

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Historic Resources of Lavonia (Partial Inventory: MRA)

and/or common Historic and Architectural Properties

2. Location

street & number City Limits of Lavonia

N/A not for publication

city, town Lavonia

N/A vicinity of

~~congressional district~~

state Georgia

code 013

county Franklin

code 119

3. Classification

Multiple Resources

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Franklin County Courthouse

city, town Carnesville

state 30528

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey
Franklin County, Georgia

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1976

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

Historic Preservation Section/
Ga. Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta

state Georgia

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☒ fair

☐ deteriorated

☒ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☐ original site

☐ moved date _____

☐ Not Applicable

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LAVONIA MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

The historic resources of the Lavonia multiple resource area are within the current city limits. These limits are currently established in the shape of a circle, the center being the exact center of the business district on the Southern Railroad tracks, having a radius of 5,486.25 feet. This circular boundary has been altered at the northern section of the City to include several commercial uses at the intersection of State Route 17 and Interstate 85.

Lavonia is a community of approximately 2,000 people located in the Upper Piedmont section of Southern Appalachia. It is a predominately flat area with densely wooded landscapes in undeveloped areas. Uses within the city boundaries form fairly distinct groupings. Retail establishments dominate the town center, with additional retail and commercial development extending south along State Route 17 and industrial uses extending south along the Southern Railroad line. Residential neighborhoods and scattered groups of houses are located along other major and minor arteries which radiate from the town center.

The Southern Railroad line, formerly the Elberton Air Line Railroad, bisects the city. The line runs from the north-west side of the city limits to the south-southeast side. The railroad is paralleled on the west by State Route 17 (Jones Street), which leads from Interstate 85 into Lavonia's town square, then turns off and exits the city limits west of the railroad. East Main street parallels the railroad on the east, from the south-southeast through the town square and north several more blocks. Land use along the railroad ranges from large expanses of open acreage near the city limits to stores and shops and private residential dwellings at the center of town. Pecan trees in groves are located throughout the city. The presence of the trees creates a common landscape setting in various areas of the community. These trees also soften the impact of newer construction. (The new Ramada Inn in the northern section of the multiple resource area has literally been built in a pecan grove.)

The central town square area was originally laid out in a gridiron fashion, but the routing of State Highway 59 through Lavonia removed the corners of some town square properties and slightly obscured this pattern. The retail establishments on the west and south sides of the square form an unbroken facade, while the north and east sides of the square contain groups of buildings and detached buildings of various widths. The only green spaces on the square are the railroad right-of-way in its center and an empty lot on the east side where an old hotel burned down several years ago. The west side also contains a parking lot on the site of the old railroad depot before it was removed to its present location in 1910. Additional retail businesses including specialty stores, service stations, and restaurants extend for about one block to the east and west while warehouse development extends down along the railroad to the south. A new shopping center is located on State Route 17 approximately five blocks south of the square and two blocks west of the railroad.

Residential development is clustered close to the town square and slowly diminishes in density towards the city limits. The residential area to the northwest of the town center is the historic Vickery Street neighborhood. The structures on this street offer the widest

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variety of architectural styles within the multiple resource area. This neighborhood includes structures of Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Georgian Revival, Renaissance Revival, Victorian Eclectic, and Bungalow design. To the north of the Vickery Street district is the Springview Heights neighborhood which is the newer black community established when the original black neighborhood was demolished for the realignment of State Route 17 and related urban renewal activity in the 1950's.

The neighborhood which adjoins the town center on the northwest is the Jones Street Residential Historic District. This neighborhood, which is located on either side of Jones Street and two side streets, is dominated by structures of Victorian Eclectic styling. One Neo-Classical structure is also present. The district is tied together through landscaped yards of lawn, shrubs, and pecan trees placed in grove-like arrangements. To the north of this neighborhood there are mixed non-historic residential and commercial uses. This northward area was the site of Lavonia's historic black community and is now used for a low-income housing development.

The residential neighborhood to the west and southwest of the town center contains a mix of non-historic and historic dwellings. All of these structures are sited on urban-sized lots and are related through similar landscaping treatments. The West Avenue-Roberts Street Residential Historic District has been delineated on several streets in this area. West of this neighborhood residential development becomes more rural, with one residence associated with a 133-acre tract at the edge of the multiple-resource area.

The residential neighborhood along Hartwell Road to the southeast of the town center is also more rural in appearance. Houses in this area are associated with larger tracts of land which were formerly used for farming. The historic houses in this neighborhood are interspersed between later residences. The elementary school and the Lavonia Carnegie Library are located at the beginning of Hartwell Road adjacent to the town center. Newer residential developments of ranch-type houses in tract layouts are located on side streets to the east of Hartwell Road. Residential development to the west of Hartwell Road appears to date from the 1950's, with a low income housing development located in this area on the site of a former mill village.

