

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 Cairo Commercial Historic District
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number North and South Broad Street with additional
properties on Railroad and Second Avenue and one on
First Street
city, town Cairo () vicinity of
county Grady code GA 131
state Georgia code GA zip code 31728
() not for publication

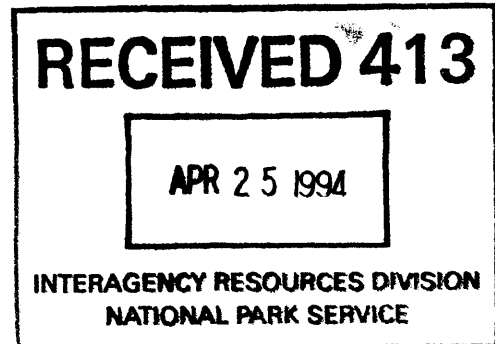
3. Classification

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	31	9
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	31	9

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

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

4/20/94
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

Gregory M. Lapsley 5/26/94

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

for _____
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional/financial institution/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
GOVERNMENT: post office
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional/financial institution/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
GOVERNMENT: post office/correctional facility/city hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival
OTHER: Commercial Vernacular Victorian
OTHER: Stripped Classical
OTHER: Functional
OTHER: 20th Century Commercial
MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials:

foundation brick/concrete
walls brick/stucco/granite
roof asphalt
other stone/glass

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

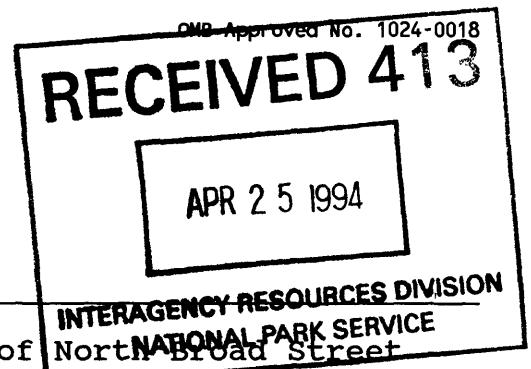
The Cairo Commercial Historic District is located in the center of Grady County in South Georgia on the Georgia-Florida border. This district consists of the concentration of historic commercial, governmental, and warehouse buildings in downtown Cairo. These buildings date from the late 19th century through the early 20th century. This area is the commercial and governmental center of the Cairo and Grady County. The nonhistoric Cairo City Municipal Building (1975) is within the district and the nonhistoric Grady County Courthouse (1984) is located just outside the northern boundary on North Broad Street--both are on the sites of the original city hall and courthouse, respectively (Photo #1).

The district is located along North and South Broad Street--the main commercial street in downtown Cairo. The district is linear with an extension to the west along the north side of the railroad tracks, which bisect the district and demarcate North and South Broad. The community and institutional buildings are located north of the railroad, the commercial buildings are concentrated south of the

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railroad, and the warehouses are to the west of North Broad Street along the rail-bed. The areas surrounding the district contain vacant lots, nonhistoric residential development, and contemporary commercial development.

Most of the commercial buildings are one-to two-stories in height and are built of brick with uniform setbacks and shared party walls (Photo #2). However, there are some three-story buildings and freestanding buildings in the district. Architectural detailing includes decorative brick corbeling, large storefront windows, segmentally arched windows, and brick pilasters. There is an eclectic mix of architectural influences found throughout the district. The more decorative turn-of-the-century buildings are Commercial Vernacular Victorian and the other more plain buildings are Stripped Classical and 20th-Century Commercial style. There are also buildings with influences from the Neoclassical Revival, and the Art Deco styles.

The buildings at 127 and 128 South Broad Street are good examples of the Commercial Vernacular Victorian with their decorative brick corbeling and stone arched lentils or segmentally arched windows (Photo #3). The Stripped Classical style old Ford dealership building (c. 1920) at 112, 122, and 126 North Broad Street has undergone some alterations; however, the brick suggestion of pilasters is still evident (Photo #4, left). The Kramer Building at 137 South Broad Street also reflects the Stripped Classical style with its smooth exterior, fluted engaged columns, and massive appearance (Photo #5, right). The 20th-century "commercial" style buildings, such as those at 7, 9, and 166 South Broad Street and 135 North Broad Street, have little or no detailing, shoebox shape, and one- to two-stories (Photo #5, far left and Photo #6).

The c. 1908 Citizens Bank at 128 South Broad Street is a Neoclassical Revival style building with a vault design, meaning it is a two- to three-story building with a tall but comparatively narrow opening on the front facade that emphasizes massiveness and enclosure (Photo #7). The granite building's classical features are a recessed portico with pilasters and Ionic columns, a pedimented front entrance, and pronounced cornice with dentils. The three-story building at 115 South Broad Street is an example of an understated Neoclassical Revival influenced building with its paired stone pilasters, keystones, and pronounced cornice (Photo #5, left).

