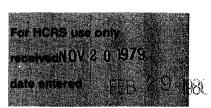
United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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R.H. Hunt

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Buildings included in the 1972 Hamilton County Survey by the Tennessee Historical Commission:

Carnegie Library (No. 1)

James Building (No. 3)

Car Barns (No. 4)

Tivoli Theater (No. 7)

Maclellan Building (No. 9) (not being nominated at request of owner)

Second Presbyterian (No. 16)

Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Tivoli Theater (4/11/73) (No. 7)
Carnegie Library (3/14/73) (No. 1)
Hamilton County
Courthouse (11/21/78) (No. 6)

Buildings that have been approved by the Tennessee Historic Sites Advisory Committee and submitted to the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Car Barns (No. 4)
Hamilton County Board
of Education Building
(A part of the Fountain
Square district) (No. 20)

7. Description Condition X excellent X good Tuins Check one X original site M moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

unexposed

__X_ fair

This thematic nomination deals with buildings in Hamilton County designed by Reuben Harrison Hunt, one of Chattanooga's most significant early architects. All of the buildings in this grouping were designed by Hunt and are either representative of his major designs or representative of general areas in which he worked.

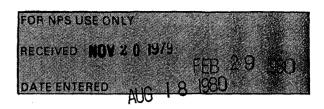
The primary similarity found in Hunt's designs is the type of building constructed. Almost invariable, these were buildings for public usage--churches, office buildings, government buildings, fire stations, schools, bank buildings, college facilities, and hotels. Only a few private residences were designed by Hunt's firm and none are known to exist. A second similarity is the type of building materials used. While parallels in scale and proportions do not appear to exist, Hunt's buildings are usually faced with brick or stone. Stylistically, Hunt's buildings reflect the popular architectural styles of his period, but with a distinctive emphasis on the classical revival styles. There is also a tendency in most of his designs to concentrate decorative elements around entrance areas and at rooflines.

Hunt's Chattanooga work reflects many of the popular styles of his day, including Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Beaux Arts Classicism, Neo-Classicism, Georgian Revival and Art Deco. In Chattanooga there are no known examples of buildings designed by Hunt constructed in styles such as the Italianate or various Victorian styles, such as Eastlake or Queen Anne, even though his career began during the period these various styles were popular.

Although none of Hunt's early Romanesque-influenced designs remain in Chattanooga (i.e., First Baptist Church, 1886, or Fire Hall Station No.1, 1902), the 1928 Education Building for the First Baptist Church was designed to harmonize with the church's Romanesque features, and is therefore reminiscent of this style. Gothic Revival, another popular style of that period, was frequently used by Hunt in ecclesiastical designs and several examples remain in Chattanooga. His most outstanding design in this style in Chattanooga is the 1890 Second Presbyterian Church. Over the next several years, Hunt designed numerous churches across the South, often at no cost to the congregation. As a result, there are various brick churches in this area designed by Hunt--most of which feature Gothic details and are similar in These are, however, of only limited architectural significance and do not represent the high quality of design achieved by Hunt for his commissions. Two of these churches designed primarily for charitable reasons, Tucker Baptist and Asbury United Methodist, were selected to be included in this nomination because they represent the best of this type of design. Although built ten years apart, they are both similar in design features, such as the placement of towers, yet there are differences in window treatments and interior features. For these reasons, both buildings were included as representative of a very important and widespread aspect of Hunt's career.

A style Hunt did not use locally to a great extent is the Greek Revival. Hunt is known to have designed only one building in this style that was constructed in the Chattanooga area. For this reason, this building, the Northside Presbyterian Church, is included in the nomination.

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Another widespread mode of work in which Hunt was involved was designing educational buildings. Hunt designed buildings for various universities, such as the Stonewall Jackson Institute, Abington, Virginia; Baylor College, Benton, Texas; A & M College, Starkville, Mississippi Normal College.

Locally, he was responsible for the designs of several elementary and secondary schools. All of these reflect <code>Classical</code> architectural influences. Two of approximately half a dozen remaining schools were chosen for their architectural integrity. The Richard Hardy Junior High School reflects influences from the Italian Renaissance revival and is representative of several schools designed by Hunt in Chattanooga. The Brainerd Junior High School reflects the Colonial or Georgian Revival and is unique among Hunt's educational buildings in Chattanooga.

