

HISTORIC DISTRICT INFORMATION FORM

I. NAME OF DISTRICT:

Monroe and Walton Mills Historic District--named because of the developer of the district, the use of the district, and because this is the traditional name of the area.

II. LOCATION OF DISTRICT

A. General Location

1. Describe in general terms the location of the district:

The district is located on the southern edge of the city of Monroe, south of the CBD and the residential area along South Broad Street.

2. Principal streets, highways, and geographic features: *S. Broad St., S. Madison Ave., and Georgia*

South Broad Street, South Madison Avenue, and the Georgia Railroad Line all run through the district in a north-south direction.

3. City:

Monroe ✓

4. County:

Walton ✓

B. U.S. Congressman and Congressional District

Doug Barnard--10th District

III. CLASSIFICATION:

Occupied

Little preservation work is in progress in the district other than routine maintenance of the buildings.

Current uses: residential, industrial, commercial, religious

IV. DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT

A. Narrative Description

1. General character, appearance, and historical development:

With few exceptions, the district is primarily an industrial complex of the late 1890s and early 1900s. Although a few Victorian homes that predate the mills remain in the area, development of the district increased in 1895 with the construction of the Monroe Mill and adjacent mill housing. Five years later the Walton Mill was constructed, also surrounded by mill housing. Both mill buildings are brick industrial complexes, typical of the era. The mill housing, situated along streets laid out in a gridiron street pattern, is made of wood and is generally small and plain in design. Early 1900 commercial and religious structures also exist in the district. At the northern edge of the district, along South Madison Avenue, a few homes exist that were tied historically to the residential areas along South Broad Street and the South Madison Avenue/Church Street area.

2. Natural terrain, landmarks:

The terrain is slightly rolling, but the area appears generally flat. A small stream runs north and west of the district.

3. Various parts of the district:

The district might be characterized as having four parts. First are the mill buildings themselves--large brick complexes typical of the turn-of-the-century. Around these buildings are the mill houses, which are small, frame structures. They are especially concentrated in the southern and eastern portions of the district. Between South Broad Street and Radford Street, south of Mears Street, is a small collection of "support" buildings, such as a church, old school, and commercial buildings. The fourth area is along South Madison Avenue, north of Knight Street, where several large houses are located.

4. Pattern of land subdivision:

The streets in the district all relate to the principal streets: South Broad and South Madison. Off of these main roads, the mills developed a simple gridiron street pattern, typical for mill villages. Because of this pattern, there is no relationship to the natural terrain.

5. Arrangement or placement of buildings:

Due to the rigidity of the gridiron street pattern, all of the houses in the district face the streets at right angles, with a uniform setback line. The mill houses have large rear yards but very small side and front yards. Development in the district is very dense.

6. Architectural characteristics:

A few Victorian-era houses remain in the district that predate the mills. These buildings are generally one-story, frame structures--simple in style with Victorian embellishments. The two mill buildings are straightforward brick industrial buildings, with the earlier Monroe Mill exhibiting more architectural detailing in the windows and throughout the building (although neither building is an exceptional industrial structure for the period). Only a few basic designs were used in constructing the mill housing, including a two-story duplex and a variation of the shotgun house. These are all simple, with only a minimum of detailing (such as porch columns or a jagged edge along the porch roof). Porches are very important features of these buildings, however, and most have both front and rear porches. The commercial, educational, and religious buildings in the district are also very simple and utilitarian in nature.

At the northern edge of the district stand a few large homes that postdate the mills, yet seem to be unrelated. In one instance, a large two-story frame house has a massive portico, with one-story porch extensions, typical of many early 1900 homes in Georgia.

Wood is used for almost all of the housing in the district. Brick is the building material for the industrial buildings, the school, and some of the commercial structures. The design qualities of the district are generally simple, yet well executed. Craftsmanship appears to be typical of the mass produced housing found in similar Georgia mill villages.

7. Landscape characteristics:

One landscape feature of the district appears to be of importance. Throughout the mill village

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(especially in the Walton Mill village) large trees are used to define the streets and reinforce the gridiron pattern. Because of the small size of the yards, these trees stand out as an important feature of the district.

8. Archaeological potential:

Unknown

9. Exceptions to the general rule:

The Victorian-era homes and turn-of-the-century houses on South Madison Avenue are discussed above. Both are exceptions to the industrial nature of the district.

