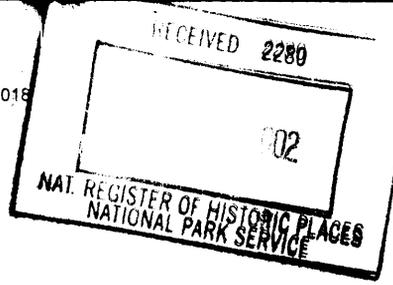


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



484

ob

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Alabama City Wall Street Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Parts of Wall Street (27<sup>th</sup> Street) between Meighan Blvd. And Norris Avenue and including parts of the 2600 block Meighan Blvd. And Sansom Street not for publication N/A

city or town Gadsden vicinity N/A

state Alabama code Al county Etowah code 055 zip code 35902

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this    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.)

*Lizbeth Ann Brown*  
Signature of certifying official

27 March 2002  
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
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action 5/16/02

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

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

Contributing

Noncontributing

33

11 buildings

       sites

       structures

33

       objects

11 Total

**Number of related multiple property listing**

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Commerce/Trade</u>	Sub: <u>Business</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>Fire Station</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Library</u>
<u>      </u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Commerce/Trade</u>	Sub: <u>Business</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>Library</u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

Art Deco

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, concrete, concrete block

roof other: tar and gravel

walls brick

other limestone

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

**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)

- 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.
- 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.) N/A

- 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
- Social and Commercial

**Period of Significance** c. 1910s - 1948

**Significant Dates** N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** N/A

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)** N/A
- 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
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository Gadsden Public Library

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State Etowah, Alabama

=====  
**10. Geographical Data**  
=====

**Acreage of Property** approx. 10 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing  
1 16 588130 3764960    3 16 588180 3764380  
2 16 588280 3764890    4 16 588040 3764380

**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 Pamela Sterne King & Christy Anderson (AHC Reviewer)

organization PSKing Associates date 8-20-01

street & number 3307 Altaloma Way telephone 205-823-1679  
city or town Birmingham state Alabama zip code 35216

=====  
**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 Less than 50

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   2   Page   1  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

**Addresses**

**Forrest Avenue**  
2618, 2631, 2700

**Meighan Boulevard**  
2606, 2608, 2618, 2700

**Sansom Avenue**  
302, 2606, 2608, 2612

**Wall Street**  
104, 106, 108, 110, 111, 118, 119-121, 123, 125, 200, 202-204, 206, 208, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214-220,  
215-217, 219, 221, 223, 222, 224, 300, 301, 302-304, 303-305, 306-308, 307-309, 310, 311, 313

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   3  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

**INVENTORY**

1. Commercial Building. 2606 Meighan Blvd. (c.1920s-30s).  
One story free standing wood building with a low-pitched side oriented gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed and casement wood windows throughout and a stoop porch with a shed roof.
2. Gas Station/Garage. 2608 Meighan Blvd. (c.1920s).  
One story stucco gas station and garage with a tar and gravel parapet flat roof with tile coping. There are double hung metal windows throughout, transom window on the front entrance, and a concrete block foundation. There is also an attached concrete utility addition on the rear of the building.
3. Commercial Building. 313 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1970s ).  
One story brick free standing commercial block with two bays. There is a parapet flat tar and gravel roof, and decorative brickwork. The storefront windows have been faced with vinyl, c. 1970s, and a new entrance constructed in each bay. There is a projecting pilaster separating the bays as well as on either end, and a concrete block foundation. (NC)
4. Gadsden Public Library – Alabama City Branch. 2610 Meighan Blvd. (c.1938).  
One story with basement brick Classical – style free standing library with a center steeple and a side oriented gabled asphalt roof. There are 8:12 double hung metal windows throughout and a gabled front portico with massive round columns, and decorative dentils. There is also a double door entrance with sidelights and transom, and a brick foundation.
5. Fire Station. 2618 Meighan Blvd. (1936).  
Two story with basement stucco Art Deco style fire station. There is a flat tar and gravel roof and a round 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony with Art Deco-style metal railing. There are metal casement windows throughout, and a concrete block foundation. Both original front garage doors also remain.
6. Ritz Theatre. 310 Wall Street. (c. 1940s; c. 1960s).  
Two story brick, including glazed brick on the front face, free standing theatre with a parapet flat roof. There is an original projecting marque sign, and there is an original window panel above the storefront area with glass block. C. 1960s alterations include an aluminum awning, an aluminum and glass entrance bay, and aluminum panels refacing the brick on the front first floor on either side of the entrance bay.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   4  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

- =====
7. Commercial Building. 308/306 Wall Street. (c. 1930s – 40s; c. 1960s).  
One story brick free standing commercial block with black and red original Carrarra glass on the front facade. There is a flat roof, and metal windows throughout, and there is a c. 1960s aluminum face above the storefront. There is also a brick foundation.
  8. Commercial Building. 302/304 Wall Street. (c. 1910s – 20s; c. 1960s).  
Two story brick and concrete free standing commercial block with a parapet flat roof, terra cotta coping and Carrarra glass on the front façade, with decorative pilasters on the ends. There are also c. 1960s fixed metal windows throughout each with a metal awning, and there is a poured concrete foundation. There is also corbelled brick at the roofline and partial vinyl on the front façade.
  9. Jerry's. 300 Wall Street. (c. 1910s – 20s; c. 1960s).  
One story brick and concrete free standing commercial block. There is a stepped parapet flat roof with terra cotta coping. There is very decorative brickwork, and brick window sills and headers. There are also c. 1960s fixed metal windows, and a concrete block foundation.
  10. Store. 302 Sansom Ave. (c. 1910; c. 1960s ).  
One story brick shotgun style free standing store with a front gabled asphalt roof and a central entrance. There is a fixed metal window, c. 1960s, and an original decorative honey brick bank above it. There is also a brick and poured concrete foundation , and a one story original wood addition.
    - A. Garage. (c. 1920s).  
One story wood garage.
  11. Commercial Building. 311 Wall Street. (c. 1910s – 20s).  
One story free standing brick commercial block with a parapet flat roof. There is decorative brick and a series of limestone decorative insets above the storefront. There is also an original wood storefront with limestone sills, and a concrete foundation.
  12. Commercial Building. 307 - 309 Wall Street. (c. 1910s - 1920s; c. 2001).  
One story brick free standing commercial block with a parapet roof. The storefront windows have been removed, c. 2001, for renovation. Storefront limestone sills remain, and there is a poured concrete foundation.
  13. Commercial Building. 305 - 303 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; 1960s).  
One story brick commercial block, with two bays, that has been refaced c. 1960s with masonry panels and aluminum and glass storefront; the original recessed entrance configuration remains. There is a flat roof and a concrete foundation. (NC)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   5  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

