

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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received

OCT 4 1983

date entered

1. Name

historic

~~Historic Resources of Phenix City, Alabama~~
(Partial Inventory: Architectural and Historic Resources)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number

Incorporated Limits

N/A not for publication

city, town

Phenix City

N/A vicinity of

state

Alabama

code

N/A

county

Russell

code N/A

3. Classification

Category

☐ district☐ building(s)☐ structure☐ site☐ object☒ Multiple

Resource N/A

Ownership

☒ public☒ private☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied☒ unoccupied☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted☒ yes: unrestricted☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture☒ commercial☒ educational☐ entertainment☐ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☒ private residence☒ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name

Multiple Ownership (See Continuation Sheets)

street & number

n/a

city, town

n/a

n/a vicinity of

state n/a

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Probate Judge's Office

street & number

Russell County Courthouse

city, town

Phenix City

state Alabama 36867

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1976 to present

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

Alabama Historical Commission

city, town

Montgomery

state

Alabama

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☒ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Not applicable

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The historic resources of the Phenix City multiple-resource area cover the current city limits of Phenix City, Alabama. Phenix City is a town of 30,000 people. It is located on the west side of the Chattahoochee River on the Alabama/Georgia state line. It is directly across the river from downtown Columbus, Georgia.

The city limits of Phenix City consist of 19.5 square miles of land that form a rectangle. The eastern boundary is the Chattahoochee River. The landscape of the town is created by steep hills split by wide, deep gullies. This is divided in the approximate center of Holland Creek, the original water source of the area. To the south of Holland Creek is the area known as Girard Commercial Center, based around the Dillingham Street Bridge. This area consists of one, two, and three-story brick buildings dating between 1910 and 1930. The majority of these buildings are presently empty. The streets are paved and have curbing. There is no landscaping. Just west of this commercial center clay hills begin to rise steeply. Split with wide, deep gullies, this area which was originally laid out in a gridiron pattern, has a series of short, irregular streets. These streets are generally paved, but numerous ones are still dirt. The landscape of the Girard area consists primarily of long needle pine trees and Kudzu. The houses in this area are late 19th century shotgun, frame constructed Victorian buildings, with gingerbread detailed porches. Some homes are brick bungalows from the 1920s and 1930s. The majority of homes are one story in height. They generally sit in the middle of small rectangular lots with sidewalks and curbing in front. The front yards tend to be small, and are informally landscaped with ornamental shrubs.

The northern section of town is centered around the 14th Street Bridge, which is approximately 1/2 mile north of the Dillingham Street Bridge. The two are tied together on the north-south axis by Broad Street, which has modern commercial developments bordering it. Above the 14th Street Bridge rises a hill which is the center of the Brownville Commercial area. Including the Russell County Courthouse, and one story commercial buildings of 1940 vintage, this area does not presently meet the criteria of the National Register.

The axis the Brownville area is Summerville Road, which runs from the commercial area in a northwesterly direction. While this area of Phenix City is hilly, it is not cut with gullies. On the bluffs overlooking the river Victorian shotgun homes and millworkers' cottages cover the landscape.

About one quarter of a mile above 14th Street, is the Central of Georgia Railroad line, which runs east-west around the base of Summerville Hill. The property directly north and south of this line running 3 blocks to 5 blocks in area, is populated with c. 1870-1900 Victorian homes of various floor plans, including shotguns, double entrance homes, and central hall, four-room plans.

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While the area is broken with c. 1930 tract type housing, and c. 1970 commercial encroachments, it remains an intact group of late 19th and early 20th century housing. The streets here are in a grid pattern, generally are paved, and have curbing. Landscaping consists of ornamental shrubbery around the foundations of homes.

Continuing up Summerville Road, the terrain rises, creating Summerville Hill. Originally used by wealthy Columbusites to retreat from the city during hot summer months, the area has a few large c. 1880's Victorian dwellings. The majority of the early homes were lost during the Civil War, and the area served as pasture until the building boom of the 1920's, and later the 1940's. At that time, one story brick, or brick and stucco Bungalows filled in the open spaces. The landscaping in this area is similar to the other sections of town.

Surrounding the Girard, Brownville, Summerville area, subdivisions, and strip commercial development has taken place. Beginning in the 1950's and 1960's, this growth has gone on outside of the downtown area, thus protecting earlier development. To the south, a four lane highway, U.S. Route 280 circles the city and extends into Columbus over the Oglethorpe Bridge, approximately 1/2 mile downstream for the Dillingham Street Bridge. To the north and west of the central business and residential area, the modern residential sections blend into the rural landscape.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE PHENIX CITY MULTIPLE-RESOURCE AREA DURING THE PERIODS IT ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANCE.

Period 1. The Phenix City multiple-resource area was within one of the most densely populated sections of the Creek Nation prior to 1832. The Creek Capitol, Coweta Town, was located south of the Girard area, at what is today the State Docks. In the 1820's a rudimentary trading town existed on the Georgia side of the Chattahoochee at the approximate location of the Oglethorpe Bridge. A ferry there served an Alabama spur of the Federal Road, which passed through the Indian Nation about seven miles south of the multiple-resource area. There is however, no record of the type of housing being used in this early period, nor a description of existing man-made features of the land.

