

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Sylacauga Historic Commercial District  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Broadway Ave., W. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Anniston Ave., W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. not for publication N/A  
city or town Sylacauga vicinity N/A  
state Alabama code AL county Talladega code 121 zip code 35150

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] April 19, 2004  
Signature of certifying official Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register
  - other (explain):

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall 6/2/04

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>64</u>	<u>9</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>64</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commercial Sub: Professional  
Business  
Government City Hall

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commercial Sub: Professional  
Business  
Government

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Moderne  
One-Story Commercial Block  
Two-Story Commercial Block

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone, brick, concrete  
roof asphalt, tar, metal  
walls wood, brick, stone  
other glass

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Sylacauga Historic Commercial District

County and State Talladega, Alabama

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance 1890-1948

Significant Dates 1890, 1904, 1940

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Ogletree, John L. Sr. and Ogletree, John L. Jr.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X 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
[ X ] Other
Name of repository
B. B. Comer Library

USDI/NPS Registration Form

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 40 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	16	569520	3670480	3.	16	569930 3670050
2.	16	569930	3670470	4.	16	569500 3670000

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gene A. Ford and Linda Ford, Architectural Historian and Christy Anderson, AHC Reviewer

organization Ford Consulting/ Alabama Historical Commission date August, 2001

street & number 26 Cherokee Hills/468 S. Perry Street telephone (205) 556-5388/ (334) 242-3184

city or town Tuscaloosa/Montgomery state AL zip code 35404/36130-0900

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple owners

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Address Inventory Summary**

**First Street**

108, 109, 110

**Second Street**

115, 116, 117, 118, 120

**Third Street**

29, 31

**Anniston Avenue**

105, 110, 112, 201, 210

**North Broadway Avenue**

105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 219, 221, 223, 228, 232, 234

**North Norton Avenue**

101, 103, 105, 107, 117, 119, 121, 123, 129, 201, 210, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 221, 223, 225, 301, 315

**VII. Narrative Description**

Sylacauga is a small town located approximately 45 miles southeast of Birmingham, Alabama on U. S. Highway 280 in Talladega County. Situated in downtown Sylacauga, the Sylacauga Historic Commercial District is bounded by First Street, Third Street, Calhoun Avenue and Anniston Avenue. This commercial district will include the Hightower Brothers Livery Stable, which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP 1997)(Resource 74).

Contained within the designated boundaries of the Sylacauga Historic Commercial District are 74 resources. Of these, 65 are contributing (1 through 10, 12-14, 16-20, 22-25, 27-29, 31-38, 40-59, 61-62, and 64-71, 73-74). Nine of the resources (Resources 11, 15, 21, 26, 30, 39, 60, 63, and 72) are considered non-contributing to the Sylacauga Historic Commercial District. Resources 15, 21, 26, and 60 are heavily modified and the remaining four resources are not old enough to be considered as eligible. The 65 contributing resources possess architectural integrity to the period of significance. This integrity meets Federal standards for listing in the NRHP. The Sylacauga Historic Commercial District has a high ratio of contributing resources (65) to (9) non-contributing resources. The resources in the historic district are contiguous.

The core of the district encompasses approximately two blocks of North Broadway Avenue, Sylacauga's main thoroughfare, and three blocks of North Norton Avenue. These two avenues contain many shops and services in the heart of the city and are landscaped with plantings on either side of the street. Small ornamental trees accentuate most of the storefronts. These trees are planted in square beds with brick surrounds within the sidewalks. Uniformly decorative waste receptacles dot the sidewalks. Some storefronts boast urns with plantings to compliment the streetscape as well.

The identified historic properties represent seventy years of Sylacauga history, dating from the 1880s and continuing through the late 1940s. The resources reflect important developments that occurred during this seven decade period, including a late nineteenth-century timber industry boom that lasted into the early 1890s; a thriving transportation/timber economy; a turn-of-the-century, thriving commercial district spurred by railroad construction; early 1920s prosperity; agricultural dependency; one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's federal relief programs of the 1930s; and finally World War II and post war developments.

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The identified historic resources represent commercial buildings that are of several varieties: one, two, and three story, free standing commercial buildings and one and two story, commercial blocks. Multiple story commercial blocks feature brick and stone construction with a flat roof and have a storefront and upper floors. Composed of an entry door, transom, and flanking display windows, a storefront corresponds with the first floor store space; the upper floor(s) function as private space, such as office, storage, and/or residential use. Corbeling, a parapet, decorative brickwork, and flat and round top windows define the upper facade of these multiple story commercial blocks. One story commercial blocks are similar in design to multiple blocks but lack upper floors. Free standing commercial buildings exist separate from adjacent buildings whereas commercial blocks often share common walls with adjacent edifices. Free standing mercantile houses feature the same architectural elements as commercial blocks.

There are, fifty-three, one story commercial block resources: 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, and 72.

The one story free standing commercial buildings are six in number. They are resources: 1, 3, 9, 12, 13, and 63.