14. Commercial Store/Florist. 301 Wall Street. (c. 1950s – 60s).  
One story brick commercial block with a flat tar and gravel roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and there is a concrete block foundation. (NC)
15. Church of Christ Annex Building. 2606 Sansom Ave. (c. 1970s).  
One story brick residential structure with a gable on hip roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and a brick foundation. (NC)
16. Church of Christ. 2608 Sansom Ave. (1948).  
One story brick religious structure with a multiple gabled asphalt roof and limestone coping. There are decorative limestone insets on the front façade, and a pointed arched entrance with a highly decorative m limestone ziggurat- style surround. There are wood windows throughout, and a brick foundation.
17. Barber Shop. 2612 Sansom Ave. (c.1920s – 30s).  
One story brick, partially glazed, free standing commercial block with a flat roof with parapet. There is decorative brickwork, and end brick pilasters. There are also 4:4 double hung wood windows throughout and an assymetrical original front entrance.
18. Bilbro Building. 223 Wall Street. (1923; c. 1960s).  
Two story brick commercial block with a glazed brick front and a parapet flat roof. There is a c. 1960s synthetic façade on the first floor front façade. Decorative brickwork remains at the roof line and there are end brick pilasters. There are c. 1960s 2:2 fixed windows on the second floor and a aluminum and glass storefront. There is also a brick foundation.
19. Commercial Building/ now Etowah Baptist Mission Church. 221 Wall Street. (c. 1910s – 20s; 1970s).  
One story brick free standing commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof, and end brick pilasters. The building was substantially renovated for church use, c. 1970s, with a stucco front façade, aluminum and glass storefront, and new entrances. There is also a concrete block foundation. (NC)
20. Commercial Building. 219 Wall Street. (c. 1910s-20s; c. 1960s).  
One story brick free-standing commercial block with a glazed brick front and a parapet flat roof with terra cotta coping. The storefront is c. 1960s aluminum and glass and there is a c. 1960s awning.
21. W. O. Philly's/(now Etowah Baptist Mission Church). 217 - 215 Wall Street. (1938; c. 1960s).  
One story brick commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof. There are decorative stone insets on the front façade, and there is a brick soldiercourse above the storefront. The storefront was modernized c. 1960s with aluminum and glass, and there is an original concrete block bulkhead.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   6  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

22. Commercial Building/ now Accounting Office. 213 Wall Street. (c. 1960s - 70s).  
One story brick commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof. There is a aluminum and glass storefront, and a concrete block foundation. (NC)
23. Commercial Building. 209 Wall Street. (c. 1930s; c. 1970s).  
One story commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof that was refaced c. 1970s with aluminum panels, and a aluminum and glass storefront with a c. 1970s wood transom. Two original end brick pilasters remain, and there is also a concrete block foundation. (NC)
24. Commercial Building. 224 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1970s).  
Two story free standing commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof and terra cotta coping. There is decorative brickwork at the roof line and there are two metal decorative vents above the second floor windows. There are double hung metal windows. c. 1970s, with some brick infill on the second floor. and there is a c. 1970s aluminum and glass storefront.
25. Commercial Building. 222 Wall Street. (c.1920s; 1940s; c. 1960s).  
Two story brick free standing commercial block with end projecting pilasters faced with c. 1940s carrarra glass. There is a parapet flat tar and gravel roof, and decorative brickwork. There are fixed metal windows throughout with large panes on the first floor, and boarded up windows on the second floor. There is c. 1960s vinyl on the first floor, and there is a brick foundation.
26. Commercial Building. 220 - 214 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1970s ).  
One story brick commercial block with three bays, and a parapet flat asphalt roof with terra cotta coping. There is decorative brickwork above the storefront that creates a signage panel within each bay. One wood transom remains on the middle bay. Modernizations, c. 1970s, include an aluminum and glass storefront and new aluminum and glass transoms in two bays. There is a brick foundation.
27. Commercial Building/Presley's. 212 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1970s).  
One story brick commercial block, with a central entrance bay and two side bays, and a flat roof with parapet. There are projecting pilasters at the central entrance bay, projecting pilasters at each end, and decorative brickwork above the storefront. Modernizations, c. 1970s, include an aluminum and glass storefront and vinyl in the transom area. There is also a brick foundation.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section  7  Page  7

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

28. Commercial Building. 210 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s- 70s).

One story, one bay brick commercial block with a central pedimented parapet and end projecting pilasters. There is decorative brickwork that forms a signage panel in each bay, a brick foundation and a flat roof with a limestone cap around the parapet. Modernizations, c. 1960s-70s, include an aluminum and glass storefront.

29. W. I. Putnam Building. 208 Wall Street. (1922).

One story brick commercial block with a projecting pediment and end brick pilasters with limestone caps. There is decorative brickwork and a limestone panel with the name of the building and date along the second floor.

30. Commercial Building/Morris Video. 206 Wall Street. (c. 1930s; 1960s – 70s).

One story brick and concrete block commercial block with a parapet flat roof and a fixed awning. The storefront has been significantly altered with a single recessed c. 1960s-70s fixed metal window; the remaining storefront area has been refaced with stucco. There is also a concrete foundation. (NC)

31. C & S Salvage Grocery and Morris Video. 204 - 202 Wall Street. (c. 1920s – 30s; 1970s).

One story two bay brick commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof with a decorative brick roof line and end brick pilasters. One bay facade was completely refaced c. 1970s with aluminum including a reconfigured storefront; the other bay has a c. 1970s aluminum and glass storefront. There is also a brick foundation.

32. Commercial Building/now Law's. 200 Wall Street. (c. 1940s).

One story stucco commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof. There are original multi-paned steel windows on the front façade, and a poured concrete foundation.

33. Gaster Fire Extinguisher Company. 118 Wall Street. (c. late 1920 - early 1930s; c. 1960s).

One story brick free standing commercial block with a flat parapet roof. There are decorative limestone square insets and decorative brickwork along the front façade and the front projecting pilasters. There is also an aluminum and glass storefront, c. 1960s, and a brick foundation

34. United States Steel Workers Building. 125 Wall Street. (1947; c. 1960s).

Two story free standing brick commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof; the side roof is stepped and has terra cotta coping. There are projecting end pilasters and decorative stone insets. The second floor has multi-paned metal windows, and the entire front façade has c. 1960s aluminum and glass, and aluminum panels. There are original casement metal windows along the side facades. (NC)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   8  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

35. Commercial Building. 123 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s).

Two story brick free standing commercial block with a parapet flat tar and gravel roof. The second floor façade has been refaced with vinyl c. 1960s, and the windows are covered with plywood and are separated by a much smaller window or panel. The first floor storefront has been modernized, c. 1960s, with aluminum and glass.

36. Commercial Building. 121-119 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s).

One story free standing brick commercial block with two bays and a parapet flat roof. This building is adorned with decorative brick with highly ornate stone insets in an irregular diamond shape. There are original wood windows in one bay with original double doors, and there are brick sills. The other bay has a c. 1960s aluminum and glass storefront.

