

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 11 1979
DATE ENTERED SEP 22 1980

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

Downtown Huntsville Multiple Resource Area

HISTORIC

Historic Resources of Downtown Huntsville

AND/OR COMMON

Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties

2 LOCATION

various locations in Huntsville

STREET & NUMBER

Central Business District

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Huntsville

--- VICINITY OF

5

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Alabama

01

Madison

089

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

see individual inventory sheets

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

--- VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Madison County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Huntsville

Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

see continuation sheet

DATE

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

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Multiple Resource Area encompasses the original 19th century commercial center of Huntsville, Alabama. It is located about ten miles north of the Tennessee River on a bluff above a natural source of water called the Big Spring, the water from which eventually flows into the Tennessee. Two miles to the east lies Monte Sano, the mountain that forms a natural boundary to city expansion on that side.

The area was laid out on a grid pattern, with the Courthouse Square as the focal point; a new county courthouse, the fourth on the Square, was opened in 1967. The land below the bluff around the Spring has always been undeveloped and used as park land for the public. The remainder of the area was developed throughout the 19th century for commercial, residential, religious and governmental uses. Nearly all structures were of three stories or less, and by the 1940's, development was solid. Beginning in the late 1950's, urban renewal cleared away many deteriorated structures so that the area now has numerous parcels of vacant land although new construction has occurred sporadically, especially in the southwest sector.

The area retains a variety of commercial and religious structures that were built during the several growth periods of Huntsville's history including antebellum stores, turn of the century mercantile establishments, three skyscrapers from the 1920's, and a few Victorian homes that have survived retail expansion and urban renewal.

Serious development of Huntsville began about 1810 with the erection of a small, brick courthouse and of frame and brick stores on the four sides of the Square. During this first period of growth, development was a combination of commercial and residential structures with the merchant often living above his shop or office. By 1861, the Square was almost filled, but the other streets had only scattered development. (See 1861 map.) The 1871 map illustrates much the same pattern, solid development on the Square and along one block of Washington Street. The lack of growth is, of course, the result of the Civil War and its disasterous after effects. Huntsville was occupied by Federal troops for much of the war, although it suffered very little physical destruction. At the conclusion of the war, there was insufficient money to make additions or improvements, a situation that lasted until well after the panic of 1873.

About 1890, Huntsville began a long period of relatively sustained growth and prosperity which only ended with the Depression of 1929. During these years the increase in commercial activity gradually forced residential structures out of the downtown area to be replaced by stores, offices and warehouses. The location of the railroad depot on the north side of town encouraged commercial development to expand in that direction. During the first part of the 20th century, the area along Jefferson Street south of the depot was filled with brick warehouses, most for the wholesale grocery business. Simultaneously the Square was filled with substantial brick commercial structures and the area north of the Square along Jefferson, Washington and Greene streets was also built up.

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HOTEL RUSSELL ERSKINE
123 West Clinton Avenue

Russell Erskine Properties
Harvey B. Morris, et. al.
604 Madison Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

TERRY HUTCHENS BUILDING
102 West Clinton Avenue

Huntsville Land Company
address given above

MASON BUILDING
115 East Clinton Avenue

Mason Properties, Inc.
Ted Gulas
P. O. Box 122
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

DOWNTOWN CHEVRON STATION
300 East Clinton Avenue

Stevens Oil Company
Bill Stevens
P. O. Box 326
Huntsville, Alabama 35805

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE AND POST OFFICE
101 East Holmes Avenue

United States Postal Service
James T. Coe, Field Supervisor
Real Estate
Field Real Estate and Buildings
Office
Federal Annex Building, Room 418
Atlanta, Georgia 30304

STRUVE BROTHERS BUILDING
103-105 East Holmes Avenue

Charles R. Smith, Jr., Trustee
604 Madison Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

NEWMAN BUILDING
107-109 East Holmes and 201 North
Washington Street

Dr. Eleanor Hutchens, Executrix
300 Williams Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

TIMES BUILDING/COURTHOUSE ANNEX
228 East Holmes Avenue

Madison County
James Record, Chairman
Madison County Commission
Madison County Courthouse
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

HENDERSON NATIONAL BANK
118 South Jefferson Street

Henderson National Bank
Paul Kelly, Vice-President and
Controller
118 South Jefferson Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

