



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

**historic name** Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District  
**other names/site number** N/A

*Resub  
of PRAT  
120*

## 2. Location

**street & number** The district centers on the courthouse square and includes properties within the boundaries of Jernigan Street and Gilmore Street to the north; North Smith Street to the east; East Haynes Street and a portion of West Haynes Street to the south; and Warthen Street to the west.

**city, town** Sandersville  
**county** Washington **code** GA 303  
**state** Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31082

( ) vicinity of

( ) not for publication

## 3. Classification

### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

### Category of Property:

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

### Number of Resources within Property:

#### Contributing

#### Noncontributing

buildings	80	33
sites	0	0
structures	3	0
objects	1	0
<b>total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>33</b>

### Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 2

**Name of previous listing:** Washington County Courthouse; Holt-Chapman Building

**Name of related multiple property listing:** Georgia Courthouses Thematic National Register Listing; Buildings Designed by Charles Edward Choate Constructed in Washington County MPS

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Richard Coors  
Signature of certifying official

1-29-02  
Date

W. Ray Luce,  
Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson A. Beal 3/1/02

( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet

Ray  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE/DEPARTMENT STORE/BUSINESS  
GOVERNMENT/COURTHOUSE/CORRECTIONAL FACILITY/POST OFFICE  
DOMESTIC/HOTEL  
HEALTH CARE/SANITARIUM/MEDICAL BUSINESS  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/MANUFACTURING FACILITY/ENERGY  
FACILITY/INDUSTRIAL STORAGE  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/STORAGE  
TRANSPORTATION/RAILROAD  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/THEATER/MONUMENT

### Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE/DEPARTMENT STORE/BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL/RESTAURANT  
GOVERNMENT/COURTHOUSE/CITY HALL  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/MANUFACTURING FACILITY/INDUSTRIAL STORAGE  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/STORAGE  
TRANSPORTATION/RAILROAD  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/MONUMENT/MUSEUM  
VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/COMMERCIAL STYLE  
LATE VICTORIAN/ITALIANATE/QUEEN ANNE  
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/BEAUX ARTS  
MODERN MOVEMENT/ART DECO/ART MODERNE

### Materials:

**foundation** Brick; Stone/granite  
**walls** Brick; Wood  
**roof** Asphalt; Metal/tin  
**other** N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District consists of the courthouse square and surrounding commercial and industrial properties in Sandersville. The area known as Sandersville was settled as early as 1793 and became the county seat of Washington County in 1796. The Sandersville town plan is an example of one variation of the Washington-type courthouse plan, which traces its origins to Washington, Wilkes County (founded 1783). As employed in Sandersville, the plan features a central courthouse square within a surrounding grid of streets. The streets along each side of the courthouse intersect at the corners of the square. The buildings within the

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commercial area include one- to three-story attached buildings and one- to two-story freestanding buildings. The buildings represent the Commercial style with decorative brickwork, Italianate style, Queen Anne style, Beaux Arts style, and Art Deco style. The historic community landmark buildings include the Washington County Courthouse, the Masonic Building, the United States Post Office, the former County Jail, and the Old City Hall Building. The industrial area of Sandersville developed northeast of the commercial core along the railroad, which was established in 1876 and expanded in 1904. The industrial area of Sandersville developed primarily in support of Washington County's agricultural economy and over the years has contained a variety of establishments such as cotton gins and warehouses, lumber companies, fertilizer plants, a blacksmith shop, and an ice factory. The industrial area includes a variety of building types and styles including the Commercial style with decorative brickwork and industrial-related side-gabled warehouses with metal seam roofs. Landscaping in the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District varies considerably from formal plantings and sidewalks in the commercial core to little to no landscaping in the industrial area. Some historic granite curbing is still visible along side streets.

Commercial buildings are located along the four blocks facing onto the square and also along portions of streets leading away from the square. The commercial area remains quite compact. Its farthest extent is to the south along South Harris Street, where it continues to the intersection of South Harris and Church Streets. Beyond Church Street, however, South Harris Street remains predominantly residential in character. This area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Church-Smith-Harris Street Historic District on December 31, 1987. East and West Church Streets present a mixture of commercial and residential development, with the commercial buildings primarily located along the north side of the street and the residences along the south side. East Haynes Street contains several commercial buildings toward its western end and becomes industrial in character toward North Smith Street. West Haynes Street contains a few commercial buildings as well as several residences in its first block, to the west of Brookins Street. Thereafter it is dominated by the Sandersville City Cemetery, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 3, 1987, along the south side of the street beginning just beyond Virginia Street. Gilmore Street is, like East Haynes Street, commercial in character at its western end and becomes industrial as it approaches North Smith Street. North of the square, both North Harris Street and Warthen Street are predominantly residential, although there are a few commercial buildings along North Harris north of Gilmore Street. This area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 20, 1989, as the North Harris Street Historic District.