Hunt's use of the classical orders can also be seen in most of his public buildings. The Hamilton County Courthouse, the Carnegie Library, the James Building, the Municipal Building, the Tivoli Theater, and the Maclellan Building are only a few buildings designed in either the Neo-classical or Beaux-Arts style. Even the restrained Frances Willard Building reflects Georgian influences. Of Hunt's buildings remaining in Chattanoga, the majority reflect classical influences and this appears to be his most commonly used style.

Even so, by the end of Hunt's career, his designs were showing Art Deco influences. His most impressive design in this style, and his last major work in Chattanooga, was the U.S. Federal Building. This magnificent fourstory building features many of the popular Art Deco components, such as decorative elements based on plant life, animals, and geometric patterns. This building was selected in 1938 by the American Institute of Architects as one of the best 150 buildings in the country constructed since 1918 and was part of a photographic exhibit displayed in the United States and in Europe. I

Overall, Hunt's work involved many of the major buildings of his day in the Chattanooga area. These include various areas of interest such as schools, hospitals, municipal buildings, and commercial structures. A man of varied talents, Hunt's architectural work labels him an eclectic who was able to work in various design areas and styles. While covering more than a fifty year period, Hunt's career also spanned various architectural styles and this is reflected in his remaining buildings.

Survey Methodology:

Although portions of Hamilton County were surveyed by a "windshield survey" in 1972 by the Tennessee Historical Commission, no complete survey was

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attempted until the summer of 1976. At that time, a comprehensive survey was planned by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission. This project was funded in part by a Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Fund and by a planning grant-in-aid from the Department of Interior. National Park Service, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

This survey was a building-by-building survey of Chattanooga's architecture. Since Community Development funds could not be used outside the city limits, the county was surveyed by volunteers. The persons primarily responsible for the fieldwork connected with this survey were Ms. Janice Nolen, Historic Preservation Planner, B.A. in historic preservation; Mr. Steve Leach, Senior Planner, B.S. in Economics and M.S.P. in Planning; and Mr. Bill Barton, fifth year student in Architecture. A resource committee, the Chattanooga Landmarks Survey Committee, consisting of architects, historians, archaeologists, and representatives of various historical societies, was formulated to provide additional assistance and information. An attempt was made to survey all buildings constructed prior to 1930 or other sites that possessed archaeological significance or unique architectural or historical merit (e.g., a 1950s house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright).

Files from this 1979 survey were used as an architectural basis for this nomination. To this information, historical research concerning R.H. Hunt was added, compiled by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission's current Historic Preservation Planner, Ms. Martha Carver, B.A. in History and M.A. in historic preservation. From this collection of information twenty buildings were selected that seemed to best reflect Hunt's work in the Chattanooga area. This selection included Hunt's most significant commercially and governmentally used buildings, selected examples of his ecclesiastical designs chosen from approximately twelve remaining designs and distinguished examples of educational facilities. Other churches and schools by Hunt were not included because it was felt they did not possess sufficient architectural merit or did not contribute to the understanding of Hunt's development as an architect.

Chattanooga Times, 4 September, 1938.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	agriculture X architecture art		landscape architectur law literature military music philosophy politics/government	re religion science sculptureX social/ humanitarian theater _X transportation other (specify)
Specific dates		Builder/Architect		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Introduction

The list of properties involved in this nomination represent a group of buildings designed by Reuben Harrison Hunt, one of Chattanooga's most significant early architects. These buildings present an overview of his work representing his major remaining designs and showing representative examples of his major areas of work found in Chattanooga. Hunt's career spanned more than 50 years in Chattanooga-from the early 1880s to the late 1930s--which coincided with Chattanooga's most significant growth periods. The buildings chosen cover the time period from 1890 to 1932.

Reuben Harrison Hunt arrived in Chattanooga from Georgia in 1882, at the age of twenty. He knew only one person in Chattanooga, Charles McGuffey, brother of the author of the McGuffey Readers, a widely used school text. Through McGuffy's influence, Hunt began work as a builder and carpenter for the Adams Brothers architectural firm while studying architecture in his spare time. In 1885, Hunt began practicing architecture, and in 1886 he designed his first major project—the First Baptist Church of Chattanooga. In these early years, he designed several other buildings in the Chattanooga area, none of which remain.

