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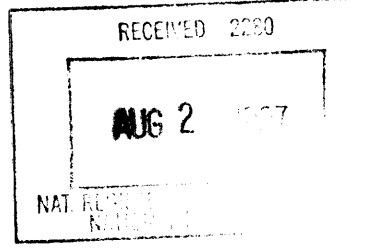
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MAY 21 1997

NPS Form 10-900
1024-0018
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Ala. Historical Commission



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Gadsden Downtown Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 225-635 Broad Street; 402-699 Chestnut Street; Court Street,
112 to Locust Street corner; 700 Forrest Avenue; 305-515 Locust Street; 126 N.
Third St.; 131-217 N. Fourth St.; 108-221 S. Fourth St.; 120-126 N. Fifth St.;
115 S. Fifth St. to Walnut Street corner; 117-121 S. Sixth St.

Not for publication N/A

city or town Gadsden Vicinity: N/A
state Alabama code AL county Etowah code 055
zip code 35901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986,
as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for
determination of eligibility 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant nationally
statewide X locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 8/21/97
Signature of certifying official Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register
criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is

- entered in the National Register
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
 National Register
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
 National Register
- removed from the National Register

Edson H. Beall 9/26/97

___ other (explain): _____

 Signature of Keeper Date
Edson H. Beall of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 7 </u> <u> 6 </u>	<u> 50 </u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u> 7 </u> <u> 6 </u>	<u> 50 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub:	<u>Business</u>
			<u>Financial</u>
			<u>Specialty store</u>
			<u>Department store</u>
			<u>Restaurant</u>
			<u>Warehouse</u>
			<u>Hotel</u>
	<u>GOVERNMENT</u>		<u>Courthouse</u>
			<u>Post Office</u>
	<u>RELIGION</u>		<u>Religious facility</u>
	<u>RECREATION</u>		<u>Theatre</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub:	<u>Same as above</u>
	<u>GOVERNMENT</u>		<u>Courthouse</u>
	<u>RELIGION</u>		<u>Religious facility</u>
	<u>RECREATION/CULTURE</u>		<u>Theatre</u>
			<u>Museum</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

Italianate

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH C. REVIVALS:

Italian Renaissance

Classical Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

OTHER: One-Storey Commercial Block

OTHER: Multiple-Storey Commercial Block

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE, CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK, STONE

other METAL

GLASS

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached Continuation Sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

=====
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the
criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant
contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in
our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type,
period, or method of construction or represents the work of a
master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a
significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack
individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information
important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious
purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the
past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance 1878-1948

Significant Dates 1883
1906
1910
1929
1948

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Gwin, Hicks & Lane, contractors
W.H. Mayben & Son, contractors
Whilddin, D.O., Architect
Hofferbert, Paul, Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached Continuation Sheets.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency: Alabama State Archives

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Gadsden Public Library; Scarboro Photo Shop

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property:

approximately 43

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	591610	3764360	3	16	592120 3763520
2	16	592360	3763930	4	16	591350 3763930
___ See continuation sheet.						

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Nelson and Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewerorganization FuturePast date December 31, 1996street & number 4700 Seventh Court South telephone (205) 592-6610city or town Birmingham state AL zip code 35222

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name

street & number

city or town

telephone

state _____ zip code _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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Description of Physical Appearance:

The City of Gadsden lies on the west bank of a bend in the Coosa River, situated on a plateau between the ore-rich slopes of Red Mountain to the south and Lookout Mountain to the north. Although older than Birmingham and Bessemer in terms of its founding date of 1847, Gadsden, like those cities, saw its greatest growth and economic vitality in terms of industrial activity beginning in the 1880s and lasting through the decade of the Second World War.

The oldest intact portion of downtown Gadsden is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places on the basis of its architectural quality and cohesion, representing structures dating from the late 1870s up until the latter part of the World War II decade of the 1940s. Properties represented in the District are dated from 1878 to 1948, which are the date of the oldest significant masonry building (the Opera House, which survived the 1883 fire) and the date of the razing of the old Courthouse. (See Statement of Significance below.)

The preponderance of buildings in the District are one- or multiple-storey (most commonly two) commercial blocks of traditional design, with storefront, transom and upper facade. The older structures feature more applied decoration and window arches, with classically inspired details such as projecting cornices, pilasters, keystones and the like. Good examples of this in the District are the c. 1884 Weiss Building (Inventory #5) and the Gadsden Hardware Building of 1885 (Inventory #17). Although late in this period, the 1902 Nadler Building (Inventory #74) and the 1904 Times-News Building (Inventory #111) take advantage of their corner locations to show off highly decorated entry bays, the latter with an Italianate opulence of projecting moldings.

Buildings from the early 20th century generally become simpler, the cornice lines defined in the brickwork and with less applied decoration, as for example the North American Grocery Co. building of c. 1910 (Inventory #1) and the Croom Grocery building of c. 1905 (Inventory #75). Elaborate corbeling characterizes some from this period (e.g., Inventory #80, the Leach Building, c. 1920). Glazed terra cotta from the 1920s appears on the Louis Pizitz building (Inventory #7). Brick is the primary building material throughout the District, load-bearing in the earlier buildings and veneer in the later. Toward the end of the period of significance, modern materials begin to appear: concrete, architectural glass, and enameled panels (most distinctively in the White Palace Café, Inventory #37). See also discussion below, p. 4, and Inventory.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

The core of this district runs along Broad Street, the primary commercial artery of the city. It extends from the middle of the 200 block on the east to the end of the 600 block on the west, extending on the south side to take in the Reich Hotel (now Daugette Towers), one of Gadsden's two surviving multi-story historic landmarks (Inventory #73). On the north, properties along Locust Street from Third Street to the mid-500 block are included; on the south the somewhat irregular boundary steps up from Fourth Street to Seventh, jogging outward again to include the 1927 sanctuary of St. James Catholic Church (#87), which is an interesting amalgam of Gothic Revival and Romanesque features. Fourteen city blocks are represented in part or in whole, with the Reich Hotel and St. James' Church being the sole contributing buildings on their respective blocks but too significant to omit from the District.

Although older structures do exist farther east toward the river, redevelopment and rather extensive demolition of the 200 block on the south by AmSouth Bank have resulted in an end to any cohesive historic fabric; thus the decision to make Third Street (except for a half block on the north) the eastern boundary. Along Locust Street some of the contributing properties included are of more recent, i.e., 1940s, vintage; this area was later to develop commercially and, being close to the railroad lines, is more characterized by warehouse and utility structures than commercial buildings and also has more unbuild land interspersed. Although farther west than the present District boundaries, the Southern Manufacturing Company's extensive millworks at one time occupied the blocks along Locust Street, probably accounting for the relative lateness of other commercial development in the area.

Along and across Chestnut Street to the south of Broad Street lies a greater concentration of commercial buildings dating largely from the first decades of the present century. Unfortunately, this side of the district is also characterized by the open lots that were created after 1980 in a city program to create more parking downtown. This left the 1904 Times-News Building (#111) unconnected from its neighbors, and meant that any historic resources east of S. Fourth Street along Chestnut were stranded without context.

At the west end along upper Broad Street lies a concentration of buildings dating largely from the 1940s and '50s, including the 1947 Pitman Theater (#70), which along with the Reich Hotel makes a visual (if not actual) end to the district in that direction. Beyond this point the commercial

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

district began to intrude into the residential section about 1950, and the present Etowah County Courthouse was built there. The 1948 abandonment by the Courthouse of its historic site between Third and Fourth Streets signified a lack of commitment to the historic downtown that contributed to the diminution of vitality in the old commercial district. Continuing this trend, in 1960 the 1905 City Hall on North Fifth Street was destroyed and municipal offices moved to a new complex built below First Street overlooking the Coosa River, again separating out the public and private functions whose former proximity in the historic downtown had created so much vitality.

Downtown Gadsden is typical of many American 19th-century towns in that it contains much closely-built and well crafted commercial architecture from several periods of growth and style. Most buildings are of two storeys; in some cases the upper floors beyond the second have been destroyed or removed for other reasons, as for instance the third storey of Kyle's Opera House (#30) in the 400 block of Broad Street and the fourth storey of the Printup Hotel (#105), which was destroyed by fire in 1929. Nineteenth-century buildings are of brick with pressed brick faces and often elaborate decorative elements such as cornices and window hoods. In the twentieth century the brick was often veneer over hollow tile, and decoration took the form of varitone designs and creative corbeling, usually along the parapet line. Stone and concrete were used as contrasting elements in the design as well as the structure of the buildings.

Probably the most distinguished building in the district is the Federal Courthouse, originally the U.S. Post Office, its ground floor dating from 1910 and its additional storeys from 1913 (#60). This is a free-standing structure faced in Georgia marble, of Italian Renaissance design with a large projecting portico. It was individually listed on the National Register in 1976.

Other revivalist styles in the District are associated with the churches: St. James Catholic Church, mentioned above, that suggests both the Gothic and Romanesque; First Methodist Church (Inventory #118), an 1893 Victorian Gothic structure that managed to survive its 1955 renovation; and First Baptist Church (Inventory #124), a 1926 Classical Revival structure of Greek temple-front design that provides a fine visual southern terminus to the District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

As the predominant style of the commercial buildings was adapted to more modern construction, concrete assumed a more prominent external role in the style. Buildings such as the 1948 Phillipson Building (#85) and the 1947 Pitman Theater (#70) are good examples of significant concrete elements in the design: the Phillipson Building has concrete banding and spandrel panels to offset the strong verticality of the pilasters, while the theater is completely faced in concrete to provide the vault-like appearance of smooth stone.

The later buildings in the district are generally constructed of concrete with brick veneer facing; some are faced in other materials such as granite aggregate or pebbledash. Face screens over the older buildings are the typical metal, pebbledash, or even wood. Exterior insulating materials typically are used in recent makeovers such as the Gadsden Museum of Art (#43) and the Cultural Arts Center (#35), which covered the 1960s Belk-Hudson building in dryvit (a type of Exterior Insulation Finish System or EIFS, as this material appears in the Inventory following). Even the venerable 1913 Frank & Hagedorn Building (Inventory #19), now Fambrough's, has been partially refaced in EIFS, although not enough to obscure the fine original stone banding and tilework of the storefront.