37. Amoco. 2631 Forrest Avenue. (c. 1970s).

One story modern service station. (NC)

38. Etowah Chemical Sales. 2618 Forrest Avenue. (c. 1920s).

Two story free standing commercial building constructed of brick tile. There is a flat roof with a stepped side parapet with terra cotta coping, one brick chimney, decorative brickwork and brick window sills and a brick foundation. The windows are boarded up on both floors.

39. Commercial Building. 104 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1930s).

Two story tile brick free standing commercial block with a flat roof and parapet. There are projecting brick pilasters at the central entrance bay, and there are decorative stone insets between the floors. The windows have been removed and are covered with plywood. There is also a c. 1930s one story concrete block rear addition. This building is very similar to Inv. # 38.

40. Commercial Building. 106 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s).

One story, one bay, brick free commercial block with a flat roof and parapet with terra cotta coping. There is a brick end pilaster, and a brick foundation; and there is a c. 1960s aluminum and glass storefront.

41. Commercial Building. 108 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s).

One story, one bay, brick commercial block with a flat roof. There are brick end pilasters, a brick foundation, and the storefront has been boarded up. A c. 1960s metal awning remains.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   9  

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

42. Commercial Building. 110 Wall Street. (c. 1920s; c. 1960s).

One story, one bay, brick and tile brick commercial block with a flat roof that is stepped. There is an original wood transom that remains above the c. 1960s aluminum and wood storefront, and there is a concrete slab foundation.

43. OK Tire Company. 2700 Forrest Avenue. (c. 1960s).

One story commercial block with a flat roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout. (NC)

44. Commercial Building. 111 Wall Street. (c. 1920s).

One story, two bay, brick commercial block with a flat roof with terra cotta coping. There are also end projecting pilasters, c. 1950s-60s aluminum and glass storefronts, and a brick foundation.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section  7  Page  2  Name of Property:  Alabama City Wall Street Historic District   
County and State:  Etowah-Alabama

**Narrative Description:**

The Alabama City Wall Street Historic District includes all of the remaining contiguous contributing resources in the Alabama City Wall Street commercial district. Wall Street was the primary commercial core of the town of Alabama City, founded in 1890-91, until 1932 when it merged with the City of Gadsden. The Alabama City Wall Street Historic District documents Alabama City's commercial development from the 1910s to the 1930s when it became part of Gadsden, and its subsequent development to 1948, by then, a commercial area in the northwestern part of the City of Gadsden. The District comprises 44 mostly commercial resources, 33 (approx. 72 %) of which are contributing and 11 (approx. 28%) non-contributing. It includes all of the buildings that front Wall Street (a. k. a. 27<sup>th</sup> Street) between Meighan Boulevard and Norris Avenue as well as a few structures in the 2600 blocks of Meighan Boulevard and Sansom Streets and 300 block of Sansom Street. Residential neighborhoods surround the historic commercial district; no residential structures have been included in the District. The terrain is very flat and there are sidewalks throughout most of the district.

Of the 33 contributing resources, 27 are commercial, free standing or commercial block, structures built between c. 1910s and c. 1948, with the bulk dating c. 1910s – 20s. Some are free standing with one bay, while a number of resources have two or three bays. In addition, there is an early service station (Inv. #2) and a fire station (Inv. #5) both of which are stucco, a public library (Inv. # 4), a theatre (Inv. # 6), and a church building (Inv. # 16). All of the commercial structures are one or two story brick commercial block buildings with the exception of one one-story wood commercial structure built c. 1920s – 30s (Inv. # 1); there are no buildings higher than two stories in the District. The commercial structures have flat roofs, most with parapets; other defining characteristics include projecting brick pilasters, some decorative brickwork (Inv. # 18, the Bilbro Building) , a few pedimented parapets, terra cotta coping at the roof line, and a few buildings with decorative stone insets (Inv. # 11 and # 34) . In addition, several have glazed brick front facades including the only remaining barber shop ( Inv. # 17), and one has especially nice Carrarra glass (Inv. # 7). There is also one shotgun-style store (Inv. # 10).

The remaining five non-commercial buildings include an excellent example of a 1920s gas station (Inv. # 2), a fine 1936 Art Deco – style fire station, (Inv. # 5), the 1938 Classically-inspired library with a pedimented portico, dentils, and a series of front columns (Inv. # 4), a theatre with a prominent c. 1940s projecting marquee sign (Inv. # 6), and a 1948 Church of Christ sanctuary that has a fine pointed arch limestone front surround ( Inv. # 16).

The non-contributing resources are scattered throughout the district and are mostly c. 1950s – 70s one story commercial buildings. The remainder are 1910s – 40s structures that have been significantly altered c. 1960s – 70s to include refacing the front facades and installing aluminum windows.

**Archaeological Component**

Although no archaeological survey has been completed in this district, it is unlikely that a survey would reveal significant archaeological resources.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  10 

Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Criterion A, Commercial Development**

The Alabama City Wall Street Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its documentation of the commercial, as well as institutional and labor development, of Alabama City and later Gadsden, Alabama from the 1910s to 1948. The District contains documentation of the town's commercial development from the late 1910s – 1920s south of Central Avenue, the only area that survived the fire of 1927; the late 1920s (Inv. # 2) when the town began to rebuild; the 1930s after it merged with the City of Gadsden in 1932; through the late 1940s. It also documents the District's late 1930s institutional development (Inv. #s 4 and 5), and labor history (Inv. # 34).

**Criterion C, Architecture**

The Alabama City Wall Street Historic District is significant under Criterion C for its documentation of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District's architectural history from the 1910s to 1948. The District contains examples of typical small town one or two story brick commercial blocks c. 1910s – 1920s with flat parapet roofs, projecting brick pilasters, terra cotta tile coping, decorative brickwork, limestone insets, and some original wood storefronts; excellent examples of institutional history including the 1936 Art Deco Fire Station (Inv. # 5) and the Classical – style 1938 Alabama City Library (Inv. # 4); and a fine example of late 1940s small – town vernacular religious architecture, the 1948 Church of Christ (Inv. # 16).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  11  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:**

The history of Alabama City, now part of the City of Gadsden, is not as old as that of Gadsden, but is nearly inseparably from it. Double Springs, later known as Gadsden, was settled during the 1840s and 1850s. As early as 1832, the U. S. Government had purchased this land from the Cherokee Indians, but not until 1840, did it issue land grants to homesteaders.<sup>1</sup> By 1846, it had its first postmaster, Gabriel Hughes, and its first private school.<sup>2</sup> By 1857, there were 150 residents and three stores, and that same year, Robert Kyle, the son of a wealthy tobacco manufacturer from North Carolina, moved to the area and opened a mercantile business.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1861 – 64, Gadsden played an important role in the Civil War. Many young men joined one of six home guard units which formed into the Nineteenth Alabama Regiment in August 1861. After training in Nashville, the regiment was assigned to the Army of Tennessee and fought in the battles of Shiloh during which it helped capture 3,000 Federal troops, Murfreesborough, Chicamauga, Atlanta, and Nashville. Moreover, in 1864, the Confederate general, Philip D. Roddy, known as the “Defender of North Alabama,” headquartered in Gadsden and led numerous raids against Union troops who were stationed along the Tennessee River.<sup>4</sup>

But undoubtedly the most famous war event revolved around young Emma Sansom. On May 2, 1863, sixteen – year old Sansom led Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest’s troops out of the area where Union Colonel Abel D. Streight had burned out the only known route, a wooden bridge spanning Black Creek. Because of her knowledge of the area and quick-wittedness, therefore, Colonel Streight was unable to trap the Rebels and General Forrest went on to Rome, Georgia where he was greeted as a hero.<sup>5</sup> Later, when Alabama City was founded, Sansom Avenue and Forrest Avenue would become primary streets in the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District.

