

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 26 1985
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Baird Hardware Company Warehouse

and/or common Baird Center

2. Location

street & number 619 S. Main Street

not for publication

city, town Gainesville

vicinity of

state Florida

code

county Alachua

code

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Akira and Associates

street & number 619 S. Main Street

city, town Gainesville

vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alachua County Courthouse

street & number 201 E. University Avenue

city, town Gainesville

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Erla Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980

federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Gainesville

city, town Gainesville

state Florida

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary

The Baird Hardware Company Warehouse is a single story brick building comprised of two wings, each approximately 200' x 50' forming a right angle L. It is an example of early 20th century utilitarian architecture with minimal architectural adornment. Its most prominent structural feature is its massive roof truss system, designed to span the width of the building without intermediate support, so as to provide maximum unobstructed storage space within the exterior walls.

Site

The Baird Hardware Company Warehouse is located in the southeastern section of the central core of Gainesville, Florida, a city of 81,000 population. It is situated on one-half of a city block in a mixed residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhood environment. The building dominates the northern half of the site, with a large open area on the south side and an entrance road and parking area to the North. Four non-contributing structures are located on the site: a small concrete block storage shed adjacent to the entrance gate near the northwest corner of the site, a large c. 1950 cement block warehouse in the northeast corner, a small lumber storage shed in the southeast corner, and a brick walkway flanked by planters at the main entrance in the interior corner of the L.

Original Appearance

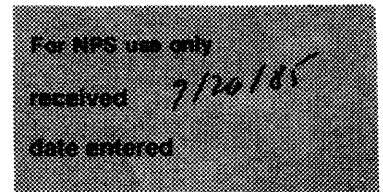
The Baird Warehouse was built as a utilitarian structure, designed to take advantage of its location near the crossover of the two major railroads serving the community, and to serve as a receiving and distribution center for the wide range of building supplies, farming equipment, and general hardware handled by the Baird firm. Its two long wings form an L, designed to accommodate separate rail spurs served by the Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard Air Line railroads. A 10 foot wide wooden loading dock, set on brick piers, ran the full length of the West and South facades. A separate storage building was located immediately to the East of the North end of the building, and connected to it by a short loading dock is believed to have been built at the same time, but may have been added at some time prior to 1928.

The exterior brick walls, set on concrete footings, are three wythes in thickness. Each wythe was laid in English bond, with 4 or 5 stretcher courses between each header course. The header courses, staggered vertically across the center wythes, serve to tie the exterior and interior wythes together.

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Fenestration was regular on the South and West facades, with loading doors at regular intervals, and two windows are evenly spaced in the interstices (Photo 3). At the end of the North wing, a single loading door was flanked by two evenly spaced windows (Photo 4). On the East and North sides, the spacing of the loading doors was irregular, and the number of intervening windows varied (Photo 5). The northeast corner of the East wing was clipped at a 45° angle. A single loading door was set in this diagonal wall segment, and five windows were set in the gabled end wall (Photo 7). All windows were 3 over 3 fixed sash, of uniform size, and except for the two located high in the gable of the East wing, were at uniform height approximately 6 feet above the main floor level. The doors were a common industrial type of uniform size and style, constructed of vertical plank with horizontal batten bracing, mounted on the interior wall to slide into surface mounted wooden pockets. Doors located in the East half of the East wing were at a lower level than the others, reflecting a change in the interior floor level.

The original wood shingle roof was devoid of openings, and was supported by a massive truss system that is the most impressive architectural element of the building as well as its dominant interior feature. Supported only by the exterior walls, the trusses span the full 50 foot width of each wing. The top and bottom chord of each truss are composed of five 2 x 12 inch heart pine timbers bolted together. The chords are tied together by four diagonal braces of 6 x 12 inch timber and five ½ inch steel tie rods (Photos 10, 11, and 13). The trusses were spaced approximately 14 feet on center, converging at a monumental hip truss at the crotch of the building. This was the only truss with intermediate support from below, a single 8 x 8 inch post at its center point. The trusses were connected by 2 x 8 inch purlins ledgered on and set flush with the top chords, which supported the roof deck of diagonal planking.

