

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received        11 1986

date entered         
**MAY 08 1986**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Colonel O. R. Hood House

and or common Gadsden Woman's Club

**2. Location**

street & number 862 Chestnut Street NA not for publication

city, town Gadsden NA vicinity of congressional district 4

state Alabama code 01 county Etowah code 055

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: cultural:

**4. Owner of Property**

community service facility

name Gadsden Woman's Club

street & number 862 Chestnut Street

city, town Gadsden NA vicinity of state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Etowah County Courthouse

street & number 800 Forrest Avenue (Records Room)

city, town Gadsden state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1970-present  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The O. R. Hood house is a two-story brick residence with two chimneys, a basement situated directly below the back porch and kitchen and an attic over the center portion of the house. The home is an interesting study in the local growth of neo-classically-inspired domestic designs, in that it incorporates the basic neo-classical form with Victorian embellishments.

The facade of the residence features a colossal portico in the Roman Ionic Order with a broad architrave. The window treatment is primarily multi-lighted (9 or 12) over a single light, but also includes a fan-light in the entablature and an arch above the 2nd story balcony entrance. The main entrance is an imposing wood door, fully glazed, with a single pane of beveled glass, and the side lights and transom contain lead beveled glass.

The terra cotta porch floor extends to each side with a wood balustrade of spindle balusters set between brick piers. Flat top one story porches at each side feature small columns with Roman Ionic capitols set on brick piers. Each side entrance of the house is set in the protruding octagon bays that relieve the square form of the house.

The combination hip and gable roof has asphalt composition shingles and modillions support the cornice around the entire perimeter of the roof. Metal rain gutters are mounted on fascia boards.

At the rear of the house is a gable kitchen wing with a flat top porch providing access to the basement which has been enclosed with beaded board walls surmounted by narrow glass windows.

Interior features include mouldings with egg dart patterns, wainscotting with recessed panels, high wood bases and chairrails, smooth architraves, and ceiling beams (added c. 1955) on the first level. The simple panel mantels feature rectangular pieces of vitreous tile in the fireplace hearths. Greatly in contrast to the other less embellished interior features is a Federal style stairway with painted risers and stained hardwood treads with three spindle type balusters per tread. The stairs begin at the first floor in the entrance foyer and continue to the attic level.

The house is situated in a residential neighborhood and sited approximately 40 feet from the curb of Chestnut Street facing 9th Street North, in close proximity of a main business thoroughfare. A brick veneer garage is situated at the northwest corner of the lot. The face bricks of the building appear to be the same as those on the house.

Total Contributing Properties: 2

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1902-04 (1904-36) **Builder/Architect** James Crisman

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Criterion B - INDUSTRY/COMMERCE/LAW

The O. R. Hood house is significant for its associations with Oliver Roland Hood (1867-1957), a Gadsden attorney and local industrial promoter. One of the three original organizers of the Alabama Power Company, and the author of the company charter, Hood served as the company's first vice president (1906-1911) and legal advisor (1906-1941). Between 1920 and 1945, Hood also played an instrumental role in the development of several other local industrial and commercial developments including successfully promoting Gadsden as the best site for the Southern branch of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company (1926), serving as president of the Gadsden Loan and Investment company (1935-37), vice president of the Sauquiot Spinning Company of Alabama (1935-37), director of Gadsden's Chamber of Commerce (1935-37) and legal advisor of several local corporations. He commissioned James Crisman, a local builder and architect to design and construct this house in 1902. The house was completed in 1904, and Hood occupied it until his death in 1951.

Criterion C - Architecture

The O. R. Hood house (1902-1904) is an exceptionally fine local example of a neo-classically-inspired eclectic home. Clearly reflecting the prevailing favor of Roman-influenced classical forms during the 20th century and featuring Victorian embellishments, the design incorporates a colossal portico in the Ionic Order with Roman Ionic capitals, a fanlight in the entablature and an arch surmounting the second story balcony door with Victorian-inspired elements such as bracket-like modillions along the cornice, octagon bays at each side and leaded glass surrounding the main entrance. Smooth, less adorned elements characterize the neo-classically-inspired interior with the rather plain architraves and simple paneled mantels which stand in contrast to the Federal style staircase.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Gadsden

