

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 20 1985

date entered MAR 4 1986

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

1. Name

historic

and or common Tifton Commercial Historic District

2. Location

street & number Main Street, Love Avenue,
Second Street, Third Street N/A— not for publication

city, town Tifton N/A— vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Tift code 277

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners (more than 50)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Tift County Courthouse

city, town Tifton state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See continuation sheet

title Historic Structures Field
Survey: Tift County has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date 1981 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Office,
Ga. Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state GA

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

001 A 9AM

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Tifton Commercial Historic District consists of portions of ten blocks of primarily commercial buildings in Tifton's historic downtown. The district is situated to the east of the intersection of Tifton's two major railroad lines. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (originally the Brunswick and Albany) slices on an approximately east-west course through the center of the district. The Southern Railway (originally the Georgia Southern and Florida) runs approximately northwest - southeast through town and helps to form the district's western boundary. The commercial area is laid out on flat land with two non-aligned grids separated by the Atlantic Coast Line tracks. These tracks, with their rights-of-way, cut a wide swath through the district. Except for a number of warehouses stretched out along the tracks, buildings tend to face away from the railroad and towards Love Street, Second Street, and Main Street, the principal business streets in town.

Buildings date from the 1890s to the late 1930s, with almost a complete break in construction occurring between 1925 and 1935. The majority are one- to three-story buildings with party walls and common setbacks. There are also a number of prominent freestanding buildings. The primary building material in the district is brick, used structurally, as a veneer, and decoratively; in addition, there is one example each of a marble-clad building, a granite-faced building, and a rusticated concrete-block building. A wide variety of building types are represented in the district including a courthouse, a post office, a church, seven warehouses, two hotels, banks, office buildings, two theaters, three depots, a wide variety of stores, and an industrial complex that originally functioned as Tifton's ice and electric plant. Victorian Eclectic and Early 20th Century Commercial style structures predominate. Typical features associated with the Victorian Eclectic buildings include segmentally arched and bay windows, trabeated windows with lintel cornices, pressed metal and corbeled brick roofline cornices, corbeled string courses, and storefronts with cast-iron columns. The Victorian church (1901) with its round-arched openings borrows from the Romanesque Revival. The Commercial style buildings have flat facades, pent or parapet roofs, and spandrel panels and/or windows and entrances detailed with cast concrete, terra cotta, or decorative brickwork. There is a small collection of mid-1930s Art Deco/Art Moderne-inspired buildings along Main Street in the district. The Lockeby Building (1937) with its cast-stone vertical banding is a fine local example of an Art Deco structure. The Tift Theatre (1937) with its smooth-faced, multi-colored Carrara glass facade and geometric "Theatre" sign is Art Moderne-influenced. Tifton's freestanding buildings, many of them architect designed, provide excellent examples of several other styles. The district's most prominent landmark is the massive three-story Myon Hotel, built in 1906 and designed with a definite Georgian Revival influence. The 1912 Tift County Courthouse is a finely detailed Beaux Arts style building; the 1914 post office (now the library) is Renaissance Revival in style. The 1917 Bank of Tifton (now a C&S Bank) is a fine example of the Neoclassical style, and 1916 Union Station (now the Chamber of Commerce) with its long, low roofline has a Prairie-style influence. The Twin Brick Warehouses, built in 1922 and 1925 on the site of Tift's sawmill at the east edge of the district, are landmark structures by virtue of their immense size (approximately 100' x 400' each) and their easily recognizable stepped-parapet fronts.

Landscaping in the district is minimal, limited to modest plantings on the lots surrounding the old post office and the courthouse. Non-contributing properties include a very few non-historic structures built after 1925, a group of historic buildings rendered non-historic

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1890s - 1925; 1937 **Builder/Architect** Multiple: William A. Edwards,
B. B. Smith
Oscar Wenderoff

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Tifton Commercial Historic District is historically significant in terms of community planning and development and transportation, architecture, commerce, and politics and government. In terms of community planning and development and transportation, the district is significant as the center of a railroad town that developed first around the saw mill and from the extensive land holdings of one man, and later as a county seat. The three extant railroad depots in the district document Tifton's location at the crossing of two major rail lines and its development as an important railroad shipping center. Architecturally, the district is significant for its representative collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial, institutional, and transportation-related architecture. Included in the district are many Victorian Eclectic and Early 20th Century Commercial style buildings and a few Georgian Revival, Neoclassical, Beaux Arts, Renaissance Revival, and Art Deco/Art Moderne influenced structures. In terms of commerce, the district is significant as the historic commercial center of Tifton and Tift County which served the retailing, wholesaling, marketing, and shipping needs of the surrounding area. In terms of politics and government, the district is significant for containing the old U. S. Post Office and the Tift County Courthouse which document the presence, respectively, of the federal and county government in Tifton. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility under National Register criteria A, B, and C.