Period 2. Between 1828 and 1832, as Columbus was surveyed and developed as a trading town, settlement began on the Alabama side. A private log fort for Indian trade was built there on a hill by the river. Displaced Creeks built huts near the riverbank, from which they begged or traded with Columbus whites. Prominent half-breeds built log houses in the area there, and a community of outlaws, gamblers, and prostitutes collected around a store about a quarter mile south of the present Dillingham Street. The latter settlement was called Sodom. There was early a sawmill on Holland Creek. Slave-owning half-breeds settled on the courthouse hill to the north and on the bank just south of Dillingham Street, planting cornfields near Holland Creek.

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Period 3. 1832 to 1840 were years of rapid transition. In 1833 a bridge was built to span the river at Dillingham Street, and a second spur of the railroad added to veer north along the creek toward West Point. Early frame houses, stores, and a hotel appeared near the bridgehead. Development was tentative, however, until late 1836, when the militant towns of the Creek Nation were moved west. Secure, settlers built an undetermined number of homes--presumably fifty or more, some probably reflecting Plantation Plain architectural styles, some probably frontier cabins--on a broken grid of streets surveyed to reflect the street plan being utilized in Columbus. The grid, especially in the southern half, was interrupted by creeks and gullies. The denser settlement was apparently within four blocks of the Chattahoochee on both sides of the creek, with commercial development near the bridge. There were numerous farms within the multiple-resource area, particularly on roads leading from the riverside settlement, which was called Girard. Docks and storehouses received steamboats below the bridge, and on the ridges in the northern part of the multiple-resource area there developed a community of small farms and summer homes for wealthy Columbus citizens. It was called Summerville. By 1840 the process of Indian removal, begun with the treaty of 1832, was virtually complete.

Period 4. Between 1840 and 1865, small Greek Revival and Federal style houses continued to be built near the river and on outlying roads, replacing early frontier structures. A United States Supreme Court decision blocked use of Alabama dock facilities, so Girard became a largely residential community, a town of workers' cottages, shops, creek-powered mills, small farms, and the estates of local contractors. Mills on the Columbus side of the river were served in the 1850's by a second bridge at 14th Street and housing gradually shifted northward, with contractors having multi-acre homesteads in the western suburbs. Two railroad lines passed through the Phenix City area in that decade, the Mobile and Girard road dead-ending at the river just south of Girard, and the Montgomery and West Point crossing a bridge to Columbus just north of the planned town. On the northern edge of the multiple-resource area, well out of the historic town, a Rock Island Paper Mill was built on a creek beside the Chattahoochee, and there was a fourth bridge to factories on the Georgia side. During the Civil War, a large system of earthen forts, gun positions, and rifle pits was built in the multiple-resource area to guard the western approaches to the Columbus factories.

Period 5. In 1865 many of the buildings in the multiple-resource area were burned during the last land battle east of the Mississippi, the Battle of Girard. In the ensuing destruction, bridges, shops, storehouses, and homes burned, leaving only three substantial houses on the battle field north of the 14th Street Bridge. Scattered clusters of houses remained between Dillingham Street and Holland Creek, along the riverbank, and in the suburbs of Girard, but much of the area literally awaited reconstruction. Early post-war rebuilding of textile factories and construction of dozens of factory houses north of 14th Street shifted development sharply north of Holland Creek, where two and three-room shotgun houses and gable-roofed vernacular cottages were the norm. The Dillingham Street Bridge, burned in the War, was rebuilt, and a railroad bridge was made just below it. Churches and frame store buildings appeared near both wagon bridges, as new residential neighborhoods were developed to the north and west of the crossings. By 1880, the Phenix City multiple-resource area had recovered not only from the war but from the depression of the 1870's and was in a phase of growth.

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Period 6. The half-century between 1889 and 1929 was one of industrial, commercial, and residential expansion. Industries ultimately developed in the area included a cotton mill and two lumber mills, with smaller plants producing caskets, concrete pipe, mattresses and food products. A movie theater opened, new churches were organized, and existing congregations replaced their frame buildings with brick structures or veneered existing ones. Brick bank buildings were built, and simple one and two-story brick stores replaced their wooden predecessors in the commercial districts near the two bridges. Brick filling stations appeared on major corners, and a brick railroad station of the Montgomery and West Point line was constructed. In the new residential neighborhoods to the north and west of town, and near the brick-yards south of the city limits, shotgun houses replaced plantation plain cottages as typical workers' houses, many with ornate millwork. Middle-class dwellings followed national trends through Victorian, Cottage styles and Neo-classical styles to the brick and weatherboard bungalows of the twenties to forties. Brick bungalows became common in the twenties and thirties in the neighborhoods off Summerville Road in the north part of town. Scattered two-story houses, mansions by the standards of the area, were built by wealthier citizens around the turn of the century. Wood-frame public schools were replaced by one and two-story brick buildings as the city's educational system expanded. A private park with an artificial lake and dancehall was developed by damming Holland Creek, and on the northwest edge of the multiple-resource area, the creek was blocked to produce a reservoir for Columbus' waterworks (later to be used as Phenix City's waterworks) before the facility was abandoned near the end of this period. Except for housing developments around the brickyard, south of Girard, twentieth century expansion tended to be in the northern part of town, especially after prohibition stopped a prosperous wholesale liquor trade centered on warehouses at the Dillingham Street Bridge. With the Depression, nearly all private construction ceased.