The present Washington County Courthouse (photograph 1) was constructed in 1868 as the third courthouse building to serve the county and is among three buildings surrounding the square that date from prior to 1870. Three major alterations to the courthouse have been completed since the building was constructed: an enlargement and extensive remodeling in 1899, the addition of a west wing in 1938, and the addition of an elevator in the late 1990s. The building expresses Victorian-era details. Also on the property is a c.1898 bandstand and a monument to Georgia Governor Jared

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Irwin. The Washington County Courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 18, 1980, as part of the Georgia County Courthouses Multiple Property nomination.

Following are street-by-street descriptions of commercial buildings surrounding the square as well as an overview of buildings off the square and the North Smith Street industrial area.

Public Square-east side (North Harris Street): This block, a mixture of one- and two-story brick commercial buildings all dating from prior to 1900, is dominated by two-story buildings at either corner (photograph 14). At the north end is the original J. D. Newman and Brothers Building, which was rehabilitated in the late 1980s. The upper front facade appears much as it did originally, with tall, narrow six-over-nine segmental-arched windows and a corbeled cornice. The lower, storefront level has been altered, with original display windows and recessed entrance replaced by fixed windows and a modern door. Windows on the north side elevation have been removed and the openings blocked, although the segmental arches and window sills have been retained. The one-story buildings in this block have been altered to a fairly substantial degree, although the building now housing Vogue Men's Store (formerly the Louis Cohen Jewelry Store) still exhibits a fine corbeled brick cornice. The building at the south end of the block, constructed in 1890, exhibits a nonhistoric brick lower storefront but retains upper-level window openings and corbeled cornice.

Public Square-south side (Haynes Street): This block features several key buildings. What is now known as the Rawlings Block is the original Hotel Sandersville Building (photograph 7), constructed in 1856 at the southwest corner of the intersection of Harris and Haynes Streets. Also key is the building that originally housed the R. L. Warthen Law Office, facing the square from near the middle of the south side of Haynes Street (photograph 6, temple-front building). Constructed in the late 1850s, it is one of the oldest structures in downtown Sandersville and was remodeled in the early 1930s to function as a public library organized and managed by the Transylvania Club. This organization, a local women's literary society founded in 1908, has utilized the building as a meeting place for many years. Finally, a portion of the building constructed in 1905 as the Hotel Julida still stands at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Haynes and Brookins Streets (photograph 6, background). By 1913 the original building housed the Hermann-Evans Sanitarium and later became known as the Rawlings Sanitarium.

Public Square-West Side (Jones Street): This block contains the building that originally housed the Washington County Jail and was also the Sheriff's residence (photograph 2); it now functions as a museum operated by the Washington County Historical Society. This building is unusual in the district for its residential character. At the northwest corner of the intersection of Jones and West Haynes Streets is the Masonic Building (photograph 3), constructed in 1924 to replace the original Masonic Building. At the middle of this block is an example of the commercial building type known as the "enframed window wall." It features a large central section (or bay) of display windows that is twice as wide as the enframing bays (photograph 3).

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Public Square-North Side The key building in this block is the two-story Holt-Chapman Building (photograph 15), constructed at the northwest corner of North Harris and Malone Streets in 1898. It was designed by renowned Georgia architect Charles E. Choate and is an outstanding example of Victorian-era commercial building design with elaborate stone detailing and ornamental brickwork. The Holt-Chapman Building was listed in the National Register on July 28, 1994, as part of a multiple property listing of the Buildings Designed by Charles Edward Choate Constructed in Washington County Multiple Property nomination. There are several fine one-story buildings in this block, and also the large City Hall building that exhibits fine Italianate design (photograph 16). It has a major one-story addition to its west side facade. The building at 114 Malone Street housed the original Coca Cola bottling works while the right (east) half of 116 Malone Street housed the original Pastime Theatre.

Several key buildings are found along downtown streets that do not face onto the square. The former Sandersville Federal Building (now privately owned) (photograph 18) is a fine example of Beaux Arts design at a prominent corner location (Gilmore and North Harris Streets). On the north side of East Haynes Street is a building that formerly housed a bank and a carriage repository (photograph 9). It expresses distinctive round-arched window openings and corbeled brick cornices and is the only remaining example of what were once several buildings of similar appearance along East Haynes Street. The Pastime Theatre is the only building in downtown Sandersville that expresses any influence of the Art Deco Style (photograph 8). It was constructed on the west side of South Harris Street in 1938. Just north of the Pastime is a very large two-story building that originally housed a bank and post office and is known today as the Belk Building (photograph 8). The lower level of this building was substantially altered in early 1999, yet the upper level remains quite intact and serves as a good example of Italianate influence on a commercial building.

