

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Washington Historic District  
other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number Centered on West Robert Toombs Avenue (U.S. Highway 78 /Georgia Highway 10) and North Alexander Street  
city, town Washington (N/A) vicinity of  
county Wilkes code GA 317  
state Georgia code GA zip code 30673

( ) not for publication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>	
	<i>Previously Listed</i>	<i>Newly Identified</i>	<i>Previously Listed</i>	<i>Newly Identified</i>
buildings	75	417	10	207
sites	0	3	0	0
structures	0	3	0	2
objects	0	1	0	0
<b>total</b>	<b>499</b>		<b>219</b>	

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 3--Classification

---

**Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 75**

**Name of previous listing:**

Campbell-Jordan House, 208 Liberty Street – listed July 14, 1971. One contributing building.

Cedars, The, 210 Sims Street – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building.

East Robert Toombs Historic District, East Robert Toombs Avenue between Alexander Avenue and Grove Street – listed April 11, 1972. Nine contributing buildings.

Fitzpatrick Hotel, 18 W. Public Square – listed December 17, 1982. One contributing building.

Gilbert—Alexander House, 116 Alexander Drive – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building.  
Three noncontributing buildings.

Holly Court, 301 S. Alexander Street – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building.

Mary Willis Library, E. Liberty and S. Jefferson Streets – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building.

North Washington District, bounded by Jefferson and Court streets, Poplar Drive, and US 78 – listed March 4, 1973. Six contributing buildings.

Old Jail, 103 Court Street – listed June 5, 1974. One contributing building.

Poplar Corner, 210 W. Liberty Street – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building. One noncontributing building.

Toombs, Robert, House, 216 E. Robert Toombs Avenue – listed April 11, 1972. NHL designation November 7, 1973. One contributing building.

Tupper-Barnett House, 101 W. Robert Toombs Avenue – listed April 11, 1972. NHL designation November 7, 1973. One contributing building.

Washington Presbyterian Church, 206 E. Robert Toombs Avenue – listed April 11, 1972. One contributing building.

Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum, 308 E. Robert Toombs Avenue – listed May 13, 1970. One contributing building.

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 3--Classification**

---

**Washington Commercial Historic District, roughly bounded by Court Street, Jefferson Street, Robert Toombs Avenue, and Allison Street – listed March 6, 1986. Thirty-seven contributing buildings. Six noncontributing buildings.**

**West Robert Toombs District, W. Robert Toombs Avenue between Allison Street, Route 44, and Lexington Avenue – listed March 1, 1973. Nine contributing buildings.**

**Wilkes County Courthouse, Court Street – listed September 18, 1980. Two contributing buildings.**

**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.

Richard Luce  
Signature of certifying official

10-13-04  
Date

*for* W. Ray Luce  
Historic Preservation Division Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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. Bull 12/6/04

( ) determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

## 6. Function or Use

---

### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC: hotel  
COMMERCE/TRADE: business  
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution  
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store  
SOCIAL: clubhouse  
GOVERNMENT: correctional facility  
GOVERNMENT: post office  
GOVERNMENT: courthouse  
EDUCATION: school  
EDUCATION: library  
RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument  
RELIGION: religious facility  
FUNERARY: cemetery  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: waterworks  
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC: hotel  
COMMERCE/TRADE: business  
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution  
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store  
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant  
SOCIAL: clubhouse  
GOVERNMENT: city hall  
GOVERNMENT: courthouse  
EDUCATION: school  
EDUCATION: library  
RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument  
RELIGION: religious facility  
FUNERARY: cemetery

---

## 7. Description

---

### Architectural Classification:

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal  
MID-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: Greek Revival  
LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne  
LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman  
OTHER: Commercial Vernacular Victorian  
OTHER: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial  
OTHER: Folk Victorian  
OTHER: gabled ell cottage  
OTHER: New South cottage  
OTHER: Queen Anne house  
OTHER: Queen Anne cottage  
OTHER: saddlebag  
OTHER: American Small House  
OTHER: Ranch

### Materials:

**foundation** BRICK  
STONE: granite  
CONCRETE  
**walls** WOOD: weatherboard  
BRICK  
STONE: granite  
SYNTHETICS: vinyl  
**roof** ASPHALT  
METAL  
**other** N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Located in the eastern part of Georgia, the city of Washington is the county seat of Wilkes County. Wilkes County was established in 1777, and Washington was founded in 1780 as the first town named after George Washington. The city of Washington has some of Georgia's oldest resources including its historic plan. The Washington Historic District consists of the city's historic commercial, governmental, residential, industrial, and community landmark buildings.

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Washington Historic District is a large district incorporating a major portion of Washington as

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

well as several previously listed historic districts and individual properties. The district encompasses historic residential, commercial, industrial, and community landmark resources built from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The historic intact downtown plan of Washington was laid out in 1783 in a gridiron plan of streets with the courthouse square as the main focus of the plan. In 1793, additional land surrounding the downtown was subdivided and laid out in a gridiron plan for residential development. The courthouse square is divided in two halves with a public square (historically sited with the courthouse) on one half and commercial development on the other half. The rest of the commercial development (including community landmark buildings) is located on the blocks facing the square. The historic residential development is located on the small city lots surrounding the commercial development. The earliest resources (late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century) are located closer to the commercial block and the later residences (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are located further away. Towards the northern and western edges of the district, the smaller city lots open up into larger parcels of land that feature late 18<sup>th</sup>- to mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century houses with historic outbuildings. The remaining industrial resources, dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, are located near the terminus of the Washington spur of the Georgia Railroad. The historic city cemetery, Resthaven Cemetery, is located in the southwestern section of the town. The cemetery was started in 1857 and includes both white and African-American burials.

FULL DESCRIPTION

**The following description is based on research completed by John Kissane, historic preservation consultant, and was written with additional information by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division. "Washington Historic District," draft National Register of Historic Places Form, October 4, 1999. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

The historic commercial area was laid out in 1783 and is of profound historic significance in Georgia's town planning. Known as the Washington plan, it served as the prototype of numerous courthouse towns across the state. The first Wilkes County Courthouse (1785) was located north of the town square. The second courthouse (1817 to 1907) was located in the center of the square. The present 1904 courthouse faces the square from across Court Street to the north, leaving the square itself an open public space. The downtown square has been the commercial and governmental heart of Wilkes County for more than two centuries. Commercial buildings in the downtown area date from the 1870s through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Surrounding the downtown are residential areas containing a variety of house types and architectural styles. There are numerous examples of late-18th and early-19th century houses that were added to in the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century either stylistically or with large additions, a practice that was something of a tradition in Washington. Several of the prominent Greek Revival houses originated as much simpler and earlier house types and were updated and enlarged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Also in Washington are a number of examples of mid-19th century houses that received Victorian-era updating.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

Also within the district is an industrial and adjoining small commercial area located about a half mile southwest of the downtown square. The district also features a large number of community landmark buildings including the Wilkes County Courthouse (1904), historic churches, the Mary Willis Library (1888), the former United States Post Office (now City Hall, 1917), Old Washington Jail (1891), Washington Public School (1897), and St. Joseph's Home for Boys (1931). Also within the district is the historic city cemetery for both white and African-American residents called Resthaven Cemetery.

Commercial Buildings

Washington's historic commercial area is located in the approximate center of the historic district and much of the area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Washington Commercial Historic District (listed March 6, 1986). The core of the commercial area is centered on the town square with one-, two- and three-story, attached, brick buildings facing the square on the east, west, and south sides (the courthouse is located on the north side). Other commercial development in the district is comprised of neighborhood stores and small groupings of businesses.

The commercial buildings in downtown Washington are representative of the types of structures built in Georgia during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Within the district are numerous excellent examples of the Commercial Vernacular Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Commercial styles. Common architectural elements include cast-iron columns, original storefronts with recessed entrances, transoms, segmental- and round-arched windows, corbeled brickwork, brick pilasters, and stepped parapets (photographs 19-25).

One of the most prominent buildings in Washington is the Fitzpatrick Hotel (individually listed in the National Register December 17, 1982). Constructed in 1898, the Fitzpatrick Hotel stands three stories in height and is located at the middle of the block on the west side of the square. The Queen Anne-style hotel has granite details, an elaborate round corner tower with domed roof, and pair of projecting two-story bays centered on the front façade (photograph 19).

The 1898 Simpson Building is a good example of a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial building in Washington (photograph 20, center). The building retains its elaborate, crenellated and corbeled cornice; the store name and date are carved into a stone panel that is centered on the façade; two-over-two double-hung windows with decorative brick lintels; granite watertables; and recessed entrance.

The c.1914 National Bank of Washington building is a prominent three-story corner building (photograph 23). Although the storefront was remodeled in the early 1950s, the upper stories retain their original decorative brickwork with pilasters, cornice, and panels and flat- and round-arched one-over-one double-hung windows with cast-concrete lintels.

Another good example of a commercial building is the 1920 Pope Building (photograph 67). The Pope Building is a large, detached, two-story brick building originally built as an automobile sales



National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

and service facility. The front façade of the building has large display windows with transoms on the first floor and grouped eight-over-eight sash windows on the second floor.

The two-story brick building on Spring Street (photograph 24) is a good example of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial building in Washington. The building features grouped windows on the second floor and decorative diamonds in the pilasters and recessed panels.

The district also retains a historic neighborhood corner store, Gunter's Grocery, which served nearby residents that lived at the northern end of the city (photograph 3). The Gunter family purchased the c.1915 Craftsman-style bungalow and c.1920 store in the late 1920s. The store is typical of small neighborhood stores in Georgia and is a rectangular, frame building with low-hipped roof that extends beyond the building on the front façade to create a sheltered entrance.

Another historic commercial enterprise is a c.1950 International-style doctor's office located in a residential area of the district at 507 Spring Street. The one-story brick building is characterized by a series of planes and a flat roof with a recessed entrance.

Located along Depot Street approximately one-half mile southwest of downtown is a small commercial area that developed in the vicinity of the Washington's historic industrial area. A significant building in this commercial area is the c.1899 Barrows Hotel (photograph 76). According to local sources, the hotel was designed and owned by Edward F. Barrows and was called the Hotel Cofer in the late 1920s. The two-story, Romanesque Revival-style, brick building has a square, two-and-a-half story corner tower; parapet roof with elaborate cornice; round-arched windows; and an arcaded first floor on the front façade. A two-story, brick commercial building is located a block north of the hotel (photograph 77). Built c.1910, the building has three bays, corbeled brickwork, and recessed brick panels beneath the cornice. Across the street is a c.1910, one-story, brick commercial building that retains its four storefronts, corbeled brickwork, pedimented two-over-one double-hung windows and wood paneled doors.

