(Rev. 10-90) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM	REC VED MAY COLOR MAY COLOR MATIONAL REC COLHISTORY
1. Name of Property	MATIONAL
historic name <u>Alexander City Commercial Historic District</u>	
other names/site numberN/A	
***************************************	=======================================
<sup>2</sup> 2. Location	
	Jefferson Streets & Courthouse Square not for publication N/A
city or town <u>Alexander City</u> state <u>Alabama</u> code <u>AL</u> county <u>Tallapoos</u>	vicinity <u>N/A</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the pro- 60. In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u>does no</u>	ty meets the documentation standards for registering properties ocedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part of meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this tewide <u>X</u> locally. ( <u>See continuation sheet for additional</u> 5/16/00
Signature of certifying official	Date
Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preserva	ation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau	
In my opinion, the property meets does not me ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)	et the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	
***************************************	
4. National Park Service Certification	
	Dignature of the Keeper
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):	Esar A. Ball E/22/E

|

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5. Classification					
<pre>====================================</pre>	Category of Pro (Check only one b			ly listed resources in the count	
Minivete	[] building(a)		Contributing	Noncontributing	
[X] private [X] public-local	[ ] building(s) [X] district		<u></u>	<u>17</u> buildings sites	
[ ] public-state	[ ] site			structures	
[] public-Federal	[] structure			objects	
	[] object		33	<u>17</u> Total	
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter *N/A* if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)		rty listing.)	Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register		
N/A			N/A		
6. Function or Use	######################################	2592552229552222	i		
				12 3 2 3 8 5 2 3 5 5 5 5 5 5 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	
Historic Functions (Enter cate		•			
Cat: commerce/trade	Sub:	<u>business</u> professional			
		specialty store			
<u></u>		warehouse			
social		meeting hall			
government		post office			
		courthouse/city hall			
Current Functions (Enter cate Cat: commerce/trade	gories from instru Sub:	•			
	040.	professional			
		specialty store			
		specialty store warehouse	······		
social		warehouse			
social					
		warehouse meeting hall			
social government vacant/not in use		warehouse meeting hall			
		warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall			
social government vacant/not in use 7. Description Architectural Classification (8 other: one-part commerce	ial block	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
social government vacant/not in use 7. Description Architectural Classification (E other: one-part commerc other: two-part commerc	ial block	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall			
social government vacant/not in use 7. Description Architectural Classification (8 other: one-part commerce	ial block	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
<u>social</u> <u>government</u> <u>vacant/not in use</u> 7. Description Architectural Classification (E <u>other: one-part commerc</u> <u>other: two-part commerc</u> <u>other: classical modern</u> Materials (Enter categories from	ial block ial block instructions)	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
social 	ial block ial block instructions)	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
social 	ial block ial block instructions)	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
social 	ial block ial block instructions) e nthetics, stucco	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		
social 	ial block ial block instructions)	warehouse meeting hall courthouse/city hall	Colonial Revival		

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

8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property X A Property is associated with events that have made B Property is associated with the lives of persons sig X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of	for National Register listing) a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. nificant in our past. f a type, period, or method of construction or represents the s, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose
Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) A owned by a religious institution or used for religiou 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	
	······································
Period of Significance	
Significant Dates	
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)	N/A
Cultural Affiliation <u>N/A</u>	
Architect/BuilderRoberts & Company (architects)	
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain significance of th	e property on one or more continuation sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	======================================
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this for	
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 #	Primary location of additional data: N/A [ ] State Historic Preservation Office [ ] Other state agency [ ] Federal agency [ ] Local government [ ] University [ ] Other Name of repository

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10. Geographical Data         Acreage of Property approximately 8         UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)         Zone Easting Northing       10 5 897510 3445460 3 16 589090 3645360         2 16 597401 3454720 4 16 599760 3645760	
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11. Form Prepared By         organization       N/A/Alabama Historical Commission         date       January 1999         street & number       4 Windsor Drive/468 South Perry Street       telephone         street & number       4 Windsor Drive/468 South Perry Street       telephone         city or town       Tuscaloosa/Montgomery       state       Alabama       zip code       35404/36130-0900         Additional Documentation	Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
name/title _Jeff Mansell/Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewer         organization	Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
organization	11. Form Prepared By
organization	name/title Jeff Mansell/Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewer
street & number <u>4 Windsor Drive/468 South Perry Street</u> telephone <u>334-242-3184</u> city or town <u>Tuscaloosa/Montgomery</u> state <u>Alabama</u> zip code <u>35404/36130-0900</u> Additional Documentation 	
city or town_Tuscaloosa/Montgomerystate_Alabamazip 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.) nameultiple	
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city or town state zip code	

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section <u>2/7</u> Page <u>1</u>

Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama

II. Location

Alabama Street: 141, ,143, 145, 147, 153, 155, 161 Broad Street: 2, 4-6, 16, 26, 42, 44-46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 58, 60-68, 110, 124 Calhoun Street: 102, 110, 122, 128, 134, 140, 148 Court Square: 4, 82, 100 Green Street: 150 Jefferson Street: 15 Main Street: 11-13, 12, 19, 30, 33, 41, 45, 49, 53, 107, 115-123 Wheeler Street: 107, 136, 155

#### VII. Narrative Description

The Alexander City Commercial Historic District contains 32 contributing buildings, 1 contributing site, and 17 noncontributing buildings reflecting the commercial, economic, and civic development of Alexander City during the period of significance, 1902 to 1950. The district is made up of commercial and governmental buildings associated with the 20<sup>th</sup>-century development of Alexander City. Located entirely within the municipal boundaries of Alexander City, the district contains a portion of the city's historic commercial and business area, the county courthouse/city hall complex, a former Masonic Lodge, and the former post office, which is now used as a community center.

The downtown business district is bisected by the railroad which enters the city from the northeast and continues through the downtown area to the southwest. Broad Street, the city's main thoroughfare, runs parallel to the railroad with secondary streets, such as Main, Bibb, Clay, Green, and Franklin, bisecting Broad from the north and south. The district boundaries were drawn to include the historic downtown area, taking in the most comprehensive group of historic commercial and governmental buildings.