The historic, freestanding buildings in the district are described below:

The Zebulon Theater (1936) at 207 North Broad Street is a two-story, brick building with an Art Deco influence (Photo #8, right). Its most prominent features are the brick, horizontal banding, two oculi, the

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curved ticket booth with glass blocks, the marquis, and vertical neon signage reading, "THEATRE." The other Art Deco influenced building is located at 144 South Broad Street.

At 203 North Broad Street, the United States Post Office (1935) was constructed with funds from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (FEAPW) which later became the Public Works Administration (Photo #8). The brick post office is an excellent example of the Stripped Classical style with its brick suggestion of pilasters and granite capitals, stringcourse, lintels, rectangular panels, and cornice cap for adornment. Other distinguishing characteristics are its protruding central bay, flat roof, and tall front entrance with tall windows on each side. Inside the building is an intact New Deal mural, Products of Grady County, by Paul Ludwig Gill.

The three, one-story warehouses (1909) on Railroad Avenue are perpendicular to the railroad tracks (Photo #9). These brick buildings are an example of functional architecture, meaning they were built for utilitarian purposes. Their only stylistic detail is the segmentally arched windows.

Formerly the Atlantic Coastline Depot, the Cairo Depot on South Broad Street is now used as the Cairo Police Station (Photo #10). Built c. 1880, it is a stucco-over-masonry building with overhanging eaves, brackets, a large hipped roof over the east end, gable roof over the west end, and an extant loading platform adjacent to the tracks.

The streets in the district are two-way. Broad Street has sidewalks, some granite curbing, and some parallel parking in front of the buildings (Photo #11). Landscaping is minimal with grassed areas around the freestanding buildings.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Commerce
Community Planning and Development
Transportation
Government

Period of Significance:

1866-1943

Significant Dates:

1866 - Creation of town plan
1906 - Grady County formed, Cairo named as county seat

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

n/a

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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 Cairo Commercial Historic District is a typical historic central business district in a small, Georgia railroad town. It contains a variety of historic commercial buildings, warehouses, government buildings, and a depot.

In terms of architecture, the district is significant primarily for its concentration of an important historic building type--the commercial row building--characteristic of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial development in Georgia and across the nation. These buildings are brick, one- to three-story buildings, share party walls, and have uniform setback. The non-freestanding buildings that line North and South Broad Street are good examples of commercial row buildings. The freestanding buildings within the district represent governmental and institutional buildings, as well as the local theater and railroad depot--these buildings serve as landmarks in the community and are typical of the types of freestanding buildings in small Georgia towns.

The district is also significant for its representation of important historical architectural styles including Commercial Vernacular Victorian, Neoclassical Revival, Stripped Classical, the 20th-century "commercial" style, and Art Deco. Constructed from the late 1800s to the late 1930s, these buildings and their architectural influences are typical of those found in small towns in the late-19th and early 20th centuries.

The Cairo Commercial Historic District provides a good illustration of how architectural influences developed from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. Reflecting the late Victorian influence, the turn-of-the-century buildings have decorative brick corbeling and stone arched lintels or segmentally arched windows. With their columns, pilasters, keystones, and symmetrical facade, the buildings built in the early 1900s reflect the classical influences of the Neoclassical Revival style and the Stripped Classical style.

The later Stripped Classical style buildings, with their brick suggestion of pilasters and their simple cornices, have understated classical detailing underlying an otherwise unadorned building. These buildings represent a transition between classical influenced architecture with pediments and pilasters and modern architecture which is characterized by plain wall surfaces and no stylistic detailing. The even more modest 20th-century "commercial" style buildings have little or no detailing, a shoebox shape, and one- to

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two-stories. Adjacent to the railroad tracks, the 1909 warehouses with no stylistic influences represent functional architecture--meaning they were built for utilitarian purposes.

The Art Deco influenced Zebulon Theater built in 1935 represents the progression of architecture to a more modern age. Its most prominent features are the brick, horizontal banding, two oculi, the curved ticket booth with glass blocks, the marquis, and vertical neon signage reading, "THEATRE." The other Art Deco influenced building is located at 144 South Broad Street.

The Citizens Bank building at 128 South Broad Street is an excellent example of a vault type building as described by Richard Longstreth in The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. The vault building which emphasized massiveness and enclosure was most often used for banks. It is usually a two- to three-story, large, rectangular building with a tall and comparatively narrow opening on the front facade.