B. Condition:

Excellent

Good

Fair--general condition of the district

Poor/Deteriorated

C. Acreage of district (approximate):

120

D. Number of properties in district (approximate):

246

E. Intrusions and non-historic properties. Intrusions and non-historic properties are marked on the accompanying map.

Intrusions--General Description and Criteria for Inclusion:

The intrusions in the district are generally of two types. The first are historical structures that have been significantly altered after the district's period of significance had passed. This alteration is such that the historical features of the building have been destroyed. Criteria used included date of alteration, design of alteration, and degree of alteration. The second type are modern structures which, because of their design, proportions, massing, siting, or other features, detract from the significance of the district. Criteria used included date

of construction, design features, and compatibility with district.

Non-historic structures--General Description and Criteria for Inclusion:

Most buildings in this category are structures built after the 1930s. While they generally blend into the district in terms of siting, proportion, massing, height, and design, they do not necessarily contribute to the significance of the district. These are usually very non-descript buildings, with few if any design details. Criteria for inclusion included date of construction, design features, and compatibility with district.

F. Boundaries of district

1. Brief boundary description and justification:

The district boundaries are shown on the accompanying map and include the historical areas associated with the Monroe and Walton mills. Industrial, residential, commercial, educational, and religious buildings connected with the mill are included. A few houses along South Madison Avenue are also included as this residential neighborhood abutted the mill area during the historic period. These are generally intact historic boundaries associated with the mill development.

2. Difference of areas outside the district:

Modern residential intrusions lie to the north, while vacant land and a cemetery lie to the east of the district. Vacant land lies west of the district, while modern residences and commercial structures are to the south. The South Broad Street Historic District is adjacent to the district on the northwest.

3. Tentative boundaries:

The boundaries are relatively clearcut.

G. Photographs:

Attached (See photographs #58-77)

H. Maps:

Attached (See Maps M-33, 34, 35, 43, 44)

I. U.T.M. References:

A Z17 E249590 N3742000  
B Z17 E249650 N3741590  
C Z17 E249240 N3740960  
D Z17 E248730 N3740760  
E Z17 E248710 N3741570  
F Z17 E249190 N3741900

V. HISTORY

A. Summary of Historical Facts

1. Original owner/developer:

Monroe Cotton Mill Company (1895)

2. Subsequent developer:

Walton Cotton Mill Company (1900)

3. Original uses:

Industrial (textile mills), residential, commercial, educational, religious

4. Subsequent uses:

Same

5. Architects:

Unknown

6. Contractors:

T.J. Nichols (Walton Mill\*)

7. Other artists/craftsmen:

Unknown

8. Dates of development:

1895 to 1930s

B. Historical Narrative:

Until the 1890s, Monroe served primarily as a commercial center for surrounding agricultural interests. However, early in the last decade of the nineteenth century, industrial development increased in Monroe. Local businessmen, encouraged by the industrial expansion of the "New South," combined their financial resources to bring industry to Monroe. One of the earliest of these industries was the Monroe Cotton Mill Company.

Chartered in August 1895, the Monroe Cotton Mill Company became a part of the state's growing textile industry of the late nineteenth century. The board members (T.J. Avery, G.W.

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Felker, Sr., J.H. Felker, John D. Malsby, C.T. Mobley, G.M. Napier, W.H. Nunnally, G.C. Selman, and J.T. Van Horne) were prominent local citizens. Incorporation of the mill came just six years after the establishment of the town's first industry, the Monroe Guano Company.

Construction of the two-story mill\* began in 1895, with the first floor devoted to weaving and the second floor reserved for spinning. The brick walls for this building were 16" thick. Construction also began on frame, four-room mill housing for the workers. This mill village surrounded the mill on three sides and was named "Carson."

The Monroe Mill initially used 5,000 spindles. Machinery used by the mill included Whiting looms and spindles and Hethrington English Cards. The first product produced was brown sheeting that was exported to China.

By 1897, preparations were underway to double the work force. Thirty new mill houses were under construction, bringing the total number of houses to 75, with 600 inhabitants. The weekly payroll for the mill was \$750.

As the mill and village grew, it was not long before other institutions moved in to serve the community. Shortly before the turn-of-the-century a church building was constructed near the mill. This was shared by the Baptists and Methodists for a brief period of time, but it eventually became St. Stephen Methodist Church. A school was also built near the church for use by the village residents.