Period 7. The years between 1929 and 1954 were years of stagnation. Early in the depression, the Girard branch of the Eagle and Phenix Mill was abandoned and Columbus mills cut back. The few private structures of the period are generally of plain construction, virtual throwbacks to earlier shotgun and cottage type styles executed in low quality materials. A subdivision behind the current junior high school on 14th Street was developed only on its edges before economic conditions stopped work, as was a subdivision near the waterworks. Most of the town's original post-bellum houses, along with the few remaining ante-bellum ones, were still occupied but deteriorating from poor upkeep. In the mid-30's, the first clearing of historic neighborhoods occurred, and a federally sponsored housing project was built between 14th and Railroad Streets and another along the river south of the Montgomery and West Point tracks. These projects would be gradually expanded over the next two decades until they consumed many blocks of nineteenth century housing, including the original Eagle and Phenix factory village, which gave Phenix City its name. A new courthouse and post office replaced several older structures. "Pickren's Pool," in the country north of Summerville, was developed as a private amusement park, Idle Hour Park, which included boating, rides and a zoo. It was an elaborate facility for its era. Bars near the Phenix City bridges expanded and proliferated with the World War II influx of soldiers into Fort Benning, becoming gambling casinos and centers for prostitution.

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Phenix Foundry expanded to fill defense contracts, and brickyards still functioned south of the old Girard area. In the 1940's, Columbus factories divested themselves of large tracts of factory housing, as well as the abandoned Phenix Cotton Mill and Mill Village, which occupied most of the land between the two street bridges and east of Broad. The land was gradually sold off to smaller buyers. There was, however, little change in the appearance of the city in the decade following the war because its reputation as "Sin City" made loans almost unobtainable and employment scarce. Some solid post-war houses were built in subdivisions behind the present junior high school and off Summerville Road, but growth was slow.

Period 8. The 1954 cleanup of Phenix City released an era of rapid expansion. Subdivision after subdivision was developed on all sides of town, especially to the north. Textile, metal-working, paper, and lumber mills appeared in the suburbs, and the brickyards greatly expanded production. On Broad and along a strip out 13th and 14th Streets, hundreds of older homes and commercial buildings were razed and replaced with used car lots, parking lots, and various stores and commercial structures, leaving only pockets of surviving pre-1900 structures. A large tract of downtown property was made into a shopping center. The old Central High School was expanded, then converted to a junior high school, as new school buildings were built in the suburbs. The large tract of 1870-1929 factory housing north of the upper railroad tracks remained substantially intact, though some structures lost their historic character or were compromised by incongruous remodeling. Historic Girard neighborhoods, never as continuous because of the irregular terrain in that area, remained intact in pockets; but neglect, remodeling, and intrusion--the latter made possible by advances in civil engineering which complete previously broken street grids--left only small areas of a consistent historic character. The 60's and 70's saw Phenix City expanding rapidly outward, with a four-lane bypass becoming a strip of shopping centers, trucking firms, mobile home lots, amusement facilities, and fast-food restaurants. In the mid-70's a State community college built a campus on the south side of town. A golf course, ballfields, tennis courts and other city recreational facilities proliferated to the north, including Idle Hour Park, which became a city park during the 1950's. Established churches expanded and new congregations organized, either removing areas of housing for parking lots and building expansion or building new facilities in the suburbs. In the late 70's, particularly in the neighborhoods along Summerville Road, historic housing seemed to be better maintained than before, with the trend away from resident-ownership apparently reversing.

CHOICE OF MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA, HISTORIC DISTRICTS, AND INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

The multiple-resource area was designated as the current city limits of Phenix City. The city limits contain a representative sample of the kinds of architectural and historical resources found in the vicinity of Phenix City. Furthermore, the city limits represent a clearly defined area under the jurisdiction of a single local government. Correspondence between the initiators of the Phenix City Multiple Resource Nomination, the Phenix City Historical Preservation Society, and the city leaders, concerning the same area, will facilitate preservation planning in the vicinity.

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Seven historic districts were selected on the basis of intact areas of consistent architectural and historical development. The two commercial districts contain the existing intact areas of commercial development. The Phenix City Residential District, encompasses the intact Brownville neighborhoods left in the city limits. The time frame of the neighborhoods range from 1850 to 1940.

Individually nominated properties were selected solely on the basis of the National Register Criteria.

METHODOLOGY

This nomination was initiated by a group of people interested in the preservation of Phenix City. The group organized as the Phenix City Historical Preservation Society and in the spring of 1979 requested services of the Preservation Planner of the Lower Chattahoochee Area Planning and Development Commission, Nancy Alexander.

The result of the initial planning was the beginning of a local survey, and the preparation of a grant request to the Alabama Historical Commission. Upon the awarding of this 50% matching grant-in-aid, an intern, Susan M. Mahan, was hired from the Preservation Program of Middle Tennessee State University. She spent the summer of 1980 cataloguing existing information, formulating district boundaries and determining individual sites. The Alabama Historical Commission and the Lower Chattahoochee Area Planning and Development Commission provided technical assistance throughout. Members of the historical society provided housing for Ms. Mahan through the summer, while the county volunteered office space.

Work continued through the fall and winter of 1980, and continues toward completion in spring of 1981. Ms. Mahan volunteered her time at the close of the internship, writing the physical descriptions. Dr. William H. Green, President of the Phenix City Historical Preservation Society, prepared the historical information and statements of significance and Ms. Alexander served as coordinator of the project, editing and organizing information, and writing the individual nomination forms. The society members did the historical research for individual properties, along with interested history students, under the guidance of Dr. John Lupold of Columbus College, Columbus, Georgia.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates *N/A* Builder/Architect *N/A*

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PHENIX CITY MULTIPLE-RESOURCE AREA

The Phenix City multiple-resource area is important to the overall history of east Alabama because it represents patterns of settlement and economic development representative of the Chattahoochee Valley. The town also played an important role in the historical development of the area. The historic resources of Phenix City are significant in terms of 19th century and early 20th century exploration and settlement, agriculture, military, transportation, engineering, community planning, architecture, industry, commerce, organized crime, politics, religion and education.