Industrial development in the multiple resource area is confined to the railroad corridor south of the town center. Three historic industrial complexes along with newer industrial and storage facilities are located along the railroad track. Open land is interspersed among the groups of structures in this part of town.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LAVONIA MULTIPLE-RESOURCE AREA DURING THE PERIODS IT
ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANCE**

Period 1 (Pre 1878). Few artifacts remain to document the appearance of the Lavonia multiple resource area prior to the creation of the town in 1878. Cherokee Indians are known to have been present in the area but the closest documented settlement was one and

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one-half miles from Lavonia. Due to Lavonia's location several miles from the Tugalo River, it is doubtful that permanent Indian settlements occurred within the multiple resource area. It appears that this area remained forested until white settlement began with the founding of Franklin County in 1784. Portions of the multiple resource area were cleared for farming during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1878 Abner Burgess resided in log cabin in the area of present day Augusta Road and used the surrounding farmland for the production of corn, wheat, and cotton.

Period 2 (1878-1880). By 1878 the Elberton Air Line Railroad had penetrated this isolated area and terminated one mile north of the present town center at a point known as Aquilla. The city of Lavonia was originally proposed in the area around Aquilla but was moved one mile south to land donated by Burgess. The town was laid out in a gridiron plan with the Elberton Air Line Railroad bisecting the town center. Small commercial lots were placed in the town center on either side of the railroad with larger residential lots on the periphery. The entire city plan encompassed an approximately nine-block area. An auction was held in 1878 and commercial and residential lots were sold. It is likely that the construction of frame commercial buildings and city residences came shortly after the sale. One of the first commercial structures to be built in the town was a modest frame depot located in the exact center of the original town plan. The town center was surrounded by large tracts in single ownership which were used for farming. It is likely that some simple frame residences were located on these tracts in addition to the Burgess log cabin which had been built in the earlier period. The Roberts-Verner House, a frame structure on Vickery Street which was once associated with a 60-acre tract, dates from this period and is the oldest structure remaining within the multiple resource area.

Period 3 (1880-1921). This period has been called the "building boom" in the history of Lavonia. It was during this time that the Victorian Eclectic style which dominates the character of the town developed.

Commercial construction during this period began with the building of frame stores, hotels, and warehouses in the town center. Following a fire in 1905 which destroyed an entire block of commercial buildings on East Main Street, brick was used more extensively in the downtown area. The appearance of the square reflected the agricultural economy of the area. The area around the railroad in the middle of the town center was known as a "cotton yard." Wagons loaded with bales of cotton which had come straight from the gin would be driven to this yard for bidding from the buyers. Watering troughs were located in the town center for the watering of horses and mules. The center developed with merchantile establishments, warehouses, professional offices, and retail establishment, and approximately four livery stables developed at the edges of the town's central business district. One of these latter enterprises, owned and operated by C. A. Kidd, eventually evolved into the first gas station in Lavonia. Kidd's business was located at the east end of Grogan Street and still stands today. The original brick structure was altered with

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the removal of a corner to allow for automobile access. A major change occurred in the town center with the removal of the depot from its center. The Womans Club of Lavonia felt the original wooden depot obstructed the view and separated the town. In 1911 a more substantial depot building of frame with a tile roof was built at the northern edge of the central business district on the east side of the railroad. The depot and numerous brick commercial structures and one frame warehouse remain to document the commercial development of Lavonia during this period.

All four of Lavonia's churches developed during this period. The first church to be established was the Methodist Church (1883) which was housed in a frame building adjacent to the town center. This building was replaced by a brick structure in 1907. The Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church were frame, plain-styled structures constructed near the town center on Vickery Street around 1890. The original Baptist Church building was later replaced with a Renaissance Revival structure in 1917. The Presbyterian Church still uses its original structure today. The Fairview Baptist Church was established in 1898 in the northern part of the community in the black section of the town in a wooden structure. Schools which had functioned more or less informally at several locations in town were consolidated into one school housed in a two-story brick building erected on Hartwell Road in 1896 and known as the "Lavonia Institute." The Carnegie Library was built adjacent to this school in 1911.