The floors were unfinished pine planking throughout. The interior space was unobstructed except for three small partitioned rooms: a shipping office and a heavily constructed storeroom for firearms and ammunition were located near the juncture of the wings, and a small plumbing supply office occupied a corner of the North end. Wooden shelving was probably installed in various locations and modified or relocated from time to time to meet changing storage requirements.

There were no sanitation facilities in the building, but fire protection was provided by a sprinkler system extending throughout the building (Photo 12).

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Alterations and Present Appearance

Only one noticeable alteration appears to have been made to the building throughout its 70 years as a warehouse. This occurred in 1938, when the wood shingle roofing material was replaced with galvanized steel. Site alterations during this period included the construction, circa 1950, of a large cement block warehouse immediately north of the East wing and the small open lumber storage shed off the southeast corner.

Although the conversion of the building to multiple adaptive uses after 1981 resulted in the demolition of the small, detached storage building adjacent to the North wing, no structural alterations were made to the warehouse building itself. Some minor exterior modifications and extensive non-structural interior installations were required, but were accomplished with minimal impact on the historic character and appearance of the building.

No significant exterior features were removed. Code compliance required the replacement of three original doors in the South facade, one at the North end, and four in the East facade and interior corner of the L, all of which provide access to and egress from office and studio spaces. In the South facade, French doors with fixed sidelites were installed directly in the original openings (Photo 2). At the North end, a single swinging door with sidelites was similarly installed (Photo 4). At the four public entrances at the interior angle, French doors were set back in shallow entry vestibules, and an 8 foot wide veranda with a wooden deck supported on brick piers and a galvanized steel roof supported by simple pine posts was installed to provide access (Photos 5 and 9).

Interior alteration included the removal of the partitions forming the two small shipping offices and firearms storeroom and the wooden storage shelves. Salvaged lumber was reused to build the entry vestibules (Photo 9) and in the construction of new partitions to create office and studio spaces in the North wing and the West half of the East wing (Photos 8, 9 and 11). In these areas, a new floor was installed over the existing original floor, which remains in place. The East end of the East wing now houses a woodworking shop, and remains essentially unaltered (Photo 13).

The original sprinkler system was refurbished and remains in use (Photo 12), electrical service was modified and expanded, sanitation facilities and a heating and air conditioning system installed. While these installations are largely unconcealed, their visual impact is not excessively intrusive.

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Despite the alterations described above, the Baird Hardware Company Warehouse retains the essential structural and architectural integrity that reflect its character and appearance throughout its historical use as a commercial warehouse.

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 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 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 1910 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Baird Hardware Company was a major commercial enterprise in the Gainesville area for ninety years. Established in 1891 as E. Baird and Company, the firm employed, at its peak in the 1950's, over 100 people, stocked over 35,000 items, and grossed over \$4 million per year through retail sales and wholesale distribution throughout North Central Florida. Its fortunes declined thereafter, and the company was liquidated in 1980.

The company was initially established as a co-partnership in 1890 or 1891 by Eberle Baird, Thomas J. Swearingen and J. R. Eddins, "for the purpose of supplying the public with hardware, stoves, tin and graniteware, house furnishing goods, etc."¹ Baird, an Ohio native who moved to Florida in 1881, had been successfully engaged in the lumbering and sawmilling industry. Under his direction, and with the impetus of the Florida phosphate boom in the mid-1890's, the company prospered, and the Gainesville Sun reported in its December 18, 1897 issue that "The firm is enterprising, and their energy has given them prestige in supplying the phosphate plants in Alachua and Levy counties. They carry everything in the hardware line."²

In April, 1900 the firm was incorporated as the Baird Hardware Co., with "plumbing, steam and gas fitting in this State or elsewhere" among its objectives.³ By 1905, the firm occupied two separate warehouses as well as a downtown retail outlet and warehouse.⁴ By 1910 its growing business required the construction of additional warehouse and wholesale distribution facility to serve both its retail outlets in Gainesville and other communities, and its expanding wholesale business in some twenty North Florida counties.