In terms of commerce, the district is significant as the historic commercial center of the surrounding area. As the county seat of Grady County, Cairo provided a variety retail, professional, banking, freight, and warehousing services to the area. This activity is represented by the remaining historic commercial structures in the district.

The buildings at 127 and 128 South Broad Street were built in the late 1800s and housed a dry goods store and grocery store. The building at 101 North Broad Street, just north of the railroad tracks, housed a hardware and grocery store and buggy business. One-hundred years later, these buildings are still a part of Cairo's commercial center.

During the first decade of the 20th century, Cairo's economy expanded and the town became more prosperous. In 1906 Grady County was formed and Cairo became its county seat, in part due to the growing affluence of the community. The Citizens Bank Building was built in c. 1908 and is symbolic of the flourishing economy and the financial growth Cairo experienced during this time.

Cairo's commercial growth and development of Cairo can be attributed to the presence of the railroad. Cairo became the agricultural shipping, packaging, and distribution center of the region. The 1909 warehouses adjacent to the tracts symbolize the railroads impact on Cairo's economy.

The warehouses also represent the agricultural-related success of Cairo during the mid-20th century. Known around the state and nation as the syrup producing capital--Cairo shipped more pure sugar cane

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syrup than any other city in the nation in the 1930s. During this time, Cairo was said to supply 98 percent of the world's collard seed, as well as being, the center of the tung-oil industry (tung-oil is extracted from the tung-nut tree) and a leader in the pecan shelling, peanut grinding, okra canning, and cucumber pickling industries.

In terms of community planning and development, the district is significant as an example of a 19th-century railroad town laid out using a linear street pattern from a c. 1866 plan conceived by the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad. Cairo developed perpendicular to the railroad tracks along North and South Broad Street, which is still Cairo's main downtown thoroughfare. The c. 1880 passenger depot remains at the center of the historic commercial district and the tracks separate North Broad Street from South Broad Street.

This district is a good representative example of the "cross-rail" type of railroad town--a specific sub-type of the railroad town as described in the Georgia Office of Historic Preservation "Historic Community Types in Georgia" context report by Darlene Roth. Salient characteristics of the "cross-rail" type of railroad plan, present in the Cairo Commercial Historic District, are a single principal downtown street crossed more or less at right angles by the railroad. This junction, marked by a depot, served as the center of the community and a focus for downtown development. The typical development pattern is commercial development along the cross-street and warehouses and industry along the cross-rail, as seen in the Cairo Commercial Historic District.

The Cairo Commercial Historic District is significant in transportation because the City of Cairo and its economy developed subsequent to the arrival of the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad in the 1860s. The c. 1880 Atlantic Coastline Depot still stands in the heart of downtown Cairo. Although now serving as the Cairo Police Station, the extant depot and the railroad bed represent Cairo's long association with rail transportation in Southwest Georgia.

During the 1910s and 1920s, the dependence on the railroad was shifted to the automobile. By 1920 Cairo had four automobile dealerships in the downtown area. The extant c. 1920 Ford Dealership on North Broad Street represents the growing importance of the automobile during this period.

The district is also significant in government for its 1935 United States Post Office located within the district. The post office was built as part of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (FEAPW) program. Inside the post office is an intact New Deal mural, Products of Grady County, by Paul Ludwig Gill. The post office and the mural represent the federal government's efforts to provide

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employment and assist communities during the Depression as a part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's economic stimulus programs and a major Depression-era public works project for Cairo.

National Register Criteria

The Cairo Commercial Historic District is eligible under **Criterion A** for its significance in the commercial, developmental, governmental, and transportation history of Cairo, Georgia. The district is also eligible under **Criterion C** for its concentration of intact, historic, commercial buildings representative of late 19th- and early 20th-century architectural styles.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

Period of significance (justification)

Cairo's "cross-rail" type of town plan originated in 1866. The fifty-year mark of historical significance is 1943.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing buildings were built within the period of significance and retain a high degree of integrity. The noncontributing buildings either were built after 1943 or have undergone extensive alterations.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

NOTE: The following history is from the "Cairo Commercial Historic District, Historic District Information Form" prepared by Nancy Tinker on file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Office of Historic Preservation, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Cairo area in southwest Georgia was slow to develop. In the region west of the Ochlocknee River, there were yeoman farmers with few or no slaves populated the area. Calvary, Tired Creek, Sofkee, Whigham, Beachton, Duncanville, and Pine Park were some of the settlements in the area. However, Cairo's future townsite remained farm and woodland until the railroad arrived. The founding of Cairo started in 1859 when the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad began acquiring land for the railroad right-of-way from Thomasville to Bainbridge. The

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right-of way was seventy-five feet on each side of the track. In May 1860, the railroad purchased land from Malachi and Nancy Collins and from Phoebe and Washington Baggett for the right-of-way. The next year Francis P. Hawthorn sold land to the railroad for the right-of-way.