BOST BLOCK
106-116 South Jefferson Street

Huntsville Land Company
Ira Terry
address already given

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W. T. HUTCHENS BUILDING
100-104 South Jefferson Street

The Hutchens Company, Inc.
Vernon F. Hutchens, President
2508 Washington Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35811

BECKERS BLOCK
105-111 North Jefferson Street

Huntsville Land Company
address already given

STRUVE-HAY BUILDING
117-123 North Jefferson Street

117-121: Robert S. Moorman
3311 Lookout Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

123: J. C. and William R. Hay
505 Williams Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

CHURCH OF THE VISITATION
222 North Jefferson Street

Church of the Visitation
Reverend Alban J. O'Hara
222 North Jefferson Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

W. L. HALSEY WAREHOUSE
300 North Jefferson Street

W. L. Halsey Grocery Company, Inc.
W. L. Halsey, Jr.
P. O. Box 22
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

HALSEY GROCERY WAREHOUSE
301 North Jefferson Street

W. L. Halsey Grocery, Inc.
address given above

KELLY BROTHERS AND ROWE BUILDING
307 North Jefferson Street

Jesse W. Wilson, Jr.
109 North Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

LOMBARDO BUILDING
315 North Jefferson Street

Charles H. Gaines, Jr.
Marks-Fitzgerald Furniture
2001 University Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35805

MILLIGAN BLOCK
201-203 East Side Square

East Side Square Professional
Building Office Complex
Leon Crawford, Partner
3125 University Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35805

MAY AND COONEY/ELBERT H. PARSONS
LAW LIBRARY
205 East Side Square

Madison County
address already given

SCHIFFMAN BUILDING
231 East Side Square

Lawrence B. Goldsmith, Jr.
206 Gates Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

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DONEGAN BLOCK
105-109 North Side Square

105: T. A. Blackwell
105 1/2 North Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

107-109: Mrs. Jame K. Lowe
210 Williams Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

RAND BUILDING
113 North Side Square

Douglas C. Martinson and
George H. Beason, Jr.
201 East Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 36801

104-128 SOUTH SIDE SQUARE

104: Joyce, Pearson and Prout, Architects
Thomas G. Joyce, President
104 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

106: H. Kenan Timberlake
106 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

108: Jeff D. Smith
108 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

110: Dan Moran
110 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

112-114: Huntsville Land Company
address already given

116: Johnston, Johnston and Moore
William H. Johnston, Partner
116 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

118: Mrs. Marquerite E. Johnston
Route 7, Box 388
Russellville, Alabama 35653

120: Zach Higgs
Central Bank Building
Suite 55
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

122: Culver and Miller, Attorneys
122 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

124-126: Daniel S. and John W.
Harrison
124 South Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

128: Mrs. James M. Dyer
1505 Glenwood Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

STRUVE BROTHERS BLOCK
101-105 South Washington Street

Stanford Johnson
101 1/2 South Washington Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

KRESS BUILDING/BREAKER'S
107 South Washington Street

Ace Collins
1222 Monte Sano Boulevard
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

DUNNAVANT'S BUILDING
100 North Washington Street

Earl E. Cloud, et. al.
Suite 368, Central Bank Building
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

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OLD STEGALL HOTEL
101-111 North Washington Street and
117 East Clinton Avenue

Huntsville Housing Authority
Nathan Porter, Director
P. O. Box 486
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

EVERETT BUILDING
115-123 North Washington Street

Huntsville Housing Authority
address given above

YARBROUGH HOTEL
127-129 North Washington Street

Carey Walker, Jr.
604 Madison Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

LEWTER HARDWARE
222-224 North Washington Street

Donald Lewter
524 Franklin Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

HUNDLEY-VAN VALKENBURG HOUSE
108 Gates Street

Richard P. Van Valkenburg,
Avalyn Van Valkenburg and
Ann Darby
P. O. Box 152
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

HUNDLEY-CLARK HOUSE
400 Franklin Street

James P. and Cruse P. Clark
Clark Cruise and Travel
400 Franklin Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

RANDOLPH STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST
210 Randolph Avenue

Randolph Street Church of Christ
Reverend H. L. Tipton, Jr.
210 Randolph Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

THE BIG SPRING
West Side Square

City of Huntsville
Mayor Joe Davis
P. O. Box 308
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Title: Inventory of Historic Huntsville Architecture
Date: Begun January, 1976 Local
Depository for Survey Records: Huntsville Planning Commission
Huntsville, Alabama

Title: Historic American Buildings Survey (First Alabama Bank of Huntsville/First
National Bank)
Date: 1933 Federal
Depository for Survey Records: Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

Title: National Register - First Alabama Bank of Huntsville/First National Bank
West Side Square - 10/25/74

Clemons House
219 Clinton Avenue - 10/16/74

Oscar R. Hundley House
401 Madison Street - 4/22/78

Depository for Survey Records: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Washington, D. C.