Community Planning and Development and Transportation

In 1872 Henry Harding Tift (1841-1922) purchased 4,900 acres of undeveloped timberland along the tracks of the Brunswick and Albany Railroad (later the Atlantic Coast Line) in Berrien County and established a sawmill. A settlement rapidly grew up around the mill, triggered in 1888 by the arrival of a second railroad, the Georgia Southern and Florida (later the Southern). In 1890 the settlement was incorporated as Tifton, and all Henry Tift's property lying within the incorporated limits was laid off in blocks and put up for sale. By 1892 Tifton already had 1,200 residents, 11 business houses, 2 restaurants, a hotel, and an academy. Guided by Tift's strong leadership and located at the intersection of two important rail systems, the town grew into an important regional timber and, later, agricultural center. In the 1890s Tift financed two more railroads that terminated in town; in 1896 he established the Bank of Tifton. In 1905 Tifton became the county seat of newly created Tift County, and by 1906 the population had jumped to 2,394. The next ten years were ones of great growth and prosperity when many of Tifton's landmark structures, including the courthouse, the post office the Hotel Myon, and Union Station, were constructed. Growth faltered in 1916 with the closing of Tift's sawmill and virtually ceased by 1925 as the town struggled to shift from a timber to an agricultural economy. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (1907) and the Coastal Plains Experiment Station (1919),

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 35 acres.

Quadrangle name Tifton West, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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2	6	1	6	1	5	1	0
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3	1	4	8	1	2	6	1	8	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

1	1	7
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2	6	1	8	1	7	1	0
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3	1	4	8	1	2	3	1	3	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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2	6	1	4	1	5	1	0
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3	1	4	8	1	2	0	1	5	1	0
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D

1	1	7
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2	6	1	2	1	2	1	0
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3	1	4	8	1	2	4	1	8	1	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, is described and justified in Section 7.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher
Historic Preservation Section,

organization Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources date November 26, 1985

street & number 270 Washington St. S. W. telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA 30334

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 Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Office date 12/13/85

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

Ann Schlarzel date 3/4/86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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

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date entered

Representation in

Continuation sheet Existing Surveys

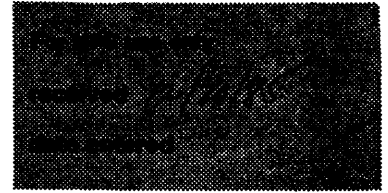
Item number 6

Page 2

Several buildings in the district have been individually recognized by the National Park Service. The Tift County Courthouse was listed in the National Register on September 18, 1980 as part of the county courthouse of Georgia thematic nomination. Three buildings in the district have received Preliminary Certifications of Significance from the National Register Programs Division of the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office. These are: #214 East Second Street (December 6, 1983); the Lockeby Building, corner of Third and Main (February 27, 1985); Myon Hotel (February 27, 1985).

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Continuation sheet

Description

Item number

7

Page

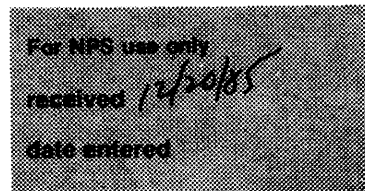
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by virtue of recent alterations, and several intrusions, both new buildings and altered historic buildings whose character detracts from the historic environment of the district.

Boundary: The Tifton Commercial Historic District consists of the contiguous, intact, historic commercial, governmental, and transportation-related structures in Tifton's historic downtown. A church and a historic house, once part of an adjacent residential area but historically absorbed into the downtown as it expanded, are included in the district. Newer commercial development to the south, east, and west, altered historic buildings on the south end of Main Street, and residential areas to the north surround the district.

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

state institutions won for Tifton with donations of land and money from Henry Tift, helped to boost agricultural productivity and crop diversification in the area. By the late 1930s, the tobacco industry, pioneered by Tift beginning in the 1890s, has become very lucrative. Tifton experienced a building boom in the late 1930s. In 1936 the local newspaper reported that "approximately 100 new buildings have been constructed or are in the process."

