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

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

Ala. Historical Commission JUN 5 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name New Decatur /Albany Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Multiple not for publication N/A

city or town Decatur vicinity N/A

state Alabama code AL county Morgan code 103 zip code 35602

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date 5/31/95

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 7/7/95

Entered in the National Register

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

New Decatur /Albany Historic District
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) Category of Property (Check only one box)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count).

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>36</u>	<u>11</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>36</u>	<u>11</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC
GOVERNMENT
COMMERCE/TRADE
SOCIAL
RECREATION AND CULTURE

Hotel
Government Office
Department Store
Specialty Store
Meeting Hall
Theater

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE
GOVERNMENT
COMMERCE/TRADE
SOCIAL
RECREATION AND CULTURE
LANDSCAPE
VACANT/NOT IN USE

Park
Government Office
Specialty Store
Business
Professional
Restaurant
Civic
Theater
Parking Lot

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque
LATE VICTORIAN: Renaissance
MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne
MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Stone</u>
roof	<u>Unknown</u>
walls	<u>Brick</u>
other	<u>Glass</u>
	<u>Metal</u>

Narrative Description

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

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the 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)

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

Name of repository: Main Street Decatur, Inc.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions).

- Architecture
- Community Planning and Development
- Commerce
- Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1887-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frahn, Albert (Architect)

Unknown

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 13 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) 16 501235 3829150 | 3) 16 501510 3828520 |
| 2) 16 501515 3829050 | 4) 16 501215 3828540 |

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret Slater and Phil Thomason

organization Thomason and Associates date September 23, 1994

street & number P.O. Box 121225 telephone 615-385-4960

city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____

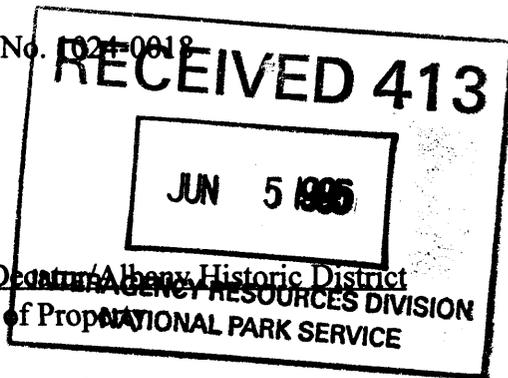
street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018



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National Park Service

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DESCRIPTION

The New Decatur/Albany Historic District is located in the City of Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama. The district contains a total of 48 properties dating primarily from the late 1880s to 1941. The district lies just south of the early 19th century Tennessee River town of Decatur (Old Decatur) and adjacent to the railroad tracks in the late nineteenth century planned town of New Decatur. The town, known briefly as Albany merged with (Old) Decatur in 1927.

Developed in the late 1880s on land purchased by the Decatur Land Development and Furnace Company, New Decatur's streets are laid out in a grid pattern, oriented to the compass points, North, East, South, and West. Connections between the Old and New Decatur are awkward since Old Decatur's grid was oriented toward the river in a Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest pattern. New Decatur also differed from the Old Decatur in its wide avenues and large planned green space park dividing the planned business and residential areas of the new town. A northern boundary of New Decatur was the Old L & N Railroad belt line, now Lee Street. This road separates the business district of the new town from the residential areas of the old town.

The New Decatur/Albany Historic District is located primarily on 2nd Avenue N.E. and S.E. between Lee Street on the north and Jackson Street/Gordon Drive S.W. on the south. It also encompasses commercial buildings on Moulton and Johnston Streets. This area, as envisioned by the planners, was a commercial hub beginning with the construction of the first buildings in New Decatur in the late 1880s up to around World War II.

Contributing buildings within the district illustrate local interpretations of the Romanesque, Renaissance Revival, Victorian, 19th-20th century commercial, and Modernistic (Art Deco, Art Moderne) Styles. Height of the buildings ranges from one to three stories while the predominant original facing material of the historic buildings is brick. One notable exception is the limestone-faced Casa Grande Building (Bldg. #17), constructed in 1904. Decorative features include brick corbelling (a feature of many buildings in the district), stone accents such as lintels, belt courses, sills and quoins (Bldg. #s 11, 13, 20), multi-colored brick patterning (Bldg. #s 11, 47) and metal cornices (Bldg. #s 15, 20). High-style features include a square hipped roofed corner tower (Bldg. #11), rounded transoms (Bldg. #s 12, 15), and art glass (Bldg. #s 12, 15).

Although numerous fires and urban renewal have changed the face of the district, several buildings remain from New Decatur's early years of development. The earliest are two buildings on 2nd Avenue built in 1887. The E.S. Johnson Building at 200 2nd Avenue S.E. (Bldg. #18) retains its original fenestration which includes arched windows and door openings on the Grnt Street (side) facade. The upper two stories of the building, once the tallest in New Decatur, were removed around 1944 as a result of a fire. Although its original purpose is no longer recognizable, the building at 112 2nd Avenue N.E. (Bldg. #9) was built as a stable for the Casa Grande Hotel. It is now the Princess Theater. The 3-story, brick-faced, 1890 Cotaco Opera House (converted to the Masonic Hall in 1927) is a good intact example of early architecture in New Decatur and is listed in the National Register. Other buildings (Bldg. #s 2, 3, 36-39) date from the early period. The building at the corner of Moulton and 2nd Avenue (Bldg. #s 36-39) was heavily damaged by fire

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in 1973 resulting in the removal of the second story.

The majority of the buildings in the district date from the first decade of the 20th century (Bldg. #s 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 35, 46). The ca. 1900 building at 101-103 2nd Avenue S.E. (Bldg. #11) has a hipped roofed, 3-story corner tower; corbelled brick frieze; and stone quoins, lintels and sills. The Casa Grande Building (Bldg. #17), built in 1904 on the site of the burned out Casa Grande Hotel, is outstanding in the district in its limestone-faced facade with decorative stone details such as dentils, arched lintels and textured stone.

Buildings from the second decade of the 20th century in the district tend to be simpler in detail than their predecessors, as the decorative influences of the late 19th century Victorian era finally disappear. The buildings are simple one and two-story structures, faced in brick. Some have tan brick facing with stone (Bldg. #10) or dark-colored brick details (Bldg. #34). The massive building at 131 2nd Avenue N.E. (Bldg. #7) stands out with its vaulted roof, crenelated parapet and four arched bays containing multi-light windows on the facade.

A number of buildings in the district were constructed in the 1920s and '30s. One large, low commercial block at the south end of the district is a simple, local interpretation of the streamlined Art Moderne style (Bldg. #s 23-26, 27-30) with its curved 2nd Avenue facade.