Competition arrived for the Monroe Mill in 1900 with the incorporation of the Walton Cotton Mill Company. However, this competition was more perceived than real, as the two mills shared many board members. The original incorporators were T.J. Avery, J.M. Day, G.W. Felker, Sr., J.H. Felker, A.C. Kelly, H. McDaniel, J.D. Malsby, C.T. Mobley, J.M. Nowell, R.L. Nowell, W.H. Nunnally, G.C. Selman, and B.S. Walker.

Construction began on the mill building\* in 1900 under the direction of contractor T.J. Nichols, and was completed in 1901. Five thousand spindles were used in the mill, which was headed by president Coleman T. Mobley. Frame mill houses were built south of the mill in a gridiron street plan. Prior to World War I, the Walton Mill produced lining for high top shoes.

Both mills grew rapidly in the early 1900s. By 1901 the Monroe Mill had enlarged its plant and added a one story weaving room on the east side of the building. In 1906, the Walton Mill doubled in size, a feat which it accomplished again in 1924.

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In 1907, the Monroe Mill employed 175 operatives and had a monthly payroll of \$3,600. The Walton Mill had 165 operatives in that same year.

During the early 1900s, the mills acted as a magnet on Monroe, pulling both industrial and residential development southward. Some of the residential development concentrated along East Church Street extended as far south as the mill village. This is especially true along South Madison Avenue, where fine turn-of-the-century homes lined both sides of the road.

Cotton statistics for Monroe show an increasing amount of activity in the city from 1900 to 1920, with a sudden drop at that point. 50,368 bales of cotton were ginned in 1911, but only 7,402 bales were ginned in 1922. These peaks and valleys in cotton production also affected the mills, although they have generally weathered the rough economic times in the past.

Growth of the Walton mill village continued through the 1920s and 1930s. Three streets (Mill, Salem, and Ripley) lay south of the mill and were lined with houses by 1924. As later houses were constructed, their size increased from the original two room plans. Stores were built in the village, and in 1927 the school was moved from frame to brick quarters\*. Several expansions of the mills took place during this period and support buildings, such as cotton warehouses, were either built or bricked. A frame recreation hall\* was built by the Walton Mill for its employees. In 1931, St. Stephen's Methodist Church moved to the old schoolhouse, and in 1938 they built a new building\* with lumber from the old mill at High Shoals.

Through the years the capacity of the Monroe Mill increased from 5,000 to 25,000 spindles, with its principal products being jeans, twills, and sateens. In recent years, the Walton Mill has produced cloth, varieties of twills, sateens, and ducks. The Walton mill village has generally retained a larger percentage of its original buildings, although expansion of the mill has destroyed some of the earliest housing. Both villages have an unusually high number of intact historic buildings that reflect the development of the industry. A merger of the two mills in the 1970s cemented the ties that had always existed from the early 1900s.

## VI. SIGNIFICANCE

### A. Areas of Significance:

Architecture	Industry
Community Planning	Landscape Architecture



B. Statements of Significance:

Architecture: There are four basic types of buildings in the Monroe and Walton Mills Historic District that are significant in the community's past. These are the residential structures not particularly associated with the mills, the mill buildings themselves, the mill housing, and support structures. Each will be considered separately.

Several residences existed in the area prior to the construction of the mills. These structures are generally one-story, frame Victorian-era buildings similar to those found along East Church Street. Porch detailing, as well as decorative woodwork in the gables, is used extensively. Where these buildings did not interfere with the operation of the mills, they were retained, adding a decorative flavor to the regimentation and duplication of the district. In later years (i.e., 1900 to 1920), a few homes were built along South Madison Avenue as the East Church Street residential district expanded. These buildings generally feature classical features popular in the period. There is one exceptionally fine house in this grouping north of the Monroe Mill which displays an impressive two-story portico with one-story porch extensions to each side. All of these buildings in this class are important as fine examples of middle and upper-income housing in Monroe at the turn-of-the-century.

The next important buildings are the mills themselves. Both are good examples of late nineteenth century industrial complexes. Of the two, the Monroe Mill\* is the more impressive as it is generally intact, only slightly altered, and features a more interesting use of architectural detailing. The siting of the Monroe Mill is also impressive, as its importance in the community can be easily seen by its setting apart from the support buildings and by its massive nature. Coming five years later, the Walton Mill appears more utilitarian in design. Although surrounded by extensions and support buildings, the basic mill building can still be seen and recognized.