The site of the new warehouse was chosen specifically for its access to the major rail lines serving the community. The construction of the first railroad through the area by the Florida Railroad Company in 1859 was primarily responsible for the founding of the town of Gainesville and the relocation of the county seat to this new community.⁵ This line became a part of the Seaboard Airline Railroad in 1903.⁶ Additional rail service was provided in 1881 by the Florida Southern Railway and the Savannah, Florida and Western Railway, which later became part of the Plant System, and merged with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1902.⁷ The site of the new Baird warehouse was located near the crossover of the SAL and ACL main lines and was accessible by existing spurs from each which had served a major cotton gin destroyed by fire in 1907.⁸

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9. Major Bibliographical References

See bibliographic references on attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.83 acres

Quadrangle name Gainesville East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

 Zone

3	7	1	7	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	----

 Easting

3	2	7	1	9	10	10
---	---	---	---	---	----	----

 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 Comm. 169.01 FT S of Int. E R/W S. Main St. & S R/W SE 6th Ave POB S 439.25 FT S. 81 DEG. E44.33 FT to NLY R/W Depot Ave. NELY Along said R/W 268.32 FT. N 323.78 FT W 104 FT N. 71.12 FT W 86.22 FT S 20 FT W 81.9 FT S 10.13 FT W. 27.6 FT TO POB.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William Thurston/Diana Primelles

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date September 6, 1985

street & number Department of State, The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

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

George W. Percy

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/19/85

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

Entered in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 11-25-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Baird Hardware Company acquired the property for \$6,000 in 1908,⁹ and built its new brick warehouse two years later.

The Company continued to thrive and to expand its operations. In 1924 its charter was amended to increase the amount of capital stock authorized from \$50,000 to \$200,000 and the amount of indebtedness allowable from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and to include automobile accessories and marine supplies among its many products lines.¹⁰ At this time, too, its retail facilities were substantially expanded.¹¹

Eberle Baird died in February, 1930,¹² and C. Addison Pound became President of the company two months later. Pound had joined the firm in 1908, at the age of 18, and had worked his way up through the retail and wholesales ranks to become Secretary of the firm and a member of its Board of Directors in 1917 and Vice President in 1919. By 1930, he had also become a leading figure in economic and civic affairs in the community, was involved in several major real estate developments and served terms as president of the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce.¹³

Pound led the Company successfully through the early years of the Depression. By 1938 sales had regained the peak levels of the mid-1920's, and the volume of business virtually doubled during World War II, with the rapid development of military training facilities and expansion of civilian communities to support them. In the post war years, the Company continued to prosper under Pound's direction, with several major modernization and expansion projects being completed between 1946 and 1954.¹⁴

Much of this prosperity was due to the sale of marine supplies, particularly Mercury outboard motors. The Baird Hardware Company had been the exclusive distributor for the Johnson Outboard Motor Company in Florida from the mid 1920's until 1936 when Johnson initiated its own direct distribution to retailers. Baird then took on the Champion and Mercury lines, eventually concentrating its efforts on Mercury products. This business expanded rapidly after World War II, and in 1950, the first full railroad carload of Mercury motors was received at the Baird Hardware Warehouse in Gainesville (Photo 14). Throughout the 1950's, Mercury motors destined for all points in Florida passed through the Warehouse, making up a major share of the marine supply business, which in turn accounted for some 45% of the Baird Company's annual sales.¹⁵

But in 1960, the Mercury Company, too, established its own direct distribution system. This meant the loss of \$2.25 million annually to Baird Hardware Company.¹⁶ This major blow was followed by a series of less dramatic developments that adversely affected the Company. These included the development of outlying shopping malls, which hurt the firm's

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retail sales, and increasing competition from national chain wholesalers. As a result, the retail marine business was closed out in 1964, retail auto supply sales followed in 1966, and on April 1, 1967 all retail sales were closed down.¹⁷