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Construction ceased with the Depression, and the city remained in a state of limbo until the third period of growth that occurred when the Redstone and Huntsville Arsenals and later NASA were located in Huntsville. Starting in the 1950's, the city quickly outgrew the limits of the 19th century town while suburban shopping malls deprived the downtown of its retail function. Many older buildings were destroyed, and new construction has only partially filled the voids; too many of the extant buildings are still empty and unrenovated.

The antebellum structures usually were narrow, of three stories, built of brick, and had post and lintel construction on the first floor. Those buildings erected after the Civil War are similar except they have segmental headed windows on the upper floors decorated with metal hood molds and capped by an ornate, bracketed metal cornice. These buildings are often only two stories high. There is some use of locally fabricated cast iron columns on the street level. After the turn of the century, there was a slight increase in scale with two buildings reaching twelve stories. Terra cotta cladding was used on several structures and a more decorative use of brickwork became common.

The downtown buildings reflected most of the various styles that became fashionable in the United States; but as a rule, they were rather more restrained than those in a large city. The decorative elements were normally confined to the window treatment and cornice (the ground floors of most of these buildings have been modernized past recognition). The styles also exhibited a certain time lag in reaching Huntsville; the Italianate influence continued into the 20th century while the last Art Moderne building was not erected until 1948. The area contains Greek Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Gothic Revival, Commercial Brick, and Art Deco styles.

The original 60 acres of the downtown was laid out on a grid pattern of six streets by five streets. They were surveyed at an angle of 34 degrees north of west so that the Big Spring would lie wholly within one block, and the north-south streets would run parallel to the top of the Spring bluff. This created twenty squares of two acres each which were then divided into four lots except for the Courthouse and Spring squares. The lots facing the courthouse were always the prime commercial sites and were those first developed. But it was not until late in the century when more space was needed that the remainder of the streets were filled in.

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By the end of the 19th century, brick commercial structures had begun to line the streets out toward the depot. By 1940, the only open space was the landscaped grounds around the courthouse on which a herd of deer had been kept, and the only park was the area around the Big Spring and lagoon. The buildings remained low except for three "skyscrapers" which were erected across the north side of town at the end of the 1920's.

As part of the local urban renewal program in the 1970's, the downtown streets were recurbed and paved and the sidewalks were bricked. Extensive plantings were introduced along the downtown sidewalks, and the Big Spring land was relandscaped. The land on the west side of Church Street has served as a park since the early 1940's. It contained tennis courts and a public swimming pool; these have been removed, and the area redesigned as a passive park around a small lagoon fed by the Spring. The senior citizen's center is located in this park while a new parking garage forms the northern boundary. The large Von Braun Civic Center complex, opened in 1975, lies to the west of this park.

The moderate scale Greek Revival courthouses that had served since 1840 were replaced by a ten-story glass and steel courthouse in 1967 that damaged the scale of the Square area and left little open space at its base.

This is a predominantly commercial area with 89% of the nominated properties falling in this category. Churches comprise 4.5, and residential buildings make up 4.5. One natural site of historic importance, the Big Spring, is also included (2%).

An inventory of the historic architecture of Huntsville was begun in 1976 under the auspices of the Huntsville Planning Commission. Linda Bayer, planner and architectural historian, and Pat Ryan, historian, were hired to conduct the survey which is still in progress at this time. They are making a written and photographic record of the structures built prior to World War II and are dating the buildings through the use of deeds, tax assessments, and old newspaper articles. Research is underway to identify the architects and builders who worked in the town and to determine the extent of their professional training and the scope of their careers. The 19th century newspapers are providing information on the technical aspects of the local building industry. There has been no archaeological investigation of the area since the current researchers are unqualified in that field.