Although the decade of the 1940s was a period of prosperity in Decatur, the only reflection of this in the district is the 1941 renovation of the Princess Theater (Bldg. #9) in the Art Deco style. The theater today is a highlight of the district with its intact Art Deco style glass facade and its marquee which is a masterpiece of glass and neon lighting.

From 1941 to the 1960s, virtually no building activity occurred in the district. Through urban renewal, buildings were demolished leaving voids between existing buildings: some were paved over for parking. The Masonic Building (Bldg. #32) was spared from demolition at the ninth hour. In the early 1970s, a fire in the 200 block of Moulton Street resulted in changes to, or demolition of, some of the buildings on the north side. In the late 70s, a concrete awning was erected along the sidewalks of 2nd Avenue S.E. This awning has been removed from certain locations and plans are in the works for the removal of the entire awning. A park was developed on a vacant lot in recent years, adjacent to 113 2nd Avenue S.E.

The boundaries of the district are drawn to include architecturally and historically significant structures within the New Decatur/Albany Historic District and are drawn to exclude as much modern development as possible. Of the 48 buildings in the district, 36, or 80% are contributing. Contributing structures are at least fifty years of age and possess sufficient architectural character and building fabric and/or historical significance to meet the National Register criteria for significance. Non-contributing buildings number ¹¹ or 20%, and are those of recent construction and historic buildings that have been irreversibly altered to a point that they no longer contribute to the character of the district.

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INVENTORY

(Original Building Uses are listed, if known, Current use listed in parentheses)

2nd Avenue N.E., West Side

1. 101-103 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Forbes Piano) ca. 1915. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story (tan) brick-faced commercial block with flat roof. The storefront has ca. 1970 metal and plate glass display windows, aluminum and glass entrance and concrete bulkheads. The transom has been enclosed with metal panels and across the storefront is a metal awning. In the intact upper portion of the 2nd Avenue facade are 8 window bays. Each has soldier course lintels and concrete sills. The window openings have been covered with plywood. Beneath each window are rectangular panels of brown brick. The upper facade has a veneer of common bond brick. Above the windows is a corbelled brick cornice and beneath the parapet are two rows of brown brick belt coursing. Interior of first floor has a cast iron metal column system and retains original open floor space with wood floors, plaster walls and pressed metal ceiling. The south (Moulton Street) facade has a small intact storefront with an awning and a single-light and wood door, display windows, and wood bulkheads. There are 8 window bays on this facade, all covered with plywood. (C)

2. 107 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Community Action) 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced commercial block with flat roof. The storefront was remodeled in 1990 and has multi-light wood windows resting on brick bulkheads. The main entrance has double doors of multi-light glass and wood. The two storefronts, separated by a brick pier, have canvas awnings. Above the storefront is a steel lintel with rosettes. In the upper facade are four window bays with segmental arches, stone sills and 1990 6:6 wood sash windows. Above each window are vents with metal grills. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. The interior was remodeled in the 1990s into offices. (C)

3. 109-113 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Junior League/Sav-A-Life) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced commercial block with flat roof. The storefront has 3 entrances with original single-light glass and wood doors. The storefronts have copper and glass display windows resting on brick bulkheads. Dividing each storefront are brick piers with stone bases and capitals. Each storefront retains its 8-light glass and wood transom. Above the storefront is a steel lintel with rosettes. The upper facade has 3 bays with arched window openings. The original windows remain and are 1:1 wood sash with modern tinted glass storm windows. The window openings have soldier course lintels and stone sills. Above the windows is corbelled brick with pellet brick molding and inset terra-cotta panels. At the roofline is a parapet with stone coping. The interior of the first floor has been altered into offices. The second story retains its original staircase with milled newel post and railing, its tongue-in-groove wainscoting, and original doors and transoms. Windows on the north facade are original 2:2 sash set within segmental arches. (C)

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4. 115 2nd Avenue, N.E. Parking lot with small modern commercial building set back from street. (NC)

5. 117-119 2nd Avenue N.E. (Chenault, Hammond & Hall Attys.) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, flat-roofed, brick-faced commercial block. The storefront was remodeled ca. 1990 with added doors, picture windows, metal canopies and infill brick. The upper facade has been sandblasted and repainted over the south part of the storefront. At the roofline is original brick corbelling and a flat parapet. The interior has been remodeled with added partitions but the original pressed metal ceiling remains. There are exposed party walls on the north and south side elevations. The storefront of this simple building, which is its major character-defining feature, is entirely gone. If the storefront is taken back to its original appearance, the building may be considered contributing. (NC)

6. 131 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Cinema Equipment Concession Supply). ca. 1925. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront has an original single-light glass and wood door and 2-light transom. The storefront retains original display windows resting on brick bulkheads. Across the width of the storefront is a ca. 1970 metal awning. The upper facade is composed of wire brick in an irregular bond pattern. The upper facade has recessed brick panels, a belt course of soldier and sailor coursing, and multi-colored brick inserts. At the roofline is a flat parapet with metal coping. Windows on the north (alley) side have 6-light wood windows. The interior has an open space with concrete floor and plaster on brick walls. (C)

7. 133 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Robinson/Royal Furniture Store). ca 1915. 19th-20th Century Commercial. Two story, brick commercial block with vaulted roof. The building has free-standing walls of common bond construction. On the east (main) facade are four bays. The storefront has an original entrance with double doors of single light glass and brass with rosettes and brass handles. Over the door is a 6-light glass and wood transom. The storefront retains original glass and wood bulkheads, transom bars and arched transoms. The transoms have been concealed behind pressboard panels which have also concealed the original frame bulkheads. Dividing each of the storefront bays are brick piers resting on poured concrete foundations. Second story windows are set within segmental arches. Each arch is composed of four-course header bond brick. In each arched bay are 3 glass and wood windows. The central window is 6:6 wood sash while the flanking windows are of 12-light fixed design. At the roofline is a crenellated parapet with concrete coping. Below the roofline are tie rods with star anchors. The interior is composed of open floor space with wooden floors and ceilings and a post and lintel wood support system. The north wall has no fenestration. The south wall has first floor windows and doors, now enclosed with brick. Second story windows have brick sills and are 6:6 wood sash set within segmental arches. (C)

2nd Avenue N.E., East Side

8. 110 2nd Avenue, N.E. (Hudson and Elrod, Attorneys) ca. 1910. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. Storefront has ca. 1990 glass and wood door and a picture window. Wood panels enclose the transom. A metal canopy spans the storefront. The upper facade has a parapet and ca. 1990 9:9 wood sash windows. The north (alley) side is of 6-course common bond brick and has 1:1 windows with

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stone sills and a chimney. The interior is remodeled into offices. (C)

9. 112 2nd Avenue, N.E. Casa Grande Stable, Princess Theater (Princess Theater) 1887/1917/1941. Art Deco. Originally built as the opulent stables for the Casa Grande Hotel, this building was converted to a vaudeville theater in 1921, the Princess Theater. Ten years later, the Crescent Amusement Company of Nashville, Tennessee converted the theater to a movie house with a capacity of 960. In 1941, the style selected by Decatur architect Albert Frahn for the \$50,000 renovation was Art Deco. The Princess Theater functioned as a movie theater until it was closed in 1978. After purchase by the City that year, the building stood vacant until a 1983 renovation occurred.