### Industrial Buildings

A historic industrial area is within the Washington Historic District and is located south of West Liberty Street along Garland Avenue and Depot Street. The industrial area developed along this portion of the Georgia Railroad, which runs through Washington. According to the 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, a historic freight depot, cotton platform, and railroad turntable (no longer extant) were once located on the west side of Depot Street. Industries relating to cotton also appear on the 1903 map and include numerous cotton warehouses, a cotton compress, cotton gins, cottonseed and oil buildings and warehouses, and guano warehouses.

Some historic resources from the cotton era are still extant including c.1890 cotton warehouses built as part of the Dublin Warehouse Company (photograph 75). The former warehouse buildings are now in use by Burdette Mill and Gin Company producers of feed, seed, and fertilizer. Although the c.1900 Southern Cotton Oil Company building (photograph 74) was extant when the photographs

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

were taken for the district, the building was recently razed. The industrial area also includes complexes of buildings that represent later products that developed after boll weevil destroyed the cotton industry. The 1921 Wilkes Milling Company, Washington's first electric flour mill, and the c.1920 Washington Gas and Oil Company both retain their historic complexes of industrial buildings. Also extant are early 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial buildings related to the Pope Manufacturing Company, which operated a mill, ice plant, cotton gin, and fertilizer plant (photographs 72 and 73).

A typical industry in Georgia's cities was Coca-Cola bottling plants. The Washington Coca-Cola Bottling Plant is located at 313 Liberty Street and was constructed in 1907 (photograph 71). The one-story brick building was altered c.1940 with a Colonial Revival-style front façade, which features a classical pedimented front entrance and cast-concrete Coke bottle emblem.

Another historic industry was the Royal Manufacturing Company (now Delta Woodside Industries), which made men's clothing. The 1937 brick building is located at 314 Water Street (photograph 47). The long, one-story brick building has a one-and-a-half story center bay and steel casement windows.

House Types and Styles

Washington's historic houses represent over 200 years of house types and styles commonly built in Georgia. Because of the great wealth in Washington before the Civil War and the fact that no battles were fought within 100 miles of the city and it was not on Sherman's March to the Sea, the historic district retains a significant number of Federal- and Greek Revival-style houses. Although the city suffered greatly under Reconstruction, by the 1890s new businesses, new industries, and the return of high-level cotton production caused an economic boom in Washington as evidenced by the elaborate Queen Anne- and Classical Revival-style houses in the historic district. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century also was a time of great growth and prosperity in Washington and numerous Craftsman-style bungalows were constructed throughout the district. House types also vary within the historic district and represent nearly all the common types of houses built in Georgia through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of the oldest Federal- and Greek Revival-style houses were previously listed in the National Register either individually or as a contributing property within a historic district. The late 18<sup>th</sup>- through mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century houses are generally located near the downtown commercial area or were once on the outskirts of the city as large plantation houses. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the large landholdings were subdivided and developed into residential areas. A majority of Washington's historic African-American neighborhoods and commercial areas were demolished as part of the urban renewal movement in the 1960s through the 1980s. The surviving, intact, contiguous African-American resources located west of downtown are included in the historic district.

The highest concentration of antebellum houses is located east of downtown along East Robert Toombs Avenue and south along Water Street (part of this area is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the East Robert Toombs Historic District). Large, antebellum houses with

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

spacious grounds with mature oak, cedar, and magnolia trees characterize this part of the district.

One of the characteristics of a number of Washington's late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses was the addition of later Greek Revival elements to fashion-consciously update the house. The most well known example of this is the National Historic Landmark Robert Toombs House (photograph 44). The 1797 house was updated with the two-story, monumental, Doric portico with full entablature and a west wing in 1837 by Robert Toombs. Toombs added an eastern wing after the Civil War. Another example is the National Register listed Campbell-Jordan House located at 208 Liberty Street (photograph 28, left). The house was constructed c.1841 by joining two, earlier, Federal-style houses and adding a monumental, peristyle Greek Doric colonnade and other Greek Revival details. Similar to the Campbell-Jordan House, the National Register listed Holly Court was created from two 1830s Federal-style houses joined together in 1840 and a monumental, two-story portico was added to the front façade (photograph 49).

Located on a prominent corner lot adjacent to the downtown square is the Tupper-Barnett House (National Register listed April 11, 1972 and National Historic Landmark designation November 7, 1973). The house was originally built c.1832 as a fine, two-story, Federal-style house (photograph 33). The well-proportioned, peristyle, Doric colonnade with entablature was added c.1860. The Tupper-Barnett property also retains a row of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century tenant houses that were not mentioned in the earlier nominations (photograph 17).

The Hillhouse-Toombs-Wood House was built in 1814 as a two-story, frame, plantation-plain type house by Sarah Hillhouse (photograph 42) (National Register listed within the East Robert Toombs Historic District). Circa 1830, the original house became the rear ell and an addition was constructed perpendicular to the original house to face Robert Toombs Avenue. In the 1860, two side wings were added. The house has a one-story veranda with square Doric posts and an asymmetrical façade.

An example of the Federal style in Washington is the Semmes-Bowdre House located at 519 North Alexander Avenue (photograph 2). The house was previously listed in the National Register as a contributing property in the North Washington Historic District. The two-story, frame house features six-over-six double-hung windows, a bracketed cornice, and symmetrical front façade with double-door entrance with an elliptical fanlight and sidelights on each floor. The one-story wrap-around porch and second-story balcony are later 19<sup>th</sup>-century additions.

Another example of the Federal style in the district is the National Register listed Gilbert-Alexander House, which is one of the earliest brick houses in Georgia (photograph 9). The house was built in 1808 as a two-story, side-hall house, a brick wing was added c.1823 on the west side, and a two-story frame addition was added to the east side in the 1830s. The two-story Doric portico was added to the house in the 1830s. Federal-style details include Palladian windows, full architraves over the windows, and large-pane six-over-six double-bung windows.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

A good example of the Greek Revival style in Washington is the Heard-Bounds House at 615 Spring Street (photograph 64). The two-story, frame house features a full entablature supported by Ionic columns, symmetrical façade, and a central entrance with fanlight and sidelights.

The tradition of updating earlier houses in Washington continued in the late 1800s. An example is the Irvin-Orr House located at 15 Lexington Avenue (photograph 80). A two-story full-width portico with Temple-of-the-Winds Corinthian columns was added to an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century house in the late 1880s. Another example is the National Register listed Poplar Corner, which began as a c.1810 plantation-plain Federal-style house. In the 1880s, the house was updated to reflect the Victorian era with brackets, a swag frieze along the front facade, and side porches with turned posts. In 1905 the house further updated to the Neoclassical Revival style with a monumental Corinthian portico added to the front façade (photograph 68, left). A third example is the Old Presbyterian Manse located at 309 South Alexander Avenue (photograph 50, left). The two-story, frame, I-house was constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and has later turn-of-the-century porch and projecting bay.

The prosperity of Washington after the Civil War is seen in the numerous, large Queen Anne-style houses built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. An example of a Queen Anne-style, Queen Anne-type house is the National Register listed The Cedars, located at 201 Sims Street (photograph 12). The house features an asymmetrical form, three-story square tower, a wrap-around porch with elaborate scrollwork and chamfered posts, eave brackets, and decorative sawn work in the gables.

An excellent example of the Queen Anne style is the elaborate c.1890 New Haywood (also called the Hill-Harris House), located at 201 West Robert Toombs Avenue (National Register listed within the West Robert Toombs Historic District) (photograph 66). The Queen Anne-type house has a multi-gabled roof, multiple porches including a one-story wrap-around porch on the front façade, and a three-story octagonal tower with the third story as an open belvedere. The house features exuberant woodwork including spindles, turned posts, scrollwork brackets, and carved sunburst motifs in the front gable. Designed by Atlanta-based architect Gottfried L. Norrman and previously listed as part of the West Robert Toombs Historic District, the 1893 Barksdale-Burt House is another excellent example of a Queen Anne-style, Queen Anne-house type house in Washington (photograph 82).

An excellent example of a Queen Anne-style, Queen Anne-type cottage is located at 408 Alexander Avenue (photograph 57). The one-story, frame house has a multi-gabled roof, projecting front gable with a projecting bay, a tower-like dormer with a conical roof, and a partial-width porch with scrolled brackets and chamfered posts.

An example of a Queen Anne-style New South cottage is located on West Robert Toombs Avenue (photograph 78). The one-story frame house has a porch with turned posts and a projecting front gable with a bay, Queen Anne windows, decorative shingle work and spindle work.

An excellent example of a Classical Revival-style house is the Wilheit House located at 224 East Robert Toombs Avenue. The 1912, two-story, brick, Georgian-type house features a two-story, full-width, Doric portico; entablature with dentils; and symmetrical front façade with a one-story side

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

porch wing. The entrances on each floor feature a fanlight and tracery-light sidelights, and there are grouped tracery windows on the first floor topped by a fanlight.

The historic district also has a number of Folk Victorian style houses. A good example of a Folk Victorian-style gabled ell cottage is located on the 200 block of Water Street (photograph 37, right). The house features a shed-roof porch with scrolled brackets, chamfered posts, and turned balusters. Another good example is the Folk Victorian-style gabled ell house located at 513 Spring Street (photograph 62). The two-story, frame house has decorative eave brackets and a wrap-around porch with chamfered posts, scrolled brackets, and a decorative balustrade.

A good example of a hall-parlor house is located at 307 Pope Street. The c.1900 frame house has a small, historic front gable addition off of the front porch but the original two-room plan is clearly evident.

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Craftsman style was the most popular in Georgia and is most often associated with the bungalow house type. The Washington Historic District has numerous excellent examples of Craftsman-style houses are found throughout the district. An excellent example of a Craftsman-style bungalow is located at 109 Water Street (photograph 36). The front-gable bungalow has knee braces, wide eaves, and a front-gable porch and a porte-cochere with battered posts on brick piers. Located on the 500 block of Jefferson Street are two similar front-gable bungalows (photograph 61). A good example of the use of natural materials with the Craftsman style is the bungalow at 415 Jefferson Street. The side-gable bungalow has exposed rafters, very wide eaves, and a front-gable porch with rough granite posts (photograph 55).