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The inventory structures are concentrated in the areas of Twickenham and Old Town Historic districts, the central business district, and the mill villages that were built outside the town limits during the first quarter of this century. All of the extant structures of the central business district were surveyed to determine those that qualified for the National Register by reason of age or architectural/historical value. Those buildings that met the requirements have been included in the nomination. The remaining structures either were not yet of sufficient age or have been so altered that the possibility of their being restored is negligible. The business district as a whole has experienced so much urban removal and redevelopment since 1955 that a great number of the significant properties have already disappeared.

The boundaries of the multiple resource area of Huntsville were selected to include the remainder of the 19th century town that was not already included in a historic district. The eastern boundary abuts the existing districts while the other sides are determined by the modern ring road that now defines the downtown.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES _____ BUILDER/ARCHITECT _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the multiple resource area of downtown Huntsville derives from its age, scale, extent, architecture, and layout, all of which are typical of rural town development in the 19th and early 20th centuries. With a few exceptions, the streets maintain a low cornice line composed of two and three story brick buildings; only six structures now disrupt the skyline, three from the 1920's, and three from the 1960's. The buildings of the nomination are concentrated in an area six blocks by four blocks. The new construction now taking place within this area retains the small scale of the existing buildings. The structures themselves represent the various styles that were popular for retail and religious buildings, but they are, as a rule, interpreted in a restrained manner that reflects local materials, needs, and talents.

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(see continuation sheet)

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Particularly common are structures in the Commercial Brick style which flourished during the first thirty years of this century. These buildings share common stylistic and structural traits and are found throughout the country in smaller towns and suburbs. Although they are stylistically distinct, they apparently have never been specifically identified nor defined-- hence the introduction here of the name "Commercial Brick" style to facilitate discussion of this group of buildings. Briefly, these buildings are constructed of brick and are fewer than five stories high. The overall proportions are low and the principal orientation is horizontal. The facade tends to be flat, symmetrical, and regular in design. The cornice is usually cleanly cut or consists of a stepped parapet wall with slight corbelling. Windows are double hung and arranged to create horizontal patterns across the facade, but the proportion of glass to brick remains small. Decoration is restrained and consists primarily of brickwork laid to produce flush patterns on the wall surface or of accents of the structural elements created by a second, contrasting material, usually masonry or terra cotta. In short, the Commercial Brick style achieves its effect from the disposition of its mass, proportion, and fenestration, rather than from the introduction of applied decorative elements. It is a simple, functional method of building incorporating a minimum of ornament, which is always handled as an integral part of the structure's basic form. These buildings in the Commercial Brick style are important locally as they typify commercial architecture in Huntsville during the early part of the 20th century. Although there exist examples in the downtown of the formally recognized high styles, such as Gothic Revival, they are not representative of the bulk of Huntsville's architecture and were designed by imported architects. The Commercial Brick buildings illustrate the mercantile style that predominated during this period for the majority of small, local building projects designed by local architects. However, Commercial Brick was not purely a Huntsville development, for buildings in this style can still be seen in communities all across the country wherever modest commercial construction occurred during the first decades. Commercial Brick style buildings form the connecting link between Victorian and later "modern" styles, and they prepared the way for the success of the latter by their emphasis on the subordination of decoration to structure.

The central business district still retains its grid system of streets that was surveyed in 1810 with the Courthouse Square as the heart of the downtown. Even today the square functions as the center of county government and of downtown street life.

John Hunt, the first white man to settle near the Big Spring, arrived about 1805, and in 1809, the first government land sale took place at which LeRoy Pope purchased the sixty acres that became downtown Huntsville. The streets were laid out to agree with the presence of the Big Spring; the first courthouse was erected; and settlers began arriving mainly from Tennessee, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. Many of these were cotton planters attracted to Huntsville by the

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presence of the fertile soil of the Tennessee Valley which was suited to cotton culture. The town prospered until the Civil War as a regional center for retail trade, cotton production, and county government. A canal was built from the Big Spring to the Tennessee River in order to ship the cotton bales along the river system to New Orleans. During this period, the area on the Square was built up with frame and brick structures for commercial and residential use. The area south and east of the Square was chosen as the site for many of the elegant Federal and Greek Revival style brick homes of the wealthy planters; this section is now Twickenham Historic District. Fires and rebuilding have taken their toll of the earliest downtown structures; however, several are still extant such as the excellent Greek Revival First Alabama Bank on West Side Square (National Register), the Schiffman building on East Side Square, now remodeled in the Romanesque Revival Style, the Mercury building of 1841 in Twickenham, and 108 and 110 South Side Square. In addition, there are several buildings on the Square that retain antebellum foundations and party walls so that the scale is maintained although the facade has been extensively remodeled or rebuilt.