2-story, load bearing, brick commercial building with combination roof and Art Deco Style facade. Storefront retains original black carrara glass panels, curved structural glass blocks and terrazzo floor. The floor features both a granite map of Alabama highlighting Decatur and comedy and tragedy faces. The three entrances have original double doors with elliptical glass lights. The ticket booth is located in the south storefront corner and is framed by structural glass blocks. The building retains is original neon-outlined metal and glass marquee. The upper facade has a stucco exterior with horizontal and vertical bands of yellow and black carrara glass. At the roofline is a parapet. North and south bays project slightly and contain paired 8-light wood casement windows and 5-light windows. The bricked-in windows on the alley (south) side are arched. Modern steel doors are added to the entrance. The interior retains its original lobby, auditorium, balcony, stage and staircase detailing. During the 1983 renovation, carpet, seats on the main floor, and stage flooring were replaced. The main floor seats were moved to the balcony and those seats discarded. Modern sound equipment has also been added in the auditorium. Replacement lights replicate the originals. (C)

10. 116-118 2nd Avenue, N.E. Albany Post Office (vacant--to be incorporated into Princess Theater as a support building) 1917. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced flat-roofed commercial block. Both storefronts were altered ca. 1970 with added aluminum and glass doors, aluminum and plate glass display windows and a metal canopy. Concealing the original transoms are wood panels. The upper facade consists of 2 bays, each containing four 1:1 sash windows. Each window bay has 6-light wood transoms, soldier course lintels and concrete sills. Below each window bay is a rectangular panel outlined in brown raised bricks. The upper facade overall has American bond tan brick. In the upper facade above the windows are inset concrete panels, in rectangular and diamond shapes. At the roof line is a stepped parapet with corbelled brick coping. Windows on the north (Holly Street) facade are 1:1 wood sash with added wood cornices. Entrances on the north facade have ca. 1970 glass and wood doors; some entrances are enclosed with brick. (C)

2nd Avenue, S.E., West Side

11. 101-103 2nd Avenue S.E. (Court Street) ca. 1890. Late-Victorian: Romanesque. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial block. On the north side (Moulton Street) facade are 3 storefronts (119, 121, 123 Moulton). The 123 storefront retains its original cast iron pilasters, frame bulkheads, display windows and transoms. The 119 and

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121 storefronts have been altered with ca. 1980 metal and wood panels. The original cast iron columns remain but have been enclosed. At the upper facade are 9 sets of paired and single 1:1 sash windows set within segmental arches. Above the windows are 2-light rectangular transoms and above is brick corbelling. The main (2nd Avenue) facade has ca. 1988 storefronts with brick bulkheads. The original transoms remain above the display windows. The central bay of this facade has a Romanesque arch of limestone with a stone keystone. Windows of the upper facade are paired and tri-part 1:1 wood sash with stone lintels and sills. Above the windows are single light transoms. The northeast corner features a square tower displaying single-light wood windows and transoms. The tower has a pyramidal roof. In the upper facade of the south bay is corbelled brick and a terra-cotta belt course. At the corner of the building are stone quoins. The 1st floor interior has been remodeled and retains brick and plaster walls and wood floors. (C)

12. 113 2nd Avenue S.E. (Lorch, Inc.) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront was remodeled in 1994 with frame bulkheads, single-light glass and wood doors, and a transom. An original cast iron pilaster remains on the storefront. The upper facade has 3 window bays, each with 1:1 wood sash windows. The windows are set within segmental arches and there are elliptical multi-light transoms with decorative art glass. The windows have brick surrounds and keystones. Above the windows are vents with metal grills. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. The interior was remodeled in 1994 into office space. (C)

13. 115-117 2nd Avenue S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The building has 3 storefronts, each with ca. 1979 aluminum and glass doors, windows and transoms. Above the transom area is a limestone lintel. The upper facade contains 2 main window bays and the ghost of a 3rd in the central bay. The side bays each contain an original projecting bay. The windows in these bays are of ca. 1950 multi-light hopper design and above are original copper heads with pediments. The central bay has a bricked-in bay window opening. The other windows on the facade have ca. 1950 metal and glass lights, jack arching, and stone sills. Above the windows is corbelled brick and a copper belt course with egg and dart design. Above the belt course are indented brick panels. At the roofline is a flat parapet with concrete coping. The interior has been remodeled for retail space but retains its original pressed metal ceiling. (C)

14. 121-123 2nd Avenue S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1960. Modern. 1-story brick, flat-roofed commercial building. This building incorporates a wall of the ca. 1890 building at 123 2nd Ave., S.E. The wall retains some original stone and brick elements but has been largely rebuilt. (NC)

15. 201 2nd Avenue S.E. Diana Shops-1940s (Blackburn, Maloney, Schappert & P.C. Building) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. Built on site of Casa Grande Hotel which burned ca. 1900. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial block. The ground level facade was renovated in 1988 and has 3 storefronts. Each is comprised of a recessed segmental arched opening containing a ca. 1988 door, sidelights and transom. Flanking each entrance are 2:6 modern windows set within segmental arched openings. Arched brick lintels are above all storefront doors and windows. A stone water table spans the front facade. A brick cornice separates the storefront

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from the upper facade which is intact. It has four bays, each containing a center single-light window flanked by 1:1 sash and topped by a segmental arched multi-light transom. Molded brick arches atop the transoms spring from a molded brick course which spans the facade. Small rectangular grilled vents are above each bay. An original bracketed metal cornice spans the front and wraps around to the Johnston Street (north) side facade. This side facade contains original round windows on the ground level and paired or single 1:1 transomed windows above with stone lintels and sills. At the west corner of this facade is an entrance with modern doors and a shingled awning. The interior of the building was renovated for office space in 1988. (C)

