

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Ala. Historical Commission

RECEIVED 4
- 6 1994

RECEIVED

APR 20 1994

1546

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 an 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 Leeds Downtown Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number See Inventory NA not for publication

city or town Leeds NA vicinity

state Alabama code AL county Jefferson code 073 zip code 35094

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 50. 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] 11/29/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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] Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall Entered in National Register 1-12-95 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
22	7	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
22	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty Store

Transportation/Rail-related

Government/City Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty Store

Transportation/Rail-related

Government/City Hall

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/Early 20th Century American

Movements/Commercial Style

Late 19th/Early 20th Century American

Movements/Other: Railroad Housing

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Wood

roof Asphalt

other

8. Narrative Description

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

The Leeds historic district consists of several downtown commercial blocks that directly adjoin the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad Depot, the historic nucleus of downtown Leeds. The sections of Ninth Street from just south of Parkway to just north of Thornton Avenue form the north/south axis of the district while Thornton Avenue from Ninth Street to Tenth Street and Railroad Avenue from Ninth Street to Eleventh Street with the depot situated between the two avenues form the west/east axis (Figure 1). This "P" shaped arrangement of streets contains twenty-nine buildings, twenty-two of which contribute to the historic significance of the district, and five sites.

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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

Transportation

Period of Significance

1883 - 1936

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Leeds Downtown Historic
Name of Property

District

Jefferson Co., Alabama
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 10 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	542690	37111650
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	16	543080	37111440

3	16	542890	3711080
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	16	542500	3711280

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 Gene A. Ford/Architectural Historian

organization The University of Alabama, Archaeological Division date 9/9/93

street & number 13075 Moundville Archaeological Park telephone 348-7774

city or town Moundville state Alabama zip code 35474

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 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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

RECEIVED

- 6 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

The topography of the area is relatively flat as is much of downtown Leeds with the exception of the Georgia Pacific Southern Railroad grade which rises several feet or more above the surrounding ground. The bridge of the Central of Georgia Railroad rises to some eighteen feet above ground to allow passage over Parkway (Highway 78) at the east end of town.

The area selected as the historic district is bounded to the east by several more commercial blocks. With the exception of a classic 1920s gas station there are no historic buildings located on these blocks. Most of the buildings in this area are constructed of concrete blocks. The elevated grade and bridge of the Central of Georgia Railroad directly adjoin these blocks and form the eastern boundary of Leeds.

The area directly west of the historic district features a number of early twentieth-century commercial buildings, most of which are located on Parkway (Highway 78), which crosses Ninth Street. These buildings are similar in style and age to those in the district. Like those in the district, they represent the consequential growth of Leeds that developed out of the construction of the Georgia Pacific and Central of Georgia Railroads and the Standard Portland Cement Company in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the Parkway buildings were not included in the NRHP nomination as they do not represent the initial stage of downtown development.

The blocks south of Parkway contain a number of modern buildings, parking spaces, and vacant lots. These blocks are bounded to the south by a cement factory. Built in 1905-1906, the Standard Portland Cement Factory spurred another wave of development in Leeds. A number of the early twentieth-century factory buildings still stand, including an excellent Art Deco administration building. The cement processing plant is still in operation, but under a different name.

Located just northwest of the cement plant is a residential community that extends westward to Ashville Road and northward to the Central of Georgia railroad tracks. This community was built to provide housing for local merchants and cement factory employees. Featured in this early twentieth-century residential section are many fine examples of Craftsman bungalows constructed of fieldstone.

Unfortunately, the area north of the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad tracks has lost much of its historical identity. The Central of Georgia Depot and its associated structures have been absent from downtown Leeds for many years. A number of historic businesses situated around the depot have long since disappeared. The historic fabric of this area has been replaced with open lots and modern buildings.

Located to the northeast of the Georgia Pacific/Southern Depot are a number of residential blocks. Most of the houses in this area tend to be of the Post WW II variety: folk bungalows, modern side gable cottages, and frame and brick ranches.

Ninth Street is the commercial core of the historic district. It contains 14 contributing (C) buildings, 2 noncontributing (NC) buildings, and 5 sites. Many trees punctuate both sides

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Description cont.

of Ninth Street. Somewhat concealed from view behind two trees are Ann's Style Shop (#21C) and a vacant building (#22C). The two wood frame, commercial buildings rise to a height of one story as does the brick City Hall (#23NC), which is located across the street. A tree standing on the southeast corner of Parkway and Ninth Street provides abundant shade for the front of City Hall. These three buildings mark the southern boundary of the district.

Two one-story, brick commercial buildings occupy the Northeast corner of Parkway and Ninth Street. The southernmost of the two buildings has been covered with wood and concrete blocks thus compromising its architectural integrity. The one-story building (#1C) adjacent to the corner building rises slightly above its southern neighbor only to be overshadowed by a series of four two-story, brick, commercial buildings(#2-5C). The second and first floor bays of these buildings run in continuous parallel lines, suggesting the buildings are one composite unit. Contrary to this unified appearance, the top of the northernmost building (#5C) slightly projects above the rest of the roof lines, and the lighter color of the southernmost building (#2C) differs from the darker color of the other buildings. Thus, the southern and northernmost buildings in the series appear to be part of, yet separate from, the commercial unit.

A void caused by an alley way that runs west/east across Ninth Street breaks up what would otherwise be a continuous commercial facade that runs from Parkway to Railroad Avenue. On the north side of the alley the commercial facade resumes; however, the series of three buildings (#6-8C) that occupies this area rise no higher than one story. With the exception of a continuous roof line and adjoining walls, the buildings appear to be distinct units. Along the entire side of the northernmost edifice (#8C), a mural depicts the spectacular arrival of a train in Leeds. Fittingly, this building is called the Depot Restaurant. The building progression gives way to Railroad Avenue, the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad grade, train depot grounds, and Thornton Avenue.