In 1859 the Memphis and Charleston Railroad entered Huntsville connecting it with Memphis on the west and Chattanooga on the east and through the latter with the port cities of the eastern seaboard. This gave the cotton planters greatly improved facilities for marketing their crop. However, the Civil War ended most activity, and for three years Huntsville concentrated on survival while under Federal occupation. Construction came to a standstill and even after the war ended there was little money to resume development, a situation that lasted into the 1880s. By then the city was mounting a campaign to attract new residents and industry. In 1881 a spinning mill was opened in Huntsville to produce cotton thread; it met with immediate success, and by 1892 the town had secured its first large cotton weaving mill which located just north of the city limits. This began a second period of growth and prosperity for Huntsville as six more mills opened around the city during the next ten years, and Huntsville became one of the major cotton textile towns of Alabama. Each firm erected a village around its mill to house the operatives who flocked to Huntsville to find employment. Huntsville itself began to expand and construction was underway everywhere. The downtown was practically rebuilt at the turn of this century with new retail buildings appearing along all the major streets. The area around the square was no longer sufficient for the increased population and the commercial area expanded quickly in the direction of the depot. During the 1920s, chain stores began opening in Huntsville which further increased the mercantile activity. Although the mills provided sporadic employment depending on the price and availability of cotton, the town continued to grow until 1930 when the effects of the Depression reached Huntsville. The 1930s began a period of stagnation for the town that was intensified by the belated arrival of labor union activity in the local mills which, when combined with the Depression, effectively brought to an end Huntsville's career as a textile town.

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Because of fires and the frequent remodelings that are common with commercial properties, there remain only five pre-Civil War structures in the nomination area that have been identified. These are the Schiffman building which was extensively remodeled in 1895, the Stegall Hotel block which suffered a major fire in 1932 and was largely rebuilt, the White building which was totally renovated in 1967, and 108 and 110 South Side Square. The First Alabama Bank, the Memphis and Charleston depot, and the Clemens and Humphreys houses, all on the Register, date from this period and retain their nearly original exterior fabric. The Church of the Visitation was begun prior to the war but not completed until 1877. The period following the war experienced only scattered development because of reconstruction, financial panics, and the absence of a distinct economic base for the town. The buildings remaining from this time were often reconstructions of older buildings located on the Square such as the Donegan block, rebuilt after the 1867 fire, and about half of South Side Square. The small Gothic Revival Church of Christ built in 1887 appears to have been a personal project of the O. M. Hundleys who donated the land and supervised construction.

The erection of Dallas mill finally gave the Huntsville economy a solid base and spurred construction activity which was, however, at first predominantly residential. By 1900 commercial redevelopment was well underway, but it was not until the 1920s that retail development boomed. During this decade, national chain stores such as Penney's, Sears, Kress, and Wards began to open branches in the city. These firms usually began business in an existing building which they remodeled, but within a few years, they contracted to erect their own establishment. Several local citizens were responsible for much of the new downtown construction. Herr Struve built at least four large structures of which three are included here (Struve Brothers block, Struve Brothers building, and the Struve-Hay building), Oscar R. Hundley erected 128 South Side Square and the Hundley Rental Houses as well as the Hundley house (401 Madison) and 500 Franklin Street (both National Register). Several wholesale grocery firms began developing the north end of Jefferson Street (Lombardo and Halsey) and a number of local firms built new business houses (Harrison Brothers Hardware, Hutchens Hardware, and Dunnnavants Department Store). In the late 1920s, the notion that Huntsville would continue to grow to become a major metropolitan center spurred the erection of three high-rise buildings (Terry Hutchens, Huntsville Times, and Russel Erskine Hotel). The Kress building was not finished until 1931, but the plans had been drawn prior to the Depression. Commercial construction virtually ceased during 1930s when the general economic condition further eroded as labor union activity forced the closing of most of the mills for months or years at a time. The newspaper of 1930 are full of ads announcing business closings, bankruptcies, and "quitting business" sales. Only one significant structure from this later period is included, the Henderson National Bank of 1948 designed by Warren, Knight and Davis of Birmingham in the Art Moderne style.