At the time of this 1997 nomination, the count of buildings in the historic district is 128, 78 of them Contributing and 50 Non-Contributing. The number of Contributing buildings will increase, however, as removal of face screens proceeds and other restorations are made, a process which is ongoing and is daily improving the streetscape in this historic downtown.

Archeological Component:

Although no formal archaeological survey has been done of the Gadsden downtown district, the potential for subsurface remains may be good. Buried portions could reveal significant information that may be useful in interpreting the District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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Property List
Downtown Gadsden Historic Survey

Broad Street

1. North Alabama Grocery Co./First Choice Personnel, 225 Broad Street, c. 1910
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage; constructed of brick now painted red; enframed upper windows with corbeled tab decoration below flat parapet; four one-over-one wood sash windows with stone headers with keystones and stone sills; recessed central entry, cabinet storefront with lower transom intact; main transom occluded by panels in frame. Canvas awning. (Roll 4, #34) C
2. Flour & Feed Warehouse/Shear Class\Herb Patch\McNair Jewelers, 227-31 Broad Street, c. 1890
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 75' frontage; double storefront with central building entry to upper floor; five metal-frame casement windows across front and running along side wall. Molded sheet metal cornice with brackets; projecting brick course above windows, above which are five segmental *bas relief* panels with incised notches. Storefronts completely altered, pebbledash facing, metal awning. (Roll 4, #35,36) C
3. Advanced Accounting/Owen Agency, 233-35 Broad Street, c. 1980
Modern one-storey brick double block, 50' frontage, varitone pink brick with multi-pane wood windows in molded frames, flat parapet. (Roll 4, #36A) NC
4. Meeks Block/J.C. Penney\Grandma's Attic, 301 Broad Street, 1923
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: red brick, recessed double entries with flat canopy across facade. Small-paned leaded transom panels, recently damaged on Third Street end. Storefront appears to have original copper framing. Three trios of one-over-one wood sash windows above, transom portions occluded. Stepped stone-capped parapet with soldier courses; central stone name panel with "Meeks" incised. Third Street side completely without windows. This building was constructed by the Meeks Estate for the first J.C. Penney store east of the Mississippi River. W.H. Mayben & Son, contractors. (Roll 5, #1) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

5. Oxford Block/Weiss Building/Baby Mart, 307 Broad Street, c. 1884
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: painted brick; three singly-set upper windows with brick segmental heads, replacement multi-pane windows. Projecting metal cornice with modillion brackets, three-panel friezeband with *bas relief* "Weiss" on central one. Modernized storefront with entry at side; canvas awning. Apparently this was the east-end quarter of the Oxford Block, the central two quarters of which were joined to create the terra cotta face of the Louis Pizitz Department Store (see #7 below) and the remaining quarter of which was demolished for new construction (see #8 below). (Roll 5, #2) C

6. Phoenix Block/Gurley & Holcombe/Pat Walsh/Life Insurance Co. of America, 308-10 Broad Street, c. 1883
Refaced multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: brick now painted brown; one storefront completely altered with modern doors and window, the rest obscured by wood panels; the other half matches neighboring Kress Building (see #9 below) in fake Colonial style with projecting canopy. Seven singly-set upper windows, the center one over the original building entrance, with Italianate bracketed heads over round-head frames, but the windows are completely blocked by painted panels. Small projecting cornice with three console brackets and one elaborate console bracket on the Kress Building end that actually marks the center of the original Phoenix Block frontage. (Roll 4, #31) NC

7. Louis Pizitz Department Store/Dawson Building/Insurance Facilities, Inc., 309 Broad Street, c. 1884, 1924
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: constructed of red brick with face cladding of white glazed terra cotta. Five upper bays delineated by fluted pilasters, each bay containing a pair of rectangular windows now with replacement tinted sheet glazing; windows surmounted by spandrel panels with *bas relief* shields, swags and cornucopias. A molding of acanthus leaves along the cornice line. Modernized storefront: recessed central entry with double wooden doors; marble bulkheads; black canvas awning. Apparently originally two brick buildings (see #5 above), the c. 1924 terra cotta refacing was done for Louis Pizitz Department Store. Rehabilitated 1996. (Roll 5, #3) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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8. Modern infill: Commercial Building, 313 Broad Street, 1996
Multiple-storey commercial block in the style of the early twentieth century, two storeys, 25' frontage: red brick, a remarkably good infill structure. This lot was probably the site of the remaining quarter of the old Oxford Block, comprising what is now the Dawson Building (#7 above) and the Weiss Building (#5 above). NC
9. Kress Building, 312 Broad Street, c. 1914
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: a redeveloped half of the old Phoenix Block that was in place by 1885 (see #6 above). Typical fine Kress structure with varitone buff brick, projecting dentillated cornice; six large rectangular windows above, three on either side of central pier, with replacement tinted glazing; transom heads with decorative screens. Upper parapet above cornice has limestone corner blocks, soldier courses, stone cap and crested center section bearing the name "Kress". Heavy stone window heads with keystones. Ground floor completely altered with false Colonial overlay: double entries with broken pediments, replacement windows, dark brick facing, projecting metal awning. (Roll 4, #30) C
10. Weiss Building, 315 Broad Street, c. 1890
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: orange brick with painted brick face; three one-over-one wood sash windows above, the center one slightly wider than those flanking, all with straight undecorated heads. Molded sheet metal cornice with paneled friezeband, "Weiss" in *bas relief* on center panel (cf. #5 above, the other Weiss Building, very similar in scale and style, with different details). Storefront very altered, overlaid with brick on the bulkheads, replacement show windows, recessed double entry with modern paneled doors; canvas awning. (Roll 5, #4,5) C
11. Suna Dee Collections, 321 Broad Street, c. 1885; c. 1980
Modern refacing of older brick building(s): two-storey, 25' frontage, screened with its neighbor (#12 below) to create the appearance of one building. (Roll 5, #6) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 8

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

12. Gadsden National Bank/Pharmacy Services, 317-19 Broad Street, c. 1885; c. 1980
50' commercial frontage, two storeys inside; masonite panels, modernized storefronts; stuccoed along exposed side. Both buildings underneath are brick: 50' on the Fourth Street side and 25' on the inner side (see #11 above); there is about a 2' space between them covered only by the applied face panels. (Roll 5, #6) NC
13. Sibert Building/W.T. Grant/B & T Cleaners/June's Shoes, 318-22 Broad Street, 1884; redone 1905
Multiple-storey commercial double block, two storeys, 50' frontage: rough-face varitone red brick, plain flat parapet; upper windows (five, three of which are now covered by a signboard) one-over-one wood sash; lower windows along Fourth Street have segmental heads. Upper face has blind panels and window-head courses of a darker, polished brick; shallow corbeling at parapet. Storefront altered, now three spaces, the corner 25' (once Edwards Shoes) with Cararra glass facing and deeply recessed entry, signboard obscuring all else above; inner store transom obscured by metal panel. (Roll 4, #29) C
14. Herzberg Building/Gadsden Jewelry & Loan, 400-404 Broad Street, 1884
A landmark Gadsden commercial building, now completely refaced. Two-storey, 50' double block, its facade now faced in metal and half of the front with an angled-out Mansardish canopy. Storefronts completely redone, with some surviving Cararra glass from an earlier alteration. Stuccoed on the Fourth Street side, upper windows replaced with tinted sheet glass. Original elaborate corbeling and stepped buttresses at top along side still intact and visible. This was the original home of H. Herzberg, dry goods and groceries: brick with a stone face; iron-and-glass storefront; three segmental-head windows on the front and the same elaborate brick decoration still visible along the Fourth Street side. Altered c. 1975. (Roll 5, #25,26,27) NC
15. W.T. Grant/Railroad Salvage, 401 Broad Street, 1952
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 60 X 200': brown brick on street level and buff above, with darker brick as setting for windows on second storey, metal-frame hoppers set in trios and rounding the corner. Storefront slightly recessed, faced in polished stone aggregate. This is the site of the old Etowah County Courthouse, constructed 1890, destroyed in 1947 and the site sold for commercial development to Boston Ground Rent Trust; Grant's was the original tenant. (Roll 4, #28) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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16. Edmondson-Ewing Building/Cross Drug Store\Hobbies & Collectibles, 406 Broad Street, 1885
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: painted brick, storefront bricked up and altered to provide two entries on either side of a recessed central space. Three one-over-one straight-head sash windows above; modest projecting sheet metal cornice with brackets, overlapping the Gadsden Hardware Building next door to the west but sheared off on its other end by its eastern neighbor's face screen. Entire building painted white. (Roll 4, #15) C
17. Gadsden Hardware Building/Downtown Gadsden, Inc., 408 Broad Street, 1885
Multiple-storey commercial block, three storeys, 25' frontage: smooth-face red brick with stone trim; second-storey windows set two to a bay, originally one-over-one but now with multi-pane replacements, deep transoms; straight stone heads with keystones. Third-storey windows likewise but with simple stone heads and no transoms. Deep projecting bracketed cornice. Limestone pier bases; brick rusticated every fifth course. Restored 1995. (Roll 4, #13,14) C
18. Rutenberg's/Little Faces, 410-12 Broad Street, c. 1885
Multiple-storey commercial double block, two storeys, 50' frontage: refaced until recently with pebbledash and metal framing but with one half uncovered and the other half in process of uncovering. Central stair to upper storey; painted brick, segmental-arched windows with metal-frame hoppers set in; blind arcade under cornice line; decorative hood moldings on central pier sheared off to accommodate screen. Modernized storefront with recessed entry. (Roll 4, #12) C
19. Frank & Hagedorn Building/Fambrough's, 413 Broad Street, 1913
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' corner frontage: concrete construction with red varitone brick veneer; crested parapet over pressed metal cornice; six single windows above, set in pairs with darts between, replacement sash. The ground-floor exterior is highly decorated, with stone trim delineating the bays and providing contrasting foundation and cornice lines. Storefront face is stone with bands of terra cotta lozenges in piers and across spandrel lines. Storefront partially altered with EIFS facing, transoms obscured; canvas awnings. Original entry to upper floor at side. (Roll 3, #31) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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20. Sam Powers Dry Goods/Gadsden Church Supplies, 414 Broad Street, c. 1885
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage:
recently unscreened to reveal original masonry front with some remaining
Cararra glass from the earlier remodeling. Three single windows above
with keystones, replacement glazing; simple sheet metal projecting
cornice with acanthus and lion's head decoration on end brackets. Now
(1996) in rehabilitation, brick painted, upper transom restored; canvas
awning. (Roll 4, 11) C
21. Young's Men's & Women's Wear, 416 Broad Street, c. 1885
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: completely faced in
ceramic tile below and stucco above storefront. Plain flat
parapet; altered storefront framing but earlier recessed entry with
terrazzo tile; projecting flat metal canopy. (Roll 4, #10) NC
22. Ewing Building/Santos Printing Co., 417-19 Broad Street, c. 1885
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage:
completely covered by metal screen but with original or early
storefront: copper framing, paneled show window furnishing; two recessed
entries to either side and a side entrance to upstairs. Flat parapet.
Stamped tin ceiling intact inside. (Roll 3, #30) NC
23. Gadsden Mercantile Co./Lerner Shop\Family Loan, 418 Broad Street, c.
1885; c. 1945
Multiple-storey commercial building, two storeys, brick
construction, its identity hidden by a metal screen and metal framing
around the facade. An earlier alteration c. 1940s gave it an eyebrow
parapet and deeply recessed terrazzo entry. (Roll 4, #9) NC
24. Vance's Shoes/Butler Shoes\Missy Sportswear, 420 Broad Street, 1885
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: flat parapet, front
completely faced in ceramic tile but with earlier Cararra glass on
recessed storefront. (Roll 4, #8) NC
25. Skylight Christian Brothers Fellowship, 421 Broad Street, c. 1890
One-storey commercial building, 25' frontage: completely sheathed
in mauve drivit. Flat parapet, storefront occluded except for an entry
bay; canvas awning. Originally a temple-front building. (Roll 3, #29)
NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