The industrial area located east and northeast of downtown Sandersville features a variety of buildings and building types. The area developed primarily in support of Washington County's agricultural economy. The area includes buildings related to several different industries. The municipal ice plant (photograph 20) exhibits the Commercial style with decorative brickwork. The Sandersville Gin Company Building (photograph 34), the Gulf Oil Corporation Building (photograph 22), and several processing facilities (photographs 28, 29, and 30) have metal siding, and metal seam roofs. The B. J. Tarbutton Cotton Warehouse (photographs 31 and 34) is constructed of brick and has arched window openings. Buildings more recently constructed are also present in the industrial area of the district. The Coca Cola Bottling Plant (photograph 12) exhibits the Art Moderne style with casement windows, a flat roof, and a monochromatic exterior. The building which houses J.G's Carwash (photograph 13) was originally a gas station.

Landscaping in the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District varies considerably, from formal plantings in the vicinity of the Washington County Courthouse and Jared Irwin monument to the almost complete lack of landscaping in the industrial section to the east and northeast. Streets

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fronting onto the courthouse square feature small, recently planted street trees and sidewalks composed of brick and concrete. Some historic granite curbing is still evident along side streets.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture  
Commerce  
Community Planning and Development  
Industry  
Politics/Government  
Transportation

**Period of Significance:**

**1793-1950**

**Significant Dates:**

1793-Established settlement in existence at least by this date  
1796-"Saundersville" selected to serve as a county site for Washington County  
1812-Sandersville incorporated  
1855-First major fire in downtown Sandersville  
1864-Sherman and Northern troops enter Sandersville and burn courthouse  
1869-Present Washington County Courthouse completed  
1876-Sandersville & Tennille Railroad constructed  
1880-First Sandersville City Hall erected  
1888-Second major fire in downtown Sandersville  
1890-Present Sandersville City Hall building constructed  
1893-Third major fire in downtown Sandersville  
1904-Fourth major fire in downtown Sandersville  
1904-Sandersville Railroad established  
1938-Washington County Courthouse annex constructed

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A



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**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Brantley, Greene and Renfro, J. W. (builders)  
Choate, Charles E. (architect)  
Ledford, L. H. (architect)  
McCaskill, H. L. (architect and builder)  
Wetmore, James A. (architect)

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District contains much of the historic commercial and industrial development in and near downtown Sandersville that developed from 1793 through 1950. The proposed district is significant in the area of architecture for its collection of good, representative examples of commercial and industrial building styles and types typical of small Georgia towns in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also significant for the work of noted local and regional architect Charles E. Choate, represented by the Holt Brothers Bank Company Building. It is significant in the area of commerce as the commercial core of Sandersville during the historic period. It contains the city's downtown business district, an area that has played a vital role in the history of Sandersville and Washington County. Additional commercial buildings are located in the immediate vicinity of the square, along short stretches of the blocks leading away from the square. The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development for its historic and intact town plan, a variation of the Washington-type courthouse town plan. Sandersville's significance is derived from the continued presence of this original plan and for the town's development from the early 1790s through the 1940s. The plan retains the central courthouse square (with the Washington County Courthouse within the square but off-center, situated on the northern side) and is representative of Sandersville's role in early Georgia town planning. The proposed district is significant in the area of industry for the development of the industrial area that occurred to support the agricultural economy of Sandersville and Washington County. It is also significant in the area of politics/government for the typical activities that would have taken place in the city as the county seat for Washington County. The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial District is significant in the area of transportation for the railroad-related activities that occurred during the historic period and the enhancement of the city's role as a commercial and industrial center in Washington County and for the role played by the railroad in the city's growth and development. The industrial area east and northeast of downtown Sandersville particularly benefited from the presence of the railroad.

#### **National Register Criteria**

The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A for its development since the 1790s as the county seat and economic and industrial center of Washington County. The Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C for its large and substantially intact collection of historic commercial and industrial buildings constructed from the 1850s through the 1950s.

#### **Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

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#### **Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance for the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District begins in 1793, the year that a settlement was known to exist at this location and ends in 1950, the end of the historic period.

#### **Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

Contributing resources in the historic district are those constructed during the historic period that are significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, industry, politics and government, and transportation and that retain historic integrity. These resources include commercial buildings on and around the courthouse square, community landmark buildings such as the Washington County Courthouse and the Sandersville City Hall, and industrial-related buildings located northeast of the downtown commercial core.

Noncontributing resources are those constructed after 1950 and those that have lost their historic integrity. Buildings constructed outside of the period of significance include commercial buildings (photographs 12 and 13) and industrial-related buildings (photograph 33, foreground). Other noncontributing buildings within the district include buildings that have lost their integrity due to significant alterations (photographs 3, foreground; 8, background; 14; 15; and 19).