The Hightower Brothers Livery Stable (Resource 74) is already on the NRHP (1997). It has been recently restored and again takes its place as a Sylacauga landmark. The ca. 1914 brick stable has a corbelled parapet with a flat roof, a thirteen bay façade with arched double leaf wood doors and thirty pane windows.

The sole, two story free standing commercial building is Resource 30.

The two story commercial block total is nine and is as follows: 16, 17, 31, 32, 34, 43, 44, 46, and 58.

There is one, three story freestanding commercial building, Resource 64.

There are two civic buildings: the old Sylacauga City Hall and the City Jail (Resources 7 and 8) The two story, City Hall was built in 1937 by the Public Works Administration in an Art Moderne style.

*Archaeological Component*

Although no archaeological survey has been conducted in association with the Sylacauga Historic District, there exists the potential for subsurface remains in the district.

Sylacauga Resources

1. 108 First Street. Ca. 1920. One story, stone faced, free standing commercial building with flat roof of tar composition, off center wood and glass double leaf doors, multipane windows. Contributing Resource.
2. 109 First Street. Modern Cleaners. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door, display windows, flat metal roof drive through Contributing Resource.
3. 110 First Street. Ca. 1920. One story, brick, free standing, commercial building with flat roof of tar composition, off center wood door, metal garage door, multiple multipane windows. Contributing Resource.

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4. 115 and 117 Second Street. John L. Ogletree, Sr. and John Ogletree, Jr. builders, 1945. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, multiple off center plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  5. 116 and 118 Second Street. Ca. 1945. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of asphalt shingles, two off center plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  6. 120 Second Street. Ca. 1945. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of asphalt shingles, off center wood and glass door with sidelights, off center plate glass door, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  7. 29 Third Street. City Hall. 1937. Two story, brick Art Moderne building with flat roof of tar composition, three part façade with 1/1 double hung sash windows in threes, stone band, first floor with central double leaf wood panel doors, stylized frieze and capitols with stone capitols, triple 1/1 double hung sash windows, stone bands, replacement window, wood and glass panel door, basement with 1/1 double hung sash windows. Contributing Resource.
  8. 31 Third Street. City Jail. 1937. One story, brick building with flat roof of tar composition with stone coping, security door and window. Contributing Resource.
  9. 105 Anniston Avenue. 7 Up Bottling Company. Ca. 1900. One story, brick, free standing, commercial building with flat roof of tar composition, sign panel, central triple leaf wood doors, flanking 9/9 double hung sash windows. Contributing Resource.
  10. 110 Anniston Avenue. Sylacauga Auto Parts. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center wood and glass doors, flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
  11. 112 Anniston Avenue. Ogletree Building. Ca. 1960. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, central plate glass door and plate glass window. Non-contributing Resource.
  12. 201 Anniston Avenue. A & D Welding. Ca. 1895. One story, brick free standing commercial building with flat roof of tar composition, two off center wood and glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  13. 210 Anniston Avenue. Michael's Plumbing. Ca. 1900. One story, brick, free standing, commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass doors and windows, enclosed door with arched transoms. Contributing Resource.
  14. 105 North Broadway Avenue. Citas Income Tax Service. Ca. 1890. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door, sidelights, clerestory, display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.
  15. 106 North Broadway Avenue. Wright and SprayBerry Insurance. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center wood and multiple pane glass door and multiple pane replacement windows. Replacement siding and wood shingle overhang. Non-contributing Resource.
  16. 107 North Broadway Avenue. American Home Patient. Ca. 1940. Two story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, second floor with 6/6 double hung sash windows, storefront with recessed entryway, plate glass doors and display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.

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17. 110 North Broadway Avenue. Diggs. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with decorative parapet, flat roof of tar composition, brick dentils, enclosed windows on second floor, storefront with two off center glass doors with side lights and transoms, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  18. 111 North Broadway Avenue. Alabama Business Products. Ca. 1917. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, two off center plate glass doors with transom and display windows. Contributing Resource.
  19. 112 North Broadway Avenue. Caroles. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, stringwork, off center glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  20. 113 North Broadway Avenue. Diamond Jewelry. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, recessed entry way with off center plate glass door and display windows. Contributing Resource.
  21. 114 North Broadway Avenue. Rocky W. Jackson. Ca. 1917. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, metal slipcover on upper façade, off center plate glass door and windows, vitrolite siding at base of facade. Non-Contributing Resource.
  22. 115 North Broadway Avenue. A. J.'s. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, recessed entry way with off center plate glass door and display windows. Contributing Resource.
  23. 117 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, stringwork, off center glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  24. 119 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, stringwork, off center glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  25. 120 North Broadway Avenue. J. M. Duck Jewelers. Ca. 1917. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, sign panel, two off center doors, one glass and wood frame and one plate glass, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  26. 121 North Broadway Avenue. Southeastern Cellular. Griffin's Jewelers. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, central glass doors. Modified Post- modern façade with stucco cladding, flanking pilasters and pediment, display windows. Non-contributing Resource.
  27. 122 North Broadway Avenue. The Sport's Locker. Ca. 1917. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door and windows. Contributing Resource.
  28. 123 North Broadway Avenue. Coosa Valley Pool and Spa. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, sign panel, off center plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  29. 124 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1917. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door and display windows. Contributing Resource.
  30. 126 North Broadway Avenue. The Bank of Sylacauga. Ca. 1975. Two story, brick and concrete, free standing, commercial building with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with side lights. Non-contributing Resource.



