

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Thomasville Depot
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 420 W. Jackson Street (U.S. 319) N/A not for publication
city, town Thomasville N/A vicinity
state Georgia code GA county Thomas code GA 275 zip code 31792

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 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 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. See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon 4/14/88
Signature of certifying official Elizabeth A. Lyon Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register 5-19-88
 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 of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation/rail-relatedCommerce/restaurant

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation/rail-relatedCommerce/warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals:
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival
(partial stylistic influence)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls brick

roof tin
other molded concrete window sills
terra cotta signage

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Thomasville Depot is located in downtown Thomasville, a small, county-seat town in south Georgia, approximately fifteen miles north of the Georgia-Florida border. The Thomasville Depot is a two-story with basement, red brick railroad depot/passenger station built in 1914 with endrooms reminiscent of the Mission Revival style. The depot building includes both a second floor and a restaurant, and the property also includes a historic train shed and a Railway Express Agency (REA) building. The depot has horizontal lines, low metal roofs, wide overhanging eaves, and red brick walls. It is parallel to the railroad tracks. The first floor of the depot contains, from west to east, rooms originally designated for: baggage, the U.S. mail, two black restrooms, the black waiting room, the ticket office, the white waiting room, two white restrooms, the kitchen and black lunch room, and the main white dining room. The second floor contains offices.

The exterior of the depot building used as a design feature cream-colored brick to highlight the windows and door lintels as well as to distinguish between the two floors. Terra-cotta panels were used for the signs indicating "Restaurant" and "Baggage" over those respective ends of the depot and the word "Thomasville" in the central bay of the second floor facing both the railroad tracks as well as on the other side facing the town. The rooms on either end are highlighted by stepped and scrolled gables. On the interior, original plumbing, bathroom fixtures, some original seating, signage, and the ticket window survive. The train shed retains its original gable metal roof supported by "Y" braces. The REA building, located on the west side of the property, was built by 1928. It is a simple, one-story brick building with a flat roof and an interior that is mostly one large room.

The grounds include rose bushes and palm trees as well as a parking lot. The site, the same location as an earlier 1885 depot, is just west of the Thomasville Commercial Historic District (National Register) and is close to industrial and manufacturing plants. Changes to the property have been minimal and include temporary partitions and new paneling in some rooms, the addition of new lighting and heating equipment, and the reduction of some entrance doorways.

8. Statement of Significance

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

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

architecture
transportation

Period of Significance

1914-1937

Significant Dates

19141928

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Office of Chief Engineer, AtlanticCoastline Railroad

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.Statement of Significance

The Thomasville Depot is significant in architecture because it is a distinctive type of historic building--a railroad depot whose form and massing can unmistakably be "read" as a railroad depot/passenger station--and for its unusual design and construction. The depot and the Railway Express Agency building are significant in the area of transportation for being part of the major railroad station complex for both passengers and freight in Thomasville, a major hub of railroad activity. These two areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

In architecture, the Thomasville Depot is significant because it is a distinctive type of historic building in its overall form. It is typical of railroad buildings in Georgia and elsewhere: it has a long, stretched-out form, was built immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks, and has broad, overhanging eaves to shelter passengers and baggage. In its general layout, it includes the essential railroad depot features: baggage, mail, and waiting rooms. It also has important features rarely seen in other small town Georgia railroad buildings. This depot is two stories, the second floor being offices, and it also has a restaurant, a community meeting spot as well as an amenity to travelers. A special feature of this depot is that it has two end rooms whose unusual gable roofs offer a hint of the Mission Revival style so prevalent in nearby Florida. The railroad publicity in 1914 specifically mentioned this style. This may have been done to whet the appetite of tourists who would be heading to Florida via Thomasville (a decade after Thomasville lost its role as a tourist mecca) or as a reminder of where they had been for those tourists heading back north. The style could reference the Flemish or Dutch Colonial interest of the early 20th century, since the brick is laid in Flemish bond and a different color brick is used to highlight windows. Another special feature is the freestanding historic passenger platform shed. Although the history of such sheds is not well understood, it is clear that it is an unusual feature of a small-town depot and are seen very rarely today. This is one of the last railroad depots/passenger stations built in Georgia. None were

