

JUL 25 1989

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic Resources of Downtown Statesboro, Bulloch County, Georgia

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

Historical Development of Downtown Statesboro

**C. Geographical Data**

The multiple property listing is located within the boundaries of the Statesboro Downtown Development Authority, Bulloch County, Georgia. See the attached map for precise boundaries.

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

7/19/89  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Amy Federman  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

9/6/89  
Date

## E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN STATESBORO

The historical development of downtown Statesboro, Bulloch County, Georgia is the context in which the National Register eligibility of historic properties within the Statesboro Downtown Development Authority (DDA) boundaries have been judged. Downtown Statesboro has a history which begins with the formation of Bulloch County in the 1790s and continues through the present. This history can be subdivided into six major developmental periods: an early settlement period, 1796-1803; a period during which county government activities dominated, 1803-1888; a period highlighted by the railroad and a thriving cotton economy, 1889-1929; a period of economic depression, 1930-1941; World War II, 1941-1945; and a modern period, 1945-present. Most of the downtown development reflected in this National Register nomination occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the railroad and the production of cotton, especially Sea Island cotton, were the major contributors to Statesboro's development. All of the districts and individual properties which have been determined to meet the requirements for National Register nomination in this context have been documented on individual registration forms and accompanying maps and photographs.

#### Creation of Bulloch County: 1796-1803

Bulloch County, located on the Georgia Coastal Plain, was created from Screven and Bryan Counties on February 8, 1796. The new county, named for Georgia's first governor, Archibald Bulloch, was established by the state government to pave the way for inland settlement of Georgia, rather than because of population density. In November 1801, George Siebald, a land speculator from Augusta, Georgia, sold two hundred acres of land to Bulloch County residents for the creation of a county seat. The county government was to be centrally located, following the pattern of most other county seats established in Georgia. "Statesborough" was officially established by an Act of the Georgia Legislature in 1803.

There are no extant structures from this early period of Statesboro's history. However, it can be assumed that because Bulloch County was a frontier area, many of the first buildings were of log or primitive wood construction. Physical evidence from other frontier parts of the state indicates that some early settlers were constructing modest houses out of milled lumber as early as 1809. Like other Georgia pioneers, the Bulloch County settlers probably lived in log structures for short periods of time before constructing more comfortable, one- and two-room, frame residences.

#### Setting Up County Government: 1803-1888

During this period, county government was established in Bulloch County and the county seat of Statesboro (then called "Statesborough") was laid out. Growth was slow, however. County Surveyor Josiah Everett's plan for Statesborough was recorded on February 11, 1806. This plan did not delineate the boundaries for the town but rather laid out a gridiron street pattern with twenty-eight building lots.

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**Section E - Statement of Historic Contexts (continued)**

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Like many other planned county seats in Georgia, the central square was reserved for courthouse construction. Few settlers were attracted to the area, probably due in part to the poor soil conditions and inadequate transportation facilities within the county. Unsatisfactory roads and a lack of rail lines contributed to Bulloch County's slow growth rate for most of the century.

In 1866, the city of Statesboro received its first charter which established the legal boundaries as one mile in every direction from the courthouse square and provided for the Americanized spelling of the town's name. Throughout most of this period, little commercial activity has been documented and the town appears to have functioned mainly as the center for county government. Statesboro did not appear in the U.S. Census until 1880 when its population was listed as 25.

As early as 1817, cotton was grown in Bulloch County. The soil proved to be well suited for the cultivation of Sea Island cotton, which was twice as valuable as short staple varieties. Without direct access to rail or water transportation, however, cotton was not a very profitable cash crop due to the high costs involved in conveying goods to market. The Georgia Railroad planned to construct a line through Bulloch County in 1835, but it was opposed by area farmers. Their resistance was based on the fact that railroad companies were given the power to condemn necessary rights-of-way and over concerns that steam-powered locomotives could cause fires in the fields.

Statesboro's growth and expansion began in earnest in the late 1880s. Some of the earliest documented commercial development in downtown Statesboro occurred in 1886, when J. A. Brannen erected a row of eleven wooden stores along the west side of North Main Street. These structures burned in 1888 and the area was completely redeveloped with masonry structures in the early 20th century.

Residences of this period were also of frame construction and many in the original downtown area were destroyed by fire or replaced by modern commercial buildings in the early to mid-20th century. In the entire multiple property nomination area, there is only one extant residential structure from this period, the James Alonzo Brannen House, located at 121 South Main Street. The modest, late Victorian cottage was constructed in 1881, utilizing the then-popular L-plan. It is representative of the late 19th-century houses constructed in Statesboro and other small towns around the state which were of frame construction with modest late Victorian details including asymmetrical facades, multiple gables, double-hung windows, and use of weatherboard and shingles.