#### **Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

**\*\*NOTE: The following history was compiled by John Kissane, Historic Preservation Consultant, April, 2000. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

#### Settlement

Sandersville, Georgia came into existence during the final years of the 18th century and is located within an area ceded by the Creek Indians in 1790. White settlers began moving into the area west of the Ogeechee River in the early 1780s, a violation of Georgia law since settlers were not permitted to venture beyond the state's recognized boundaries. State representatives conducted a series of meetings with the Creeks prior to most of this initial settlement activity, and subsequently laid out Washington County as well as Franklin and Greene Counties. But there apparently had been no formal agreement between the state and the Indians -- or at least not one that satisfied the majority of the Creeks. In 1787 a band of Creeks burned the newly established town of Greensborough (Greensboro). This caused the federal government to step in and negotiate the 1790 Treaty of New York, which included the cession of a large territory west of the Ogeechee and as far north as

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present day Stephens County (originally within Franklin County). Once the treaty was enacted, the pace of settlement of what was then the Georgia frontier increased considerably.

The first courthouse town established in Washington County was Warthen, located approximately nine miles north of present-day Sandersville. Although the details of how and why the courthouse was moved to Sandersville are unclear, a settlement had been established at this location at least as early as 1793. In that year, Baptist preacher John Newton recorded in his diary that he preached at "White Ponds" and that the place was also called Saundersville. The exact origin of the name "White Ponds" is not known, but much of the Sandersville vicinity was under water in the late 1700s and this probably gave rise to the name. (A considerable portion of the northeastern section of the town was under water as late as the 1860s, and was only drained and made useful for building purposes following the Civil War.) Interestingly, the Sandersville *Progress* took up the question of the age of the town in the 30 April 1907 issue of the paper and concludes that 1793 must be regarded as the community's birth date. In making this determination, the *Progress* article cites Rev. Newton's diary.

The southwest corner of the intersection of Harris and Haynes Streets was in the 1780s the site of a trading post operated by Mark Saunders, one of Washington County's earliest settlers. Two Indian paths are said to have crossed at this point. It is not clear just when Saunders arrived in the area or when the settlement that grew up in the vicinity of his store began to be known as "Saundersville." (By 1812, the date of Sandersville's incorporation, the "u" had been dropped from the town's name.)

The site of present-day Sandersville was chosen as the county seat of Washington County in 1796, three years after the Georgia Legislature directed the Justices of the Inferior Court to identify and select a location for such a purpose. Georgia Governor Jared Irwin, a native of Washington County, signed the Act into law on 20 February 1796.

The Sandersville plan is an example of one variation of the "Washington" type courthouse plan, which traces its origins to the Wilkes County town of Washington (founded 1783). The three Washington plan variations are all based on a central square designed for the courthouse. As employed in Sandersville, the plan features a central courthouse square with streets along each side intersecting at the corners of the square. A somewhat unusual feature of the original Sandersville plan that has not been retained is the placement of alleys in the middle of each block, perpendicular to the square. (This exact plan was utilized in the South Georgia town of Newton, in Baker County, which was founded in 1831. It has been suggested that the people who settled Newton came from Sandersville but this has not been substantiated.) While it was laid out in 1796, Sandersville was not incorporated until 27 November 1812.

#### Antebellum Period, to 1860

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Sandersville grew slowly during the first half of the 19th century, and the population stood at approximately 500 in 1850. During this period the commercial establishments of downtown Sandersville were confined to Harris and Haynes Streets and included six general stores, three grocery stores and one tavern as well as four blacksmiths, two carriage-makers, two shoemakers, one tailor, one cabinet maker. The town also had eight lawyers and six physicians at the mid-point of the 19th century and a newspaper, the *Central Georgian*, was being published in Sandersville. It first appeared in the town around 1845 as the *Telescope* and became the *Central Georgian* in the early 1850s.

In the 1840s, when the Central of Georgia Railroad was being constructed, there was a proposal to route the line through Sandersville, but residents did not want it. Thus, as an alternative, the stop known as Station 13 was established at Franklin's depot, which grew to become the town of Tennille, located several miles south of Sandersville. From the 1850s into the 1870s a hack service provided transportation between Sandersville and Tennille. A newspaper ad from 1855 indicates that the Reuben Mayo's hack left the town at 9:00 each morning to meet the "up-train from Savannah and Augusta" and returned to Sandersville at noon. At 2:00 each afternoon the hack again made the trip to Tennille, this time to connect with the "down train from Macon." Horse-drawn wagons and ox carts served as the means of transporting freight between Sandersville and Tennille.