On December 15, 1866, the first lot in what was to become Cairo was sold by H.H. Tooke and James H. Hayes of Thomasville, who also drew the original town plan at the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad depot. The deed was not recorded for twenty-four years.

Southwest Georgia did not experience the physical destruction of the Civil War. However, this portion of Georgia was not exempt from economic hardship which prevailed during the years of Reconstruction. The economy was in a depression and there was very little currency circulating in South Georgia. In the July 12, 1865 edition of the Thomasville Enterprise, the paper agreed to accept agricultural goods in lieu of money for subscription payment "due to the scarcity of paper."

With no currency and even less available credit, many Thomas County farmers were forced to borrow money to purchase seed and fertilizer. Other local farmers found themselves mortgaging future crops to purchase farm supplies. In either arrangement, the advent of bad weather or low prices brought financial ruin to many farm families. The end of this destructive cycle began a tradition of share-cropping and tenant farming not just in Southwest Georgia but all over the South.

Thomas County, along with other agrarian based southern states, found itself purchasing high priced supplies from northern states and selling cotton to England for a low price established in the port city of Liverpool. From 1870 to 1900, land in the south averaged less than \$15 annually per acre. In 1878, cotton sold for \$0.10 per pound, and in 1898, for \$0.05. These financial conditions encouraged the growth of the Agrarian Movement, a practice which was strongly supported in the area later to become Grady County, Georgia.

The Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, was organized nationally in 1867 by Oliver H. Kelly, a clerk employed by the Agricultural Department in Washington, D.C. Mr. Kelly's intent in creating the Grange was to provide social, economic, and educational opportunity for America's farming families. The concept spread rapidly across the south, and by 1875 membership in the Cairo Grange reached one hundred. Additional organizations in South Georgia were formed in Duncanville, the Glasgow District, and in Boston.

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The Cairo Grange, though short lived, did meet with some measure of success. Lead locally by Peter Vanlandingham, the Cairo Grange negotiated cooperative purchasing agreements. As the Grady County Grange did not represent the mass of farmers (few if any share croppers) and did not limit membership to those involved directly with agriculture, the organization closed its doors in late 1880.

By June 14, 1880, there were fifty-five households in Cairo within a half-mile radius of the railbed. This community had become a trade center due to the its location on the railroad and on the intersection of several regional roads near the Cairo depot. By this date, Cairo had only a handful of stores--small frame and masonry buildings scattered along the length of Broad Street.

By 1904, Cairo and its neighboring community of Whigham, each contained a population of several hundred people. Adjacent settlements, Pine Park to the east, Calvary and Duncanville to the south, and Akridge to the north, continued as community centers, despite the fact that none of these developments were located on the railroad.

As Cairo's importance to these communities developed, a movement to carve a new county from the western portion of Thomas and the eastern section of Decatur County began. Demands for a new county were legitimate as it was oftentimes inconvenient, if not impossible, to transact business or legal affairs in either Thomasville or Bainbridge. Efforts in forming a new county were originally initiated in 1875. The booster spirit continued and in 1903 the Cairo Messenger mounted an almost weekly campaign for the establishment of a new county with Cairo identified as the county seat. At this time, Cairo lacked a municipal water supply, electricity, and masonry school buildings. Efforts would prove unsuccessful until January 1, 1906, when Grady County was formed with Cairo as the county seat. The new county was named for Henry W. Grady, the Georgia journalist who advocated modern agricultural practices and the development of local resources in planning a prosperous future for the South.

In 1908 the Farmers Union became active in local agricultural issues. Lead by T.M. Whigham and J.A. Wynn, this locally based organization strove to "aid farmers in a financial way, make them more fraternal, and stir up the farmers to a sense of duty in educating their children." A co-operative for tobacco growers was organized in 1908. It was also in this year that the Farmers Union initiated plans to build a warehouse in Cairo. The warehouse was constructed in 1909 and managed by S.P. Vanlandingham. W.B. Roddenbery, speaking at a Union meeting advised, "Grow crops you can grow more profitably and leave off cotton. . . "

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The cotton market continued to fluctuate with the commodity selling for 12 1/4 cents per pound in 1911. Farmers predicted the arrival of the boll weevil in 1912, although the insect did not appear until 1915. With the boll weevil's arrival, Grady County's cotton crop was cut by one-third. Grady County, along with adjoining counties, found itself quarantined from the remainder of the state. Citizen committees and agricultural groups met to begin attempts at fighting the insect. Recommendations for improving these circumstances ranged from "cutting cotton acreage by twenty per cent and planting other crops" to organizing a Live Stock Association who advocated raising livestock and grain.