The district lies on a slight rise to the west and east/southeast of the railroad. The courthouse square, a roughly 200' open square plaza, faces due north and is set at an angle to the railroad; the northwest corner of the plaza almost touches the railroad. The names and configurations of the streets surrounding the square have changed intermittently since the town was incorporated in 1873. Today, Lee Street enters the center of the square on the west. Church Street enters the center of the square on the south. Main Street runs due north for another block where it intersects Broad Street and the railroad. Tallapoosa and State Streets, running east and west, both enter onto the square on the east, intersecting Main Street. Alabama Street runs northeast/southwest and intersects with State Street one block east of the courthouse square. This particular intersection's arrangement created a triangular open space (used for parking) between the rows of commercial buildings which face Alabama and State Streets; however, the buildings on the State Street side were demolished in 1999. Since Alabama Street slopes away from the courthouse square, these one-part commercial block buildings create a stair step effect as they are arranged down the side of the hill.

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Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama

The buildings in the district are located on streets with sidewalks and curbs and in some areas, lined with varieties of oak trees. The green space in front of the former post office has been used as such since the early-20th century. Sanborn Insurance maps indicate that even prior to the construction of the post office in 1924, this area was known as Central Park. The park contains lawn spaces, plants, and sidewalks. The convergence of streets at odd angels has resulted in the creation of triangular medians along Main Street on the east.

Today, these medians have been planted with varieties of shrubs and ground cover. One median, located on the eastern side of the square, contains an ornamental cast iron fountain and decorative iron fencing. Many of the commercial buildings in the district are two-part commercial blocks: two or more story buildings characterized by having two distinctive horizontal zones, the storefront and upper facade area. These buildings are all constructed of brick; have recessed entrances next to or flanked by display windows; and decorative features such as corbeling stonework, vertical and horizontal brick panels, and in some cases pilasters. The Masonic Lodge, a three-story, two-part brick commercial block building, is one of the most imposing buildings in the downtown area, possessing large arched windows and heavy dentil work. One-part commercial blocks are only one story with a decorated facade similar to the treatment of the storefront levels of two-part commercial blocks. Most of the contributing one-story commercial blocks have little ornamentation and are constructed of brick with storefronts capped with transoms and recessed brick panels above. A streamline/Art Moderne styled automobile dealership, two-part commercial block auto show room and repair shop, intact service station (City Chevron), and several other automobile service buildings comprise Alexander City's extant auto-related architecture.

The former post office and the courthouse/city hall represent the historic governmental/public architecture in town. Both buildings employ styles of architecture commonly used for public buildings in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The post office (presently the Bud Porch Center) is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style with its hipped roof, dormer windows, decorative quoins, broken pediment door surround, and stone work balustrade. The former post office was remodeled in 1981 for use as a community center. Across the street, the courthouse/city hall building is a good example of classical modern architecture, exhibiting a mixture of classical and modern details, corresponding with 1930s trend in government architecture. Basically H-shaped with a central block and subordinate wings, the building features minimal detailing such as bands of decorative course work (in this case dentil trim work), streamlined limestone door surrounds with carved ornamentation, and decorative panels featuring molded geometric reliefs. A modern, but sympathetic, wing was added to the rear in circa 1990. The Tudor-Modern Alexander City Bank (South Trust) is a rare example of this style and, despite an addition and window change, retains many significant architectural features including its limestone facade and pilasters, pointed arch windows, and decorative stone carving.

## **Archaeological Component Statement**

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made of this district area, the potential for subsurface remains is good/high. Buried portions may contain significant information that may be useful in interpreting the entire area.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **CONTINUATION SHEET** 

Section 7 Page 3

Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama 

#### Inventory

### ALABAMA STREET

1. 141 Alabama; circa 1920; One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with original wood and glass doors; flanking brick bulkheads and wood display windows; 10 pane transom and spanning "I"-beam above; rare original storefront; two wire glass skylights; used as a tin shop for many years. C

2. 143 Alabama; circa 1928; One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with flanking display windows; four pane transom above; two wire glass skylights; used as general store space, including a printing shop and furniture store. C

3. 145 Alabama; circa 1928; One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with flanking display windows; four pane metal transom above; two wire glass skylights; used as a bottling works for a while. C

4. 147 Alabama; circa 1928; One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with flanking display windows; five pane metal transom above; two wire glass skylights; was part of a furniture store and used as a dry cleaners. C

5. 153 Alabama; circa 1928; G & W Style and Beauty Salon. One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with flanking display windows; four pane transom above; two wire glass skylights. C

6. 155 Alabama; circa 1928; Spot Family Clothing and Shoes. One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed double entrance with flanking display windows; three pane transom above; two wire glass skylights; originally a bakery. C

7. 161 Alabama; circa 1950; One-part commercial block; brick; flat roof with parapet; front facade has six bays with multi-pane metal windows and awning inserts; central entrance; side facade has five bays with same fenestration; lintel course and sills are yellow brick; two wire glass skylights; originally a dry-cleaning establishment. C

## **BROAD STREET**

8. 2 Broad; circa 1902; Ozzy's Photo & Camera. Two-story plus basement, two-part commercial block; brick corner building with stone foundation; flat parapet roof with coping; storefront contains recessed entrance with flanking display areas and covered transom above; upper facade has recessed area with two round-arched window openings (currently bricked up) with heavy brick dentil work above, bands of brick corbeling along roofline: side facade contains 10 bays with heavy segmental arched 2:2 windows; rear elevation has access to basement, window-door-window arrangement on first floor, and two windows on the second floor. C

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Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama

9. 4-6 Broad; circa 1902; Froshins/Apple Tree. Two-story plus basement, two-part commercial block; stone foundation; brick with circa 1950 black cararra glass covering entire front facade; flat parapet roof; storefront contains recessed central aluminum entrance doors flanked by large aluminum display windows with cararra glass covered bulkheads; left of the main entrance is a secondary entrance with aluminum door with "BARGAIN BASEMENT" above in cararra glass panel; right of the main entrance is another secondary entrance, recessed with an angled display area with cararra glass bulkhead; upper facade cararra glass panels are approximately 18" x 24" and framed in aluminum; top of upper facade contains two bands per panel of cream cararra glass; rear elevation has segmental arched fenestration with only one original 9:9 window and circa 1960 elevator shaft. C