Frame mill housing quickly followed construction of the mills. Several different styles were used, but all of the houses fall into one of these basic designs. While the earliest houses for the Monroe Mill tended to be four rooms in size, those for the Walton Mill were small, two room buildings. Size increased as more houses were built. Front, and in many cases back, porches are significant features of these houses, the front used for "visiting" purposes while the back served family needs. Details are sparse, but they do exist, especially along the sides of the front porches. Balustrades and columns are also distinctive features of these houses, which are significant as a type of housing built by industry for the working class in Monroe.

The final class of important buildings in the district are the support structures. Frame and brick stores, one and two stories in height, were built to serve the mill village residents. These are generally plain, utilitarian structures. The brick school building, the Recreation Hall, and St. Stephen's Methodist Church (now covered with siding) exhibited more detailing in their design. These buildings tended to serve social, as well as educational and religious functions, and were the focal points of the community.

Community Planning: Complete towns built around a mill came to New England as early as the 1790s and grew rapidly in the nineteenth century. In the smaller towns of the South, these mill villages generally came in the latter half of the nineteenth century, centered around a new textile mill. The purpose in developing the villages was to provide housing for the workforce, focus attention on the importance of the mill in the workers' lives, and provide for a degree of control and regimentation on the working class.

The Monroe and Walton Mills Historic District follows this national trend. Streets are laid out in a gridiron pattern, with houses of similar designs on very small lots. This provides the sense of repetition and regimentation. The mills also serve as the focal points of the district. Support structures such as churches, schools, stores, and recreation halls (often built by the mills), are scattered throughout the district. This type of development is important as a reflection of the industrialization of America and the response by management to the needs of the new industrial workforce.

Industry: The establishment of the Monroe and Walton Mills was the single most important factor in shaping Monroe into the community it is today. Monroe turned from a small commercial service town for farmers to a city largely dependent on industry. Dramatic population increases from 1890 to 1910 document the extent of this change, which is a local expression of the "New South" industrial movement. With this industrial growth, the town enlarged and residential neighborhoods grew on the north, east, and southwest sides of the community. Commerce also increased with the influx of industrial money.

Because it brought these changes to Monroe, industry is a significant part of the city's past. As the largest employer in town, and one of the earliest, the Monroe and Walton Mills must be seen as a major force in Monroe's industrial heritage.

Landscape Architecture: It is important to note that despite the regimentation of the mill villages, some attempt

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was made to improve the living environment for the workers. This is especially true in the Walton mill village, where large trees were used to provide a softer edge to the community. While the trees help define the street pattern, they are also important as a local attempt to provide pleasing amenities for the residents.

\*Denotes a building still standing.

VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

See Overview Statment.

MONROE AND WALTON HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 MONROE, GEORGIA  
 MAP M-34

- Contributing Structures
  - ▨ Non-historic Structures
  - Intrusions
  - Boundaries
  - ⊙ Photo Number/Direction
- Other maps of districts: M-33  
 Map prepared January 1983 by David J. Brown