In the meantime, C. A. Pound, Sr. had retired, and C. A. Pound, Jr. had assumed the presidency of the Company.¹⁸ He believed that the firm could survive only through a major restructuring of its operations and the complete replacement of its obsolete warehouses with a single modern facility. The alternative, which he considered more prudent, was the liquidation of the Company's assets.¹⁹ Accordingly, he supervised the gradual disposition of the various properties of the firm throughout the 1970's, and the final liquidation of its remaining inventory and fixtures in 1980. On January 1, 1981, the Baird Hardware Company ceased to exist as a corporate entity.

The Baird Hardware Company Warehouse, the only surviving building associated with the Company, was donated to the University of Florida to benefit the C. Addison Pound, Sr. and Annie C. Pound Endowment Fund in the College of Business Administration and the C. Addison Pound, Jr. Engineering Scholarship Fund. In September, 1981, the property was purchased by Akira and Associates, Ltd. for rehabilitation for adaptive reuse. Today, the building continues its active life, housing office, studio spaces, and a specialty woodworking shop. It has been renamed Baird Center, commemorating its original function and the role of Baird Hardware Company in the historic development of the community.

FOOTNOTES

¹The Gainesville Sun, February 29, 1891.

²F.W. Buckholz, History of Alachua County, Part II, p. 241.

³Articles of Incorporation - Baird Hardware Co., Incorporation Book No. 1, p. 58. April 28, 1900.

⁴The Gainesville Sun, November, 1905.

⁵Charles Hildreth, and Merlin Cox, History of Gainesville, Florida (Gainesville: Alachua County Historical Commission, 1981) p. 70.

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⁶Ibid., p. 74.

⁷George W. Pettengill. The Story of Florida Railroads, Bulletin No. 86: The Railway and Locomotive Society, July 1962.

⁸The Gainesville Sun, October 31, 1907.

⁹Alachua County Courthouse, Gainesville, FL. Warranty Deed, W.W. Gordon & Co. to Baird Hardware Co., Deedbook 74, p. 130. May 29, 1908.

¹⁰Articles of Incorporation - Baird Hardware Co., Incorporation Book No. 3, p. 60.

¹¹The Gainesville Sun, May 23, 1924.

¹²Ibid., February 20, 1930.

¹³Ibid., August 21, 1924; April 6, 1925; April 20, 1925; September 27, 1925; April 10, 1928; July 14, 1928; Gainesville Chamber of Commerce: Gainesville Alachua County, Florida, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1927).

¹⁴Personal papers of C. A. Pound, Sr.; The Gainesville Sun, February 1, 1953; May 2, 1954; Interview with C. A. Pound, Jr., March 27, 1984.

¹⁵Interview with Leo Ward, Gainesville, FL, January 16, 1984; The Gainesville Sun, May 2, 1954; May 11, 1958; March 1, 1981.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., March 24, 1967.

¹⁸Ibid., May 8, 1962; Southern Hardware, June 1962.

¹⁹Interview with C. A. Pound, Jr., March 27, 1984.

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Books

- Barr, Melanie. A History of Baird Hardware Company, Akira and Associates, April 1984.
- Buchholz, F.W. History of Alachua County, Florida: Narrative and Biographical, Part II - Biographical. St. Augustine: The Record Co., 1929.
- Davis, Jess. History of Alachua County, n.p. 1959.
- Hildreth, Charles H. and Cox, Merlin G. History of Gainesville, Florida. Gainesville: Alachua County Historical Commission, 1981.
- Webber, Carl. The Eden of the South. New York: Leve and Alden's Publication Department, 1883.

Directories

- Polk, R.L., ed. Gainesville City Directories 1905-1973. Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk and Co., 1905-1973.

Interviews

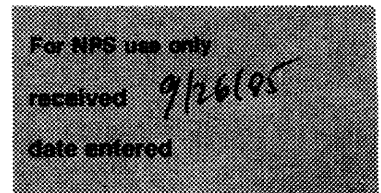
- Pound, C. Addison Jr. by Melanie Barr. Interview, Gainesville, Florida, March 27, 1984.
- Ward, Leo by Melanie Barr. Interview, Gainesville, Florida, January 16, 1984.