Phenix City was settled initially, like most of east Alabama, by white traders and "intruders" on Creek tribal lands. The area passed from Indian to white ownership between 1833 and 1836, when most of the Creeks were removed by armed force. Upon Indian removal, settlement accelerated, and more durable structures were built. The agricultural lands of the Creek Nation were the primary object of east Alabama settlers, with the Phenix City area being from its inception a major bridgehead town and distribution point for cotton, corn, and other produce. The riverside fields near Holland Creek were used as cornfields by their last Indian owners, and farming and grazing occupied much of the multiple-resource area until residential expansion after World War II. A military strongpoint and central staging area in the campaign against the 1836 Creek uprising, Phenix City again achieved military significance when Wilson's Raiders attacked its extensive fortifications in 1865, a week after Lee's surrender. Transportation routes created Phenix City as a settlement. At the fall line of the Chattahoochee River, the northernmost loading point for steamboats, it shared with Columbus the first bridge across the Chattahoochee River on the state line, from which wagon roads (later highways) branched in several directions across east Alabama. Later two railroad lines, one organized by local residents, passed through the multiple-resource area. Most of the Chattahoochee River bridges before 1870—not only in Phenix City, but along the length of the River—were engineered and constructed by Horace King, a resident in the multiple-resource area. King, a slave until being freed in 1846, specialized along with his master, John Godwin, in large-scale construction projects such as bridges, factories, and courthouses. Girard, the core of the community of the multiple-resource area, was surveyed in a regular gridiron pattern of streets echoing Columbus. Girard, however, represents a significant failure in geometric town planning because surveyors failed to take into account creeks and other interruptions in the grid. The city is characterized today by straight but discontinuous streets. Architecturally, Phenix City contains a variety of building types, including Greek Revival, Victorian shotgun homes and cottages, Neo-Classical residences and commercial structures, and Bungalow homes and schools. While collectively the buildings are not the finest examples of architecture in the state, they represent a period and type of construction which shows a unique type of development often associated with mill towns. Industrially, the Phenix City multiple-resource area has been a lumber and milling center since the first sawmill was built on Holland Creek by Benjamin Marshall, Girard's Indian property owner. Slow to recover after the Civil War,

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which damaged it seriously, the area's industry has included cotton mills, grist mills, brickyards, sawmills, a brewery, a legal distillery, a paper mill, a concrete works, several cotton gins, a casket factory, an iron foundry, and a variety of light industries. As a commercial and warehousing town, Phenix City has historically deferred to Columbus, Georgia, since an early Supreme Court decision prohibiting docks on the Alabama side of the River. A significant exception to this was the trade of illegal alcoholic beverages, which was centered near the Dillingham Street Bridge until the state crackdown in 1916, following the passage of Alabama's prohibition law. The bootleg traffic which continued in the wake of this crackdown was the nucleus of an organized crime establishment which grew to massive size and virtually controlled the city and county government during World War II and almost a decade thereafter. Gambling casinos and houses of prostitution were allowed to thrive openly near the bridge and at other points in town, nurtured especially by the expansion of Fort Benning, in Columbus. The election of an anti-crime Phenix City attorney, Albert Patterson, as Alabama Attorney General, signalled an abrupt shift in the political climate of the town. Upon the assassination of Patterson, his son was elected Attorney General. Prior to Patterson's election, Governor Gordon Person had the city placed under Martial Law. Patterson's election and his son's election as Governor four years later gave Phenix City political significance in the state capitol where its native-son Governor and local representative led a successful effort to expand state support of public education. Education has played a role in Phenix City since 1867. Often sponsored by local churches, it is significant not only in and of itself, but as a rallying point during the Phenix City clean-up when political power swayed education development. Religion is significant to Phenix City as a stronghold for beliefs in what was often a corrupt society. With approximately 42 churches in the area in 1954, it had more churches per capita than any other city in the United States.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PHENIX CITY MULTIPLE-RESOURCE AREA

Period 1. Coweta Falls, the southernmost barrier to navigation on the Chattahoochee River, was an Indian fishing site only a few miles north of the Creek capitol town of Coweta in a densely settled portion of the Creek Nation. In 1800, the Alabama lands by the falls had been deep within Creek lands, but after the Treaty of Indian Springs in 1825, the river at the falls became the border between the state of Georgia and the dwindling Indian territory. The once-prosperous Creeks faced an influx of refugees from ceded Georgia lands, together with the temptations of white money and whiskey, the ravages of smallpox, and the erosion of tribal law.

