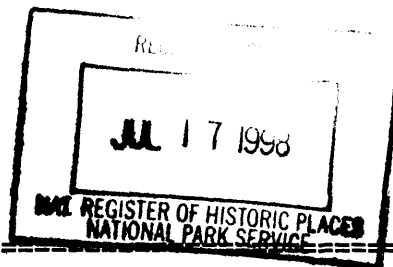


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Rogers Department Store

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 117 North Court Street not for publication N/A
city or town Florence vicinity N/A
state Alabama code AL county Lauderdale code 077 zip code 35630

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

7/10/98
Date

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

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 [] See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 [] See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature] Date of Action
Edson H. Beall 8-14-98

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Rogers Department Store

County and State Lauderdale County, Alabama

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check only one box.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Department Store</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Department Store</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite

roof ASPHALT

walls STONE: Limestone
BRICK

other STONE: Limestone
METAL: Aluminum

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) N/A

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1910 - 1948

Significant Dates 1910 1944 1946 1948

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

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Hulsey and Hall, architects James, Forman, contractor

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS) N/A
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office
 Other state agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository
Florence Public Library
Rogers Department Store Archives

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10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing			
1	<u>16 438130 4730950</u>	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

 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 Pat Stancell, Assistant Director and Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewer
organization Florence Main Street Program date April 10, 1998
street & number 301 North Pine Street telephone (256) 760-9648
city or town Florence state Alabama zip code 35630

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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 Percy Rogers and Tom Rogers
street & number PO Box 917 telephone (256) 764-8261
city or town Florence state Alabama zip code 35631

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

Section VII. Narrative Description

Rogers Department Store is located on the southwestern corner of North Court Street and West Mobile Street in the historic downtown commercial center of Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama. This is the historic location of the Rogers' family department store since their business' original incarnation as the "Surprise Store" in 1894. The present building dates from several periods, consisting of the 1910 two-story brick core with 1944 additions and renovations and the 1946-1948 restoration and completion of the remodeling after fire damage in 1946.

Rogers is a three-story plus a full basement, 312' x 75' department store with a rectilinear plan and a 45 degree canted north corner. The building's perimeter covers nearly the entire site with 65,575 square feet of storage, display, sales, and office space. The store contains solid brick masonry walls dating from the original 1910 building and concrete block and poured concrete walls with internal reinforcing metal rods installed during the expansion and post-fire renovation of 1944 to 1948. The front facade (northeast elevation) and the northwest elevations are covered in a beige-colored limestone veneer with carved limestone sculptural relief accents. Panels of polished pink granite occur on portions of the front and side elevations along the water table, creating a protective wainscot at the street level. The roof is a flat built-up asphalt system not visible from the ground because of the distinctive stepped parapet that rises above the roof line. The fenestration is made up of single pane, aluminum frame display windows on the first floor and tri-part aluminum windows with a central casement flanked by fixed glass panes and recessed vertically-stacked triple aluminum windows in the prominent paneled areas on the upper facade of the front and side elevations. Several double hung wood windows can also be found on the rear elevation.

One of the most prominent exterior characteristics of this Art Deco-styled building is its vertical pattern of recessed and projecting panels of limestone on the upper facade. Each of the bays on the second and third floors are recessed with flanking vertical panels. The area above the third floor windows to the parapet line contains a scored vertical panel. This verticality is heightened even more at three points along the limestone-clad front facade and side elevation. All three are quite similar in design in that they contain a slender recessed bay of windows flanked by a succession of raised vertical limestone panels. The top of these areas are crowned by a raised stepped parapet with a central fluted panel flanked by other limestone panels. One of these areas is situated above the centrally-located front facade entrance. The entrance is quite distinctive with a pair of single pane glass doors surrounded by aluminum frame glass side lites and fixed panes; a wonderful flat aluminum canopy separating the doors from the fixed six pane, aluminum frame transom; and surrounding convex limestone molding topped with its prominent metal "ROGERS" letter sign. Pairs of single pane aluminum display windows with fixed transoms (currently covered over) flank the front facade entrance.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