Residential development during this period began with the construction of several frame residences adjacent to the downtown and several frame residences associated with larger tracts on the periphery of the town limits. The Stovall Homeplace is one of the oldest residences from this period and dates from the early 1880's. The Stovall property, which encompassed approximately 200 acres, did not become a part of the town until the city limits were expanded in 1896. There were other similar rural developments of a later date on the edge of the city, including the Killingsworth farm on the southeast and the Crawford-Shirley farm on the southwest. Residential neighborhoods close to the central business district began to develop on roads extending from the town center. The Jones Street area appears to have developed first with the Vickery Street area following a few years later. These neighborhoods were dominated by frame residences of Victorian Eclectic design, a style which continues to dominate the multiple resource area. A large frame structure was built at the corner of Vickery and Grogan Streets and was known as the Mason Hotel. A black community of modest frame houses developed to the rear of the Vickery Street and Jones Street neighborhoods and apparently housed the domestic workers who were employed in the homes of the white residents. The West Avenue-Roberts Street area began to develop in the early 1900's; houses in this area were also frame, Victorian Eclectic designs sited on city-sized lots. A mill village of almost identical modest, frame houses developed adjacent to the Lavonia Cotton Mill in the southern section of the city. The Hartwell Road area developed with larger tracts associated with each residence. Several houses on Hartwell Road which were located close to the school and central business district were built on smaller lots. Several of the individuals who

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lived along Hartwell Road maintained small farms within the city limits. A number of the residences from this period of development still survive within the multiple resource area.

Industry also came to Lavonia during this period. During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, three major industrial complexes - The Southern Cotton Oil Company, The Lavonia Roller Miller, and the Lavonia Cotton Mill - were established along the railroad tracks south of the town center. These industrial complexes were built of brick and heavy timber framing, and they were generally utilitarian in their design. During this period as well, the Stevenson brickyard was established along Hartwell Road.

Period 4 (1921-1926). There was little building activity during the years 1921-1926. The few structures built in this period were brick and frame residences of bungalow styling. Construction in the central business district was at a standstill during this period, reflecting the decline in agriculture caused by the boll weevil.

Period 5 (1926-World War II). The decline in cotton production caused by the boll weevil and the effects of the Great Depression brought building activity virtually to a halt in Lavonia between the mid 1920s and the mid 1930s. Diversification of the localeconomy was made visible in the town center with the construction of the Whitworth Hatchery next to the Sinclair Station on East Main Street in 1936. The two-story brick building which had formerly housed the Haley General Merchantile Store was sold to Carwood Manufacturing Company which opened a sewing plant in the structure. The W.P.A. made a large impact on the visual qualities of the town center by paving the streets in this area during this period. Several automobile service stations were established in the town center during this period, including the Sinclair Station on East Main Street and the Pure Oil Service Station on West Avenue. These stations documented locally the rise of the automobile. State Route 17 (Jones Street) was paved and realigned to remove a dangerous curve north of the town center. This re-alignment caused the demolition of many residential structures in this section of the city which housed many of Lavonia's black residents and prompted their move to the Spring Heights sections of the city, north of Vickery Street. The wooden church building of the Fairview Baptist Church congregation, also located in the historic black community, was replaced with a more substantial brick structure in 1937. The W.P.A. constructed the present elementary school building on Hartwell Road on the site of the former Lavonia Institute in 1940. The Bradford Residence on Grogan Street, a Bungalow-styled structure, was built in 1932. Several historic residences of frame were lost to fire during this period. Most of these homes which were located in the western portion of the city were replaced with modest brick period houses which still stand along West Avenue. Other distinguished Craftsman-style houses were built in the city, several of which are attributed to the Atlanta architect Leila Ross Wilburn.

Period 6 (World War II - Present). Diversification of the local economic base became more visible during this period. Large storage bins used for grains were constructed throughout the industrial area south of the town square. Through urban renewal, the remaining structures in the black community on Jones Street and the mill village houses adjacent to the Lavonia Cotton Mill were demolished and replaced with low-income housing units of brick. The town center began to lose some of its importance with the building of a new city hall south of town on State Route 17 (Augusta Road). The large tract of land once associated with the Crawford-Shirley House was subdivided, and commercial growth occurred in this area. Small shopping centers were built along the Augusta Road on former farmland, and later new bank

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buildings were constructed in this area. Residential development was sporadic throughout the multiple resource area, with brick ranch-style homes built adjacent to the older residences in several neighborhoods. Tract-type developments of newer residences occurred at several locations in the city - west of Augusta Road, along the eastern portion of Bowman and Grogan Streets, and to the east of Hartwell Road. Several new residences were also built at the end of Vickery Street. The area along the rail line to the north of the city which had served as small-scale farmland began to be used for light industrial purposes. The large frame hotel which stood in the center of the East Main Street block in downtown was destroyed by fire in the late 1970's. Interstate 85 was constructed in 1964 and adjoined the city limits on the north. This resulted in commercial development in this area, and the city limits were adjusted to take some of this area into the city.