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31. 200 North Broadway Avenue. Ed Jones. Ca. 1900. Two story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, storefront with off center plate glass door with flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
32. 201 North Broadway Avenue. Stanton's. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, second floor with 1/1 double hung sash windows with segmented arch lintels, sign panels, storefront with double leaf plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource
33. 202 North Broadway Avenue. Frank House Jewelers. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center plate wood door with flanking display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.
34. 203 North Broadway Avenue. Hagan's Drug Co. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, ornamental parapet, brick stringwork, sign panel, storefront double leaf plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
35. 204 North Broadway Avenue. F & M Dress Shop. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
36. 205 North Broadway Avenue. Charlie's. Ca. 1935. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, off center, two double-leaf plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
37. 206 North Broadway Avenue. Treasures Art & Crafts. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
38. 207 North Broadway Avenue. Charlie's. Ca. 1935. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, off center, two leaves, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
39. 208 North Broadway Avenue. Palace Drug Store. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, slipcover with fake gabled dormers and wood shingle awning, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows. Non-contributing Resource.
40. 210 North Broadway Avenue. Super Fitness Gym. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, and recessed entryways with two off center plate glass doors and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
41. 211 North Broadway Avenue. J. C. Penney. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, stringwork, off center, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
42. 212 North Broadway Avenue. Janet Jones Insurance. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
43. 213 North Broadway Avenue. Papa John's. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, second floor windows still visible with infill, storefront with off center, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.

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44. 214 North Broadway Avenue. H & R Block. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, second floor with 1/1 double hung sash windows with segmented arch lintels, sign panels, storefront with double leaf plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  45. 215 North Broadway Avenue. La Costa. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, sign panels, off center, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  46. 216 North Broadway Avenue. Sylacauga Karate. Ca. 1895. Two story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, second floor with 1/1 double hung sash windows with segmented arch lintels, sign panels, storefront with double leaf plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  47. 217 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, recessed entry, off center, double leaf, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  48. 219 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, recessed entry, off center, double leaf, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  49. 221 North Broadway Avenue. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with parapet front, flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice. Contributing Resource.
  50. 223 North Broadway Avenue. Sherwin-Williams. Ca. 1895. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, recessed entry, off center, double leaf, plate glass doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
  51. 228 North Broadway Avenue. Garbo's. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, stringwork, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.
  52. 232 North Broadway Avenue. Broadway Avenue Florist. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with flanking display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.
  53. 234 North Broadway Avenue. Law Office. Ca. 1900. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, neo-classical façade with central wood and glass door, frieze, flanking columns, fixed pane windows. Contributing Resource.
  54. 101 North Norton Avenue. Sylacauga Today. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, central plate glass door with transom and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
  55. 103 North Norton Avenue. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, and central plate glass door with transom and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
  56. 105 North Norton Avenue. Hair Razors and Nails. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, and central plate glass door with transom and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.

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57. 107 North Norton Avenue. Cupboards. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, central wood and glass door with flanking display windows, awning. Contributing Resource.
58. 117 North Norton Avenue. A & M Clothing. Ca. 1920. Two story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, second story with 6/6 double hung sash windows, storefront with multiple plate glass doors and wood doors, display windows. Contributing Resource.
59. 119 North Norton Avenue. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, corbelled cornice, sign panel, recessed plate glass door, flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
60. 121 North Norton Avenue. Hare and Dunlap. Ca. 1920. One story brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, central wood and glass door, flanking 6/6 double hung sash windows. Modified with a stucco cladding to update. Non-contributing Resource.
61. 123 North Norton Avenue. Larry Parker Furniture. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, central double leaf, and plate glass door with transom and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
62. 129 North Norton Avenue. Pete's Feed and Seed. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, central double leaf, plate glass door with flanking display windows, covered clerestory. Contributing Resource.
63. 201 North Norton Avenue. Ca. 1980. One story, brick commercial building with hip and cross gable roof of asphalt shingles, central, double leaf plate glass doors and flanking 6/6 double hung sash windows. Non-contributing Resource.
64. 210 North Norton Avenue. Arnold Building. Ca. 1940. Three story, brick commercial block with stone clad first floor, casement windows on second and third floors, first floor with wood and glass door and one set of double leaf, plate glass doors, and display windows. Contributing Resource.
65. 212 North Norton Avenue. Foote Brothers Furniture Warehouse. Ca. 1940. One story, brick commercial block with coping lined parapet, upper façade with decorative brickwork, canvas awning, two double leaf plate glass doors, and flanking display windows. Contributing Resource.
66. 213 North Norton Avenue. Maytag. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with parapet, flat roof of tar composition, off center wood and glass door, display windows and awning. Contributing Resource.
67. 214 North Norton Avenue. Tanning Salon. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, central plate glass door, sidelights and transom, flanking plate glass windows and awning. Contributing Resource.
68. 215 North Norton Avenue. Service Star. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center glass door and transom and wood and glass door and transom, display windows. Contributing Resource.
69. 216 North Norton Avenue. Performance Carpet and Tile. Ca. 1920. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, recessed entryways, two off center glass doors with transoms, flanking display windows and awning. Contributing Resource.