16. 207-209 2nd Avenue, S.E. La Boons Department Store in 1940s (Weathervane, Country Cabin, Deli) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. This building was constructed on the site of the Casa Grande Hotel which burned ca. 1900. 2-story, brick-veneered, flat-roofed commercial block. In the 1940s or 50s, the original storefront was reconfigured. In the 1980s, the building was again renovated. It has two storefronts with modern aluminum and glass doors and windows and a central staircase entrance. The upper facade has modern multi-colored brick facing and has four bays, each containing a modern 1:1 window with sidelights, a transom, and a small metal awning. The interior was remodeled for retail and office use. (NC)

17. 211 2nd Avenue, S.E. Casa Grande Building, F.H. Woolworth's in 1940s (Casa Grande Building) 1904. 19th-20th Century Commercial. This building was built on the site of the Casa Grande Hotel which burned ca. 1900. 3-story, flat-roofed, commercial block with limestone veneer. The storefront, renovated in 1987, has a modern brick veneer, plate glass display windows and recessed entrances with aluminum and plate glass windows and doors. Two original metal pilasters remain and delineate an original entrance. On the upper facade are 8 bays. Striated pilasters divide the recessed bays and on the third story, the pilasters have capitols and stone arches above the 1:1 arched windows. The 2nd story windows are 1:1. Between the second and third stories and within each recessed window bay are decorative panels of alternating rusticated and smooth stone. A dentilled frieze spans the upper facade. A stepped parapet has side finials, stone coping and a central panel with "Casa Grande 1904" carved in the stone. The interior was remodeled in 1987. (C)

2nd Avenue, S.E., East Side

18. 200 2nd Avenue, S.E. Walgreens-in 1940s (Walgreen Professional Building) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick commercial block. Storefront has modern door; infilled doors and windows; and modern 1:1 tri-part window. A brick soldier course is above the ground floor storefront opening. The upper facade has recessed bays divided by brick pilasters. The central bay contains a segmental arched window opening with paired 1:1 windows and arched transom. A segmental brick header arch tops this window. The other bays have 1:1 windows with transoms. Above the windows, each bay has a recessed rectangle. Alternating bays contained grilled vents. A corbelled belt course spans the facade. A stepped parapet with a recessed rectangular panel caps the building. A combination roof system includes a mansard roof on the front portion of the building. The north (Johnston Street) side facade has a paired 1:1 window with stone lintel on the east side ground level, and on the west side is a modern plate glass and aluminum entrance to the upper floors. It has a canvas awning.

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Two small storefronts on this side have recessed entrances and multi-light transoms. A belt course divides the ground level from the upper facade which has 12 bays, each divided by a brick pilaster. Each bay has a paired 1:1 window with a transom. A recessed panel is above each window and above the panels, is a corbelled belt cornice and a stepped parapet. The interior was renovated in the 1980s for retail and office use. (C)

19. 206 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Uptown Fashions) ca. 1915. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial block. The building has a side recessed plate glass entrance leading to a staircase. The single storefront contains an angled recessed entrance with 2 abutting sets of paired, transomed oak doors (early 20th century.) and metal kick plates. Large plate glass and metal display windows on tile bulkheads frame the entrance. Two free-standing, metal-sheathed columns are flush with the sidewalk. Above the storefront, the transom area is covered over. The upper facade has 6 bays, each has a 1:1 window with a transom. A stone belt course caps the windows. In the frieze area are 6 rectangular vent openings. Metal coping is found along the cornice. A common wall is now exposed on the south side. (C)

20. 224 2nd Avenue, S.E. ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial block. Storefront infilled ca. 1980 with brick veneer. Inset entry with paired modern, transomed doors and three ca. 1980 1:1 windows. Brick columns with striated bases and carved stone capitals mark the building's center and each front corner. The upper facade has a band of small metal lion heads and a stone belt course upon which rests six 1:1 windows. The windows have transoms and stone drip molding. Above the windows are small rectangular grilled vents, a corbelled brick belt course and then just below the metal cornice, is a dentilled brick frieze. The south (Grant Street) facade has an infilled area between 2 brick piers at the front (SW) corner and five segmental arched openings with brick drip molding; 3 are doors and 2 are windows. On the upper story are a stone belt course and 11 bays with transomed 1:1 windows with stone drip molding. 6 rectangular vents and a dentilled brick course are in the frieze area. The front (south side) three bays are taller than the remainder of the side facade and share a common metal cornice with the front facade. A chimney with recessed panels is found on this side. A rear addition to the building has a gabled roof, windows identical to those of the main building block, and a modern storefront. A common wall is exposed on the north side. The interior was renovated for office use. Although the storefront is gone, the building retains sufficient integrity and significant architectural features. (C)

21. 300 2nd Avenue, S.E. Rose Building (E. S. Johnson Building) 1887. 19th-20th Century Commercial. The building was originally a general mercantile and once was the tallest building in New Decatur. A fire in the early 1900s resulted in the removal of the 4th floor and in the 1930s, another fire caused the removal of the third floor. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial block. The ca. 1980s storefront has an angled corner entrance with plate glass doors and display windows at the front and around the side (Grant Street) facade. Above the storefront is an enclosed transom area and a stuccoed cornice. The three 1:1 2nd story windows in original recessed openings have false muntins and rest directly on the cornice. Above each window and within the recessed area are 2 decorative brick rectangles. Terra-cotta coping caps the parapet. The north (Grant Street) facade has 4 original arched openings with brick arches above: two are enclosed windows and 2 are doors. A stone belt course spans the lower facade about 5-feet above sidewalk level. Above the 1st story is a cornice upon which rests 10 1:1

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windows in recessed bays. Within the recess and above the windows are decorative brick panels. Above four of the windows are grilled vents. Terra-cotta coping is found atop the stepped parapet. A rear building addition is stepped back from the main block and contains identical windows to the main block, upper story. (C)

22. 304 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Locksmith) ca. 1925. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, flat-roofed commercial building. This building has been altered with modern plate glass and aluminum windows and doors in the storefront and vinyl siding in the upper facade. (NC)

23. 306 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Carpetmasters) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by the Art Moderne Style. The building has a recessed area flanked by brick pilasters and an inset entry with tan brick bulkheads and plate glass and metal windows and doors. The transom area has been enclosed. The upper facade is painted brick with terra-cotta coping along the parapet. (C)

24. 308 2nd Avenue, S.E. (A Touch of Class) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by the Art Moderne Style. The building has a recessed area flanked by brick pilasters and a flush entry with plate glass and metal windows and doors and corrugated metal sheathing in the bulkhead. The transom area has been enclosed. The upper facade is painted brick with terra-cotta coping along the parapet. (C)