26. Bellenger Building/Nelson's, 422 Broad Street, 1885; 1949 (face only)
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: iron-spotted brown brick face, originally with stepped parapet but refaced in 1949 and cut down to a flat one, with shallow corbeling beneath. Three wide window openings on second storey, now occluded and with phony shutters at sides. Windows were originally trios of sash. Dime-store red full-facade signboard across storefront spandrel, obscuring transom; canvas awning; slightly recessed storefront. Interior retains wooden floors and 5-and-10 atmosphere. (Roll 4, #7) NC
27. Hoffman's Jewelers/Broad Street Basket Co., 423 Broad Street, c. 1895
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: painted brick and trim, corbeled cornice and flat parapet. Two straight-head windows upstairs with plain stone sills and headers. Recessed central entry, modernized storefront; striped canvas awnings. From 1928 to 1988 this was the home of Hoffman's, a fine jewelry store; the original interior cabinetry remains in use by the present owner. (Roll 3, #28) C
28. Hughes Building/Belk-Hudson\Delaney's Home Furnishings, 425 Broad Street, 1903
Multiple-storey commercial block, two-storeys, 50' frontage: dentillated cornice and parapet name panel in place but otherwise completely refaced: the upper face is covered in masonite panels and the storefront has been redone in a Colonial style. This building has three cutaway bay windows behind the face panels; it is scheduled to be restored. (Roll 3, #27) NC
29. Motlow's Saloon/Rite-Way Beauty Supply\Hicks Family Shoes, 426-28 Broad Street, c. 1883
Multiple-storey commercial double block, two storeys, 50' frontage, divided into two store spaces with central stair bay. West half had been radically altered with metal on storefront, transom and upper windows completely obscured by wood screens; this half is commercially attached to Hicks Shoes next door, and the Hickses have recently (1997) unscreened it. East half and entry bay retain segmental-arch windows with running stone header. Original two-over-two sash now uncovered on both sides. Deep projecting cornice, brackets intact on east half only. (Roll 4, #6) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

30. Kyle's Opera House/Hicks' Family Shoes, 430 Broad Street, c. 1878
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys (originally three), a radical redoing of a 50' two-part double block: central recessed entry in a full-facade glass storefront; elaborate faceted metal screen covers top storey, with pebbledash panels at street level. This is a very significant building, having the fire wall that reportedly stopped the 1883 fire from burning up the town; by 1920 it had lost its upper storey and its facade had been remodeled. (Roll 4, #5) NC
31. Delaney's, 433 Broad Street, c. 1890
Multiple-storey commercial block, two-storeys, 50' frontage, upstairs entry at side. Originally a double block, now with storefront modernized as an annex to other Delaney's buildings and without an entrance of its own. Painted brick with corbeled cornice line; six 1/1 wood sash windows upstairs under segmental heads with stone trim. Cast-iron storefront framing remains with reproduction wooden elements inserted. Transom obscured by scored face material (EIFS or concrete); rosettes in storefront I-beam. (Roll 3, #26) C
32. Edward Farley Store/Delaney's Annex, 435 Broad Street, c. 1890
Multiple-storey commercial block, two-storeys, 50' frontage: now faced in stucco on upper face; double storefront with central stair between; seven straight-head one-over-one sash windows (4/4 in middle) with a running stone course header; bracketed cornice with sunburst design below. One earlier storefront recessed with flat canopy, obscured transom; the other modernized to match corner building (#34) with canvas awning. (Roll 3, #25) C
33. First National Bank/Ike Saks Corner/Twigs & Roses/Christian Book Store, 434 Broad Street, 1959, 1996
Built on the site of the 1905 First National Bank and a neighboring building once connected and refaced by the Ike Saks clothing concern. A two-storey corner block now clad in concrete aggregate panels with modern aluminum-and-glass display windows on street level and a single band corner window on second level. (Roll 4, #3) NC
34. Sterchi Brothers Furniture/Delaney's Furniture, 437 Broad Street, c. 1890
Two-storey 50' commercial building of brick, now faced with plaster to the parapet; modern raked recessed store-front with metal poles supporting lintel. (Roll 3, #24) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 13

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

35. Belk-Hudson/Cultural Arts Center, 501 Broad Street, 1960s, 1987 (site of the 1937 Princess Theater)

A complete modern refacing in EIFS of the brick Belk-Hudson department store, with a cylindrical projection at corner, recessed entry, cantilevered canopy. This was the original site of the Princess Theater and Princess Grill, which burned in the 1960s. Belk-Hudson built on the site; the building was acquired by the Cultural Arts Center when it became vacant. (Roll 1, #16) NC

36. Tolson Building/Vance Drug Store\Rita's, 502 Broad Street, 1881

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, with its longer (c. 125') side along Fifth Street. Brick, now painted, with corbeled cornice and corner quoins; three window bays on front with straight-head windows; sixteen windows on side, all replacements except one one-over-one sash over the rear store entry, which is round-arched and with bracketed cornice above, probably original. Concrete sills and heavy headers on upper windows, now painted with trim color. Completely redone at street level with brick overlay, metal canopy, block infill, an applied arcade along side wall, and a Colonial entrance surround on front. (Roll 1, #17,18,19) C

37. White Palace Café, 504 Broad Street, c. 1885, 1938

One-and-a-half-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: fine intact example of Art Moderne in a commercial building, a 1938 overlay of an older (c. 1885) structure, retaining inside the hex tile floors. Exterior characterized by a flat polished facade clad in black and green enameled metal panels with two bulls-eye inlays below parapet; narrow slightly recessed central entry flanked by two plate glass windows, now tinted. A neon "Café" sign projects from the parapet level. Mayben & Son, contractors for the Art Deco storefront. (Roll 1, #s 20,21) C

38. Hill's Grocery/Michael Jewelers, 506 Broad Street, c. 1885

One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: recently rehabilitated (1996); painted brick, enclosed window band at second level; cabinet storefront with double entries, lozenges in bulkheads; dentillated sheet metal cornice, barrel awning. (Roll 4, #4) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 14

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

- =====
39. Everything Under the Sun, 508 Broad Street, c. 1885
Two-storey 25' commercial building, completely refaced: new brick on modernized glass-and-aluminum storefront, flat metal canopy, false shingling to parapet. Deeply recessed entry is probably only reminder of former configuration. (Roll 1, #23) NC
40. Mitchell's Collectibles, 510 Broad Street, c. 1900
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: terrazzo bulkhead and entry, recessed off-center entry with added window space. Completely faced in metal surrounding storefront with vertical planks above to parapet. (Roll 1, #24) NC
41. S.A. Berger Dry Goods/Kyle Building, 511 Broad Street, 1883
Multiple-storey commercial block, three storeys, three bays: at the time of this survey (1995-97) in rehabilitation as an adjunct facility of the Cultural Arts Center next door. Constructed of red brick with a slightly projecting center bay; its Empire roof line with its projecting gable make this a very distinctive structure in the district. The central of the bays has dominant architectural features: on the ground a large segmental arch with two smaller ones in side bays, and above a single tripartite window in center bay, and two-over-two sash windows with transoms in side bays. All windows have segmental-arched rusticated stone heads. The storefront had been completely redone in aluminum and masonite and bore no relationship to the upper storeys; presently the original configuration of the building front is being recreated. The false face of the building had also covered a c. 7' wide store space that had been a hat cleaning shop. Patricia Sherman, architect for the restoration. (Roll 1, #15) C
42. Let's Celebrate, Gifts/Etowah Loans Co., 512, 512-A Broad Street, c. 1900
One-storey commercial double block, one storey with double storefront; top of building sheathed in corrugated metal; storefronts have masonite on one with cantilevered flat canopy; Carrara glass on the other with some metal replacement panels, shallow canopy suggesting Art Moderne. (Roll 1, #25) NC
43. Western Auto/J.C. Penney\Gadsden Museum of Art, 513 Broad Street, c.1910; c. 1989
Multiple-storey block, a two-storey 50' commercial building now completely faced in EIFS (drivit) including a cornice. Postmodern stylistic elements include *in antis* columns in a raked, recessed entry

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 15

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

#43: Gadsden Museum of Art, continued:

with one glass block wall; an arch at center with scroll above. Street-level facing is polished granite, with polished metal lintel across the front. Interior stamped tin ceiling still intact in front. (Roll 1, #14) NC

44. Ralls Drug Store/O Suzanna's, 514 Broad Street, c.1885

One-storey commercial block, c. 25' frontage: red brick, common bond; blind panel below flat parapet. In restoration 1996: storefront within frame completely removed in preparation for reconstruction. Stamped tin ceiling intact; ceramic tile floors of drug store still visible. (Roll 1, #26) C

45. Wallpaper & Art Store/Vacant building, 516 Broad Street, c. 1900

One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: recessed entry, completely sheathed in white metal (not porcelain) panels. (Roll 1, #27) NC