10. 16 Broad; circa 1902; Webshoppe. Two-story plus basement, two-part commercial block; brick with stone foundation; flat parapet roof with coping; heavily altered facade; storefront recessed nearly 10 feet with open stair to upper floor, second floor has a Palladian window and two 1:1 windows with Dryvit surrounds, decorated Dryvit cornice at parapet line; rear elevation has segmental arched fenestration with four on second floor and five on first. NC

11. 26 Broad; circa 1902; Family Dollar. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block; stone rubble wall and foundation; flat parapet roof with coping; originally contained three store spaces, now entirely open on interior; central entrance with flanking display windows; circa 1970 barrel cloth awning; some recessed brick panels on upper facade; upper facade also contains a lot of Dryvit; rear elevation shows rubblework and contains circa 1990 addition. NC

12. 42 Broad; circa 1902; David's Jewelers. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block; brick with brick foundation; flat parapet roof with tile coping; segmental arched openings on rear elevation; facade altered, now brick storefront with replacement tinted windows; central entrance with heavy copper awning. NC

13. 44-46; circa 1902; Hebson's Jewelry/Party Maker. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block; brick with stone foundation; flat parapet roof; storefronts are altered; Hebsons's has central entrance with flanking display areas and flat awning; Party Maker has off-central entrance with display window and shed awning; upper facade has nicest brickwork left in downtown area -- heavy brick corbeling with central arches on each storefront, brick panels, and tiered vertical corbeling with stone coping at parapet; rear elevation has four bays with segmental arched openings (many are bricked in). C

14. 48 Broad; circa 1902; A J's Mens Shop. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block; brick with brick foundation; flat parapet roof; altered facade; clapboard cedar storefront with central entrance; overwhelming shed awning; stucco-covered upper facade; rear elevation contains grill vents and flat arched fenestration (some filled in). NC

15. 50 Broad; circa 1940; Afrocentric Shop. One-story, plus basement, one-part commercial block; brick with brick foundation; flat parapet roof with tile coping; storefront has deeply recessed entrance with flanking display areas with cararra glass bulkheads; flat metal awning; brick panel on upper facade; for many years this space was an alley, thus explaining it's slight width; 1948 Sanborn shows this as a restaurant. C

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section <u>7</u> Page <u>5</u> Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama

16. 52 Broad; circa 1945; Factory Connection. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof with tile coping; central recessed entrance with flanking aluminum display windows; six bays on rear with flat arched windows and double wood doors. C

17. 54 Broad; circa 1945; Movie Gallery. One-story plus basement, one-part commercial block, brick; flat parapet roof; central recessed entrance with flanking aluminum display windows; flat metal awning; upper facade covered with corrugated metal, but part is torn away and can see brick beneath; four 1:1 windows on rear elevation. C

18. 58 Broad; circa 1910; Beauty Shop. One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof with brick corbeling; total replacement storefront; nonhistoric shed addition on rear. NC

19. 60-68 Broad; circa 1920. One-part commercial block; long corner building with open interior; Sanborns show that interior spaces were configured in various ways over time; five shops currently; brick with stone foundation; flat parapet roof with brick corbeling along roofline; side elevation parapet is stepped; multiple entrances/window openings with heavy, three-brick wide segmental arches; some new display windows; side facade has four segmental arched openings; rear elevation contains multiple bricked-up segmental arched openings and some doors. C

20. 110 Broad; circa 1935; City Chevron. One-story gas station with original flat canopy supported by square brick bases; canopy is frame with tongue and groove ceiling; station has flat parapet roof, canopy is partially gabled; station is concrete block faced with brick; front facade of station has vertical tongue and grove paneling; there is a long grouping of 9:1 wood windows (eight continuous along with original wood panel doors); north elevation has original restroom doors and small 4:4 wood windows and three large garage bay areas; circa 1950 brick garage bay on south side with roll-up garage door and aluminum pedestrian door. C

21. 124 Broad; circa 1945; High Cotton Antiques. One-story plus balcony Art Moderne/streamlined-style building; brick with bands of slightly darker colored brick every seven courses; flat parapet roof with brick coping; front of building contains the showroom area and a service bay entrance; the showroom consists of continuous windows with aluminum mullions topped by a horizontal band of metal that extends around the rest of the front facade; exterior front corners on showroom section are curved; side elevations contain multipane metal windows with awning inserts; rear elevation contains three original wood panel roll-up garage doors in service area; exposed steel trusses in rear service area; concrete floor; originally auto sales and service business. C

## **CALHOUN STREET**

22. 102 Calhoun; circa 1902; Lou's Barber & Style Shop. Two-story, two-part commercial block; triangular plan; brick with flat parapet roof; storefront has five bays with replacement windows and door with segmental arches above; second floor has three bays with segmental arched windows; some open corner brick work; heavy brick corbeling along roofline. C

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Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama

23. 110 Calhoun; circa 1902, circa 1950 alterations; Queen's Attic Antiques. One-part commercial block; stone with stuccoed front facade; flat parapet roof; central entrance with flanking display windows; fabric shed awning; rear elevation is stone with segmental arch fenestration. C

24. 122 Calhoun; circa 1902; Riley's. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick and stone; flat parapet roof; central entrance with flanking display windows; entire upper facade covered with blue vinyl siding; second story side elevation has segmental arch windows. NC

25. 128 Calhoun; circa 1902; Heilig Meyers. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof and stepped side parapet; storefront has central entrance with flanking display windows; the window bulkheads and surrounds are covered with cararra glass; second floor facade has two segmental arch windows (filled in) with brick sills and open brickwork along sill course; two bands of open corner brickwork above. C

26. 134 Calhoun; circa 1902; Cotney Jewelry. One-part commercial block; brick with new brick veneer on front ... facade changing historic appearance; central entrance with flanking curio windows; prominent awning over entrance; upper front facade has vertical brick panels. NC

27. 140 Calhoun; circa 1902; Building Blocks. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; altered storefront with off-set entrance and four display windows; heavy shed awning; upper facade covered with vertical wood boards. NC

28. 148 Calhoun; circa 1920; City Pawn. One-part commercial block; brick covered with vertical vinyl siding; flat parapet roof; storefront has central entrance and flanking display windows; siding covers posts too. NC

## **COURT SQUARE**

29. 4 Court Square; 1974; City Hall. New Formalism, One-story plus basement; most of exterior faced with smooth stucco-like panels except for main facade which has some granite veneer sections; flat roof with prominent roof slab overhang; fixed metal windows; double metal entrance door; series of six granite projecting vertical elements on front facade to left of main entrance. C