Another Ninth Street commercial block section stands on the northeast side of Thornton Avenue. This block consists of three businesses unified in a one-story, brick commercial edifice (#16C). Unifying elements include a continuous, wrap-around belt course, parallel bay arrangements, continuous roof line, and a canted entry bay. The canted entry bay at the southeast corner of the unit unifies the Ninth Street and Thornton Avenue sides of the building. The northern side of the unit marks the northern boundary of the historic district. However, directly adjoining this side is a modern brick building with aluminum siding. An alley way that runs west/east across Ninth Street extends along the north side of the modern building.

On the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Parkway, north of Structures #21C and #22C, stands a modern white gazebo in an otherwise empty lot. The sides of two two-story commercial buildings, one on Parkway and the other on Ninth Street (#19C), form the backdrop of the gazebo and the lot, both of which are partially concealed from view from Ninth Street by several trees.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Leads Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Description cont.

Hardly noticeable against the two-story, brick backdrop is a small, one-story, plain, brick, commercial building (#20C). It stands between the lot and the larger building, and is the beginning of a series of brick edifices on the west side of Ninth Street. In addition to the lot and small building, an alley on the north side of the large, two-story, commercial building- (#19C), appears to magnify the size of the building by creating a void around it. The magnified edifice features a number of first and second floor bays along the Ninth Street and alley sides.

On the north side of the alley the commercial block resumes with a one-story, brick building (#18C). The edifice, like Structure #20C, is partially concealed from view by several trees and dwarfed by a much larger adjacent building to its north. This building (#17C) features one-and-a-half to two stories, brick construction, numerous bays, and a canted main entry bay, which unifies the Ninth Street and Railroad Avenue sides of the building. Concrete steps lead down from the canted entry to Railroad Avenue which marks the northern end of the historic district on the west side of Ninth Street. Directly adjoining Railroad Avenue is the railroad grade. North of the tracks on the northwest corner of Thornton Avenue and Ninth Street is a modern one-story, brick, commercial building. It stands across Ninth Street from Structure #16C.

Structure #8C occupies the southeast corner of Ninth Street and Railroad Avenue. While the long side of the building (the side that features the train mural) extends along Ninth Street, the facade faces Railroad Avenue, the railroad grade, and the train depot. The one-story building features brick construction and decorative facade elements.

Adjoining the brick edifice on its east side is a modern one-story, brick addition with a side gable roof. Between this addition and a one-story, frame building (#9C) an alley extends from Railroad Avenue to another alley running perpendicular to it. A large tree partially conceals the frame building from view. The building, once a combination store and dwelling, extends along the alley. Several modern sheds and a garage stand behind the building, which very much resembles a folk bungalow. The east side of the bungalow-like building is bounded by a large lot that is vacant with the exception of a one-story, concrete block structure (#25NC) that once served as a car wash operation. The lot extends to the west side of Tenth Street.

Another Railroad Avenue block begins on the east side of Tenth Street with an one-story, aluminum warehouse. Housed inside this modern warehouse are several businesses, including a tire repair shop and small motor shop. East of the warehouse is a 1950s, concrete block bungalow. Next to it, separated by a driveway, is a worker's cottage, the gable roof of which runs parallel to the driveway. The cottage (#10C) has been modified by the addition of a front-oriented gable roof structure of the folk bungalow variety. A screened-in porch fronts the north side of the modified dwelling. Standing next to it is a late nineteenth-century, single pen cottage (#11C). The wood frame dwelling features one story, a single bay facade, and a side gable roof. The single pen dwelling marks the eastern boundary of the historic district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 7 Page 4

Description cont.

Situated between Railroad Avenue and Thornton Avenue is the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad Depot (#12C). The train depot directly adjoins the railroad tracks to the north and consists of landscaped grounds, a collection of railroad memorabilia, a wooden platform, and the depot building. The one-story, wood frame depot features a cupola, a low-pitched hip roof, wide eaves, brackets, and numerous bays. The lot adjoining the depot is a holding facility for numerous vehicles. The depot marks the eastern boundary of the historic district on the south side of Thornton Avenue.

The north side of Thornton Avenue features the south side of Structure #16C. On its east side is a two-story, brick, commercial building (#15C). A two-and-a-half-story, wood frame hotel and residence (#14C) occupies the space east of Structure #15C. Several tall trees stand in front of the historic hotel. East of it stands an eil-shaped, railroad worker's cottage (#13C). Tenth Street borders the lot on which stands the worker's dwelling and forms the eastern boundary of the historic district on the north side of Thornton Avenue.

An historic photograph in Leeds...Her Story (Figure 2), dated circa 1911, depicts one of the earliest Ninth Street (then Called Elm Street) streetscapes (Leeds History Committee 1979). Back then, the road was dirt. Stretches of ground with either sparse vegetation or large trees extended from the sidewalks in front of the commercial buildings to the narrow dirt road. Many of the buildings featured cloth awnings. The building presently housing Total Health Care (#19C), is pictured in the left middleground. It has undergone only a few cosmetic changes through the years. Another familiar building is the one that is currently occupied by Leeds Insurance (#2C). In 1911 the buildings featured cloth awnings and open clerestories. Also pictured in the photo are several buildings that no longer stand. Two frame buildings, one two-and-a-half-stories high and the other one-and-a-half-stories, stood where now stand Chic Boutique (#3-4C) and White's Service Center (#5C).

Also pictured in the middle background is the town well. It was located between the Georgia Pacific Railroad and Central of Georgia Railroad, which was several blocks north of the Georgia Pacific tracks. It functioned as the town social center. People ostensibly gathered there for a drink of water, but in reality, they sought gossip or an opportunity to discuss politics. Eventually, the well was filled-in and paved over. It is located some distance north of the present Lee's Tobacco and Candy Store (#16C).