46. Diamond Center of Gadsden, 517 Broad Street, c. 1915; c. 1980

Multiple-storey commercial building, two storeys, 25' frontage: brick, sheathed in previous occupant Lorch's standard panels with modern showcase windows. Flat metal canopy across facade. (Roll 1, #13) NC

47. Touch of Class, 519 Broad Street, c. 1950 (refaced)

Multiple-storey commercial building, two-storeys, 25' brick with recessed entry, Carrara glass on storefront; plain brick face above with a picture window and single tiled course. Roll 1, #11) NC

48. BonTon Barber Shop/Diana Shop/First Methodist Annex, 520-22 Broad Street, c. 1905

One-storey commercial block, 50' frontage: recessed entry, "Diana" in terrazzo; brick overlay on altered storefront; honeycomb metal screen rises higher than the original parapet. (Roll 1, #28) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 16

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

49. Sears/Fuller Medical Company, 524 Broad Street, 1905
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: brick, now painted; six bays with single straight-head windows upstairs, all replacements. Double storefront with black Carrara glass facing; cut-away storefront between two entries with lintel supported by iron poles. Signboard in transom space, canvas awning. This building was restored in 1994 by its present owner and occupant. (Roll 1, #s 29,30) C
50. Antonelli's, 525 Broad Street, 1910
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: brick, now painted, with stone trim; flat parapet, broken cornice with inset decoration between pieces; recessed central entry; canvas awning. The rear portion of the building is in more original condition, with segmental-arched windows, unpainted red brick. Broad Street portion restored 1995. (Roll 2, #3) C
51. LeBourg's Bicycle Shop/Alaco Pharmacy, 527-29 Broad Street, 1915
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: iron-spotted buff brick with flat parapet; double storefront with transoms, decorative corbeling on piers; interlocking blind panels below parapet; stepped watertable. Restored 1995. (Roll 1, #9; 2, #2) C
52. Gadsden Florist/Sims Jewelers/Art School, 528-32 Broad Street, 1910
One-storey commercial block, brick, now painted gray; basically a double storefront but configured now with three spaces of unequal size. Flat parapet with corbelled decoration below; pier caps; canvas awning across two of the three spaces. (Roll 2, #4) C
53. Mexican Chili Parlor/The Choice Restaurant, 531 Broad Street, c. 1915
One-storey commercial block, brick, now painted; blind panel beneath flat parapet. Altered front with masonite panels and aluminum framing; raked flat canopy and projecting neon sign. Originally a Mexican restaurant, it was redone in the 1920s. (Roll 1, #6,7) C
54. The Food Garden/One Clothing, 534-36 Broad Street, c. 1915
One-storey commercial block, c. 20' frontage with two store spaces: flat parapet with elaborate corbeled decoration below;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 17

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

#54, The Food Garden/One Clothing, continued:

restored wooden storefront with transoms, painted brick. Interior retains hexagonal tile floor, tin ceiling and cove mouldings; east side has neighbor's wall painting: "Chalmers and Oldsmobile, Automobile and Electric Supplies - Flanders Motor Company." (Roll 2, #5) C

55. Young's/Julia's Hat Box, 538 Broad Street, c. 1910

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: brown brick with elaborate stone cornices and dentillated mouldings, four upper bays with straight-head windows (replacements) under heavy headers; corbeled pilasters. Bracketed storefront cornice still intact, all below it altered; recessed central entry with door to stairs at side. (Roll 2, #7) C

56. Gadsden Sew 'n Vac/H & B Jewelers, 540-544 Broad Street, c. 1915

One-storey commercial block, c. 60' frontage: red brick with prominent crested parapet and stone cap; plain band course decoration across front. Storefronts much altered, drivit facing and aluminum-and-glass framing; pent-eave shingle canopy across fronts. Central entry now closed off. One interior space retains its stamped tin ceiling. Was home to the Coffee Cup restaurant in the 1940s. (Roll 2, #8) C

57. Greer/McNair Jewelers, 541 Broad Street, c. 1920

One-storey commercial block, c. 25' frontage: recessed entry and false Mansard canopy to the parapet. Masonite panels on altered storefront. (Roll 1, #5) NC

58. Commercial Block (Mal's et al.), 543-49 Broad Street, c. 1920

One-storey commercial block, four bays, projecting piers defining the storefronts. Completely stuccoed front and sides; Mal's on corner has a vinyl or metal sheathing over the stucco. Traces of old tiled entries in three of the stores. Original red brick of building visible on 6th Street near rear store entry. (Roll 1, #s 3,4) NC

59. Wood Building/Snellgrove Drug Store, 546 Broad Street, 1924

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys: corner building of brick, now painted gray; windows replacement sash paired or in trios with transoms under stone headers, canvas awnings on both levels. Modest moulded cornice below parapet; parapet crests to eyebrow on Broad

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 18

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

#59, Wood Building, continued:

Street frontage. This building was the home of Snellgrove's Pharmacy for 60 years until 1995; interior furnishings were intact and are being used by new tenant. (Roll 2, #9,12) C

60. U.S. Post Office/Federal Courthouse, 600 Broad Street, 1910, 1913

Vertical block, three storeys: Completed 1910 as a one-storey building with three-bay central pavilion; expanded to three storeys in 1913. Steel frame construction with concrete floors, faced in variegated Georgia marble with banded rustication; Italian Renaissance Revival influence with attic storey, clay tile roof, heavily bracketed eaves; five bays across front with three-bay central pavilion containing arched windows and central entry below; patterned screens over upper windows. Projecting one-storey porch with balustrade above, supported by paired Tuscan columns. Smaller windows 2-over-2 sash with bracketed cornice headers. Rear extension added 1926, making dimensions 85 X 115. James Knox Taylor, supervising architect for 1910 and 1913. Added to National Register 1976. (Roll 2, #13; 3, #14) C

61. First National Bank/Compass Bank, 601 Broad Street, 1956

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys with one vertical end bay: corner bank building faced in buff Roman brick below and limestone above; tinted band windows on second storey with anodized aluminum framing. Paul Hofferbert, architect. (Roll 2, #15; Roll 3, #16,17) NC

62. Woolworth's/Gadsden Music Company, 607 Broad Street, 1959

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 100' frontage: modern building of brick veneer faced with pebbledash panels across second level; Roman brick piers and bulkheads, shallow recessed storefront entries; projecting flat metal canopy across facade. (Roll 3, #13) NC

63. Rhodes-Carroll Furniture/Jordan Furniture Building, 612 Broad Street, c. 1940

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, c. 100' frontage: red brick veneer with buff face, decorative concrete banding at parapet; central limestone panel with vertical seams above storefront, flanked by large multi-pane metal-frame windows. Shallow aluminum canopy over storefront, recessed central entry, low bulkhead with Carrara glass facing. D.O. Whilldin, architect. (Roll 2, #14; 3, #12 [rear]) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 19

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

64. Alaco Pharmacy/Bedford Campaign HQ, 615 Broad Street, c. 1925
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: brick, now painted; flat parapet with simple corbeling below and blind panel. Storefront altered with various replacement facings. (Roll 3, #12) C
65. Jordan Office Supply, 616 Broad Street, c. 1940
One-storey commercial block, 50' frontage: faced above store-front with concrete panels decorated on one end with bas relief blocks. Storefront recessed to center with central supporting pier of marble. Piers and bulkhead clad in simulated stone panels resembling marble. Two single entries on either side of central pier. D.O. Whilldin, architect. (Roll 3, #1) C
66. Attorney's Office/Mike's Music, 620-22 Broad Street, c. 1925
One-storey commercial block, 50' frontage: brick with pale buff brick facing alternating with bands of concrete; plain flat parapet. Modern storefronts faced with limestone; flat metal canopy above. (Roll 3, #2) C
67. J.C. Penney/in renovation, 623 Broad Street, 1961
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys in front, c. 100' frontage: modernist building of brick veneer with yellow-buff brick face and orange ceramic tile trim on storefront and around narrow band of metal windows above. Retractable awnings still in place. Now vacant, in rehabilitation. (Roll 3, #11) NC
68. Alabama Gas Corporation, 624 Broad Street, c. 1920
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: brick, now completely refaced in pebbledash panels above and metal below. Raked, recessed off-center entry; modern windows in groups above with reflective glass. (Roll 3, #3) NC
69. Alabama Power Company/Salvation Army Thrift Store, 626-28 Broad Street, 1914
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, c. 75' frontage with a 25' section at a shallow angle to the other 50' as it follows the curve in the street. Faced in patent-hammered varitone brown brick with flat stone parapet and soldier course below. Row of 1-over-1 wood sash windows above, on the longer section with decorative heads and stone

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 20

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

#69: Alabama Power Company Building, continued:

keystone trim. Entry to upstairs off-center. Main storefront has original copper framing and mini-light transom; smaller storefront altered. (Roll 3, #4) C

70. Pitman Theater, 629 Broad Street, 1947

Vault-style theatre building of red brick faced in concrete, the massiveness of the front relieved by an enframed window with decorative metal screen above the triangular marquee. Marble panels on street level; large vertical neon sign above, newly restored by the City. D.O. Whilldin, architect. (Roll 3, #9) C

71. Ritchey Business Center, 630-34 Broad Street, 1950

One-storey commercial block, modern building with three spaces; Roman brick piers, shallow flat metal canopy; Carrara glass and stone on bulkheads. (Roll 3, #5) NC

72. Texas Steer Restaurant/Jim's Bar-B-Que, 635 Broad Street, c. 1925, c. 1943

One-storey commercial block, c. 20' frontage. Opened in the 1920s and known for many years after 1935 as Runt's Place; redone in its present Moderne style in the early 1940s. Concrete construction with glass block in front section and Carrara glass trim; slightly recessed central entry, metal facia. Metal awnings over side block windows. (Roll 3, #s 7,8) C

Forrest Avenue

73. Reich Hotel/Daugette Towers, 700 Forrest Avenue, 1928-29

Ten-storey vertical block, an apartment/hotel building of red brick with limestone trim and banding. Simple two-part columnar block with more decorated second storey, incised swag panels; pedimented corner windows at penthouse level. Windows singly set one-over-one sash that appear to be metal replacements. Main entry on Forrest Avenue characterized by a broken stone pediment and flag poles; flat projecting canopy. In the 1960s it was known as the Reich Motor Hotel; it was sold in 1970 for redevelopment as an apartment hotel. D.O. Whilldin, architect. (Roll 3, #9) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 21