In 1866 or 1867, the county, then known as Baine, was created out of portions of Cherokee, St. Clair, Marshall, Calhoun, Blount, and DeKalb Counties, and got its first probate judge, J. M. Moragne. The same year, its first newspaper, the Gadsden Times, organized and Robert B. Kyle (for whom Kyle Boulevard, the northern boundary of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District was named), was elected its first mayor.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, in 1869, the county’s name was changed to Etowah.<sup>7</sup>

1 “The Growth of Gadsden,” Herbert Meighan, April 1950.

2 History of Etowah County.

3 A Short History of Gadsden, compiled by Elbert L. Watson; The Birmingham News, “How Gadsden Got Its Name,” Jack Hopper.

4 A Short History of Gadsden, compiled by Elbert L. Watson, pp. 4 – 6.

5 Ibid.

6 History of Etowah County.

7 A Short History of Gadsden, compiled by Elbert L. Watson, p. 8.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  12  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

During the 1870s, Gadsden established itself as an important trade and transportation center of North Alabama. In 1870, its first railroad was constructed from Attalla by the company of Kyle and Hollingsworth. The same year, the first county courthouse was built, and, according to Federal Census records, there were two attorneys, two hotels, a saddle manufacturer, a silversmith business, two physicians, a barber, two dentists, several merchants, and a Bible "agent." There were also four ministers, and a number of farmers who grew principally corn, wheat, potatoes, cotton, tobacco, as well as cultivated honey and molasses. Pig and sheep were also raised. In 1871, Gadsden incorporated, and by the end of the decade, there were at least 2000 residents, a public school, a county jail, nineteen businesses with trade coffers totaling over \$1 million per year, its first industry was established, and the first electric lights were used. <sup>8</sup>

The 1880s and 1890s saw Gadsden virtually explode into a major boom town. Its first bank was opened by Glen Brockway & Company, and its first street car was built by later Alabama City-founder, Captain J. M. Elliott, which gave the city hourly connections to nearby Attalla. In 1882, the city's first iron furnace, the Coosa Furnace, opened along the west bank of the Coosa River by A. L. Crawford and Thomas O'Connor. In 1883, Gadsden received its first telephone system, its first fire department in response probably to a major disastrous fire that same year, and two major industrial companies, the Coosa Furnace and the Southern Manufacturing Company. <sup>9</sup> Several years later, in 1887, the first ice plant, Gadsden Ice Company, and first electric plant, Queen City Electric Light Company, were built. In addition, the first railroad bridge crossing the Coosa River was built by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Mineral Division. By 1890, according to Sanborn maps, moreover, Gadsden had a population of 2,901, and its first canning factory and first cast iron soil pipe foundry were established. <sup>10</sup>

One year later, in 1891, due primarily to the efforts of Captain James Madison Elliott, Alabama City was founded by a special act of the State legislature. William Gardner was appointed mayor, and C. A. Clayton, C. F. Norris, R. V. Wilson, and Abihu Christopher were named aldermen. Each of these men represented one of the town's four wards.<sup>11</sup> Alabama City was, at that time, approximately three thousand acres lying between Little Wills Creek and Black Creek, some two miles in either direction between the towns of Gadsden and Attalla, and about fifty-six miles from the industrial boomtown of Birmingham. There were some fifty residents living there; and there was also a post office.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 9-10.

<sup>9</sup> The Growth of Gadsden, J. Herbert Meighan.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 63-64.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  13  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

---

According to sources, Captain Elliott's dream was to lure industry to the new town <sup>12</sup>, and eventually cause Attalla and Gadsden to merge with it into a single highly-industrial Alabama City.<sup>13</sup> Born on November 12, 1854 in Rome, Georgia where he attended public schools, Elliott graduated and then continued on to Henry College in Virginia. After his schooling, Elliott became a steamboat clerk, and then a riverboat captain on the Coosa River between Rome and Gadsden, Alabama. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Gadsden and became general manager of the Gadsden Steamboat Company which controlled river transportation between Rome and Gadsden. In addition, the Captain operated a number of saw mills in cooperation with R. B. Kyle, as well as a large cotton warehouse. And in 1887, the enormously ambitious and entrepreneurial Elliott founded the Elliott Car Works, later known as the Southern Car and Foundry Company. <sup>14</sup>

In 1895, only a few years after Alabama City was incorporated, J. Howard Nichols and his son, Howard Gardner Nichols, visited Alabama City and decided to move their Chicopee, Massachusetts manufacturing company there. Beset by the problems in the New England textile industry and the magnet of the South's cheap labor and abundant natural resources, Dwight Company's agent, Howard Gardner Nichols, decided to migrate South. According to Nichols, there were numerous reasons for this decision:<sup>15</sup>

Labor agitation was directly the cause which induces us to come south. For the past ten years labor agitators, largely foreigners, have been weaving a web of oppressive laws around cotton manufacturing industries in Massachusetts until they are almost strangled in its meshes. People here [in Alabama], unacquainted with professional agitation, little realize how dangerous it is to the prosperity and welfare of a state. laws are made which are of no real benefit to operatives, but of great annoyance to manufacturers.

---

<sup>12</sup> Scrapbook of Etowah County.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; "Alabama City: Its Location, and the Advantages It Offers the Workingman," a pamphlet published by the Dwight Manufacturing Company, Alabama City: Alabama, c. 1910s.

<sup>14</sup>Hoffman, James L., "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America in a Cotton Mill in a Medium-Sized Southern Industrial City: Labor Revolt in Alabama, 1934," a dissertation for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1986, pp. 62-3.

<sup>15</sup> Hoffman, A Study of the United Textile Workers of America . . . , p. 66.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  14  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

In addition, Nichols continued, “ 1) the South has at present [1895], advantages over the North in the matter of manufacturing course goods. 2) Cheap coal was an important factor. . . . 3) The lesser cost of living, due to the warmer climate, permits of lower wages without in any way depriving the operatives of the luxuries of life.” A major worry, however, was an inadequate water supply from nearby Black Creek which he remedied, in 1895, with construction of a dam and a grist mill in the mill village. 16

Of Alabama workers, Nichols stated that:17

Some stress is laid on the quality of the help here – that as a rule it is superior to ours. I am not wholly convinced of this fact, if it be a fact. It is true that with us they are largely foreigners while here they are native. But my observation in this locality leads me to believe that on the average our northern help will do a larger day’s work than the help here.

