

**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 ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL  
other names/site number LEE HOTEL

**2. Location**

street & number 141 Flint Ave. (300-310 Washington St.)  
city, town Albany (N/A) vicinity of  
county Dougherty code GA 095  
state Georgia code GA zip code 31703

(N/A) not for publication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:**

|            | <u>Contributing</u> | <u>Noncontributing</u> |
|------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| buildings  | 1                   | 0                      |
| sites      | 0                   | 0                      |
| structures | 0                   | 0                      |
| objects    | 0                   | 0                      |
| total      | 1                   | 0                      |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**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.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

11/5/91  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

entered in the National Register

Delores Byer 12/19/91

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

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

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

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

( ) see continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions:**

DOMESTIC/hotel

**Current Functions:**

OTHER: transitional center

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification:**

COMMERCIAL STYLE

**Materials:**

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| foundation | brick       |
| walls      | brick       |
| roof       | sheet metal |
| other      | n/a         |

**Description of present and historic physical appearance:**

The St. Nicholas Hotel, located in downtown Albany on the edge of the commercial area, is a three-story, flat-roofed, brick building in the commercial style. The brick walls are 12 inches thick, laid in a running bond method. The roof is flat and covered with sheet metal behind a brick parapet.

At the street level, the Washington Street facade is broken up into six store units at an average width of 22 feet. There is also one store front on the Flint Avenue side. The main arched recessed entrance contains a tiled "St. Nicholas" in the floor framed by two carved Ionic stonework columns. The Ionic pillars have capitals with scroll work. The main hotel building is 150 feet across the front and 70 feet 8 inches in depth. There is a one-story, Corinthian metal column at the storefront entrance on the southwest side of the building. The Flint Avenue store building in the rear joins the main building by a brick arch.

The upper two floors are subdivided into bays by brick pilasters. The floors include paired windows, flat arches on the second floor, and segmental arches on the third floor. There is a brick parapet at the roofline.

The interior features plaster walls and a decorative pressed metal ceiling in the lower lobby area. There are original wainscoting, wood stairs, hardwood floors, doors to the rooms, and hallway configuration remaining as well as the downstairs concrete floor with its ceramic tile. The interior walls on the second and third floors are stud construction with plaster. There is some wainscoting on a portion of the interior. All ceilings are 10 feet, and there are wooden floor joists, as well as steel columns supporting first floor ledger. There is a steam-radiated heat system which is still operational.

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National Park Service

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The hotel, located on flat terrain, is on the former site of an iron foundry in a commercial area in downtown Albany adjoining a railroad spur and between two major railroads.

Changes to the building include the removal of the alcove entrance and garage-type double doors added on the Flint Street side. Other changes stem mostly from repairs after the 1940 tornado and recent certified rehabilitation. The original canopy on the Washington Street front was lost in the tornado and was not replaced.

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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  
TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance:**

1908-1941

**Significant Dates:**

1908, 1941

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

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

Bruce and Everett of Atlanta  
(Alexander C. Bruce; Alexander F. N. Everett)

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**Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:**

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

The St. Nicholas Hotel is significant in architecture because it is a good example of a small, 50-room commercial hotel built near the railroads to serve railroad passengers and to include retail space on the ground floor. Architectural features of note are its main entrance with its Corinthian-columned entry way, and tile floor which includes the hotel's original logo, corner entrance with cast iron column and simple straightforward design. It is also significant as a work of Bruce and Everett of Atlanta, a firm established by the noted Alexander C. Bruce (1835-1927), formerly of Parkins and Bruce as well as Bruce and Morgan, at the end of a remarkable career, with a young partner, Alexander F. N. Everett (1880-1937), who went on to a distinguished career on his own. It is one of the few known, surviving works of this short-lived firm. The hotel is significant in commerce and transportation because it was built to be a hotel to serve railroad passengers and commercial/business travelers, as well as to include commercial space. It reflects the era when successful commercial activity and transportation was tied almost totally to the railroad. Circus performers often stayed here, and the son of one such couple was noted bandleader, Harry James, born in the hotel in 1916. After a major tornado in 1940, the hotel reopened as the Hotel Lee.

**National Register Criteria**

The St. Nicholas Hotel meets National Register Criterion A because it was associated with events which were part of the broad pattern of American history. In this case this would be its association with the tie in between commercial growth and the railroads. The nearby railroads were the source of passengers, many of them traveling sales people, who had to travel by rail and needed a convenient place to stay, as motels would later serve automobile travelers. This hotel was one of several in Albany which served such passengers, part of the American way of life in the early 20th century, but the only one which remains. The first floor of this hotel, including the one-story addition along Flint Street, was filled with stores and eating establishments, some to serve the guests, others associated with businesses which benefited from the nearness to the railroad and its passengers.