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70. 221 North Norton Avenue. Ca. 1940. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, recessed entryways with off center glass door with transom and plate glass window. Contributing Resource.
71. 223 North Norton Avenue. Ca. 1940. One story, brick commercial block with Colonial Revival details, flat roof of tar composition, brick frieze, central glass door with transom, concrete surround with broken pediment and flanking 8/8 double hung sash windows. Contributing Resource.
72. 225 North Norton Avenue. Talladega County Economic Development. Ca. 1960. One story, brick commercial block with flat roof of tar composition, off center plate glass door with transom and plate glass window. Non-contributing Resource.
73. 301 North Norton Avenue. Gas Building. Ca. 1948. One story, brick utilities building with flat roof of tar composition, central wood and metal door with flanking fixed pane windows. Contributing Resource.
74. 315 North Norton Avenue. Hightower Brothers Livery Stable. Ca. 1914. One story, brick commercial building with a flat roof of tar and gravel and a concrete slab floor, corbelled parapet, thirteen bay façade, off center wood door, arched double leaf wood door, windows with thirty panes each. Contributing Resource. NRHP.

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## VIII. Significance and Historical Context

### Architecture

The Sylacauga Historic Commercial District is significant under Criterion C, Architecture, for its collection of late nineteenth to mid twentieth-century commercial buildings. Represented in the district are sound examples of locally significant one and multiple story commercial blocks. The resources in the historic district retain such historic characteristics as name plates, decorative brickwork, transoms, parapets, bracketed cornices, corbelled belt and string courses, recessed panels, clerestories and glass display bays.

### Commerce

The Sylacauga Historic District is significant under Criterion A, Commerce, for its collection of late nineteenth to mid twentieth-century commercial buildings. These buildings represent 60 years of Sylacauga's commercial history. Beginning with the railroads entry to Sylacauga in the late 1880s, the present commercial district developed along North Broadway and North Norton Avenues. Service businesses for the transportation system evolved along the train tracks. An already extant commercial area declined and Broadway Avenue became the focal point for Sylacauga's commercial district.

The district buildings are associated with significant periods of economic growth from its inception, to industrial and commercial growth in the early twentieth century (ca. 1904), a building boom during the twenties, Federal Relief Projects in the late thirties, and an enormous industrial, population boom in the early forties. Contained within the Sylacauga Historic District are historic banks, general merchandise stores, restaurants, specialty shops, and professional offices, all the elements commonly associated with a commercial district.

### Historical Context

Sylacauga is a small town located approximately 45 miles southeast of Birmingham, Alabama on U. S. Highway 280 in Talladega County. The original settlers of this area were the Creek Indians. The name Sylacauga however, derives from the Shawnee word "Chalakagay".

Sent to dispatch a hostile band of Creek Indians, General Andrew Jackson carved a military road through virgin forest from the Tennessee River to the Coosa River in 1813. After the Creek Indians officially ceded their territory east of the Mississippi River in 1832, Jackson's Trace precipitated the flow of settlers from Georgia, Tennessee, and the Atlantic Seaboard into the area that would become Talladega County. In 1850, the Alabama legislature permitted a group of investors to build a plank toll road that passed through Sylacauga. This plank road became Main Avenue.

Consequently Main Avenue was the location of the first commercial district in Sylacauga in the 1850s. The area was called *Old Town* where a handful of wood frame commercial buildings stood at the intersection of Main Avenue and Ft. Williams Street. These edifices included a livery stable, blacksmith shop, and hotel. They were all enterprises to expedite travel on the plank road that stretched from Wetumpka to Talladega (*The Sylacauga News*, 1971, 4).

During this decade of the fifties, Sylacauga was a town with dirt roads but underneath these paths was a marble foundation. In the fifties this marble brought industry into Sylacauga. Sometimes known as the Marble City, Sylacauga sits on a solid deposit of some of the hardest, whitest marble in the world. The rock bed is approximately 32 miles long and one and one half miles wide. The deposit runs approximately 400 feet deep and is known as the Sylacauga marble belt. Marble companies moved into Sylacauga to open quarries (Chamber of Commerce, Sylacauga, Alabama, 1959, 10).

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By 1858 the town of Sylacauga was growing and The First Baptist Church decided to move into town. The residential sections of Sylacauga were emerging along with moderate development in *Old Town*. The district now contained a school just East of Main Avenue, the Methodist Church and Masonic Lodge (*The Sylacauga News*, 1971, 4).