Present 9th Street and Parkway Looking North to Railroads —

Courtesy: Fred Scott

Figure 2

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 7 Page 5

Description cont.

Another historic photograph in Leeds...Her Story (Figure 3), dated circa 1920s, depicts some structural and cosmetic changes on Ninth Street in the early 1920s. Sometime after 1911, the road was widened and paved to facilitate automobile traffic, which replaced horse drawn wagons as the major mode of transportation. Very little of the abundant vegetation of the previous decade remained on the street sides. Evidently, wood and metal frame awnings were the rage in the 1920s as all the building sported them rather than cloth awnings. Close inspection of the historic photograph reveals that all of the buildings considered to contribute to the significance of the historic district are in place with the exception of the dry goods store located in the right middleground. Reportedly, this building was destroyed by fire in the 1930s and was shortly thereafter replaced by several buildings that presently house Pak-N-Ship and Ronnie Armstrong's Insurance (#6C) and Bishop Cleaners (#7C).

The streetscape of present day Ninth Street somewhat resembles that of the 1920s with the exception of a few cosmetic differences. The once ubiquitous clerestories of the 1910s and 1920s have been enclosed in more recent times. A few of the brown colored brick buildings have been painted white. In addition, the street sides have been relandscaped with planters and trees. Otherwise, the buildings have remained in place.

Inventory

The inventory of individual properties within the historic district includes both contributing and noncontributing resources.

Contributing Resources

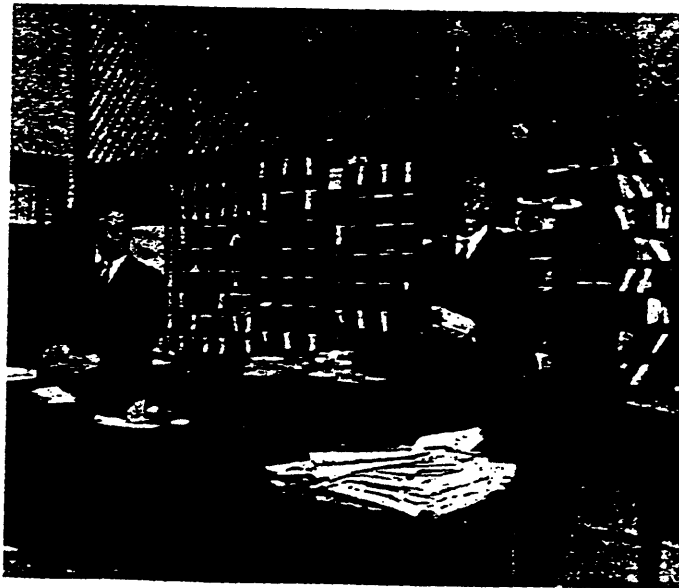
Structure #1, a contributing resource called Phillip's Shoes, 102 9th Street N.E., has occupied its place on Ninth Street since 1912. An historic photograph in Leeds...Her Story, dated circa 1920s, depicts the building as a hardware store, possibly called the Leeds Supply Company (Figure 3) (Leeds History Committee 1979). The one-story, light-colored, brick, commercial building featured a flat roof, decorative brickwork on the facade, corbeled string courses, a large projecting signage board, a clerestory, and an indistinguishable bay arrangement. Today, Structure #1 features grey colored bricks, an enclosed clerestory, a cloth awning that resembles the type that once hung from Ninth Street buildings in the 1910s, and a modern display front. The decorative brickwork above the enclosed clerestory is still visible beneath the recent paint.

Structure #2, a contributing resource presently occupied by Leeds Insurance Agency, 106 9th Street N.E., ca. 1908, has stood on Ninth Street since the early 1910s. In 1911 it was called the W. N. Lee and J. W. Kincaid Building (Leeds History Committee 1979). At that time a dry goods business operated in it. Johnnie Hartgrove, a present occupant, said that various businesses have occupied the building, including a grocery store, law office, water-works office, and an insurance office.



Present Ninth Street in the early 1920's . . . note Easter Sale sign.

Figure 3



*Old Post Office circa 1938 where Bishop's Cleaners is now.
Charlie Stone and J. Melvin Spruiell. Courtesy: Robert Spruiell*

Figure 4

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 7 Page 6

Inventory cont.

Basically, the building has undergone only a few cosmetic changes in its history. A 1911 photograph in Leeds...Her Story records the two-story, brick, commercial edifice with a cloth awning (Figure 2). A 1920s photograph in the same source shows the building without an awning, as it is today. Sometime after the 1920s, the light-colored bricks were painted their present white color. The building features, as it has throughout its history, corbeled brick string courses and other patterned brickwork, second floor bays with segmental arch heads, brick lintels, ten pane windows (may not be historic), and a clerestory (now enclosed). The four bay, first floor facade arrangement features two, exterior single leaf entry bays with adjacent plate glass bays. More than likely, this bay arrangement is of modern construction.

Structures #3 and #4, 112 9th Street N.E., contributing resources constructed in the late 1910s and currently used as a boutique, were once identical. An historic 1920s photograph shows the two adjacent commercial buildings with wood and metal frame awnings suspended by tie rods (Figure 3). The two-story brick buildings featured matching, corbeled, brick string courses, three second floor bays with a continuous stone lintel, decorative square and diamond shaped tile inlays, open clerestories, and commercial first-floor bay arrangements (indistinguishable in photograph).

A recent inspection of the buildings revealed that both have had their awnings changed to vintage 1910s cloth awnings and have had their clerestories enclosed. The southernmost of the two buildings on Ninth Street has been painted a lighter color than its neighbor. It is not known if the two buildings once housed separate enterprises, but now, the first-floor dividing wall is absent so that the two buildings house one business.