The hotel meets criterion C because it embodies distinctive characteristics of a commercial hotel from the early 20th century. While a very functional building, with its original layout of a hallway running throughout the upper two floors and the hotel rooms off of this hall, the downstairs, main entrance and lobby retain the

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flavor of an early hotel. The entrance contains elaborate Corinthian columns and a tile floor with the original hotel name inlaid in tile. The first floor contains the original stairway and other hotel motifs abound including wainscoting. The building was not built for tourists and thus it was not decorated to be the "Ritz", but rather featured the utilitarian arrangement of design needed for a railroad related hotel of the period. Its location was near the railroads, from whence its major clientele came, and downtown Albany.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification, if applicable)**

The period of significance dates from the building of the St. Nicholas Hotel in 1908 until its repair in 1941 after the tornado of 1940 severely damaged the hotel, causing it to be rebuilt and reopened as the Lee Hotel in the 1940s.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if applicable)**

There is only one building on this property, the nominated one. It consists of the main hotel fronting Washington Street and the commercial addition along Flint Street.

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

The St. Nicholas Hotel is located in the county-seat city of Albany in the southwestern part of Georgia. While this area of the state was not opened for settlement until the 1820s, Albany soon became a trade center and its growth caused the original county to be subdivided and Dougherty County was created in 1858 with Albany as its county seat. The city's growth was insured by the advance of the railroads.

It was due to these railroads and Albany's increasing role as a railroad and commercial center that the need for a new commercial or traveller's hotel was felt in the early 20th century.

Lots 21 and 23 on Flint Street were sold to N. J. Cruger and W. W. Pace by Samuel and Richard Pattison, heirs to the pre-existing foundry on this spot, on the 31st day of August, 1906 for the sum of \$11,800.

William Wilkinson Pace, son of Davis Pace (the first elected mayor of Albany), was born April 26, 1860. Receiving his education from the local schools, he was further fitted for the business life he was destined to follow by attending Bruce Business College in Atlanta, Georgia. Early in his business career he became associated with N. J.

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Cruger under the firm name of Cruger & Pace, who were brick manufacturers and dealers in lumber and building supplies. This firm became large owners of real estate, consisting of stores, dwelling houses and later built the St. Nicholas Hotel.

Mr. Pace was elected city councilman in 1893 and served one term. Around 1908 before the death of Mr. Cruger, the firm dissolved partnership, dividing the assets. In the division of the property, Mr. Pace became the sole owner of the St. Nicholas Hotel.

Construction began on the St. Nicholas Hotel shortly after the land was purchased in 1906, just blocks from the railroad station. The Manufacturer's Record for September 27, 1906, quotes the Albany newspaper:

Cruger and Pace have purchased a site on which to erect building. Size and character has not been determined.

The purpose of building this fine hotel was to accommodate people traveling by train. The St. Nicholas Hotel was the third hotel to be built in Albany.

While Albany's newspapers are incomplete, the special issue of the Albany Herald for October 26, 1907, highlights major buildings in town, as well as those under construction. While this hotel was obviously not completed, it was underway, as shown in the advertisement by the C. D. Smith construction company. He indicated he was now building the "Cruger and Pace Hotel". He was also the builder of the First National Bank, designed by the same architects as the hotel, Bruce and Everett. Both buildings opened in 1908.

Bruce and Everett were principals in an Atlanta architectural firm consisting of Alexander C. Bruce and Alexander F. N. Everett. Bruce had been partners with two of Atlanta's premier architects, William H. Parkins (as Parkins and Bruce) and Thomas H. Morgan (as Bruce and Morgan). Between these two firms, he had been involved in the design of many mansions, county courthouses, railroad buildings, and other structures. Everett, on the other hand, was just beginning his career and apparently after Bruce and Morgan dissolved their firm, he was able to form a partnership with Bruce. The work of this short-lived firm can be found all over the state, including churches (Everett's specialty, as he published a small book of church designs) and other public buildings. Everett's career continued independently into the Art Deco era, as one house designed by him survives in Atlanta.

The St. Nicholas Hotel must have opened in the late spring of 1908. The surviving newspapers for 1908 are incomplete. The first mention of



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the hotel's name comes in an advertisement for the barber shop on May 7th, then a full-fledged add for the hotel is found on June 17th. This advertisement highlighted the following features of this self-described "Albany's Elegant New Hotel" which was "round the corner from the Depot" : electric lights, electric bells, a large sample room, elegantly furnished, steam heat, running hot and cold water in every room, and some rooms with a private bath.