Civil War brought Sylacauga's prosperity to a stand still. Men left to fight and never returned. With only the plank road for transportation, Sylacauga floundered. During the decade following the war, the white population dropped drastically in Talladega County. Reconstruction was difficult all across the South with large portions of the white male population dead. Numerous Southerners decided to move west to escape post-war problems. In 1860 there were 14,634 white citizens and 8,865 slaves in Talladega County. By 1870 the numbers dropped to 8,469 whites while there were 9,595 free blacks in the county. Sylacauga fell on hard times with a population of 1,034 white citizens in 1870 that dwindled to a mere 500 by 1880 (Mizzell, 2001, 17).

Hope came to Sylacauga in 1886 with the arrival of the Anniston and Atlantic Railroad, the first railroad to pass through town. Yet the railroad did not solve all the problems. The population continued to decline and by 1887 there were only 316 white residents left in Sylacauga. The state legislature again incorporated Sylacauga in February 1887. This new incorporation included more land in the town, "one half mile in every direction from the intersection of Fort Williams and Main Streets (Mizzell, 2001, 18).

*Old Town* began to loose ground with the arrival of the railroad. The Marble City Land and Furnace Company purchased about three hundred acres of land where they plotted a new commercial district. It was closer to the railroad crossing at Broadway Avenue and Fourth Street. This commercial district was called *New Town* and it developed during the 1890s. With more people coming into Sylacauga, new businesses were needed to accommodate the traffic.

Reports in the local newspaper announced this growth along the Anniston and Atlantic Railroad with more than twenty mercantile establishments emerging (Mizzell, 2001, 18). At the turn of the century, the Rex Hotel was built on Broadway Avenue. It would have been an obvious service industry for railroad passengers who needed a place to rest on their journey. Down the street from the hotel was the Marble City Dry Goods Store and on the West side of Broadway was a second hotel. The Southern Hotel run by the Kelley family with Thompson's Barber Shop and Kelley's Bakery on the ground floor. A pressing shop resided at the rear of the hotel. Unfortunately the Southern Hotel burned in the decade of the twenties and the other buildings were lost to Urban Renewal in the early seventies (*The Sylacauga News*, 1972, 4, 6).

Many other service businesses developed at the turn of the century including livery stables, blacksmith shops, wholesale grocers, banks, saloons, hardware stores, and pharmacies. The Smith brothers, Eugene, Lee, Ed and Warren, originally came from Lafayette, Alabama and were some of the first leaders of commerce in southern Talladega County. They founded the Smith Brothers Mercantile Company and the Smith and Looney Farm Supply business.

Although we do not know the exact address, such stores as the Smith Brothers Mercantile Company existed on both Broadway and Norton Avenues. Resources 14, 71, 19, 23-24, 26, 28, 32, 34, and 41-50 all date from ca. 1890-95. These commercial buildings are located on North Broadway Avenue and retain detailing such as clerestories, decorative parapets, segmented arch windows, and sidelights.

The 1890s prosperity brought an Italian sculptor, Guiseppi Moretti to Sylacauga. Moretti had already established himself as an artist in New York but moved to Sylacauga for its marble. Like Florence, Italy where such sculptors as Michelangelo had marble quarried locally, Sylacauga had a limitless supply of the quality material. Moretti purchased a marble quarry and named it the Moretti-Harrah Marble Quarries. Moretti is best known for his statue of Vulcan, a monumental metal statue designed for the Chicago World's Fair (*The Birmingham News*, 2002, 1).

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With the city changing and growing, Sylacauga's population surged from 1890 to 1900 doubling during this decade (Goff, 16). The population boom brought growth to local business. P. H. DeBardeleben established the Palace Drug Company in the early part of 1900 (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959, 1959, 2*). The store was originally opened on Broadway Avenue and has seen four Broadway Avenue locations in its more than eight decades of operation. At present the store is located at 208 North Broadway Avenue (Resource 39). Other businesses such as Hagan Drug Co. (Resource 34) began during this time period as well (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959, 1959, 3*). An old photograph from ca. 1907 shows a Staples and Grocery Store and barber shop on Broadway Avenue. These businesses may have been housed in any of the resources dating from ca. 1900 along North Broadway Avenue including Resources 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40, and 42.

Further commercial development came in 1904 with the establishment of the Sylacauga Fertilizer Company, Inc. The fertilizer company began as a small mixing plant on the corner of Anniston Avenue and Fourth Street and was the only fertilizer company at the time. There they manufactured farm-grade fertilizer for field crops. Unfortunately the original building burned in 1912 and the plant was moved to Norton Avenue (Pursell, 13). Norton and Anniston Avenues began to develop into an industrial core for the commercial district. Such buildings as Resource 13, today Michael's Plumbing, began life as a warehouse around 1900.

Industry continued to thrive in the community with the arrival of Avondale Mills in 1906. That year Braxton Bragg Comer purchased the Central Textile Mill in Sylacauga and began his operations. Comer built the Eva Jane Mill in 1913 and in 1919 the Sallie B. No. 1 and Catherine Mills were built. Over the years, Avondale Mills constructed a mill village, and a company-owned dairy, hospital, poultry farm and recreation center were made available for their employees (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959, 1959, 5*).