30. 82 Court Square; 1938; Tallapoosa County Courthouse/Old City Hall; Robert and Company, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, Architects. Classical Modern, Two-story plus basement; "H"-shape plan; brick; flat roof; three-bay center block with flanking two-bay wings; multipane metal windows with louvered central panes; front (south) facade faces south with open staircases rising to central single leaf entrance; each floor in wings defined by decorative concrete string courses; decorative comice band features molded dentil work; concrete paneled surrounds found on side entrances; decorative pierced brickwork panels on side elevations. C

31. 100 Court Square; 1924, circa 1981; Bud Porch Center. Colonial Revival, One-story plus basement; rectangular plan; brick; hip roof with triple dormer windows; low lying stonework balustrade along roof line; five bay facade; central double leaf entrance with transom set in broken pediment limestone surround; 12:12 wood windows with decorative limestone panels above; quoins; circa 1981 read loading dock addition; originally Alexander City Post Office. C

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Section 7 Page 7

Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama 

32. 100 Court Square; circa 1920; Central Park. Flat grassy area with paths in front of old post office; approximately 60' x 60' in size. C site

## **GREEN STREET**

33. 150 Green; circa 1935; Thomas Auto Parts. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick; flat roof with parapet and stepped side walls; rear of building is one story; front facade corner is canted with alternating, exposed brick corners and entrance door, window, and recessed brick panel above; first floor south facade has four openings - display windows and entrance door; east facade has two display windows, two 12-pane metal windows with keystones, roll-up garage door, and four 12 pane metal windows with keystones; second floor south facade has six 12-pane metal windows with keystones and brick panel above; second floor east facade has four 12-pane metal windows with keystones; originally auto show room in front and service area in rear. C

## JEFFERSON STREET

34. 15 Jefferson; 1927, 1998; South Trust Bank; Tudor Modern. Two-story, two-part commercial block with canted corner with entrance doors; limestone face over brick; flat roof with parapet; corner has entrance with window above capped by a limestone eagle; side facades are three bays with large recessed, corbeled limestone surrounds; pointed arch windows with spandrels in between first and second floors; second floor window openings are paired with limestone sills and lintels; side bays divided by stone pilasters; at roof line pilasters rise above parapet with gable cap and have a unifoil panel; south elevation has additional bay with entrance door and window above; windows replaced in 1998 with metal and tinted glass, however mimic historic ones; 1998 rear drive through and south side addition is faced with limestone; addition has multipane fixed windows divided by gable-cap pilasters; originally was Alexander City Bank. C

## MAIN STREET

35. 11-13 Main; circa 1902; Merle Norman/Steele Marketing. One-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof with concrete coping; two storefronts with a flat aluminum awning; transom covered with blue and black composite panels as are the window surrounds and bulkhead; Merle Norman entrance is offset with a display window to its side; Steele entrance is centered with flanking display windows; upper facade has two recessed brick panels and soldiered brick corbeling. C

36. 12 Main; circa 1920; circa 1960; Carlisle Drug Co. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; triangular-shaped plan; storefront received update in circa 1960 with aluminum windows and doors, bulkhead and surround areas covered in corrugated metal, as is upper facade; flat metal awning; nice modern-styled lettering on sign on upper facade. NC

37. 19 Main; circa 1902; Russell Corporation. Three story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; storefront altered with stucco and new windows and doors; entire upper facade area covered with vertical aluminum siding. NC

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38. 19 Main; circa 1902; Russell Corporation. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; storefront altered with stucco and new windows and doors; entire upper facade area covered with vertical aluminum siding. NC

39. 30 Main; circa 1920; Esquire Fashion. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; storefront entrance is offset with aluminum doors and display windows; flat metal awning; upper facade covered with vertical aluminum siding. NC

40. 33 Main; circa 1902; English Cottage. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; storefront has central entrance and flanking display windows with heavy shed canopy above; upper facade has two 1:1 windows with flat arches and vents above; brick corbeling along roofline. C

41. 41 Main; circa 1902; Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; entire second floor and storefront surround covered with nonhistoric yellow brick; storefront has offset entrance and display windows; heavy awning. NC

42. 45 Main; circa 1902; Coley Insurance. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; facade altered in circa 1960 with tile bulkheads, aluminum display windows, doors, and canopy; upper facade covered with corrugated metal. NC

43. 49 Main; circa 1902; Cloud Nine. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; original storefront with cast iron columns in front of wood bulkheads with display windows; offset paneled wood entrance door; large six-pane transom above; recessed brick panel on upper facade with brick corbeling along roofline; best intact c. 1902 storefront in district. C

44. 53 Main; circa 1902; Carlisle Clothing. One-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; front facade altered with scored stucco and new recessed entrance door with flanking display windows. NC

45. 107 Main; circa 1930; Graves Furniture. Two-story, two-part commercial block; brick; flat parapet roof with concrete dentil coping; front center section of parapet is raised; corner building; altered storefront with stucco and new doors and windows; upper facade intact with three bays on front, each with a paired group of multipane metal windows with awning inserts on concrete sills and lintels; vertical brick panels flank windows in upper facade; other recessed brick panels can be found above and below windows; side elevation first floor covered with stucco, upper facade contains four original bays; each has multipane metal windows with awning inserts and concrete sills and lintels of C

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46. 115-123 Main; circa 1915; Masonic Lodge. Three-story, two-part commercial block; brick with flat parapet roof; stepped center section of parapet on front facade; storefront contains two store areas with replacement metal display windows and entrance doors; transom covered by shed canopy; five bay upper facade with varied fenestration: second floor had pairs of windows (now replacement) with stepped limestone flat arches and limestone sills and third floor had pairs of round arched windows (now replacement) with round brick lintels and flanking brick pilasters; each bay on third floor is slightly recessed with brick corbeling along top; original metal cornice with brackets approximately three feet down from roofline; center section of parapet contains carved stone masonic symbol; upper floor masonic lodge, other floors used for a variety of businesses including the post office. C

### WHEELER STREET

47. 107 Wheeler; circa 1935; Alexander City Glass. One-part commercial block; brick; flat roof with parapet; upper front facade covered with metal; storefront has metal display windows; facade has two entrances and roll-up garage opening; four original skylights; originally auto sales and service business. C

