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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Atlantic Coastline Railroad Passenger Depot

other name/site number: Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot

2. Location

street & number: Powell Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Dothan

vicinity: N/A

state: AL county: Houston

code: 069

zip code: 36303

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-local

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. 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. ___ See continuation sheet.

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of certifying official

12/6/93
Date

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

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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): _____

[Handwritten Signature] *[Handwritten Date]*

Entered in the
National Register

[Handwritten Signature] Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: TRANSPORTATION

Sub: rail-related

Current : VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH- AND EARLY 20TH-CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation brick roof asphalt
walls brick other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: C,A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Transportation

Period(s) of Significance: 1908-1941

Significant Dates: 1908

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 16 653190 3456090 B _____
C _____ D _____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries were delineated by the legal description of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: John M. Dollar/Dothan Landmarks Foundation; Chloe Mercer/AHC Intern
Organization: Dothan Landmarks Foundation Date: September 1992
Street & Number: P.O. Box 6362 Telephone: (205)794-3452
City or Town: Dothan State: AL ZIP: 36302

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Section number 7 Description Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot
Dothan, AL - Houston County Page #1

Located in the Dixie neighborhood of Dothan, the Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot is a two-story, rectangular brick structure that was built in 1908. This hipped roof building served as Dothan's passenger station from the date of its construction until 1979.

The depot, measuring 71 x 25 feet, has a central projecting bay with double windows facing the tracks on the northern elevation. The southern street side elevation is identical to the other except for the substitution of a door instead of the projecting bay. The depot has two stories which extend two-thirds of the way from east to west, and one story on the extreme western end. Large brackets, typical of railroad stations of this period, support the massive, overhanging hipped roof, which skirts the depot at the first level. Two interior brick chimneys are found in the center of the depot and at the western end.

The ten-bay facade contains double-hung, 2/2 sashes with rusticated granite sills and lintels. A row of four single windows extends across each side of the projecting bay on the second story. A door replaces one of those windows on the first story. The doors also have granite steps, sills, and lintels. One door led to the waiting room designated for whites on the eastern end, and one led to the room designated for blacks on the western end of the two-story section. The area at the projecting bay divides these two rooms and once served as the ticket booth. The baggage area at the western end has a large, central sliding door.

During the 1960s, the white waiting room on the east side of the building became the "common waiting room" when the Atlantic Coastline changed its policy on segregation. With the use of a common waiting room, the waiting room for blacks became the freight room. The rest rooms for blacks, located on the west side of their waiting room, became "staff rest rooms" during the 1960s. At some point, the red clay tile roof was replaced by a newer roof material. A wooden freight building, once located on the east side of the depot, has been removed. At one time, the Powell Street side of the depot was a city park that has since been paved.

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CRITERION C (ARCHITECTURE):

The Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot reflects the standard pragmatic railroad architecture of the early 20th century. Buildings such as this were common across Alabama, but are quickly falling into states of disrepair and becoming obsolete as railroad traffic continues to decrease. The interior and exterior of the structure has retained much of its original integrity.

CRITERION A (TRANSPORTATION):

Although the Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot only served passengers, its existence represents the most popular and accessible form of transportation in the early 20th century. Stations such as this existed in numerous small and large towns during this period. The Atlantic Coastline provided service to Montgomery; Tallahassee, Florida; and Thomasville, Georgia; all major cities within the area. These routes, particularly the one to Montgomery, were extremely significant as they linked the citizens of Dothan economically, socially, and politically to larger cities.

The Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot also represents Dothan's physical and economic growth during the early 20th century. Without the railroad in the town, Dothan would have remained a simple crossroads. Because railroad companies such as Atlantic Coastline created a much easier way to transport agricultural and industrial products, Dothan developed into the central town of the entire Wiregrass region.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

Dothan lies in the Wiregrass region of Alabama, an area not settled until after the Civil War due to its poor soil. In 1890, four years after its incorporation, Dothan's population was sparse with only 247 residents. The coming of the railroad in 1889, however, transformed Dothan into a bustling town which quickly became known as the "Hub of the Wiregrass."(1)

With fertilizers improving agricultural conditions and a timber industry developing, Dothan now had a stable economic base, and the railroad supplied an easy way to transport the goods. Before 1889, products were taken by wagon to the Chattahoochee River to be shipped to available markets. Turpentine and lumber were the main exports, but as the original tree stands were cut, cotton and particularly peanuts, became the main agricultural products. The railroad, coupled with these new economic developments, created a suitable environment for industrial development. Peanut oil mills, lumber yards, fertilizer plants and ice factories soon began to appear.(2)

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As the economy progressed, numerous settlers arrived to support the new farms and industries. By 1900, the population had risen to 3,275. In 1910, Dothan had 7,106 residents, and between 1910 and 1920, another 48% increase had occurred bringing the population to 10,034. Before long, Dothan became the largest city between Montgomery and Tallahassee, Florida. At least three railroads served the Dothan area and provided transportation for agricultural and timber products. Dothan became the commercial center of the Wiregrass region and thrived as the seat of Houston County.(3)

The Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot is a reflection of the growth of the town. The present building was constructed on the site of the old Alabama Midland Railroad Station, the first railroad company in Dothan. In 1902, the Atlantic Coastline Railroad acquired the "plant system." (4) A freight station, located adjacent to the passenger depot, served passengers until the small building could no longer serve the growing number of passengers. The current structure was completed in 1907 and was the largest and busiest Atlantic Coastline depot between Montgomery and Thomasville, Georgia.(5) In 1967, Atlantic Coastline merged with Seaboard Coastline which, in turn, was purchased by CSXC in 1980. The depot, however, served Dothan until 1979 when the last passenger train came through.(6) Future plans for the former depot include restoration and converting the building into a railroad museum.