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

Chestnut Street

74. Nadler Furniture Building/Peabody's, 402 Chestnut Street, 1903
Multiple-storey commercial corner block, two storeys, painted brick, chamfered corner entry under heavily decorated name panel at top; molded sheet metal cornice with prominent corner pier caps and brackets; singly-set rectangular upper windows on Chestnut Street side now blocked; along Fourth Street windows are intact two-over-two sash with segmental heads. Storefront redone with tinted glass; other than entry bay, all other openings on Fourth Street side now occluded. (Roll 7, #5) C
75. C.B. Croom's Grocery/Chestnut Station, 410 Chestnut Street, c. 1905
Multiple-storey double block, two storeys, c. 40' frontage: red-orange brick, now painted; six segmental-arched windows upstairs, center ones paired over building entry. East storefront blocked with wood but transom frame and I-beam visible. West storefront altered: modern tinted glazing, some old Carrara glass. (Roll 7, #14) C
76. Chestnut Station II, 410 Chestnut Street, c. 1926
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: except for side piers, completely faced in EIFS above altered storefront and wood on storefront; band window, single entry at side, canvas awning. (Roll 7, #15) NC
77. Commercial Building, 412 Chestnut, c. 1930
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, brick now painted; flat undecorated parapet; two square metal hopper windows upstairs; storefront with c. 1940s alterations including pink and blue Carrara glass, suspended flat metal canopy. (Roll 7, #16) C
78. Outdoor Supply, 414 Chestnut Street, c. 1926
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: now completely obscured by metal screen except for one side pier; altered storefront. (Roll 7, #17) NC
79. P.K. Yates Printing, 416 Chestnut Street, c. 1920
One-storey commercial block, c. 20' frontage: brick with intact transom, blind panel below flat parapet. Storefront restored by Yates 1990: double-door central entry, paneled bulkheads; building lights are old Gadsden street gaslights. Inside, counter bases are YMCA paneled doors. (Roll 7, #18) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 22

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

80. Red Leach & Sons Insurance/Greater Gadsden Housing Authority, 418-22 Chestnut Street, c. 1920

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, three bays delineated by two single-window-wide projections surmounted by corbeled stepped pier caps that pierce the cornice line, in one of which the entry to upstairs is set. Buff brick veneer painted on face; on eastern third original one-over-over sash in place; on other two bays sash replaced with false Colonial-style multi-pane glazing with shutters (!). Elaborate cornice-line corbeling, stone-capped piers and parapet. Storefronts all altered; canvas awning on 418, shingled canopy on Housing Authority. (Roll 7, #19) C

81. Frame World, 430 Chestnut Street, c. 1943

One-storey commercial block, c. 50' frontage: red brick with plain parapet and upper face; recessed central double doors, flat suspended canopy. (Roll 7, #20) C

82. Phoenix Hotel/Southern Hotel/Roebuck Shoe/June Bug's Ceramics, 436-42 Chestnut Street, 1907

What's left of a three-storey vertical block, a former hotel now down to its first floor with storefronts after a c. 1930 fire destroyed the upper floors. Four commercial bays on Chestnut Street; varitone red brick construction with iron-spotted buff brick face, now painted; heavily molded sheet metal storefront cornice; transom line mostly intact but occluded; metal screen above cornice but being removed on Fifth Street side. (Roll 7, #21,22) C

83. WNAL-TV, 510 Chestnut Street, c. 1925

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage, very altered from original appearance, faced in EIFS; four rectangular windows above, two arched ones on ground level; pent-eave canopies over each storey face. (Roll 7, #2) NC

84. Mayben & Son/Gadsden Heating and Sheet Metal/Alabama Orthopedics, 512 Chestnut Street, c. 1925

Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, c. 25' frontage: patent-hammered red brick construction, altered wood-frame front; enframed row of windows above; pent eaves at each level. (Roll 7, #1) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 23

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

85. Phillipson Building/Noojin Building, 520 Chestnut Street, 1948
Seven-storey vertical block, a commercial office building. Red brick veneer; horizontal concrete coursing of sills and headers; rusticated courses; pilasters on front to create verticality, with concrete panels in spandrels between. Marble facing on street level front; metal-frame hopper windows. The rear portion of building, not visible from the street, is part of the old Holy Name of Jesus Hospital, from whom the land was purchased in 1943. Charles H. McCauley, architect. (Roll 6, #21,23) C
86. First Methodist Church Educational Building, 530 Chestnut Street, 1936
Two-storey red brick institutional building with suggestions of Gothic trim in accordance with sanctuary architecture; singly-set multi-pane rectangular sash windows; stone courses along Chestnut Street. Paul Hofferbert, architect; W.H. Mayben & Son, contractor. (Roll 6, #22,24) C
87. St. James Catholic Church, 622 Chestnut Street, 1927
Ecclesiastical building suggesting both the Romanesque and the Gothic, the first in its massing and the second in its details. Stucco over brick, square corner towers; basilica style with entrances in both towers and the central nave. Attached buttresses delineate bays of the nave. (Roll 6, #19) C
88. Service Station/Downtown Cleanup, 699 Chestnut Street, c. 1928
One-storey automotive service building, stucco over block, flat parapet with projecting service bay supported by square piers; garage entries to either side. (Roll 6, #20) C

Court Street

89. Omni Design Group, 112 Court Street, c. 1950; refaced 1993
One-storey commercial block, also taking up some of the rear of the Frank & Hagedorn Building (Fambrough's); this appears to be an infill structure to expand space in the older building. Brick veneer, asymmetrical front with bays of vertical windows; canvas awning above windows to parapet. (Roll 3, #33) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 24

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

90. Gadsden Loan and Investment, 116 N. Court Street, c. 1950
One-storey commercial block, c. 15' frontage: this appears to be another infill between Hagedorn and the Lee Building along what was Lawyers Row when the Courthouse stood across Court Street. Red brick veneer, flat parapet, aluminum and glass storefront, awning over entry. (Roll 3, #34) NC
91. Lee Building, 118 N. Court Street, 1937
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: painted brick, stepped parapet; three bays with irregular entries; four sets of straight-head upper windows, the center two paired, all blocked. Asphalt shingle pent eave over altered storefronts. (Roll 3, #35) C

Locust Street

92. Smith-Echols-Burnett Hardware/Gadsden Hardware/Moss Warehouse, Court Street at Locust, 1905
Three-storey vertical block, a warehouse of red brick with stone sills; five bays of three multipane metal sash windows above; central garage bay below in use, other four closed; transoms partially intact. Bays delineated by pier pilasters with oversize Ionic capitals, in visual support of corbeled cornice line below flat parapet. Built by T.S. Kyle for the hardware company; H.M. Johnson, builder. It is one of two surviving structures of the Gadsden Hardware Company. (Roll 3, #36,37) C
93. Denny's Automotive Paint & Supply, 305 Locust Street, c. 1945
One-storey commercial block, 50' frontage: block construction with brick face, capped piers, stepped parapet. (Roll 5, #9) C
94. A & L Upholstery/vacant, 321 Locust Street, c. 1945
Multiple-storey commercial structure of indeterminate type, two storeys: front section faced in smooth-face red brick but altered on storefront with permastone under shingle canopy; windows upstairs multipane replacements below lightly corbeled parapet line; same opening at side now blocked. Section at rear has exterior steps up and a gallery running front to back. (Roll 5, #11,12) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 25

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

95. Mater's Oyster Bar and Pizza, 323-329 Locust Street, c. 1943, 1960s
One-storey commercial block, patent-hammered red brick, all but one section (323) very altered by paint and wooden canopy obscuring all upper masonry; altered storefront and windows. (Roll 5, #12,13) NC
96. Gadsden Times Building, 401 Locust Street, 1957
One-storey commercial block, painted brick, treated on Locust Street face to conform to two-storey section adjacent (see #97 below): metal Mansard canopy, tinted windows, pebbledash panels. (Roll 6, #1,2) NC
97. Gadsden Times Building, 1957
Multiple-storey commercial block, the two-storey section of the Times, red brick with buff face brick; modern storefront with vertical tinted windows, pebbledash panels. (Roll 6, #3) NC
98. Alabama Gas Service Center/Moss Warehouse Annex, 406 Locust Street, c. 1905
Two-storey, painted brick warehouse building abutting the slightly older Gadsden Hardware warehouse (#92 above); service doors intact. Built by the Kyle family, it served for many years as a service building for Alabama Gas Corporation; it became part of the Moss warehouse operation in the mid-1980s. (Roll 6, #6,7) C
99. Gadsden Times Service Building, 415 Locust Street, c. 1926
One-storey commercial block, red brick with face painted buff to match neighboring Times building; stepped parapet with stone caps; garage entrance in use, other flanking openings occluded with small entry door set in to one of them; metal-frame window set in center face between pilasters. (Roll 3, #4) C
100. Southern Electric Supply Warehouse, 433 Locust Street, c. 1950s
One-storey utility building, brick veneer over block for office; metal warehouse behind. (Roll 6, #5) NC
101. Southern Electric Supply Store, 439 Locust Street, c. 1943
One-storey commercial block, c. 40' frontage: brick, now painted; flat parapet with high step in center, metal awning, enframed storefront windows flanking central entry. Building to the rear of the brick face is corrugated metal with metal-frame windows below parapet. (Roll 6, #9) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 26

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

102. Cosby-Hodges Milling Co./Nolen Glass, 501 Locust Street, c. 1929
One-storey commercial block, 50' frontage on corner: varitone red brick construction, office section on Locust somewhat taller than warehouse behind; stone-capped flat parapet with central step; blind panel with limestone corner blocks; heavily screened, singly-set rectangular windows, central entry. A simple building distinguished by fine brickwork. (Roll 6, #11) C
103. Swift & Co./Hardin Building, 515 Locust Street, c. 1907
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 50' frontage: brick now painted; six segmental-head windows upstairs with tinted sheet replacement glazing; four of same windows downstairs, two on either side of central recessed entry loggia. Storefront I-beam with rosettes; three downstairs bays delineated by shallow buttresses. Corbeling below flat parapet. Building altered in recent rehab but retaining much original material. (Roll 6, #12) C