25. 310 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Liz Ashwander's Decorator Service) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by the Art Moderne Style. The building has a recessed area flanked by brick pilasters and an angled recessed side entry with plate glass windows and doors and carrara glass bulkheads. The transom area has been enclosed. The upper facade is painted brick with terra-cotta coping along the parapet. (C)

26. 312 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by the Art Moderne Style. The building has a recessed area flanked by brick pilasters and a recessed center door with plate glass windows. The transom area has been enclosed. The upper facade is painted brick with terra-cotta coping along the parapet. (C)

27. 314 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Nutrition Center, Sue's Variety) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by Art Moderne Style. The building has a storefront flanked by brick pilasters, carrara glass bulkheads, recessed glass, and aluminum entrances. The transom area above the storefront is enclosed. In the upper facade is a corbelled brick cornice and tile coping on the parapet. (C)

28. 316 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by Art Moderne Style. The building has a storefront flanked by brick pilasters and a recessed glass and aluminum entry. The transom area above the storefront is enclosed. In the upper facade is

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a corbelled brick cornice and tile coping on the parapet. (C)

29. 318 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by Art Moderne Style. The building has a storefront flanked by brick pilasters and an angled recessed entry. The transom area above the storefront is enclosed. In the upper facade is a corbelled brick cornice and tile coping on the parapet. (C)

30. 320 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Vacant) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by Art Moderne Style. The building has a storefront flanked by brick pilasters and flush paired plate glass and aluminum doors flanked by display windows. The transom area above the storefront is enclosed. In the upper facade is a corbelled brick cornice and tile coping on the parapet. (C)

31. 324 2nd Avenue, S.E. (Carter's Upholstery) ca. 1925. Art Moderne. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building with curved facade influenced by Art Moderne Style. The building has two storefronts, each with aluminum and plate glass doors and display windows resting on a tan brick bulkhead. The transom area has been filled in. The upper facade had tan brick facing and a scalloped parapet with stone detailing in the center and on the rounded sides. (C)

Johnston Street E., South Side

32. 115 Johnston Street, E. Cotaco Opera, Payne Theater, Masonic Theater, Masonic Lodge (Masonic Building) 1890. Late Victorian: Renaissance Revival. Constructed in 1890 as the Cotaco Opera House, the building was built to attract people to the growing town of New Decatur. In 1905, the building became the Payne Theater and then around 1909, the Masonic Theater, which featured vaudeville acts. In 1927, the building was converted to a meeting house for the Rising Sun Masonic Lodge No. 29. The lodge occupied the 2nd and 3rd floors while the first floor was used for a bank, offices and retail. The building's large meeting rooms were used into the 1970s. In 1976, the deteriorated building was acquired by the city through urban renewal. A private buyer purchased the property in 1984 and by 1990, renovation for office and retail uses was completed.

3-story, brick, flat-roofed, free-standing commercial block. The building retains its original storefront configuration with a central recessed arch containing paired wood doors. On each side of the entrance is an original storefront which has been converted to display windows. On the outer side of the facade are two recessed areas which originally served as display areas for show posters. A narrow cornice separates the storefront from the upper facade which has 5 bays in both the 2nd and 3rd stories. Each story has a stone belt course under the 1:1 windows. At the top is a metal cornice and a brick parapet. Both side elevations contain numerous window openings on each floor; most have 1:1 windows while others are bricked-in. Historic photographs reveal that the windows of the side facades were originally arched. The interior of the building has been renovated to accommodate retail and office space. Some original floors and the original staircase remain. The building is individually listed on the National Register. (C)

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East Moulton Street, North Side

33. 110-112 E. Moulton Street (Steed Furniture Company) ca. 1915. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial block. Building has two storefronts which are largely intact. The 112 storefront has a recessed entrance with a single-light glass and wood door. Display windows rest on brick bulkheads. Above the display windows is a transom bar and original glass and wood transom with opaque glass. A metal awning spans the storefront. In the east bay of the 112 storefront is a single-light glass and wood door and transom, which leads to a second story staircase. The upper facade has 6 window bays which have been covered with wood panels. The window openings have tinted brick soldier course lintels and concrete sills. Above the windows are tinted brick panels, decorative concrete panel inserts and circular vent openings. At the top is a corbelled brick cornice with stone finials at the corners. A brick belt course connects the window arches. The interior has been remodeled into office space. (C)

34. 114 E. Moulton Street (London Antique Shop) ca. 1920. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront has original brick bulkheads and ca. 1970 aluminum and glass display windows and door. A metal awning spans the front facade. The transom is covered with a wood panel. On the upper facade is a large ca. 1950 metal and glass multi-light window with hopper lights, resting on a concrete sill. The brick piers framing the building have brick quoins. In the upper facade above the windows are rectangular and diamond panels of tan brick. At the roofline is decorative brick banding, a flat parapet, and terra-cotta coping. The interior has original plaster walls and ceilings, open floor space and a wood staircase to the mezzanine level. (C)

35. 116-118 E. Moulton Street (International Career Institute) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront was remodeled in 1987 with aluminum and glass display windows and wood and glass doors. The brick bulkheads are original. A canvas awning spans the front facade. The upper facade has 4 window bays with 1:1 wood sash windows set within segmental arches. The windows have brick sills. The upper facade has horizontal bands of indented brick. At the roofline is a flat parapet with terra-cotta coping. The interior has been remodeled with dropped ceilings and wood paneling on the walls. (C)

36. 200-202 E. Moulton Street (Loyds) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial-Altered. 1-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The building burned in 1973 requiring the removal of the 2nd story and the rebuilding of the storefront. The storefront has modern plate glass windows, aluminum and glass doors, added bulkhead materials, and enclosed transoms. The west (2nd Avenue) side has rectangular and oval original window openings which have been covered with wood panels. This facade has an arched entrance with a terra-cotta keystone and aluminum and glass doors. The interior has modern dropped ceilings and interior finishes. (NC)

37. 204 E. Moulton Street (Bridal Formal Wear) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial-Altered. 1-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The building burned in 1973 requiring the removal of the 2nd story and

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the rebuilding of the storefront. The storefront has modern plate glass windows, aluminum and glass doors, added bulkhead materials, and enclosed transoms. The interior has modern dropped ceilings and interior finishes. (NC)

