United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only received FEB 1 3 1980 date enteredMAR 1 0 1980

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

- 7,00				
1. Nam	ie			·
historic Alah	oama Penny Saving	s Bank		
and/or common	Pythian Temple			
2. Loca				
	γ.			
street & number	310 18th Street	, North		not for publication
city, town Bir	rmingham	vicinity of	congressional district	6
state Alaban	na code	01 county	Jefferson	code 073
3. Clas	sification			
Category district _X building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible X yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agricultureX commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Proper	ty		
name Grand	l Todas Vaishts s	£ D-+1-3		
GLAIR	l Lodge Knights o	•		
street & number	JEG EGGII DELEC	•		
city, town Bir		vicinity of	state	Alabama
5. Loca	ation of Lega	ai Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Jef	ferson County C	ourthouse	
street & number				
city, town	Birmingham		state	Alabama
	resentation	in Existing		STADAMA.
title Alaba	ama Inventory	has this pr	operty been determined ele	egible? ves X no
	3-present			
				e county loca
depository for su	urvey records Alaba	ma Historical C	ommission	
city, town Mo	ontgomery		state	Alabama 36130

7. Desc	ription			
Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins unexposed	Check one unaltered altered	Check one X original site moved date	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Alabama Penny Savings Bank (1913) is a six-story Commercial style building faced with buff-colored brick. It has a strong vertical appearance, emphasized by its proportions and the unbroken rise of four vertical piers. The outside piers and fenestration are framed by striped borders of buff-colored and darker brick. The wider outside piers give the building a more solid appearance. The first floor serves as a base with Doric pilasters that support a simple entablature. The second floor is faced with unrelieved brick work and is pierced with paired windows on either side of a central group of three. A molded stringcourse divides the second floor from the upper floors. Above the second floor the piers are treated as pilasters that rise to a simple capital at the attic story. The spandrels between the windows on the upper floors are recessed, and at each floor they increase slightly in height. The attic story has a system of screened openings aligned with the windows below. The building is crowned by a projecting cornice and relieved finials above the corner piers.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 1900-	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community plans conservation economics education engineering	ning landscape architecture law literature military music ement philosophy	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation X other (specify) Black history
Specific dates	1913	Builder/Architect	Wallace A. Rayfield	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Alabama Penny Savings Bank (1913) represents significant black financial, professional, architectural, and cultural achievements, some of national scope. The bank for which the building was constructed was the first black-owned bank in the state (founded in 1890) and the second largest black bank in the country in 1907. It financed the construction of homes and churches for thousands of local black citizens.

The brick work and skillful handling of proportions and architectural details make the Alabama Penny Savings Bank a distinctive local example of 1910s office building design. It was built by a local black construction company. The design quality suggests that it is the work of a trained architect, although none has yet been identified. It may be by black architect Wallace A. Rayfield, who did many other buildings for the black community in Birmingham at this time, including the noteworthy 16th Street Baptist Church (1911), which is only a few blocks away and was also erected by Windham Construction Company.

From the beginning, the bank building furnished offices for the black press and business and professional people. When the Alabama Penny Savings Bank folded in December, 1915, the building was bought by the Grand Lodge Knights of Pythias, a fraternal service organization to which many black legislators have belonged. After 65 years in the building, the Pythians now propose to rehabilitate it as a black landmark and a center for professional offices. They also hope to restore some of the original banking facilities, including the vaults.

The Alabama Penny Savings Bank is a dominant structure in a district that has long symbolized black life in Birmingham. For more than half a century -- from the passage of segregationist Jim Crow laws in the early 1900s until the 1960s -- 18th Street and 4th Avenue North was a dynamic center of social life and professional achievement. The color and vitality of that life in the 1920s and 30s was captured by author Octavius Roy Cohen in stories that were known throughout the nation. Although now diminished by the demolition of some structures and the dispersal of black life that has come with integration and suburban expansion, the district retains its identity and remains associated with the black community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet.

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List all sta	ates and counti	es for properties overl	apping state or	county bou	ndaries	
state		code	county			code
state		code	county			code
11. F	orm Pre	epared By				
name/title	Ellen Mert	ins/Alice Bowsh	ner (Birmin	gham His	torical	Society)
organizatio		[istorical Commi			cuary 1,	
street & nui		onroe Street	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	telephone (
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city or town			orvotion		labama	36130
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The evaluat	-	this property within the s				
As the design	national gnated State History	oric Preservation Officer f	local or the National His	storic Preserv	vation 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 Histor	ic Preservation O	fficer signature	B. Dace	ard.	<u>)</u> .	
title	APO	Alabame	•		date J	Usus 5/980
For HCRS	use only					
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Keeper of	the National Regi	ster			uate .	1/0/00
Attest:	last	1 A Duhi		C. Made	date 3/	6/80
Chief of R	egistration					

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 1 3 1980

DATE ENTERED (1 144)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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- Birmingham Regional Planning Commission. <u>Historic Site Survey</u>, Jefferson County, Alabama, 1972.
- Satterfield, Carolyn Greene. <u>Historic Sites of Jefferson County</u>, <u>Alabama</u>. Birmingham, Gray Printing Company, Inc., 1976.
- White, Marjorie L. <u>Downtown Birmingham-Architectural and Historical</u>

 <u>Walking Tour Guide</u>. Birmingham Historical Society and The First

 National Bank of Birmingham, Birmingham Publishing Company, 1977.