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	9	1	9	2	0	3	7	6	3	1	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley D. Qualls, Cultural Resources Coordinator

organization Alabama Historical Commission date September 16, 1985

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery state Alabama

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4-3-86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 5/8/86

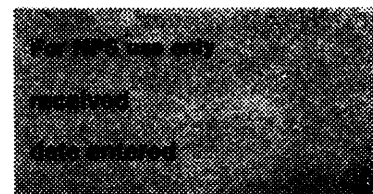
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Historical Summary

The O. R. Hood house (Gadsden's Woman's Club) is Gadsden's most stately and beautiful example of classically-inspired domestic architecture dating from the early 20th century. Built 1902-04 by James Crisman, a local architect/builder, the home clearly reflects the prevailing favor of Roman-influenced classical forms popular during the opening decades of the 20th century.

Colonel and Mrs. Oliver Roland Hood purchased the home site containing a small cottage from Mr. and Mrs. B. P. Phillips on August 27, 1902. Hood, a native of Ashville, Alabama graduated from Peabody Normal College (University of Nashville) in 1889. He moved to Gadsden in the late 1880's and established a successful law practice after passing the bar in 1890. He married his wife, Julia Riddle, in 1889. Between 1893 and 1902 Hood was very active in local politics. In 1893 he was elected a city alderman and served until 1895. In 1895 he served on the City Council and its education committee. Hood recommended to the Council the establishment of a graded system to be administered by a Board of Education appointed by the Council. He drafted a bill to that effect and secured its passage in the State Legislature. In 1901 Hood represented the 7th Congressional District as delegate to the Alabama Constitutional Convention, and also served again on the City Council for two years.

At the turn of the century Gadsden's economy was greatly stimulated by the movement to develop the natural resources of the immediate region. Located in the state's mineral belt, Gadsden boasted an abundance of raw materials for iron and steel production that were situated in close proximity to an inexhaustible supply of water. Hood recognized this industrial advantage and joined with promoter and developer William Lay and his son Earl Lay to organize the Alabama Power Company in 1906. Lay's dream was to develop the navigability and hydro-electric power of the Coosa River. Hood supported Lay's proposal and served as the First Vice President of the Company (1906-11) and authored the company's charter.

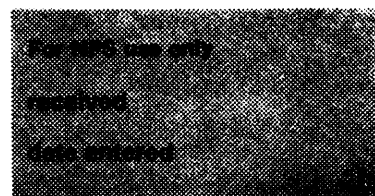
In 1907 an act of Congress granted to the Alabama Power Company the right to construct a dam across the Coosa River at Lock 12, subsequently named Lay Dam. The Lock 12 project of 110,000 horse power was completed in 1914, and was the state's largest reinforced concrete dam at the time of its completion. This successful venture resulted in what today is the state's major electric company and is still operating under the same name.

Hood played an instrumental role in the development of several other local industrial and commercial developments. In 1926 Hood successfully promoted Gadsden as the ideal site for the Southern branch of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and during the 1930's served as President of the Gadsden Loan and Investment Company, Vice President of the Sanquoit Spinning Company of Alabama and Director of Gadsden's Chamber of Commerce.

Throughout the years, Hood's law firm grew and was highly respected locally. Initially joined by Walter T. Murphee in 1893, Hood later took on additional partners through the years. By 1949 Hood was senior partner for the law firm of Hood, Inzer, Martin and Suttle. Maintaining a successful practice, Hood was legal advisor/counsel for several local based corporations including the Alabama Power Company, Republic Steel

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Corporation, Southern Bell Telephone Company and the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Hood died in 1951.

Ironically, after Hood's death the house was acquired by a local organization organized in 1923 at the home of the daughter of the architect and builder of the house.

The Woman's Club was organized in 1923 at the home of Mrs. Charlotte Crisman Cox, daughter of James Crisman, builder of the Colonel O. R. Hood home. Originally called the Axis Club, the name was changed in 1929 to the Woman's Club of Gadsden.

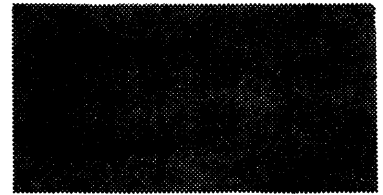
For many years the membership was over 500, reaching an all time high of over 600, and stressing as it's object "literary, social, scientific and philanthropic--for advancement of womankind, and to have a representative organization ready for all times to take action on any progressive force that vitally affects the community."