On 24 March 1855 a major fire ravaged Sandersville's entire commercial district as well as a portion of the town's residential development. It began southeast of downtown and progressed along Church Street. Newspaper accounts of the event describe the fire as spreading with "alarming rapidity" due to gale-force winds from the southeast, so that "it was not more than two hours before the whole business part of the place was consumed." Among the buildings destroyed were the Washington County Courthouse and Jail. The written accounts do not mention an exact number of commercial buildings lost but state that 35 to 40 houses were destroyed. The event necessitated a rebuilding of downtown Sandersville and losses in the entire town totaled \$121,368; less than one-third of the property lost was insured. Despite the seriousness of the fire and the fact that many residents were left destitute, Sandersville recovered rather quickly. In January of 1857, with not quite two years having passed, the local newspaper reported the following:

It is with real satisfaction that we note the progress our Town is making in substantial and even elegant improvements. Our citizens have not only erected a large and commodious brick building for a Hotel but are now erecting a superb edifice for a Court House and also a Masonic Lodge. The former will cost the county not less than \$15,000, and the latter, the Masons, \$3,000....The Courthouse will probably be the finest in the State....Private dwellings are likewise going up some of which are tasteful and elegant structures. The desolation made by the sweeping fire of March 1855 is last disappearing, and in a short time but few will regret it.

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The building constructed as the R. L. Warthen Law Office, facing the courthouse square from near the square's southwest corner was built in the late 1850s or just after the Civil War -- there is uncertainty about this. It is believed that some of the brick used in the building's construction were salvaged from either the fire of 1855 or the Washington County Courthouse destroyed by Sherman's forces in 1864. Whether constructed in the late 1850s or mid-1860s, this building is certainly one of the oldest structures in downtown Sandersville. It was remodeled in the early 1930s to function as a public library. The Transylvania Club, a local women's literary society founded in 1908 and the organization responsible for beginning the library, also utilizes the building. A rear addition now functions as offices of the Chamber of Commerce.

The fire of 1855 prompted construction of the first brick buildings in Sandersville, although most replacement commercial buildings were frame. There had been concern in the town before 1855 that a fire company was needed, this sentiment having been expressed in 1854 when a comparatively minor fire destroyed several downtown buildings. Between 1855 and the 1895 the downtown square became entirely commercial in character; prior to the first major fire it was commercial only on Harris and Haynes Streets.

#### Civil War, Reconstruction and Prosperity, 1860-c.1920

While many residents of Sandersville and Washington County participated in the Civil War, those who remained at home did not feel many direct affects of the war during its first several years. Most food items and other essentials were available and in sufficient quantities. But this changed suddenly, when in November of 1864 Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and his northern forces entered Washington County and caused extensive damage in Sandersville. The brick courthouse was burned and the community was left in disarray. Many in town worried that Sherman's men would burn the Masonic Hall (a brick structure built in 1855), but it was left undamaged.

Despite the severity of the post-war conditions, efforts to return the town to the prosperity of the pre-war years met with considerable success. In its issue of 4 November 1868, the *Central Georgian* reported on conditions in Sandersville at that time. The article leaves no doubt that the town and its residents suffered greatly for several years after the Civil War, but improvements apparently came rather suddenly the year of the newspaper report:

Considering the impoverished condition of the people of Sandersville at the close of the war, the improvements in the town since that time are surprising. But few of the citizens had not been in the service of the Confederate States -- a large proportion served from the firing of the first gun to the last, and returned to find their families to a greater or less extent destitute of the necessaries of life. Yet without capital, without

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credit, with hopes crushed the people went to work to regain their shattered fortunes -- Storehouses, for three years deserted were reopened, goods appeared upon the shelves, and merchants behind the counters, gradually business revived, old houses were all taken and new ones were demanded -- We can scarcely realize that less than four years ago, a devastating army passed through our midst leaving the people without a change of clothing and scarcely goods sufficient to stay the gnawing hunger. A few months more and our new and handsome Courthouse - now fast going up - will be complete, the rubbish removed, and the last footprint of Sherman's army gone. So much for the energy of our people under the Blessings of Providence.

The Sandersville city limits were expanded in 1866 to take in all land within a one mile radius of the Washington County Courthouse. This action brought all of the land in the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District into the city limits. The Smith Street vicinity gradually developed into an area of cotton gins, lumber companies and, beginning in about 1890, cotton warehouses. It was C. R. Pringle who constructed the first gin as well as a large mill at the intersection of Smith and East Haynes Street, a business was known as the Eureka Mills and Ginnery. These establishments were utilized by farmers throughout Washington County. Sandersville's first public high school was constructed in 1872 and replaced in 1897 but a large brick building at the northwest corner of the intersection of Smith and East Church Streets. This building is no longer standing.