Another popular early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural style throughout Georgia is Colonial Revival. An excellent example of the Colonial Revival style in the district is located at the corner of North Street and North Alexander Avenue (photograph 13). The two-story, brick, Georgian-type, house features a symmetrical façade, a portico with entablature and Doric columns, and a fanlight over the entrance. Another example is the two-story, frame, Georgian-type house located at 301 Liberty Street (photograph 69, left). The house features a symmetrical façade and a one-story portico with entablature and square, Doric posts.

Another popular early 20<sup>th</sup>-century revival style in Georgia is the Tudor Revival style (also called the English Vernacular Revival style), and the district has several good examples of the style. The brick, English cottage on Liberty Street is a good example of the style in Washington with its asymmetrical façade with front chimney, and grouped windows (photograph 32, right).

The Washington Historic District also has a number of post-World War II houses. A good example of an American Small House is located at 309 West Liberty Street. The house has a symmetrical front façade with minimal Colonial Revival-style details including paired windows and a portico supported by grouped posts. Another example of an American Small House is located at 303 Water

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

**Street.** The house has an asymmetrical front façade and an integral screened, side porch. The only detail is the front pedimented stoop.

Most of the residential areas in the historic district were built-out by the 1940s and there are only a few examples of 1950s ranch houses in the district. One example is the ranch house located at 327 Water Street. The one-story, brick house has the characteristic low, long, rectangular form of the ranch house with no ornamentation.

One of Washington's historic African-American neighborhoods is located along Whitehall Road southwest of downtown. According to oral history, John Wylie, a white landowner, gave land in the area to his freed slaves after the Civil War. The area became known as "Wylieville" and later as Freedmanville and was centered near the Jackson Chapel AME Church. Several African-American businesses were historically located in this area also. Another African-American neighborhood, known as the Lexington community, was located along West Robert Toombs Avenue where it turns into Lexington Avenue. Located at 210 Lexington Avenue is the former home of Dr. Frederick Douglass Sessoms, who was a very prominent African-American doctor and community leader in Washington in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two-story, frame, Folk Victorian-style, I-house was built c.1890 and has a full-width porch with turned posts and balusters and spindle work. A small African-American neighborhood called Gulleytown was historically located in a low-lying area near the courthouse and jail but is no longer extant. Two other large African-American neighborhoods, Baltimore and Black Bottom, were located on the southeast side of town (no longer extant).

Although most of Washington's African-American houses succumbed to urban renewal, the surviving houses are good examples of house types commonly found in African-American neighborhoods in Georgia. A number of saddlebags and gabled ell cottages survive along Norman Street (photograph 87). An early house, c.1870, that remains is the McGuire House located at 321 McGuire Street. The frame, central hall cottage has nine-over-nine single-hung windows, the door surround is a transom and sidelights, and a front pedimented portico with square posts.

The single-pen house type was once numerous in Georgia's African-American neighborhoods but rarely survives intact today. There are two good examples in the historic district, which are located on Whitehall Street (photograph 89, center). Also rarely found is the extended hall-parlor house type. An example in the district is also located on Whitehall Street (photograph 89, left).

An example of a multi-family house in the African-American neighborhood is located on the 100 block of Norman Street (photograph 88). The frame house has a long, rectangular form and is divided into four, one-room deep, apartments.

An undocumented, large barn is located at the intersection of Mercer Street and Georgia Highway 44 (photograph 86). The gambrel roof, Appalachian-type livestock and hay barn is probably a remnant of a larger farm that is no longer extant.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

Community Landmark Buildings

As in most of Georgia's county seats, the most prominent building in the city is the county courthouse. The Wilkes County Courthouse was constructed in 1904 and is located on the north side of the town square (listed in the National Register September 18, 1980 as part of the County Courthouses in Georgia thematic nomination). The eclectic, two-story, brick, Romanesque Revival-style building was designed by architect Frank M. Milburn (photograph 15). Milburn was a Kentucky native who moved to Charlotte, North Carolina in 1895 and soon had the largest architectural business in the South. His designs include several Georgia county courthouses. The original roof of the courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1956, in the 1980s a contemporary but compatible clock tower was reconstructed, and an addition was added to the rear in 1990. To the rear of the courthouse is a historic county jail (NR listed with the courthouse).

Located at 103 Court Street is another historic jail (individually listed in the National Register June 5, 1974). The two-story, brick, Romanesque Revival-style building was built in 1891 by the McDonald Brothers Jail Building Company of Louisville, Kentucky (photograph 16).

Located at 102 Liberty Street a block south of downtown is the historic United States Post Office, which was constructed in 1917 and is now the City Hall (photograph 31). The one-story, brick, Classical Revival-style building has decorative brickwork, stylized fanlights on the front façade, and a classical door surround with transom and sidelights. James Wetmore, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury, designed the post office.

Numerous historic churches are located throughout the historic district and represent significant community landmark buildings in Washington. Several churches are already listed in the National Register either individually or as contributing properties within historic districts. The 1825 Washington Presbyterian Church, located at 206 East Robert Toombs Avenue, was individually listed in the National Register on April 11, 1972 (photograph 41). The frame church is an early surviving church in Georgia and resembles an archetypical New England church with its three-part steeple. The 1885 Gothic Revival-style Washington First Baptist Church is located at 105 West Robert Toombs Avenue and was previously listed as a contributing property in the West Robert Toombs Avenue Historic District (photograph 34). The large, two-story, brick building has a three-story, corner bell tower, multiple stained-glass windows, and high-style Gothic details. Located at 214 East Robert Toombs Avenue is the Second Washington Episcopal Church, which was previously listed as a contributing property in the East Robert Toombs Historic District on April 11, 1972 (photograph 43). The eclectic Gothic Revival and Queen Anne style-frame church is strikingly similar to the Episcopal St. Bartholomew's Church located in the small community of Burroughs in Chatham County (NR listed June 17, 1982), and both churches were built in 1896, feature decorative shingle work, and have the exact same tower design. The Washington church has stained glass windows designed by Wilbur Herbert Burnham, designer of the windows at National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

The 1910 Washington First United Methodist Church also is high-style Gothic Revival and is located at 102 West Liberty Street (photograph 31, rear). The brick church also has a square corner bell tower, pointed-arch fenestration, decorative stonework, and stained glass and tracery windows. Next to the church is the Gothic Revival-style parsonage constructed the same year.

Built in 1881-1882, the Second Methodist Church (now LaFayette Masonic Lodge) is located at 205 East Liberty Street, two blocks east of the First Methodist Church (photograph 29). The one-story, Italianate-style, brick church has a pedimented roof, a square tower centered as part of the front façade, round-arched triple-hung windows, and decorative brackets along its cornices. Ionic columns and pilasters support the pedimented entrance.

Two historic African-American churches are located within the historic district. Jackson Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was built in 1863 on Whitehall Street (photograph 93). The frame church has a three-story tower on the front façade with a conical roof and decorative brackets under the eaves. The church was an important landmark in the historic African-American residential area of Washington along Whitehall Street known as Wylieville and later as Freedmanville. The church is on the edge of the historic district and is included as one of the last remaining buildings representing the African-American community in this area. The large historic African-American neighborhood that surrounded the church has been replaced with modern housing. The other historic African-American church in the district is Marks Tabernacle Baptist Church (photograph 84). The Queen Anne-style brick church was built in 1923 and has two crenellated square towers, round-arched windows, and arcaded, recessed entrances.

The Mary Willis Library was Georgia's first free town and county library and was individually listed in the National Register on April 11, 1972. The grand, Queen Anne-style brick building was designed by architect Edmund Lind and built in 1888 (photograph 30). Edmund Lind designed the Peabody Library in Baltimore before moving to Atlanta in the late 1800s. The exuberant Victorian-era building features decorative stone and terra cotta details, three-story turret, and stained glass windows.

There are two schools located in the historic district. The Washington Public School (high school) was listed as a contributing property in the North Washington Historic District (March 7, 1973). The 1897 Washington Public School is a large two-story, Romanesque Revival-style, brick building with a four-story square tower and a projecting, one-story, arcaded entrance with pronounced archivolt trim (photograph 7). Although the 1931 St. Joseph's Home for Boys is located within the boundaries of the previously listed West Robert Toombs Historic District (March 1, 1973), it was built outside the period of significance at the time. St. Joseph's, a Catholic orphanage and school for boys, was established in Washington in 1877 in an antebellum house. The 1931 building is a large two-story, Classical Revival-style, multi-colored brick building (photograph 81).

Located on North Alexander Street, the Washington Women's Club Building is a two-story, frame, Federal-style house (photograph 27, right). The house was constructed c.1784 on Robert Toombs Avenue. In 1909, the Washington Women's Civic Club was organized and began raising money for a clubhouse. In 1929, the women's club purchased a lot on North Alexander Street and moved the



National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

house to the lot. The two-story, monumental portico is a later addition (post 1940s), but the house still retains its simple, Federal characteristics.

Sites, Structures and Objects

The one contributing object within the historic district is the 1908 Confederate monument located in the center of the town square (photograph 15). The monument is similar to others around the state that were erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and is an obelisk topped by a figure of a Confederate soldier.

The three contributing sites in the district are the three historic cemeteries in Washington. The Washington city cemetery is known as Resthaven Cemetery and is located on the far southwestern end of the district south of Gordon Street (photographs 91 and 92). The cemetery was opened in 1857 and is the main city cemetery for Washington's white and African-American citizens. The cemetery is an irregularly shaped parcel on primarily level ground. Entrances are located on the south side of Gordon Street (northern boundary) and the north side of Hospital Drive (southern boundary). The northern section contains the oldest graves and is organized in a somewhat irregular grid pattern. Three narrow paved paths run north-south through this part of the cemetery and there is also a gravel road running parallel to the railroad tracks along the cemetery's western boundary. The landscape pattern throughout is informal, composed of numerous mature hardwoods, cedars, and pines. The African-American section is located southwest of the cemetery's historic white section and is heavily wooded. The southern, nonhistoric section of the cemetery is open and contains very few trees. Grave markers in the cemetery are typical of Georgia's city cemeteries, and flat slab, obelisks, and headstones are the common grave marker types. Some of the plots have ornamental cast iron fencing, which was common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The second contributing site is the St. Patrick's Church Cemetery is located at the corner of North Alexander Avenue and Hudson Street. The St. Patrick's Church was reported to be the first brick Catholic church in Georgia and was built in 1830. The church congregation left the church in 1877, and the church is noted as being in ruins by 1940. Ruins of the church no longer remain, but the cemetery remains on the church lot and has a number of obelisks and finely carved headstones from the 1800s (photograph 5).

The third historic cemetery is an undocumented family cemetery to the rear of the Gilbert-Alexander House, but on a separate parcel. The cemetery is overgrown but historic obelisks are visible from the street.

