

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official

3/30/89
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Amy Schlazel
Signature of commenting or other official

5/19/89
Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Amy Schlazel 5/19/89
 - () determined eligible for the National Register _____
 - () determined not eligible for the National Register _____
 - () removed from the National Register _____
 - () other, explain: _____
 - () see continuation sheet _____
- _____
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling
COMMERCE:business
RELIGION:religious structure
EDUCATION:school
CULTURE:monument
TRANSPORTATION:rail-related

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC:single dwelling
COMMERCE:business
CULTURE:monument
EDUCATION:school
RELIGION:religious structure
TRANSPORTATION:rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN:Victorian eclectic
LATE 19TH/20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:Colonial Revival
LATE 19TH/20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:Commercial Style
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials:

foundation brick
walls wood, brick
roof asphalt
other

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Roberta Historic District consists of the intact historic residential and commercial areas of the city of Roberta that began development in 1888 when the Atlanta and Florida Railroad came through and continued until the 1930s when several important institutional buildings were constructed. The city's major commercial and residential development took place along a north-south corridor of streets that paralleled the railroad tracks and an east-west corridor. The commercial area is located at the district's center along either side of the railroad and consists of attached one- and two-story, masonry buildings with corbeled brick cornices, wooden storefronts, and arched windows with decorative hoods typical of late-19th and early 20th century commercial buildings. Two free-standing commercial buildings also remain. The residential area developed out from the commercial center along the north-south and east-west corridors. The houses are generally one- and one-and-one-half story, wood-frame structures with details representing Victorian eclectic, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman stylistic influences. Historic institutional buildings in the district include a church and a school.

The main areas of the district are the central business district or downtown commercial area including stores facing the railroad tracks, on Wright Ave., and along the east-west corridor, Agency Street.

One residential area is east of the commercial area, along E. Agency, Rucker, and Manor Streets. This area also includes the historic Crawford County Middle School. Another area is west of Mathews St. and includes the brick Methodist Church on W. Agency St. Some residential houses are along the north-south corridor of Mathews St. located away from the central business district.

The district is laid out in a cross-axial plan with the earliest development paralleling the former Atlanta-Florida Railroad. The railroad is now operated by Southern Railroad and is still in use. It is all that remains of the historic rail operation in Roberta. The corridor which completed this cross-axial design was the east-west road known as Agency Street. This road at one time led to the Creek Indian Agency.

Most of the commercial and residential lots are perpendicular to the streets. While many of the house lots are the same size along a particular street, others vary in size and are irregular in shape. The center of town is marked by a monument of Col. Benjamin Hawkins, to commemorate his work as an Indian Agent, and as the first white man to settle in Crawford County. This granite monument was erected in 1931 and is located in the middle of Wright Ave. Roberta was chartered in 1890-91 and named after the daughter of one of the original developers.

Most commercial structures are attached to adjacent buildings forming roughly three business blocks and concentrated along the intersection of Wright Ave. and Agency St. Commercial buildings that are not attached include the c. 1890s general store at 267 E. Agency and the long, narrow, frame, building at 220 Wright Ave. The houses, school, and church are all detached structures.

The district includes a variety of architectural styles, including Vernacular Commercial, Victorian eclectic, Colonial Revival and Craftsman/Bungalow. Good examples of the Vernacular Commercial style can be seen in photograph #1. Several of the brick commercial structures have decorative brick work, dentil moldings and large plate glass store windows. The Victorian eclectic style is represented in many local buildings including those shown in photographs 5, 8, 26, and 28. These buildings reflect the traits of irregular massing, wrapped porches, and patterned gables. The early 20th century bungalow style is fairly prevalent throughout the community, examples are shown in photographs: 3, 4, 16, 17, 20, and 25. The bungalow featured in photograph #16 was the home of Mattie Roberta McCrary Champion for whom the town of Roberta was named. This district also includes a 1928 Colonial Revival style middle school. The red brick school is symmetrical in plan and accented with decorative white trim and a white cupula (photograph #13). The 1926 red brick Methodist Church is designed in a simple cruciform plan (photograph #31).