By 1895, the Dwight Manufacturing Company had completed its first planned mill and village in Alabama City, and according to educator James L. Hoffman, may have helped plan the town of Alabama City. By 1902, another industrial giant, the Alabama Steel and Wire Company of Birmingham, later Gulf State Steel, was built immediately west of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District, just out of the town’s 1910 limits, where it remains today.18 Captain Elliott’s dream of an industrial magnet, it seems, was becoming realized.

By 1910, according to Sanborn maps, Alabama City contained over 2500 residents. Many of their Victorian era L-cottages and T-cottages remain extant immediately adjacent west and east of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District in what was then Kyle’s Second Plat to the Sanborn map. In addition, there was a post office, possibly the original structure, at the northwest corner of Kyle Avenue (now Meighan Avenue) and 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Opposite the post office, on the northeast corner, was the Dwight Inn which remained there until 1927 when it burned to the ground. 19 In addition, the town’s – and the State of Alabama’s – first public library had opened in 1902 south of the commercial district in Dwight Mill Village where it remains extant.20

The 1910 Sanborn maps show that Alabama City was bordered by the Black Creek to the east, the City of Gadsden to the west, Gulf States Steel plant to the south and Southern Railroad to the north. Railroad tracks owned by the Nashville Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad, and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad company, ran though the

---

16 Ibid, p. 66-67.

17 Ibid., p. 67.

18 Ibid.; History of Etowah County, p. 10.

19 Sanborn Insurance Maps, Alabama City, March 1910.

20 Ibid., Etowah County Scrapbook.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  15  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

heart of the private commercial and residential areas located between First and Ninth Streets and from Kyle Boulevard (now Meighan Boulevard) to Norris Avenue. North of this area, Dwight Mill Village was rapidly developing.<sup>21</sup>

Outside the Dwight Mill Village, according to 1910 maps, private businesses scattered throughout Alabama City's residential areas but concentrated primarily along 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, and along Kyle Boulevard (now Meighan Boulevard). According to Dwight Manufacturing Company documents, the company did not provide a commissary to its employees but encouraged them, instead, to shop "where they wished" primarily in the many privately owned shops and businesses just north of the tracks in the town's commercial district. <sup>22</sup> In 1910, such stores included the J. M. Morgan Contracting Company and lumber yard, general stores, barber shops, warehouses, bakeries and lunch rooms, grocery and drug stores, and pool and billiards halls. No saloons were allowed within the Alabama City limits.<sup>23</sup>

By 1912, a streetcar, owned by Captain Elliott's Alabama City, Gadsden, and Attalla Railroad Company, was under construction in Alabama City. In addition, a new business district, known as Canterbury Station, had grown up just north of Kyle Boulevard. It was a thriving, diverse area including Alabama City Livery, grocery stores, feed stores, millinery shops, drugstores, and a movie theatre. Moreover, the new Gadsden to Attalla streetcar would make a stop here to pick up students who attended area high schools. Little documentation remains of Canterbury Station probably due to the catastrophic fire in 1927 that would ravage the area.

In 1914, an attempt -- fueled at least in part by Birmingham's impressive merger in 1910 that more than doubled its size -- to merge Alabama City into the city of Attalla failed. <sup>24</sup> In a late turn of events, according to a history of Etowah County, the Alabama City effort failed because of interference from "certain Gadsden citizens" who told Alabama City officials and residents that Attalla City "wants to gobble them up for selfish gain." To further fuel the controversy, according to reports, Captain Elliott had reported to Alabama City citizens that he "had no objections to Alabama City 'swallowing' Attalla, but he did object to Attalla 'swallowing' Alabama City." Alabama City officials, at that time, included Mayor Burns (first name not known), and city council members Henry Williams, J. D. Loner, Tom Cox, Ira Gray, and Tom Barron; other important officials were Police Chief Joe Williams, and City Clerk Charley West. As to the Dwight Manufacturing Company's interest, according to the Gadsden Herald, the huge mill favored the merger.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Dwight Manufacturing Company pamphlets, c. 1910s.

<sup>23</sup> Etowah County Scrapbook.

<sup>24</sup> A History of Etowah County, Alabama, Etowah County Centennial Committee, Birmingham: Roberts and Sons, 1968.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  16  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====  
By 1915, according to Sanborn maps, Alabama City's population had doubled to 5,000. In addition, a significant commercial area had also developed along 7<sup>th</sup> Street (now Wall Street) some of which comprise the heart of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District. Included was a five and dime store, and a "moving picture" theatre, no longer present, located on east side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Sansom and Shuler Avenue, one block southeast of the present theatre (Inv. #6). There was also a railroad depot which along the railroad tracks that no longer remains.

At this time, Alabama City's commercial area, and residential areas outside of Dwight Mill Village, did not solely own and operate its own fire and water services. According to 1915 Sanborn maps, the Dwight Manufacturing Company owned and operated the system of water, while the mains and hydrants were owned by the City. Water purchased from the manufacturing company was exclusively for city mains except for the private drinking needs of the "mills and cottages." There were two volunteer fire departments of six men each. Two fire hoses were housed at the corner of Sansom Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street (now Wall Street). Fire alarms were provided by company whistles, and additional fire service was supplied by the Dwight Manufacturing Company, Gadsden Fire Department, Gulf States Steel, and the City of Attalla. In what will later, perhaps, dictate the disastrous fortune of early Alabama City businesses, the Dwight Manufacturing Company owned only the land south of Sansom Avenue—but not north of it -- where its fire department apparently protected only its investments. 26

During the 1920s, Alabama City's residential areas grew were developing into self-sufficient neighborhoods. By the end of the decade, Alabama City had more than 6,500 residents. To serve their educational needs, there were three schools including the city's first public school, Dwight Elementary School, located on Peachtree Street in the mill village. the 1926 Elliott Grammar School located along Meighan Boulevard, and the 1929 Emma Sansom School. All of these have been demolished. At the same time, a modern gas station (Inv. # 5 ) was constructed along Meighan Boulevard in the late 20s next to then existing Elliot Grammar School , and a number of churches dotted the town. By 1926, according to Sanborn Maps, the Dwight Baptist Church had been built in the mill village in 1903, and there was an impressive variety of Protestant denominations located outside the village including the extant Holiness Church and Alabama City United Methodist Church, the Church of Christ (which was later torn down and the current 1948 sanctuary built, Inv. # 16), New Shiloh Baptist Church, and Cumberland Presbyterian Church. 27

The town's commercial interests had also grown. In 1920, a commercial mall, according to one source, was built where the Alabama City Library (Inv. # 4 ) stands today. Moreover, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue had become known as Little Wall Street, later simply Wall Street, and helped fuel and diversify Alabama City's economic and commercial

26 Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915.