48. 107 Wheeler; circa 1935; Alexander City Glass. One-part commercial block; brick; flat roof and parapet with tile coping; brick panel in upper facade; three bay storefront has central door with transom flanked by garage openings with wood paneled roll-up doors; originally an auto repairs business. C

49. 136 Wheeler; circa 1935; Yesterday's Café. One-part commercial block; brick; gable roof and stepped parapet; main block with side building and covered drive-up area; main block has five bays with central entrance flanked by two display windows; recessed brick panel on upper facade; originally auto sales and service business; side building housed body work shop. C

50. 155 Wheeler; circa 1950; Stark Carburetor & Electric Co. One-part commercial block; concrete block with brick veneer on front facade; flat roof with parapet; original storefront with wood roll-up paneled garage door; 2 wood doors, one with transom; wood display window. C

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## Section VIII. Statement of Significance

### **Criterion A - Commerce, Politics/Government**

The Alexander City Commercial Historic District is significant in the areas of commerce and politics/government. Since the founding of Alexander City in 1873, the courthouse square and its surrounding environs have been the setting for local politics and government. The square and adjoining area has traditionally been the heart of the business district, and therefore, the district is historically and currently significant in the field of commerce. This is reflected in the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial architecture found in the historic district including commercial buildings, banks, professional offices, civic buildings, specialty stores, restaurants, and auto-related businesses. The district includes two important public resources: the county courthouse/city hall and the post office. Constructed with Works Progress Administration funds, the county courthouse/city hall is one of two courthouses in the county, the other located in the county seat, Dadeville. A second courthouse building was constructed because Alexander City is across the Tallapoosa River and Lake Martin from Dadeville. Encompassing commercial and governmental buildings, the historic district symbolizes how small-town Alabama society organized itself and carried on its business and governmental activities during the period of significance. 1902-1950. Since the district continues to be the center of commerce and politics/government for Alexander City, the period of significance dates from the time of the earliest construction of a building in the district to 1950. the arbitrary fifty-year rule established by the Department of Interior. The oldest extant commercial buildings date from circa 1902, after a fire in June that year completely consumed the downtown area.

## **Criterion C - Architecture**

The Alexander City Commercial Historic District is significant for its collection of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial and governmental architecture, including examples of Colonial Revival, classical modern, streamlined modern/Art Moderne, Tudor Modern, and one- and two-part commercial block buildings. The focal points of the district are the courthouse/city hall complex, a fine example of classical modern governmental architecture, and the former post office, now known as the Bud Porch Center. With the use of both classical and modern decorative elements, the courthouse visually embodied the progressive, reform-oriented New Deal program that funded the construction of the building. The post office also exemplifies the popularity of the Colonial Revival style for governmental buildings during the first decades of the twentieth century. The Alexander City Bank building (now South Trust) is a rare example of stripped classicism with a Tudor flare. This Tudor-Modern building would have been very avant garde for this area when it was built in 1927. Two important auto-related buildings are located within the district: a streamlined, Art Moderne dealership with curved glass walls and an intact gas station, City Chevron, with its original frame canopy, front facade, and service bays. The old Froshins Department Store is a wonderful example of modern styling with its circa 1950 storefront remodeling in cararra glass. Other buildings located in the district include examples of locally significant one- and two-part commercial blocks that include architectural features such as name and date plates, decorative brickwork, brick corbeling, decorative glass, transoms, and recessed brick panels. The Masonic Lodge, Graves Building, 150 Green Street (Thomas Auto Parts), and 102 Calhoun (Lou's Barber & Style Shop) are good examples of two-part commercial blocks. Alabama Street contains a row of one-part commercial blocks arranged on a slight slope with stepped roof lines. Two of the most intact examples of the one-part commercial block form are located at 141 Alabama Street and 49 Main Street. These resources clearly reflect the development of Alexander City during the period of significance, 1902-1950.

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#### **Historic Summary**

Alexander City is located in Tallapoosa County in eastern central Alabama. Tallapoosa County is bounded by Clay, Randolph, Chambers, Lee, and Macon counties and the Tallapoosa River. The county is rich in Native American history as many of the Upper Creek villages were located on the Tallapoosa. Alexander City would be founded on the site of the former town of the Tuckabatchee tribe of Creek Indians. (Richardson, 147; Ingram, 18) Tallapoosa County is located squarely in the Piedmont Plateau region of Alabama, a rich mineral region containing deposits of gold and copper ores, soapstone, corundum, and kaolin. Authorities have determined that there is more gold lying in the stretch of hills between Alexander City and Dahlonega. Georgia than in any similarly known area in North America. Tallapoosa County is drained by the Tallapoosa River and its main tributaries, including the Hillabee and Big Sandy Creeks. The greater part of the county is timbered with oak and short-leaf pine. Tallapoosa County has tremendous timber resources and the timber industry is one of the largest sources of income. Great strides have been made in regard to forestry conservation, crop rotation, livestock production, and pasture maintenance. In 1948, there were 2,893 farms in the county, with an average acreage of approximately 100 acres, thirty-five of which were under cultivation. Corn production increased from an average of 11 bushels per acre in 1935 to a little less than 25 bushels per acres in 1950. Livestock population increased 41 percent in Tallapoosa County from 1940 to 1945. Dairy cattle also increased and in 1950, Tallapoosa County had more Junior Dairymen than the next four highest counties in Alabama. In addition, in 1951, 300 farmers were raising beef cattle. Tallapoosa County's population grew from 4,424 in 1840 to 34,666 in 1950. (Richardson, 148; Ingram, 18-26)

Fortunately, for the textile industry, Tallapoosa County lies directly above the Black Belt Prairie region of Alabama, a rich and fertile crescent-shaped area stretching across Alabama to the south of Alexander City and Tallapoosa County. Recognized as one of the major agricultural areas of the state, the Black Belt Prairie provided large amounts of cotton for the textile mills which were founded in, and contributed to, the economy of Alexander City. Farmers in Tallapoosa County also raised cotton. By 1951, 355 farmers on 234 farms produced an average of 387 pounds of lint cotton per acre. The average production in 1935 had been only 145 pounds per acre. (Richardson, 148; Ingram, 18-19)

Originally named Youngsville, honoring the family which founded the town in the 1830s, Alexander City was platted and lots were offered for sale in 1860 in anticipation of a proposed railroad connecting Georgia with central Alabama. As a result of the Civil War, the Opelika-Talladega line of the Central Georgia Railroad was not finished until 1874. The railroad was historically the focal point of the town. The streets and the business/commercial district were, therefore, laid out in relationship with the railroad. Hence, Broad Street, the principal east-west axis runs parallel to the railroad. Spur lines also run to the various textile mills, such as Russell Corporation and Avondale Mills.