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Period 2. In 1828, the Georgia General Assembly established Columbus as a trading town on the fall opposite the multiple-resource area. As Columbus grew, the Alabama lands facing it developed an ad hoc village of Indian beggars and traders and a riverbank community of gamblers, prostitutes, runaways and fugitives from justice. Called Sodom for its iniquity, this small outlaw village one quarter mile below the present Dillingham Street was the first white settlement in the multiple-resource area. About the same time a fortified trading post was built on the Dillingham Street Hill by Stephen M. Ingersoll, a New York physician-adventurer who had served in the War of 1812. He came to the Georgia goldfields before establishing an Indian store on the Alabama side. Dr. Ingersoll was to be a dominant figure in the area for almost fifty years and his descendants, as well as the descendants of his slaves, continued to be prominent after his death. In 1832 a treaty was signed ceding Creek lands west of the Mississippi, making the multiple-resource area part of the State of Alabama. Each Creek head of household was to be deeded a half-section of land which he might sell before moving west. A five-year period was set aside for the transition. Residing by 1832 in the multiple-resource area opposite Columbus were two prominent half-breeds, Thomas Carr and Benjamin Marshall. Both literate planters and slave owners, they served as translators between the whites and Indians and were reputed to have the manners of country gentlemen. Carr, a protege of Indian agent John Crowell, had a cabin south of the Dillingham Bridge site, and Marshall had a house on the current courthouse hill. Marshall farmed along Holland Creek, as well as owning a sawmill, a gristmill and a river ferry.

Period 3. For his services as an interpreter in the 1832 treaty negotiations, Marshall was rewarded with a square-mile reserve including his improvements. The area is still called "Marshall's Reserve". He sold the land that year to a group of Georgia investors who would establish the town of Girard on the property. That same year, John Godwin, of South Carolina, bridged the river at the site of the present Dillingham Street span and is said to have built the first frame house within the multiple-resource area, along with workshops for the construction of the bridge. In charge of construction was a 25 year-old slave named Horace King, who would later build nearly every bridge--rail or wagon--across the Chattahoochee for the next fifty years, as well as bridges and large buildings in other parts of the Southeast. The bridge was the only span across the river for many miles in either direction, so well-used highways soon connected it to points in several directions: to the Federal Road to the south, to West Point, Georgia, in the north, and the emerging pioneer communities in the Old Creek Nation to the west. Meanwhile, though white settlement increased after 1832 and other houses joined Godwin's in Girard, conditions remained unsettled. The power of the county government was organized in 1833. Its first court meeting in Godwin's workshops, was tenuous and disputes between whites and Indians were frequent, especially with the influx of armed white intruders and land speculators bent on taking the Indians' land. A short-lived effort by the federal government to enforce treaty provisions on the Creek's behalf almost led to civil war, and the compromise arranged by Francis Scott Key in effect abandoned the Indians to the rapacity of white settlers. As a result, thousands of Indians were driven from their towns on good agricultural lands and reduced to beggary or starvation. Despite efforts of Benjamin Marshall, Dr.

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Ingersoll, and others to speed Creek removal westward, conditions came to a violent climax early in 1836 when the more militant Creeks fortified themselves in the swamps, murdered travelers on the Federal Road, and looted white settlements. Dr. Ingersoll's fort, in the multiple-resource area, was manned with militia and federal troops to protect the bridge and serve as a staging area for riverboat attacks downstream against the Creek strongpoints. By midsummer, 1836, the militants were defeated, and forced removal of the Indians began. In the fall of that year, the bulk of Marshall's Reserve was auctioned off, in the form of Girard town lots, and construction accelerated in the area. At first Girard seemed a serious competitor with Columbus as steamboat docks were built in Alabama and waterpowered mills planned. However, a series of state court actions, with Dr. Ingersoll representing Alabama interests, led to a Supreme Court ruling giving Georgia exclusive control of the river and reducing Girard to its historic role as primarily a residential adjunct to its sister city. By 1840, free of Indian pressures but limited in its use of the river, Girard assumed a stable role in the developing valley.

Period 4. In the 1840's Girard was becoming a town of "mechanics," a designation which then referred to carpenters and other skilled craftsmen. John Godwin stayed and prospered, buying skilled slaves and extensive timberlands. He based his multi-state construction business on several settlement lots in the suburbs of Girard, the headquarters from which his firm specialized in courthouses, mansions and bridges. In 1846 Horace King, Godwin's bridge builder, was freed by the Alabama legislature but continued to work with his past master. By 1850, however, Godwin and King were only two of eighty free mechanics residing in the Girard area, two thirds of the work force in the community of about five hundred inhabitants. Twenty-six workers were listed in the census as "laborers," some perhaps working in Columbus mills, but many no doubt assisting in the mechanical trades. Deed records list many mechanically skilled slaves working with Godwin. So Girard, the core settlement of the multiple-resource area, was in effect a permanent construction camp serving Columbus and the surrounding area. By 1850 Ingersoll had built a fine house, since destroyed, on the northern ridge overlooking Girard. He grazed his livestock on the slopes below the ridge. Ingersoll's son, William, had become a physician in the town. Besides Godwin and the Ingersoll's, other citizens worth thousands of dollars in the 1850 town were as follows: another mechanic, Vincent Kirkland; several merchants including Henry Lanier, Bartly Whithurst, John Woodson, Andrew Harber, George Wacassa, James More, and James Giddens; and the tavern-keeper, Isaac McGehee. Walton B. Harris, the town lawyer, Godwin, Ingersoll and thirteen other investors incorporated the Mobile and Girard Railroad of which about fifty miles of track was in use by the onset of the Civil War. The tracks terminated near the river just south of Marshall's Reserve, and a bridge at that point was planned. Through the north end of town another railroad--the Montgomery and West Point--was completed in the 1850's, stimulating residential construction along the tracks (Railroad Street) and on the edges of Dr. Ingersoll's pasture north of the track. King built a bridge for this line before the war broke. North of Girard, Summerville was a prosperous residential community, complete with an academy which educated children of prominent families from both sides of the river. Wealthy Columbus citizens kept summer homes