THE RAILROAD IN THE SOUTH:

The railroad system came to the south in 1856 when a single track from Richmond to Danville, Virginia, was laid with state funds. Although the states had controlling interest of the rails, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company controlled the extension and improvement of lines.(7) Eventually, tracks were extended to Greensboro, North Carolina, and Atlanta and into South Carolina. The Southern Railway Securities Company was soon formed to control the Pennsylvania interests south of Washington. After 1877, lines penetrated Alabama to make Birmingham a stop on the rail.(8)

Planters in Alabama had been using the steamboat to transport their goods on the rivers to the coast. They desperately needed some means of overcoming the exorbitant charges of the steamboat companies for transporting goods and bringing supplies. They wanted a facility to bring isolated sections in touch with each other and to promote an exchange of products. The railroad became the most attractive form of transportation with its cheaper construction, practicality and speed, and inexpensive rates.(9) Railroads brought population growth to towns, industrial expansion, and interstate trade.

At the turn-of-the-century, an estimated 40,000 depots were standing. Today, less than half remain.(10) The Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot is one of these depots that has survived with much of its original integrity.

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- 1
Alabama State Planning Commission, Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South, 1941, pp. 383.
- 2
Ibid., pp. 384.
- 3
Pamela Ann and Wendell H. Stepp, Dothan: A Pictorial History, (Norfolk: Donning Company, 1984), pp. 113.
- 4
Ibid., pp. 26.
- 5
Ibid., pp. 48.
- 6
Ibid., pp. 31.
- 7
Moody, John. The Railroad Builders. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919, pp. 179.
- 8
Moody, pp. 180-81.
- 9
Owen, Marie Bankhead. The Story of Alabama, Vol. 2. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1949, pp. 114.
- 10
National Trust for Historic Preservation, Forum Leaflet #4.

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Section number 9 Biblio. Ref. Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot
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Alabama State Planning Commission. Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South. 1941.

Dothan Eagle. 1906-1908, passim.

Moody, John. The Railroad Builders. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919.

National Trust for Historic Preservation, Forum Leaflet #4.

Owen, Marie Bankhead. The Story of Alabama, Vol. 2. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1949.

Rogers, Furman, Jr. "A History of Houston County." (M.A. Thesis, Auburn University, 1952).

Stepp, Pamela Ann and Wendell H. Dothan: A Pictorial History. (Norfolk: The Donning Company, 1984).

Watson, Fred S. Hub of the Wiregrass: A History of Houston County, Alabama, 1903-1972. (Anniston: Higginbotham, Inc., 1972).

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Section number 10

Atlantic Coastline Passenger Depot
Dothan, AL - Houston County

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LEGAL DESCRIPTION

A lot or parcel of land located in the City of Dothan, Houston County, Alabama, and being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at the intersection of North line of Powell Street with the East line of Headland Avenue; thence North $19^{\circ}38'50''$ East 241.00' along said Avenue to the POINT OF BEGINNING; thence South $41^{\circ}51'08''$ East along a chord line, a distance of 183.00', being the same line deeded to the City of Dothan in Deed Book 202 at Page 589; thence South $46^{\circ}07'39''$ East a distance of 74.15'; thence North $38^{\circ}12'15''$ East a distance of 42.76' along the East side of a curb line being the East side of an old parking lot; thence North $47^{\circ}59'34''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $47^{\circ}50'14''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $46^{\circ}49'19''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $45^{\circ}52'24''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $44^{\circ}43'20''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $43^{\circ}58'20''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $42^{\circ}41'50''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $42^{\circ}05'30''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $41^{\circ}22'20''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $40^{\circ}53'00''$ West a distance of 25.00'; thence North $40^{\circ}06'27''$ West a distance of 20.17'; thence South $19^{\circ}38'50''$ West a distance of 42.15' to the POINT OF BEGINNING; and containing 0.23 of an acre, more or less. Said property lying in the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 and the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 13, Township 3 North, Range 26 East, Houston County, Alabama.

The above described property is shown on print of survey dated February 6, 1989, prepared by Veston W. Bush, Jr., Alabama Registration No. 9676, Veston Bush Contracting, Inc. and Land Surveying, Highway 173, Capps, P.O. Box 5, Abbeville, Alabama, 36310.

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Atlantic Coastline Railroad Passenger Depot
Powell Street, Dothan, AL (Houston County)
Photographer: William Holman
Negatives: Dothan Landmarks Foundation
Date Photos Taken: June 1993 (exterior); October 1993 (interior)

- Photo #1: Track Facade, Looking West
- Photo #2: Street Facade, Looking East
- Photo #3: Street Facade, Looking Northeast
- Photo #4: View of Entrance
- Photo #5: View of Brackets
- Photo #6: Side Facade, Looking Northwest
- Photo #7: Side Facade, Looking Southeast
- Photo #8: View of Window
- Photo #9: Track Facade, Looking South
- Photo #10: Interior, looking West
- Photo #11: Interior, Upstairs Interior
- Photo #12: Interior, Downstairs, East Waiting Room
- Photo #13: Interior, Looking East
- Photo #14: Interior, Upstairs Office
- Photo #15: Interior, West Waiting Room and Ticket/Office Area
- Photo #16: Interior, Downstairs West Waiting Room
- Photo #17: Interior, Downstairs, East Waiting Room
- Photo #18: Interior, Downstairs, East Waiting Room