In 1876 a shortline railroad was organized by local citizens and constructed between Sandersville and Tennille. The route began at the intersection of West Church and South Harris Streets and headed south toward Tennille down the middle of South Harris Street. The shortline was operated independently and functioned as a branch of the Central of Georgia Railroad. In 1893 it was acquired by the Augusta Southern Railroad. This transaction did not please the Central of Georgia management nor did it suit local businesspeople, for the Augusta Southern initially required that all Sandersville business be routed via Augusta. As a consequence, a second local rail line was established. This was named the Sandersville Railroad and its creation was led by local businessman Louis Cohen. The new line once again provided local people with a connection to the Central of Georgia.

The most destructive fire in Sandersville's history broke out the night of 4 May 1888. The fire began to the southeast of the courthouse and moved along North Harris Street, eventually jumping across Harris and eventually reaching the original Sandersville city hall (which was just eight years old at the time, as it was constructed in 1880). The city hall building could not be saved, and all records were lost along with the structure itself. A replacement building, which faces the Washington County Courthouse from across Malone Street, was constructed to serve as city hall in 1890 and still functions as a City building.

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The opening paragraph of the local newspaper, the *Sandersville Herald*, account of the 1888 fire leaves no doubts about the severity of the event:

Friday night, May 4th, 1888, has drawn a long, deep, dark mark across the page of Sandersville's history, which will remain, indelible, imperishable, so long as history recounts facts and tradition hands down from generation to generation the great events of the past.

The final tabulation of damage from the 1888 fire includes "31 stores, offices, shops and warehouses; 1 public building (city hall); 2 residences and 5 outbuildings on private lots; aggregating a total of 39." The City of Sandersville responded to this level of destruction by adopting an ordinance whereby owners or tenants of downtown lots were not allowed to construct wooden buildings on properties within the immediate vicinity of the square. While some initiated construction of masonry buildings, the transformation from frame buildings to brick buildings took some time in Sandersville. A third major fire struck downtown Sandersville in 1893, destroying buildings on the north side of the square from City Hall east to North Harris Street. One of the key losses was Watkins Hall, a two-story frame theater building that had been a favorite place of entertainment for local residents and house performances by traveling troupes.

The turn-of-the-century was a period of considerable growth in Sandersville (which reached a population of approximately 2,023 in 1900), and this was reflected in developments downtown. One of Sandersville's most distinctive commercial buildings, the Holt-Chapman Building, was constructed at the northwest corner of North Harris and Malone Streets in 1898. It was designed by renowned Georgia architect Charles E. Choate. The fires of 1888 and 1893 prompted business owners and others to construct brick buildings, which are considerably less flammable than the wooden buildings that had been common up to that time. (The 1855 fire had resulted in the construction of the first brick commercial buildings in the town, but the majority of downtown buildings were still wood in the 1880s, when the move to brick began.) In 1899 a major project was undertaken to enlarge and remodel the Washington County Courthouse, and the clock tower that distinguishes the building was completed at this time.

During the 1890s, the industrial area east and northeast of downtown Sandersville was further developed and became the center of cotton warehousing in the county. (Prior to this time cotton was bought and sold on the streets of downtown Sandersville.) Other establishments in this area included Sandersville Machine Works, lumber companies, cotton gins, a cotton seed oil mill, an oil refining company, a bottling company, an ice factory, and, eventually, the electric light plant. Also in this area was the railroad as well as the depot. The depot of the Sandersville Railroad Company burned in 1903 but was replaced shortly thereafter. A cotton seed house owned by Louis Cohen, president of the Sandersville Railroad Company, was utilized as a temporary depot until the replacement was completed.



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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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Construction of new buildings continued into the early 20th century. In 1903 Sandersville's first ice factory was built and began producing ice on the east side of North Smith Street, just northeast of the Dixie Ice and Bottling Company. Sandersville's third and fourth banks were established at this time, the First National Bank in 1901 and Citizens Bank in 1905. In November of 1903 the Sandersville Water Works and Electric Light Commission contracted with civil engineer Nesbitt Wingfield of Augusta for construction of water works and electric lights plants in the town. Although vacant, the original electric light plant and pumping station is still standing north of Gilmore Street. In 1904 Dr. Eugene Harris announced plans to construct and open a sanitarium at the southwest corner of the intersection of West Haynes and Brookins Streets. This building was completed the following year and was known first as the Dr. Harris Sanitarium and in the 1930s and 1940s was a boarding house and then an apartment building.

Another early 20th century building, a portion of which still stands, was originally the Hotel Julida, constructed in 1905 at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Haynes and Brookins Streets. The building housed five businesses at the street level with hotel accommodations above - a total of 53 suites, double and single rooms. There was a roof garden as well as a large skylight allowing light to come into an arcade into what was called the "rotunda" space. This establishment was not long-lasting, however, for by 1913 the building housed the Hermann-Evans Sanitarium. When completed in 1905, the Hotel Julida became the third hotel in Sandersville and joined the Sandersville Hotel and the Gilmore House. The Sandersville Hotel dates from 1856.