After planning for years to buy a suitable place to meet, and seeing the mindless destruction of many of Gadsden's oldest and finest homes because they were located near the business area, the club purchased the home of Colonel Hood when it became available after his death in 1951. They wanted to preserve the building as a historic landmark representative of the culture of the late 19th and early 20th Century era, and to provide a meeting place for civic groups.

Through wars, depression and good times, the club has maintained its reputation for service: Organizing blood drives, finding places for soldier's families to sleep during WWII, giving scholarships, working with exceptional children and sponsoring and organizing fund drives for whatever need there was in the community. Through the early years of their "City Beautiful Campaign", its members planted over 6000 dogwood trees and thousands of other trees and shrubs. Out of the Woman's Club have come many of the city's original civic organizations, such as the Little Theatre, the Music Club, Garden Clubs, Art Association and Concert Association. Among other things, the Woman's Club initiated the expansion of the Gadsden Public Library, established the Children's Library, the acquisition of Noccalula Park by the City, the erection of the Bronze statue of Noccalula, and helped to design the official seal (flag) for the City of Gadsden. They have brought to the city many famous and great speakers from around the world. In 1944 they organized the League of Women Voters in Gadsden. Since 1962 the Woman's Club has published an annual Civic and Cultural Events Calendar, listing all clubs, organizations of any kind, schools, PTA's, churches, city and county governments, cultural events and many other miscellaneous pieces of information. The Woman's Club Creed, written in 1925 by one of its members, Mona Myers Davies, is printed in every calendar and still serves the club and community well. It's last lines are" "To build a strong foundation on which younger hands may safely lay more stones, To feel that the world owes me nothing, but that I owe much to the world and everything to God."

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

"A Little Book About Gadsden" published in 1938 by the Woman's Club of Gadsden  
Minutes of The Woman's Club of Gadsden - on file at the Clubhouse.

"The History of Etowah County" published in 1968 by the Etowah County Centennial  
Committee

"As Memory Serves" on Will Martin by Frances Lee Underwood  
(Writer for many years for the Gadsden Times - compilation of articles written and  
published in the Gadsden Times.)

"Soldiers of Progress and Industry" The Gadsden Public Library

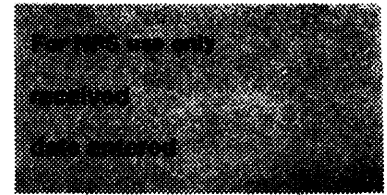
Mrs. Gretchen C. Deal, Personal Secretary to Col. O. R. Hood for 17 years.  
c/o Mrs. Reatha Deal Wynott  
1120 Bellevue Drive  
Gadsden, Alabama 35901

Mr. and Mrs. Roland F. Hood, Jr. - (family records)  
2727 Scenic Drive  
Gadsden, Alabama 35901  
Roland Hood is the great nephew of Oliver R. Hood.  
Josephine (Mrs. Roland) Hood is the great niece of Mrs. Julia Riddle Hood.

Owens, Thomas H., History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama, Biography, 1921.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