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The multiple resource area is historically significant for the retention of its original 1810 street layout featuring the courthouse square with the prime commercial property being the four blocks facing the courthouse. Although the scale of this space has been altered by a modern highrise courthouse and a bank, the remainder of the buildings, including those presently under construction, continue the small scale development of attached two and three story individual structures. Many of these buildings have been rebuilt during the years, but they often retain the foundations and party walls of their 19th century antecedents. Although the Big Spring no longer functions as the city water supply, it and the surrounding land still are used as a public open space as they have since the founding of the city.

The buildings of the nomination are predominately retail and office structures that reflect the various architectural styles as they were modified in small towns. Many of the earliest retail buildings were of frame construction, but the constant threat of fire and an abundance of brick resulted in masonry construction becoming the rule at an early date. The First Alabama Bank is a superb illustration of the Greek Revival temple form as applied to 19th century commercial needs. George Steele, the architect, also designed the second county courthouse to a similar design except that it was double fronted and topped by a copper dome. The retail stores from this earliest period have been heavily remodeled, but the Schiffman building, and 108 and 110 South Square display the tall, narrow proportions that were typical. The Memphis and Charleston depot and the Church of the Visitation illustrate the use of non-Greek styles that began prior to the Civil War for specialized buildings. The first is a simple Italianate design while the latter is a masonry edifice of Romanesque Revival inspiration. Retail design after the war continued the same scale but introduced Italianate features such as heavy, bracketed metal cornices (which were often added to pre-war structures to modernize them) and segmental or round-headed windows on the upper floors topped by massive hood molds, usually of cast iron. Typical of this phase are the Donegan block, the Rand building, and 106 and 112 South Side Square. Variations on this style remained the rule until the turn of the century as illustrated by the 1904 Halsey Warehouse and the Milligan block of 1900. Two good examples survive of structures incorporating cast iron elements on the ground level facade, one being 112 South Side Square and the other, the 1904 Halsey Warehouse. The Everett and the Struve-Hay buildings also fall in this category, but their cast iron facade columns have been covered or removed during later remodelings. At the turn of the century, a new style, Commercial Brick, became common which substituted groups of windows for the individual openings of the Italianate, eliminated metal cornices and window molds, and derived its decoration from imaginative brickwork combined with masonry. The earliest buildings in this style were still quite elaborate retaining the Victorian love of variety and multiple elements. Typical examples include the Everett, Struve-Hay, and Dumnivant's buildings. As the century progressed, the style became

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cleaner, relying chiefly on the pattern of fenestration for its visual effect. These include the W. T. Hutchens building, Harrison Brothers hardware, the Bost block, Becker's, and the Newman building. The most frequent concessions to decoration were a stepped brick parapet and panels of decorative brickwork or terra cotta. Two buildings exhibit a full terra cotta facade, Masons and the Law Library, while the Huntsville Times building used it for the base and spandrels. The small population and an abundance of land made tall buildings unnecessary from a financial standpoint, but psychologically, they were required to prove that Huntsville had come of age. The first was the Gothic Revival Terry Hutchens building of seven stories which was built in 1925-26. It was the first structure in Huntsville large enough to require a steel frame, and its construction caused much local amazement since the walls were not load bearing. The architect was B. F. Hunt. It was followed by the twelve-story Huntsville Times building of 1926-28, also designed by the R. H. Hunt Company of Chattanooga in the Art Deco style, and the Russel Erskine Hotel (1928-30) designed by Marr and Holman of Nashville. One other Art Deco structure, the Kress building, and one Art Moderne building, the Henderson Bank, also survive downtown.

Huntsville businessmen often used local architects for their small building ventures but invariably went out of town to hire an architect for major structures. Nashville, Chattanooga, and Birmingham architects were those most often brought in when serious construction plans were contemplated.

A small amount of preservation activity has been carried out by individual owners in the central business district. Notable examples being the Donegan block, the Law Library, the Milligan block, the Hundley-Clark house, and 106 South Side Square. The railroad depot is currently being restored by the city. A few structures have been steadily maintained so that they are preserved without restoration such as Harrison Brothers hardware, the Schiffman building, the 1904 Halsey warehouse, Henderson National Bank, and both churches. The Huntsville Housing Authority and the City of Huntsville have invested approximately \$2,000,000 in improving the streetscape through repaving, planting, and sidewalk bricking, as well as modernizing utility services in the area. It is hoped that formal recognition of the architectural and historical significance of the area will encourage other owners to undertake sensitive restorations in the near future.