CHOICE OF THE MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA, HISTORIC DISTRICTS, AND INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

The multiple resource area was designated as the current corporate limits of the City of Lavonia. These city limits include a representative example of the types of architectural and historical resources found in the Lavonia vicinity. The city limits also represent a clearly defined area under the jurisdiction of single government. The relation between the corporate limits and the multiple resource area should facilitate preservation planning activities in the area.

Historic districts and individually nominated properties have been selected solely on the basis of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Although three historic residential districts adjoin the downtown commercial historic district, all have been designated separately to reflect their particular architectural and historical values.

METHODOLOGY

This nomination was initiated by the Lavonia Chamber of Commerce. The Lavonia Chamber of Commerce has been interested for some time in the redevelopment of the downtown area and believes the tax benefits associated with National Register listing would be helpful in this effort. It was decided to include the entire city in the nomination in an attempt to involve the whole community in historic preservation.

The research for the nomination was carried out by a team of local volunteers. These volunteers researched all structures within the community which had been identified by a windshield survey to meet the 50-year age requirement. A student intern from Brenau College assisted in the initial survey of the city. On the basis of this data, the preservation planner at Georgia Mountains Area Planning and Development Commission assisted in the preparation of nomination documents. These documents were then edited by the staff of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (the Historic Preservation Section). Review of documentary information and on-site inspections by State Historic Preservation Office staff and the Georgia Mountains Area Planning and Development Commission preservation planner confirmed the National Register eligibility of the nominated districts and properties.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1878 Builder/Architect Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historic resources of Lavonia consist of four historic districts and twenty-four individual properties. These districts and properties comprise approximately 220 of the 2100 acres within the city limits. The four historic districts consist of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial brick buildings and a railroad depot in the center of town, late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses and a church lining Vickery Street, and late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses along West Avenue and Roberts Street. The twenty-four individual properties, all dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including outlying residences and farmhouses, some with outbuildings, simple Victorian houses, elaborate turn-of-the-century dwellings, and bungalows, three industrial complexes, an early twentieth-century gas station, and a public library. Taken together, these historic districts and properties, with their historical associations, constitute a nearly complete and well preserved record of the history of Lavonia. The founding of the town along newly-laid railroad tracks in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the subsequent development of a commercial center and agricultural market for the surrounding countryside, the concomitant establishment of residential neighborhoods and outlying farmsteads, the emergence of local industries based on regional agricultural products, the organization of local institutions such as churches, fraternal lodges, civic clubs, and a public library, the introduction of the automobile, the decline of cotton, and the Depression are all chronicled in Lavonia's historic districts and properties. In terms of National Register areas of significance, the historic resources of Lavonia are significant in exploration and settlement, community planning and development, architecture, landscape architecture, commerce, industry, agriculture, and transportation. They meet National Register criteria A, B, and C. Their suggested level of significance is local.

Franklin County was created from former Cherokee Indian territory shortly after the American Revolution and was the ninth county established in Georgia. Settlers from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania migrated into this region and began farming the land. Agricultural practices eventually evolved into a one crop system based on cotton. The building of a railroad in the late 1800's opened up this isolated area to a regional and national market. With the suitability of the land for farming cotton and the network to markets established through the railroad, it is understandable that the community of Lavonia was created. This community was laid out on a gridiron pattern along the path of the railroad. This pattern is still visible on the land today. The town was primarily settled by descendants of the early pioneers who lived on farms within Franklin County. The creation of a town center with surrounding residences attracted these county residents into the city. The establishment of schools and churches reinforced the settlement trend and the modest gridiron plan expanded to accommodate growth. Residential

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neighborhoods developed in all directions from the commercial center. Residences, churches, industrial, and commercial buildings were constructed in a variety of architectural styles. These styles included vernacularized versions of Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Victorian Eclectic, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical, Georgian Revival, and Bungalow, and they are still represented within the Lavonia multiple resource area. The industrial section of the city developed south of the town center along the path of the railroad. It began with modest operations which processed locally grown cotton. This area still reflects its early industrial history with original mills standing alongside later adaptations for the poultry business. Landscape architectural history is represented in the green spaces along the railroad and the repetition of pecan trees in grove-like placements throughout the multiple resource area. The depot, railroad tracks, later roads, and the variety of service stations in the town center represent the transportation history of the area.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAVONIA MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

