

PH 363910

DATA SHEET  
MAR 23 1977

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED SEP 19 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Western and Atlantic Railroad Zero Milepost

AND/OR COMMON

Western and Atlantic Railroad Zero Milepost

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER ~~On Western and Atlantic right-of-way at~~ Central Ave. (old Loyd St.)  
between Wall St. and Railroad Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th - Andrew Young

STATE

Georgia

--- VICINITY OF

CODE  
13

COUNTY  
Fulton

CODE  
121

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY                                   | OWNERSHIP                                  | STATUS  | PRESENT USE                            |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED                     | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE   | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)       | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE           | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                   | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL    | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE         | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH              | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS             | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL   | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE              | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                  | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS        | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED              | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
|  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                           | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY      | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:                    |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Georgia, State Properties Commission, Mr. David Benson

STREET & NUMBER

7 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia 30334

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fulton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

160 Pryor St.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Zero Milepost is a stone marker measuring 42" in height, 12" on two sides and 11" on two sides. The crown is pyramidal. The inscription "W & A RR 138" is roughly carved into one side and "W & A RR 00" on another. The lower 12" of the marker are now enclosed by a large, square concrete base and iron posts with railings, which were added for protective purposes.

A Georgia Historical Commission marker providing a brief history of the Railroad stands just outside the railing.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC          | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>History |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES      1842-1850      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Zero Milepost is significant in two areas of history: transportation and local history. This stone milepost marks the southeastern terminus of the state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad. It was this railroad that provided the impetus for the beginning and subsequent growth of the city of Atlanta. More specifically, this milepost marks the center of the city from which the city limits were measured.

Legislation creating the Western and Atlantic Railroad was enacted in 1836 although the idea of a state-owned railroad in Georgia had been mentioned as early as 1826. Then, in 1835-36, word came that a new rail line would be constructed from Charleston to Cincinnati that could pass through north Georgia. However, by the time a convention was held to discuss this possibility, it was too late. The proposed Georgia route had been discarded in favor of a route through Tennessee. Another convention was then held in Georgia and it was decided that the State of Georgia would build its own railroad through the center of the state and allow private, branch lines to join with it. Had Georgia participated in the Charleston and Cincinnati project, the Western and Atlantic and the city of Atlanta itself may never have existed.

Governor Wilson Lumpkin initiated the idea for the W and A but, as his term ended in 1835, his plans had to be enacted by the new governor, William Schley, who appointed Colonel Abbott Hall Brisbane to survey north Georgia. When the Legislature met in November of 1836, a bill to construct a railroad at state expense was introduced and passed, 76-65. A major spokesman in the Legislature on this bill was Alexander H. Stephens, a freshman legislator who made his maiden speech for this bill and went on to become Congressman, Vice-President of the Confederacy and Governor.

No specific locations of terminal points were named but generally they were to be on the Tennessee line near the Tennessee River at or near Rossville and then in a direct route to the southeastern bank of the Chattahoochee River. The 1836 Act stated further that the "said railroad shall be known and distinguished as the Western and Atlantic Railroad of the State of Georgia." The annual appropriation was set at \$360,000, \$60,000 of which was for surveying and locating the road. Colonel Stephen Harriman Long was hired to survey and build the road on May 12, 1837. He had previously taught mathematics, surveyed the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and written Railroad Manual.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garrett, Franklin M., Atlanta and Environs, Vol. I, Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1954.  
 Georgia Historical Marker, Georgia Historical Commission, Atlanta, 1958.  
 Wimbush, W.A., Western and Atlantic Right of Way Case, 1895, Testimony of Bodwell E. Wells, C.E.  
 Cooper, Walter G., Official History of Fulton County, Walter G. Cooper, 1934.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |         |              |     |     |       |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|--------------|-----|-----|-------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1,6  | 7,4,1   | 880<br>7,3,0 | 3,7 | 3,7 | 5,7,0 | B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING     |     |     |       |   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |         |              |     |     |       | D |      |         |          |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Martha F. Norwood, Research Associate

ORGANIZATION

Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section 1/4/77

STREET & NUMBER

270 Washington St., Room 703

TELEPHONE

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia 30334

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DAVID M. SHERMAN

DATE

3-16-77

TITLE

Chief, Historic Preservation Section

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

2/19/77

DATE

7-16-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 23 1977

DATE ENTERED SEP 19 1977

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The southeastern terminus was originally located at Pittman's Ferry in Gwinnett County but it was soon found to be unfeasible and the point was relocated at Montgomery's Ferry at Old Fort Gilmer and the Standing Peachtree. It was then decided that the line should extend south of the river in order to provide a better location for lines to Athens, Madison, Milledgeville and Forsyth to connect with the Western and Atlantic. This provision was in an amendment to the 1836 Act and was passed in December of 1837. It stated that the line would continue "to some point not exceeding eight miles, as shall be most eligible for running branch roads..." The southeastern terminus was then moved to Land Lot 78, District 14, DeKalb County. [This area became Fulton County on December 17, 1853.] This point would be between the present Forsyth and Magnolia Streets. After construction began in 1838, discussion continued on the location of the southeastern terminus. Then, in 1842, a new and final point was established, only 1200 feet from the previous point, in the northeast corner of Land Lot 77, 14th District, DeKalb, later Fulton, County. This point was located at Loyd Street, now Central Avenue, between Alabama and Decatur Streets by surveys by C.F.M. Garnett and F.C. Arms. In 1850 the zero milepost was implanted at this location. Today it stands on this same point but is under the Central Avenue viaduct between Wall Street and Railroad Avenue. (See Vincent's Map of Atlanta, 1853, Attached) The mileposts were placed in 1850 by Bodwell E. Wells, Civil Engineer for the railroad, who later testified that he "...began locating mile posts sometime in the fall of 1850. I ascertained the initial point by measuring and obtaining the center of the south line of the State Square, which was the north line of Loyd Street, and using a map furnished me by the Chief Engineer that was made by F.C. Armes..."

A five acre tract including the point was donated to the state by Samuel Mitchell in 1842 which allowed for the erection of the depot buildings. A small settlement had already appeared as early as 1836 and was known as Terminus. When the final point was located, a town was laid out and named Marthasville in honor of Governor Lumpkin's youngest daughter. The five acre tract was called State Square. The first train ran from Marthasville to Marietta on December 24, 1842 but regular service did not begin until 1845. By 1845, Marthasville had grown significantly. The railroad officials thought the name unfitting and began calling their depot Atlanta. In December of 1845, the name was officially changed to Atlanta and the city limits defined as one mile in every direction from the state depot.

From this small, stragging railroad town of 1845 has grown one of the largest metropolitan cities in the country. Zero Milepost stands as a reminder of these early railroad days and the birth of a city.



(Collection of Franklin M. Garrett)

Vincent's old (1853) map of Atlanta as reprinted in Hopkins' Atlas of Atlanta, 1878. This is the earliest extant complete map of the city. The "Note" and "N.B." were added upon republication in the 1878 Atlas. Explanation at top added by the writer of this history