NOTE: See MAP M-33  
 FOR CONTINUATION OF  
 MONROE HILLS DISTRICT

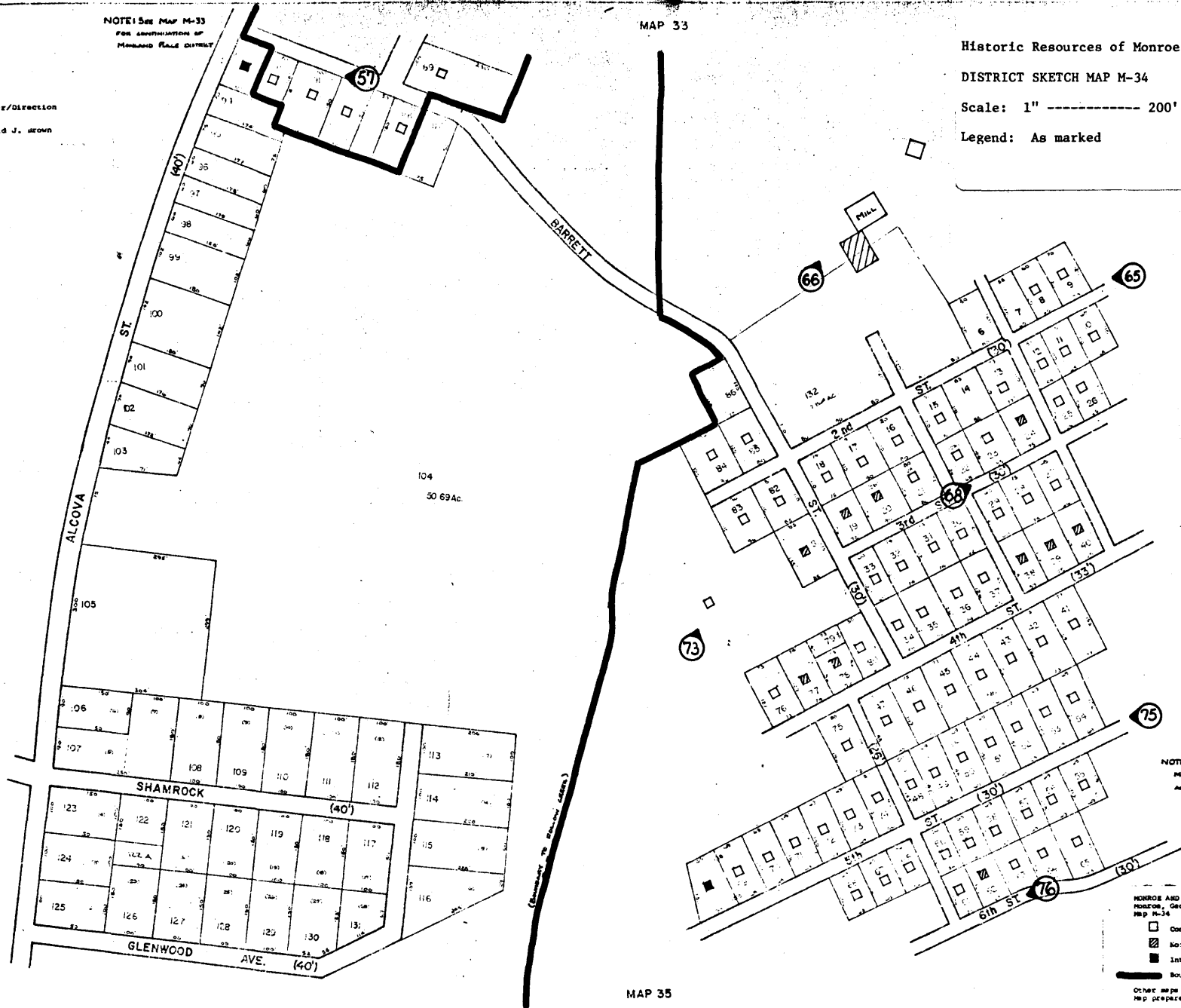
MAP 33

Historic Resources of Monroe, Walton Co., Ga.

DISTRICT SKETCH MAP M-34

Scale: 1" ----- 200'

Legend: As marked



NOTE: See MAPS M-33, M-35, M-43, AND  
 M-44 FOR CONTINUATION OF MONROE  
 AND WALTON HILLS DISTRICT

MONROE AND WALTON HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 MONROE, GEORGIA  
 MAP M-34

- Contributing Structures
  - ▨ Non-historic Structures
  - Intrusions
  - Boundaries
  - ⊙ Photo Number/Dir
- Other maps of districts: M-33, M-35, M-43, &  
 M-44 prepared January 1983 by David J. Brown