As the first decade of the twentieth century progressed, Eugene Smith became the first president of the Marble City Savings Bank. E. J. and E. S. Smith opened the bank on November 11, 1913 where the B. B. Comer Library now stands. Around 1914 the Hightower Brother Livery Stable (Resource 74) was opened also. It is located on North Norton Avenue beside the railroad tracks. This location kept the business vital for many years. First horses carried people and products from the rails to other locations. Later motor vehicles carried and delivered products from the railroad to other locations. Hightower Brothers even ventured into automotive sales (Ford, 1997, 6).

Nineteen-seventeen was a year of unusual growth and prosperity in Sylacauga and the industries expanded. That year the Sylacauga Steam Laundry, two stave mills and a gristmill were opened in town. The Grist and Feed Mill opened in an existing warehouse just off Broadway Avenue. The Montgomery Stave and Cooperage Company opened and local lumberman, R. L. Rumsey, opened a second stave mill using pine staves. Three graphite mines were to open including the Seminole Graphite Company. The Wisconsin-Alabama Lumber Company started as well. Taylor & Sons of Wilsonville began the Madras Marble Quarry. Broadway Avenue was paved (Thurman, 1971, 7).

Unfortunately a disastrous tornado reduced the prosperity of the year. A funnel cloud tornado tore through the commercial district late one Sunday night. The plant of the Sylacauga Lumber Company, the new steam laundry, the African American's lodge hall, the Marble City Mills and Guinn and Lyon's Shop were destroyed. The roof of the Hightower Brothers Livery Stable (Resource 74) was blown off, and the gristmill of Mr. T. B. Little was damaged. Damages were estimated at \$150,000.00, a large sum for the early twentieth century (*The Sylacauga News, 1972, 1*). Rebuilding began and by the next decade Sylacauga rebounded.

In 1920 the population of Sylacauga was 2,141, a 47% increase from the 1910 census (Mizzell, 2001, 23). Avondale Mills built the Sallie B. No. 1 Mill and the Catherine Mill in 1919 (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959, 1959, 5*). This expansion brought more jobs and people to the Sylacauga area. Many commercial buildings date from ca. 1920 including Resources 1-3 on First Street and Resources 54-62, and 66-69 on North Norton Avenue. Such businesses as Jordan Insurance

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built a new building and J. J. Hightower built two new stores. One store was to be rented by the Treadwell Grocery Company in 1925(*Age Herald*, 1925, 4).

Improvements in the downtown commercial area were underway by 1924. Concrete pavement was extended up Broadway Avenue and storm sewers, curbs, and gutters were installed by the Portland Cement Company. Much activity in Sylacauga came to a screeching halt with the stock market crash in 1929 that led to a construction stoppage across the United States. Sylacauga was the center for marble quarrying in the state. The industry depended on construction throughout the country. Unfortunately most construction was halted around the country.

The Federal Relief Works created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt made possible most of the construction that did take place. In Sylacauga a new water works system, new City Hall (Resource 7), and jail (Resource 8) were built. Mayor H. H. Howard of Sylacauga requested a loan of \$100,000 to build a new water works system for the city. Hugo L. Black telegraphed from Washington on April 12, 1934 to announce that the PWA (Public Works Administration) approved \$19,000 for the waterworks project. Construction began soon after this announcement. In 1937 the PWA built a New City Hall and jail for the city. November 21, 1939 was a momentous day for the city of Sylacauga, dubbed March of Progress day. The city celebrated the opening of the B. B. Comer Library, the completion of the Alabama Power Company's sub-station, and the opening of the new paved highways constructed by the WPA.

By 1930 the population of Sylacauga had grown to 4,111. An industrial survey of Talladega County from 1930 viewed Sylacauga as a town with "a splendid appearance, having well paved streets, well-lighted; the business part is compact, all of substantial brick construction. The residences are largely modern with many unusually good homes and well landscaped grounds (Alabama Industrial Development Board, 3)". Yet everything was not rosy in the city and some businesses did close. A bank and a lumber mill both closed their doors. Modern Cleaners (Resource 2) opened. Though not at its present location, the business existed in different locations along North Broadway since its inception. Resource 29 was the location of the Sokol Bros. Furniture Company that opened in 1936. The store was the third installment in the Sokol's chain (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959*, 1959, 7). The town further persevered its workforce with the help of industrial staples such as Avondale Mills.

Avondale Mills were more important to Sylacauga as great sources of comfort and jobs during the Depression years. The Mills offered workers a continued education and educations for their children as well. Statistics show that the mill employed 3,600 workers in 1939 (*Sylacauga, Alabama Anniversary Celebration 1834-1959*, 5). Although the mill workers were provided with their own hospital, recreation center and dairy, retail shopping was probably carried out in downtown Sylacauga. The Mill village is only a few miles from the commercial district.

Sylacauga weathered the Depression and the thirties closed and the forties opened with a jolt to the area. The Great Depression was drawing to an end and a war raged in Europe. In 1941 Sylacauga was thrown into the war effort with the construction of an explosive powder plant in the nearby town of Childersburg. This was no accident that the industry came to Alabama. Chester C. Davis, member of the National Defense Advisory Commission, pointed out that the South had suffered major industrial setbacks due to the Civil War. The war destroyed or rendered ineffective almost all existing Southern industry. World War I built industry tightly around accessible industrial areas. Davis suggested that new war industries should spread further and support more communities with wartime jobs.