 See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Montgomery, Erick D. "Thomasville Passenger Station," Historic Property Information Form, June 27, 1986. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	7
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2	1	4	5	6	0
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3	4	1	4	8	1	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of the parcel transferred by the Seaboard Coastline Railroad to the City of Thomasville in 1987. It is marked on the enclosed plat map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nomination include all of the remaining property historically associated with the Thomasville Depot.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
 organization Historic Preservation Section, date March 30, 1988
 street & number Georgia Department of Natural Resources telephone 404/656-2840
205 Butler Street, SE Suite 1462
 city or town Atlanta, state Georgia zip code 30334

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built after World War I. The depot was designed by the Chief Engineer for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad out of their Wilmington, North Carolina office. The depot and the REA building are significant in terms of transportation for their role as the major railroad station complex in Thomasville. The city of Thomasville was noted then--as now--for its many Northern visitors and part-time residents. Five rail lines connected the city to the outside world and Thomasville developed as a commercial center for the surrounding area of Georgia and Florida. The city was the intersection of the North-South route from Chicago to Miami and the East-West route from Jacksonville to St. Louis.

The historical associations of this property with the railroad and transportation development make it eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. As one of the "broad patterns of American history", the role of the railroad in any small, Southern town was immense. For Thomasville, so dependent on Northern tourists and part-time residents, it was the lifeline; not to mention the commercial needs it satisfied. The depot served many purposes for passengers of both races in a segregated era. Under Criteria C, the architecture of this depot makes a statement for eligibility as a form embodying "the distinctive characteristics of a type" of construction rather than as the work of a master. While the rooms on the end of the depot hint of the Mission Revival style, the goal of the designer, the main architectural thrust of the building is that it is a depot. Its placement next to the railroad tracks was a necessity, but it is long and low in form, with wide, overhanging eaves for shelter. Its interior layout is functional with few frills. Its original floorplan reflects the segregated needs of a Southern community when public facilities were "separate but equal", hence the need for waiting, rest and dining rooms for each race.

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Historical Narrative/Context Statement

The Thomasville Railroad Depot, on the site of an earlier depot, will likely be the last one built in this city, due to the decrease in railroad passenger service throughout the nation.

On April 16, 1861, shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, the first train reached Thomasville on the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad, a line from Savannah, Georgia. Nearby towns sprang up along the railroad, as they were to do all over the country, and especially in south Georgia. Thomasville was the western terminus of the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad until 1867 when the line was extended forty-five miles west to Bainbridge.

Before the railroad arrived, cotton and other crops were taken overland to Tallahassee, Florida, thirty-five miles southwest of Thomasville. There a rail line shipped them to a port on the Gulf of Mexico. The advent of the railroad allowed Thomasville to be a major supplier of food during the Civil War, as well as a point of refuge for people from Savannah and coastal Georgia.

In 1869, the third rail line built from Thomasville (the South Georgia and Florida Railroad) was completed 58 miles north to Albany, Georgia. Along this line more towns developed. In 1888, after much delay, a fourth line, built by the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad, was finished from Thomasville to Monticello, Florida. Along this line the town of Metcalfe developed. No rail line was ever built connecting Thomasville and Tallahassee. The Atlantic and Gulf, renamed the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad, and the South Georgia and Florida Railroad were all eventually bought starting in 1879 by Henry B. Plant, the railroad magnate who built up the west coast of Florida. By 1888, all Thomasville rail lines were Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad.

The fifth and final line built out of Thomasville was that of the Tifton, Thomasville and Gulf Railroad, completed in 1900 to Tifton, Georgia, another county-seat town 55 miles to the northeast.

The first known railroad depot, built about 1861, served both passengers and freight. It is believed to have looked similar to the 1857 one still standing in Albany, Georgia, a simple brick warehouse-type structure. The one in Thomasville, a frame building, was demolished after 1950.