An advertisement in the 1909-1910 Albany City Directory states that the hotel had steam heat (still in operation today) and hot and cold running water in every room. The 1922 City Directory shows that there was also a telephone in every room. It is possible that the phones were added prior to 1922, as the City Directories from 1911-1921 are not available. The structure of the hotel contained several stores. A listing of the addresses and occupants follows:

300 Washington: At this address from 1922-1938 was the Pace Tire/Goodrich-Silvertown Store and from 1941-1948 the Consumer Gas Company of Georgia and, by 1949, finance companies.

302 Washington: at this address from 1922-1940 it appears to be vacant; it became used in 1941 as Price Mercantile Company.

306 Washington: from 1907-1933 this was the St. Nicholas Dining Room; from 1934-1942 the Empire Hosiery Company.

308 Washington: from 1922-1927 this was the Singer Sewing Machine Company; and from 1928-1936, vacant.

Harry Haag James, the great jazz instrumentalist of the late 1930s and 1940s, was born in the St. Nicholas Hotel on March 15, 1916. His middle name derived from the mighty Haag Circus of which both his parents were members, his father as bandleader and his mother as an aerialist. Circus performers were just one of the many groups who travelled by train and always stayed at a hotel near the railroad on which they traveled.

In 1930, a railroad siding was added immediately behind the hotel on the other side of the preexisting radiator company at 143 Flint Avenue. This allowed another building to be squeezed into the space between the railroad siding and the radiator building. It is presumed that at this time the archway was built to connect this new building and the radiator building to the hotel. Since this was connected, the hotel and these other buildings have remained under the same ownership.

The era of the St. Nicholas Hotel came to a dramatic end at 4 o'clock on the morning of Saturday, February 10, 1940, when Albany and the hotel were hit by the most vicious tornado that the area had ever

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experienced. Those who heard it and lived to tell the story said that the tornado sounded like "the noise of a thousand freight trains." Photographs of the hotel after the tornado show the extensive damage to the building.

When the hotel was rehabilitated, it reopened under the name "Lee Hotel," presumably named for General Robert E. Lee. Since the 1940s, the hotel and the area of town in which it was located have declined. In 1984 the hotel was purchased for rehabilitation and has now reopened as a transitional center.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Hudgins, Vicki R. for Larry Bussey, Inc. "St. Nicholas Hotel."

Historic Property Information Form, July, 1984. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. This was supplemented by additional material by Maryel Battin, consultant.

Albany Herald, Oct. 26, 1907 (special issue); May 1-July 16, 1908, issues on microfilm at the University of Georgia, Athens.

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

- (X) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- (X) State historic preservation office
- ( ) Other State Agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** less than one acre.

**UTM References**

A) Zone 16 Easting 770330 Northing 3497240

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is all that city lot upon which the former hotel sits and is marked on the enclosed tax map.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property is all the land which has been traditionally associated with this property and all that remains associated with it today.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title** Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian.  
**organization** Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** 404-656-2840 **date** October 10, 1991

(HPS form version 11-02-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Photographs