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Section E - Statement of Historic Contexts (continued)

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The Coming of the Railroad and Cotton: 1889-1929

This period was the most prosperous in Statesboro's history. A combination of rail transportation and Sea Island cotton cultivation produced tremendous growth and resulted in an increased demand for housing and services for the rapidly expanding population. Most of the extant historic buildings in downtown Statesboro were built during this period.

As if to demarcate this period of growth and development, on September 2, 1889, Statesboro received its second charter which reduced the city boundaries to one square mile, extending one-half mile north, south, east, and west from the courthouse, and provided for the election of Statesboro's first mayor and five councilmen. The boundaries were not changed again until the fourth (current) city charter was adopted in 1912.

The Dover and Statesboro Railway, the first railroad to serve the city, was incorporated in January of 1889 and began operation in October of that year. The railroad was encouraged by local residents, many of whom purchased stock in the company, helped to grade road beds, and provided supplies for construction of the tracks. Rail service allowed for transportation of freight out of the county and, therefore, the large-scale and profitable production of cotton as a cash crop. Soon after the turn of the century, two more railroads served Statesboro. The Central of Georgia Railroad purchased the Bruton and Peneora Railway in 1901 and extended the line to Statesboro. In addition, thirty-four miles of the Savannah and Statesboro Railroad between Cuyler and Statesboro were opened. Population and commercial activity in the town grew correspondingly. Census data shows that the number of inhabitants grew from 25 in 1880 to approximately 4000 in 1930.

By the turn of the century, agriculture had become a major factor in Statesboro's growth. Cotton production began as early as 1817, but it was not a significant crop until after the arrival of the railroad. By the 1899-1900 growing season, 9762 bales of cotton were ginned in the county, and in 1902 a cotton seed oil mill was established in the southeastern section of town. In 1902, Statesboro was recognized as the world's second largest market for Sea Island cotton, and by the next year Bulloch County was the world's largest Sea Island cotton producing county, with one-eighth of the world's supply of Sea Island cotton handled through Statesboro. In the next decade, however, devastation caused by the boll weevil starting in 1915 and depressed World War I cotton prices resulted in a decline of the local cotton market.

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**Section E - Statement of Historic Contexts (continued)**

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Due to the combined influence of the railroad and the cotton market, the decade from 1894 to 1905 was the most intense period of construction for the city, particularly in the downtown area. Early commercial structures were concentrated around the courthouse square and along the town's main streets with warehouse and industrial buildings located along or near the railroad tracks. In Statesboro, these buildings were typical of those being constructed in other Georgia small towns. Most were one- to three-stories high and of masonry construction. Typically, the ground floor featured a retail storefront with a recessed entrance and display windows. Upper floors were offices, meeting rooms, storage areas, or apartments. Ornamentation reflects a variety of stylistic influences common to commercial structures of the period in Georgia's small towns and included the Italianate, Italian Renaissance, Queen Anne, and, slightly later, the Neoclassical. Decorative details include pressed-metal cornices, corbeled brickwork, and segmental- and round-arched windows.

Statesboro's first financial institution, the Bank of Statesboro, was organized in 1894. The bank was housed in several buildings in the East Main Street area until its third and final home at the corner of Siebald and East Main was constructed. The three-story, Renaissance Revival structure, constructed in 1911, is one of the most outstanding pieces of architecture in downtown Statesboro.

In 1894, Bulloch County constructed its present courthouse on the square at the center of the business district. The Queen Anne structure was designed by Bruce and Morgan, an Atlanta architectural firm which also designed many other Georgia courthouses and commercial buildings. Bulloch County was very wealthy in the early 1910s due to its success in the cotton market and was able to afford extensive alterations to the county courthouse. In 1914 the courthouse was enlarged and then-fashionable Neoclassical details were added to the facade. The Bulloch County Courthouse was added to the National Register in 1980 as part of the thematic nomination, "County Courthouses in Georgia."

During the years prior to the popularity of the automobile, urban homes were generally constructed within walking distance of the central business district. Historically there were many late 19th-century residences along North and South Main Street in the vicinity of the commercial district. All but a few of these late-Victorian residences were demolished and replaced with commercial structures during the mid-20th century, however, as Statesboro's central business district expanded and its major north-south street became a commercial strip. Judging from available documentation, the former residences along Main Street utilized common materials and architectural features. The extant residences in the downtown area feature frame

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Section E - Statement of Historic Contexts (continued)

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construction with weatherboard and fish-scale shingles as facade materials.

Improved transportation technology--primarily the automobile--and a rapidly expanding population allowed for the development of residential areas in the downtown area but separated from the central business district in the early 20th century. Most of the city's streets were paved by 1915 and, according to the 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, a car dealership and several garages had opened for business as a result of the popularity of the new mode of transportation. The South Main and North College Street residential areas developed west of downtown as middle-class neighborhoods during the early 20th century. Residences along South Main date from 1910 through 1930 and represent several architectural styles or influences. The earliest from this period is the Victorian Eclectic style: wood-framed, one- to one-and-a-half stories high, central hall plan, regular massing, high hipped roof, multiple gable, and wide porches. Bungaloid residences featuring brick or clapboard facades, extended eaves, and Craftsman details are located in each of the nominated residential districts.