Third Street

104. Texaco Station, 126 N. Third Street, c. 1930
One-storey automotive service building, three bays, of which Locust Street end is a projecting service bay and office, the other two garage bays. Stucco over brick, now painted gray; flat parapet; red Texaco star in stained leaded glass over doorway. Interior spaces largely original. (Roll 5, #7,8) C

Fourth Street

105. Printup Hotel, 131-135 N. Fourth Street, 1887-88; 1929; 1980s
Originally four storeys with a corner turret and belvedere, a flamboyant Queen Ann stacked block suffering from fire and then bad rehabilitation over the years. Now three storeys, brick painted, flat parapet, segmental-head windows filled with modern replacement sash; all details of earlier structure gone except for painted pilasters. Only the carriage porch with its rusticated ashlar blocks recalls the original building. The fourth floor was lost after a 1929 fire; the present modernization was done in the 1980s. Gwin, Hicks & Lane, contractors for the original building. (Roll 6, #8; 5 #10) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 27

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

- =====
106. Equipment Service Co., 203-05 N. Fourth Street, c. 1900
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: painted brick, flat parapet with soldier courses; original or early double entry doors; transoms intact beneath metal awnings. (Roll 5, #14) C
107. Equipment Service Co., 207 N. Fourth Street, c. 1900
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: garage/office combination, painted brick, tab courses beneath flat parapet; transom intact beneath metal awning. (Roll 5, #15) C
108. Equipment Service Co., 209 N. Fourth Street, c. 1900
One-storey commercial block, 25' frontage: painted brick, central double doors, transom intact beneath metal awning. Flat parapet with corbel courses below; storefront I-beam. (Roll 5, #16) C
109. BBS Grocery, 217 N. Fourth Street, 1930
One-storey warehouse, patent-hammered varitone red brick; stepped parapet with terra cotta coping; concrete foundation and sills; garage entry with modern roll door; occluded windows on street side. (Roll 5, #18) C
110. Kerry Wilson Insurance Agency, 108 S. Fourth Street, c. 1965
One-storey commercial block, c. 40' frontage: modern office building, buff brick veneer. Built by the Hicks family on the site of a newsstand building that burned; occupied for many years by ALFA Insurance. (Roll 6, #14) NC
111. Times-News Building/Merrill Lynch, 111 S. Fourth Street, 1904; 1981
Two-storey vertical block, Italianate with corner turret (originally with a conical cap); elaborate cornice with modillion brackets; arcaded upper windows on 4th Street with replacement glazing. Cast iron storefront and lower cornice on more decorated 4th Street side; rectangular windows with stone heads and sills on Chestnut Street side. A major Gadsden landmark, rehabilitated 1981 by Merrill Lynch. (Roll 7, #3,4) C Added to NR 1/11/83
112. Commercial Building, 209 S. Fourth Street, c. 1905
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, 25' frontage: brick now painted yellow with brown trim; three rectangular upper windows with prominent keystone decoration, replacement glazing. Storefront blocked up with board and batten panels; single center door. Shingled canopy over storefront area; smaller one at parapet line. (Roll 7, #7) NC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 28

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

-
113. T.R. Reed Wholesale Grocery\4th Street Jewelers/Pastime Barber Shop, 211-13 S. Fourth Street, c. 1915
One-storey commercial double block, c. 40' frontage: built of smooth orange brick but largely obscured: half completely covered by vinyl siding with modern inserted storefront, flat metal canopy; other side (213) retains upper masonry with tab corbeling below flat parapet but with modern storefront and metal Mansard canopy. (Roll 7, #8,9) NC
114. Downtown Athletic Club/Barber Shop/Richardson Accounting Service, 215-17 S. Fourth Street, c. 1915
One-storey commercial double block, c. 40' frontage: painted brick; central building entry between inner piers; corbeled cornice line below flat parapet. Storefronts altered at different times: 215 has '40s appearance with Carrara glass in transom, flat metal canopy; 217 storefront entirely paneled over. (Roll 7, #10,11,12) C
115. Primestar, 219-21 S. Fourth Street, c. 1905
Multiple-storey commercial block, two storeys, c. 40' frontage: brick faced with stamped tin to resemble rusticated block; five singly set upper windows have tin shutters, replacement multipane glazing. Cornice is also tin with swags and flower pattern. Storefront completely altered; shingled canopy continuous with businesses next door. (Roll 7, #13) C

Fifth Street

116. Dowdy's Office Equipment, 120 N. Fifth Street, c. 1915
One-storey commercial block, one frontage: painted brick with modernized facade: metal surround, EIFS panels, oversize metal Mansard canopy. (Roll 6, #13) NC
117. Commercial Building, 124-26 N. Fifth Street, c. 1930
Red brick shell of one-storey commercial double block, recently gutted by fire but all walls left standing. Rehabilitated in 1996 as commercial space. (Roll 6, #10) C
118. First Methodist Church, 115 S. Fifth Street, 1893; 1954-55
A Victorian Gothic church, generally cruciform with bell tower and spire in Chestnut Street ell; red brick with stone portals; interior completely replaced in 1950s remodeling. Turner & Batson, architects for remodeling. (Roll 6, #22,24A) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 29

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

119. Kimball Paint Co./Carden Building, 211-13 S. Fifth Street, c. 1945; 1978
One-storey commercial building, red brick with rear ell, now faced
entirely in EIFS; tinted single-sheet glazing in round-head frames. NC
120. Virgone Building, 214 S. Fifth Street, 1946
One-storey commercial block, central block with adjacent sections
of lesser height; faced with patent-hammered varitone red brick with
limestone trim; no transoms, tiled bulkheads. Main panel below parapet
contains brick and stone weave-pattern; Carrara glass and tiles decorate
north pavilion. (Roll 7, #23) C
121. Gadsden Business College/Carden Building. 215-17 S. Fifth Street, c.
1945; 1978
Two-storey office building of concrete block, stuccoed along sides
and rear; only three of probably eight windows still visible on second
level; tinted sheet glazing. Adjoining one-storey building (see
Inventory #119 above) on its north side and sharing with it a shingled
awning. NC
122. Fowler Brothers Motor Company/First Baptist Annex, 225 S. Fifth Street,
c. 1930
One-storey automotive commercial block, red brick with patent-
hammered red brick face, now painted, c. 100' frontage with 25'
projecting showroom space; remainder appears to be garage/service.
Notched stone-capped parapet with central step, metal-frame industrial
windows along both sides. Paul Hofferbert, architect. C
123. Haley-Rogers Building/Ron Cannon AIA, 226-28 S. Fifth Street, 1929
One-storey double commercial block with unmatched facades, brick
now painted; Spanish Eclectic inspiration with curvilinear parapets.
Orange brick construction with pressed brick face, all now painted. 226
now altered: face above original copper storefront covered with board
and batten; canvas awning. 228 has recessed full-facade loggia behind
double segmental arches; double-door entry; 21-light transom panels over
show windows with 15-light transom over entry. Decorative brick tile on
piers; glazed tiles applied as decoration. Metal-frame windows along
south side with cornice boards and stone sills. The interior of this
space has been retained close to the original. Designed by and once the
offices of Gadsden architect Paul Hofferbert. C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 30

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

-
124. First Baptist Church, corner Walnut and S. Fifth Streets, 1926-27
Classical Revival temple-front ecclesiastical structure, pedimented gable front with deep eaves and modillion dentils; buff brick, green tile roof. Five limestone Tuscan columns support the porch roof; three double-door entries with paired windows above; tripartite window in gable. Limestone trim. Five sanctuary bays with rectangular stained glass windows; vestibule bay on side and bays on front defined by blind vertical panels. N.O. Patterson, supervising architect and builder. C
125. First Baptist Church Educational Building, Walnut and S. Fifth Streets, 1926-27
Four-storey vertical block of same Classical Revival style and construction as sanctuary, with limestone course defining piano nobile form of sanctuary. Six-over-six sash windows. N.O. Patterson, architect and builder. C

Sixth Street

126. Scarboro Photo Shop, 117 S. Sixth Street, c. 1928
One-storey commercial block, c. 25' frontage: brick but completely refaced with metal on face to parapet; modern storefront, sandstone on bulkhead and one side pier. (Roll 3, #18) NC
127. Gadsden Hearing Aid/Jordan Furniture Storage, 119 S. Sixth Street, c. 1928
One-storey commercial block, c. 40' frontage on 6th Street: L-shaped with two bays facing Chestnut Street. Red brick with stepped stone-capped parapet; deep transom line covered with metal panels; modern storefronts inserted. One central entry on 6th Street indicates that the building on this side was originally not divided into two spaces. An original mini-light transom is extant but painted over. (Roll 3, #19,21) C
128. Corner Service Station, S. Sixth Street and Chestnut, c. 1915
One-storey automotive service building, red brick, roughly L-shaped, nestled in ell of #127 above; small and narrow with original or early features: paneled doors with transoms, simple metal cornice with wide friezeband. Originally a service station with an open canopy bay to the street, the little building later served as a café for a time, then was used for storage as presently. (Roll 3, #20) C

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 31

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

Statement of Significance:

The Downtown Gadsden Historic District is being nominated to the National Register on the basis of Criterion A, Commerce, and Criterion C, Architecture. The significant period for both criteria is 1878 to 1948. The year 1878 is the approximate date of the first significant masonry building in the city (the Kyle Opera House), a building that subsequently saved much of the town from burning down in the July 4th fire of 1883, after which most of what now stands in downtown Gadsden was built. At the end, 1948 is the year the 1890 Courthouse was demolished and its site surrendered, thereby severely altering the relationship between public and private business activity and encouraging the growth of the City to the west, away from the old downtown.

Significant dates listed on the nomination form are:

- 1883: the date of the fire that destroyed most of the older settlement buildings and resulted in the rebuilding of the City in brick, essentially the date of the beginning of the present downtown.
- 1906: the date of the founding of the Alabama Power Company in Gadsden.
- 1910: the date of the first stage of the U.S. Post Office building.
- 1929: the date of the coming of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company to Gadsden, an event of significant economic impact to the district.
- 1948: the year of the abandonment of the old Etowah County Courthouse.