Structure #5, a contributing resource at 114 9th Street N.E. was built in the late 1910s. An historic 1920s photograph shows the two-story, brick, commercial edifice rising ever-so-slightly above its neighbors (Figure 3). It featured a parapet that somewhat resembles a broken pediment, four second floor bays, that are parallel to those of Structures #3 and #4, a continuous stone lintel, an open clerestory, square and diamond-shaped tile inlays, wood awning, and a commercial first-floor bay arrangement. According to a 1930 Sanborn Map, the basement housed an undertaker's business through the 1920s and 1930s.

Today, the edifice no longer features an awning. The clerestory has been enclosed. A hardware store recently occupied the building. The original hardwood floor is still intact in the front of the store. It is currently vacant.

Structure #6, 116 and 120 9th Street N.E., a contributing resource constructed in the 1930s, is a one-story, brick, commercial building. The building stands on the site of several previous buildings. More than likely, the edifice once featured open clerestories. A recent inspection revealed that the facade above the two entries has been covered up with some material. The bay arrangement has been altered as well. It features corbeled brick string courses. The building is considered to be a contributing resource due to its age.

Bishop Cleaners, Structure #7, 122 9th Street N.E., ca. 1936, is a contributing resource. The one-story, brick, commercial building stands on the site of a previous building. An historic, late 1930s photograph in Leeds...Her Story shows the interior of the present cleaners

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLeeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, AlabamaSection number 7 Page 7

Inventory cont.

(Figure 4) (Leeds History Committee 1979). It featured wood bins along one wall. The bins held parcels and letters for the Post Office that once occupied the building.

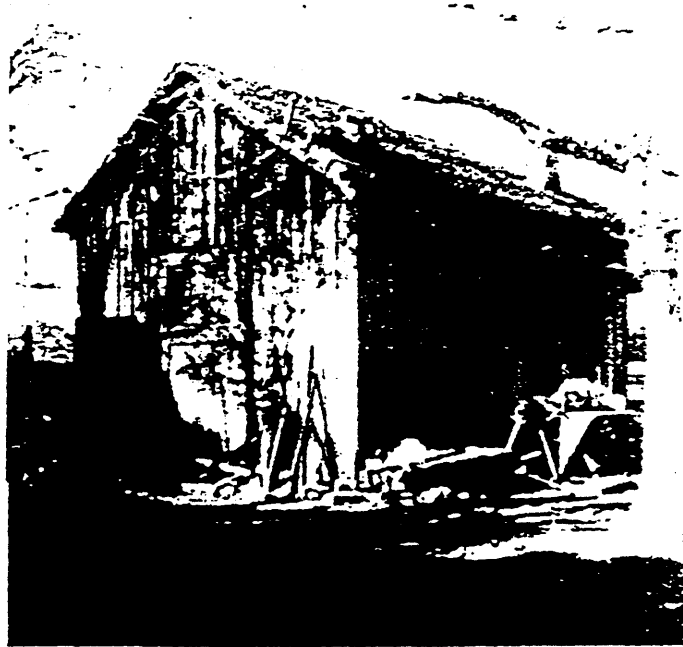
Today, the building is painted off-white and the clerestory is enclosed. An awning shades the modern bay arrangement with a central single leaf plate glass bay flanked on either side by multi-pane plate glass bays. The facade above the bays features a decorative string course with flanking brackets and another parallel, decorative, brick band. An interesting feature is the end pilasters; they rise above the roof line and a section of bricks step down in several levels to the roof line. Whether this was done for decoration or to repair the roof, which leaks along the roof/wall line, is unknown.

The Depot Restaurant, Structure #8, 913 Railroad Avenue, ca. 1914, is a contributing resource that stands on the corner of Ninth Street and Railroad Avenue. The one-story, brick commercial edifice has had a long history in the restaurant business. In the 1920s, Blant Dorough operated a restaurant in the building (Leeds History Committee 1979). A recent inspection of the building revealed that a number of Ninth Street-side bays have been enclosed. The facade, which faces Railroad Avenue, has been painted white. A mural of a train arriving in town was painted on the Ninth Street-side in 1990. The facade features a corbeled brick string course, another horizontal decorative, brick band, and a modern bay arrangement with two single leaf entry bays flanked on either side by plate glass bays and end pilasters. A modern brick addition has been added to the building facing Railroad Avenue.

Structure #9, 917 Railroad Avenue, a contributing resource constructed circa 1922, is a one-story, wood frame building. It features a front gable roof, interior end chimney, four bay facade with two single leaf entry bays with transoms flanked on either side by enclosed bays, and a full-width porch with engaged gable roof, and simple posts on brick piers. A number of the side bays have been enclosed. There are several modern sheds behind the building. A 1930 Sanborn Map indicates that the front section of the building served as a store while the rear served as a dwelling. The building is currently vacant.

The Moore House, Structure #10, 1016 Railroad Avenue, ca. 1900, is a contributing resource. Although the dwelling has been modified by the addition of a building that resembles a folk bungalow, the original core is believed to be a double pen dwelling once used by railroad workers. The core, built around 1900, features a side gable roof, end chimney, a double pen floor plan, a side that has been altered into a facade with three bays, a single leaf entry bay, and a partial-width, screened-in, hip roof porch. The addition, added to the original core facade or rear, features a front gable roof and a single bay facade.