Alabama Power Company stepped to the forefront of the battle. Their industrial engineers fought for locating these wartime industries in Alabama a year in advance when the locations were scouted. Phone calls by the power company followed up the written reports stressing the need for employment in the state. Ultimately the War Department relented and granted permission for an ammunitions plant to be built at Childersburg (*Triumph of Community Enterprise*, 1948, 6).



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E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Company spent \$72 million to construct the powder plant. Approximately 13,000 workers were needed to operate the plant. This plant brought an enormous increase in the population of the cities of Sylacauga, Childersburg and Talladega. The population of Sylacauga nearly doubled with space becoming a problem (Triumph of Community Enterprise, 1948, 9).

The old Sylacauga High School dormitory became office space for Dupont. The firm opened with 200 staff people. By May 1941, an estimated 350 carpenters and mechanical workers were hired each day. The mushrooming staff was placed in the post office basement, third floor of City Hall (Resource 7), the mezzanine floor of the library and the high school auditorium (Triumph of Community Enterprise, 10).

Businesses proliferated in the commercial district of Sylacauga. On North Broadway Avenue were at least four beauty salons and one barbershop including Ruby's Beauty Shop (Resource 19). There were four jewelers with one being Resource 35. Several auto sales and services existed including Sylacauga Motor Car Company (Resource 18), Sylacauga Parts Co. (Resource 68), and Parker Motor Co. (Resource 54) (Polk City Directory, 1941, advertisements).

With such prosperity at hand, the end of World War II brought a time of anxiety over loss of jobs for those in Sylacauga. AOW layoffs began immediately and Sylacauga responded by working to convert the wartime plants into peacetime facilities. In 1944 the Alabama State Chamber of Commerce met and appointed a committee to work with local Alabama communities to plan new industries. Those representing Sylacauga were H. A. Parker, J. W. Brown, Jr., E. L. Widemire, and Hugh Comer. Added later was Donald Comer, Chairman of the Board of Avondale Mills. The Talladega County War Plants Conversion Committee met for the next four years (Triumph of Community Enterprise, 1948, 2). Finally on April 16, 1948, ground was broken for the \$32,000,000 Coosa River Newsprint Company plant at the AOW location. The balance left in the committee's account, \$1,440.79 was divided between the Chamber of Commerce of Talladega, Sylacauga, and Childersburg (Mizzell, 2001, 31).

The U.S. government was not inclined to give up all of the AOW facility as a defense plant. Olin Industries signed a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers in 1954 to take over the upkeep of the AOW with the stipulation that in wartime the plant would convert back to combat production. Some of the original AOW land was leased to the aforementioned Coosa River Newsprint Company and more was leased to the Beaunit Mills Plant.

These new industries helped the Sylacauga commercial district to maintain but not flourish. After the war only a small number of new businesses are documented. The transition from the wartime economy to peacetime was not smooth. Not all of the AOW employees could find post war work and they left the city of Sylacauga to find work elsewhere. Trades that once serviced the wartime crowds could no longer stay in business. Laundries, beauty salons, barbershops, theatres, and groceries were closed due to the now excessive numbers of them.

The Sylacauga Historic Commercial District survived. What exists today along North Broadway Avenue has evolved from the close of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century. Today the businesses maintain their place in the everyday life of citizens of Sylacauga.

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*The Sylacauga News*, May 22, 1924.

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**X. Verbal Boundary Description and Justification**

The boundaries of the Sylacauga Historic Commercial District are defined as on the accompanying Talladega County tax map number. The scale of the map is 1" = 180'.

The boundaries were drawn to include as many of the contributing resources historically associated with the downtown Sylacauga Historic Commercial District as possible. Information derived from the survey indicates a number of problems with too many non-historic intrusions, buildings built within the last fifty years, between Ft. Williams Street and First Street to include this area in the historic district. The northern boundary was drawn where the commercial core was severed by demolition leaving vacant lots and infill that has replaced historic warehouses over the years. The southern boundary was drawn due to infill constituted of new commercial development including a sixties strip mall and seventies-eighties commercial buildings. Finally the eastern and western boundaries of the district are natural divisions formed by residential neighborhoods meeting the commercial district.