27 History of Etowah County, p. 10; Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1926.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  17  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====  
livelihood. In 1927, a major fire destroyed a number of buildings in town. Probably the most devastated area was the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Kyle Boulevard (now Meighan Boulevard), known then as The Square, and contained the Alabama City's post office and city hall complex, Dwight Inn, McNair's Drug Store, and Dwight Mill Tower and Clock.<sup>28</sup> By that time, Alabama City had developed its fire services from all-volunteer to a partially paid chief, ten men, and a fire truck with a Cadillac chassis.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to The Square, the 1927 fire seemingly destroyed all of the residential and commercial structures along Wall Street between Kyle Boulevard and Central Avenue. A number of buildings, however, survived south of Central Avenue (Inv. #s 8 - 9, 11-13, 17, 18 - 22, and 24 - 29) where the Dwight Manufacturing Company owned the land and where it apparently used its own fire department to quell the fire. After the fire destroyed Alabama City's City Hall/Post Office and much of its commercial core, the town hung on and began to rebuild, but as an independent city, it would never recover.

By contrast, its next - door neighbor flourished. By the turn of the century, Gadsden had landed its first steel plant, Alabama Steel and Wire, which reorganized in 1906 - 07 as the Southern Steel Company after the nation's economic recession forced its owners to sell. <sup>30</sup> In addition, Gadsden got its first long distance telephone line, and first library hospital. In 1906, moreover, the Alabama Power Company was formed by William Patrick Lay, and in 1914 in Gadsden. it opened its first power plant.<sup>31</sup>

In 1913, however, after more financial pressure, Southern Steel Company, was sold to Gulf States Steel Corporation which owned it for the next twenty-five years. With this reorganization, the billet manufacturer grew and developed into a model corporate giant. According to a 1929 publication in "Blast Furnace and Steel Plant," company president James Bowron was responsible for moving the Gadsden steel plant into the modern age of steelmaking. In this effort, the company increased its supply of raw materials by acquiring additional mining facilities in places like Sayre and Altoona, and by installing modern machinery at its mines and quarries. This aggressive growth program depended, according to a 1985 Gadsden Times article, on the area's plentiful water sources and its large available supply of "exceptionally desirable" native white labor. In addition to that, by the 1920s, in the tradition of paternalistic company towns, Gulf Steel built 250 houses for its employees at the entrance to the plant; a YMCA for its employees complete with a gymnasium, pool, game room, and theatre room; a school; a commissary; and two churches - one for whites and one for blacks.<sup>32</sup> While the YMCA building no longer exists, much of the Gulf States Steel company town remains near the entrance of the plant adjacent to the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District.

28 Ibid.

29 Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1926.

30 Bob Scarboro and Mike Goodson, Images of America: Etowah County, p. 73.

31 Ibid.

32 The Gadsden Times, February 24, 1985.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  18  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====  
Between 1914 and 1927, the city of Gadsden continued its climb toward economic and industrial importance. By 1920, Gadsden had a population of 22,404, and in 1925, East Gadsden merged into it and was physically connected by the Memorial Bridge in 1926. By 1927, according to an article written that year by E. W. Capen, known as a local industrial and financial expert, Gadsden and her sister cities of Alabama City and Attalla, had a combined population of 32,500 up some 34% since 1920. By 1927, moreover, the area had become known as the Gadsden District, and was heralded for its industrial importance and its prospect of even greater prosperity. Capen predicted that year that “the Gadsden District will soon be a center containing many more large manufacturing establishments and hundreds of thousands of people.” He further predicted that the abundance of Coosa River water power, and the vast deposits of coal and red iron ore had positioned Gadsden for industrial greatness. 33

By then, Gadsden’s population was nearing 25,000 according to census records; and streetcars completed in 1926 connected her to her suburbs. Moreover, in 1930, the city saw completion of a \$1 million blooming mill, a major expansion of the Gulf States Steel Company, construction of two hospitals totaling some \$1.2 million, the introduction of natural gas into the District, a \$1 million expenditure to get it to Gadsden, Attalla, and Alabama City, a \$1 million expansion by the Alabama Power Company, completion of the 10 – story Hotel Reich, addition to the Gadsden High School, and completion of a major paving project. In addition, the Goodyear Dixie Plant was completed in 1929. 34 Gadsden, according to a 1929 newspaper article, was so “like Birmingham” in its characteristics and capabilities. that phenomenal future growth was all but guaranteed.35

By contrast, the years of 1926 and 1927 shook traditional labor-management relationships in the Gadsden District. In 1926, a serious labor controversy erupted at Gadsden’s Agricola and Jones Manufacturing Company, apparently the result of a Moulder’s Union attempt to unionize the plant. Management maintained that the Gadsden Chamber of Commerce’s 1923 declaration of the city’s open shop policy had virtually outlawed any unionization activities. The Union countered that men who had joined the Union were bring systematically laid off. 36

Such rancor continued throughout the 1930s, and reached a pitch in 1935 when the U. S. Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act, known also as the Wagner Act, which was designed to protect the rights of unions. At the same time, a split developed within the American Federation of Labor over the issue of how to organize large manufacturing plants, whether by traditional crafts guilds or by industries. Out of this controversy, some AF of L

33 “Gadsden and Her Industries,” E. W. Capen, published by the L & N Employes’ [sic] Magazine, December 1927, pp. 7-10; “Gadsden, Alabama: The Industrial Center of Northeast Alabama,” Gadsden Chamber of Commerce, 1927.

34 The Birmingham News, 1-1-31.

35 The Birmingham Age-Herald, December 29, 1929.

36 “A History of Etowah County, Alabama,” Etowah County Centennial Committee, p. 212.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  19  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====  
leaders broke away and formed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) specifically to unionize big industries such as steel, manufacturing and rubber. Much of its aim in the Gadsden area was at the Goodyear Rubber Tire & Company, and Alabama City's Dwight Manufacturing Company and Gulf States Steel Corporation.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of the decade the Great Depression struck the area hard, and while Gadsden and Attalla were severely hit economically, the town of Alabama City would not survive it. In 1930 and 1931, many of its businesses, including the Wall Street bank, closed. And one year later, on July 13, 1932, Alabama City voted to merge into the city of Gadsden. <sup>38</sup>

As the two cities merged, their political, economic, and industrial destinies merged with them, good or bad, settled or tenuous. According to a 1931 Birmingham News editorial, the merger more or less formalized what had become an economic and political fact. "Gadsden, Attalla, and Alabama City," it said, "are closely adjoined to each other . . . and . . . have grown and built up so that they are now one community.." Their common future, the editorial continued, was inevitable, and destined a merged city to "become one of the larger cities of the state in short order." A consolidation of the municipalities, it concluded, "would hasten the city's rise to that position."<sup>39</sup> Just prior to the merger, moreover, the city of Gadsden showed an assessed evaluation of \$14 million. Annexation of Alabama City increased this sum by \$2 million. The total population of Gadsden was now nearly 39,000 with some 8,800 living in Alabama City. Of these, approximately 75% were white. In addition, there were now over 17 industrial companies having one hundred or more employees, and at least 30 other smaller ones.<sup>40</sup>

To administer the new larger Gadsden, a three-member commission was formed that included J. H. Meighan, chairman, and Morris Ford and Cordon Cantrell. Under this political organization, it seems, the Gadsden made major strides. Between 1934 - 38, municipal administration projects costing over \$2 million were completed

---

37 Deirdre Coakley, An Informal History of Gadsden, Alabama 1846-1996, published by The Gadsden Times: 1997, pp. 85-86; Robert Wilbanks, compiled by, Voices of America: Gadsden, Alabama, Stories of the Great Depression, pp. 18-21.