There are three contributing structures in the district: the town plan, which was laid out in 1783, built as it was planned, and became a prototype for town planning in Georgia's county seats; a historic c.1900 steel standpipe located at 214 Alexander Drive (photograph 40); and the rail line which began as a branch of the Georgia Railroad (now CSX) in 1853.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

---

Landscaping

Landscaping in the district is typical of Georgia towns. Much of Washington occupies nearly level ground, so topography is not a significant characteristic of much of the historic area. The downtown commercial area has commercial buildings built to the lot lines and sidewalks (photograph 18). The residential areas are characterized by mature trees, sidewalks, informal landscaped yards, and some retaining walls (photographs 32, 36, 38, 45, 46, 59, and 63). Landscaping in the African-American neighborhood is typical of Georgia towns and is characterized by small lots, the absence of sidewalks, few plantings or street trees, and narrow roads (photographs 87 and 88). The industrial area of Washington is typical of industrial areas with few trees and little or no landscaping.

---

## 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  
Ethnic Heritage: black  
Industry  
Politics and Government  
OTHER: Women's History

**Period of Significance:**

1783-1954

**Significant Dates:**

1783—the downtown plan was laid out with gridiron streets and a central courthouse square  
1795—first Wilkes County courthouse built (not extant)  
1800—the Washington Gazette, the town's first newspaper, was founded  
1806—first hanging of a woman (Polly Barclay) in Georgia occurs in Washington  
1825—First Presbyterian Church was built, the oldest church building remaining in Washington  
1841—much of the downtown commercial area destroyed by fire  
1853—branch of the Georgia Railroad from Barnett to Washington completed  
1865—President Jefferson Davis holds last meeting of the Confederate Cabinet in Washington  
1888—mule drawn streetcars for passengers and freight operates between depot and downtown  
1889—Mary Willis Library, the first library free for city and county residents in the state  
1895—second large fire destroys much of downtown  
1899—local telephone service and light and water plants open  
1904—present courthouse built  
1909—Washington's first residential suburb "Grandview" developed  
1910—Washington Women's Club organized

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

**Significant Person(s):**

Hillhouse, Sarah, Porter (1763-1831)

Toombs, Robert

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Chafin, James B, architect and builder, Washington, GA

Goluke and Stewart, architects

Lind, Edmund G., architect

McDonald Brothers Jail Building Company (1883-1891), architects and builders, Louisville, KY

Milburn, Frank Pierce (1868-1926), architect, Charlotte, NC

Norrman, Gottfried, architect, Atlanta, GA

Wetmore, James, architect, U.S. Treasury

**Statement of significance (areas of significance)**

Wilkes County is on the eastern side of Georgia and was the first county named in Georgia's first state constitution in 1777. Wilkes County residents played an important role in the Revolutionary War during the Battle of Kettle Creek and during the British occupation of Georgia. In 1780, 100-acres of land was land out into a town and common and became the first settlement named after George Washington. Located in a prime agricultural area and with access to stagecoach routes and early railroads, Washington soon became the center of cotton production in the state. The Washington Historic District represents over 200 years of the development of Washington from its model 19<sup>th</sup>-century town plan through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ranch house.

Washington Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its extraordinary examples of historic residential, commercial, industrial, and community landmark buildings representing common architectural types and styles found throughout Georgia from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

20<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural styles represented in the district range from Federal to ranch. The Washington Historic District contains numerous, intact, excellent examples of late 18<sup>th</sup>-to mid-20<sup>th</sup> – century common house types and styles found throughout Georgia and defined in the statewide historic context: Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings.

House types in the Washington Historic District also represent nearly all the house types popular in Georgia as defined in Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings. Common one-story house types in the district include single pen, hall-parlor, saddlebag, gabled ell cottage, Queen Anne cottage, Georgian cottage, New South cottage, bungalow, American Small House, and ranch house. Although two-story houses are relatively uncommon in Georgia, Washington has a large number of both frame and brick examples, which emphasizes the wealth of its residents throughout its history. Common two-story house types in the district include Georgian house, Queen Anne house, and I-house.

The single pen and hall-parlor house types were built throughout Georgia but rarely survive intact today. The district has good, intact examples of both of these house types such as the two single pens on Whitehall Street and the hall-parlor on Pope Street. Good examples of the saddlebag house type are seen in the row of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century tenant houses on the Tupper-Barnett House property. The saddlebag was a common form of house built for workers throughout Georgia's history. The gabled ell cottage house type is one of the most prevalent in Georgia and is found in great numbers throughout the district. Representative examples are found on Norman Street, the 200 block of Water Street, and 513 Spring Street.

The Georgian house and Georgian cottage are also very prevalent in Washington were built from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. An early 19<sup>th</sup> century example of a Georgian house is the frame, Tupper-Barnett house. An early 20<sup>th</sup>-century example of a Georgian house is the brick, Colonial Revival-style house located on the corner of North Street and North Alexander Avenue. An example of the I-house house type is the frame, c.1784 Women's Club Building on Alexander Avenue.

The popularity of the Queen Anne style is seen in Washington with its numerous examples of the Queen Anne cottage and Queen Anne house type. An excellent representative example of the one-story Queen Anne cottage house type is located at 408 Alexander Avenue with its irregular multiple projecting bays on the façade, and an excellent example of the two-story Queen Anne house type is the c.1890 New Haywood on West Robert Toombs Avenue. The New South cottage house type was very popular for middle- and upper-middle income Georgians between the 1890s and 1920s and is found throughout Washington. One example is the frame, Queen Anne-style, New South cottage on West Robert Toombs Avenue with its projecting front bay.

Good representative examples of the bungalow house type are found throughout Washington and are commonly associated with the Craftsman style. Representative examples are located along Water Street and Jefferson Street, which indicate the growth of this area in Washington during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Washington Historic District also has good representative examples of mid-

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

20<sup>th</sup> century house types including the American Small House and ranch. Built during the post World War II housing boom, the American Small House is generally square or slightly rectangular in form with a side-gable roof and minimal stylistic details. Two good examples within the district are located at 309 West Liberty Street and 303 Water Street. The residential areas in the Washington Historic District were mostly built-out by the 1940s and there are only a few examples of 1950s ranch houses in the district. One good representative example is the ranch house located at 327 Water Street. The one-story, brick house has the characteristic low, long, rectangular form of the ranch house with no ornamentation.

The Washington Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent representative examples of common late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup> -century architectural styles found in towns in Georgia. Architectural styles in the district include Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century revival styles, and Craftsman.

Late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses are located near the central business district with later housing developments located farther away. The city's role as the center of cotton production in the state is seen in the monumental Federal and Greek Revival-style houses built by its planters—some located in the city as a "town" house and some that were formerly large that were later subdivided in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of these houses were individually listed or listed within small historic districts in the National Register during the 1970s. Significant Federal- and Greek-Revival-style houses include the Robert Toombs House, Campbell-Jordan House, Holly Court, Tupper-Barnett House, Hillhouse-Toombs-Wood House, and the Semmes Bowdre House among numerous others.

Prosperity returned to Washington after the Civil War, and the district is significant for its excellent collection of Queen Anne-style houses. Prominent examples such as The Cedars, New Haywood, and the Barksdale-Burt House are already listed in the National Register for their architecture. However, the district has a number of excellent examples of Queen Anne-style cottages including the Queen Anne-style and Queen Anne-type cottage located at 408 Alexander Avenue. The house embodies the characteristics of the Queen Anne style emphasizing asymmetry with its multi-gable roof, projecting front gable and bay, and tower-like dormer and with its decorative woodwork.

The vernacular Folk Victorian style was built throughout Georgia from the 1870s through the 1910s and is characterized by simple house types with Victorian-era detailing. Good examples of Folk Victorian-style gabled-ell cottages are located on the 200 block of Water Street and the 500 block of Spring Street, which feature typical Folk Victorian details such as scrolled brackets, chamfered posts, and decorative woodwork.

The Classical Revival-style Wilheit House was built in 1912 on East Robert Toombs Avenue among older Greek Revival-style houses reflecting the continuing popularity of monumental houses in Washington. The house has a two-story, monumental, Doric portico, an entablature with dentils, and a symmetrical façade.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

The Colonial Revival style was extremely popular in Georgia from the 1890s through the 1940s, and there are numerous good examples of the style in the district. A representative example is the two-story, frame house at 301 Liberty Street. The house has elements recalling the Federal-style with its severe symmetry and one-story, pedimented portico with square Doric posts. A later example is the 1940s American Small House at 309 West Liberty Street with its minimal Colonial Revival-style elements such as a symmetrical façade, paired windows, and a portico with grouped square posts. Commonly associated with the English house and English cottage house types, the Tudor Revival style is another popular revival style found in the historic district. One example is the English cottage-type house located on Liberty Street with its asymmetrical façade and front façade shouldered chimney.

The Craftsman style was the most popular style in Georgia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and is generally associated with the bungalow house type. Numerous good examples of the style are found throughout Washington. One example is the side-gable bungalow on the 400 block of East Robert Toombs Avenue with its wide eaves, knee braces, grouped windows, and front gable porch with square posts on brick piers.

The Washington Historic District has excellent, intact, historic commercial buildings representative of the types and styles of commercial buildings constructed in towns from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Georgia. The central business district in Washington is located around the courthouse square. The commercial buildings around the central square represent the types of commercial buildings found in Georgia's towns and are generally a one-, two-, or three-story attached, brick building with a decorative cornice, detailed brickwork, and a recessed or flat storefront. The commercial buildings also represent good examples of the Commercial Vernacular Victorian and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial styles. The 1898 Simpson Building is an excellent example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Commercial Vernacular Victorian style with its elaborate cornice, corbeled brickwork, and recessed entrance. The 1920 Pope Building is an excellent example of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial style. The building is a freestanding, two-story brick building built as an automobile dealership and its large display windows and ribbon windows are very characteristics of commercial buildings from this time period.

The Washington Historic District also has an excellent collection of industrial buildings that represent the types of industrial architecture found in Georgia's cities. The numerous cotton warehouses associated with the Dublin Warehouse Company are good examples of brick warehouses with their long, low form with a hip roof. The 1937 Royal Manufacturing Company Building is an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century textile mill building. The brick building has a central one-and-a-half-story bay with two one-story bays on either side and steel casement windows.

