c.1910; and the water tower was built to serve the needs of the steam locomotives in 1918. The four-story, cast-concrete coal chute was built in 1925. Demolished in 1995, the coal chute was the only one of three such structures left in the state of Georgia and the only one ever constructed on the Central's lines between Savannah and Macon, and Millen and Augusta. The other two chutes are located in the Macon Railroad Historic District in Macon and Social Circle in Walton County.

Economic Decline and Great Depression Period, 1929-1944

During these years, Millen's railroad- and cotton-based economy was devastated by the arrival of boll weevil and the Great Depression. However, efforts to diversify its agricultural economy in the early 1920s softened the impact. The number of 500 pound bales of cotton produced in Jenkins County dropped abruptly in 1920, falling from 15,586 in 1919 to 9769 in 1920. (All time high had been 29,339 bales at 28.8 cents per pound in 1911.) The number of bales fell to lows of

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4700 bales in 1921 and 5719 bales in 1923, but immediately began to rebound, going up and down between approximately 9000 and 17,000 bales during the years 1924-1939. The price per pound of cotton baled fluctuated between lows of 5.7 and 5.8 cents in 1932 and 1933 and 32.0 cents (second highest price recorded in the 40 years of reports) in 1923.

Construction resumed in the area of the historic district in the 1930s with the completion of two public buildings, the architect-designed, Stripped Classical-style, brick, Millen City Hall (1936) and the brick-and-marble United States Post Office (1938). The post office was built under authority of the Emergency Construction Program Act which approved \$65,000 in 1936 for the cost of site, building, and administration. An Augusta architect, Elroy G. Smith, was retained to build the City Hall, and the West Point, Georgia, construction company of Batson-Cook was awarded the post office contract.

The 1930s also saw additional new commercial construction in the district. One of the first car dealerships in town, Millen Ford, was built on the southeast corner of East Winthrope Avenue and North Masonic Street in c.1937. A gas pump was located in the front of the building, but has since been removed.

The 1930s marked a shift in transportation from the railroad to the automobile. The Central of Georgia Railroad had been Millen's lifeline for almost seventy-five years, but the effects of the Great Depression in conjunction with the unrestricted and unregulated competition from the highways resulted in the Central's being placed in receivership on December 19, 1932. It did not emerge from bankruptcy until 1948 and was subsequently reorganized. Millen's passenger service was discontinued in the early 1970s, bringing to an end an important era in Millen's transportation and commercial history.

The automobile-based trend in new commercial construction in Millen continued through the 1940s. The northeast corner of West Cotton Avenue and North Hendricks Street was the site of first a service station and then the Brooks Chevrolet Dealership, which it remains today, having undergone periodic alterations. During this period, commercial buildings were used to house other automobile-oriented functions.

Modern Period, 1945-1975

In each decade following the end of the period of historic significance for the Downtown Millen Historic District, Millen's commercial expansion continued, adding a new major enterprise or

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addition in 1951 (Jockey International); in 1966 (Rusco Hilite Building Products) with a new facility constructed in 1972; and in the early 1970s (Brigadier Industries). These newer industries helped the city of Millen achieve a balanced economy that includes both agriculture and industry.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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Section 9

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:

- (x) 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 approximately 47 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 17 Easting 411680 Northing 3629610
- B) Zone 17 Easting 412120 Northing 3629850
- C) Zone 17 Easting 412370 Northing 3629550
- D) Zone 17 Easting 411700 Northing 3629270

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Downtown Millen Historic District are indicated by a solid black line on the accompanying tax parcel map of Millen.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Downtown Millen Historic District encompass the concentrated area of historic commercial, governmental, and transportation-related buildings in downtown Millen. The historic district includes those areas that retain a high level of historic integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

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edited by Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of
Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street, N.W.
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
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Consultant services: Lina L. Cofresi and Rosetta Radtke, The Jaeger
Company (Gainesville, Georgia).

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Photographs

Name of Property: Downtown Millen Historic District
City or Vicinity: Millen
County: Jenkins
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: January 1995

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 23. West section of the district, 1918 water tower; photograph facing north.
- 2 of 23. Car dealership (1947); p.f. northeast.
- 3 of 23. Millen City Hall (1936); p.f. west.
- 4 of 23. Streetscape view along Cotton Ave; p.f. northeast.
- 5 of 23. Daniel Building; p.f. north.
- 6 of 23. Former passenger depot (c. 1910) now freight depot; p.f. northwest.
- 7 of 23. Streetscape view of Daniel Building and Godbee Building (1905) on Cotton Avenue; p.f. northeast.
- 8 of 23. Kenwin Building (1893) and former Bank of Millen (1954); p.f. north.
- 9 of 23. Streetscape view of Cotton Avenue; p.f. northwest.
- 10 of 23. Former freight depot (1900) now Millen Chamber of Commerce/museum and 1925 coal chute (demolished in 1995); p.f. northeast.
- 11 of 23. Cast-concrete coal chute (demolished) and one-story mechanical building; p.f. northwest.
- 12 of 23. Commercial buildings along N. Daniel St.; p.f. north.
- 13 of 23. Streetscape view along Cotton Ave; p.f. northeast.
- 14 of 23. Streetscape view and the two-story, 1928, N.P. Economos Building; p.f. north.

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Photographs (continued)

15 of 23. Streetscape view along Cotton Ave., two-story, former First National Bank (c. 1900); p.f. northeast.

16 of 23. Streetscape view along Cotton Ave.; p.f. northwest.

17 of 23. Wood-framed, gabled-front, c.1875 building and the opera house (c. 1900); p.f. northeast.

18 of 23. Ford car dealership c. 1937 on E. Winthrope Ave.; p.f. southeast.

19 of 23. Storage buildings; p.f. east.

20 of 23. Streetscape view along E. Winthrope Ave., two-story, 1963 Masonic Lodge, and a former residence; p.f. southeast.

21 of 23. Jenkins County Courthouse (1910) and Civil War monument (1909); p.f. north.

22 of 23. U.S. Post Office (1937); p.f. southeast.

23 of 23. Lane Building (1914) and one-story, former Plymouth car dealership; p.f. northeast.