Criterion A: Commerce

The commercial history of Gadsden is representative of that of 19th-century frontier towns in the patterns of its growth and the changes wrought by time and the national economy. Briefly, this growth is exemplified by the evolution of a mercantile town from a cotton and small farm economy, through the discovery of natural resources for an industrial base and the attraction of large industries, through a bustling downtown supporting both local stores and national companies, through a mecca for military activity, enhanced population and economic boom, to a time of urban dissolution, sprawl, loss of industry, and finally a diversification of economic factors and revitalization of the downtown core by public and private partnership.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 32

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

The area of the city now nominated to the National Register contains buildings reflecting several periods in that growth, and the quality of their architecture becomes more interesting when seen in this context. When a city starts its life, it has basic elements: mercantile interests, a bank, churches, and someplace where the people can seek "culture" or entertainment. The oldest buildings, the 1878 Opera House in the 400 block of Broad Street (Inventory #29) and the 1881 Tolson Building (Inventory #36) represent two of these three primary aspects of early Gadsden life: for many years the Opera House represented the sole venue of public entertainment (and was a mercantile location as well, on the street level), and the Tolson Building was one of the earliest mercantile houses built that survived the fire and subsequent replacement of less substantial buildings by bigger and better ones.

In studying the growth and development of Gadsden's downtown, one sees the essential ingredients of mill and mine supply, warehousing, hardware, dry goods, general merchandise, grocery wholesaling, and drugstore goods and services build, be bought, be merged, move, grow, prosper or disappear over the years. In the early years, Broad Street housed warehouses as well as specialty stores, and livery stables as well as hotels. After 1883 when much of the downtown burned and brick commercial blocks began to replace the wooden structures east of the Opera House, many of the basic functions began to migrate to the north and south of Broad Street, and mercantile interests displayed their style not just in their windows but in the quality and appointments of their buildings. Perhaps the most enduring examples of mercantile pride are the 1883 S.A. Berger Dry Goods Building, now the Kyle Building (Inventory #41), the Frank & Hagedorn Building, now Fambrough's (Inventory #19), the Kress Building (Inventory #9), and the old Louis Pizitz Department Store, now Insurance Facilities, Inc. (Inventory #7). Except for the Kyle Building, each of these is an early 20th-century refacing of the original blocks, and each survives as an example of strong identity for long-term mercantile interests in Gadsden. The Kyle Building was considerably altered on its street level during the 1970s, but is presently being restored under the auspices of the Gadsden Cultural Arts Center.

By 1923 Gadsden's commercial prospects appeared bright enough to attract the attention of the J.C. Penney Company, "the big chain store people of the west. . . . This concern chose Gadsden as the location for its first store east of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio rivers, which speaks volumes for the confidence these people entertain toward Gadsden's future."¹ Penney's first home was the 1923 Meeks Block on Third and Broad Streets (Inventory #4);

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 33

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

by 1961 the company was in its new building on the 600 block of Broad Street (Inventory #67). Later in that decade the Belk-Hudson Company built its new building on the ashes of the Princess Theatre at Fifth and Broad (Inventory #35). Both of these building events are typical of commercial development in general, when large chain stores were building new buildings or moving to new ones in areas being developed out of the original downtown blocks. As noted by Will Martin in the Times-News in 1947 (see historic summary, above), the commercial center was already moving westward; it would be the 1960s, however, before the fulcrum of business expansion would be reached and the slow decline begin. In 1975, the Gadsden Mall was opened; many of the established retail businesses decamped to the riverside development, leaving the downtown to pick up what commercial tenants it could. After 1990, with the establishment of the downtown revitalization program, the historic downtown's commercial life has begun to pick up again.

One major aspect of downtown life that grew, prospered and withered in Gadsden as in other American cities was the hotel business. Gadsden's first major hotel was the Printup House, built in 1887-88 and one of the most prominent establishments in town both functionally and architecturally. The building as first constructed was a work of Queen Ann exuberance (Inventory #105); a 1929 fire and subsequent modern alterations have rendered it non-contributing in the District but still a major presence there, its rusticated carriage portico glumly overlooking the scrubby lot that used to hold the Etowah County Courthouse. The other departed hotel property in the District is the 1907 Phoenix Hotel block, now entirely retail on its last remaining storey (Inventory #82). Ending the period of hotel construction is the Reich Hotel, now Daugette Tower (Inventory #73), a 1928-29 structure in the commercial style that in 1970 was converted to an apartment hotel, at least retaining, unlike the earlier hotels, some aspect of residential use.

From a commercial standpoint the year 1929 became, of course, a disaster for more than the Printup Hotel. In Gadsden, however, the loss of the old hotel's grandeur was a little offset by the completion of the Reich Hotel with its much-vaunted "modern" conveniences, although, like the Thomas Jefferson Hotel in Birmingham, it opened just in time to struggle through the Depression. Another 1929 blessing for Gadsden was the arrival of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, which has greatly augmented the industrial payroll and is to this day a major element in the city's economy.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 34

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

Criterion C: Architecture

This late 19th- to mid-20th-century downtown contains fine examples of commercial and public building styles from Victorian-era through early modernist. There are examples of Italianate and other elaborate Victorian decorations with Classical references, from the late 19th century and into the early 20th (the fanciful Times-News Building [#111] was not built until 1904). There are simplified examples of early-century buildings in rebellion against Victorian flamboyance, exhibiting fine brickwork and modest cornices or decorated parapets. There is the Post Office building of 1910 and 1913 (upper two storeys added in 1913), of Italian Renaissance inspiration (Inventory #60). There are examples of automotive buildings and of utilitarian buildings such as warehouses. One of the best examples of an Art Moderne facade is the White Palace Café (Inventory #37), so good a one as to be featured in The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, which is the National Trust's Main Street style book². The White Palace is a 1938 refacing of an 1885 building that has remained almost miraculously intact. Unfortunately, much of Gadsden's fairly substantial collection of Art Moderne refacings has in its turn been overlaid and destroyed, although fragments remain on storefronts primarily in the 500 block of Broad Street. Finally, there are good examples of modern construction methods used on traditional commercial styles, especially using concrete in both structural and decorative ways. Concrete foundation and framing of major buildings began as early as 1910 with the Post Office and the 1913 rebuilding of the Frank & Hagedorn building (Inventory #19), with stone or brick veneer masking the frame. Exterior decorative concrete appears primarily in the 1940s buildings such as the Pitman Theater of 1947 and the Phillipson Building of 1948 (see description of appearance, above).

Of the predominant stock of one-storey and multiple-storey commercial blocks, the great majority go no higher than two storeys. Most were built that way, but some, for example the 1907 Phoenix Hotel (Inventory #82) and the Opera House (Inventory #29), lost their upper storeys at some point in their histories, mostly to fire. All retail activity is now on the ground floors only, and some buildings have been subdivided into store spaces beyond their original plans. In general, however, the original configuration of single and double (i.e., two separate retail spaces) blocks remains intact.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 35

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

This district, despite some depredations around the edges, retains most of its built history. The major depredation was the destruction of the 1890 County Courthouse and removal of the facility from its Court Street location to one further west on Broad Street, and its replacement with a W.T. Grant store of no architectural distinction whatsoever. As noted above, this change was symbolic of a lack of regard for the downtown, but it was only typical of American urban decisions in the post-War years when progress and the requirements of an automobile-loving public were paramount considerations in making building decisions.

Changes to the buildings themselves have largely been in terms of remodeling and obscuring of their original faces by screens. These are things that can be reversed and in many cases are being reversed. There are enough architectural survivals and sufficient density of construction in the proposed district to make these blocks an excellent example of a small American city that grew up in a period of industrial expansion and survived to become diversified and once again appreciative of its built past.

Historical Development:

Gadsden began as a packetboat stop on the Coosa River known as Laferty's Landing, and it also went by the name of Double Springs for a few years after the first white settlers began to arrive about 1840. General D.C. Turrentine settled there a few years later, and it was his friend and fellow soldier James Gadsden who, after negotiating the Gadsden Purchase with Mexico, came to visit and pronounced the area splendid and ripe for development, thereby encouraging the settlers and leading them to name the town after him. It remained, however, a "plodding hamlet"³ with 150 residents and three stores⁴ until Robert B. Kyle arrived from North Carolina in 1857 and began to energetically develop the town. He began a mercantile business and invested in the development of a bank and a steamboat company.

Baine County was created in 1866 and Gadsden made the seat. The subsequent Reconstruction legislature changed the County name to Etowah, Baine being then in disfavor. The railroad came in 1870 and so did the first Courthouse. Gadsden was incorporated in 1871, and Kyle became the City's first mayor in 1876. Ten years after the close of the Civil War, Gadsden could boast a population of 2,000 and nineteen businesses.⁵ At this time the town was concentrated several blocks nearer the Coosa than the present district, and there were no brick buildings until Mr. Kyle built the first one in the latter part of the '70s decade. This was almost certainly the Opera

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 36

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

House, a three-storey brick building whose fire wall saved the rest of the growing town from being destroyed by fire on July 4, 1883. This significant building still stands (Inventory #30), but is unrecognizable in its present form. The 1890 second Courthouse is worse than unrecognizable, however, having been demolished in 1948 in favor of a new one in another location, leaving to the vagaries of commerce its square between Court and Fourth Streets, the heart of the present district.

The major industrial history of Gadsden began in the 1880s with the Coosa Furnace, followed shortly thereafter by the Southern Manufacturing Company and, in 1887, the Elliott Car Works.⁶ In 1895 a major industrial event occurred: the building of the Dwight Cotton Mills in Alabama City, an adjacent settlement incorporated in 1891 and later merged with Gadsden in 1932, bringing the major area of industrial activity within the greater city limits. The Alabama Steel & Wire Co. followed in 1905; this was the first steel-related mill in Gadsden and was after 1913 operated as the Gulf States Steel Company until its purchase by Republic Steel in 1937. This mill remained one of the three largest enterprises in Gadsden; the other two were Goodyear Tire & Rubber and Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company. Goodyear came to Gadsden in 1929 and still, after many vicissitudes, is a major economic factor in the city. In 1947 Allis-Chalmers took over a war munitions plant presented to the city by the Government. The Dwight Cotton mill became part of the Cone Mills in the 1940s and was summarily shut down in 1959 after a labor dispute. It was the loss of Dwight, and the closing of several of the pipe mills about that time, that began a period of decline and job loss that has plagued Gadsden to the recent past.