The landscaping of the residences has basically remained unchanged since the early 1900's. Almost all of the residences occupy their original lots; few lots have been subdivided. The three blocks along Wright Ave. from Agency Street to Crusselle Street were originally

laid out in the original 1888 plat for businesses. Only one block, now called "Old Town", actually developed and can be identified by the raised sidewalk in front of evenly set-back businesses (photograph #1).

Intrusions or non-historic properties are small in number within the designated district because the boundaries have been drawn to exclude any such properties that fall at the edges. Other residential properties are non-contributing due either to their post-1936 age or severe changes.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

architecture
commerce
community planning & development
transportation

Period of Significance:

1888-1936

Significant Dates:

1888

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

n/a

Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Roberta Historic District is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning & development, and transportation.

ARCHITECTURE

The district is significant in architecture because it contains a variety of representative architectural types and styles. These include an intact collection of late 19th and early 20th century houses, commercial buildings, a church and a school representing a variety of architectural influences, including Victorian eclectic, Vernacular Commercial, Colonial Revival and Craftsman/Bungalow. An example of this commercial style is located at 190 Wright Ave. This c. 1890s, two-story brick building features a decorative brick cornice line, second story segmental arched windows with hood moldings, and fanlights over the ground floor doors and windows. This building was used as the Crawford County Bank from 1900-1910, the Bank of Roberta from 1900-1928 and as the U.S. Post Office from 1929-1962. The c. 1890s commercial building located at 160 Wright Ave. has always operated as a general store. R.E. Bankston has been at this location since 1922. The building's exterior is typical of stores at the turn-of-the-century with wooden double doors, decorative brickwork and large plate-glass windows. What is unusual is that the store's interior has also been maintained and appears much as it did in the early 1900s. The interior furnishings include the original counters, floors, shelves, cash register, and scales. An unusual example of a vernacular commercial building is the long, low, front-gabled frame building in photograph #10. This building was first used as a saloon, then a millinery store and now serves as an insurance office. The residence located at 396 E. Agency is a good example of Victorian eclectic style (photograph #5). This simple, one and a-half story, frame building features a multi-gabled roof, a wrapped porch with spindle work, decorative corner brackets, a transom window over the front door and fish scale wooden shingles on the front gable. An example of a two-story Craftsman/Bungalow is seen in photograph #16. Recognizable design elements are the front full-width porch with wooden porch columns on brick bases, a low-pitched roof with exposed roof rafters, transom and sidelight front door windows, and front window panes which form a decorative window pattern. The commercial and residential buildings within the Roberta Historic District represents architectural styles commonly found in small rural railroad towns.

COMMERCE

This district is significant in commerce because the historic buildings that comprise the central business district, reflect the variety of businesses that were once active in this downtown area. These businesses served all the commercial needs of the citizens, not only of the city, but also of the surrounding community as well. Roberta's commercial area is unusual in that its growth occurred only after the rail line was established. The buildings that remain were

once general stores, dry goods merchants, milliners, financial institutions, etc.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

In community planning & development the district is significant for its development directly along the railroad and for the important role that the railroad played in the city's growth. Once the railroad was established in 1888, Roberta began to develop. Its cross axial pattern of development mainly occurred along Wright Ave., which faced the tracks, and along the main east-west corridor Agency Street. This development pattern has remained, with few exceptions, as the central plan for the city. The point at which the Atlanta-Florida Railroad crossed the main Creek Agency Road (now Agency Street) provided a natural location for a community to develop. Most citizens that moved to Roberta were from nearby Knoxville, located one mile west of the town.

TRANSPORTATION

The district is significant in transportation because it owes its actual existence to the advent of the Atlanta-Florida railroad which ran from Atlanta to north Florida and was completed in 1888. While the rail buildings used during this time period and the original depot are gone, the continued presence of the railroad tracks themselves--which are still used--reflect the town's origins as a railroad center, which served not only the town, but the surrounding farmlands where cotton and other farm products were sent to markets by rail.

National Register Criteria

These areas of significance support this district's eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

Under Criteria A--including the broad patterns of American history--this district, as the core of a small Southern town, reflects a great deal of the panorama of American life. The railroad line shows the town's origins as a rail stop on the important Atlanta-Florida railroad. The commercial area reflects the variety of needs of a growing community with a turn-of-the-century central business district that once housed general stores, dry goods merchants, specialty shops, banks, etc., all needed in day-to-day life by its citizens. The district also contains a middle school and a church, both aspects of a community's overall needs, along with many residential dwellings. Roberta is a good example of a typical community whose development occurred because of the railroad. Roberta is also a very common, ordinary railroad town and very typical of small towns in Georgia. Most of the commercial and residential buildings face the railroad tracks as a result of this rail-related development.