Other areas of Huntsville that retain a significant concentration of historic structures are the two residential districts bordering the central business district on the east. These have both been designated historic districts by city ordinance and are already listed on the National Register as such. The remainder of the historic structures are isolated examples or mill villages, all of which lie at a distance from the original town center.

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Two churches have been included in this multiple resource nomination since they form an integral part of the historical development of the downtown area during the 19th century when all public facilities, retail and institutional, were concentrated in the blocks immediately surrounding the courthouse. The Church of the Visitation in the Romanesque Revival style, started in 1861, indicated an awareness of ecclesiastical styles fashionable in the Northeast although no architect has yet been discovered for it. The Church of Christ is a small Gothic Revival structure of 1877 that is typical of the box-like church with frontal tower which became common throughout the country.

Several buildings are included that are less than fifty years old. They represent the final phase of the second distinct period of expansion in Huntsville's history and as such are an important part of the downtown redevelopment that began in the 1890s. Specifically, the Kress building is a fine Art Deco design, while the Henderson National Bank of 1948 is included because it is an excellent example of the Art Moderne style. The exterior is unaltered, and the hope is that by recognizing its architectural value now, it will survive unchanged to be fifty years old. The U. S. Courthouse and Post Office is almost fifty years old and is the only local example of W. P. A. architecture. Stylistically it is a stripped Neo-Classical Revival design with vaguely Art Deco overtones. The federal courtroom retains a large W. P. A. sponsored mural by Xavier Gonzalez.

The architectural inventory is being conducted by the staff of the Huntsville Planning Commission to identify those structures that have architectural and/or historical merit. It has resulted in a zoning change to protect the historical residences bordering the commercial zone. The city's comprehensive plan for the revitalization of the business district encourages the private restoration of as many buildings as possible to create a historical area that encompasses not only the downtown but also the adjoining residential districts. A dual utilization of the central business districts's physical resources is envisioned; the first is to develop the area as the financial, governmental, professional and cultural center for the region. The second is to develop the historical properties to attract tourism and specialized retail trade to the downtown. These two goals not only complement each other but overlap. The rehabilitation of the central business district that would attract tourists would also provide suitable office space for professional, financial and governmental concerns. This plan is being spearheaded by the city which is restoring the Memphis and Charleston depot on the north as a transportation museum and will operate the reconstructed Constitution Hall Park on the south side. These two city-owned historical sites will anchor the downtown between them and provide an impetus to tourist business in the area. The city expects to publish in the near future an architectural walking tour of the commercial structures that will bring additional attention to the unique qualities and ambiance of the downtown.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

see individual inventory sheets

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

Linda Bayer, Planner

ORGANIZATION

Huntsville Planning Commission/Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

May 31, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama 36130

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

Mills B. Forward, Jr.

TITLE

SHPO Alabama

DATE

June 5, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Lince
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9/22/80

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bill Post Office

DATE

2/2/81

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The multiple resource ^{study} area of downtown Huntsville begins at the intersection of Williams Avenue and Monroe Avenue. The boundary line follows the middle of Monroe north and then east where the street name changes to Lincoln Avenue, thence southeast along the middle of Lincoln to a point halfway between Clinton and Randolph avenues, thence southwest along the southern boundaries of Blocks 24, 23, and 22, thence southeast along the boundary between Blocks 29 and 30 to the middle of Randolph Avenue, thence northeast along the middle of Randolph to the middle of Greene Street, thence southeast along the middle of Greene to the middle of Eustis Avenue, thence southwest along the middle of Eustis to the middle of Franklin Avenue, thence southeast along the middle of Franklin to Williams, thence southwest along the middle of Williams to the point of beginning.

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National Park Service

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Downtown Huntsville MRA
State ALABAMA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Hutchens, W. T., Building

Keeper

Lawl Duke 12/28/83

Attest

2. Building at 105 N. Washington
Street

for Keeper

Delores Byers 5/23/84

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

3.

Keeper

Attest

4.

Keeper

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

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Keeper

Attest

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Keeper

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