The Cicero Davis House, Structure #11, 1020 Railroad Avenue, is a contributing resource. Built in the late 1880s to house railroad workers, the one-story, single pen dwelling with board and batten siding has undergone few, if any, changes (Figure 5). An historic photograph in Leeds...Her story shows the dwelling as it is today with a two bay facade, single leaf entry bay, and a shed roof stoop (Figure 5). The dwelling housed Cicero and Melissa Hood Davis, both of Cherokee and African American descent, in the late 1880s (Leeds History Committee 1979). The Davises were one of the first black families to come to Leeds. Cicero Davis worked at the Georgia Pacific Railroad located across the tracks. The dwelling is a significant resource.



*Ciscero Davis home on Railroad Avenue still standing . . .
built in late 1800's. Courtesy: Lonnie Marbury*

Figure 5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLeeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, AlabamaSection number 7 Page 8

Inventory cont.

The Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad Depot, Structure #12, Thornton Avenue, ca. 1890, a contributing resource of significant status, is a one-story, wood frame transportation building located between Railroad and Thornton Avenues just east of Ninth Street. It features a cupola, which is a modern addition that was built to resemble the cupola that sat atop the roof in the early history of the building, hip roof, wide eaves, decorative brackets, three interior chimneys, multi-bay facade, and a wooden platform. The building is listed on the NRHP. Two historic photographs in Leeds...Her Story indicate that the building has undergone only a few changes, the most notable of which was the addition of a modern cupola (Figures 6 and 7).

A railroad section house, Structure #13, 932 Thornton Avenue, which stands on the corner of Thornton Avenue and Tenth Street, is a contributing resource constructed around 1900. The dwelling features a side gable roof, double pen floor plan, four bay facade with two, interior, single leaf entry bays flanked on either side by a single bay, full-width porch with an engaged gable roof and plain posts, and a rear ell addition. A 1930 Sanborn Map indicates that the dwelling stood much closer to the railroad tracks than it does today. It was moved in the late 1930s to its present site. For a long time, the dwelling housed Georgia Pacific Railroad workers.

The Hagwood Hotel, Structure #14, 918 Thornton Avenue, is, like the section house, a contributing resource of significant status. According to the Jefferson County Historic Building placque on its facade, the hotel was built in 1910. An historic photograph in Leeds...Her Story reveals that the hotel has changed little over time (Figure 8) (Leeds History Committee 1979). The two-story, wood frame edifice features a hip roof, interior chimneys, a three-over-three bay facade, a central single leaf entry bay with sidelights and a transom, a second-story entry bay with transom, a two-tiered portico with gable roof and a pent roof section, open rail balustrade, two full-height brick columns, first-floor flat roof with a plain spindlework frieze, and two brick columns. The east side of the domestic building features a bay window. There is a concrete block garage in the back of the building. The building functioned as a hotel for Georgia Pacific Railroad workers in its early history. Today, it is a private residence owned by Hagwood family members.

Hagwood Machine Tool and Welding, Structure #15, 906 Thornton Avenue, is a contributing resource built around 1910. According to Leeds...Her Story, the building originally served as a stable for the Hagwood Hotel; later it was dry goods store. The building is currently used as a machine shop. The building has changed little over time. The two-story, brick commercial edifice features a second-story facade with two eighteen-pane bays, a brick string course, and a first floor with three sliding doors.

Lee Tobacco and Candy Store, Structure #16, 200 9th Street N.E., is a contributing resource built around 1922. The one-story, brick commercial building features four brick belt courses, three of which wrap around the Thornton Avenue and Ninth Street sides, and a canted entry bay facing the corner of Ninth Street and Thornton Avenue. It has been subdivided into three compartments. The southernmost section features a side entry bay with an



An early view of SOUTHERN DEPOT facing Hagwood Hotel.

Courtesy: Maxie Hagwood
010

Figure 6



Figure 7



HAGWOOD HOTEL was built in 1910 and run by Ada Moor Hagwood. Meals were served during the early days but later rooms were rented. Clientele were mostly railroad operators. Oscar Neuman, Southern, and Sarge Jackson, Central of Georgia. Others who resided there at one time were D. M. Goss, Ralph Hale and Pat Lindon and wife. Later, Red Turner, W. W. Teal, E. R. Perdue, Ike Levys, John Herron, T. W. Mays, Harry Woodring, Tommy Tomlinson, and others.

Adjacent to the hotel was a livery stable run by three Hagwood brothers, later a dry goods store and presently a machine shop.
 Courtesy: Maxie Hagwood

Figure 8



Hotel built by Arthur Mason Spruiell in 1906 of lumber from his sawmill. The property was purchased from Leeds Improvement Company and the deed dated 6th of April 1906 was for property "... to construct a good hotel." The hotel was built to house the workers who were to build the cement plant. At the time the hotel was operating the cement plant was the only building in Leeds which had electric lighting. The hotel later became known as the Babb Hotel operated by Mr. and Mrs. Will Babb. Dr. W. O. Lawrence had his office in one of the rooms on the ground floor. The hotel was located on the corner of present Ninth Street and Parkway Drive and faced Ninth Street.

Courtesy: Genia Butts Barnett

Figure 9

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLeeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, AlabamaSection number 7 Page 9

Inventory cont.

aluminum shed roof awning which faces Thornton Avenue, a paneled corner post in front of the double leaf entry bay, and a wrap-around aluminum, awning. The ceiling above the entry features wood paneling. The middle section features an enclosed clerestory and a recessed double leaf entry bay flanked on either side by plate glass bays, and an aluminum awning. The northernmost section is identical to the middle, with the exception that it has been painted white. The entry bays of the two end sections also feature paneled wood ceilings.

Structure #17, the Abercrombie-Walker Building currently called The Junction, 127 9th Street N.E., is a significant contributing resource. Built in 1880, it is one of Leeds earliest downtown businesses. It has had two owners during its one-hundred-year-history. In its time the building has served as a hardware store, a furniture store, and a general store. The main exterior changes include a modern gable roof addition and enclosed clerestories. A modern office space has been added to the interior.