Although Alexander City was not incorporated until 1873, the history of the town dates back to 1836 when James Young and his family traveled from South Carolina down the Federal Road across Georgia to Alabama. They crossed the Tallapoosa River and five miles beyond, settled a tract of land near the site of one of the early towns of the Tuckabatchee tribe of the Creek Confederacy. The Youngs were one of many families from South Carolina who were moving to the recently ceded lands of the Creek Indians. (Kelley, 1; Ingram 4-17)

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In the 1830s, Youngsville was scarcely visible for the forest around it. As one early observer remarked, the town was "just a wide place in the road, a little wild in its ways but inhabited by an honest, clever people, although the best man was sometimes known by the hard muscle on his arm, which many times was tested in a dispute over a horse swap." From the front porch of this "Georgia Store" trading post, Griffin Young saw many of the people who passed through or settled in Youngsville, including the prospectors seeking fortunes in the gold mines located a few miles east of Youngsville. Early settlers had actually discovered gold in the region as early as 1815 in the hills east of Hillabee Creek. By the time Griffin Young married in 1844, the mining town of Goldville was thriving with twelve stores, three barrooms, a hotel, a school, church, dwellings, two large tent villages, and a population of 5,000. Some of the population who could not take the rowdiness of a frontier mining town moved to Youngsville or to a community a few miles south of Goldville called New Site. (Kelley, 2; Ingram, 25-26)

In the late 1850s, word reached the small village of Youngsville that the Central Railroad of Georgia was building a railroad through the town to the middle of Alabama where iron ore and coal deposits were being discovered. Griffin Young, realizing that his land would be ideal for the location of a depot, laid off some town lots in 1860 and advertised in the *Tallapoosa Times*, a Dadeville newspaper: "The Village of Youngsville, Tallapoosa County, situated on the Opelika Talladega Rail Road Route is now laid off in Town lots 33 feet front by 66 feet back and offered at private sale. Apply to R. G. Young." There was a quick demand for business lots near the railroad although work on the rail line was soon halted due to the outbreak of the Civil War. The most valuable lots were those facing and lying just north of the railroad along Broad Street. Both sides of Broad and Main (which bisected Broad from the south) would become the city's two principal commercial streets. Residential areas would soon be established to the north, northeast, and south of the commercial district. (Kelley, 2-3)

Youngsville began to grow up around the public square which Griffin Young laid out in 1860. But the town was not laid out according to any symmetrical or formal plan. The main axis was and is the railroad with Broad Street running parallel to it. Secondary streets radiate from Broad Street to the north and south. As one would expect, businesses grew up on either side of the railroad. The city hall/courthouse was located on a small rise south of the commercial district, connected to Broad Street and the railroad by a short block of Main Street. The original courthouse sat in the middle of a large public square which was diagonal to the railroad. The Baptist and Presbyterian congregations located their churches on lots facing the public square and the city hall/courthouse. While some businessmen once characterized the downtown commercial district of the town as being shaped like a "Chinese puzzle," the town's plan emphasizes the importance of the railroad to the town. Indeed, recognizing that the future of Alexander City lay with the railroad, Griffin Young built a two-story home for himself, using the second floor as a hotel. Across the square was the cockpit for the sport of cock fighting and a ten pin alley. Soon, the small village of Youngsville had three stores, three barrooms, a distillery, a doctor's office, a drugstore, a race track, a tanyard, a blacksmith shop, and a wood shop. The character of the town, however, was described as rowdy and that "Lawlessness was rampant, drinking and betting accompanied with cursing...women were admonished that they had best stay off the streets alone on Saturdays." (Kelley, 4)

On Monday, February 5, 1872, the General Assembly passed Act No. 239 which called for the incorporation of the town of Youngsville with the corporate limits to be set at a half mile in every direction from the center of the public square. The Act further provided for the selection of town officials and enabled them to make ordinances, by-laws, resolutions, and regulations deemed necessary to operate the local government. The bill also allowed the officials to prohibit "gambling, drunkenness, profane language, assaults and batteries; to appoint night

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watches when necessary, to clean and keep in repair the streets; and to levy a tax...to defray the expenses of the town." (Kelley, 4)

By 1872, a handful of Methodists and Baptists decided that there was a need to reorganize congregations in Youngsville and to erect more substantial houses of worship. The Baptists, guided by Reverend A. K. Tribble, re-organized a congregation on August 3, 1872 and had completed their own building by 1877 on the southerm side of the public square. This lot is still occupied by the First Baptist Church. The Methodists, organized on August 17, 1872, had completed their building by 1875 and the Dadeville newspaper noted "the M.E. Church now presents a beautiful appearance. It, of course, has no similarity to the cathedral of Milan, but it has been very much improved." By 1894, the Presbyterians had constructed a sanctuary on the eastern side of court square. (Kelley, 5)

As the railroad approached, the town's enthusiasm and appreciation increased, particularly for the man who was viewed as being responsible for completing the project, Gen. Edward Porter Alexander. A West Point graduate, Alexander had received a commission as Captain of Engineers in the Confederate Army in 1861 and proved himself to be a brilliant artillerist. Barely thirty years old at the end of the Civil War, Alexander became professor of Mathematics and Civil Engineering at the University of South Carolina. In 1871, he was named superintendent of the Charlotte and Augusta Railroad. Subsequently, he was president of the Savannah and Memphis Railroad and for two years he was government director of the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1902, he was engineer arbitrator of the dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In honor of General Alexander, the president of the soon-to-be-completed railroad, on March 19, 1873, the State legislature passed Act No. 302 which officially changed the name of the town to Alexander City. On Wednesday, June 24, 1874, the first train steamed into Alexander City. (Kelley, 5-6)