The Washington Historic District has an excellent collection of community landmark buildings, many of which were designed by architects, which represent common types and styles of community landmark buildings found in cities throughout Georgia. The Romanesque style with its often imposing and eclectic ornamentation and masonry construction was frequently used during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for public buildings. The 1904 Wilkes County Courthouse designed by architect Frank

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

M. Milburn, the 1891 Jail built by the McDonald Brothers Jail Building Company, and the 1897 Washington Public School are all examples of the use of the Romanesque style in public architecture in Washington. The 1917 Classical Revival-style United States Post Office, designed by Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury James Wetmore, is also a good example of post offices built throughout Georgia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of which were designed in the Classical Revival style. Another architect-designed community landmark building is the Mary Willis Library designed by noted architect Edmund Lind.

Washington's many churches are representative of the types and styles of churches built throughout Georgia. The Gothic Revival style was very popular for church architecture and examples in Washington include the 1885 Washington First Baptist Church, the 1896 Second Washington Episcopal Church, and the 1910 Washington First United Methodist Church. Good examples of other common church buildings are the 1881-1882 Italianate-style Second Methodist Church and the Queen Anne-style Marks Tabernacle Baptist Church.

The district is significant in the area of black ethnic heritage for the historic residential and community landmark resources associated with the African-American community in Washington. Although a majority of Washington's African-American resources were demolished during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century's urban renewal movement, the remaining historic resources centered around Jackson Chapel AME Church and Marks Tabernacle Baptist Church are good representative examples of the types of houses built in the African-American neighborhoods. The house types in the historically African-American area of Washington represent common house types found in small town African-American communities as described in Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia. House types found in Washington's African American neighborhood include single pen, gabled ell cottage, bungalow, extended hall-parlor, and saddlebag. Two significant early African-American houses remain intact within the historic district: the c.1890 Folk Victorian I-House built by Dr. Frederick Douglass Sessoms, a prominent doctor and community leader, and the c.1870 central-hall McGuire House. Washington is also significant in the area of black ethnic heritage for its two remaining African-American churches. The 1863 Jackson Chapel AME Church is a very early African-American church and is frame with a three-story conical tower. The 1923 brick Marks Tabernacle Baptist Church is a good example of a Queen Anne-style church with two crenellated square towers, round-arched windows, and an arcaded, recessed entrance.

The district is significant in the area of commerce because its central business district represents the city as the center of commerce in Wilkes County. The downtown was historically the primary location for the trading, buying, and selling of goods, services, and commodities on a local and countywide basis. In fact, the downtown remains the center of commerce for Washington today. The historic intact commercial buildings within the historic district are representative of all types of commerce that contributed to the town's economy throughout its history. The 1898 Fitzpatrick Hotel is the most prominent commercial building on the courthouse square and is an excellent example of the large hotels built in Georgia's towns along major railroad corridors for travelers, salesmen, and people coming into the county seat on business. The one-, two-, and three-story brick buildings surrounding



National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

the square represent the mercantile, professional, and banking businesses that were historically found in Georgia's cities. Later, "new", 20<sup>th</sup>-century businesses such as automobile sales and servicing are represented in Washington, an example of which is the 1920 Pope Building.

The Washington Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development as an early prototype for town planning in Georgia. The 1783 plan of Washington with its gridiron plan of streets with a central courthouse square as the focal point of the town would become a model for county seats throughout Georgia. As described in Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types, the Washington plan is characterized by the courthouse in the middle of the square with the streets coming in at all four corners with commercial development around the square and grids of streets from the north, south, east, and west quadrants of the square. The Washington town plan became an important prototype that was subsequently replicated in a number of county seats across the state and has significance in the history of town planning in Georgia. Three variations of this plan, all distinguished by a central square designed to contain the courthouse, were implemented. Washington's plan is now referred to as the "B" variation, with all blocks of similar size except the range containing the square. The "A" variation, adopted in nearby Crawfordville (Taliaferro County), is the simplest with one size for all blocks and the courthouse square itself. The "C" variation, as utilized in Gainesville (Hall County), is the most complex and features two ranges of smaller lots laid out at right angles, the crossing point of which contains the courthouse square. The oldest residential areas of Washington are located close to the central business district and also on the edges of the district in the form of antebellum plantations that were later subdivided in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as the town grew outward. As was historically typical in Georgia's towns, the African-American neighborhoods were located in the less-desirable areas of the city such as the historic "Gulleytown" (no longer extant) located in the low-lying area near the courthouse and jail, the Lexington community near the industrial area and cemetery, and the Freedmanville neighborhood located at the edge of town. The industrial area in Washington developed near the railroad line to the southeast of downtown and included a depot, a small commercial area, and numerous agricultural-based industries. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Washington's first residential suburbs developed in the area generally bounded by South Street, Cedar Street, Jefferson Street, and South Spring Street. The 1908 suburb was called "Grandview" and a variety of early-20th century house styles and types are found in the area as well as several 19th century residences that preceded the subdivision.

The Washington Historic District is significant in the area of politics/government as the governmental center Wilkes County since the city's founding. Wilkes County itself was created at the constitutional convention held in Savannah that also established Georgia as a state. Wilkes County originally included all of what would eventually become Elbert and Lincoln counties as well as portions of the present Hart, Madison, Oglethorpe, Taliaferro and Warren counties and was named in honor of John Wilkes, a member of the British Parliament who advocated more lenient treatment of the American Colonies than was typical. The role of the county and city governments is represented in the district by the Wilkes County Courthouse, the two jails, and the United States Post Office (now Washington City Hall). In Georgia, county seats were the center of government, law, and business for the surrounding area. The district is also significant in the area of politics and government for the Robert

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Toombs House. Toombs served in the Georgia Legislature from 1837-1843, in the United States Congress from 1845-1853, and the United States Senate from 1853-1861. Originally a moderate, Toombs helped prevent Georgia's secession in 1850 and advocated compromise, but later he developed secessionist views that led him to give up his Senate position. Toombs' aspiration was to become president of the Confederacy, and when Jefferson Davis was elected to that office, Toombs reluctantly agreed to serve as Secretary of State. Davis and Toombs disagreed about many things, and it was not long before Toombs resigned and accepted a military assignment as a brigadier general of the Confederate forces. When he distinguished himself during the battle at Antietam, Virginia, but was not subsequently promoted, Toombs resigned and returned to his home in Washington. Jefferson Davis held the last meeting of the Confederate Cabinet in Washington at Toombs' house. The house is now the state-owned and National Historic Landmark-designated Robert Toombs Historic Site.

The Washington Historic District is significant in the area of industry for its historic, intact industrial area located approximately one-half mile southwest of the downtown commercial area along Garland and Depot streets. The industrial area represents the types of industries commonly found in Georgia's towns and is centered around the railroad, the major transportation system in Georgia until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1853, a branch of the Georgia Railroad was completed to Washington, and depot was built approximately a half-mile from downtown on Depot Street (no longer extant). Cotton was the agricultural and industrial staple of Washington and the surrounding area and was the basis of the economy from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Industries based on the production and transportation of cotton-based goods is still represented in the district, including the c.1890 cotton warehouses associated with the Dublin Warehouse Company. The large complexes of the Wilkes Milling Company, the Washington Gas and Oil Company, and the Pope Manufacturing Company represent later 20th-century industries. The first textile mill built in Washington was the 1937 Royal Manufacturing Company, and the building is still extant in the district. Another important industry in many of Georgia's towns was the local Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, which produced and distributed Coca Cola. Washington's bottling plant still remains on Liberty Street.

The Washington Historic District is also significant in the area of women's history for Sarah Porter Hillhouse and the Washington Women's Club. Sarah Porter Hillhouse is believed to have been the first woman to edit a newspaper in the south and is noted for reporting on the state legislature while the capitol of Georgia was located in Louisville (Jefferson County). Sarah Porter Hillhouse was born on May 29, 1763, in Old Hadley, Massachusetts, and married David Hillhouse in Montville, Connecticut, on October 7, 1781. By 1788, David Hillhouse had received land grant in Wilkes County land for his service in the Revolutionary War. Hillhouse became a major landowner and merchant in Washington. He purchased Washington's first newspaper, the Gazette, in 1801, and changed its name to the Monitor. David Hillhouse died in 1803, at the age of 47, and Sarah Porter Hillhouse took over publication of the paper and her husband's print shop, which printed to official records of the state legislature. The Monitor prospered under her guidance with a readership of about 700 to 800 subscribers. Porter became a successful businesswoman and bought and sold land throughout Wilkes County. In 1811 or 1812, Sarah Hillhouse turned publication of the Monitor

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

over to her son, David Porter Hillhouse, and constructed new house at 205 East Robert Toombs Avenue in 1814. Sarah Porter Hillhouse lived in Washington until her death on March 26, 1831.

The Washington Women's Club was established in 1909. In 1929, the women's club purchased a lot on North Alexander Street and moved a c.1784 Federal-style house from its original location on Robert Toombs Avenue to the lot to use as a clubhouse. The Washington Women's Club has been an important civic organization in the city since 1909 and was responsible for initiating the annual Washington Tour of Homes in the early 1950s. The tour of homes is still a major community event held every spring that draws many people from the area and across the state to visit Washington's historic houses. The women's club has played an important role in promoting and preserving Washington's historic resources.

**National Register Criteria**

The Washington Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of commerce, community planning and development, black ethnic heritage, politics and government, and women's history. The district is eligible in the area of commerce for its excellent collection of commercial buildings that represent the economic and trade history of Washington. The district is eligible in the area of community planning and development because of its significant plan that influenced city planning throughout Georgia, the town retains its overall historic integrity, and retains all its historic components including its historic commercial, residential, community landmark, African-American, and industrial resources. The district is eligible for listing in the area of politics and government as the seat of Wilkes County's government. The district is eligible in the area of black ethnic heritage for its remaining historic African-American houses and churches. The district is eligible in the area of industry for its collection of historic industrial buildings, which represent Washington's major industries from cotton and cotton products to textiles. The district is eligible in the area of women's history for the significance of Sarah Porter Hillhouse, a newspaper publisher and Georgia's first woman editor and for the Washington's Women's Club, an important civic organization that helped promote and preserve Washington's historic resources.

The Washington Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B in the area of politics and government for its associations with Robert Toombs (1810-1885). A prominent and pivotal politician throughout his life, Robert Toombs was one of Georgia's leading Whigs in the Georgia House of Representatives and later in the United States House of Representatives from 1837 to 1851. Toombs was elected to the United States Senate in 1851 and with the disintegration of the Whig party, joined the Democrats. Toombs served as one of the south's leading Southern senators until Georgia's secession in 1861. Appointed Secretary of State for the Confederacy, Toombs often clashed with Jefferson Davis resigned his post to command a Confederate brigade. The last meeting of the Confederate cabinet was held in his house. After the war, Toombs returned to his law practice and remained politically influential in Georgia until his death in 1885. The district is also eligible under Criterion B for its associations with Sarah Porter Hillhouse (1763-1831). Hillhouse was the first woman editor and publisher of a newspaper in

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Georgia and is believed to have been the first woman editor of a newspaper in the south. For nearly a decade, Porter ran the newspaper, published records for the state legislature, and prospered by buying and selling land at a time when women usually did not have interests outside the home.