In 1905, a piece was included in the 13 April edition of the Sandersville *Herald* titled "A Retrospective View" by R. G. Hyman. This article today provides clear evidence of how the town progressed from earlier in the century as well as from just a few years previous. Hyman contends that by 1905 the amount of business activity in Sandersville was double that of 1900. Hyman also notes that over the previous 20 months (August 1903 to April 1905) a total of 106 building permits had been taken out, signaling considerable new construction activity. Yet another new building from this period was the post office, constructed directly to the rear of the Sandersville Hotel (later to be the Rawlings Sanitarium). The old Masonic Hall, a building that would burn in 1921, functioned as a post office until construction of the new building. A different sign of progress in the downtown area was initiated in 1904, when tiling began to be laid on top of the old brick pavement that had become rough and uneven. Public improvements during the first decade of the 20th century included plans for a sewerage system in the town in 1905, the same year that new equipment was purchased for use in fire fighting. Given Sandersville's history of destructive fires, the purchase of three hoses and reels was seen as an important accomplishment for the town and resulted in a 40 percent reduction of insurance rates on business property.

By the 1910s downtown Sandersville and the adjacent industrial area could perhaps be characterized as having reached the peak of economic prosperity in the town's history. The downtown offered not only the business establishments and professional services typical of a county seat town, but had two

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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prominent hotels, two sanitariums, and a fine level of rail service. In 1913 a Coca Cola Bottling Works, founded by W. L. Williams, had begun operations on Malone Street directly east of the Pastime Theatre. The Pastime first opened in a building on Malone Street in February of 1911 and in 1938 moved into an Art Deco-styled building that still stands on the west side of South Harris Street. Also by the 1910s, Sandersville's industrial district located immediately east and northeast of downtown had developed into a thriving and quite diverse area.

#### Decline, Depression and Recovery, c.1920-1950

The fire that in 1921 destroyed Sandersville's unique old Masonic Hall in a way foreshadowed events of the 1920s and 1930s in the town as well as in Washington County. The agricultural depression that struck throughout Georgia was felt in Sandersville, especially by merchants and owners of the town's industries. The building that replaced the original Masonic Hall was completed in 1924 and was one of the few examples of new construction downtown between 1920 and the 1940s. In the 1920s the Coca Cola bottling works moved from its original downtown location on Malone Street into a building at 115 North Smith Street. It remained in operation as a bottling plant owned by the Hudson family until the franchise was sold back to Coca Cola in 1986 and taken out of use the following year.

Other significant buildings constructed during this period include a municipal ice plant in 1930, a new post office in 1931, the Pastime Theatre in 1936, and a major annex to the Washington County Courthouse in 1938. The fact that the annex was built at this time may indicate an unusual level of confidence in the town and county that economic difficulties would soon diminish.

Another significant building constructed during the 1930s was the Smith's Mortuary Building, built in 1936 at 117 Gilmore Street (photograph 19). The M. C. Smith Funeral Home was founded on 1 January 1931 at 804 Lovett Street (not within the boundaries of the historic district). M. C. Smith established the business out of a desire to offer quality mortuary service to the African-American population of Sandersville and Washington County. In 1936 Smith moved his business to the Gilmore Street location, into what was then a boarding house. Part of this building was demolished in the 1940s and the remaining portion of the building was covered with a brick veneer. The present front portion of the building was added in the 1970s.

The M. C. Smith Funeral Home was not the first black-owned business in downtown Sandersville -- there had been barber shops and cafes prior to 1936 -- but is especially significant for the role played by M. C. Smith in this and other enterprises in Sandersville. Smith was also involved with construction of the Smith-Lucas Building (photograph 19) directly east of the Mortuary Building. The lower level of the Smith-Lucas Building has housed a dentist's office, the Washington County Extension Office, a barber shop, a grocery store, a cafe and a billiard parlor. The upper level is composed of a large auditorium (no longer in use) that was the location of a variety of social

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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functions including appearances by nationally known black musicians such as Little Richard. This building thus has been of considerable significance to the black community of Sandersville. A third building constructed by M. C. Smith is that at 104 East Haynes Street. It was built in the late 1940s and has housed grocery, furniture and hardware stores.

The United States' entry into the Second World War at the end of 1941 meant that many men and women were brought into the war effort and rationing of numerous items was mandated. But the war also signaled an end to nearly two decades of depressed times for the nation, Georgia, and towns such as Sandersville. The war's end sparked a construction boom across the country, consisting primarily of new housing. While downtown Sandersville did not experience a great deal of new construction during the 1940s, the existing establishments as well as new businesses saw something of a return to the prosperity of the 1900s and 1910s.