A much larger and more fashionable depot/passenger station was built in Thomasville during 1885-1886 by the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad. It was a two-story frame structure with a train shed. The new depot was a necessity due to the great influx of Northern tourists, seasonal visitors, and eventually part-time residents. Thomasville had become one of the most fashionable winter resorts in the nation due to its pine forests and reputed healthy climate. It remained in this exalted position for about twenty years until the opening of Florida to tourists and the discovery that Thomasville's climate wasn't really as therapeutic as once thought. During the last quarter of the 19th century many large hotels were built in Thomasville for the

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visitors.

Even though most of the tourist trade left Thomasville after Florida opened up, the city continued to grow in the early 20th century. It became one of the major cities in south Georgia as the rail business shifted from being tourist oriented to business and commerce.

By November 1912, the people of Thomasville wanted a new passenger station and the newspaper editorialized about this need. The 1885-1886 depot had been allowed to deteriorate by the new owners of the rail line, Atlantic Coast Line. After much local agitation, a letter dated February 17, 1913 arrived from the railroad owners for the editor of the newspaper. It indicated that plans were underway for a new passenger station. Building plans for the new depot were announced in the issue of November 1, 1913. The city council approved the plans, with work to begin in February, 1914. Although the railroad discussed the idea of putting the station at a slightly different location, local officials and citizens were in favor of it being at the same location as the old one. On February 27, 1914 the newspaper published a drawing of the new depot, giving the citizens their first glimpse of it. The contract was let in March to W. H. Little and W. C. Philips of Cordele, Georgia for \$27,000. This article referred to the depot being designed in the Mission Revival style.

The new depot was opened to the public by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad on November 5, 1914. The local people and their newspaper were duly impressed with the building, a result of their efforts two years earlier.

This depot was at its peak in terms of use in the 1920s and 1930s when 34 passenger trains arrived or departed daily from Thomasville. Most of these came through this depot, although the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic line (the new owner for the line to Tifton) had a depot (now destroyed) on South Dawson Street. Thomasville was on a main line between Saint Louis, Missouri and Jacksonville, Florida as well as between Chicago and Tampa. It was also a point where train crews were changed. At one time there were a round house and maintenance shops just west of the station.

The Railway Express Agency building which survives on the property is a reminder of the valuable services rendered during the high point of the railroad era by express companies. They were similar to today's trucking operations or parcel delivery services, distributing packages throughout the U.S. An express service existed in Thomasville as early as 1865. By 1912, an express building was built on the depot lot. Previous buildings were frame, but by 1928 the existing building was erected by the Railway Express Agency (REA) on the grounds. It operated from this building until around 1971. Since then the building has been used for storage.

The depot was in use twenty-four hours a day, and thus the restaurant stayed open the entire time. During the time of private rail cars, there was even a side

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track to accommodate those visitors who were wealthy enough to travel in their own railroad cars.