The Washington Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture for its excellent collection of intact commercial, residential, and community landmark buildings representing common types and styles found in Georgia towns from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with 1783, the date of the plan and the implementation of the plan for downtown Washington as a gridiron plan of streets with a central courthouse square and ends with 1954, the end of the historic period.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

The contributing buildings within the district date from the district's period of significance and retain their historic integrity. The noncontributing buildings were constructed after the period of significance or have lost their historic integrity from nonhistoric alterations. All buildings were evaluated by members of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division's Survey and National Register staff on June 2, 2004, and contributing or noncontributing status was determined according to the criteria of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

The two contributing sites are the two historic cemeteries, St. Patrick's Church Cemetery and the Washington City Cemetery (Resthaven Cemetery). The three contributing structures in the district are the town plan, steel standpipe, and water tower. The one contributing object is the Confederate monument.

**Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

**NOTE: The following developmental history was prepared by John Kissane, historic preservation consultant. "Washington Historic District," draft National Register of Historic Places Form, October 4, 1999. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Settlement of Wilkes County

In December 1773 a group of settlers from Westmoreland County, Virginia arrived near the present site of Washington, which was then a thick forest. They soon constructed a stockade that would be known as Fort Heard several miles northeast of present-day Washington, a fortification intended to offer protection from Indians. Most of the settlers that followed this first group to Wilkes County were from North and South Carolina as well as Virginia. In February 1777, a constitutional convention meeting in Savannah established Georgia as a state, and the entire portion of the ceded lands north of the Ogeechee River was incorporated into a single county. The county was named in honor of John Wilkes, a member of the British Parliament who advocated more lenient treatment of the American Colonies. The first boundaries of Wilkes County included the land that eventually was

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

divided into Elbert and Lincoln counties as well as portions of the present Hart, Madison, Oglethorpe, Taliaferro and Warren counties.

During the American Revolution, Wilkes County was undisturbed by actual warfare. The new residents were strongly divided in sentiment concerning the war. Many citizens of Wilkes County supported the Whigs, but others benefited from Governor James Wright's partiality in granting lands to loyalists and refusing land to those in opposition to the British government. After the fall of Augusta in January 1779, many Wilkes County settlers quickly moved their families across the Savannah River into South Carolina. Most of the abandoned houses were burned by Colonel Hamilton's troops, who had been appointed to administer the British oath of allegiance to those remaining. Over the next few weeks, events led up to the Battle of Kettle Creek, a decisive battle of the Revolution and a victory for the Americans that broke the hold of the British in Georgia. The key leader of the Georgia Whigs who defeated the North Carolina Tories was Elijah Clark (born 1733, died 15 December 1799), a resident of Wilkes County, who along with John Dooly and Andrew Pickens led a patriot militia to victory on February 14, 1779. (There are no extant historic resources in Washington that are related to Clark.)

The residents who had fled Wilkes County to South Carolina soon returned and began repairing their homes, and on August 25, 1779, the first session of court was held in Wilkes County at the home of Jacob McLendon, approximately ten miles north of Fort Heard. During the period of British occupation of Georgia, the state capital shifted between Savannah and Augusta. On January 4, 1780, Savannah was occupied by the British and Augusta was determined unsafe, so the General Assembly meeting in Augusta that day designated Fort Heard as a meeting place during times of attack. A month later, on February 5, 1780, the General Assembly adjourned at Augusta and reconvened at Fort Heard, bringing the state capital to Wilkes County where it remained the greater part of the year. (Fort Heard was located along Fishing Creek approximately seven miles northeast of the Washington.)

On January 23, 1780, the state legislature appointed a board of commissioners for the newly established Wilkes County. The commissioners were empowered to select 100 acres of Wilkes County and lay it out into a town and common. The legislature also instructed that the town would be called Washington, and this is the first recorded mention of the name. In addition, the town became the first American settlement to be named after George Washington.

Antebellum Period

Following the Revolution, Wilkes County began to prosper as the land was developed and educational, political, religious, and social enterprises were established and promoted. The county's population increased rapidly as newcomers, mainly of Scotch-Irish ancestry, arrived from the Carolinas and Virginia as well as Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

The Washington town plan dates from 1783, when the state legislature appointed a five-man board of commissioners and instructed them to lay out the town in one-acre lots, reserving a sufficient number of lots for a Wilkes County free school and also a church. Money derived from the sale of lots was to be put toward construction of a courthouse, jail, school, and cemetery. Initially, city of Washington was divided into a town square and 48 lots forming a rectangle, with the surrounding town common land making the shape of the entire town a square. In 1793, apparently due to demand for additional town lots, the commissioners were authorized by the state legislature to divide the common into 68 new lots for residential use. In so doing, the commissioners continued the original streets and lot sizes, and the enlargement encompassed the rest of the original state grant of 100 acres. With the exception of the range of smaller blocks containing the market square (now known as the public square), all blocks were four acres divided into one-acre lots. The market square was composed of lots 11, 12, 21 & 22 as indicated by the plan.

The plan for Washington became known in Georgia as the "Washington Plan" and subsequently was replicated in a number of county seats across the state. The Washington Plan has considerable significance in the history of town planning in Georgia. Three variations of this plan, all distinguished by a central square designed to contain the courthouse, were implemented. Washington's plan is now referred to as the "B" variation, with all blocks of similar size except the range containing the square. The "A" variation, adopted in nearby Crawfordville, Taliaferro County, is the simplest with one size for all blocks and the courthouse square itself. The "C" variation, as utilized in Gainesville, Hall County, is the most complex and features two ranges of smaller lots laid out at right angles, the crossing point of which contains the courthouse square.

In 1783, when the state legislature authorized the organization of a school. One thousand acres were granted to Wilkes County with the directive that income from this land be used for maintenance of the facility. The Wilkes County Academy, which became known as the Washington Academy, was one of the first three public schools chartered by the state and was opened on January 1, 1786. Classes were held in houses until the first school building was constructed in 1797, outside the city limits. This property was sold in 1824 and the school was moved into town. The education of girls received early interest in Washington, and in 1805, Mary Pauline Dugas opened a private girls school in the town. The female school was highly successful and within five years relocated to Augusta. In 1814 the trustees of the Washington Academy opened the Washington Female Academy. Also, private schools became numerous throughout Wilkes County during the 1820s and 1830s. The Washington Female Seminary opened on December 31, 1838 and attracted students from throughout Georgia as well as several neighboring states.

Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians all organized congregations in Wilkes County in the 1780s, and the first Roman Catholic church in Wilkes County was established in 1790 (now part of neighboring Taliaferro County). Several prominent Georgia religious leaders were active in Washington, including Reverend John Springer and Reverend Jesse Mercer. Reverend Springer was the first Presbyterian minister ordained in Georgia and he operated a school at his rural Wilkes County home from 1788 until his death in 1796. Reverend Jesse Mercer, a Baptist, published the Christian Index in Washington from 1833 to 1840, when the publication was taken over by the

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Baptist Church and printed in town until it was moved to Macon in 1857. Mercer intended to establish a Baptist college in Washington and reportedly raised as much as \$100,000 toward that effort. Due to financial difficulties, however, the Georgia Baptist Convention stepped in and transferred the donations toward chartering Mercer University in Macon.

The agricultural development of Wilkes County was initially diverse and included a substantial amount of tobacco production. Agricultural practices changed when Eli Whitney perfected his cotton gin in Wilkes County in 1795, and the number of acres devoted to cotton production increased steadily. Along with the increase in cotton production, the number of slaves owned by Wilkes County planters increased. By 1802, for example, there were 5,039 slaves in the county, representing more than one-third of the total population of approximately 14,000. By 1820, 8,921 slaves were owned by 1,057 Wilkes County farmers (when the county had a total population of 17,606). The ratio of slaves to planters increased through the antebellum period to an average holding of nearly twenty slaves per family, among the highest in Georgia. Some of the most prominent Wilkes County planters established homes in Washington while owning outlying plantations and contributed greatly to the growth and sophistication of the town. The 1850s were an especially prosperous time, as cotton prices rose markedly. A result of the increase in wealth is the number of large houses built or older houses enlarged and updated in Washington, most in the Greek Revival style then popular across Georgia and the South.

Washington's early 19<sup>th</sup>-century growth is due in part by the city being an important point on mail and stagecoach routes. As early as 1804, a company was incorporated for the purpose of operating stagecoaches between Augusta and Washington; by 1816 the route continued to Athens and the following year a new company began a stage route linking Washington with Greensboro and Eatonton. Mail and stagecoach drivers stopped at the south end of the public square at an inn that became known as the Washington Market, and there were other early taverns in the town including the Willis Hotel, first opened in 1802 (both no longer extant).

In 1827, the Gazetteer of Georgia by Adiel Sherwood recorded the following information about Washington:

contains an elegant C. H. [courthouse] with an excellent Clock, Jail, branch of the State Bank, houses of worship for the Methodists and Presbyterians, and one preparing for the Baptists, Male and Female Academy, 75 dwelling houses, 8 stores, 7 offices, and 8 shops, and about 1000 inhabitants. This is on the great western road via Athens to Tennessee. The stage from Augusta to Athens, and thence on return, stops the night in this place; the stage from Powelton passes weekly, and thence on via Petersburg, Abbeville C. H., Yorkville, S.C., Salem, N.C., and Cartersville, Va. to Washington City. A weekly paper is issued here.

Businesses in Washington experienced steady growth during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The town had a newspaper as early as 1800 when Alexander McMillan founded the Washington Gazette. The next year, the paper was edited by David Hillhouse and became known as the Monitor. When



National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Hillhouse died in 1804, his widow, Sarah Hillhouse, took over management of the Monitor and became the first woman newspaper editor in the South. Other signs of early prosperity include construction of a red brick courthouse in the center of the square in 1817, and the 1820 establishment of a branch of the Georgia State Bank in Washington. Much of the town's business district was destroyed by fire in 1841, after which a fire company of 25 men was organized and a fire engine purchased. In his 1849 Statistics of the State of Georgia, George White pronounced that Washington was then "among the most beautiful towns in the State, and the citizens have the reputations of being intelligent and hospitable. The people of this county are generally well informed, industrious, temperate, and religious."