Problems with the boll weevil continued in 1916, with seventy-five percent of Grady County's farmland infested. There were attempts at diversification with the planting sugar cane, sweet potatoes, rice, and shade tobacco. The devastation of the cotton crop led to crop diversification which led to the eventual revival of Cairo's economy.

Grady County, Georgia received its second rail line service in 1908 when the Pelham & Havana (P. & H.) Railroad established rail service. Known locally as the "Pore and Hungry," the P. & H. provided service from Cairo to Havana, Florida. The train lacked a turntable and consisted of an engine, one passenger car, and several freight cars. Rail service never extended north of Cairo to Pelham. The P.&H. ran until early 1924 when the Georgia & Florida Public Service Commissions conducted a public hearing and recommended the P.& H. be discontinued.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps dating from 1912 depict a small developed community. Cairo's commercial development began at Pearce Ave. (3rd Ave. NW-NE) and ended at Munroe Ave. (2nd Ave. SW-SE). The most densely developed area in Cairo's linear commercial corridor lay south of the depot along South Broad. The majority of properties here stood two stories in height, shared party walls, and were constructed primarily of masonry. A variety of grocery stores, millinery and dry good shops were evident as were banks, office space, and the Telephone Exchange. Vacant lots existed although they were found without exception along lower South Broad. Individual, free-standing buildings were also evident along South Broad Street.

The community's two story, masonry sanitarium was located on the northwest corner of South Broad and West Munroe. Cairo's infirmary, a single story masonry building, was found across the street on the northeast corner of South Broad and East Munroe.

Commercial development continued on North Broad above the railroad bed. Cairo's Post Office, Fire Department and "moving pictures" (located inside City Hall) were located here as were a variety of buggy, hardware, and grocery store establishments.

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As assortment of manufacturers, D.R. Wilder Manufacturing Company (syrup canners), The Cairo Guano Company, and the Cannon Company (syrup manufacturers) had constructed large masonry warehouses along West Railroad Avenue northwest of the depot. Additional warehousing lay to the east of South Broad on Wight Street (1st Avenue SE). Buildings here were predominantly detached and stood one story in height. Vacant lots were scattered the length of the street. Residential development began south of Munroe (2nd Ave. SW-NE) and north of the original Grady County Courthouse, a three story, masonry building with clocktower, located on the northeast corner of North Broad and Pearce (3rd Ave. NE).

Although Grady County was a major producer of cotton, the county was also known for its production of sugar cane syrup. By 1914, Cairo, Georgia had become the nation's second largest producer of cane syrup. Due to this level of production, Congress authorized the establishment of a sugar cane experiment station with an initial appropriation of \$10,000. In December, 1914, the Cairo Messenger reported, "on Saturday 1,200 barrels of syrup were sold in Cairo putting \$12,000 in circulation and making it the busiest day of the year."

The packing of "patch cane" syrup was begun in Cairo on a large scale by W.B. (Walter Blair) Roddenbery who in 1890 developed a family farm and mercantile into a major food production industry. By 1920, other food items were added and the W.B. Roddenbery Company was born. The family's syrup was so well received, that in 1904 Roddenbery Cane Syrup was awarded a medal for excellence at the St. Louis World's Fair. Three years later the product won a gold medal at the James town Exhibition. Today, the W.B. Roddenbery Company employs five hundred workers and markets their products nation wide.

By 1915 The Cairo Messenger reported deposits for the following banks: Farmer's & Merchants - \$83,000, Cairo Banking - \$146,000, and Citizen's Bank - \$171,000. By 1917, the three banks totalled one million dollars in deposits.

The Cairo community enjoyed the theatre. By 1915 the "Lyric" was showing moving pictures on the second floor of 116 North Broad (City Hall and Fire Department). The theatre was opened for only three months and then replaced by the Aleazar Theatre in the same location.

In 1916 Congressman Frank Park announced a \$6,000 allocation to purchase a new Post Office site. It was in the same year that the City of Cairo installed a White Way of twenty, five globe coiled iron lamp posts along Broad Street. Merchants were asked to "subscribe" to reduce purchase and installation expenses.

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The community continued to thrive, and by 1918, four automobile agencies were located in downtown Cairo. On North Broad Street, the c. 1920 Ford Dealership building still stands. The automobile business continued to impact on the community prompting City Council in 1917 to raise its speed limit within the city limits to 12 1/2 miles per hour.

During 1918 there were a number of improvements made to downtown Cairo--Broad Street was paved with brick and City Council passed an ordinance requiring the removal of all tin and wood awnings in downtown. Also in 1918, the City purchased a street sweeper and passed an ordinance prohibiting the unrestricted grazing of domestic hogs within city limits.