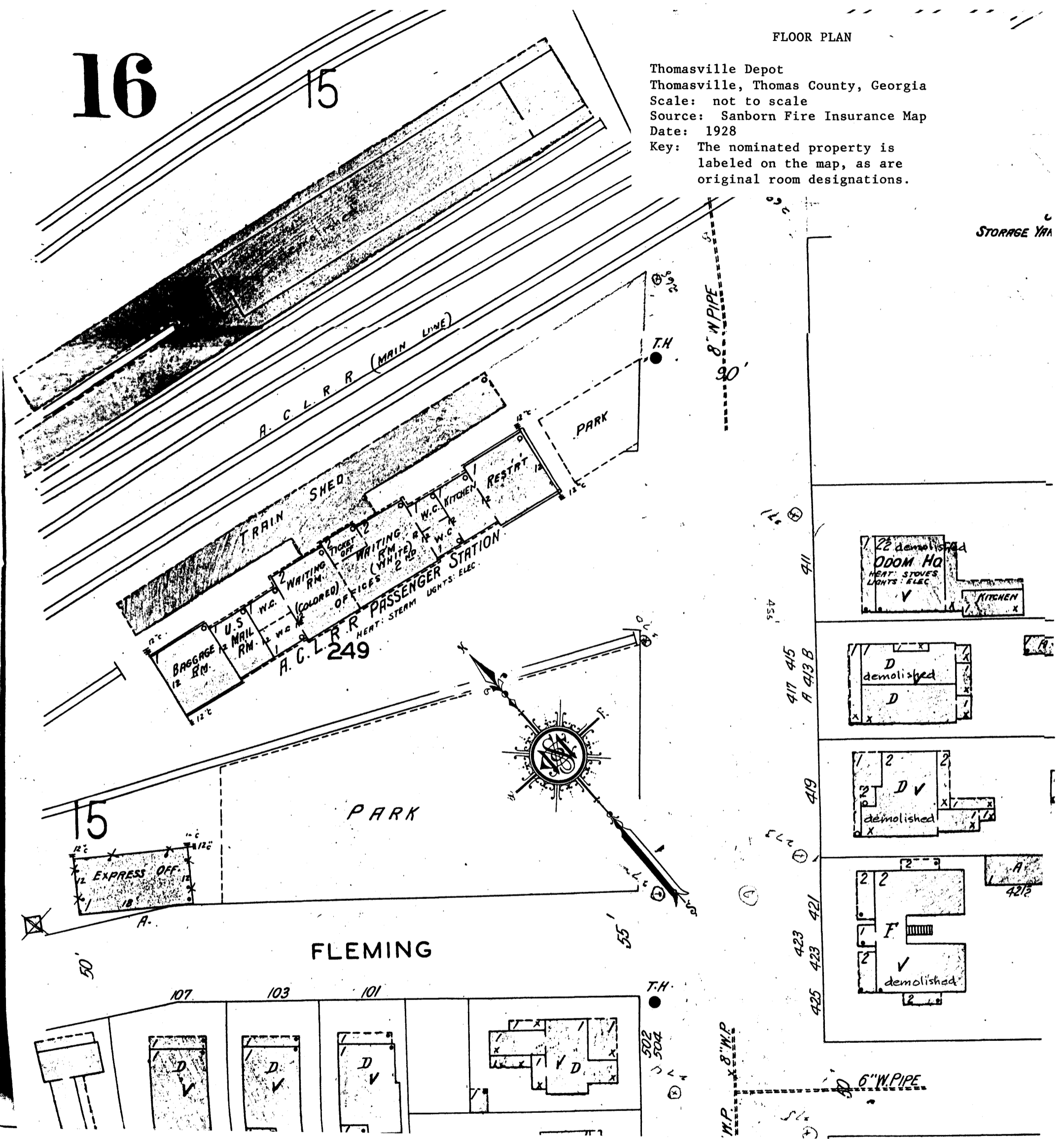
By 1959, the number of trains had dwindled to six. The restaurant closed in 1969, being replaced by vending machines. As segregation in public accommodations ended in the early 1960s, the black facilities were partitioned off for other uses. The mail room was also deactivated. On October 1, 1979, AMTRAK, which had earlier taken over passenger service along the route, discontinued the "Floridian", the last passenger train to serve the run from Chicago to Miami, and thus through Thomasville. Since then the depot has remained largely empty, awaiting a new use.