Period 1 (Pre 1878). Lavonia is located in Franklin County which was created from Indian territory by a state legislative act on February 25, 1784. It was the ninth county created in the State of Georgia and the first to be created after the close of the American Revolution. The county was named for Benjamin Franklin, Revolutionary patriot and statesman. The territory included in Franklin County was a vast, sparsely inhabited region. The original settlers of the county were emigrants mostly from North and South Carolina and were principally descendants of Protestant Scotch and Irish; a few were from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. After the Revolutionary War many soldiers settled in the county. They were given land as payment for their service in the Revolution. Following 1785 the head right system of granting land to settlers was abolished. The lottery system of granting lands replaced this system in 1818. By this system lands were laid off in tracts of 102.5 acres. Every white man, widow, and orphan resident was entitled to one draw, and every Revolutionary soldier was allowed a draw as late as 1825. Realizing that the county was too large, a process of dividing the county to create other counties started and was not completed until 1905 when the last division of territory was made in the formation of Stephens County. In all, 12 Georgia counties have been created from the original Franklin County. The Lavonia multiple resource area was a part of the vast territory in Franklin County. There are no Indian settlements which can be documented in this area. It appears that the multiple resource area was originally forested and was largely cleared for farmland prior to the creation of the town.

Period 2 (1878-1880). By 1878 the Elberton Air Line Railroad penetrated this isolated region and terminated at a point approximately one mile north of present day Lavonia, known as Aquilla. A post office was established at this point which also intersected with the South Carolina-Carnesville Road. Four individuals--J. H. Jones, President of the Elberton Air Line Railroad; J. H. Grogan, retired Methodist minister; T. J. Bowman, architect/builder from Elbert County; and J. H. Vickery, a merchant from Habersham County--proposed the creation of a town at this terminus point of the railroad. The property in this area belonged to Samuel H. Knox, and before plans could be completed and a title obtained to the land, Knox died and the deed could not be settled. For that reason the location of the new town was moved one mile south and established on lands donated by Abner Burgess, a large landowner who farmed this land and lived in a modest log cabin in the area of present day Augusta Road. R. W. Cleveland, surveyor from Elbert County, made a plat of the town on July 12, 1878. The town was laid out in a gridiron pattern with

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the railroad line bisecting the town. The major streets were named for the four promoters, and the town was named "Lavonia" in honor of Lavonia Jones, the wife of J. H. Jones. An auction was held in August of 1878 and the train from Elberton made two round trips bringing potential investors to the sale. Approximately 300 people attended the auction, and a number of business lots and a few residential tracts were sold. At the time of founding the central portion of the city was surrounded by large tracts in single ownership. The Mauldin land was located to the south, the Ledbetter land on the east and southeast, land owned by Jim Knox on the southwest, Tribble land on the west and northwest, Wright land on the northeast, and Burgess land joined the Knox land to the north. In 1879 an election was held to determine whether or not the town would be incorporated. In 1880 a petition was brought to Franklin County officials which stated that the citizens of Lavonia desired that the town be incorporated with the city limits established at 440 yards in every direction from the depot building, which was located in the exact center of the town. Most of the first settlers came from communities within a few miles of the town. Most of them maintained their farms in the county and came to Lavonia to make their home. T. F. Allison was one early settler who came from North Carolina, and other settlers' origination points appear to have been Aquilla, Bowersville, Elberton, Poplar Springs Community, Hart County and Habersham County, all of which were in Georgia; and Edgefield, South Carolina.

Period 3 (1880-1921). The time frame between 1880 and 1921 was a "building boom" period in the development of Lavonia. The town established itself as a permanent and prosperous stop along the Elberton Air Line Railroad, which now connected with Toccoa and provided access to the large urban centers of Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, D. C. Cotton was the major source of income and in 1884 the Carnesville paper noted: "cotton, cotton, cotton . . . trade flourishing." By 1887 Lavonia had nine stores and was considered by some the best business point on the Elberton Air Line Railroad. Churches were established -- the Methodist Church in 1884, the Baptist Church in 1890 and the Presbyterian Church in 1889 -- and a number of residences were built along roads which extended from the town center. Several industries were established in Lavonia at the turn of the century, all of which related to the agricultural economy. These included the Lavonia Roller Mill, the Lavonia Cotton Mill, the Southern Cotton Oil Seed Company, and Farmers Oil Seed Company. Banks were also established during this period -- the Bank of Lavonia, the Vickery National Bank, and the First National Bank of Lavonia. By 1891 the town included three churches, a Masonic, Grange, and Alliance Lodge, a school, three steam gins, a saw mill, a grist mill, a printing press, an art gallery, and a telegraph office. The town received electric lights around 1911. The Lavonia Woman's Club became an instrumental group in promoting improvements in the community. The Carnegie Library was built in 1911 due to the efforts of this group, and the former depot was replaced with a more substantial structure in a new location at the insistence of the club. Two newspapers were in operation in the community for several years -- the Lavonia Times and the Standard Gauge. These papers later consolidated to become the Lavonia Times and Gauge. The name of the paper illustrates the relation of the town with the railroad. The railroad used a narrow width track, called a narrow gauge, until 1893 when it was changed to a wider track, known as the standard gauge. The growth rate during this period illustrates the thriving condition of the community. The population in 1890 of 283 inhabitants increased to 699 residents by 1900. The population of 1,712 residents by 1910 established a growth rate of 143 percent in the first 10 years of the twentieth century. The town limits were

