

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUN 28 1984

date entered JUL 26 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Irvin General Merchandise Store

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Irvin Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Cornelia

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

code 013

county Habersham

code 137

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Edward E. Strain, III, and Dennis T. Cathey / Cathey and Strain, Attorneys at Law

street & number P.O. Box 689

city, town Cornelia

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia 30531

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Habersham County Courthouse

city, town Clarkesville

state Georgia 30523

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title See Continuation Sheet.

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Irvin General Merchandise Store is a two-story brick commercial building located in downtown Cornelia, Habersham County, Georgia. Extending the full width of a city block with an older facade facing Irvin Street and a new facade fronting on Hodges Street, it is flanked by other commercial structures.

Both store facades are constructed of brick laid in common bond and are divided into three bays by brick piers. The earlier, probably ca. 1904, Irvin Street facade has, on the first floor, a recessed central entrance flanked by large plateglass windows. The present appearance of this storefront area results from a recent certified rehabilitation of the building and closely resembles the historic appearance of the first floor. On the second floor, this facade has pairs of segmental arched windows with a brick string course and corbeled cornice above. The Hodges Street facade, which dates from sometime between 1922 and 1932, when the building was extended to the rear, is similar but more modern in design. It has the same arrangement of bays with a brick string course and corbeled cornice in low relief. In 1940, when the Belk Company bought this building, a facelift was performed on both facades and the interior. At this time, the windows on the second floor of the Hodges Street facade were bricked in, and glass double doors, plateglass windows, black tile trim, and a rectangular panel of black and white tile (which originally advertised "Belk Gallant Co." in large letters) were added to both facades. The Hodges Street facade remains intact from that date. More recently, an aluminum false facade was added to and then removed from the Irvin Street facade.

Prior to the recent certified rehabilitation of the building, the interior contained two open floors and a mezzanine with display cases and closets along the walls on all floors. Twelve columns in two rows, rounded on the first floor and square on the second, rose through both floors. The mezzanine is still supported by eight of these. Presently, the Irvin Street half of the first floor is subdivided into offices. Original columns in this area are still visible, and a skylight, covered over in a 1940s Belk remodeling, has been reinstalled in its original location. The rear (Hodges Street area) of the first floor and the second floor remain open areas with ceilings and lighting fixtures dating from the 1940s. A new stair has been constructed along the east wall in the rear area. On the second floor, an original atrium area has been boxed in to provide finished walls connecting the first-floor library and the skylight.

The building, located in the central business district of downtown Cornelia, has no landscaping. It is part of a block of historic buildings which faces the railroad track that bisects the community. The buildings appear to date from the early 1900s, although some facades have been recently altered.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1900, 1922-32      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Irvin General Merchandise Store is historically significant in the areas of architecture and commerce. Architecturally, the building is significant as a landmark historic building in downtown Cornelia. It is one of the oldest and the largest historic commercial structures with an intact facade in Cornelia. The contrast between the largely Victorian turn-of-the-century front facade and the more modern 1920s rear facade reflects both the evolution of this building and changing architectural tastes in the early twentieth century. In terms of commerce, the building is significant for its association with the Irvin General Merchandise Store, a large general store that serviced Cornelia and the surrounding mountain counties for many years. The above areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register criteria A and C.

Architecturally, this turn-of-the-century building is a good example of a late-Victorian general store in small-town Georgia. Its load-bearing brick construction and the segmental arched windows, string course, and corbeled cornice of the earlier (Irvin Street) facade are typical of this style and period. The slightly later 1920s rear (Hodges Street) facade provides an interesting contrast and provides evidence of changing architectural tastes in the early twentieth century. Built of the same material and retaining the same architectural elements--piers, string course and cornice--it nevertheless presents a more streamlined appearance, with simpler and less three-dimensional detailing than the earlier facade. The exterior of the building remains largely intact despite some cosmetic changes made by the Belk-Gallant Company in 1940. Significant interior features include the rows of wooden columns.

In terms of commerce, the building is important as the home of a large general store which evolved over the years into a modern department store. The city of Cornelia was chartered in 1887. It developed at the junction of two rail lines which were built in 1872 and 1882, bringing immediate commercial development to the area. One of the earliest businesses to begin operating was a general store, apparently housed in a wooden structure and located on the present side of the Irvin General Merchandise Store. In 1884, this business was sold to Peter King and I.T. Sellers, who, in turn, in 1904, sold it to G.B. Irvin. The existing brick structure was probably built by Irvin at this time. Under Irvin's ownership, the general store evolved into one of the largest department stores in this rural section of the state. Its location, across from the railroad tracks near Cornelia's transportation hub, facilitated the delivery of merchandise. Typically, the store provided a wide range of goods and services that included furniture, dry goods, clothing, and even funeral arrangements.