One of Gadsden's enduring legacies to the State and the region is the founding there of the Alabama Power Company in 1906. William P. Lay was a riverboatman who understood the river and its potential as a power source. With the help of investors sought after his arrival in the area in 1874, he built the first electric plant in Gadsden in 1887. He realized that in electricity lay the ability to use the power of the Coosa-Alabama river system, and to that end he organized the Alabama Power Company.⁷

By 1920 Gadsden thought of itself as eternally prosperous; a Chamber of Commerce publication from those years notes that "the Gadsden district has 39 manufacturing plants with nearly 7,000 employees and a monthly payroll of approximately \$600,000."⁸ By 1930 Gadsden had surpassed Bessemer as the fourth largest city in Alabama, an occasion of much crowing in the newspaper. In 1940 the total payroll was \$21,600,000. Gadsden remained Alabama's fourth

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 37

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

=====

largest city until about 1960 when Dwight Mills closed, at which time it dropped back to sixth.⁹

The World War II decade was the most prosperous of all, and Gadsden was called an Alabama "war city" by the Birmingham News, which documented its wartime manufacturing and the injection of military life and population into the economic life of the city. The location of Camp Sibert in Gadsden was a major bonus; this was a chemical warfare training center which after the War left the airfield as its legacy, along with the USO Building that became a community center owned by the City.¹⁰ Other wartime developments were the presence of an Air Force supply depot, a shell plant, a federal contract with the Agricola Furnace Company, enhanced production at Goodyear and Republic Steel, and, finally, enactment of the Rivers and Harbors Bill which authorized \$60 million to develop the Coosa-Alabama river system. All this activity and the influx of personnel and population earned Gadsden "the distinction of being 'the fastest growing city of its class in the nation'" even as early as 1940.¹¹

By 1947 the center of the City, long located along the Broad Street blocks between Third and Sixth Streets, began to be pulled westward by the development of the Forrest Avenue extension of Broad by businesses, replacing in the process many residential and institutional structures such as the 1905 Carnegie Library. The 1948 sale of the old Courthouse property for commercial development and the subsequent location of the new Courthouse in the Forrest Avenue area also served to encourage this trend. Will Martin in the Gadsden Times noted that "(t)he main theater, hotel and shopping district is still centered around the court square and it could be anchored there if property owners in that area keep up with the procession by erecting new and more modern stores and office structures as demanded."¹² Some modern building in the heart of the district was undertaken in the next two decades, sometimes accompanied by the destruction of earlier buildings on the sites or, more often, the inappropriate alteration of the historic buildings to conform with the decades' admiration for modernity and progress.

By 1980 the plight of the downtown had become such that the City resorted to a since-discredited plan: the destruction of portions of blocks along Chestnut and Locust Streets to provide parking (although mercifully not along Broad itself). Whether or not this has served to keep downtown business viable, it has created a number of open spaces that narrow the scope of the present district and make a connection with the earliest parts of the city an impossibility. However, there still remains a fine collection of historic

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 38

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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resources, many of which are presently undergoing rediscovery and rehabilitation. The downtown is now an interesting amalgam of 19th- and 20th-century commercial and institutional architecture, and the presence of a design review component in the City government should now make drastic alteration or destruction of these resources a thing of the past.

Notes

¹ W.H. Butler, "Gadsden on Substantial Basis," *The Dixie Manufacturer*, July 25, 1923, p. 18.

² Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, National Trust for Historic Preservation. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1987, p. 63.

³ Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South, WPA Writers' Program, Alabama State Planning Commission. New York: Richard R. Smith, 1941, p. 191.

⁴ Undated city brochure, Alabama State Archives County collection.

⁵ Elbert L. Watson, A Short History of Gadsden, undated municipal booklet, Chamber of Commerce et al. (BPL clipping files)

⁶ J. Herbert Meighan, "The Growth of Gadsden," Alabama Business Woman, April, 1950, p. 9. (Archives clipping files)

⁷ WPA Writers' Program, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁸ "Fifty Facts About Gadsden and Etowah County," undated (post-1920) pamphlet, Gadsden Chamber of Commerce. (BPL clipping files)

⁹ Birmingham News, undated article from 1960s, Birmingham Public Library clipping files.

¹⁰ "Gadsden's Postwar Program is Cinching Wartime Growth," Alabama, January 25, 1946, p. 10. (Archives clipping files)

¹¹ Walker, Alyce Billings, ed., Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South, (WPA Writers' Program, originally published 1941, see note 2 above), reprinted 1975, p. 176.

¹² Will Martin, "Center of City Shifts Up and Down Broad Street," Gadsden Times, January 7, 1947. (Archives clipping files)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 39

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 40

Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The District includes the streets and numbers indicated on the first page of this nomination form. Boundaries are shown on the accompanying sketch map, the source of which is the Gadsden planimetric map on a scale of 1" = 200'.

Boundary Justification:

The delineation of the District was arrived at by both visual and historic scrutiny of the downtown. The present boundaries include as much of the historic core of Gadsden as has survived fairly intact without undue interruption by demolition or modern construction. It actually comprises the original downtown's most significant blocks from earliest beginnings to about 1948, when the Courthouse was destroyed and the commercial center began to drift westward. The Third to Sixth Street blocks along Broad Street were always the densest and most significant to the downtown, and they are the core of the present district.

For more specific discussion of the boundaries, refer to Section 7 above, the physical description of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photos Page 41 Gadsden Downtown Historic District
Etowah County, Alabama

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Gadsden Downtown Historic District; Gadsden, Etowah County, Alabama
Photos: Linda Nelson; Date: Feb 1997; Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission

Curve of upper Broad Street. looking east from 600 block.
1 of 12

Broad Street, south side of 500 block; left to right property numbers 52, 54,
55, 56, and 59, from southeast.
2 of 12

511 Broad St., Berger Dry Goods/Kyle Building, #41 from west.
3 of 12

Broad St., north side of 500 block; left to right, #51 & 50, from northwest.
4 of 12

Broad St., south side of 500 block; left to right, property numbers 56, 55,
54, and 52, from northeast.
5 of 12

Wood Building, #59, southeast corner of 6th & Broad St., from east northeast.
6 of 12

US Post Office/Federal Building, #60 from east.
7 of 12

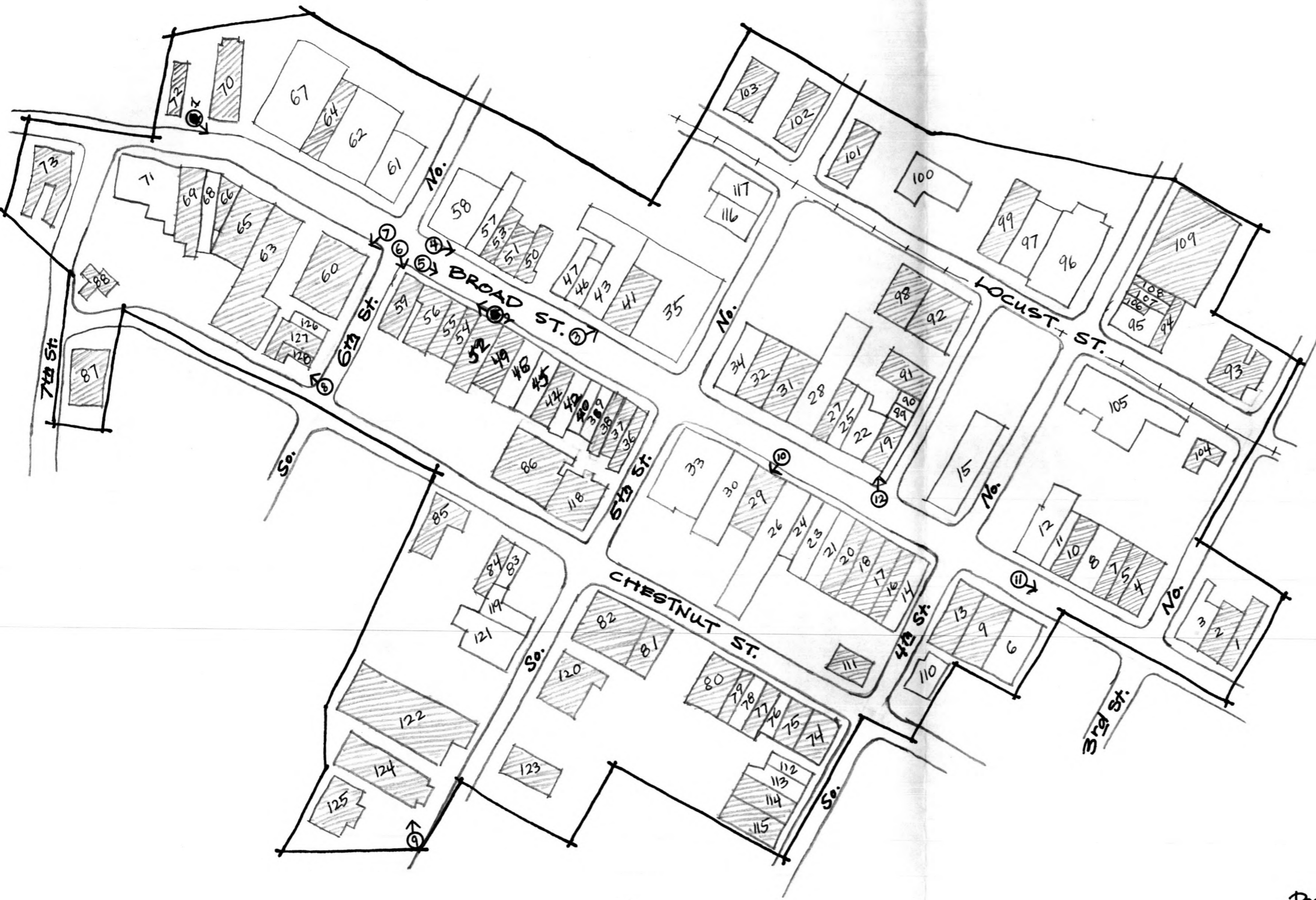
Service Station, #128, northwest corner of 6th & Chestnut Sts. from southeast.
8 of 12

1st Baptist Church, #124, northwest corner of S. 5th & Walnut Sts., from south
southeast.
9 of 12

Motlow's Saloon, 426-428 Broad St., #29, from northeast.
10 of 12


Broad St., south side of 300 block; left to right, property numbers 11, 10, 8,
7, 5, and 4, from west.
11 of 12

Frank & Hagedorn, #19, northwest corner of Court and Broad Sts., from south.
12 of 12



GADSDEN DOWNTOWN
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 ETOWAH CO., ALABAMA

BOUNDARY & PHOTO MAP
 SCALE: 1" = 200'

C = 
 NC = 