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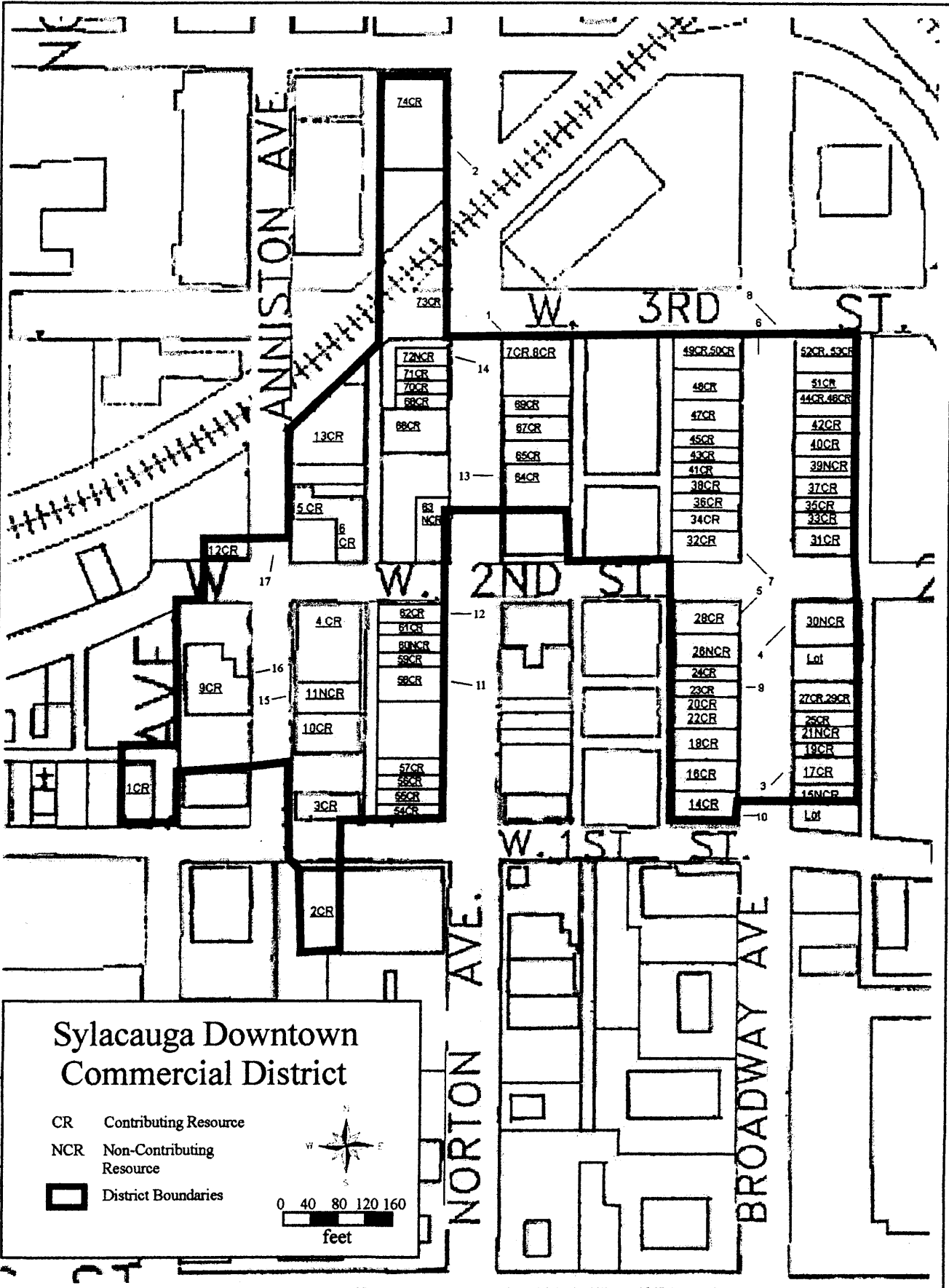
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Photo Log


The following information is the same for each photograph:


Name of photographer: Gene A. Ford  
Date of photograph: January 2001  
Location of original negatives: Alabama Historical Commission  
468 South Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

- Photograph 1. Resource 7. Old Sylacauga City Hall. Facing Northwest.
- Photograph 2. Resource 72. Hightower Brothers Livery Stable. Facing Northwest.
- Photograph 3. Resource 17. Diggs Sports Equipment. Facing Northeast.
- Photograph 4. Resource 30. The Bank of Sylacauga. Facing Northwest.
- Photograph 5. North Broadway Avenue. West side. Facing Southwest.
- Photograph 6. North Broadway Avenue. West side. Facing South.
- Photograph 7. Resource 32. Stanton's. Facing Northwest.
- Photograph 8. North Broadway Avenue. East side. Facing southeast.
- Photograph 9. Resource 22. 117 North Broadway Avenue. Facing West.
- Photograph 10. Resource 14. 105 North Broadway Avenue. Facing West.
- Photograph 11. Resource 58. 117 North Norton Avenue. A & M Clothing. Facing West.
- Photograph 12. Resource 62. 129 North Norton Avenue. Pete's Feed and Seed. Facing West.
- Photograph 13. Resource 64. 210 North Norton Avenue. Arnold Building. Facing East.
- Photograph 14. Resource 72. 225 North Norton Avenue. Talladega County Economic Development. Non-Contributing Resource. Facing West.
- Photograph 15. Resource 11. 112 Anniston Avenue. Ogletree Building. Ca. 1960. Non-Contributing Resource. Facing East.
- Photograph 16. Resource 9. 105 Anniston Avenue. 7 Up Bottling Company. Facing West.
- Photograph 17. Street Scene looking north on Norton Avenue at Resource 13.



**Sylacauga Downtown Commercial District**

- CR Contributing Resource
- NCR Non-Contributing Resource
-  District Boundaries



0 40 80 120 160  
feet