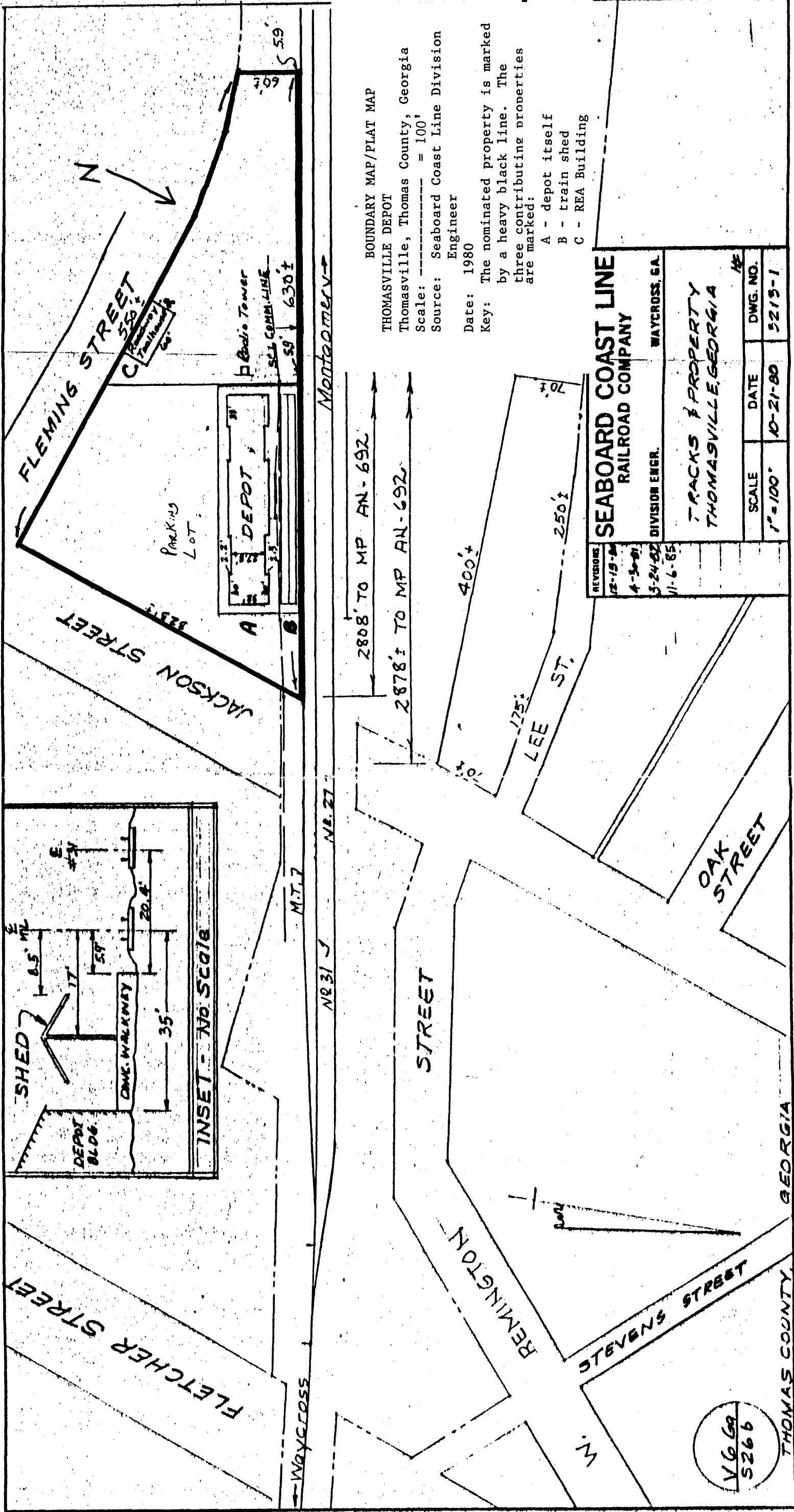
16

15

FLOOR PLAN

Thomasville Depot
 Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia
 Scale: not to scale
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
 Date: 1928
 Key: The nominated property is labeled on the map, as are original room designations.





BOUNDARY MAP/PLAT MAP
 THOMASVILLE DEPOT
 Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia
 Scale: 1" = 100'
 Source: Seaboard Coast Line Division
 Engineer

Date: 1980
 Key: The nominated property is marked
 by a heavy black line. The
 three contributing properties
 are marked:
 A - depot itself
 B - train shed
 C - REA Building

SEABOARD COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY		WAYCROSS, GA.	
DIVISION ENGR.		THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA	
REVISIONS		SCALE	DATE
12-19-80		1" = 100'	10-21-80
4-30-81			
3-24-82			
11-6-85			
DWG. NO.		5213-1	

V669
5266

THOMAS COUNTY, GEORGIA
 TELEPHONE POST #232611