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on the high ridge here to remove their families from the malaria threat of the riverbank. Farther north, but within the multiple resource area, the rock Island Paper Manufactory could produce 800,000 pounds of paper yearly and was connected by a bridge to a factory complex on the Georgia side. In the 1850's and early 1860's, expanding Columbus factories and a privately financed bridge at 14th Street made the North Girard area a natural residential location for mill workers, particularly as the mills boosted production to meet wartime demand. In October of 1862, Ingersoll sold to the Eagle mill in Columbus twenty-six acres of North Girard land between Broad Street and the river, south of the Montgomery and West Point Railroad. Here, after the war, the Eagle and Phenix Manufacturing Company would construct a factory town, the original Phenix City. Meanwhile, however, the bi-state community become an arsenal and refugee center for the warring South; and in 1863 conscripted slaves executed the plan of Major-General J. F. Gilmer for a vast system of earth fortifications protecting the roads leading into Girard and the western approaches to the bridges, a system including eleven fortified gun positions, a bivouac area, and miles of rifle pits.

Period 5. War came to the multiple-resource area on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865, a week after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. General James Wilson's "Raiders" appeared unexpected on Sanford Road south of town and seized the approach to the Dillingham Street Bridge, but they were thwarted when Confederates burned the bridge. That night in almost total darkness, three hundred dismounted Iowa cavalry stormed fortifications on Summerville Road, and two mounted companies rode undetected through the Confederate line. Their communication cut, the Confederate troops retreated in confusion, leaving Wilson in undisputed control of the Girard battlefield and the bridges and factories of Columbus. Undermanned and shrouded in darkness, the formidable earthworks in the multiple-resource area had not been effective. Union troops burned houses containing arms and all structures of potential military use within the multiple-resource area, including a paper mill, a nail factory, textile plants, government blacksmith shops, a roundhouse, and a station. Most of Girard lay in smoldering ruins. With the Eagle Phenix Factory in Columbus and the cotton warehouses also burned, the area experienced a profound economic depression. Jobs were unavailable, and food was in short supply, so that many of the undestroyed houses were abandoned, the inhabitants moving to the farms outside town or the breadlines of Columbus. By 1870, however, the Phenix City area was on its way toward recovery, but all of the rebuilt industry was on the Georgia side of the river. The cotton mills were rebuilt larger than before, and Horace King rebuilt the burned Dillingham Bridge and a

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railroad bridge beside it. King, now a respected contractor, also served as a legislator and census taker and worked in partnership with Dr. Ingersoll and other prominent whites. In the early 1870's Ingersoll died and his extensive pastures north of the Montgomery and West Point tracks were gradually sold by the heirs as residential property--some in large parcels, much lot-by-lot in a subdivision called Ingersoll's Survey. Gradually, the Alabama settlements emerged as two distinct communities, the northern end growing more rapidly than the southern. The legal dividing line was the county line established by reconstruction legislation, a line running just north of 14th Street. Brownville, in Lee County to the north, was almost exclusively a cotton worker's town, centered on the new Eagle and Phenix factory houses. It also expanded northward along Summerville Road and into Ingersoll's old pastures. Grown from several houses to hundreds in little more than a decade, Brownville was a raw new town of workers drawn from as far away as England. It was reputed as a brawling and bawdy suburb in the 1870's. In contrast, though the town of Girard did become increasingly a town of mill workers after the war, iron workers predominated and it retained some of its old component of skilled craftsmen, supervisors, and builders. Its population was described in the Columbus Enquirer of 1870 as "quiet, sober, and industrious." The Baptist and Methodist congregations in Girard thrived after the war, with Brownville branches of both denominations being established after 1870. The residences of the period between 1865 and 1880 appear to have been utilitarian, especially in the Brownville area, where row after row of almost identical factory houses appeared. Even the privately owned homes--though solidly built with good, probably local millwork and heart pine framing--were small and unpretentious, generally two and three-room cottages. By 1880, the Eagle and Phenix factory, the principal employer of residents in the multiple-resource area, included three plants and was the largest textile mill in the South; and Muscogee mills was also a major employer. Near the Girard end of town the Columbus iron foundries were prospering, including Golden's Foundry, recently organized by a Girard family with a homeplace on Sandfort Road.

Period 6. In a series of land sales through the mid 1890's the Ingersoll heirs sold more property north of the Montgomery and Girard Railroad for residential purposes. Most of the area south of 20th Street, north of the tracks, and east of 11th Court was compactly developed as workers housing before the turn of the century. Development extended further out Railroad Street and Summerville Road with scattered settlement on the fringes. Closer in, the town grew westward and southward, particularly