By 1879, the Baptist and Methodist churches were completed, the Adams Hotel located near the railway was thriving, two gins were operating, and city's first schools were organized. A two-story frame building with two long rooms on each floor was completed on "the hill" and it served as the city's first school building. "The hill" has been the setting for the city's schools since that time. Located just to the east of the downtown commercial block "the hill" is today the setting of the Junior High School. Additionally, in that year (1879), members of the Blount Springs Convention were calling to the attention of the people of Alexander City the importance of the Tallapoosa River and the development potential of the natural resources and commercial uses to the State. The river which flows by Alexander City some five miles to the east, runs nearly 300 miles through the state. The Convention pointed out twelve significant features of the river, including the presence of fine building stone, an abundance of timber, and the constant supply of fresh water. Yet despite all these improvements and significant developments, by 1887, Alexander City contained a population of only 750. (Kelley, 5-7)

One inconvenience for the citizens of Alexander City was the distance from the Tallapoosa County seat of Dadeville. Although located only fifteen miles to the southeast, Dadeville was on the opposite side of the Tallapoosa River, causing great difficulty in regard to travel for the residents of Alexander City. As Alexander City's mayor remarked in 1889, "A nice, comfortable and convenient courthouse [will] enable the people on this (west) side of the river to avoid their going to court in Dadeville and waiting around all day just to have to go back four or five times before the case is read." In February 1889, construction began on the courthouse and upon its completion, the *Opelika Daily News* was able to note that "Alexander City is the only place in the United

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States that boasts a house of justice - court house - completed...and as neat and handsome as any in the State, that was built entirely by private subscription." Soon, other construction projects were taking place and the city continued its slow but steady growth into the 1890s when the town's population reached 1,000. By 1900, one writer noted that there did not seem to be a single vacant dwelling for rent anywhere in town. Indeed, by this time the citizens of Alexander City had already witnessed the opening of the town's first bakery and drugstore. The town was serviced by two banks, The Citizens Bank and the Alexander Bank, and gold mining had been renewed in the late 1890s with the establishment of the Romanoff Land and Mining Company which erected a \$10,000 plant to extract ore from Hog Mountain. The Presbyterians and Methodists had both erected new churches in 1895, the same year the town was connected by telephone to nearby Dadeville and the same year electric lights came to Alexander City. In addition, the trading region for Alexander City included the adjoining counties of Clay, Coosa, Elmore, Chambers, and Lee Counties which were regarded as rich cotton producing areas. From these counties, the town annually received ten to twelve thousand bales of cotton for shipment from warehouses located on the railroad. (Kelley, 12-13)

It was Alexander City's proximity to these rich cotton-producing counties and to the railroad which made the town an ideal setting for the establishment of cotton mills. J.C. Maxwell and Reuben Herzfield of the Alexander City bank persuaded D.L. Lewis of Talladega that Alexander City would subscribe to \$65,000 in capital stock if he would locate a proposed cotton mill in their city. By the end of November 1900, the Lewises awarded the contract to Miles & Bradt of Atlanta for the main building and to J.A. Cullars of Auburn for the workers' cottages. The following year, the 10,000 spindle Alexander City Cotton Mill was in production. (Kelley, 19)

Two events occurred in 1902 which had a major impact on the future of Alexander City. Ben Russell, an Alexander City resident and banker, visited a knitting mill in Washington, Georgia, which manufactured ladies', misses' and children's underwear. Utilizing some of his wife's inheritance, Russell bought the mill and brought the industry to Alexander City. Very few, if anyone including Ben Russell, realized that Russell Mills would grow to be the largest single employer in Alexander City and a major contributor to the life of the town for coming generations. By 1905, within three years of its founding. Ben Russell's knitting mill had tripled its production and had a staff of 50 employees. In 1933, the Alexander City Outlook noted that the Russell Corporation was able to provide its workers with comfortable homes in its village, electric lighting, and water and sanitary mains, a hospital, a church, and a grammar and high school. Similarly, the Comer family which owned the Alexander City Cotton Mills provided their workers with uniform mill housing, two churches, and a school. It is not clear whether or not the Russell and Comer families conscientiously practiced the theories of welfare capitalism but it is evident that they followed the prevailing trend in industrial relations of providing a variety of services for their workers. These services improved the quality of life for the workers and also enhanced the company's public image. By the 1970s, Russell Corporation would employ 5,350 people and pump an estimated \$33 million into the local economy. Alexander City Cotton Mills, which in 1919 became a subsidiary of Avondale Mills, eventually employed 750 people with an annual payroll of \$5 million. (Kelley, 20-21, 26-55; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, various dates from 1898-1931) (Kelley, 20-21)

On Friday, June 13, 1902, the second great event of the year occurred; a fire virtually destroyed the town. The fire began at a cotton gin and machine repair shop but due to the gusting winds and the drought-like conditions, it quickly spread through the commercial district of the town, engulfing the courthouse, the Methodist Church,

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the Adams Hotel, the depot, the livery stable, both banks, box cars and railroad tracks, the wooden sidewalks, and most of the residences along Broad and Green Streets. The entire town of Alexander City had virtually been destroyed by fire. Mayor S. J. Nolen announced that the losses totaled \$400,000 with \$130,000 being covered by insurance. Eight days after the fire, the town council adopted a fire limit ordinance providing that within set limits (which encompassed the main downtown area) only brick and stone buildings could be erected on the front streets and frame buildings covered with corrugated iron could be built on the back streets. No foundries or shops requiring large furnaces and steam power could be built within the fire limit. Some citizens also suggested that the city government should take the opportunity to rearrange the business district, providing the city with some semblance of order and a modern air. Thinking that would take too much time, the city fathers began rebuilding immediately along the original plan devised by Griffin Young. By 1906, the citizens of Alexander City were saying that perhaps the few had been a blessing in disguise. The residents built a whole new town in four months and "Progress" was the slogan for the upcoming municipal elections. (Kelley, 21-25)