MAP 35

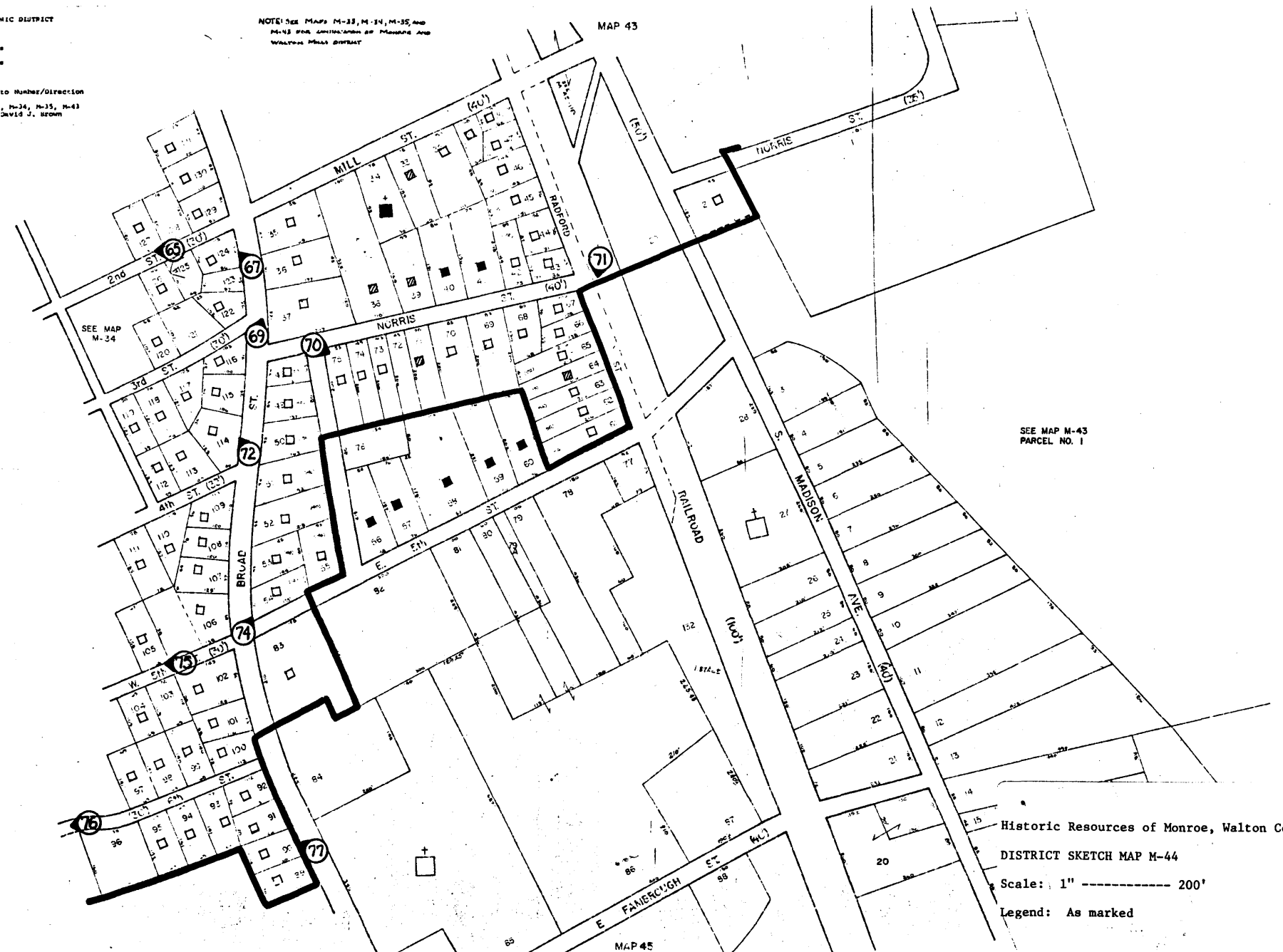
MONROE AND WALTON MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 Monroe, Georgia  
 Map M-44

Contributing Structures  
 Non-historic structures  
 Interlines  
 Boundaries  
 Photo Number/Direction

Other maps of districts: M-33, M-34, M-35, M-43  
 Map prepared January 1981 by David J. Brown

NOTE: See MAPS M-33, M-34, M-35, and  
 M-43 FOR CONTINUATION OF MONROE AND  
 WALTON MILLS DISTRICT

MAP 43



SEE MAP M-43  
 PARCEL NO. 1

Historic Resources of Monroe, Walton Co., Ga.  
 DISTRICT SKETCH MAP M-44  
 Scale: 1" ----- 200'  
 Legend: As marked

WALTON COUNTY GEORGIA	<p>LEGEND</p> <p>--- BOUNDARIES</p> <p>--- PHOTO NUMBER/DIRECTION</p> <p>□ CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES</p> <p>▨ NON-HISTORIC STRUCTURES</p> <p>■ INTERLINES</p> <p>○ PHOTO NUMBER/DIRECTION</p>	<p>MAP M-44 COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS        AND FIELD SURVEYS. THE CITY AND COUNTY ENGINEERS        ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION CONTAINED        HEREIN.</p>	<p>Map by  <b>NEWS MAPPING CO.</b>        P. O. Box 442        Athens, Ga.</p>	<p>MONROE        1981  <b>M-44</b></p>
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