38 A Little Book About Gadsden, Alabama, written and published by the Department of Archives and History of The Woman's Club of Gadsden, sponsored by the City Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Industries, possibly 1938, p. 25.

39 The Birmingham News, 1-8-31.

40 Gadsden Chamber of Commerce records.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  20  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====  
including four new schools built with Projects Works Administration (PWA) monies, including Gulfsteel in Alabama City and Carver School for blacks; an armory; an auditorium and amphitheatre built by the PWA, and a host of public improvements were finished. Moreover, in 1936, the Art Deco Fire Station (Inv. # 5) was constructed, and in 1938, the Alabama City Public Library (Inv. # 4) was completed and its staff provided by the Works Progress Administration. 41

By 1940, the City of Gadsden was recognized as the State's second largest industrial city, and was also one of its most unionized. It showed a population of over 40,000 and boasted a payroll of approximately \$15,000,000, its largest ever. Gulf States Steel had sold to Republic Steel in 1937 and was, by 1940, its largest plant with 3,100 employees; Dwight Manufacturing Company had 2,500 employees; Goodyear had 1,600. In addition, Gadsden had obtained more Federal monies for public improvement projects than any other in the State save Birmingham, and it boasted the largest curb market in the State by then with proceeds of over \$137,000 in one year.<sup>42</sup> In Alabama City, the new c. 1940s Ritz Theatre was built (Inv. # 6), as was the 1947 United States Steel Workers Building (Inv. # 34) just blocks away from Republic Steel, and the 1948 Church of Christ sanctuary (# 16).

During the 1940s and 1950s other important businesses opened in Gadsden – and some closed. The most important opening was the war-dependent ordinance plant that pumped the economy well during the early 1940s, but was closed by 1945 when the war ended. In Alabama City, smaller, but nonetheless important business opened during the same period including the Alabama City Bank, Jack's Coal Yard, W. D. McNair Drug, City Drug, Brock Smith Grocers, Rainbow Mattresses, A & H Café and Alabama City Cash Store. By contrast, however, labor-management conflict erupted even violently during the 1950s with one major casualty being the closing of the Dwight Manufacturing Company in 1959.<sup>43</sup>

Ironically, Gadsden's historical self-comparison with the City of Birmingham continued throughout the 1960s – 80s, but the comparison, during this time, was not positive. Plants closed and workers were laid off and, by the recession of the 1980s, Gadsden had an unemployment rate of over 20% and was the "Number One" hardest hit city in Alabama. According to one Atlanta Journal-Atlanta Constitution article, Gadsden was a "steel town down on its luck."<sup>44</sup> Since then, of course, Gadsden has rebuilt its economy, and Alabama City has rebuilt with it. Just outside the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District, in fact, are several new buildings constructed since then, most notably, the c. 1990s SouthTrust Bank on Shuler Street.

41 Ibid.  
42 Alabama, "Gadsden," July 26, 1937, pp. 9 – 12.  
43 History of Etowah County.  
44 The Atlanta Journal – Atlanta Constitution, 11-28-82.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page  21  Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

**Bibliography**

A History of Etowah County, Alabama, Etowah County Centennial Committee. Birmingham: Roberts and Sons. 1968.

A Little Book About Gadsden, Alabama. Department of Archives and History of The Woman's Club of Gadsden. Sponsored by the City Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and Industries, possibly 1938.

Birmingham News. 1-1-31.

Birmingham News. "How Gadsden Got Its Name, Jack Hopper.

Capen, E. W. "Gadsden and Her Industries." L & N Employes' [sic] Magazine, December 1927.

Coakley, Deirdre. Portrait of a City: An Informal History of Gadsden, Alabama 1846-1996. Gadsden, Al: The Gadsden Times. 1996.

Dwight Manufacturing Company. "Alabama City: Its Location, and the Advantages It Offers the Workingman," c. 1910s.

"Gadsden, Alabama: The Industrial Center of Northeast Alabama." Gadsden Chamber of Commerce. 1927.

Gadsden Chamber of Commerce Records.

Hoffman, James L. "A Study of the United Textile Workers of America in a Cotton Mill in a Medium-Sized Southern Industrial City: Labor Revolt in Alabama, 1934." A dissertation for the Doctor of Education degree at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1986.

Meighan, Herbert. "The Growth of Gadsden." April 1950.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1910, 1915, 1926.

Scarboro, Bob and Mike Goodson. Images of America: Etowah County.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9,10, photos    Page 22 Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

=====

The Atlanta Journal-Atlanta Constitution. 11-28-82.

The Birmingham Age-Herald. December 29, 1929.

The Gadsden Times. February 24, 1885.

Watson, Elbert L., compiled. A Short History of Gadsden.

Wilbanks, Robert, compiled by. Gadsden, Alabama: Stories of the Great Depression. Charleston, S. C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District is shown on the accompanying map entitled "Alabama City Wall Street Historic District" 2001, drawn not to scale.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary lines were drawn to include resources historically associated with the Alabama City Wall Street Historic District in Alabama City later Gadsden, Alabama. The boundary lines were drawn in such a way as to include as many contributing resources as appropriate and to exclude as many non-contributing resources as possible.