Currently, the one-story, commercial edifice features a wrap-around eave with brackets, decorative corbeled brickwork, brick pilasters, a five bay facade on Ninth Street, and a four bay facade, including a canted entry bay facing Railroad Avenue.

Structure #18, First Real Estate, 117 9th Street N.E., is a contributing resource built around 1922. It features a flat roof, brick construction, a five bay facade, and central double leaf entry bay. A 1930 Sanborn Map shows that the building was divided in half and featured an awning.

Structure #19, 113 9th Street N.E., a contributing resource of significant status, is presently occupied by Total Health Care. It has been a drug store since 1906 (Leeds History Committee 1979). The two-story, commercial building is pictured in two historic photographs (Figures 2 and 3). Presently, it features four second floor bays with segmental arch heads, a signage area, enclosed clerestory, and a modern first floor bay arrangement.

Structure #20, a contributing resource presently occupied by Merle Norman Cosmetics, 109 9th Street N.E., was constructed circa 1922. A 1930 Sanborn Map records the building as an office. It featured an awning. Presently, the one-story, brick, commercial building features an awning, three bay facade (one bay is enclosed), and a single leaf entry bay. The adjacent lot next to the cosmetic studio on the corner of Ninth Street and Parkway is the site of the former historic Babb Hotel (Figure 9).

Structure #21, located just south of the southwest corner of Ninth Street and Parkway, 109 9th Street, is a contributing resource. Built around 1910, it is a one-story, wood frame, commercial building currently occupied by Ann's Style Shop. It features a front gable roof and a three bay facade with a central single leaf entry bay. It was built in the early twentieth century by a professor from Leeds Academy. It once stood on Parkway. A 1930 Sanborn Map shows the building in place on Ninth Street. The map also records the building as featuring either an awning or a porch.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLeeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, AlabamaSection number 7 Page 10

Inventory cont.

Structure #22, 111 9th Street, is a contributing resource constructed around 1900. It was reported that it was moved from Parkway. A 1930 Sanborn Map shows the building in place. It features a main section with a side gable roof, a three bay facade with a central single leaf entry bay, and a full-width shed roof porch with plain posts. The rear addition features a side gable roof and several bays; it projects southward beyond the main section of the building. The addition is recorded in the Sanborn Map. The building appears to have been a dwelling at one time.

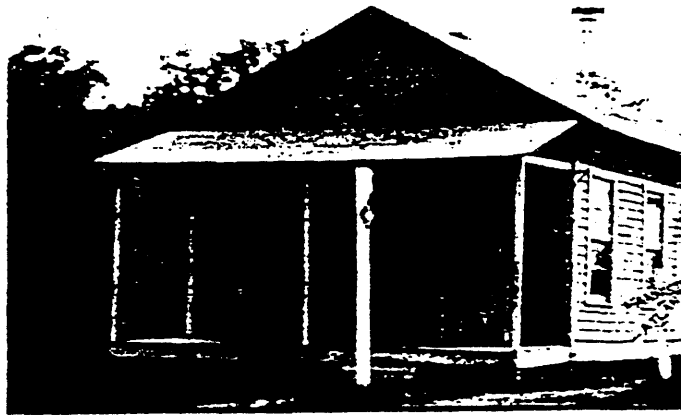
Noncontributing

Structure #23, 100 9th Street, the present City Hall, was constructed in 1953 according to a plaque located on the corner of the building. The brick, one-story government building, with a flat roof, four bay facade with a central double leaf entry bay with sidelights and transom flanked on either side by four pane windows, does not qualify as significant due to its age. However, the site upon which it stands is the site of two previous City Hall buildings. The first, constructed in the early 1900s, featured wood frame construction, front gable roof, two bay facade with single leaf entry bay, and a full-width shed roof porch (Figure 10). It faced Parkway, not Ninth Street (Leeds History Committee 1979). The second City Hall and jail was built in 1935 on the corner of Ninth Street and Parkway facing Ninth Street. Its characteristics included a side gable roof with a polygonal shaped cupola and a three bay facade with a central single leaf entry bay (Figure 11) (Leeds History Committee 1979). Since the early 1900s, the corner of Parkway and Ninth Street has been the site of Leeds City Hall.

Structure #24, 100 9th Street N.E., a television and appliance repair shop, is a non-contributing resource. In the early twentieth century a bank occupied this space. Although the overall structural integrity of the building has been greatly altered, the vault from the bank is still intact and in use. A 1930 Sanborn Map indicates that the bank was a one-story, brick structure. A recent visual inspection of the repair shop revealed that the sides of the former bank have been covered up or replaced with plywood and concrete blocks. The building features a flat roof and a modern store front bay arrangement. Too little of the original exterior of the building is left to warrant considering it a contributing resource.

Structure #25, 921 Railroad Avenue, is a noncontributing, one-story commercial building built around 1965. Constructed of concrete blocks, it features a flat roof and a two-to-three bay facade. One of the facade bays is for automobile access; another is a single leaf entry bay. The building was once used as an automobile cleaning service. It is now vacant.

Structure #26, 1000 and 1010 Railroad Avenue, is a noncontributing resource built around 1980. The one-story building is constructed of aluminum. It features a flat roof and numerous bays, several of which permit automobile access to the interior of the building. Presently, the building houses a tire repair service and a motor repair shop.



First City Hall . . . early 1900's.

Courtesy: City Hall

Figure 10



Second City Hall with Jail . . . 1935.

Courtesy: City Hall

Figure 11

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leads Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 7 Page 11

Inventory cont.

Structure #27, 1012 Railroad Avenue, is a noncontributing resource built around 1955. The one-story folk bungalow features concrete block construction, front gable roof, multi-bay facade, single leaf entry bay, and a partial-width porch. The building has served as a dwelling since its construction.

Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been completed, there is a potential for subsurface remains. Five lots may contain evidence of an earlier period of significance. These lots are the sites of the two previous city halls, town well, Babb Hotel, and two historic businesses.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 8 Page 12

Significance

Transportation

The downtown Leeds Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its collection of late nineteenth to early twentieth-century transportation buildings. In the early 1880s the Georgia Railroad Company built a line through Leeds. This rail line gave rise to a number of transportation buildings that formed the historic downtown Leeds area. At the core of the district is the Georgia Pacific Railroad Depot. Since its construction in the late nineteenth century, the depot has served as the economic and historic nucleus of downtown Leeds. Other buildings that reflect the impact of transportation in Leeds include the Hagwood Hotel and three railroad workers houses.

Commerce

The downtown Leeds Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its collection of late nineteenth to early twentieth-century commercial buildings. A number of the commercial buildings reflect the first stage of downtown development that rose out of railroad construction. The other commercial buildings reflect later stages of development spurred by the combined prosperity of the Central of Georgia and Georgia Pacific Railroad lines and the Standard Portland Cement Company.

Historical Summary

The downtown Leeds Historic District is significant in commerce and transportation. This section of downtown Leeds represents the outgrowth of the construction of the Georgia Pacific Railroad in the late nineteenth century. Since its construction, the Georgia Pacific Railroad Depot has functioned as the nucleus of the downtown area as numerous late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial and transportation buildings rose up around the depot. Today, the depot, which is listed on the NRHP, is a museum dedicated to the emergence of the Georgia Pacific Railroad and downtown Leeds.

Prior to construction of the Georgia Pacific Railroad, which was later acquired by the Southern Railroad Company, in 1882-1883, Leeds did not exist as an incorporated town. Rather, the community called Cedar Grove was a collection of independent farms. In fact, it was one of these farms that became downtown Leeds. In 1882, Wilburn K. Little sold his 156-acre farm to E. M. Tutwiler. Little had already deeded a portion of his farm to the Georgia Pacific Railroad Company (Leeds History Committee 1979). Tutwiler and the railroad company capitalized on their respective acquisitions by transforming the agricultural area into a commercial and transportation center.

After construction of the Georgia Pacific line from Birmingham to Atlanta, the depot became the focal point of Leeds. Tutwiler and a partner designed a grid pattern of streets around the depot (White 1981). The northern, southern, eastern, and western boundaries were established at a distance of one mile from the depot. The town's first commercial district concentrated around the depot along Railroad Avenue (White 1981). Leeds was incorporated in 1887.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLeeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, AlabamaSection number 8 Page 13

Significance cont.

Several of Leeds first businesses were located adjacent to the depot on what is now Ninth Street and Railroad Avenue. The first four occupants of this crossroad were William A. Abercrombie and Son, James B. Elliot and George Young, George W. Hurst, and Whitmire and Sons; they all operated general stores (Leeds History Committee 1979). Of the four buildings, only Abercrombie's (now The Junction) still stands. It was the first store built near the depot in 1880 (Leeds History Committee 1979). The other three eventually gave way to progress.

Numerous transportation structures were located along Railroad Avenue east of the depot. One of the earliest was the Cicero Davis House. It was built in the late 1880s (Leeds History Committee 1979). The single pen dwelling housed Cicero Davis and Melissa Hood Davis who were the first African American family (they were both of Cherokee Indian ancestry as well) to come to Leeds in the 1880s. Cicero Davis was a worker for the Georgia Pacific Railroad. The house still stands as do two other workers' houses built around 1900. One of the worker's houses is located near the Davis House; the other is across the street from the depot. Sometime during the turn of the century, the Southern Railroad Company acquired the property from the Georgia Pacific Railroad Company in Leeds.

To claim the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad as the sole reason for Leeds' turn-of-the-century transformation into a "manufacturing town", as promoters referred to it, would be to commit a great injustice against the Central of Georgia Railroad Company and the Standard Portland Cement Company. In 1886 the Central of Georgia built a line between Birmingham and Columbus through Leeds (Leeds History Committee 1979). The tracks were located several blocks north of the Georgia Pacific line. In 1905 the Standard Portland Cement Company built Alabama's first cement factory in Leeds (White 1981). Together, the three enterprises spurred a second stage of downtown development in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Some businesses derived their livelihoods directly from one of the railroads or the cement plant while others prospered from the general commercial scene. The Babb Hotel was built to house the workers who built the cement plant (Leeds History Committee 1979). It was built in 1906 and once stood on the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Parkway. Built in 1910, the Hagwood Hotel rented rooms to Southern Railroad workers and passengers (Leeds History Committee 1979). It still occupies its original space on Thornton Avenue across from the train depot. A drug store, a hardware store, and several general stores that came into existence before or shortly after 1910 benefitted from all the traffic generated by the industrial and transportation activities. Most of the buildings occupied by these enterprises still stand.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 8 Page 14

Significance cont.