During the early period of his career, Hunt practiced with several other architects: in 1886, as Hunt and McDaniel; in 1890-92, and Hunt and Lamm; and as R.H. Hunt and Company in later years. This latter firm consisted of Hunt, his younger brother, Benjamin Hunt, and his son-in-law, T.G. Street. Hunt's firm also served as a training ground for many architects across the South, including several architects who practiced locally, such as W.H. Sears and William Crutchfield. By the early 1920s, Hunt's firm was also maintaining offices in Dallas, Texas.

As early as 1890, Hunt was advertising that "churches and public buildings (were) a specialty." As a result, he is responsible for designing many of the major downtown office buildings. These include the Pound Building, James Building, the Maclellan Building, Medical Arts Building, Chattanooga Bank Building, and public buildings such as the Carnegie Library, the Municipal Building, the Hamilton County Courthouse, the Memorial Auditorium, and the Federal Building. For private businesses, he also designed the Tivoli Theater and storage barns for the Electric Railway Company. All of these reflect Hunt's reputation as an outstanding and well-respected architect, since they represent the major economic and business interests of the city. Also, an indication of his importance can be seen in the fact that between 1895 and 1935 no major government buildings were constructed in the city that he did not design.

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During Hunt's long and distinguished career, he became a leading figure in the field of architecture, not only in Chattanooga, but across the South. As an outstanding craftsman in his field, Hunt designed buildings in virtually every southern state, including Oklahoma, Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Tennessee and as far away as Brazil. These buildings represent his tendency to specialize in churches and public buildings and include the First Methodist Church, Dallas; First Baptist Church, Mobile; Bellevue Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis; Lookout Mountain Hotel, Lookout Mountain, Georgia; Normal College, Hattisburg, Mississippi; buildings for the University of Mississippi; and the Stonewall Jackson Institute at Abington, Virginia. As a result of these and other designs, Hunt's firm was considered one of the most prolific and widely known firms in the South in the early twentieth century.

As a leading citizen in Chattanooga, Hunt was involved in many local activities and was considered a leader in city affairs. An active member and deacon of the First Baptist Church, Hunt was also a Mason and a member of the Chattanooga Planning Commission. He was known for his generosity in extending help to college students and his contributions to various churches which often included designing church buildings across the South at no cost. In area affairs, Hunt was Chairman of the Board of the Citizen's Council of Chattanooga which had been organized in 1933 to express a formal opinion in civic actions and was thus one of the leaders in the fight to gain TVA power for the Chattanooga area which resulted in the reduction of electricity rates. Also, Hunt was a trustee of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee for over ten years and was a member of the American Institute of Architects.

Hunt's contributions to Chattanooga cannot be underestimated. At the time of his death in 1937, most of Chattanooga's public buildings were his designs, including four of the city's five then existing skyscrapers, the City Hall, the Courthouse, the Carnegie Library, the Tivoli Theater, and numerous churches and schools. As a professional architect, his reputation was known throughout the South. His work had been recognized and honored in such national architectural journals as The Architectural Record and the American Architect. An editorial, at the time of his death, stated that Hunt's services were in such demand that justified "terming his as the outstanding architect in the entire South." Another called him, "the master builder of Chattanooga," another stated that as a result of Hunt's lasting monuments, his buildings, "no man's life has been more thoroughly woven into the progress of Chattanooga during the past half century than that of R.H. Hunt."

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A more recent honor accorded Hunt is by the Chattanooga Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. This group is sponsoring the 1979 meeting of the Tennessee Society of Architects. In honor of Hunt, a special exhibit displaying drawings and photographs of his work will be featured.

While Hunt was not Chattanooga's first architect, he is probably Chattanooga's first significant architect and is crucial in Chattanooga's architectural development. Although there were other architects practicing in Chattanooga in the late nineteenth century, none have made as lasting or as significant contributions as Hunt. His career spanned more than fifty years in the city, and during that time he was widely respected as a man and as an architect. His remaining buildings span much of this time period and reflect his evolution as an architect and the changing architectural styles of that period, and in that sense, present an overview of Chattanooga's development. Not accidently, Hunt's arrival in the 1880's concided with the arrival of many other ambitious young men who came to Chattanooga just as it began to grow and expand. Hunt's career developed and expanded as Chattanooga grew, and the collection of buildings chosen for this nomination reflect both these growths and developments.