38. 206 E. Moulton Street (Photo Studio) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial-Altered. 1-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The building burned in 1973 requiring the removal of the 2nd story and the rebuilding of the storefronts. The storefront has modern plate glass windows, aluminum and glass doors, added bulkhead materials, and enclosed transoms. The interior has modern dropped ceilings and interior finishes. (NC)

39. 208 E. Moulton Street (Bob Clark's Hardware) ca. 1890. 19th-20th Century Commercial-Altered. 1-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building with four storefronts. The building burned in 1973 requiring the removal of the 2nd story and the rebuilding of the storefronts. All four storefronts have modern plate glass windows, aluminum and glass doors, added bulkhead materials, and enclosed transoms. The west (2nd Avenue) side has rectangular and oval original window openings which have been covered with wood panels. This facade has an arched entrance with a terra-cotta keystone and aluminum and glass doors. All interiors have modern dropped ceilings and interior finishes. (NC)

40. 210 E. Moulton Street (Dean Witter, Hardwick, Knight and Haddock Law Office) ca. 1975. Modern. This building replaced an earlier structure severely damaged in the 1973 fire. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. Storefront has central door flanked by two 1:1 windows with shutters. Wood paneled frieze. (NC)

41. 212 E. Moulton Street (Screen Printing) ca. 1920. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The building's storefront has modern aluminum and plate glass doors and display windows. The display windows rest on original brick bulkheads. Above the windows are transoms covered with wood and stucco panels. The upper facade is of 6-course common bond tan brick. Below the roofline is a horizontal band of tinted soldier coursing. At the roofline is a flat parapet with concrete coping. The interior retains original wood floors, plaster walls, and an interior post and lintel support system. (C)

42. 214-216 E. Moulton Street (Bell's Ceramics) ca. 1920. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The building's storefront has modern aluminum and plate glass doors and display windows. The display windows rest on original brick bulkheads. Above the windows are transoms covered with wood and stucco panels. The upper facade is of 6-course common bond tan brick. Below the roofline is a horizontal band of tinted soldier coursing. At the roofline is a flat parapet with concrete coping. The interior retains original wood floors, plaster walls, and an interior post and lintel support system. (C)

43. 218 E. Moulton Street (Decatur Lamp) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The building's storefront is altered with modern aluminum and plate glass windows and doors and enclosed transoms. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. Interiors have been remodeled with new interior finishes. (C)

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44. 222 E. Moulton Street (Sample Shoes) ca. 1900. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The building has 2 storefronts, each altered with modern aluminum and plate glass windows and doors and enclosed transoms. The storefronts are divided by brick piers. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. Interiors have been remodeled with new interior finishes. The building retains its original pressed metal ceiling. (C)

45. 224 E. Moulton Street (All-Wright Pastry Shop) ca. 1915. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront has ca. 1980 aluminum and plate glass door and display windows which rest on metal-panel sheathed bulkheads. The transom has been covered by a wood sign panel. The upper facade is of American bond and at the roofline is a flat parapet with terra-cotta coping. (C)

46. 226 E. Moulton Street (Management Advisory Group) ca. 1905. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 2-story, brick, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront was remodeled ca. 1990 with wood bulkheads, new display windows and a recessed entrance with a single-light glass and wood door. The upper facade has 3 window bays, each with a ca. 1990 style fixed-light window resting on a stone belt course. Above the windows are stone lintels and recessed brick panels. At the roofline is a flat parapet. The interior was remodeled into offices. (C)

47. 228-230 E. Moulton Street (United Way) ca. 1980. Modern. 1-story, brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The four-bay facade has a side entrance and multi-light windows with paneled aprons. A shingled shed overhang spans the facade. (NC)

48. 232 E. Moulton Street (Vacant) ca. 1925. 19th-20th Century Commercial. 1-story, tan brick-faced, flat-roofed commercial building. The storefront has ca. 1960 aluminum and plate glass doors and display windows which rest on original bulkheads. In the upper facade are tinted brick panels in diamond shapes. At the roofline is a flat parapet with concrete coping. On the east (side) facade are two multi-light original steel and glass windows. The interior has been remodeled. (C)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located in a portion of Decatur, Alabama which was once the separate town of New Decatur (and later Albany), the New Decatur/Albany Historic District is significant under Criteria A and C.

Under Criterion A, the district is significant in the areas of community planning and development, commerce and entertainment/recreation. New Decatur, a planned "new town" laid out in 1887, was the vision of the Decatur Land Improvement and Furnace Company, led by Major E. C. Gordon. Gordon is known for his role in the development of other late 19th century towns such as Sheffield, Alabama. For the development of the New Decatur town plan, Gordon procured the highest caliber planning team which included an architect and a landscape engineer. Planners laid out broad streets and paid attention to the smallest details of their new town. For example, streets were named to appeal to both northerners and southerners by selecting street names of both Union and

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Confederate Generals. (1) The plan evidently worked because numerous northerners were attracted to the new city and migrated there to start new businesses and industries. (In fact, so many moved to New Decatur from the north that petitioners were granted a name change in 1917 from New Decatur to Albany, after Albany, New York.)

In the area of commerce, the district reflects the influx of northern capital and the resulting growth of business and industry which swelled the small river town from 1,200 to 5,000 and established 41 new businesses in a single year, 1887.(2) The area encompassed by the New Decatur/Albany Historic District, with 2nd Avenue as its spine, became the new town's commercial hub.

The district also possesses significance under Criterion A in the category of entertainment/recreation for its association with the Cotaco Opera House and Princess Theater. In 1889, when the Cotaco Opera House Co. incorporated, there was no public hall in either Decatur or New Decatur. The next year, an opera house (Bldg. #32) was built on Johnston Street, just off 2nd Avenue. After the turn of the century, the building served as first the Payne and then later the Masonic Theater. These theaters featured live entertainment and later vaudeville. When the Masonic Theater had been in operation for about ten years, the Casa Grande stable (Bldg. #11) was converted to a theater, the Princess Theater. The theater was on the Orphan circuit of entertainers and legendary performers, such as Al Jolson, performed there.

Under Criterion C, the New Decatur/Albany Historic District is significant for its representative examples of commercial architecture dating from 1887 to 1941. The buildings are examples of 19th through 20th century commercial blocks with vernacular detailing, influenced by the Victorian, Romanesque, Renaissance Revival and Modernistic (Art Deco and Art Moderne) Styles. The buildings reflect New Decatur's periods of prosperity--the late 1880s commercial blocks of the booming, planned new town; the prosperity of the turn of the century when Decatur gained prominence as a river port and railroad hub; the '20s when Decatur touted itself as the "ideal location for factories" (3) and the early 1940s when TVA constructed a river terminal at Decatur.