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The other two vertically emphasized areas are located on the side elevation approximately fifteen feet on either side of the secondary entrance. These areas are slightly smaller in scale than the treatment above the front facade entrance except for the first floor opening. The first floor opening within the slender recessed window bay contains a faux window with eight solid stone window panes with convex molding surrounded by a limestone frame. The lintel is decorated with a stone carving of a ram's head with wings and flanking scrolled appendages with a fluted limestone panel above up to the second story line. The side elevation entrance is the same as the front facade except that it is slightly smaller in scale and has a smaller canopy. The north corner of the building is canted at a 45 degree angle with a display window on the storefront level and tri-part aluminum windows with a central casement flanked by fixed glass panes on the second and third stories. Above the first floor window lintel is a central molded limestone circle with fluting behind and winged-rams with scrollwork flanking it. The rear elevation of the building is brick with several randomly-placed double hung windows. Most of the original 1910 rear elevation windows were bricked-up during the 1944-1948 renovation. A covered loading dock which opens up into a stockroom, can be found along the first floor of this elevation.

The interior is broken down into four main floors with two of those having mezzanine levels. The basement, known as the cellar, contains sales space, stock and shipping rooms, offices, and other support areas. The great majority of the first floor consists of sales and display space with some stockroom space around the perimeter. The first floor mezzanine has sales floor and stockroom space. The second floor contains a large central sales space with stock rooms, dressing rooms, and rest rooms along the perimeter. The third floor and its mezzanine space have some sales space in addition to office areas and stockrooms. There are five restrooms in the building.

Interior finishes cover a range of materials. The basement floors are vinyl tile and concrete. The first floor has a concrete and wooden sub-floor covered by terrazzo, carpet, or vinyl tile. The first floor mezzanine has a wooden sub-floor covered with vinyl tile. The second floor has a concrete sub-floor covered with carpet and vinyl tile. The third floor and its mezzanine have a wooden sub-floor covered with vinyl tile.

The walls are plastered on all floors. The ceilings are plaster as well, except the basement where the ceiling is covered in celotex. Ceiling heights vary from sixteen feet on the first floor, seven-and one-half feet on the mezzanine, twelve feet eight inches on the second floor, sixteen feet on the third, and eight- and one-half feet on its mezzanine.

All floors are serviced by elevators; in fact, Rogers was one of the first stores in North Alabama to install them along with central air conditioning and heating systems. There are two passenger elevators and one, one ton freight elevator. Elevators are the main means of access to the different floors and mezzanine, while wide (over eighteen inches), closed-string stairs are located

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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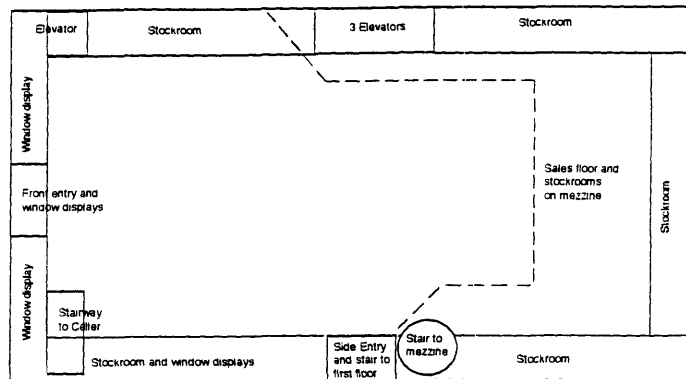
Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

on the first floor leading to the side entrance and to the basement area. Other stairs can be found on all floors but are mainly used by staff and for emergency egress. Lighting is consistent with current retail display techniques and consist of both incandescent and fluorescent fixtures in a variety of styles: recessed, surface and suspended, and bucket and track incandescent.

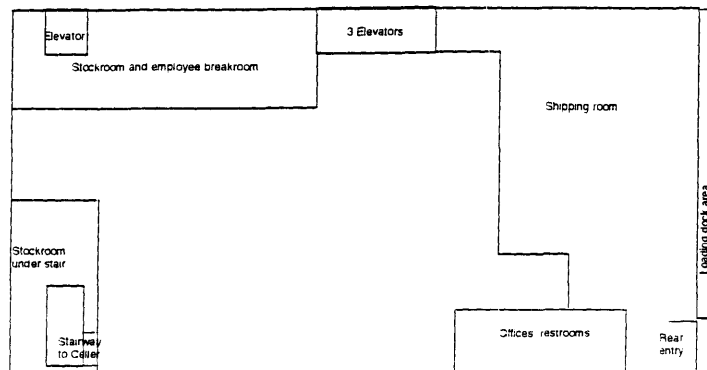
Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made of Rogers Department Store, the potential for subsurface remains is minimal. However, buried portions may contain information useful in interpreting this site.