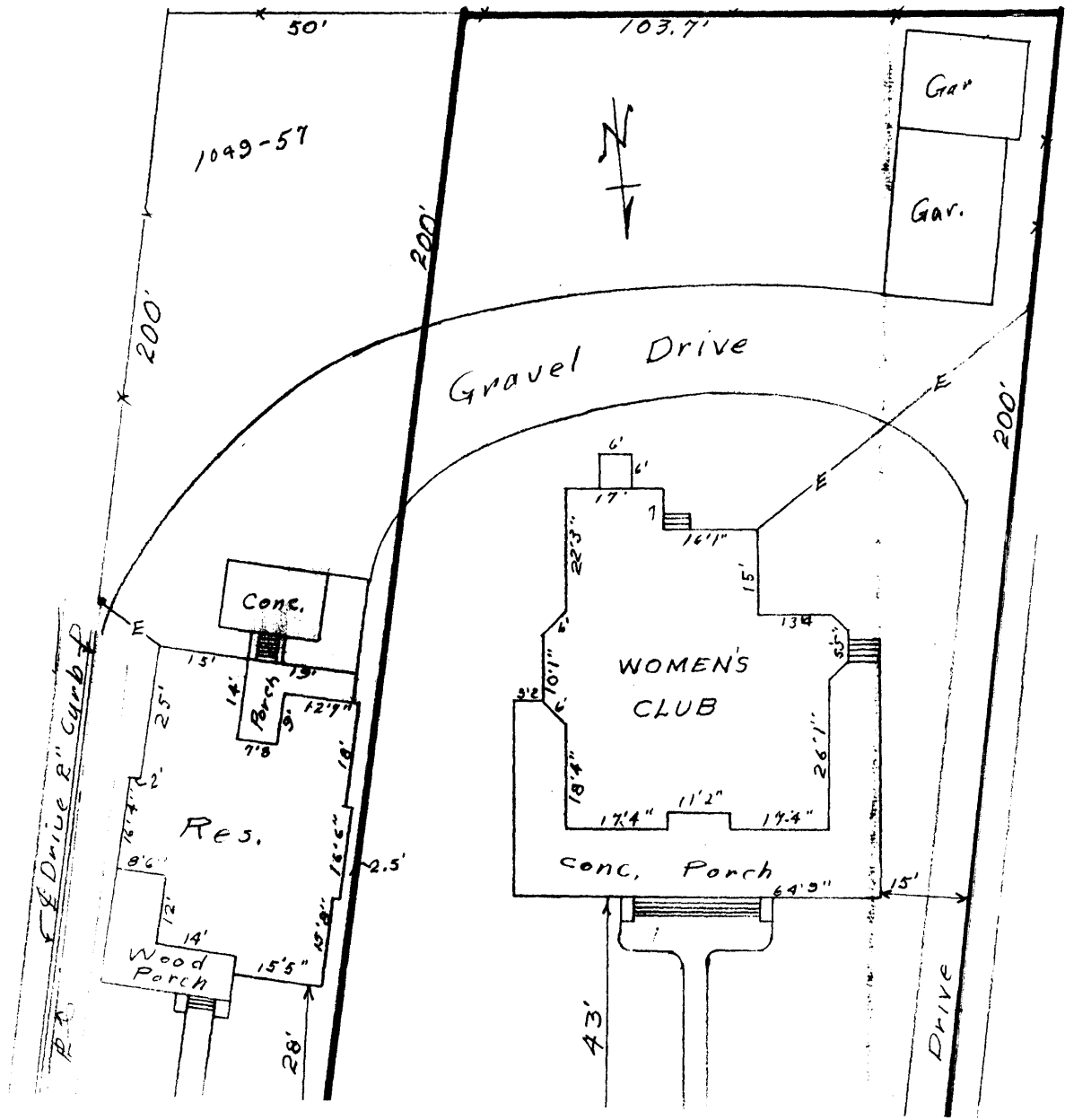
Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

A tract of land described as beginning at a point in the south line of Chestnut Street where the east line of the Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter in Section Four (4) intersects said street line, said point being the northwest corner of that certain tract of land conveyed by Emily M. Whitby to John P. Gunn, by deed dated November 8, 1890, and recorded in Book "R", page 195, Probate Office, Etowah County, Alabama; and from thence run in a westerly direction along the south line of Chestnut Street a distance of 108.8 feet, more or less, to the northeast corner of that certain tract of land conveyed by Julia Hollingsworth and husband, E. T. Hollingsworth to Florence P. Gunn, by deed dated October 5, 1901, and recorded in Book "BB", Page 414, said Probate Office; thence in a southerly direction along the east line of said Florence P. Gunn lot a distance of 235 feet, more or less, to a point in the northerly line of St. John's Alley; thence in an easterly, or southeasterly direction along the northerly line of St. John's Alley a distance of 106 feet, more or less, to a point in the east line of said Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter in said Section Four (4), said point also being in the west line of said J. P. Gunn lot above referred to; thence in a northerly direction along the east line of said Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter in said Section Four (4) and along the west line of said J. P. Gunn lot, above referred to, a distance of 248 feet, more or less to the point of beginning, said description embracing a portion of the Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter in Section Four (4), Township Twelve (12), South of Range Six (6), East of Huntsville Meridian, in Gadsden, Etowah County, Alabama; together with all improvements located thereon.





ALABAMA  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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