While the primary theme of this nomination relates to Hunt and his significance as an architect, a secondary theme is the architectural importance of his designs. To a large degree, Hunt's architectural styles can be categorized by the building type. While he designed churches in various Victorian styles (usually Gothic), most of his other buildings reflect features derived from Greek or Roman classical architecture, styles popular during most of his career. For instance, the Hamilton County Courthouse is an example of Beaux-Arts Classicism, while City Hall and the James Building are excellent examples of the Neo-Classical style. While some buildings reflect lavish detailing, other buildings such as the Pound Building, the Municipal Auditorium, or the functional Car Barns reflect only the minor use of detailing such as at the entrance area. Even the virtually severe presentation of the Frances Willard building is relieved by Georgian Revival features. Yet, by the late 1920's as Art Deco began to gain popularity, features of this style can be seen in his work. Hunt's Art Deco work climaxed with his last major design, the Chattanooga U.S. Federal Building (1932-33). a magnificent display of Art Deco detailing.

Yet, not all of Hunt's buildings are outstanding architectural landmarks. Many were designed as extremely functional buildings. While several of

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this type remain in Chattanooga, the Car Barns is the only building of this type included in this nomination as representative of this type of his work, largely as a result of its historical associations with the development of Chattanooga's transportation history, Other such functional buildings that Hunt designed were schools and hospitals. Although Hunt designed numerous schools in the Chattanooga area, few remain. Of the approximately half-dozen that do remain, two were selected to represent his work in this area. These are the Richard Hardy Junior High School and the Brainerd Junior High School. Both of these buildings, while not lavishly decorated, once again reflect classical features. The Richard Hardy, representative of many of Hunt's school designs, is virtually plain except for a concentration of detailing at the entrance area that includes an arcaded loggia. Brainerd Junior High School is somewhat unusual for his school designs, in that its features reflect the Colonial Revival popular during this period.

Since ecclesiastical designing has often been considered Hunt's speciality, four of approximately a dozen churches remaining in the Chattanooga area that were designed by Hunt, were chosen as representing the best of this aspect of his work. As opposed to his designs for business and government buildings, his ecclesiastical buildings reflect more Romanesque and Gothic features. The Second Presbyterian Church, his oldest remaining design in Chattanooga, is an excellent example of his early work in Gothic architecture. Many of his later churches in Chattanooga are very similar in design and usually reflect Gothic influence. Two churches, Tucker Baptist and Highland Park United Methodist were chosen as being the most significant of this period of his career. Northside Presbyterian was included since it is Hunt's only building of Greek Revival design in Chattanooga.

While this nomination does not include every building designed in Hamilton County by Hunt, it does give an overall view of his work in this area. This selection was primarily chosen to include his more outstanding buildings in Chattanooga and, in addition, to show representative examples of his major areas of design. It was felt that Hunt's other buildings did not possess sufficient architectural merit, historical significance, or did not contribute to the understanding of Hunt's architectural evolution and were therefore omitted.

While buildings used for religious purposes are generally exempted from listing in the National Register, these churches were included because they represent an important and integral component of Hunt's development as an architect. As his advertisements state, churches and public buildings were his speciality. As such, ecclesiastical designing was a major portion of his career and is therefore a crucial factor in understanding Hunt's career and his evolution as an architect.

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The material obtained during the 1976 Landmarks Survey is on file with the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. Also, a portion of the survey is on file with the Tennessee Historical Commission. These files are available for use by public agencies or private organizations that wish to use the material.

¹Chattanooga City Directory, 1890.

 $^{^2}$ See <u>The Architectural Record</u>, November 1916 and December 1934; and <u>The American Architect</u>, August 1, 1908.

³Chattanooga Free Press, 28 May 1937.

⁴Chattanooga Evening News, 28 May 1937.

⁵Chattanooga Free Press, 29 May 1937.

⁶Chattanooga City Directory, 1890.

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Chattanooga News Free Press, 27 December 1978.

Chattanooga Times, 14 June 1909, 21 June 1911, 22 February 1924, 13 September, 1924, 11 January 1929, 31 March 1929, 6 July 1930, 17 October 1937, 4 September 1938, 9 June 1942, 10 February 1959, 29 October 1978.

East Tennessee Historical and Biographical. Chattanooga, TN: A.S. Smith and Company, 1893.

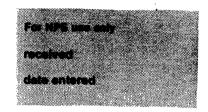
Steinberg, David. And To Think It Only Cost A Nickel!, Chattanooga, TN: N.P., 1975.

Other Sources:

Chattanooga City Directories Chattanooga Plat Maps

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Multiple Resource Area Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name <u>Buildings in</u> State <u>TENNESSEE</u>	Hamilton County Designed by R.H. Hunt Thematic Resources
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