The district is significant as the center of a railroad town that developed from the landholdings of one man, Henry Harding Tift. Its layout, with its two non-aligned grids, reflects the town's development at the intersection of two preexisting railroad lines that determined its configuration. Its three extant depots, the Atlantic Coast Line Freight Depot (c. 1899), the Union Depot (1916, built to serve as a passenger station for both main lines), and a building on Central Avenue used briefly as a depot before being converted to a wholesale grocery warehouse, document Tifton's location at the crossing of two important rail lines and its development as an important railroad shipping center. Its late designation as a county seat, approximately fifteen years after the town was laid out, is reflected in the off-center placement of the courthouse along one of the principal business streets.

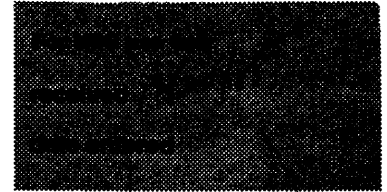
Architecture

In terms of architecture, the district is significant for its fine collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial, institutional, and transportation-related buildings that provide excellent examples of such buildings in small south Georgia cities. A wide variety of building types are represented in the district including depots, warehouses, banks, hotels, office buildings, theaters, a variety of stores, automobile showrooms, a courthouse, a post office, a church, and an ice and electric plant. Brick used structurally and decoratively in conjunction with cast iron, pressed metal, stone, cast concrete, and terra cotta is almost ubiquitous in the district as in most Georgia towns of the period. Local interpretations of the Victorian Eclectic and Early 20th Century Commercial styles are particularly well represented in Tifton's buildings which are typically detailed with piers, columns, spandrel and parapet panels, segmental arches, window caps, string courses, corbeled cornices, and parapet and pent roofs. Tifton also has a few examples of more high-style, architect-designed buildings that provide important local examples of a number of other early 20th-century architectural styles including the Georgian Revival, and Prairie styles. Two 1937 structures, the Tift Theatre and the Lockeby Building, are landmark structures in town that provide excellent local examples of the Art Deco/Art Moderne styles.

Architects represented in the district include B. B. Smith (the Myon Hotel), a well known architect from Montgomery, Alabama who designed many buildings in that city and state, William A. Edwards (1866-1939; the Tift County Courthouse and Bank of Tifton) of the prominent Atlanta firm of Edwards and Sayward who designed many important institutional buildings in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, and Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury, responsible for the design of the U. S. Post Office.

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 3

Commerce

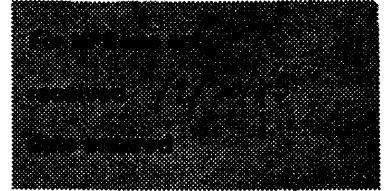
In terms of commerce, the district is significant because of its role as the principal commercial center for Tifton and Tift County. The district served as the center for day to day commercial activities in the city and its surrounding agricultural countryside; these commercial activities included wholesaling and retailing, professional services, banking, hotel accommodations, and entertainment. Of particular interest in Tifton are the number of warehouses remaining in the district to document Tifton's important role as a marketing and shipping center. Buildings that historically housed farm products, cotton, tobacco, and wholesale groceries are all extant.

Politics/Government

In terms of politics and government, the district is significant as the seat of county government for Tift County. Its presence is represented by the 1912 Tift County Court-house, located in the district. In addition, the Federal government is represented in the district by the presence of the 1914 U. S. Post Office, now the city library.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet **Bibliographical References** **Item number** **9** **Page** **2**

Kelley, David J., editor. Tifton Centennial Commorative Booklet. Tifton: Lang Printing and Office Supply, 1972.