Sanborn Maps dating from 1924 illustrate an active central business district. With few exceptions, the seven block area bounded by 3rd Ave. NW-NE and 2nd Ave. SW-SE was solidly developed. Commercial and governmental buildings lined North and South Broad. The Atlantic Coast Line Depot divided North and South Broad Street with warehouse district immediately to the west and northwest of the depot.

The city's infirmary and sanitarium were no longer standing and the Hotel Grady (northwest corner S. Broad and 2nd Ave. SW) was now there. A detached, L-shaped filling station was located on the northeast corner of South Broad and 2nd Avenue SE. Neither the gas station or the hotel remain.

Grady County's roadways left something to be desired. Badly rutted and poorly cleared roads became a Grady County tradition. In 1910, during an automobile tour sponsored by the Atlanta Constitution, the Augusta Chronicle, and Macon Telegraph reported, "On reaching the Grady County line, no sign was needed. The line across Grady was the worst on the tour, the people of this County having had to erect a Court House and bear the other expenses incident to the joys of living in a new county . . . "

The legacy of poor roadways continued, and in 1911 the county commission prioritized those roads requiring repair. The use of convicts in road repair and the requirement that all men age sixteen to fifty years old contribute time to road repair helped in a small way to improve the situation. The September Grand Jury gave the Road Commissioners twelve months to correct this circumstance. Cairo's Broad Street was also in deplorable condition so the area farmers threatened to market their produce elsewhere because the deep sand on Broad Street entrapped heavily loaded wagons. Cairo's City Council then passed local legislation authorizing street paving with assessments made to adjoining property owners.

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Road problems were finally settled in 1919 when Cairo voters passed a \$14,000 bond issue to pave Broad Street from Mott Street south to Ochlocknee, as well as Bryan Street and Central Avenue.

The 1920s were prosperous years for Grady County. Little mention is made of the Great Depression in local newspapers until 1931 when Rev. J.P. Swann wrote in the Messenger, "The world is on wheels on the installment plan." A Chamber of Commerce survey revealed "that local business was off 18.3 percent." It was also in 1931, that several local stores refused to extend credit and sold items on a cash only basis.

Steps were taken to help mitigate the crisis. Both city and county commissions reduced taxes one mill and cut salaries by ten to twenty percent. The city reduced the electrical rate by ten percent while the county stopped all bridge construction.

On December 1, 1931, the Citizen Bank Board of Directors decided to close the bank. They notified the public that "this bank has placed its assets under control of the State Supt. of Banks." In January, 1933, Grady County lost a second financial institution when the Farmers and Merchants Bank was liquidated.

Another sign of the failing economy was when in April 1933, one hundred and fifty Grady Countians eighteen to twenty-five applied for forty positions allotted the county for Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) service. Four hundred and fifty-five citizens were employed at thirty hours per week on the Civil Works Administration's (CWA) streets and roads project. In December 1933, the CWA pledged to expend \$15,000 in Grady County to exterminate rats. Only thirteen local people declined to sign the National Recovery Act (NRA) consumer card, and by August "The Blue Eagle of the NRA had spread literally over this entire community."

In 1935 Cairo built a new post office with funds from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (FEAPW) later the PWA. The post office and the New Deal mural, Products of Grady County, by Paul Ludwig Gill are still intact.

In August, 1935 the Cairo City Council decided to replace all street names except Broad and Railroad with numbers. The Cairo Messenger reflected, "No more will Cairo streets signify pioneer families; no more will the names given certain streets by the city's earliest settlers, such as Decatur, Mitchell, Pearce, Ochlocknee, and Wight be used."

The still extant Zebulon Theater opened in April, 1936 and was owned by Mrs. Ethel B. Adams. The Messenger reported, "every convenience

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had been provided in the new structure, the neon sign and marquee giving the theater a big town appearance."

By the late 1930s, Cairo had recovered from the Depression and was experiencing economic growth. According to the 1940 Census, Cairo possessed a population of 4,652, having grown from 705 in 1900. Cairo's population had increased 46% from its 1930 level.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Tinker, Nancy. "Cairo Commercial Historic District," Historic District Information Form, July 1991. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Office of Historic Preservation, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) 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 #

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):

GR 1-50 (1981 Grady County Survey)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 12 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 16 Easting 766850 Northing 3419290
- B) Zone 16 Easting 766960 Northing 3419200
- C) Zone 16 Easting 766930 Northing 2419130
- D) Zone 16 Easting 766730 Northing 3418940

Verbal Boundary Description

The district includes properties along North and South Broad Street, Railroad and Second Avenue, and one on First Street. The district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line and drawn to scale on the attached tax map of the district.