Layout of Rogers Department Store - First Floor and Mezzine
(Not to scale)



Layout of Rogers Department Store - Cellar
(Not to scale)



FLOOR PLANS

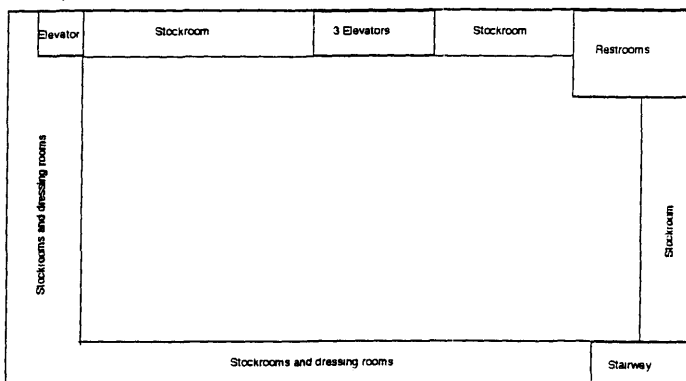
United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

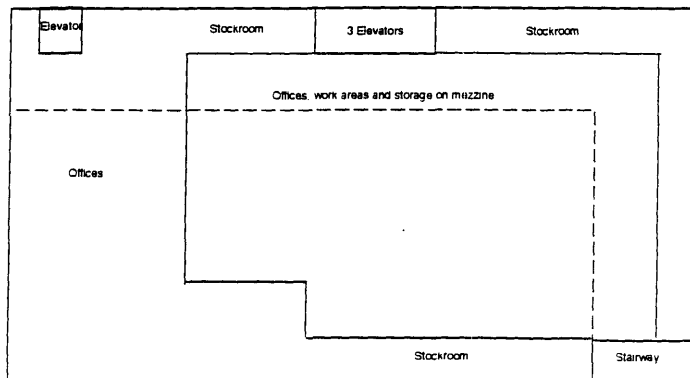
Section 7 Page 4

Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

Layout of Rogers Department Store - Second Floor
(Not to scale)



Layout of Rogers Department Store - Third Floor and Mezzine
(Not to scale)



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

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VIII. Statement of Significance

Statements

Criterion A: Commerce

Rogers Department Store is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the twentieth-century commercial history of Florence, Alabama. Rogers has been owned and operated by the same family at the same location for more than 100 years. Although the business' earliest incarnation began as early as 1894, the current Rogers building dates from 1910 and 1944-1948 and stands out as the most prominent historic commercial building downtown. It has always been the largest retail department store in the Muscle Shoals area and the commercial arena of northwest Alabama. Its continuous history has contributed to the commercial momentum and growth of the downtown commercial district in Florence.

Criterion C: Architecture

Rogers Department Store is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as the best example of Art Deco architecture in Florence. Originally constructed in 1910 as a two-story brick commercial building, Rogers underwent a major reconstruction and renovation effort from 1944 to 1948 resulting in its present appearance. Designed by the Memphis, Tennessee architectural firm of Hulsey and Hall, the 1940s renovation made a dramatic impact on Florence's architectural landscape. The new Rogers' design exuded modernity with its verticality, streamlined design, rectilinear massing, stylized animal ornament, and smooth monochromatic wall surfaces. The exterior and interior design character of Rogers is significant in that it exemplifies an architectural trend toward modern merchandising by representing the most up-to-date styling, having flexible interior space, air conditioning, and artificial lighting.

Historic Summary

In 1894 Major B. A. Rogers and his sons, T. M. and B. A. Jr., moved to the Tennessee River town of Florence in Alabama during the first of this city's great boom periods. Florence's first postwar growth period occurred after 1875 when the Federal Government appropriated funds to construct a new canal at the Muscle Shoals to make way for free navigation on this section of the river. Prior to this, river travel was restricted to high water seasons when the nearby, treacherous Muscle Shoals could be navigated. Completed in 1890, this canal made significant improvements to navigation of the shoals. During this period, many people, new businesses, and industries established themselves in Florence. Local promoters and investors organized to promote the development of the industrial, mining, and commercial potential in Florence and the surrounding area and between 1880 and 1900, the population of the city increased five-fold. The Rogerses were confident in the future of Florence and the Muscle Shoals area (including the cities of Florence, Sheffield, and Tusculmbia and later on in the twentieth century, the

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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 6Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
County and State: Lauderdale County, Alabama

new town of Muscle Shoals) and wanted to play a part in its development. They opened a retail store known as the "Surprise Store" in a two story frame building at the corner of Court and Mobile Streets.