#### The Modern Period, 1950 to the Present

Many changes have taken place in Sandersville over the last half century, including in the downtown and industrial areas. The town's economy has, for the most part, remained vibrant, but downtown Sandersville has faced increasing competition from businesses located on the outskirts of the city. Most downtown buildings were subjected to exterior alterations during the 1960s and 1970s as business owners attempted to "modernize" these structures and make them more attractive to potential customers. These changes resulted in a diminished aesthetic quality downtown; more recently efforts have been made to remove nonhistoric facades and return the buildings to their original appearances. Interest in the history of Sandersville and the downtown area is considerable and is matched by concern for the historic integrity and future viability of the courthouse square and surrounding commercial and industrial areas.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Linley, John. *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1972.

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*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (City of Sandersville, Georgia)*. New York: Sanborn Insurance Company. 1895, 1901, 1908, 1913, 1923.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section 9--Major Bibliographic References**

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued: N/A
- previously listed in the National Register Washington County Courthouse, Holt-Chapman Building
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # (N/A)
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # (N/A)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository: Washington County Historical Society

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property**                      Approximately 52 acres

**UTM References**

A)    Zone 17        Easting 331209        Northing 3651452  
B)    Zone 17        Easting 331209        Northing 3650420  
C)    Zone 17        Easting 330305        Northing 3650513

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District is indicated as a heavy black line on the attached maps.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District encompasses the contiguous intact historic commercial and industrial development of the city of Sandersville, Georgia.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 156 Trinity Avenue, SW, Suite 101  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** October 22, 2001

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)**                      ( ) not applicable

**name/title** John A. Kissane  
**organization** Washington County Historical Society  
**street and number** P.O. Box 6088  
**city or town** Sandersville **state** GA **zip code** 31082  
**telephone** (912)552-5030

(X) **consultant**  
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**  
( ) **other:**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Sandersville Commercial and Industrial Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Sandersville  
**County:** Washington  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** November, 2000

### Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 35: Washington County Courthouse; photographer facing northwest.
- 2 of 35: Former Washington County Jail and Sheriff's residence; photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 35: Masonic Building; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 35: Intersection of Brookins Street and West Haynes Street, former Dr. Harris Sanitarium; photographer facing north.
- 5 of 35: West Haynes Street, Lang Variety Works Building; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 35: West Haynes Street, south side of courthouse square, original R.L. Warthen Law Office, constructed late 1850s, remodeled 1930s, fourth building from left; photographer facing west.
- 7 of 35: Intersection of West Haynes Street and South Harris Street, south side of courthouse square, original Hotel Sandersville, constructed 1856, current Esquire Building; photographer facing west.
- 8 of 35: South Harris Street, Pastime Theatre, constructed 1938, second building from left; photographer facing north.
- 9 of 35: East Haynes Street; photographer facing west.
- 10 of 35: East Haynes Street; photographer facing west.
- 11 of 35: East Haynes Street; photographer facing west.
- 12 of 35: South Smith Street, Coca-Cola Building; photographer facing northeast.

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### Photographs

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- 13 of 35: South Smith Street; photographer facing north.
- 14 of 35: Intersection of West Haynes Street and South Harris Street, east side of courthouse square; photographer facing north.
- 15 of 35: Corner of Malone Street and North Harris Street, north side of courthouse square, Holt-Chapman Building, constructed 1898 in foreground; photographer facing east.
- 16 of 35: Malone Street, north side of courthouse square; photographer facing east.
- 17 of 35: Jernigan Street; photographer facing east.
- 18 of 35: North Harris Street, Sandersville Federal Building; photographer facing northeast.
- 19 of 35: Gilmore Street; photographer facing west.
- 20 of 35: Gilmore Street, Municipal Ice Plant; photographer facing north.
- 21 of 35: Photograph unavailable due to technical difficulties regarding resubmission.
- 22 of 35: North Smith Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 23 of 35: Photographer facing northwest.
- 24 of 35: North Smith Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 25 of 35: North Smith Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 26 of 35: Photographer facing southwest.
- 27 of 35: Photographer facing west.
- 28 of 35: Photographer facing west.
- 29 of 35: North Smith Street, Murphy and Palmer Seeds, Inc.; photographer facing east.
- 30 of 35: Photographer facing northwest.
- 31 of 35: Photographer facing west.



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Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

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- 32 of 35:      Photographer facing northeast.
- 33 of 35:      North Smith Street; photographer facing east.
- 34 of 35:      North Smith Street, Sandersville Gin Company; photographer facing east.
- 35 of 35:      Photographer facing west.