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up 16th Street, along 14th Street, and in the flats along Holland Creek. Houses, including the summer home of the influential Moses family, were built up Sandfort Road to the south, and some fine houses of craftsman and builders down Long Street to Seale Road. There were plain workers' houses along Brickyard Road, and the river, near the brickyards, which were then south of the city limits. The largest predominately black community developed near the brickyards and along Seale Road, with other pockets of black housing scattered through what, in the 19th century, remained a predominately white millworker community. By virtue of the two bridges and the Holland Creek gorges between them, two distinct business districts developed, the county line passing just north of the upper one, so that the businesses in the multiple-resource area were predominately in Girard, while Brownville had a high residential population. Brownville was incorporated in 1883 and its name changed to Phenix City in 1891 under Mayor U. H. Smith. The southern part was incorporated as Girard in 1890. There was practically no industry on the Alabama side prior to 1900. An 1890's brewery on Holland Creek where it crosses 14th Street soon moved to Columbus, leaving the brickyards and Thomas McCollister's lumber and coal yard the only apparent industries in the multiple-resource area. A number of small grocery stores, drug stores, clothing stores and barber shops served local residents. There was no local bank before the 20th century. several resident physicians, merchants, builders, and speculators did prosper--some men owning two or three of the above titles- and mill employees learned skilled trades or moved to supervisory positions. The general prosperity of the two decades after 1880 resulted in a variety of fine, often ornate houses or cottages in modified Victorian or Neo-Classical styles, through generally on a small scale. Two-story houses were rare and generally indicated citizens of means. U. H. Smith, Dr. Ashby Floyd, Warren Williams, and Dr. David Morgan were among those building fine, two-story houses around the turn of the century, all of which are still standing. The first listed were all Mayors of Phenix City, and their houses are within sight of each other in the vicinity of Summerville Road and 20th Street. All three houses were originally one-story workers cottages and were expanded variously to 'mansion' proportions: Smith's by building a second story and back rooms, adding porches and gingerbread; Floyd's by jacking up the original house and constructing a story beneath it; and Williams' by attaching a complete two-story Neo-Classical addition to the front of a common Victorian cottage.

Gradually industry began to appear in the Phenix City multiple-resource area during the first three decades of the 20th century. Columbus city

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directories sporadically list Girard contractors such as E. A. Jones and small firms such as Butts Lumber Company, McCollister Manufacturing, and Phenix-Girard Ginnery. Residents remember contractors such as Charles Gifford, Walter Whitaker, Harry Bockman, Charlie Frank William, and J. F. Snellings as operating in the multiple-resource area in the earlier decades of the century, some building large commercial structures in Columbus, as well as houses on both sides of the river. The 'mechanic's town' of Godwin's and Kings's day persisted especially in the person of Gifford. His father had been a younger contemporary of Godwin and his beautifully crafted late-Victorian home still stands on the old Gifford estate on 13th Avenue. The largest industries in the early decades of the 20th century were the Girard Cotton Mills and the brickyards. The cotton mill, which opened about 1900, spawned a cluster of worker housing between Broad and the Chattahoochee. The brickyard also gave rise to new housing, including the Sugartown subdivision developed by brickyard owner A. L. Crawford for black workers. For a few years prior to 1916, legal liquor trade was a strong contributor to the local economy. The operation was based at two liquor warehouses still extant near the corner of Broad and Dillingham. Eleven or twelve liquor wholesalers listed in the 1914 Columbus directory had addresses in Girard, distributing huge quantities of liquor throughout the Southeast and as far north as Boston. The sums of money involved were large, so large a branch bank was built on the corner of Broad and Dillingham to handle the business. The enormous capital investment involved was suddenly destroyed in 1916, a year after Alabama became a dry state, when a state judge overrode county authority and presided over a cleanup. The Girard Bank closed and the Dillingham Street area plunged into a local depression. Meanwhile, the Phenix City area to the North expanded, developing neighborhoods of brick or clapboard bungalows reflecting architectural tastes of the post-war, World War I, era. In 1923, when the two municipalities in the multiple-resource area consolidated under the name of Phenix City, the northern half of town dominated the southern in terms of wealth and population. The late 1920's were prosperous years for the consolidated town--a new high school, a new water works, and the first paved streets were all completed in 1928 under the administration of Dr. Ashby Floyd. That year also saw a federal investigation into illegal liquor trade which sent some prominent local people to prison. The pre-1916 trade had gone underground during prohibition, and the resulting tradition of organized

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crime would emerge to dominate the community during World War II.

The early 20th century saw growth in areas of industry, religion, and education. By 1929 the Phenix City multiple-resource area was no longer dependent on Columbus for employment. Within the city limits were the Girard branch of Eagle and Phenix Mill, a concrete company making sewer pipe, Butts Lumber Company making sashes and doors, the Snellings Lumber Company, the J. B. Johnson Mattress Company, two ginneries, and a casket works. Morgan's Beach, a lake and dance hall on a dammed-up section of Holland Creek attracted out-of-town business. Smaller firms made cigars, candy, ice cream and sausage. Also, as part of early 20th century growth, existing churches expanded and new congregations were organized. The Trinity Methodists enlarged and veneered their 1870's structure in 1927. The now large Central Baptists splintered off the First Baptist Church in 1932 and built a brick church, and the Girard Baptists renovated and enlarged their 1892 structure. St. Patrick's Church, the first Catholic Church in Russell County, was established in 1911 as a mission by the Vincentian Fathers. St. Patrick's school was established by a small group of school teachers who incorporated in 1918 in Lee County as Missionary servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, now operating missions in several states. Church schools were the main educational institutions for Phenix City area children, black and white, until the first decades of this century. At that time substantial public schools were built both in Girard and Phenix City, including the first public schools for blacks since reconstruction. By 1929 a modern city school system was in place to be administered for almost thirty years after its inception in 1924 by Superintendent Lucien P. Stough.