Boundary Justification

The Cairo Commercial Historic District encompasses the contiguous, intact, historic, commercial buildings in downtown Cairo, Georgia.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie N. Sharp, National Register Specialist
organization Office of Historic Preservation, 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** 20 April 1994

(OHP form version 12-08-93)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

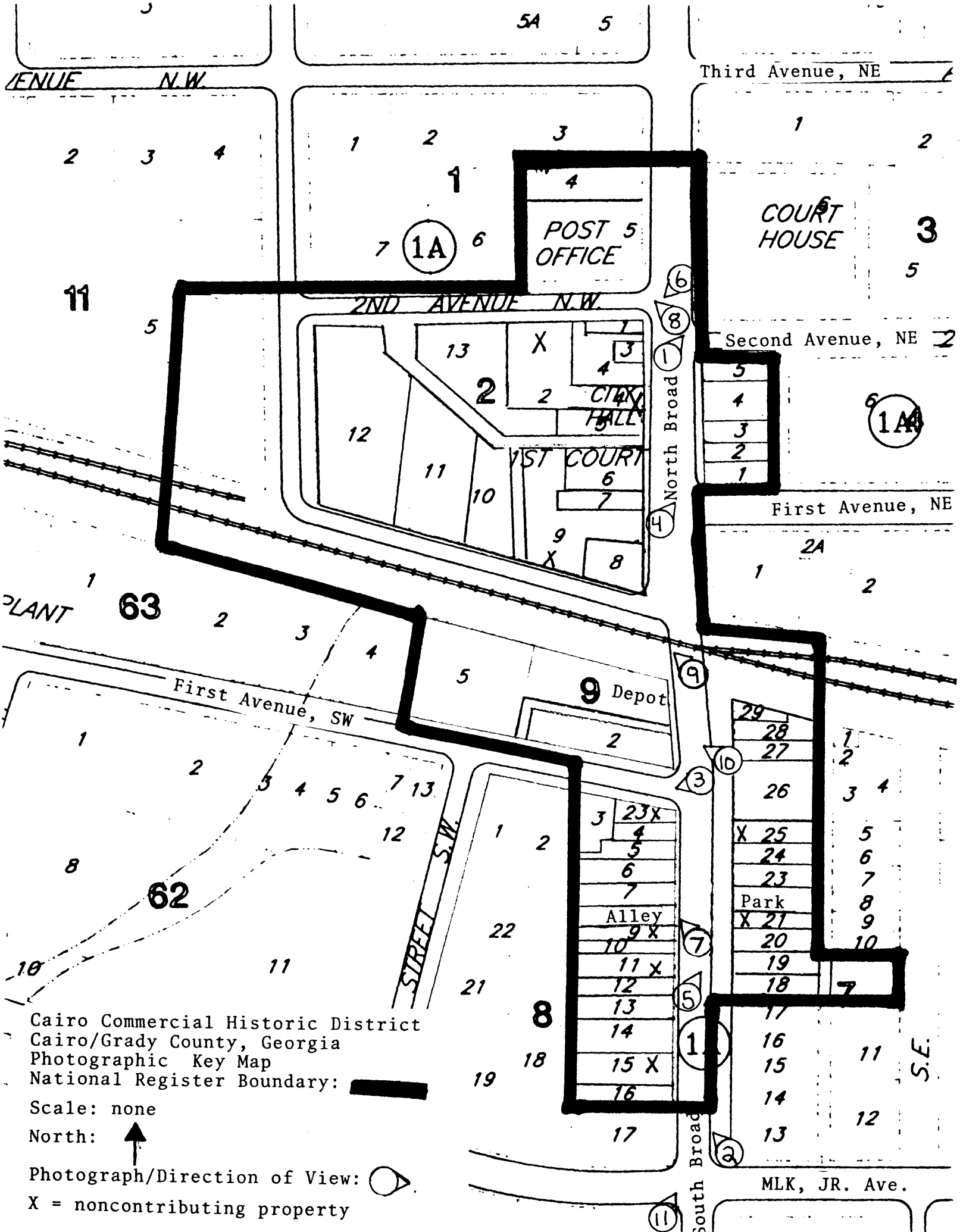
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Cairo Commercial Historic District
City or Vicinity: Cairo
County: Grady
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: December 1992

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 11: Non-historic Grady County Courthouse; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 11: West side of South Broad Street, north of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 11: Corner of First Avenue, SW and South Broad Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 4 of 11: East side of North Broad Street, north of First Avenue, NE; photographer facing northeast.
- 5 of 11: East side of South Broad Street, south of railroad tracks; photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 11: Southwest corner of North Broad Street and Second Avenue, NW; photographer facing southwest.
- 7 of 11: Citizens Bank and west side of South Broad Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 8 of 11: United States Post Office and the Zebulon Theater; photographer facing northwest.
- 9 of 11: Warehouses, railroad tracks, and west side of North Broad Street; photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 11: Former Atlantic and Gulf Railroad Depot; photographer facing northwest.
- 11 of 11: East side of South Broad Street, north of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue; photographer facing northeast.