The Rogerses ideas about merchandising differed from the typical tradesman of the day. In the 1890s there were few price tags; customers usually had to make an offer on the items in which they were interested. At the Surprise Store, the Rogerses used the slogan, "One Price - Plain Figures," since their prices were plainly written on each item. The Surprise Store was very popular because every customer knew they paid the same price. Major Rogers died in 1902, leaving the store to his sons, who continued to carry out their father's business practices.

In 1910 a fire destroyed the original wooden building and a two-story brick building was erected on the same corner in its place that same year. The new building bore the names "T. M. and B. A. Rogers" and became known as Rogers Department Store. In the 1920s and 1930s, Rogers weathered the fluctuating economic conditions of the Muscle Shoals area. Periodic "busts" and the everlasting cycle of economic booms such as the initial Federal Government project to construct a gigantic hydroelectric dam and nitrate plant to produce World War I supplies, the ultimate completion of Wilson Dam ten years later, speculation during this time like the one sparked by Henry Ford's plans for the dam, and the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the area made retail a challenging market. But the family-owned store stayed in business and continued to build upon their base of customer confidence.

During the 1940s war years, the store saw many changes. T. M. Rogers died in 1943 and both his sons, T. M. Jr. and Mims, were in the service, so Mrs. T. M. Rogers, Sr. and the Board of Directors ran the store. Under their direction, Rogers used its advertising to contribute to the war effort. In cooperation with the U. S. Treasury, Rogers ran ads asking for contributions and promoted the sale of war bonds. They also ran ads encouraging local women to join the war effort by becoming nurses, WACS, and hospital technicians.

In 1944, Rogers celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and even though the war was still raging, announced plans to modernize the building (which included an expansion to the original building on the south side) as a demonstration of the store's confidence in the future. By this time the war-time moratorium on non-essential construction was lessening, but labor and materials were hard to find; however, work did began on the renovation, albeit at a slow pace. At the ending of the war in 1945, a third generation of Rogers came home to participate in the operation of the family business. T. M. Rogers, Jr. became president and his brother Mims, became store attorney.

Tragedy struck the modernization efforts in the summer of 1946 when fire in an adjacent building did extensive damage to the

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8.9.10 Page 7Name of Property: Rogers Department Store
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south wall. Under T. M. Jr.'s supervision the renovation continued and in the months of work that followed, the store was closed for only one business day. The modernization was completed in 1948 and Rogers had big opening September 3rd and 4th that same year. Modern conveniences incorporated in the new design included air conditioning and heating systems, elevators, and a pneumatic tube system for speedy money transactions. In 1948 the "new" Rogers represented modern merchandising at its best. News articles celebrating the store's fifty-fourth anniversary that year, stated that Rogers was the largest, best-stocked store in North Alabama. During the next thirty years, the firm continued to grow and expand out to branch stores in Muscle Shoals and Decatur. Rogers is unique in that it has been owned and managed by the same family for over 100 years at the same location. Today a fourth generation of Rogers manage the store and maintain their offices in the original building at the corner of Court and Mobile Streets. They are committed to preserving the traditional Rogers position in the Florence business community: the anchor and retail leader of the downtown area.

IX. Bibliography

Florence Herald, September 3, 1948.

Florence Times, June 18, 1914.

Ibid., September 1, 1928.

McDonald, William Lindsey. *The History of First Methodist Church, Florence, Alabama, 1822-1983*. Birmingham: Birmingham Printing and Publishing, 1993.

Miscellaneous Rogers Department Store papers. Rogers Department Store Archives.

Russellville Advertiser, September 3, 1948.

X. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

Rogers Department Store is located at 117 North Court Street in Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama as part of original lot 76, according to the map and survey of the City of Florence made by the Cypress Land Company, together with certain strips of land abutting the property abandoned by the City in the narrowing of Court and Mobile Streets. The rectangular lot is located at the present southwest intersection of Court and Mobile Streets and is known as parcel 41-24-02-10-4-401-01 in the SE 1/4 of Section 10, Township 3, Range 11 West, according to Lauderdale County Tax Accessors' records.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries contain all the extant property historically associated with Rogers Department Store.