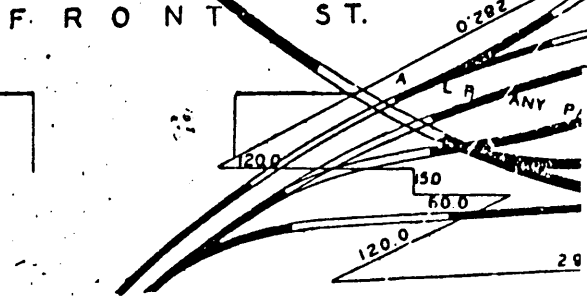
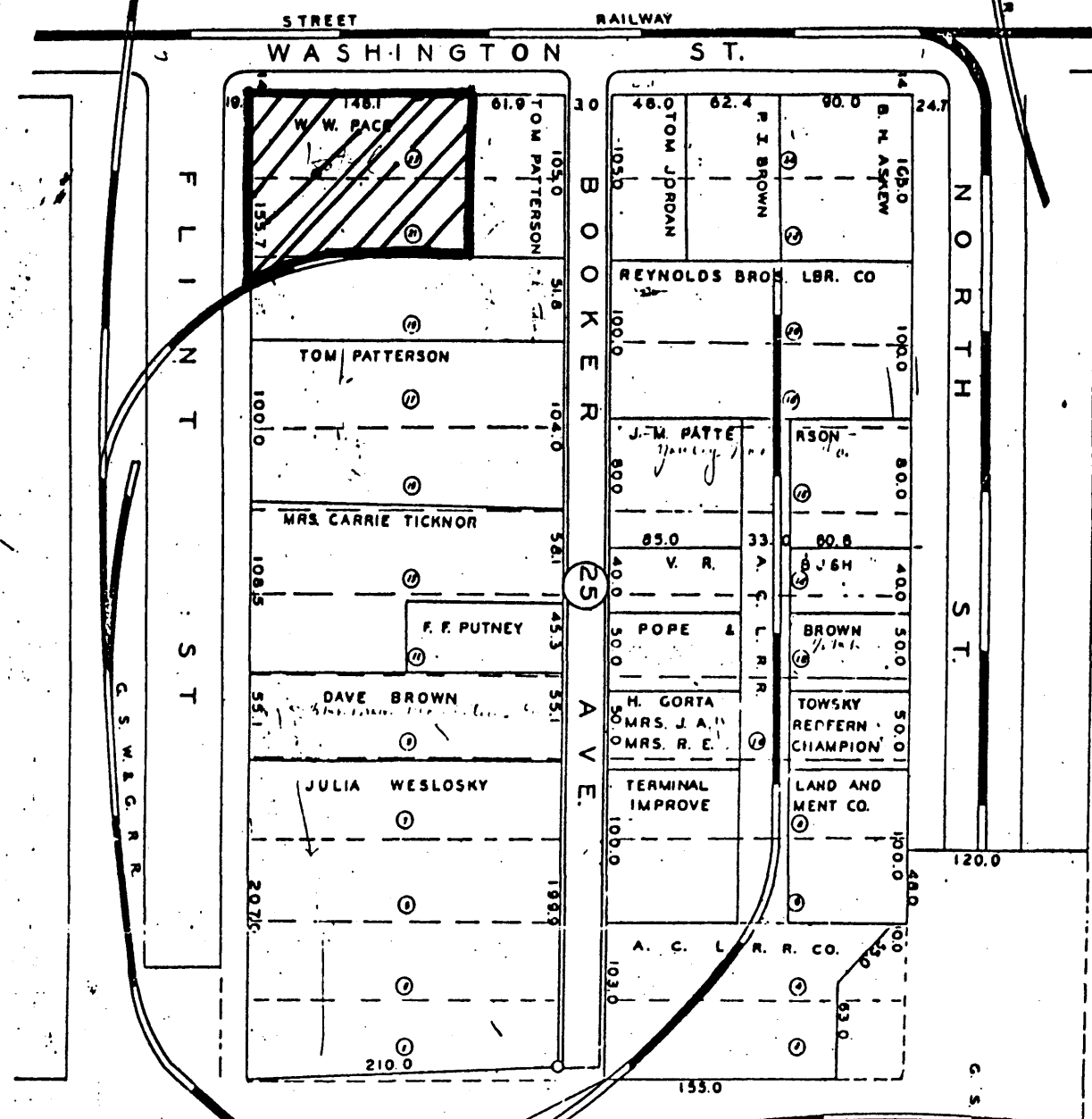
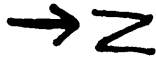
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**Name of Property:** St. Nicholas Hotel  
**City or Vicinity:** Albany  
**County:** Dougherty  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** April, 1991

**Description of Photograph(s):**

- 1 of 8: Front facade (Washington St. side) on the left; side facade (Flint Avenue side) on the right. Photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 8: Flint Avenue side; note arch and enclosed garage entrance. Photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 8: North facade, Washington St. at right. Photographer facing south.
- 4 of 8: Metal column storefront entrance, Washington St. on the left, Flint Ave. on the right. Photographer facing southeast.
- 5 of 8: Main Entrance (Washington St.); note "St. Nicholas" in the tile entranceway floor. Photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 8: First floor, entrance foyer. Photographer facing east.
- 7 of 8: Third floor hallway. Photographer facing north.
- 8 of 8: Second floor hallway. Photographer facing south.

CITY BLOCK MAPS



Boundary Map

St. Nicholas Hotel  
 Albany, Dougherty County, Georgia  
 Scale: 1" = 100'

Source: Albany City Tax Assessor's Office  
 Date: 1984

Key: The nominated property is marked by diagonal lines.

Sketch Map

St. Nicholas Hotel  
Albany, Dougherty County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Date: 1930

Key: The nominated property is marked on the map as the St. Nicholas Hotel.