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expanded to keep pace with this growth. In 1896 the town was reincorporated and the town limits established in a circular boundary three-quarters of a miles from the depot. In 1908 the town limits were expanded once again and the territorial limits were designed to "include and embrace all the territory within one and one-half miles from the central point of the city," which was the site of the old freight depot. The expansion of the town limits in 1908 took in areas of neighboring Hart County and appears to have been prompted by a large amount of building activity in the community. This boundary was decreased to one mile from the town center in 1915 with the establishment of a water system. The construction of a new building for the Bank of Lavonia in 1920 and the construction of a high school in 1921 appear to have been the last major construction projects of the building boom period.

Period 4 (1921-1926). Around 1921 changes began to occur in the agricultural economy of Lavonia. Cotton began to decline with the spread of the boll weevil, and agricultural diversification was encouraged. The decline of cotton is evident from a production in 1921 of 13,592 bales which was less than the 1920 production of 19,887 bales. By 1922, the local papers noted that "indications are that Franklin County will gin half as much cotton as was ginned in the county last year." The local media highlighted those who had not been affected by the cotton decline. A farmer from Hart County, Mr. T. E. V. White, was described as a man who had practiced diversification for a number of years and received all the benefits of this system of farming. Mr. White considered dairy cows an important part of his operation and noted that sweet potatoes were a good substitute for cotton. In 1921 a potato company was established in Lavonia by Rush Burton and A. B. Vickery, and a potato house was ready to receive potatoes in 1923. In that same year the First National Bank of Lavonia encouraged the establishment of a poultry industry by placing 800 eggs at area farms in the spring for a pullet sale in the town center in October. A chicken hatchery was also under construction in Lavonia at that time. The Lavonia Chamber of Commerce apparently responded to the depressed conditions in the community and attempted to raise public spirits with the establishment of "Round the County" tour in 1923. This tour, which began in Lavonia and took participants to several homes and farms in the county, became an annual festival for several years. A Fiddler's Convention was also held in 1924 featuring Fiddlin' Joe Carson. These activities apparently helped the situation in the community and in 1925 the paper noted that the Lavonia Chamber of Commerce had held the largest meeting on record at the Lavonia Hotel. It appears that the community began to consider enterprises other than farming. In 1924 the Georgia Railroad and Power Company rebuilt electric lines in the city and the newspaper noted that Lavonia was "now in shape to go after manufacturing enterprises of any kind." Cotton was apparently still an important part of the economy, but both were to suffer extremely depressed conditions in 1926. The spread of the boll weevil, a drought, and the production of cotton in other parts of the United States which benefited from reduced railroad rates brought the Lavonia economy to a standstill, forcing the banks to close and building activity to cease.

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Period 5 (1926 - World War II). The first decade of this period was one of depressed economic conditions in Lavonia, caused by a weak agricultural economy and then the Great Depression. It was followed by a time of slow recovery with the assistance of the federal government. A Seed Loan Program was established by President Hoover and later continued by President Roosevelt. This program limited the production of cotton, causing many acres to "go to grass," and every available warehouse in the community was filled with cotton in an attempt to stabilize prices. Farmers who remained on the land changed to cattle and poultry, and the era of the tenant farmer ended. In 1936 the Whitworth Hatchery was established in the town center and in 1934 Carwood, a sewing plant, was established in the Haley's General Store building. Through the Works Project Administration Streets in the town square were paved and an elementary school built in 1940. Only a few residences were built in the community during this period. The population declined to 1,511 in 1930 from a high of 1,712 in 1910.