The third stage of development came in the 1920s. While the financial climate was not overwhelming in Leeds during the 1920s according to Leeds...Her Story, it was favorable enough for a number of entrepreneurs to build numerous brick buildings all along Ninth Street near the depot (Leeds History Committee 1979). In fact, a comparison between a 1910s photograph and a 1920s photograph of Ninth Street shows the section of downtown as having undergone a building boom (Figures 2 and 3). The empty lots of the previous decade were converted into the proud sites of many attractive, brick, commercial buildings in the 1920s. The financial climate of the 1920s solidified the historic character of the sections of Thornton Avenue, Railroad Avenue, and Ninth Street, designated as the historic district, as very few historic buildings were added to the area after this decade. With the exceptions of a few cosmetic changes, the absence of the Babb Hotel and possibly one or two other historic buildings, and the addition of several buildings, two of which were constructed in the 1930s, the present scene in this area resembles that of the 1920s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 9 Page 15

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Leeds Historic Committee

1979 Leeds...Her Story. History Committee, Leeds Bicentennial Commission. Leeds, Alabama.

White, Marjorie

1981 The Birmingham District: An Industrial History and Guide. Birmingham Historical Society. Birmingham, Alabama.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leeds Downtown Historic District
Jefferson County, Alabama

Section number 10 Page 16

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Downtown Leeds Historic District are defined by the following block and lot numbers: the southern half of Lot 1 of Block 26; the eastern fifth of Lot 14, Lots 15, 16, 17, and the eastern fourth of Lot 1 of Block 23; the eastern sixth of Lot 11 of Block 13; Lots 6-9 of Block 14; Lots 1-9 of Block 21; Lots 1-9 of Block 22; and Lot 7 of Block 27.

Boundary Justification

The southern boundary is defined by the continuous site of the Leeds Court House since the early 1900s and two commercial buildings that have been part of Ninth Street since at least the 1920s. The buildings south of the Court House on Ninth Street are modern. They do not contribute to the historical integrity of the district. The northern boundary is defined by those commercial and transportation buildings on Thornton Avenue that developed as a result of the presence of the Georgia Pacific/Southern Railroad. Most of the buildings north of Thornton Avenue are modern. They do not contribute to the historical integrity of the district. The western boundary is defined by those buildings that represent the first, second, and third stages of downtown development on Ninth Street. The eastern boundary is defined by those buildings on Thornton and Railroad Avenues that represent the late nineteenth to early twentieth century transportation buildings directly associated with the Georgia Pacific Railroad. The buildings east of the transportation buildings do not contribute to the historical integrity of the district.

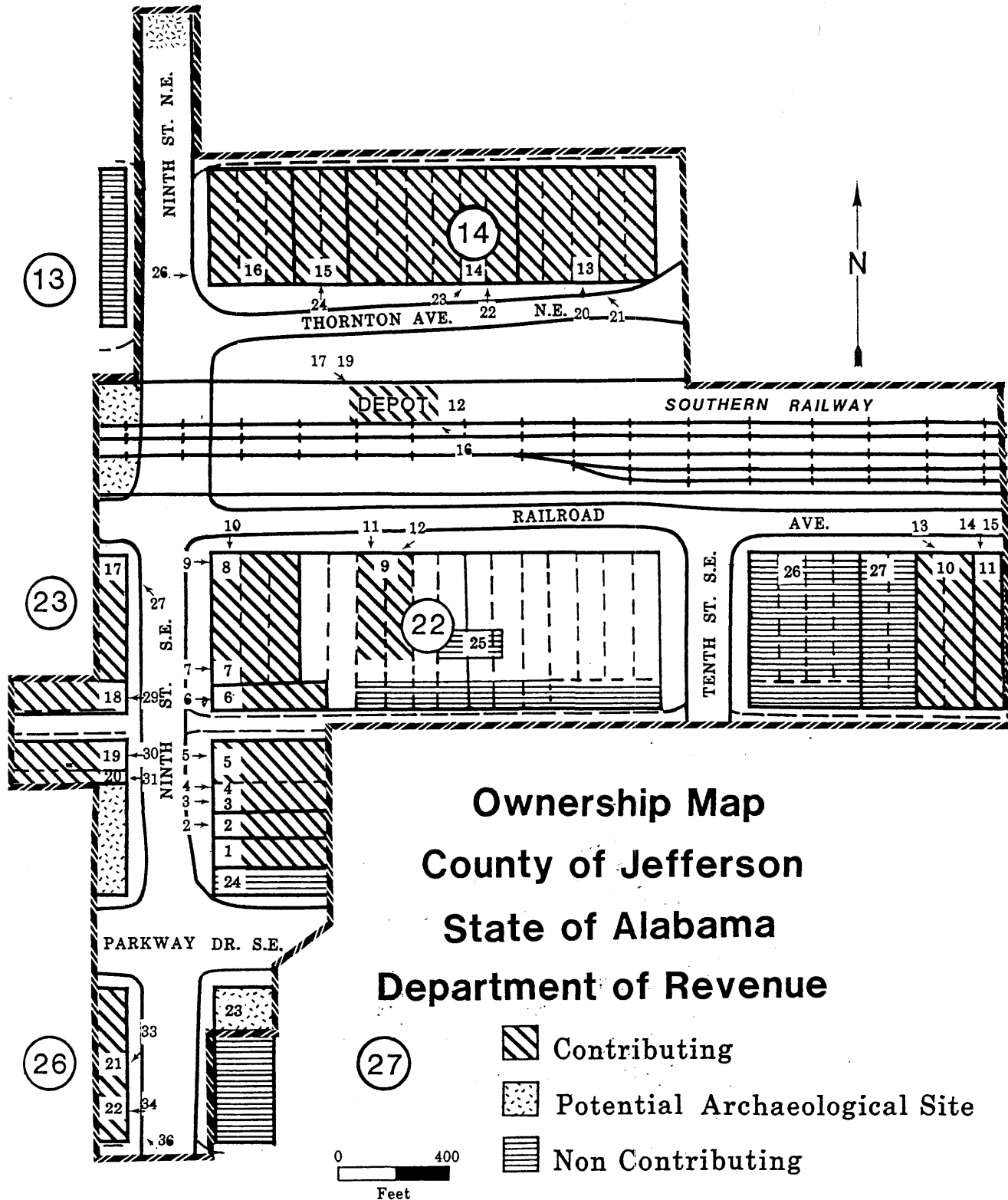


Figure 1