Under Criteria C--the building characteristics and the types of workmanship--the community's historic buildings including houses, a church, commercial, and civic buildings, contain important examples of local workmanship and the implementation of prevailing architectural styles with vernacular interpretations. These historic buildings form an overall panorama of American architecture on the small town level from the late-19th and early 20th century.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The First Methodist Church is a historic religious property within the Roberta Historic District. This building qualifies as an integral part of this district because of its historical importance and relationship to the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

1888-founding of Roberta
1936-development ended

9. Major Bibliographic References

Westberry, Elaine. "Historic District Information Form-Roberta Historic District," 1987. (On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources).

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) 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:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 65 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 16 Easting 780010 Northing 3624550
- B) Zone 16 Easting 780730 Northing 3624330
- C) Zone 16 Easting 779570 Northing 3623490
- D) Zone 16 Easting 780340 Northing 3623140

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated district is marked with a heavy black line on the enclosed site plan/sketch map.

Boundary Justification

The district boundaries circumscribe an intact area of historic residential and commercial buildings within the Roberta city limits.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher
organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone 404-656-2840 **date** 3/1/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

PHOTOGRAPHS
Section number _____ Page 1

Roberta Historic District
Roberta, Crawford County, Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative: Filed with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date: June 1988

Description:

- 1 of 32: Northeast corner of Wright Avenue and East Agency Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 32: View of East Agency Street east of south Mathews Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 3 of 32: South view of East Agency Street residences; photographer facing southeast.
- 4 of 32: North view of East Agency Street residences; photographer facing northeast.
- 5 of 32: South view of East Agency Street residences east of Dabney Avenue; photographer facing southeast.
- 6 of 32: Northeast corner of East Agency Street and Dabney Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
- 7 of 32: Northwest corner of McCrary Avenue and Rucker Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 8 of 32: Northeast corner of McCrary Avenue and Rucker Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 32: Southeast corner of Wright Avenue and Rucker Street; photographer facing southeast.
- 10 of 32: View of Wright Avenue, north of Rucker Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 32: Northeast corner of McCrary Avenue and Manor Street; photographer facing northeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ PHOTOGRAPHS Page 2

12 of 32: Southeast corner of Dabney Avenue and Manor Street; photographer facing southeast.

13 of 32: View of the Crawford County Middle School on East Crusselle Street; photographer facing southwest.

14 of 32: View of Wright Avenue; south of East Crusselle Street; photographer facing south.

15 of 32: Intersection of East Crusselle Street and North Mathews; photographer facing west.

16 of 32: Former home of Mattie Roberta McCrary Champion on North Dugger Avenue; photographer facing south.

17 of 32: Southwest corner of North Mathews Street and Andrews Drive; photographer facing south.

18 of 32: View of Roberta's Central Business District; photographer facing south.

19 of 32: View of West Agency Street from the Mathews Street intersection; photographer facing west.

20 of 32: West view of South Mathews Street; residences; photographer facing southwest.

21 of 32: West view of South Mathews Street residences; photographer facing southwest.

22 of 32: West view of South Mathews Street residence; photographer facing northwest.

23 of 32: Pecan grove along the east side of South Mathews Street; photographer facing south.

24 of 32: Intersection of Dugger Avenue and East Agency Street; photographer facing east.

25 of 32: Intersection of Tanner Lane and East Agency Street; photographer facing west.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ PHOTOGRAPHS Page 3

26 of 32: South view of East Agency Street west of Tanner Lane; photographer facing southwest.

27 of 32: South view of East Agency Street west of Tanner Lane; photographer facing southeast.