Period 6 (World War II-Present). World War II had little effect on Lavonia other than the drain of manpower. The economy continued to diversify with the establishment of a number of businesses -- Lavonia Novelty Yarns in 1944, Lavonia Industries in 1961 which became Stone Manufacturing in 1971, Franklin Industries in 1964 which makes industrial sewing machines, Alan B. Sibley Mill, a division of Deering Milliken Company, in 1965, Southeast Schokbeton, Inc. in 1968, a company which makes precast panels for commercial buildings, and Harbin Homes, a company making roof trusses, door units, and wall systems for the housing industry. Through urban renewal programs in the 1950's, the mill village and the historic black neighborhood were demolished in the construction of low-income housing developments. The last passenger train came through Lavonia in 1951, and today the line is used for freight only. Interstate 85 was constructed in 1964 and is located within the city limits at the northern part of the town. Lake Hartwell was also constructed in the 1960s on the Tugalo River. The diversification of the economy, the establishment of a large recreational lake, and the construction of a major highway have caused the population of Franklin County to increase but the population of Lavonia decreased slightly from 1970 to 1980 and today is 2,024 residents. This nomination is the community's most recent effort to revitalize its economy at the same time building upon its heritage.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Exploration and Settlement. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because it illustrates the way in which parts of the remote Georgia countryside were first settled with communities as late as the late 19th century. The multiple resource area is located in Franklin County, a north Georgia county which was established in the late 18th century but only sparsely populated until the late 19th century. With the coming of the railroad, the agricultural hinterland in the vicinity of the multiple resource area was densely settled with established communities for the first time. Lavonia is a good example of this 19th century settlement pattern. Furthermore, many of Lavonia's first citizens were

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descendents of Franklin County's pioneering settlers, illustrating a characteristic "second generation" settlement pattern in Georgia.

Community Planning and Development. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because its early history illustrates a characteristic way of planning and developing new communities in the Georgia countryside during the 19th century. Such communities frequently began with the laying out of a new railroad line through an unsettled part of the state. Station stops were established along the new railroad, usually on land donated by property owners. Around these station stops, speculative communities were planned, in anticipation of railhead commerce. Many of these communities then developed into full-fledged commercial, industrial, residential, and institutional centers. Most were originally laid out in a gridiron pattern to facilitate the sale of land through auctions. Growth was accommodated by a combination of expanding the original grid and spreading out along principal roads leading out of town. Other than the reservation of a few lots for a depot major commercial buildings, residences for the new town's promoters, and possibly institutions such as schools and churches, no land use controls were imposed, and market forces prevailed in the community's subsequent growth and development.

Transportation. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because it illustrates how modes of transportation, especially the railroad, have historically influenced the founding and development of communities in Georgia. Lavonia was founded as a station stop along a new railroad line (see above). Its very plan was influenced by the presence of the railroad: its downtown gridiron street layout was oriented to the railroad right-of-way, and its circular city limits were centered on the depot. Other modes of transportation also affected Lavonia. Wagon roads - later automobile highways - leading out of town became corridors for residential development. More recently, highway realignments have severely impacted historic residential neighborhoods, and an interstate highway on the outskirts of town has drawn some commercial activity away from downtown. All of these transportation - related developments are characteristic of Georgia's rural history.

Commerce. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because its downtown area has served as the historic commercial center for the city of Lavonia and part of Franklin County since 1878. This tradition of commercial service is fitting, since Lavonia was founded to take advantage of commercial opportunities afforded by a new railhead (see above). Wholesale and retail services, meeting both domestic and agricultural needs, were historically provided in the downtown area of Lavonia. Banks, stores, business offices, agricultural suppliers, and cotton warehouses predominated. These activities were housed first in wood framed structures and then in the brick and timber buildings which by and long survive today. The important role of the railroad in Lavonia's commercial history is evidenced by the downtown depot's central downtown location.

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Industry. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because it contains Lavonia's three major historic local industries. These industries reflect the agricultural economy of the area and show how the late 19th century "New South" philosophy affected small towns in Georgia. Lavonia's historic industries were based on the region's agricultural staples - grains, corn, and cotton - and they show how local business leaders attempted to benefit economically by providing a local industrial use for the area's agricultural products. Lavonia's historic industries also contributed significantly to the city's economy and strengthened its role as a small commercial center and railhead.

Agriculture. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because Lavonia, like so many other small railroad towns in Georgia, was established to serve the needs of a growing agricultural area. Crops grown in this part of Franklin County, especially cotton, grains, and corn, were sent to Lavonia for railroad shipment to distant markets. These crops were also processed in Lavonia's local industries. Within the boundaries of the multiple resource area are several historic farms which illustrate the agricultural traditions of north Georgia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These include both small and large scale farming, cotton as the principal cash crop, and crop diversification. The multiple resource area also contains the homes of farmers who worked tracts of land outside the city limits.