[continued]

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Jaeger, Dale. "Historic Property Information Form: King and Sellars-Irvin-Belk Building," October 15, 1981. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Clarkesville, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	2	6	7	9	4	0	3	8	2	1	5	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of the city lot presently associated with the building. It is outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed property identification map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state		code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

date June 13, 1984

street & number 270 Washington Street, S.W.

telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta

state Georgia 30334

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/20/84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

7/26/84

*for Helene Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



IRVIN GENERAL MERCHANDISE STORE  
Cornelia, Habersham County, Georgia

PLAT MAP

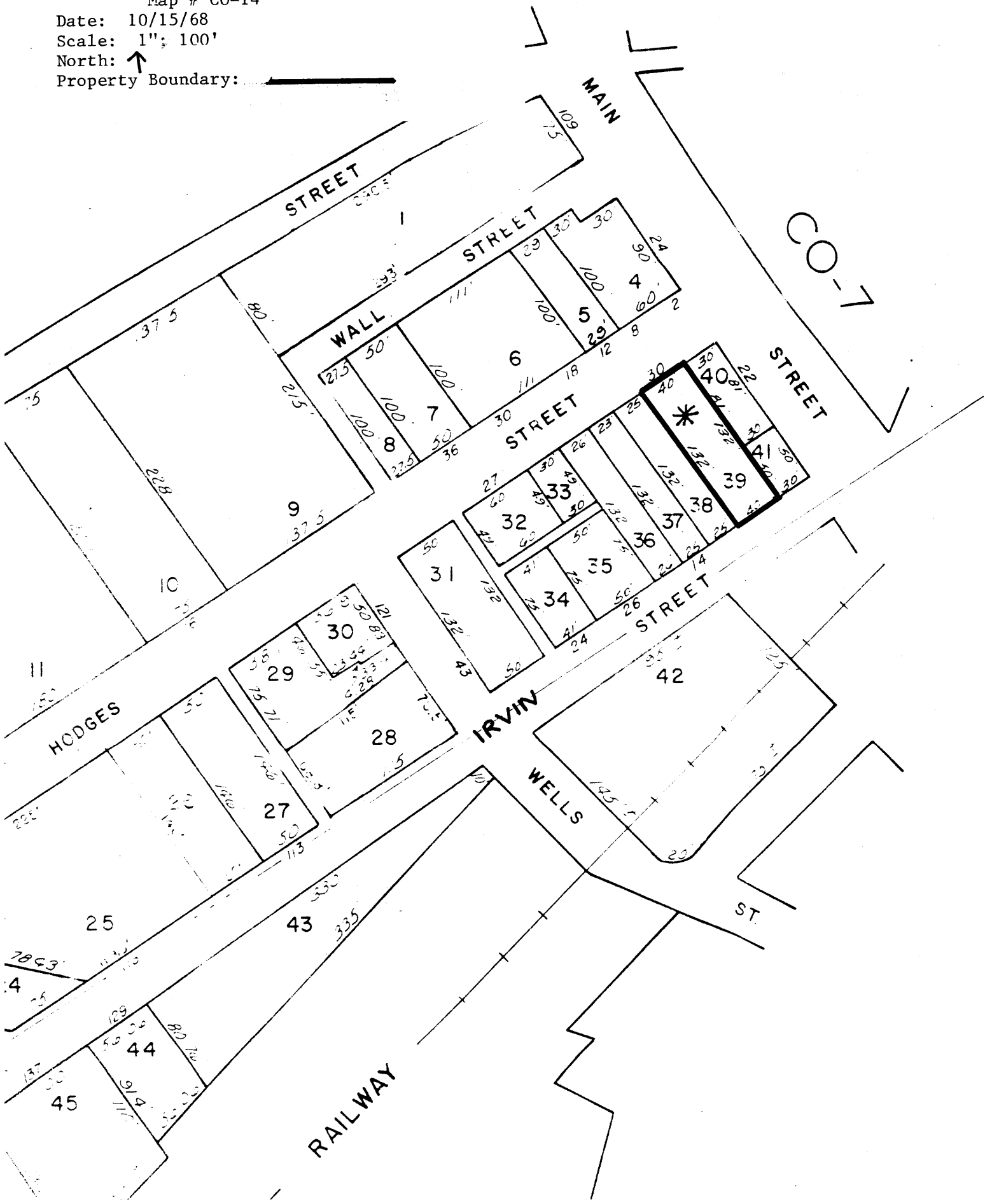
Source: Habersham Co. Property Information  
Map # CO-14

Date: 10/15/68

Scale: 1" = 100'

North: ↑

Property Boundary: —————



IRVIN GENERAL MERCHANDISE STORE  
Cornelia, Habersham County, Georgia

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

North: ↗