A railroad line was completed to Washington in 1853, nearly two decades after interest in railroads had first developed in Wilkes County. In 1839, the Washington Railroad and Banking Company was authorized to construct a line from Washington to a convenient point on the Georgia Railroad, either in Taliaferro or Warren county. While the company did not construct a railroad, its members were successful in convincing the Georgia Railroad to build a branch line to Washington. The depot was constructed nearly a mile west and a little south of the commercial district (no longer extant). Railroad access contributed to continued growth of Washington and also to eventual development of an industrial area in the immediate vicinity of the depot.

In 1829, 19-year-old Washington resident Robert Toombs was admitted to the bar by means of legislative act, since he was too young to gain admission by the regular procedure. Thus began the career of the most celebrated individual in the town's history. Toombs served in the Georgia Legislature from 1837-1840 and 1840-1843, in the United States House of Representatives from 1845-1853, and the United States Senate from 1853-1861. Originally a moderate, Toombs helped prevent Georgia's secession in 1850 and advocated compromise, but he developed secessionist convictions that led him to give up his U.S. Senate position and entertain hopes of becoming President of the Confederacy. When Jefferson Davis was elected to that office, Toombs reluctantly agreed to serve as Secretary of State. There was not much about which Davis and Toombs agreed, and it was not long before Toombs resigned and accepted a military assignment as a brigadier general. When he distinguished himself during the battle at Antietam, Virginia but was not subsequently promoted, Toombs resigned and returned to his home in Washington.

In 1860, Washington's population was approximately 2,000 with approximately two-thirds of that total composed of slaves. The Civil War did not have a direct impact on Washington since fighting took place within a hundred miles of the town. Economically, however, the wartime period was difficult for nearly everyone, as food and goods became very scarce. At the end of the war, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and members of his cabinet arrived in Washington. On May 5, 1865, they convened for the last time and officially dissolved the Confederate government. Robert Toombs was in Washington and opened his house to several officials. A few days later Federal troops arrived to arrest Toombs, but he had fled to Havana, Cuba. Toombs' wife met him in Havana, they traveled to England, and eventually returned to Washington.

Reconstruction to Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Washington's return to economic prosperity following the Civil War was not long in coming since Washington was not physically damaged during the war. By 1870 the number of businesses in the town had increased from 24 in 1860 to 48. The railroad was a great asset to the community for transporting passengers and freight. Agriculture in Wilkes County was greatly changed from the antebellum period, as most planters found they could not maintain their large land holdings without slave labor; the result was many plantations were divided into smaller farms. Many former slaves remained on the land, however, working as tenant farmers. Agriculture, particularly cotton production, remained at the center of the Wilkes County's economy, and Washington continued to function primarily as a market town for the surrounding region.

Washington's African-American population settled primarily in three residential districts during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Along Whitehall Road, an African-American community known as Wylieville and later as Freedmanville developed. John Wylie was a white landowner who developed the land in this section of the town and rented and sold property to African Americans. Soon a bustling commercial area developed to serve the residents. Jackson Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church remains in this area as the oldest-surviving African-American church in Washington. Another African-American community called Baltimore, located southeast of downtown Washington, developed prior to the Civil War and became a larger community during Reconstruction and subsequent years (outside of the historic district). Many of the African-Americans who settled in Baltimore worked as servants for Washington's wealthy white residents, primarily in homes along East and West Robert Toombs Avenue. Named in honor of the Baltimore, Maryland, relief society that gave assistance to newly freed African Americans, the Baltimore neighborhood was a target of urban renewal in the 1960s and few historic resources remain.

Cotton prices dropped significantly through the 1880s, from ten cents a pound in 1880 to only five cents a pound in 1894, but cotton production increased to unheard of levels in Wilkes County. Businesses depended on the buying power of farmers, which in turn was largely a function of cotton prices. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, new industries came to Washington including guano factory in 1886, a cotton compress as well as a cottonseed oil plant in 1889, and the Washington Foundry (later known as Washington Manufacturing Company) in 1890. A brick-manufacturing plant was in operation by the mid-1890s; in 1899 it filled a single order for one million bricks. Two round-bale cotton presses were established during the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Georgia's first free public library (for whites) was founded in Washington in 1888 and opened the following year. The Mary Willis Library was established with funds contributed by Dr. Francis T. Willis in memory of his daughter Mary as a gift to the people of Washington and Wilkes County. Construction cost \$15,000 while furniture and the initial book collection added another \$2,000. The library has continued to play an important role the area for more than a century.

The 1880s and 1890s also saw significant improvements in public utilities. In 1888, a mule-drawn streetcar began operation from the railroad depot to the courthouse square and business district. A local telephone system was installed in 1889, with long-distance connections established to Elberton

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

and Lincolnton. The downtown area suffered a serious fire on the night of June 11, 1895, when eight commercial buildings and a single residence were destroyed. Local residents immediately petitioned the city for fire protection, and as a result, the E. Y. Hill Hook and Ladder Company was soon organized. Other turn-of-the-century improvements included construction of municipal light and water plants in 1899 and a new Wilkes County Courthouse that was completed on the north of the square in 1904.

Washington's population in 1900 was 3,300, an increase of approximately 25 percent from the city's 1890 population of 2,631. In 1908, a residential suburb called Grandview developed in the vicinity of South Jefferson and South Spring streets between South and Cedar streets. The subdivision's name was a reference to a significant astronomical event that brought a team of scientists to Washington in May of 1900. At 7:02 a.m. on May 28th a total solar eclipse occurred, and Washington was the highest point along the path of the moon's shadow and thus an excellent viewing location. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology sent a solar eclipse expedition to the town. The scientists were assisted by high school teachers and students in sketching the corona of the eclipse and photographing the event from what was then a cotton field; several years later this area became the Grandview subdivision. Important industries that began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century include the Pope Manufacturing Company, Washington's first ice factory, and the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant.

Washington's prosperity during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century encouraged new civic initiatives. The Washington Chamber of Commerce was established in 1910 to advertise and promote the community, and the first streets were paved with concrete in 1913. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century also brought an increase in social and recreational activities in Washington. In 1909, the Washington Women's Club was established. In 1929, the women's club purchased a late 18<sup>th</sup> century house at the intersection of East Robert Toombs Avenue and North Alexander Avenue and moved it to North Alexander Avenue. Many civic and social gatherings are still held at the Women's Club.

Washington's population reached 4,208 in 1920. When the boll weevil arrived to devastate cotton production, Washington and Wilkes County's economic dependence on cotton and the relative lack of industrial development at the time caused severe economic effects. Many of the region's farmers forfeited their farms and left in search of opportunities elsewhere. The economic downturn caused businesses to fail. The Washington Exchange Bank, which was established in the 1880s, failed in 1925. The Great Depression only worsened the economic situation. Citizens National Bank and the National Bank of Wilkes County merged in an effort to strengthen their positions, but the combined institution closed in December of 1930. The following year saw the abandonment of two small railroad lines serving Washington, the Elberton and Eastern Railroad and the Washington and Lincolnton Railroad. Consequently, Washington's rail service was reduced to only the branch line of the Georgia Railroad.

Washington's population dropped to 3,158 in 1930, marking a loss of nearly 25 percent during the decade of the 1920s. By 1940, the population rose to 3,537. Among the few positive economic

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

developments in the 1930s was the opening of the Royal Manufacturing Company in 1937, Washington's first garment factory, which provided some much-needed employment.

Mid-20th Century to the Present

In 1941, a book entitled The Story of Washington-Wilkes was compiled and written by the Writer's Project of the Work Projects Administration and published by the University of Georgia Press. The opening chapter titled "Contemporary Scene" is a good overview of Washington at mid-century:

The town has been touched but lightly by commerce and scarcely at all by industry. The center of activity is the square, dominated on the north by a grandiose late Victorian courthouse of cream brick and red tile. Shops enclose the other three sides of the square, which is bisected by a long grassy park overlooked by the figure of a Confederate soldier standing on a granite shaft. All day from Monday through Friday this area is a scene of quiet activity, but early in the evening the square is deserted except for the movie crowd returning home, the traveling salesmen in their sidewalk rockers before the hotel, and a few grocery clerks dressing their windows for the next day's trade. On Saturdays, however, the square and business streets present a scene of bustling movement when farmers come to town to buy their weekly supplies...

Across the southern end of the square, US Highway 78 follows Robert Toombs Avenue, which, with the parallel Liberty Street and the cross thoroughfares, Spring Street and Alexander Avenue, forms the main residential district of Washington. This section is filled with stately trees, green lawns, and a luxuriant growth of shrubs and flowers as a foreground for dwellings of diversified architecture....

In the southwestern part of town a spurline railroad depot is in the center of the scattered buildings that make up Washington's industrial section. Here the air is thick with smoke and with the acrid smells of the cottonseed oil mills and fertilizer plant. Along the rutted unpaved roads are also cotton warehouses, and ice plant, a creamery, a flour gristmill, and a woodworking plant and planing mills.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

---

Negroes, making up 65 per cent of the total population, are scattered in several segregated areas. After the War between the States many freed slaves continued to live for a time in tenant houses on the property of their former masters, but after a time many of them moved into rented dwellings in town. A typical settlement is Gulleytown, where a few rows of frame houses are crowded into a gulch behind the courthouse. A majority of Negroes, however, now live in the more spacious outlying sections of Freedmanville to the west and Baltimore to the southeast....