Period 7. The years between 1929 and 1954 were a time of crime and economic stagnation. Phenix City felt, like the rest of the country, the effects of the crash of 1929. By 1933 the city government was in receivership, from which it was not to emerge for fifteen years. Eagle and Phenix closed its Girard branch mill, and other businesses failed. The repeal of prohibition led to the opening of bars near the bridges, the nucleus of the city's vice establishment. Economic stagnation was the rule, and the rare private construction was generally slipshod and architecturally retrogressive--built at minimum cost to meet a short-term need. Most major construction in the 30's was public, including the first units in two low-income housing projects, a new Russell County courthouse, a small charity hospital, and a post office. In 1932

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the boundaries of Russell County were extended northward to encompass the city, and Phenix City became the county seat again, a function it had lost almost a century earlier. The nationwide drift away from the farm was reflected in the fact that Phenix City, though on the northern edge of the county, had become Russell County's economic center. None of these changes, however, did much to break the economic stagnation of the decade. World War II had a profound effect on the multiple-resource area but also failed to produce substantial growth. Phenix Foundry expanded with defense work, and expanded production at the Columbus mills made jobs available. The presence of gambling and vice in Phenix City made the area desirable as a business or residential location, and money tended to move across the river to Columbus. Serving the tens of thousands of soldiers being trained at an expanded Fort Benning, illegal gambling casinos and houses of prostitution operated openly in Phenix City, untouched by local law enforcement officials. The resulting income was concentrated in the hands of criminals and corrupt politicians and did little to improve the overall economic condition of the town, its factory housing suffering from a decade of neglect. Even postwar prosperity had little changed, good jobs scarce, and bankers reluctant to lend money in Phenix City. The few neighborhoods that were built after the war only hastened the decline of inner residential areas as abandoned family homes became low-rent housing. One positive development of the 40's was the founding of Mother Mary Mission in 1941, a mission school on Seale Road intended for the education of black children. City improvements in the immediate post-war period, such as public housing, the first paid fire department, and a modern city hospital had no solid capital base, but depended on support from government or from organized crime elements. Not until the 1954 cleanup, when city was placed under Martial Law, did the Phenix City multiple-resource area begin its period of post-war growth. The murder of Attorney General-elect Albert Patterson, the act which triggered the cleanup, catapulted his son into the state office and to the governor's mansion four years later, the first major state political offices attained by anyone from the multiple-resource area.

Period 8. Since 1954 expansion of Phenix City has been dramatic, industrially and residentially. It has outgrown in all directions the Holland Creek Valley where it began and has attracted a variety of industries: lumber mills, textile mills, a concrete plant, a box plant, trucking firms, an auto factory, and department stores--millions of dollars worth of capital construction, most of it entering the area since 1960. Through the 60's and 70's many blocks of historic downtown housing have been razed and

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shopping centers developed near the traditional center of town and on the 431 Bypass circling the town. Much of Phenix City's pre-war housing has been abandoned by owner-residents moving to the rapidly expanding suburbs, while highways, housing projects, and commercial buildings have supplanted blocks of old housing. New public and private schools have been built to serve the suburbs and city parks expanded. The long-delayed process of paving city streets has been nearly completed. The last half of the 1970's showed a noticable reversal in the deterioration of older housing, particularly in neighborhoods on Summerville Road and on Broad north of 14th Street, where houses have been restored by owner-residents or adapted for office space.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MULTIPLE-RESOURCE AREA

The Phenix City Historical Preservation Society was formed in 1979 by a group of citizens interested in the preservation of local neighborhoods and historic sites. Among the activities the Society sponsors are fund raising efforts to establish accounts which will be used in the promotion of the ideas of historic preservation. The group holds an annual ice cream social and an awards ceremony for six houses per year to receive a house plaque marking it as a significant structure in the area. A Christmas tour of homes is held each December to mark the holiday season. Monthly Society meetings often include guest speakers who will help in the restoration of older homes.

The Society was the group to initially propose the Multiple Resource Nomination, and make advances toward its realization. Members took on the responsibility of research, while the President wrote the bulk of Section 8, the Significance. Other members have gone to city officials and bankers to explain the purpose of the Society and attain support.

Throughout the course of the project, several changes took place in the community. Properties have started to be rehabilitated, lawns cleaned, and more pride taken in the neighborhoods. This nomination will continue to promote these efforts, and hopefully take them further by allowing the use of tax incentive programs, and 50% HCRS Matching Grant-in-Aid programs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

Zone	Easting	Northing

D

Zone	Easting	Northing

E

Zone	Easting	Northing

F

Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

The multiple-resource area is defined by the city limits of Phenix City. This boundary is marked by a heavy dashed line on the attached maps.

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See Continuation Sheet

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date September 26, 1983

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 205/832-6621

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ☒ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 26, 1983

For NPS use only

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

date 11/03/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

(11/78)

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Dr. William Green
1907 6th Court
Phenix City, Alabama 36867
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Ms. Nancy Alexander
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Item number

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Phenix City Multiple Resource Area
State Russell County, ALABAMA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Brooks-Hughes House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Accept / Dmbie 10/03/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 2. | Brownville-Summerville
Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 3. | Floyd-Newsome House | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 4. | Girard High School | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>nd</u> |
| 5. | Girard Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 6. | Kid Alley Residential
Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 7. | Lower Twentieth Street
Residential Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 8. | Morgan-Curtis House | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 9. | Shapre-Monte House | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 10. | Smith Residential Historic
District | Entered in the
National Register | for Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 11/3/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Item number

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Phenix City Multiple Resource Area
State Russell County, ALABAMA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

-11. Snow Valley Residential Historic District *Substantive Review* Keeper

Attest

Accept - Dubie 11/03/83

12. Upper Twentieth Street Residential Historic District *Accred. to file* *for* Keeper

Attest

Michael Byers 11/3/83

13. Keeper

Attest

14. Keeper

Attest

15. Keeper

Attest

16. Keeper

Attest

17. Keeper

Attest

18. Keeper

Attest

19. Keeper

Attest

20. Keeper

Attest