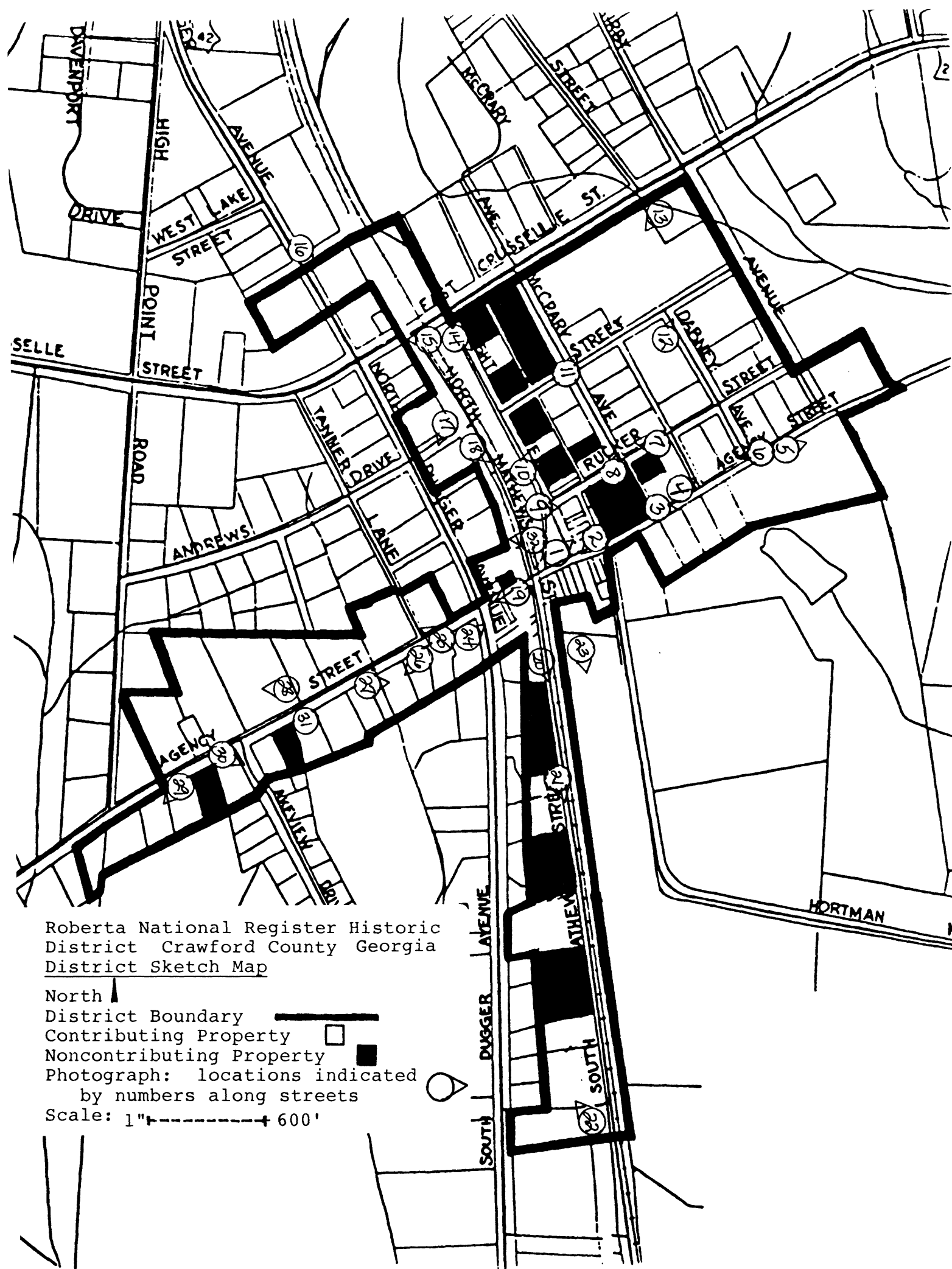
28 of 32: North view of an East Agency Street residence; photographer facing northwest.

29 of 32: View of East Agency residences west of Lakeview Drive; photographer facing southwest.

30 of 32: View of Lakeview Drive residences from the intersection of East Agency Street; photographer facing southeast.

31 of 32: United Methodist Church on East Agency Street; photographer facing northeast.

32 of 32: The Col. Benjamin Hawkins monument on N. Mathews Street north of East Agency Street; photographer facing northwest.



Roberta National Register Historic District Crawford County Georgia District Sketch Map

North ▲
 District Boundary ———
 Contributing Property □
 Noncontributing Property ■
 Photograph: locations indicated by numbers along streets
 Scale: 1" = 600'