**Photographs**

Taken by: Pamela Sterne King

Date Taken: 2001

Location of Negatives: AHC

1. 2606 Meighan Blvd. facing west.
2. 2608 Meighan Blvd. facing north.
3. 313 Wall Street facing northwest.
4. Gadsden Public Library – Alabama City Branch, 2610 Meighan Blvd. facing north.
5. 2618 Meighan Blvd. facing north.
6. 310 Wall Street facing east.
7. 306-08 Wall Street facing northeast.
8. 302-04 Wall Street facing northeast.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section    photos    Page   23  

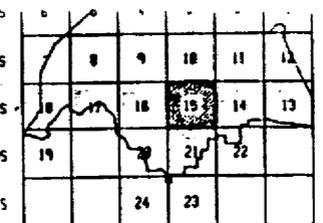
Name of Property: Alabama City Wall Street Historic District  
County and State: Etowah-Alabama

---

9. 300 Wall Street facing northeast.
10. 302 Sansom Ave. facing south.
11. 311 Wall Street facing west.
12. 307-09 Wall Street facing northwest.
13. 305-03 Wall Street facing northwest.
14. 301 Wall Street facing northwest.
15. 2606 Sansom Ave. facing north.
16. 2608 Sansom Ave. facing north.
17. 2612 Sansom Ave. facing north.
18. 223 Wall Street facing west.
19. 221 Wall Street facing west.
20. 219 Wall Street facing northwest.
21. 215-17 Wall Street facing northwest.
22. 213 Wall Street facing northwest.
23. 209 Wall Street facing northwest.
24. 224 Wall Street facing northeast.
25. 222 Wall Street facing northeast.
26. 214-220 Wall Street facing northeast.
27. 212 Wall Street facing northeast.
28. 210 Wall Street facing northeast.
29. 208 Wall Street facing northeast.
30. 206 Wall Street facing northeast.
31. 202-04 Wall Street facing northeast.
32. 200 Wall Street facing northeast.
33. 118 Wall Street facing northeast.
34. 125 Wall Street facing northeast.
35. 123 Wall Street facing northwest.
36. 119-121 Wall Street facing northwest.
37. 2631 Forrest Ave. facing northwest.
38. 2618 Forrest Ave. facing northwest.
39. 104 Wall Street facing northwest.
40. 106 Wall Street facing northwest.
41. 108 Wall Street facing northwest.
42. 110 Wall Street facing northwest.
43. 2700 Forrest Ave. facing northeast.
44. 111 Wall Street facing northeast.

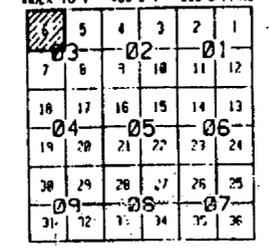


↑ N  
1"=50'

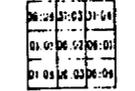


R3E R4E R5E R6E R7E R8E

TOWNSHIP LOCATOR  
INDEX TO T. 400'S T. 200' MAPPING



SUB-SHEET INDEX



District falls between shaded area on map  
Alabama City Wall Street H.D.  
Etowah Co., AL

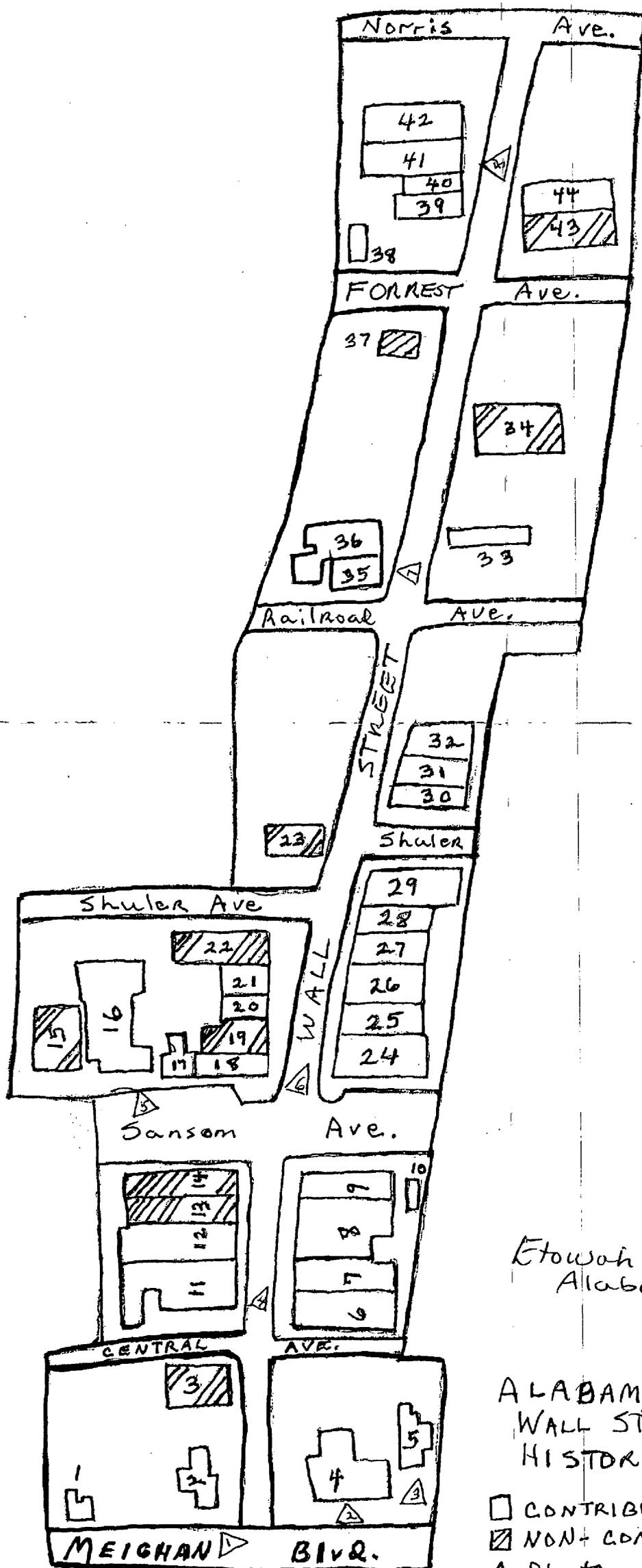
LEGEND

STATE LINE	---	AREA (FROM DEED)	10.5 Ac
COUNTY LINE	---	AREA (CALCULATED)	10.5 Ac(c)
CITY LIMIT LINE	---	DIMENSION (FROM DEED)	66
TOWNSHIP LINE	---	DIMENSION (SCALED)	666
SECTION LINE	---	INTERSTATE HIGHWAY	(I-59)
PROPERTY LINE	---	U.S. HIGHWAY	(20)
ROAD R/W	---	COUNTY HIGHWAY	(3)
ROAD TRAVEL PATH	---	COUNTY HIGHWAY 911 NUMBERING	(43)
PRIVATE ROAD OR TRAIL	---	ROADS OR STREETS BY NAME	
RAILROAD R/W	---	PARCEL NUMBER	15 15 001
WATER	---	SUB LOT NUMBER	29
LANDHOOK	---	MAP BLOCK NUMBER (WHERE APPLICABLE)	(2)
ORIGINAL SUB. LOT LINE	---	MAP BLOCK LIMIT (WHERE APPLICABLE)	001
MAJOR TRANSMISSION LINES	---	MAP BLOCK TICK (WHERE APPLICABLE)	003/003
CONFLICT	---	SUB. BLOCK NUMBER	(1)
CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, CEM., AIRPORTS, GOVT. LAND, ETC.	---	SECTION CORNERS	2   1 11   12
		STATE PLANE COORDINATES	

Historic

SECTION 6

↓ NORTH



Etowah County,  
Alabama

ALABAMA CITY  
WALL STREET  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

- CONTRIBUTING
- ▨ NON-CONTRIBUTING
- △ Photo

Drawn Not to Scale