To the average newcomer, the charm of Washington lies principally in its more old-fashioned attributes, its handsome old homes and the agreeable decorum of its personal relationships. Here, certainly, is a community where good manners really count. But further acquaintance will show that modern life also has found its place. Washington has its aristocracy, but it is determined on the basis of individual merit, in the democratic way of the alert twentieth century

The later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought many changes to the community. Growth in the community was strong after World War II, particularly with new housing construction in the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1960s, urban renewal projects brought new housing but caused the destruction of historic African-American neighborhoods. Industrial development has been substantial during recent decades and has influenced new patterns of residential as well as commercial growth outside of the historic district. Nevertheless, downtown Washington remains the commercial and economic center of the town and the county

Historic preservation has been a concern of many in Washington for several decades. In the mid-1950s, the Washington Women's Club began an annual Tour of Homes, which continues to be a popular event in the community each spring. In the late 1950s, the city of Washington purchased the building Barnett-Slaton House at 308 East Robert Toombs Avenue. The house was later deeded to the state of Georgia and developed into the Washington Historical Museum. The house was restored and eventually was returned to the city in the mid-1970s. The museum is now known as the Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum. In 1973, the state of Georgia acquired the Robert Toombs House on East Robert Toombs Avenue, which is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as a house museum. In 1995, the city of Washington adopted a historic preservation ordinance that established the Washington Historic Preservation Commission. Since that time, the commission has been very active, and Washington achieved Certified Local Government status in 1996. The Washington Historic Preservation Commission plans to continue its efforts to better educate the local public about the reasons for and benefits of historic preservation

---

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

---

- Bowen, Eliza A. The Story of Wilkes County, Georgia. Edited by Louise Frederick Hays. Marietta, GA: Continental Book Company, 1950.
- Coleman, Kenneth and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds. Dictionary of Georgia Biography 2 vols. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983.
- Lindsey, Willis. A History of Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia. Four unpublished volumes, 1955-1959.
- Mason, Herman "Skip", Jr. Black America Series: Washington Georgia. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 1999.
- Newsome, Jane R. At Home in Washington-Wilkes. Washington, GA: Wilkes Publishing Company, Inc., 1986.
- Randall, Jo. Wilkes County Churches. Washington, GA: Wilkes Publishing Company, Inc. 1973.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (City of Washington, Georgia). New York: Sanborn Insurance Company. 1885, 1896, 1909, 1917, and 1930.
- Sears, Joan Niles. The First One Hundred Years of Town Planning in Georgia. Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1979.
- Sherwood, Adiel. Gazetteer of Georgia. 1829. Reprint: University of Georgia Press, 1939.
- Slaton, Betty. Unpublished materials on Sarah Porter Hillhouse (1990), historical markers and monuments in Wilkes County (1996) and historic preservation in Washington (1999).
- Standard, Janet Harvill. The Historic Homes of Washington, Georgia. Washington, GA: Wilkes Publishing Co., 1973.
- Warren, Mary Bondurant, ed. Chronicles of Wilkes County, Georgia from Washington's Newspapers 1889-1898. Reprinted 1978 by Heritage Papers, Danielsville, GA.
- Willingham, Robert M., Jr. We Have This Heritage: The History of Wilkes County Georgia, Beginnings to 1860. Washington, GA: Wilkes Publishing Company, 1969.
- Writers' Program, Work Projects Administration. The Story of Washington-Wilkes. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1941.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

---

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): ( ) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:**
- previously listed in the National Register**
  - Campbell-Jordan House
  - The Cedars
  - East Robert Toombs Historic District
  - Fitzpatrick Hotel
  - Gilbert-Alexander House
  - Holly Court
  - Mary Willis Library
  - North Washington Historic District
  - Old Jail
  - Poplar Corner
  - Washington Presbyterian Church
  - Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum
  - Washington Commercial Historic District
  - West Robert Toombs Historic District
  - Wilkes County Courthouse
- previously determined eligible by the National Register**
- designated a National Historic Landmark**
  - Toombs, Robert, House
  - Tupper-Barnett House
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**
  - HABS GA-13            Robert Toombs House
  - HABS GA-115        Presbyterian Church
  - HABS GA-1145      Gilbert-Wright Alexander House
  - HABS GA-1158      Bennett House (Barnett-Tupper House)
  - HABS GA-2122      New Haywood
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #**

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

---

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

---

**10. Geographical Data**

---

**Acreeage of Newly Added Properties:** Approximately 597 acres (acreeage estimator).

**Acreeage Previously Listed Individual Properties and Districts:** 265.3 acres (NR database).

**TOTAL ACREAGE OF DISTRICT:** Approximately 862 acres.

**UTM References**

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
A)	17	339670	3735471
B)	17	340093	3733823
C)	17	339877	3733541
D)	17	339060	3733200
E)	17	338707	3733242
F)	17	337901	3733495
G)	17	337537	3732939
H)	17	337151	3733267
I)	17	337583	3734284
J)	17	336910	3734695
K)	17	338300	3734981

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary is indicated on the attached tax maps drawn with a heavy black line, drawn to scale. The dotted lines on the tax maps indicate previously listed buildings and districts. It should be noted that district boundaries for the East Robert Toombs Historic District, North Washington Historic District, and West Robert Toombs Historic District are approximate because the exact boundaries for these 1970s nominations were indeterminate.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the intact, historic, and contiguous resources associated with the development of Washington.



---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Gretchen A. Brock/National Register Coordinator  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**mailing address** 47 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 414-H  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** August 4, 2004  
**e-mail** gretchen\_brock@dnr.state.ga.us

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** ( ) not applicable

**name/title** John Kissane/Consultant  
**organization** N/A  
**mailing address** 310 Three Oaks Drive  
**city or town** Athens **state** Georgia **zip code** 30607  
**telephone** (706) 613-7307  
**e-mail** jandakissane@bellsouth.net

- ( ) **property owner**  
(X) **consultant**  
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**  
( ) **other:**

**Property Owner or Contact Information**

**name (property owner or contact person)** Betty Slaton  
**organization (if applicable)** Washington Historic Preservation Commission  
**mailing address** 205 East Robert Toombs Avenue  
**city or town** Washington **state** Georgia **zip code** 30673  
**e-mail (optional)** N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

---

**Name of Property:** Washington Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Washington  
**County:** Wilkes  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** December 1999 (Field checked by Gretchen Brock on June 2, 2004)

**Description of Photograph(s):**

Number of photographs: 93

1. 100 block of Clark Drive; photographer facing northeast.
2. Semmes-Bowdre House, 519 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing east.
3. Gunter family house and store, 530 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
4. 100 block of Poplar Drive; photographer facing north.
5. St. Patrick's Church Cemetery, Hudson Street; photographer facing northwest.
6. 301 Poplar Drive; photographer facing northeast.
7. Washington Public School, 313 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing north.
8. 307 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
9. Gilbert-Alexander House, 211 Alexander Drive; photographer facing north.
10. 408 North Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
11. 103 Sims Street; photographer facing northwest.
12. The Cedars, 201 Sims Street; photographer facing northwest.
13. Corner of North Street and North Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
14. 208 Jefferson Street; photographer facing northeast.
15. Wilkes County Courthouse, Court Street; photographer facing north.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

---

16. Old Jail, 103 Court Street; photographer facing northeast.
17. Tenant house at Tupper-Barnett House, 200 block of Allison Street; photographer facing southwest.
18. Court Street; photographer facing east.
19. Fitzpatrick Hotel, 18 Spring Street; photographer facing northwest.
20. Commercial buildings, east side of public square; photographer facing northeast.
21. 17-23 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
22. Commercial buildings, corner of Jefferson Street and Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
23. Commercial buildings, Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing west.
24. 100 block of Spring Street; photographer facing north.
25. 100 block of Jefferson Street; photographer facing north.
26. 123 Jefferson Street; photographer facing northeast.
27. 106 Alexander Avenue and Women's Club Building (right); photographer facing northwest.
28. 200 block of Liberty Street; photographer facing west.
29. Second Methodist Church, 205 Liberty Street; photographer facing northwest.
30. Mary Willis Library, 204 Liberty Street; photographer facing southeast.
31. United States Post Office (now City Hall), 102 Liberty Street; photographer facing southwest.
32. 109 Liberty Street; photographer facing northeast.
33. Tupper-Barnett House, 101 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
34. Washington First Baptist Church, 105 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
35. 216 Spring Street; photographer facing northwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

---

36. 109 Water Street; photographer facing northwest.
37. 213 Water Street; photographer facing northwest.
38. 200 block of Alexander Avenue; photographer facing north.
39. 300-400 block of Alexander Avenue; photographer facing north.
40. 216 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
41. Washington Presbyterian Church, 206 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing southeast.
42. Hillhouse-Toombs-Wood House, 205 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing north.
43. Second Washington Episcopal Church, 212-214 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
44. Robert Toombs House, 216 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
45. 215 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
46. 225 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
47. Royal Manufacturing Company, 314 Water Street; photographer facing southwest.
48. 307 Water Street; photographer facing northeast.
49. Holly Court, 301 South Alexander Street; photographer facing east.
50. 309 South Alexander Street; photographer facing northeast.
51. 400 block of East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
52. 400 block of East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
53. 601 East Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
54. Pecan Street; photographer facing northwest.
55. 415 Jefferson Street; photographer facing southeast.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

---

56. 410 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
57. 408 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
58. 608 Alexander Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
59. 609 Jefferson Street; photographer facing southeast.
60. 600 block of Jefferson Street; photographer facing northwest.
61. 500 block of Jefferson Street; photographer facing northeast.
62. 513 Spring Street; photographer facing northeast.
63. 600 block of Spring Street; photographer facing north.
64. Heard-Bounds House, 615 Spring Street; photographer facing northeast.
65. 414 Spring Street; photographer facing northwest.
66. New Haywood (Hill-Harris House), 201 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing north.
67. Pope Building, 116 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing southeast.
68. Poplar Corner, 210 Liberty Street; photographer facing southwest.
69. 213 Liberty Street; photographer facing northwest.
70. 300 block of Liberty Street; photographer facing northwest.
71. Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, 313 Liberty Street; photographer facing northeast.
72. Pope Manufacturing Company, Lanis Alley; photographer facing west.
73. Pope Manufacturing Company, Garland Street; photographer facing north.
74. Southern Cotton Oil Company, 225 Depot Street (NO LONGER EXTANT June 2, 2004); photographer facing northeast.
75. Dublin Warehouse Company (now Burdette Mill and Gin, Inc.), Depot Street; photographer facing southwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

---

76. Barrows Hotel/Hotel Cofer, Depot Street (water tower no longer extant June 2, 2004); photographer facing north.
77. 114 Depot Street; photographer facing north.
78. 200 block of West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing east.
79. 214 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing east.
80. Irvin-Orr House, 15 Lexington Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
81. St. Joseph's Home for Boys, 22 Lexington Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
82. Barksdale-Burt House, 45 Lexington Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
83. 50 block of West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing east.
84. Marks Tabernacle Baptist Church, 225 West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing east.
85. 400 block of West Robert Toombs Avenue; photographer facing east.
86. Large barn, Mercer Street; photographer facing north.
87. 100 block of Norman Street; photographer facing north.
88. 100 block of Norman Street; photographer facing northwest.
89. Whitehall Street; photographer facing northeast.
90. 327 Gordon Street; photographer facing north.
91. Resthaven Cemetery; photographer facing southwest.
92. Resthaven Cemetery; photographer facing south.
93. Jackson Chapel AME Church, 318 Whitehall Street; photographer facing north.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)