One property in the district, the Cotaco Opera House/Masonic Building, is individually listed in the National Register. To the southeast of this district is the only other historic district of the original planned town of New Decatur. The "Albany [New Decatur] Heritage Neighborhood Historic District" was listed in the National Register for its significance in architecture and industry.

HISTORY

The government formally granted Alabama statehood in 1819 and in the following year, President Monroe ordered the town of Decatur to be laid off in sections 7, 17, and 18 in Township 5, Range 4 west. That same year, patents were issued to the "Decatur Land Company." Although there was a fair amount of real estate activity at this time, the growth of the town was slow. Decatur incorporated in 1826 and served as a trading center and river terminal but the existence of the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River below Decatur was a major obstacle to growth.(4) In the 1830s, the construction of the Tuscumbia-Decatur Railroad line improved the situation by offering an inland

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route to bypass the rocky shoals. But, the 1837 Depression caused the collapse of the state banking system and by 1850 the town claimed a population of only 606. Besides the failure of the banks and the existence of the shoals as an obstacle to river transport, the opening and attractiveness of the fertile Chickasaw lands in Mississippi was a factor contributing to Decatur's lack of growth.(5)

In 1855, the first train crossed the Tennessee River at Decatur and growth of the city seemed imminent. However, the 1860s brought the onset of the Civil War and when the federal troops came into Decatur in 1862, they destroyed the railroad bridge. Two years later, they razed nearly every building in the city. A federal officer described Decatur at this time as "almost depopulated, and the houses, with a few exceptions, burned or torn down."(6) Following the war, businesses slowly began the rebuilding process. The reconstruction of the railroad lines and the 1871 incorporation of the Nashville and Decatur Railroad into the L & N Railroad System played a major role in the successes of the area but a big fire in 1877 and the 1878 yellow fever epidemic again slowed improvement. Fortunately, the L & N Railroad had built massive shops in Decatur providing employment opportunities and giving some impetus to the economy.

At the end of this decade, records indicate the city was earnestly rebuilding: lighting, sanitation, and roads were improved.(7) The Bank of Decatur was formed and in the late 1880s, the first real economic boom was seen. In 1887, the Decatur Land Improvement and Furnace Company acquired 5,600 acres in and adjacent to Decatur. Led by Major E. C. Gordon, developer of Sheffield, Alabama, the firm advertised across the country, touting New Decatur as the "Gateway City."(8) Gordon envisioned a city which would be unsurpassed in the lower Tennessee Valley and hurried to develop the unexploited river town. An 1888 article in the Chicago Illustrated Graphic boasted that the developers of the New Decatur "secured the best talent in the designing and laying out of the town" (9) which featured broad avenues and a large linear park. They chose street names of both Confederate and Union Civil War generals to appeal to both northern and southern investors. Second Avenue, the new town's main street, was along the railroad in an area shown as "Business District" on the town plan. (10) Approximately 500 homes and businesses were built in 1887 in the new town, and the population jumped from 1,200 to 5,000 between January and December of 1887.(11)

The developers' showcase of this early period was the massive Queen Anne style Tavern built in 1888 at the corner of Grant and 6th Avenue. The elegant inn featured the work of the Tiffany Studios of New York. Another early hotel was the Casa Grande which filled the entire area on 2nd Avenue, S.E. between Johnston and Jackson Streets. (Grant Street originally stopped at the site). The opulent stables for the hotel were located two blocks north on 2nd Avenue N.E. (Bldg. #9, remodeled into a theater in ca. 1920, and again in 1941.)

Also built during this period of optimism was the Cotaco Opera House (Bldg. #26, Masonic Building). In exchange for \$20,000 in company stock and in the hopes of attracting more people to the area, the developers gave the Cotaco Opera House Co. four lots on Johnston Street, just off 2nd Avenue.(12) Public sale of the stock raised another \$55,000, enough to build the three-story opera house in 1890. (In 1905, the building became the Payne Theater, then the Masonic Theater and then in 1927, the Masonic Lodge. Masons used the upper floors and leased

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the ground floor for retail.) In 1888, in the midst of this boom, a second yellow fever outbreak occurred. This epidemic caused a mass exodus of Decatur's populace, including Major Gordon and many company officers.

In 1889, the state confirmed a charter for "New Decatur," as the new town came to be known. A reorganized Decatur Land Improvement and Development Company worked hard to promote the new city and to counteract the bad publicity of the yellow fever outbreak. It circulated a brochure entitled "The Sunny South-New Decatur, the Modern Industrial City of Northern Alabama and the Tennessee Valley." The publication listed New Decatur's selling points and locational advantages and discussed the extensive town improvements (roads, water works, new business and industry) made since 1887.(13)

In 1890, the second Muscle Shoals canal opened (the first built in the 1830s was a failure) and commerce briefly thrived as Decatur became an important river depot on the Tennessee River between Chattanooga and the Shoals. In 1892, the state moved the county seat of Morgan County from Somerville to Decatur, an indication of the town's growing prominence in northern Alabama.

A financial panic in 1892-94 halted progress. Many businesses succumbed including the showcase "Tavern" (it burned in 1923). In the last half of the decade, the economy stabilized in Decatur. Location played a major role in recruiting new industry and business to the area around the turn of the century. Decatur's role as a river port was important but equally important was its siting at the juncture of the "most important east-west railroad line in the south" (14) at that time and of the growing north-south line. Many new business located in New Decatur's 2nd Avenue business district during this period.

The new city was heavily populated by northerners, and a rivalry between Old and New Decatur developed. In 1907, it was reported that "the two Decaturs are two separate corporations now grown together and about equal in size."(15) The New Decatur Advertiser claimed:

Old Town [Old Decatur] is situated on the Tennessee River and has been a corporation for years. It is perhaps not so well improved in buildings as New Decatur, from the fact that many of its business blocks were built long before the new town came into existence in 1887. . .

New Decatur came into existence in 1887 and is undoubtedly one of the best laid out and improved cities in the South. There is hardly a business block that is not of modern architecture. It is, however, not so densely built as Decatur, and covers a larger area, embracing East Decatur, South Decatur and West Decatur.(16)

In 1916, New Decatur changed its name to Albany, the name favored by the numerous northern transplants from Albany, New York. But, rivalry aside, both Old and New Decatur recognized the need to market the area as a whole. A joint publication of the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the Morgan Kiwanis Club in 1922, Albany-Decatur--The Upper Muscle Shoals Cities, claimed the area was "America's greatest storehouse of

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minerals and crude materials. The ideal location for factories."(17) Its central location and access to both water and trunk-line railway transportation to the major distributing centers gave the twin cities "splendid advantages to manufacturers of all classes of products."(18) The brochure touted thirty existing industries and a map highlighted possible locations for many more. The combined population (including the suburbs of both cities) was 20,000, having almost tripled since the turn-of-the century.(19) In 1927, the legislature rejoined Albany and (Old) Decatur and the following year the combined municipality of Decatur assisted the state in the construction of the first highway bridge across the Tennessee River.