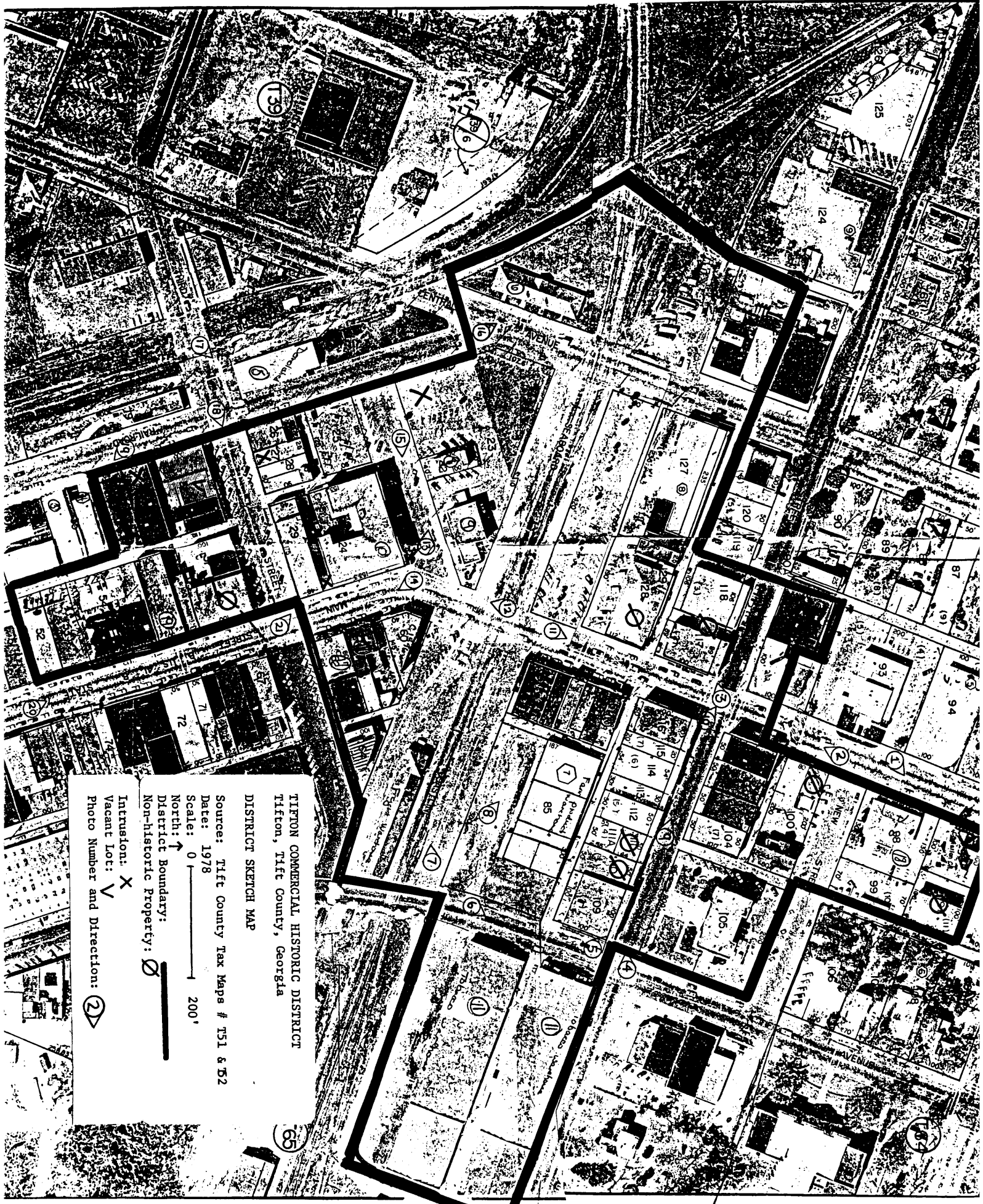
Morrell, Robert. Tifton, Georgia. Interview conducted by Nancy Tinker, September 15, 1983.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Tifton, Georgia. 1898, 1903, 1907, 1912, 1917, 1924.

Tifton Gazette. Tifton Centennial Edition, 1872-1972.

Tinker, Nancy. "Tifton Commercial Business District: Reused Historic District Information Form." October, 1983. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta.

Williams, Ida Belle. History of Tift County. Macon, Georgia: J. W. Burke Company, 1948.



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TIFTON COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Tifton, Tift County, Georgia

DISTRICT SKETCH MAP

Source: Tift County Tax Maps # T51 & T52
 Date: 1978
 Scale: 0 ————— 200'

North: ↑

District Boundary: [thick black line]

Non-historic Property: [circle with diagonal slash]

Intrusion: X

Vacant Lot: V

Photo Number and Direction: [circle with arrow]

FEB 12 1986

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Tifton Commercial Historic District Tift County, GEORGIA
86000382

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED

Edson R. Beall 4.21.94

Entered in the
National Register