Architecture. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because of its variety of historic architecture which represents building types, styles, materials, and construction techniques common to Georgia's small towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Types of buildings included in the multiple resource area include residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional - the full range of building types found in most small Georgia communities. Styles represented include Gothic Revival, Victorian Eclectic, Renaissance Revival, Queen Anne, Neoclassical, Georgian Revival, Craftsman/Bungalow, and Commercial - the usual architectural styles found in small town Georgia buildings dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of these designs are vernacular or small-town interpretations of prevailing national styles. For the most part they were created by local craftsmen and builders, but at least one noted architect - Leila Ross Wilburn of Atlanta - is known to have designed houses in the city. A wide variety of characteristic historic building materials is found in the multiple resource area; these building materials include wood, brick, stone, cast iron, pressed metal, plate glass and plaster. Most of these materials were industrially produced, befitting the late 19th and early 20th century character of the area, but a few were handcrafted, such as timber framing in some of the earliest dwellings. Construction techniques are limited to the usual wood frame and loadbearing brick masonry. The dominant architectural quality of the multiple resource area is that of the Victorian Eclectic style, reflecting the prevailing style during Lavonia's major period of growth.

Landscape Architecture. The Lavonia multiple resource area is significant because of historic landscape features which give Lavonia distinctive character and appearance as well

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as features that are typical of small turn-of-the-century towns. Informally landscaped front yards, which in the residential districts blend together to create a park-like impression along the streets, are characteristic of the landscaping found in small turn-of-the-century Georgia towns. Groves of pecan trees throughout the town give the multiple resource area a distinctive character and appearance, one associated more with south Georgia towns than those in the northern part of the state.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITY WITHIN THE MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

The Lavonia Chamber of Commerce initiated a preservation project in the central business district approximately three years ago with the rehabilitation of the depot for office space and an information center. The Chamber initially renovated the entrance room into the structure and recently completed the renovation of a second room.

The Lavonia Chamber of Commerce has for several years been interested in the revitalization of the town center. As a part of this effort, this National Register nomination was initiated. The Chamber plans to follow this nomination by creating a downtown development authority with boundaries established along the same lines as the historic commercial district. A group of students from the University of Georgia under the supervision of Allen Stovall is also assisting the Chamber of Commerce in the development of a downtown preservation plan. These students plan to involve the local merchants and citizens in the development of this plan through a series of community workshops.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet).

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property N/A

Quadrangle name Lavonia, GA. - S. C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References N/A

A

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The multiple resource area is defined by the city limits of Lavonia. The boundary line is noted as a heavy dashed line on the attached maps.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

a) Dale, Jaeger, preservation planner
name/title

b) Richard Cloues, National Register
Coordinator

a) Ga. Mountains APDC
organization

b) Historic Preservation Section, Dept. of
date Natural Resources May 16, 1983

a) 1010 Ridge Ridge Road
street & number

b) 270 Washington St. S. W.
telephone a) 404-536-3431 b) 404-656-2840

a) Gainesville, GA
city or town

b) Atlanta, Georgia 30334
state

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/13/83

For HCRRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Allison, Blairsville, Georgia, January, 1982; Marie Haley Williams, Lavonia, Georgia,
January, 1982; G. D. Pulliam, Lavonia, Georgia, February, 1982.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Lavonia Multiple Resource Area
State Georgia

Cover - accept 9/1/83

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Adams House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

2. Beasley House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

3. Jones Street Residential
Historic District

Substantive Review

for Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 9/1/83

Attest

4. Burton House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

5. Cannon-McDaniel House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

6. Cason House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

7. Cheek House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

8. Crawford-Shirley House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

9. Vickery Street Historic District

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

10. Fisher House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 9/1/83

Attest

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Lavonia Multiple Resource Area
State Georgia

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Keese House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

12. Kidd House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

13. Killingsworth Farm

Substantive Review

for Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 9/1/83

Attest

14. Lavonia Carnegie Library

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

15. Lavonia Cotton Mill

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

16. Lavonia Roller Mill

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

17. McMurray House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

18. Pure Oil Service Station

Substantive Review

for Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 9/1/83

Attest

19. Queen House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

20. Lavonia Commercial Histict
District

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Melous Byers 9/1/83

Attest

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Lavonia Multiple Resource Area
State Georgia

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Southern Cotton Oil Company

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

22. Stevenson House and Brickyard

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

23. Stovall Homeplace

Substantive Review for Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 9/1/83

Attest

24. Stovall-Purcell House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

25. Vandiver House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

26. Vickery House

for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

27. West Avenue-Roberts Street
Residential Historic District

for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

28. Yow House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Melona Byers 9/1/83

Attest

29.

Keeper

Attest

30.

Keeper

Attest