

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic STIEFELMEYER'S

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 202 1st Avenue, S.E. NA not for publication

city, town Cullman NA vicinity of congressional district 4

state Alabama code 01 county Cullman code 043

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Carl Stiefelmeyer, Sr.

street & number 202 1st Avenue, S.E.

city, town Cullman NA vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cullman County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Cullman state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1970 - present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good 1 S V W fair	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Stiefelmeyer's is a large Italianate Revival style store of two floors, constructed of wood, and located on the main street of Cullman, Alabama. Some minor changes to the facade have not diminished the building's associations with its 1890s construction, and its largely original interior condition further contributes to its overall integrity.

Stiefelmeyer's is a two-story, wood framed commercial building located on a corner lot in downtown Cullman. Designed in a restrained Italianate Revival style, the building has a flat roof hidden behind a tall wooden cornice decorated with scroll cut brackets and a modillion band. The individual, double-hung windows of the second story facade are topped by triangular wooden pediments supported on consoles.

The street level facade features a set of double-leaf, glazed doors near the southern end raised three steps above the sidewalk. The remainder of the wall is composed of large plate glass windows set on marble base panels and topped by transoms of prism glass. A wood framed canopy of moderate slope, supported at the curb on metal posts, shelters the first floor and sidewalk. As originally constructed, the building has a second entrance near the northern end and six display windows which were each divided into four square lights; the 1890s canopy was of the same size and configuration as the present one but had wooden posts decorated with jigsaw cut brackets beneath a spindle-work frieze.

The side-street wall continues the decorated cornice above the row of plain second story windows and the lower row of small ventilation windows of the first floor. A rear entrance and flanking multipaned windows, all fitted with striped awnings, have been added.

The rear wall of Stiefelmeyer's is of brick construction, and the cast iron fire shutters on the second floor windows survive intact. The foundations are of stone under the front half of the building and of brick under the rear.

The interior is composed of two sections, each divided lengthwise by a series of beveled wooden posts and massive brackets that support a large box beam. The ceilings are of beaded board; the walls are plastered; and the floors are of hardwood, although some areas have been covered by later wooden flooring. The small, raised, side-street windows have fluted trim and bull's-eye corner blocks. An open freight elevator on the interior wall is still in place. A large, partially arched opening near the rear connects the two interior sections while a fire door allows access to a later one-story brick addition which is not part of this nomination. A straight staircase with a mid-point landing provides access to the second floor; it has paneled newels and three turned balusters per step. These interior spaces have been subdivided recently to create a series of small shops, but the partitions are all of a temporary nature and could be easily removed without harm to the structure; several are nothing more than lattice screens and none exceed eight feet in height.

The second floor, used for storage, also has a beaded board ceiling, plaster walls, wooden floors, and the same post and beam support system as the first. The windows are framed with fluted trim and bull's-eye corner blocks, and the interior metal fire shutters are in use. Two huge light wells have been closed with plywood.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1892 and ca. 1896 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Stiefelmeyer's is significant because it is the only extant commercial building in the downtown that still illustrates the distinctive characteristics of wood framed construction and Italianate styling that typified the first generation of nonresidential buildings in Cullman, Alabama. The building is a fine example of its period and construction method since it possesses integrity of style, location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

CRITERION C: A Popular Combination of Construction Method and Design Preference That Is No Longer Common

The Italianate Revival style lingered on in Alabama towns until the end of the 19th century as the predominant commercial style. However it was, with few exceptions, executed in the native red brick which was plentiful. This construction method reflected not only local preferences but was in many municipalities also dictated by local building codes as a means of deterring the spread of fires in the downtown. Cullman, a town of fewer than 2,000 persons in 1890, apparently had no such restrictions since early photographs reveal a preponderance of wooden buildings.

Cullman was founded in 1873 when John G. Cullmann, a Bavarian immigrant, secured thousands of acres from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and brought five German families from Cincinnati to establish a community. A sawmill was put in operation immediately making it practical and expedient to begin erecting timber buildings. The very earliest commercial structures were simple vernacular wooden designs with flat, false fronts decorated with just a hint of an Italianate cornice and often a canopy or porch--buildings such as those that populated the boom towns of the West settled during the same period. Old photographs show that wood was the most popular building material in Cullman during the 1870s and 80s and was used for stores, houses, the L & N depot, the hotel and even the fire station.

The first Stiefelmeyer's storehouse (1888-92), located at a different site, was a two-story, false front, framed building that was destroyed by fire. By 1892 when the first portion of the present store was constructed, brick was being used in Cullman for retail houses, but the new Stiefelmeyer's was again constructed principally of wood although the false front was replaced by a more pronounced Italianate design. The use of clapboards on this large store conveys to Stiefelmeyer's an odd frontier quality (which is lacking in comparable masonry buildings) and also, because of its uniqueness, contributes to the building's strong sense of time and place. Through the years fires and rebuilding have taken their toll of Cullman's other frame structures in the downtown leaving Stiefelmeyer's as the sole remaining representative of this once popular construction style that characterized Cullman's first architectural period.