The Depression affected Decatur as it did other cities throughout the country. Along with the closure of many of Decatur's business and industrial concerns, the L & N Railroad closed down its massive local operation permanently in 1933. The thirties were a hard time for Decatur but recovery was evidenced by the end of the decade when the Tennessee Valley Authority provided a public use river terminal at Decatur. A 1940 WPA guidebook stated that Decatur had 41 manufacturing plants, six wholesale houses and many retail shops.(20) Large enterprises included the manufacture of cotton textiles, fertilizer, steel barges, boats, brick, and tile. Cotton factors headquartered in Decatur. Also existing were three hotels and "various tourist camps and inns."(21) The Princess Theater (Bldg. #9), remodeled during this period in the stylish Art Deco Style, featured a marquee that was the tallest in the state at that time.

Following World War II, Decatur again experienced a period of growth and prosperity, resulting in out-migration from the inner city neighborhoods to the suburbs; and eventually from the downtown business districts to the strip shopping centers and shopping malls of the suburbs. This trend was seen throughout the United States during this period and its adverse effects were felt in Decatur's 2nd Avenue commercial district, once the shopping hub of the entire city. In an attempt to compete with suburban shopping centers for customers, planning began in the 1960s to identify solutions. While plans were discussed over the next decade, however, buildings deteriorated and several were razed. In the late 1970s, concrete canopies were installed on 2nd Avenue in an attempt to replicate the sheltered shopping experience provided by a mall and to bring shoppers back to the Central Business District.

In 1984, a group of investors formed a public-private organization "to encourage, promote, and assist" in the revitalization of downtown Decatur. Originally known as D.A.R.E. (Downtown Area Revitalization Effort), the organization became Main Street of Decatur, Inc. in 1990. Headquartered in the New Decatur/Albany Historic District, the organization has spearheaded numerous renovation projects. Several commercial buildings were renovated as well as the Princess Theater, an art-deco theater and a showpiece anchor of the district's revitalization efforts. With these revitalization efforts, a change in property usage, from retail to professional services, is making the preservation of the buildings economically feasible.

More projects are on the drawing board. Main Street Decatur, Inc., on behalf of the city of Decatur, has been approved for a grant to fund removal of the concrete canopies on 2nd Avenue. The building at 116-118 2nd Avenue (Bldg. #10) is slated for renovation to serve as a support facility for the Princess Theater.

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END NOTES

1. Alabama Historical Commission. "Albany Heritage Neighborhood Historic District Nomination Form."
2. William E. Jenkins and John Knox. The Story of Decatur, Alabama (Decatur: Decatur Printing Company, 1976) n.p.
3. James W. Paige. Albany-Decatur--The Upper Muscle Shoals Cities (Chicago: N.P., N.D.) n.p.
4. William E. Jenkins and John Knox, p. 67.
5. Ibid, p. 89.
6. Ibid, p. 119.
7. Ibid, p. 135
8. Ibid, p. 145
9. Lee Sentell, ed. The Historic Decatur Picture Book (Decatur: Morgan County Historical Society, 1976) n.p.
10. Ibid, n.p.
11. William E. Jenkins and John Knox, p. 145
12. Lee Sentell, "Masonic Building Placed On State Register of Historic Places," The Decatur Daily, 16 November 1976.
13. William Jenkins and John Knox, p. 163.
14. Lee Sentell, ed. The Historic Decatur Picture Book, n.p.
15. William E. Jenkins and John Knox, p.180.
16. Ibid, p. 180
17. James W. Paige, n.p.
18. Ibid
19. Ibid
20. William E. Jenkins and John Knox, p. 267

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21. Ibid, p. 268

22. Main Street Decatur, Inc. "Main Street Belongs to the Community." n.p.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The New Decatur/Albany Historic District roughly includes the 100 block of 2nd Avenue, N.E., the 100 block of 2nd Avenue, S. E.--west side only, the 200 block of 2nd Avenue, S.E. excluding parcels 05, 06 on the west side, the 300 block of 2nd Avenue S.E.--east side only, properties on the north side of East Moulton Street in the 100 and 200 blocks, and one property at 115 Johnston Street, as defined on the attached boundary map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The New Decatur/Albany Historic District includes buildings in the original commercial area of New Decatur, a late 19th century planned town. The buildings are located on and adjacent to 2nd Avenue, the commercial hub of the new town and later, the central business district of Albany and Decatur. The boundaries include buildings within the period of significance in a wide variety of architectural styles and which retain their architectural integrity. Excluded from the district are buildings heavily altered or those constructed after the period of significance. The boundaries were drawn to include the greatest number of contributing resources and the least number of non contributing resources.

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Photographs

Information contained in items #1-5 is the same for all photographs.

1. New Decatur/Albany Historic District
2. Morgan County, Alabama
3. Phil Thomason
4. August 1994
5. Alabama Historic Commission

6. Streetscape 100 block, 2nd Ave. S.E, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #1

6. 133 2nd Ave. N.E, camera facing southwest
7. Photograph #2

6. 112 2nd Ave. N.E., camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #3

6. 109-113 2nd Ave. N.E., camera facing southwest
7. Photograph #4

6. Streetscape 100 block 2nd Ave. N.E., camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #5

6. Streetscape 100 block E. Moulton Street, camera facing east
7. Photograph #6

6. 200-208 E. Moulton Street, camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #7

6. Streetscape 200 block E. Moulton Street, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #8

6. Streetscape 100 block 2nd Ave. S.E, camera facing southwest
7. Photograph #9

6. 101-103 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing west
7. Photograph #10

6. Streetscape 100 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #11

6. 115 E. Johnson Street, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph #12

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6. Streetscape 200 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing southwest
7. Photograph #13

6. Streetscape 200 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing southeast
7. Photograph #14

6. 211-213 2nd Ave. S.E, camera facing southwest
7. Photograph #15

6. 224 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #16

6. Streetscape 200 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #17

6. Streetscape 300 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing southeast
7. Photograph #18

6. Streetscape 300 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing southeast
7. Photograph #19

6. Streetscape 300 block 2nd Ave. S.E., camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #20