

PH 0008290

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	ALABAMA
COUNTY:	MADISON
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	OCT 25 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
First National Bank

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
West Side Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Huntsville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
5th

STATE: **Alabama** CODE: **01** COUNTY: **Madison** CODE: **089**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First National Bank, Huntsville

STREET AND NUMBER:
West Side Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Huntsville

STATE: **Alabama** CODE: **01**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Madison County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Huntsville

STATE: **Alabama** CODE: **01**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1935** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **08**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The exterior of the Greek Revival building is unchanged except for modifications to the original servants quarters at the rear, a low side addition and the placement on the roof of a cupola from the now demolished early twentieth century Madison County Courthouse.

The building is 53 feet in width and 77 feet in length, with a plain Ionic portico at one end; which with two fronts including the cornice is of polished stone, the remainder of brick. The six columns for the portico were brought from Baltimore to the Tennessee River by ox cart, barged down the river to Triana, and up the canal to the town.

Door and window lintels and jambs, and all exterior woodwork are of red cedar. Heavy poplar timbers, mortised, tenoned and pegged, and the limestone walls are as sound today as when erected. The original 15 foot entrance doors, once hinged, now slide on tracks into slots in the wall. The roof is of copper.

As required by law of the time, living quarters for the cashier and his family were provided on the second floor. On removal a layer of sawdust was found between the joists, apparently an attempt at sound-proofing and insulation. A semi-detached building at the rear provided living quarters for the servants. In the basement were detention cells for slaves impounded for their masters' debts.

A new vault has replaced the original which rested on solid limestone and was built and roofed with blocks of limestone approximately six feet thick. Walls of brick were laid about a foot away from the stone blocks and surmounted a masonry arch.

All exterior changes made necessary by expansion are in keeping with the original building. The interior has been re-designed to meet modern banking requirements, but several original Greek Revival mantels remain in place and the principal office in the southeast corner of the main building retains the aura of 1835.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian;	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	losophy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The First National Bank of Huntsville was constructed as one of the four branches of the Alabama State Bank System and is the oldest building in the State in continuous use as a bank. Additionally the building is one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in Northern Alabama.

The constitution of Alabama had provided that the legislature might create a state bank with branches. In 1823 the Bank of the State of Alabama was incorporated, the capital consisting of trust funds held by the state and the sale of bonds issued by the bank, which was controlled by a president and board of directors elected annually by the Alabama Legislature. The involvement of the bank in politics has been cited as one of the major causes of the bank's ultimate ruin.

The bank opened at Cahaba in 1824 and was moved to Tuscaloosa in 1825 along with the state capitol. In the early 1830's it was thought necessary to set up branch banks in Mobile, Montgomery and the Tennessee Valley. The first Tennessee Valley branch was set up in Decatur in 1832, but by 1835 another northern branch was deemed necessary and the Bank at Huntsville was established.

The architect-builder, George Steele, was the most competent man in his profession in northern Alabama, and the Greek Revival structure is one of the finest examples of this 19th century style in the area. The cost of the structure exceeded \$76,000.

During this era Alabama entered a boom period. Obsession for land and slaves made large demands upon capital and involved a very extensive use of credit. The banks did a flourishing business and appeared to be so prosperous that in 1836 the legislature abolished direct taxes and allowed the banks to pay the operating expenses of the Government. The depression of 1837 revealed the true status of the banks. A special session of the legislature found that the banks were overextended, and that excessive loans and collusion between directors and members of the legislature were not uncommon.

The bank question became an issue in the gubernatorial elections of 1841 and Benjamin Fitzpatrick was elected on the bank reform platform. The Charter of the State Bank expired in 1845 and under the leadership of Fitzpatrick, it was not renewed. By 1858 the final liquidation of the

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brantley, William H., Banking in Alabama 1816-1860, Birmingham Printing Company, Birmingham, 1961.

The First National Bank Building 1835-1951, pamphlet published by the bank, based on minutes.

Glimpses into Ante-Bellum Homes, A.A.U.W., 1962 revised.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	34	0	43	46"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	86	0	35	08"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"				
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION: Alabama Historical Commission DATE: July 19, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
725 Monroe Street

CITY OR TOWN: Montgomery STATE: Alabama CODE: 01

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Mrs. B. Howard Jr.</u></p> <p>Title <u>SAPO Ala</u></p> <p>Date <u>July 25, 1974</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>A. R. Winters</u> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>10/25/74</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>W. R. ...</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>10-24-74</u></p>
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Alabama	
COUNTY Madison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	OCT 25 1974

(Number all entries)

(continued)

8. Significance

bank and its branches was complete.

After the failure of the state banking system, the structure was taken over by the Northern Bank of Alabama until Federal troops occupied Huntsville in April 1862. Shortly after the war the National Bank of Huntsville was organized and opened for business on Thursday, October 5, 1865, renting quarters in this building. On June 22, 1889 the First National Bank of Huntsville was organized for the purpose of taking over the business of the National Bank of Huntsville, and has continuously occupied the structure since that date.

Entirely surrounded by late 19th and 20th century structures, its purity of design and materials make the building outstanding.