Stiefelmeyer's also retains to a remarkable extent its original design. Only the street level facade has been altered, and even these changes are minor for a commercial structure in continuous use for nine decades. The changes in display windows

9. Major Bibliographical References

Official Cullman Centennial Booklet, 1873-1973.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .24

Quadrangle name Cullman

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24 000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	1	4	5	4	0	3	7	8	1	5	3	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is a rectangle fronting 80 feet on First Avenue East and 130 feet on Second Street, being at the southeast corner of the intersection.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Bayer, Planner

organization Huntsville Planning Department date 13 June 1983

street & number P. O. Box 308 telephone 205-532-7353

city or town Huntsville state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 11/14/83

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 12/22/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

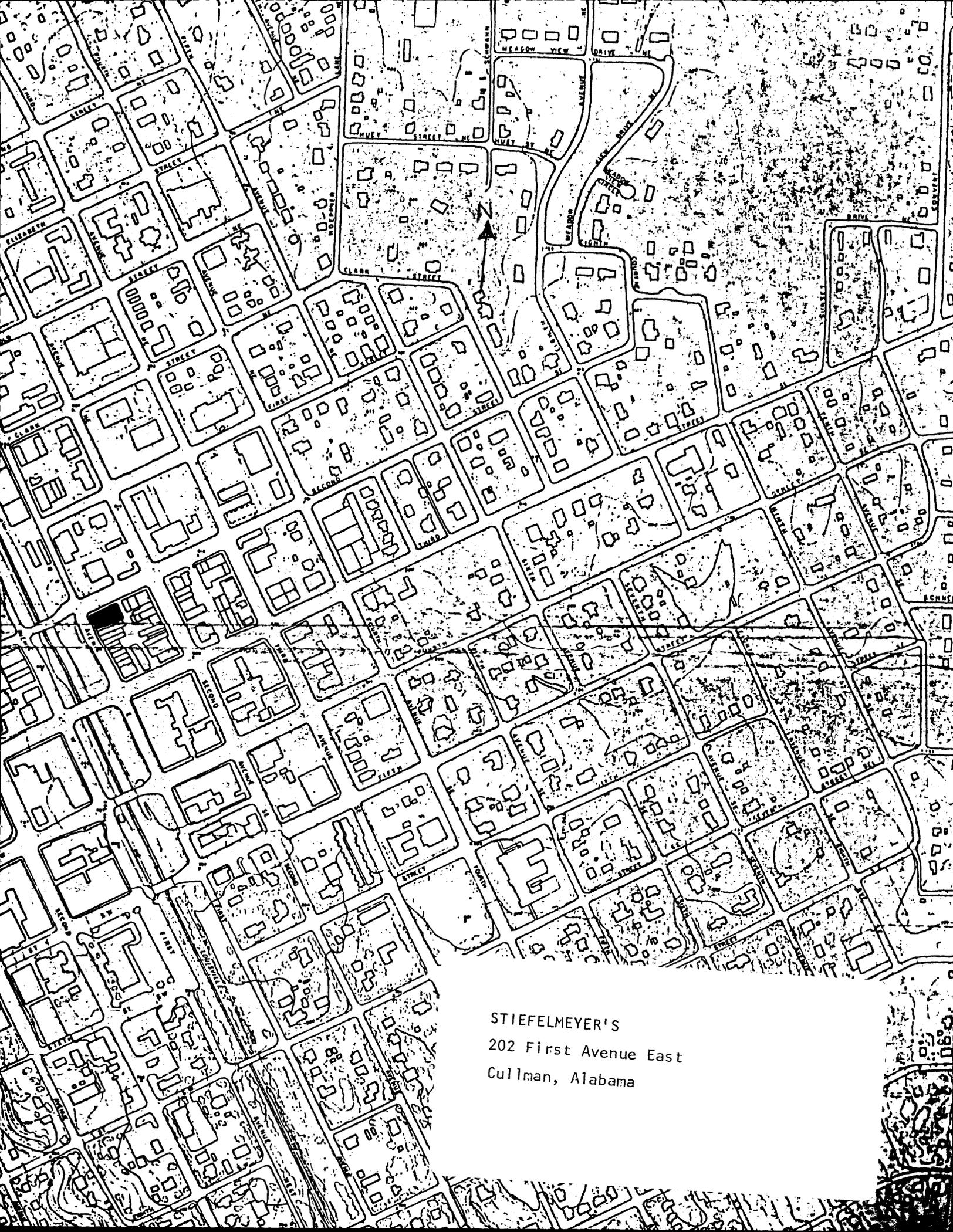
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and canopy have not altered the original configuration of the facade and in no way detract from the building's association with its 19th century origins. Equally unusual is the intact 19th century interior; the recent installation of temporary dividers has neither destroyed nor obliterated the original trim, layout, or character of the structure.

Stiefelmeyer's also functions as a major contributor to Cullman's sense of local identity through its direct and sustained connections with the period of German settlement.

This building clearly enhances our understanding of the type of architecture that was unique with new towns during the second half of the 19th century. Although examples of this method of construction are still frequently encountered in the West, Stiefelmeyer's survives as an uncommon southern artifact, reminding us that Alabama also experienced the development of frontier communities during this period.

Mrs. Maggie Stiefelmeyer purchased the first parcel of this lot in 1890 and constructed the original corner portion of the store in 1892; between 1894 and 1900 an addition, one third larger than the first but identical in design, was erected on the south side bringing the building to its present size. The first sidewalk canopy was also installed at this time. During the 20th century the business again expanded and several one-story brick stores were constructed beyond the addition, probably in the 1920s. The Stiefelmeyer family continues to operate the corner store, now as a delicatessen, while the addition is rented to several small retailers.



STIEFELMEYER'S
202 First Avenue East
Cullman, Alabama