Cairo Commercial Historic District
 Cairo/Grady County, Georgia
 Photographic Key Map

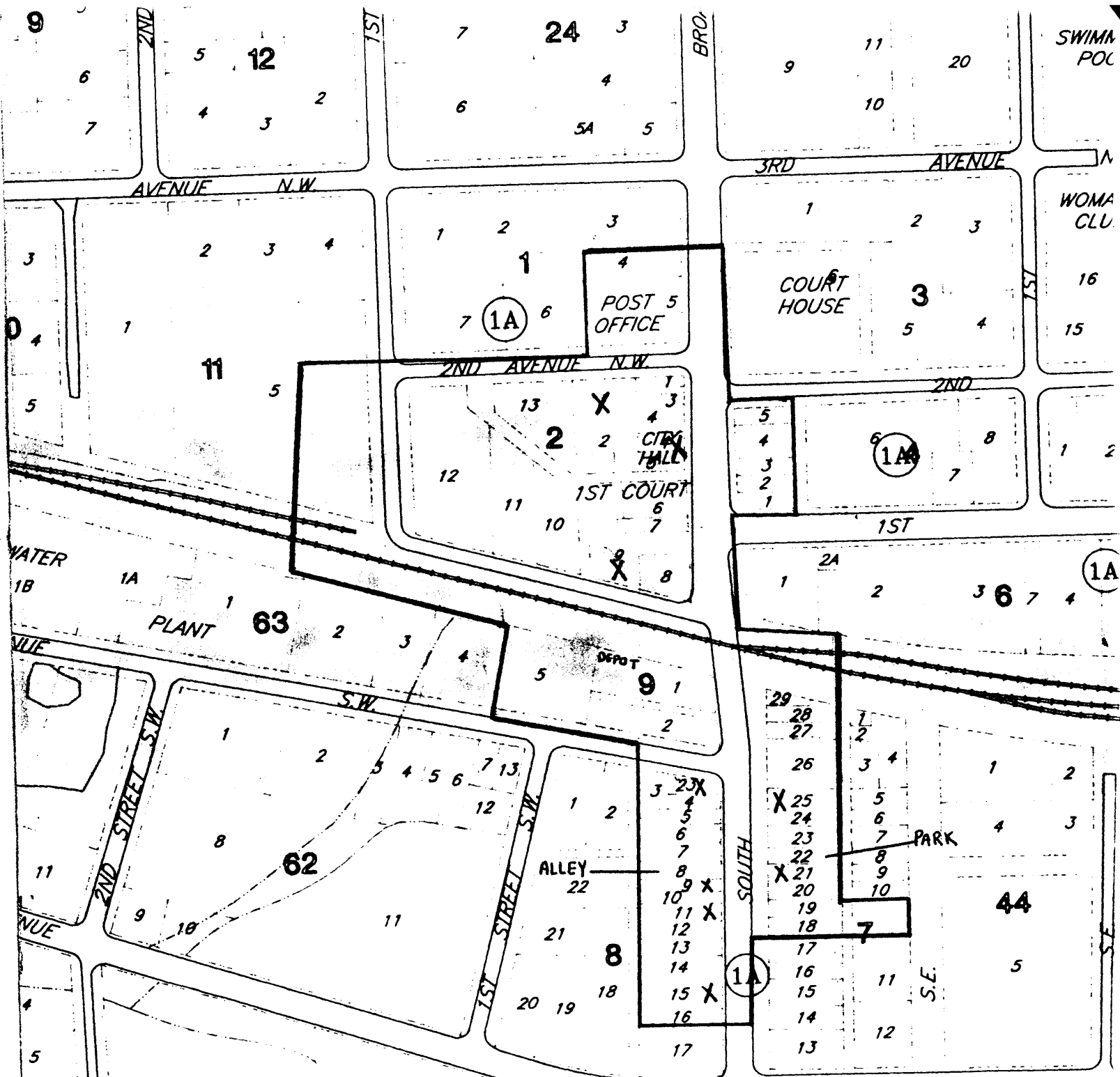
National Register Boundary:

Scale: none

North:

Photograph/Direction of View:

X = noncontributing property



Cairo Commercial Historic District
Grady County, Georgia

Tax Map

National Register Boundary: **—**

Scale: 1" = 200'

North:



X = noncontributing property