Maps

- Baird Center, Proposed Site Plan, July 10, 1983.
- Baird Center, Topographic and Boundary Survey, July 6, 1981.
- Gainesville, County Seat of Alachua County, Florida. 1884. Milwaukee, Beck and Pauli Lithography, 1884.
- Sanborn Map of Gainesville, Florida. New York: Sanborn Insurance Co., 1903, 1909, 1913, 1922, 1928.

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Newspapers

The Florida Times Union, 1887-1896.

The Gainesville Sun, 1891-1984.

The Gainesville Star, May 19, 1903.

The Independent Florida Alligator, May 23, 1975.

Official Records

Warranty Deed. Sheriff John W. Turner to H. F. Dutton Co., Deedbook N,
p. 671. September 1, 1882, Alachua County Courthouse.

Warranty Deed. W.W. Gordon & Co. to Baird Hardware Co. Deedbook 74,
p. 130. May 29, 1908, Alachua County Courthouse.

Articles of Incorporation - Baird Hardware, Incorporation Book No. 1,
p. 58. April 28, 1900; Incorporation Book No. 3, p. 60. January
22, 1924, Alachua County Courthouse.

Warranty Deed. University of Florida to Akira and Associates Ltd.
Official Records Book 1375, p. 804. September 25, 1981, Alachua
County Courthouse.

Seaboard Airline. Documents concerning the corporate histories of its
predecessors.

Personal Papers of C.A. Pound Sr. and C.A. Pound, Jr., In Possession
of C.A. Pound, Jr.

Miscellaneous photographs, miscellaneous postcards, receipts and state-
ments dated 1891 and 1903.

February 27, 1926. Letter from C.A. Pound, Sr. to E.H. Hunter, Advertising
Manager of Hardware and House Furnishing Goods, Atlanta, GA.

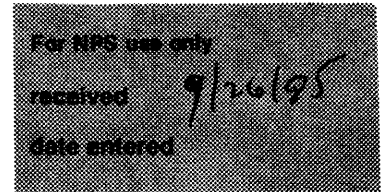
History of Baird Hardware Co. (three paragraphs), typewritten, 1890-1930
(C.A. Pound, Sr.?).

March 31, 1931. Recommendations by C.A. Pound to be Submitted to the
Board of Directors at a Special Call (sic) Meeting (typewritten).

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Sales Total for the Years 1914 through 1953, handwritten and typed.

February 29, 1960. General Bulletin to All Personnel from C.A. Pound, Jr.
In reference to the postponement of the modernization of the
retail stores.

March 9, 1960. Letter from Moore and May, Architects, to C.A. Pound, Jr.

History of Baird Hardware Co. (one page), outline form, handwritten,
1952-1970 (C.A. Pound, Sr.?).

March 21, 1967. Letters from C.A. Pound, Jr. to Retail, Dealer, Industrial,
Contractor, Commercial and Institutional Customers.

April 3, 1967. Trade Release in reference to the closing of the retail
operation.

Pamphlets and Trade Journals

Alachua County, Its Resources and Advantages. A Supplement to the Daily
Sun. Gainesville, 1895.

Baird Hardware Co. Stoves, Ranges, Heaters, Hollow Ware and Fireplace
Fixtures Wholesale Catalog No. 5. Gainesville, n.d.

Gainesville Chamber of Commerce. Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida,
Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1927).

Gainesville Chamber of Commerce. Business Directory. Gainesville, 1925.

Gainesville, Florida. In Pictures and Prose. Gainesville, 1925.

Gainesville Rotary Club. Roster, Constitution and Bylaws. Gainesville,
1922.

Pettengill, George W. The Story of Florida Railroads. Bulletin No. 86:
The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, July 1952.

Southern Hardware. June, 1962; June, 1967; August 1903.