The recovery effort enabled businesses to rebuild along Broad, Main, Madison, and Tallapoosa Streets. Residences arose on Central Avenue, Green, Clay, South Church, and Marshall Streets. Constructed primarily of brick and stone, these commercial buildings were typically one to two stories in height with minimal decorating or detailing. There were some frame residences reflecting the prevailing architectural styles of the era, namely Craftsman, Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, and Bungalow. In 1909, the Alexander City High School building, a large Neoclassical structure, rose on "the hill" and the city's first library was created. The city council passed ordinances prohibiting cruelty to animals and declaring it unlawful "to cut down or destroy or injure any tree or shrub planted or reserved for shade or ornament in any public street or square belonging to the Town of Alexander City." In addition, the town involved itself in a beautification program encouraging residents to tear down dilapidated fences, whitewash back fences and barns, cut weeds, and burn rubbish. The city council also established the volunteer fire company and a city water works. (Kelley, 25-26)

The 1920s witnessed a continuous rise of industry in Alexander City and the town's population of 3,000 could find work in two cotton mills, one knitting mill, a sash and door factory, two fertilizer plants, two bottling works, a concrete block plant, two ginneries, an ice plant, two grist mills, a machine shop, livery stable, automobile garage, four warehouses, blacksmith shops, harness and shoe shops, two newspapers, a bakery, laundry, two hotels, three cafes, and a movie house. The Alexander City Cotton Mills and accompanying mill village (with 600 to 800 residents) were located in the eastern section of the city while to the west, the ever-expanding Russell Mill complex arose just south of Broad Street and the railroad.

By the 1920s, the business and residential patterns of the town had been established. The major business and commercial district was centered around the railroad and the public square. Residential areas were located along the periphery of the business district to the north and south. The residences in the northern section of the town, along Wheeler, Clay, Green, Hillabee, Semmes, Houston, and North Central Avenue were typically frame or brick veneered structures reflecting the various architectural forms, styles, and trends popular in the early 1900s. More modest dwellings were found in the eastern areas of Alexander City, near the Alexander City Cotton Mill. Also, a small commercial block was located immediately across the railroad and street from the mill village. The historic black residential neighborhoods were clustered around African American churches (such as Bethel Baptist Church) and the black public school. Black residential neighborhoods were, for the most part, located in the northen and northeastern sections of the city.

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The prosperity of Alexander City continued into the 1920s when town residents witnessed the opening of the city's first hospital, the Russell Hospital located near the edge of the Russell Mills property, and the construction of a new bridge over the Tallapoosa River. The bridge linked the cities of Alexander City and Dadeville, the county seat. In 1924, the United States government constructed an imposing Colonial Revival post office facing the public square and across the street from the courthouse. One-story commercial blocks were constructed along Alabama and Tallapoosa Streets, lying immediately east of the courthouse square. The former post office and these one-story commercial buildings are located in the downtown historic district. More importantly, however, for Alexander City and Tallapoosa County, in the 1920s, Alabama Power Company, under the leadership of Thomas W. Martin, built at a cost of \$12 million, Martin Dam on the Tallapoosa River, creating a 40,000-acre lake with a shoreline of over 70,000 miles. By the 1950s, Lake Martin, lying just south of Alexander City, would become a favorite recreation for much of Alabama. (Kelley, 44-45)

In the 1930s, the Great Depression hit America and Alexander City felt its effects in the form of unemployment. Fortunately, the local banks held fast and the cotton and textile mills did not shut down their operations. The New Deal programs reached into Tallapoosa County, offering work for 879 people and creating Alexander City's first airport, a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. The east-west runway "was built with mule and WPA manpower." Later, in the 1940s, the north-south runway would be added. In 1939, the WPA also built the present day courthouse/city hall and jail, an example of classical-modern architecture. Gold mining again resurfaced in the 1930s. President Roosevelt's order lifting the embargo on foreign shipments of gold sent the price of the precious metal soaring and prospectors poured into Tallapoosa County. The Hog Mountain mine was reopened, employing 80 men who eventually mined 600 tons of ore daily. The mine stayed in operation until World War II when cyanide, a chemical compound produced in Germany and needed for mining, was banned.

During World War II, Russell Manufacturing and Avondale Mills turned to producing textiles and apparel for the armed forces, both operating at full capacity. Hundreds of local men and women were drafted while others went to work in the munitions plant in Childersburg, Alabama. After the end of the war, Alexander City experienced a small shortage which would continue through the 1950s as Alexander City's population began to increase. By 1950, Alexander City's population had grown to 6,433. By 1974, the population would more than double to over 15,000. (Kelley, 45)

With a solid industrial base tied to the Russell Corporation and the Alexander City Cotton Mills, Alexander City continued an unchecked path of progress throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It was during these decades that the residents of the town witnessed the building of new schools, city library and hospitals, the expansion of the airport, and the establishment of the Alexander City Junior College. Like so many other small southern cities, the history and the growth of Alexander City is tied to the railroad and the establishment of the textile industry. The resources located in the Downtown Alexander City Historic District reflect the development of the city during the period of significance, 1915-1947.

#### **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

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Alexander City Commercial Historic District Tallapoosa County, Alabama 

Section IX. Bibliography

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Kelley, Jennie Lee. A History of Alexander City. Privately printed by the Alexander City Centennial Committee, 1974.

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#### Section X. Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for the Alexander City Commercial Historic District are delineated on the accompanying map at 1" = 200'.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries were drawn to encompass as much of the historic downtown commercial area of Alexander City as possible. This includes many buildings with false facades, currently making them noncontributing resources; however, they are included because of their commercial history and to give business owners an extra incentive toward Operation Downtown Alexander City's (the Main Street office) facade restoration program to remove nonhistoric facades and restore them using the federal restoration tax credit.

#### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

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**Alexander City Commercial Historic District** Tallapoosa County, Alabama 

## Photographs

**Alexander City Commercial Historic District** Tallapoosa County, Alabama Photographer: Trina Binkley Date: February 2000 **Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission** 

1 Broad Street looking northeast 2 #9, 4-6 Broad Street looking northwest 3 Rear of buildings on Broad Street from Clay Street looking northeast 4 Wheeler Street buildings looking northeast 5 #20, 110 Broad Street looking north 6 #21, 124 Broad Street looking west 7 #s 39 and 36 Main Street looking north 8 #s 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 Main Street looking south 9 # 29, 4 Court Square looking northwest 10 #s 44, 43, 42, 41 Main Street looking northeast 11 #s 35 and 22, 11-13 Main Street and 102 Calhoun Street looking southeast 12 #s 45 and 46 Main Street looking south 13 #s 1-7 Alabama Street looking northeast 14 #30, 82 Court Square looking north 15 #31, 100 Court Square looking south