The Great Depression: 1930-1941

Statesboro's growth slowed during the depressed cotton market of the 1920s, and the city experienced only a five percent population increase, to 3996 inhabitants, by 1930. All of the banks in town closed during the Great Depression, as did many retail establishments. In spite of these economic problems there was some new construction in Statesboro during the 1930s. One major local government project involved the 1933 remodeling of City Hall to provide room for the fire department, and in 1938 the Statesboro Telephone Company remodeled the facade of its office building, adding Art Moderne details. The Georgia Theatre (1936) was constructed in the Art Moderne style of architecture and was the only new construction done in the 1930s. Designed by Savannah architect Cletus W. Bergen, the theater featured modern conveniences such as air conditioning, steam heat, and a coffee shop in the lobby. Located on East Main between the Bank of Statesboro and the Preetorious Building, the theater provided entertainment for the residents of the small town.

World War II: 1941-1945

By 1940 Statesboro's population was 5028. Through the 1940s and the Second World War no new construction or major building alterations have been documented for downtown Statesboro. Population growth continued with an increase of 1100 during the decade.

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**Section E - Statement of Historic Contexts (continued)**

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Post World War II: 1946-present

Statesboro's population reached 6128 by 1950 and 8356 by 1960. The large population increase reflects the city's post-war prosperity and can be specifically attributed to the routing of U.S. 301 through the downtown area. Constructed to replace other north-south highways linking Florida with the northeast, U.S. 301 brought increased tourist and commercial traffic to the area. Interstate Highway 95, located forty miles east of Statesboro, was completed in the early 1970s. It had a negative affect on the local economy because tourist traffic was routed away from the downtown area.

During the post-World War II period, many of the historic structures have been altered and some new construction has occurred. Alterations to historic structures in downtown Statesboro are similar to the modernization of storefronts which has occurred in other Georgia cities. Many of the display windows have been enclosed and several facades have been covered with new siding material, awnings, or shutters. Probably the greatest loss during this period was the demolition of the late Victorian residences that once lined North and South Main Streets. All but a handful of these were torn down when U.S. 301 was routed through town and local zoning allowed extension of the business district along this highway strip.

The 1980s have brought historic preservation to downtown Statesboro. Property owners are seeking advice from the Area Planning and Development Commission preservation planner and Historic Preservation Section staff regarding survey activity, National Register nominations, rehabilitation and design guidelines, and the availability of historic preservation tax incentives. Leading this movement is this multiple property nomination for the historic properties of downtown Statesboro.

## **F. Associated Property Types** (OPTIONAL)

Property types associated with this historic context are described generally in Section E, above.

## **G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

**Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.**

This National Register project has been sponsored by the Statesboro Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA is a planning and development agency in Statesboro which focuses its efforts on the historic downtown area of the community, an area which includes the central business district and historically residential properties surrounding it. The DDA undertook this project to identify significant properties within its jurisdiction for planning purposes and to make historic preservation incentives and protections available to owners of those properties.

A survey of the area was conducted with the assistance of the preservation planner at the Altamaha Georgia Southern Area Planning and Development Commission. Student interns from Georgia Southern College, in Statesboro, assisted the preservation planner in delineating the boundaries of the individual properties and districts within the DDA's authority, conducting additional research in primary and secondary sources, photographing historic buildings, and drafting the nomination. Eligibility of individual properties and districts, boundaries of properties and districts, and the determination of contributing and noncontributing properties in districts was handled in coordination with the state historic preservation office (SHPO).

The historic districts represented in this multiple property listing represent the intact historic areas within the jurisdiction of the Statesboro Downtown Development Authority (due to the overall loss of integrity of the historic downtown area, the central business district had to be divided into four separate commercial historic districts). The individual properties presented in this nomination represent the intact historic properties within the authority of the Statesboro DDA but outside the historic districts that have at this time been shown to meet the National Register criteria. All of the properties and districts were determined to have integrity because they retained the qualities that bind them to their historic period and were identified as meeting the requirements for age and significance.

Prior to the determination that Statesboro had sufficient historic properties to form a multiple property listing, several individual properties were listed in the National Register. These properties are also associated with the historic development of downtown Statesboro. The Bulloch County Courthouse was listed in the thematic nomination "County Courthouses in Georgia," September 1980. The Jaekel Hotel and the John A. McDougald House were listed individually in June of 1982. The William G. Raines House, also known as the Statesboro Inn, was listed in August 1987.

## **H. Major Bibliographic References**

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Young and Company, Business and Professional Directory of the Cities and Towns of Georgia, 1909-1910. Atlanta: Young and Company, 1910.

### **Primary location of additional documentation:**

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify repository:** Altamaha Georgia Southern Regional Development Center, Baxley, Georgia

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